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UN INTERVIEW
James Green
April 21, 1986
Interviewer: William Powell

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POWELL: Well Mr. Green we welcome your participation here today in the United Nations Oral History Program. As you know we are trying to record the memories and impressions of those who were associated with the world organization right from it's beginnings.

Since you were at the Dumbarton Oaks conversations, the San Francisco Conference, the Meeting of the U.N. Preparatory Commission in London, and some of the early sessions of the General Assembly, I think your contribution will be very useful and very valuable.

GREEN: Thank you.

POWELL: Let's begin with a little personal history background. What part of the country do you come from and what was the nature of your formal education?

GREEN: I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri. I went through high school there, then went to Yale College, class of '32, and took a Ph.D. in international relations in 1937.

I got into the State Department during the war. I fought the war in the State Department planning the peace. President Roosevelt, to his great credit, the minute Pearl Harbor occurred directed Secretary Hull to set up a post-war planning staff to prepare for the peace conference, because he had seen the disaster of the Wilson administration.

POWELL: The first record I can find in the State Department records is in August 1942 when you were in the Division of Special Research. Was that about the time that you joined?

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: What were the natures of your duties then?

GREEN: Special Research, '42?

POWELL: This is in August '42.

GREEN: This was the post-war planning staff under Leo Pasvolsky.

POWELL: Oh, that was Pasvolsky then even?

GREEN: Yes. And there was one section on what to do with Japan, assuming that we were going to win the war. What to do with Germany and Japan. Boundaries in Europe. Reparations, and I was in the section of what

to do about the League of Nations, to create a new organization which was Pasvolsky's specialty.

Small groups worked on various parts of what became the United Nations Charter. I was in the section of dependent areas under Benjamin Gerig and Ralph Bunche trying to decide what to do about the old mandated territories and set up a new, what became the trusteeship system.

And that was very inspiring work, especially to deal with Ralph Bunche. He was one of my heroes.

POWELL: I was going to ask you -- my next question was that you were -- I saw that Bunche was in that area.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And you worked with him closely, did you?

GREEN: Oh yes. Yes. And I lived in Chevy Chase in those days and we entertained the Bunches, I'm sure the only blacks ever entertained in Chevy Chase, and they entertained us in their house over in southeast Washington. But he was a marvelous person to work with.

POWELL: And I noticed when I was looking through the records that he was dealing with I think something called the Near East and Africa Unit, which I

thought was very appropriate in view of his subsequent assignment to the U.N. in the Middle East and then in the Congo.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Did you keep in touch with him after he came to the U.N.? Because after all he was Director in the Department of Trusteeship?

GREEN: Oh yes. I would try to have lunch with him whenever I could catch him. He was a very busy person, of course. A marvelous sense of humor, balance and intelligence. One of the ablest men I've ever known.

POWELL: Yes, because he made a remarkable transition.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: When he went from there to advising the Secretary-General on peacekeeping and all kinds of things.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now I see you were in something called the Western European Unit, I think they called it at one time. What was all that about?

GREEN: I don't even remember.

POWELL: Maybe that was just a table of organization that didn't mean anything.

GREEN: I suppose so.

POWELL: Now this unit under Pasvolsky, what was he like to work with?

GREEN: A very dynamic individual. A first class brain. Born in Russia, of course, but he had a mastery of English. He taught us all how to write good English. And very inspiring person. Just full of ideas. A real idea man. And he was reputedly a great chess player, and it was fascinating to sit behind him in negotiations, sometimes with the representative of the Department of the Treasury or the military, or sometimes with the British or Soviets, and watch the chess player, because he would always start with the exact opposite of what his position was.

We would sit behind him with the position papers and then what he wanted, but he would always start with the opposite. "Now tell me what you think about this, Mr. X?" "Oh, that's very interesting. I really think we could do something about that." And then he would begin to poke holes.

After about half an hour Mr. X was around to the Pasvolsky position. It was just fascinating to see the chess player in operation.

POWELL: That's a very interesting story.
And he was really the brains in the division?

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now in this division of international organizations, were you planning just the U.N. or were you working on other post-war intergovernmental organizations? I'm thinking of things like UNESCO and WHO, or were they in another organization?

GREEN: I think they were dealt with elsewhere. As I remember this was just the U.N.

POWELL: Just the U.N.

GREEN: What to do about it.

POWELL: Basically the Charter?

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And I believe that Alger Hiss was a director in your division. Did you actually know him?

GREEN: Yes. Very well. He was always above me, as Secretary General at Dumbarton Oaks, San Francisco, and always my boss. A very able man. I never understood what happened to him.

POWELL: But he had a very good standing in the department at the time?

GREEN: Oh, yes. An extremely able person. And he was one of the few individuals I've ever worked

with or worked under who could deal with administrative problems and substantive problems simultaneously. I'd be standing in front of his desk and he'd be on the telephone talking about the veto with some other delegation and then he'd turn up, "how many limousines do we need to get from A to B?" It was one thing and then the other. He could do them simultaneously. Absolutely first rate.

POWELL: What was the line of command in the State Department at that time? Did Pasvolsky report directly to Hull and later to Stettinius? Did the Secretary take a personal interest in the future of the U.N.?

GREEN: Yes, and I remember Pasvolsky reported directly to the Secretary. He didn't go through anybody else, which was very unusual in those days.

POWELL: Yes, indeed. And both Hull and Stettinius took a real interest in the planning?

GREEN: Yes. Stettinius was a marvelous Undersecretary of State. He was a great manager, a corporation type from U.S. Steel, and he really brought the State Department into the 20th century. He updated it. It was a very old-fashioned foreign office until he took over and just as I say, updated it. A really marvelous Undersecretary but not a first rate Secretary.

POWELL: No. Now we come to the summer of '44 and the Dumbarton Oaks Conversation. Whose idea were they? Was that Pasvolsky?

GREEN: I really don't remember who concocted that.

POWELL: Do you recall whether it was difficult to get the Chinese and the British and the Russians to come? Or did they --

GREEN: I don't believe there was any difficulty.

POWELL: And of course there had to be two sets of conversations, because the Russians wouldn't sit down with the Chinese.

GREEN: Yes. That's right.

POWELL: Do you know who thought up that compromise formula?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: It sounds like something Pasvolsky

--

GREEN: Probably. Yes.

POWELL: Probably yes. Now why Dumbarton Oaks? Weren't there a dozen more functional places in Washington than that?

GREEN: I suppose so, and I don't know who chose it. But it turned out to be a marvelous place. This huge livingroom. The house belonged to the Robert Wood **Bliss** family, I believe?

POWELL: Yes, the Bliss family.

GREEN: And they simply turned it over to the State Department for these conversations and the big meetings were held in the large living room and then smaller committee rooms all around the place.

I was the documents officer and what was the old ice room, before electric refrigerators. It was a room somewhat smaller than this, about ten by ten, where blocks of ice were put in the old days. Meat and ham and things were hung from the ceiling on great hooks.

POWELL: Can we say Green was put on ice?

GREEN: Yes. And that was my office for all the documents and it worked very well. It was just the right size. The file cabinets, so it was a very busy time.

POWELL: I know as you said Alger Hiss was the Secretary General of the Dumbarton Oaks Conversations.

GREEN: I think that was his title, yes.

POWELL: Yes. Was there a large secretariat? That was a comparatively small group. Of course it wouldn't be nearly as large as San Francisco?

GREEN: Oh no. It was a fairly small group, as I remember.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: As I say, I was just handling documents. I wasn't on the policy side at all.

POWELL: But presumably the U.S. under Stettinius and Pasvolsky brought in the form of a document some detailed proposals?

GREEN: Oh yes.

POWELL: Now, what about the other three governments? Did they have a similar set of documents?

GREEN: As I remember the British had a fairly complete set of proposals and the Soviets did not, but I'm speaking from a very shaky memory.

POWELL: Did you get a chance, from your vantage point, to see the delegates first-hand at work very much?

GREEN: Oh, I would be going in and out. I'd see them.

POWELL: Yes. I mean you must have known.

GREEN: Gromyko.

POWELL: I was going to say because he headed the Soviet team there.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Was that your first contact with him?

GREEN: Yes. He was a very charming person. Very warm. Perfect English and very friendly. I haven't seen him since but he was a very easy person to work with.

POWELL: And the British sent along a very strong delegation.

GREEN: Oh yes.

POWELL: Gladwynn Jebb, Professor Sir Charles Webster. I think he used to be called the British Pasvolsky.

GREEN: Oh.

POWELL: They I think had a considerable influence on this.

GREEN: Yes. Absolutely.

POWELL: And what about the Chinese? There were at least two familiar names that I came across. Wellington Koo, who just died recently here in New York.

GREEN: Oh, that's right. Yes.

POWELL: And the other one was Victor Hoo, who became the first Chinese Assistant Secretary-General of the U.N.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Did they have much of an input, or were they --

GREEN: No. They really just signed on the dotted line when the Soviet conversations were finished.

POWELL: They were just glad to be there. Well one thing that's always intrigued me about the Dumbarton Oaks meetings is that while the question of trusteeship was placed on the agenda, no provisions about it were contained in the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals.

It was understood that the matter would be a question of subsequent study and would be placed on the agenda of the U.N. Charter Conference. Why was this?

GREEN: I'm just guessing. Again I say I was on the sidelines of the policy decisions. I'm just guessing that the British and the French were not too happy with the idea. They just asked to have it postponed and they postponed it.

The same thing was true of human rights. There's nothing in the Dumbarton Oaks Proposal about human rights.

POWELL: That's right.

GREEN: That came at San Francisco.

POWELL: Now what was the atmosphere during the Dumbarton Oaks meetings? Were there any issues that gave a sense of crisis to the meetings?

GREEN: I don't think so, but again I'm just speaking from the documents room. The ice box.

POWELL: But I mean you didn't get a sense of --

GREEN: No. No crisis.

POWELL: No crisis. Now the Dumbarton Oaks Conversations were supposed to have been conducted in secrecy.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: But I have read that Scotty Reston, James Reston of the New York Times carried very prompt and very accurate reports of the proceedings.

GREEN: Every day on the front page. Yes.

POWELL: Did this in any way jeopardize the outcome of the meetings?

GREEN: No, but it was terribly embarrassing to the documents officer to have his documents published the day after by Mr. Reston.

POWELL: Did anyone ever discover how he got the documents?

GREEN: Well that's a story which I can't prove, but the U.S. delegation was very unhappy about this and among them was Admiral Train who had been in Navy Intelligence.

POWELL: Russell Train, wasn't it?

GREEN: Russell Train.

POWELL: I think so. Yes.

GREEN: And he said well let's just have a test run. Tomorrow you distribute the British and Soviet documents but you hold back the American documents, which I did, and Mr. Reston had them all. So he obviously didn't get them from the Americans.

And Reston, when he got the Pulitzer Prize off me, said, I think in his acceptance speech but it may have been later, that governments are the only vessels that leak at the top.

And I learned from some source later that he got his documents from the British Ambassador.

POWELL: Is that so? Well that's an interesting story to have on the record.

GREEN: I can't prove it.

POWELL: No. But that is interesting.

GREEN: But that was my most embarrassing official life.

POWELL: Well I mean you can't be responsible for the British Ambassador.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: What were the issues? Did Stettinius have to refer any of the Dumbarton Oaks decisions to the President, if you recall?

GREEN: I just wouldn't know. Not that I know of.

POWELL: Yes. And when the Dumbarton Oaks meetings were over, what was the feeling around the State Department of the results? Had as much been accomplished as had been expected?

GREEN: Oh, I think so. I think they were pleased.

POWELL: I mean I know that there was disappointment about one issue that had been left unresolved, the voting formula and the Security Council.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: But that was inevitable and had gone right to the top at Yalta.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now presumably after Dumbarton Oaks you went back to your job at the State Department. Is that correct?

GREEN: I think so. Yes.

POWELL: And you continued to concern yourself with post-war international organization matters?

GREEN: Yes. Especially in the trusteeship field that was coming up.

POWELL: Now at the Yalta Meeting in early 1945, the Big Three had several questions relating to the U.N. to discuss and settle. We mentioned the voting formula for the Security Council.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Then there was Stalin's request for separate membership in the organization for each of the Soviet Republics, and finally there was the question of the trusteeship provisions in the Charter.

I gather that an agreement along the following lines was arrived at at Yalta. The five permanent members of the Security Council should consult with each other prior to the Charter Conference on providing machinery in the Charter for dealing with territorial trusteeships.

GREEN: Um-hmm.

POWELL: These trusteeships would apply to existing mandates of the League of Nations, territories to be detached from the enemy states at the end of the war,

and any other territory that might be voluntarily placed under trusteeship.

It was further agreed at Yalta that at the Charter Conference there would be no discussion of specific territories, only the machinery and the principles of trusteeship.

Do you recall whose initiative this formulation was proposed?

GREEN: I was not at Yalta.

POWELL: I didn't know whether this was something that might have been worked out in the division of dependent territories in the State Department.

GREEN: I just don't remember. I'm sorry.

POWELL: Because it was a very interesting formulation.

GREEN: Oh yes.

POWELL: And I think it was accepted.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: By all of the governments, and then subsequently they had to carry out this consultation.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now when and under what circumstances were you assigned to the San Francisco Conference?

GREEN: I think it was Alger Hiss who apparently was pleased with my work as documents officer, so I was technically documents officer out at San Francisco.

POWELL: You're listed in the directory as one of his assistants.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: What were your duties there?

GREEN: Well, just again making sure that all the delegations got their papers on time, which was much more complicated than Dumbarton Oaks, of course.

POWELL: Yes, because you had a documents officer.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: I believe Bill Bruce was the documents officer. No, he was the distribution officer. Waldo Chamberlain was the documents officer. A lot of people I knew from those days.

GREEN: I probably did a lot of the work.

POWELL: Now one thing that's always intrigued me, how long in advance did the State Department start planning for San Francisco? Obviously you couldn't mount a major conference in the few weeks between the Yalta Meeting and April 25th.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: So you must have been planning. Whether you knew it was going to be in San Francisco or some other location, you must have been laying out the basic principles of the conference?

GREEN: Oh, I think so. Once Dumbarton Oaks was over the work began on a much more elaborate fashion.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: Plans for the San Francisco Conference. One of the many interesting features of San Francisco was that the minute it was announced that the conference would be held there, the State Department simply inundated by telephone calls, telegrams, letters, whatnot, every private organization, what we now call NGO, wanted to be represented at San Francisco

And I was put in charge of keeping the file and acknowledging the letters and so forth. I sorted them out. Labor, veterans, women, whatnot, and it got up to three or four hundred. Somebody above me telephoned San Francisco and they said there simply won't be room in the hotels and the assembly halls. You have to give priority to the delegations.

We can take forty, forty organizations. So eventually it ended up to be 42. We were made consultants

to the United States Delegation. The word NGO came in later, but there was 42 consultants and, again --

POWELL: Who had the job of picking the 42?

GREEN: Well, Alger Hiss and the White House got involved in this, picking out the key ones. My low point was going down the street one morning to tell the president of the Daughters of the American Revolution that they were not invited.

But it worked very well. The forty was stretched to 42 and you had a very representative group of all different fields of American life out there. It was they who pushed human rights into the Charter. Neither of the major powers was at all interested in human rights. Neither the U.S. nor the Soviets.

But the NGOs lobbied and lobbied and they got Romulo of the Philippines, Dr. Evatt of Australia, and Mr. Fraser of New Zealand on their side and those three pushed human rights into the charter.

POWELL: And of course they were also lobbying for consultative status in the economic council.

GREEN: Yes. That's right.

POWELL: Now another key person, I believe he was working very closely with Alger Hiss, is Easton Rothwell.

GREEN: Oh yes.

POWELL: He's designated as Executive Secretary. Now how did his responsibility jibe with those of Alger Hiss? I guess there was plenty for everybody to do?

GREEN: Oh, yes. Yes. He, I think, just took orders from Hiss. Easton was a very able and active person.

POWELL: At the San Francisco Conference, did Hiss concentrate on the administrative side of the conference or was he involved in the political side? Now he wasn't on the delegation.

GREEN: No. No. He was the Secretariat.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: So to speak. He was theoretically an international secretariat. I think there was one Canadian and one British involved.

POWELL: I was going to say it was 99 percent American.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: It had to be.

GREEN: Yes. But technically it was an international secretariat.

POWELL: Now, did your duties in San Francisco permit you to follow in detail the work of any particular commission or committee? I'm thinking in particular of the committee for of the commission to, which was responsible for drafting the provisions in the Charter for an international trusteeship system.

GREEN: No, I was purely on the mechanical side.

POWELL: I see. Because I find it recorded that in May, just over a month before the conference concluded, the Big Five plus Australia put in a working paper on the subject of the trusteeship system, to the committee, and its often intrigued me why the Big Five plus Australia? And, of course, Australia was going to be one of the trusteeship powers.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: I don't know how Evatt got in on that one.

GREEN: I don't know. He was a very dynamic person.

POWELL: Yes he was.

GREEN: He pushed his way in, probably.

POWELL: Yes. We were mentioning earlier that at Dumbarton Oaks you saw Gromyko for the first time.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now at San Francisco were you able to watch, say, a man like Molotov at all?

GREEN: No. I'd just see him at a distance.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: I'd never met him.

POWELL: How about our own delegation? Now we had Harold Stassen, Dean Virginia Gildersleeve, people of that caliber.

GREEN: It was a very strong delegation.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: Of the American contingent when the Charter was signed only Stassen and I survive.

POWELL: Is that so?

GREEN: I went out for the fortieth anniversary at the end of June, just a sentimental journey.

POWELL: Very good!

GREEN: And Stassen and I congratulated ourselves on our longevity.

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: Because there are only two of the American ceremony.

POWELL: Is that so? That's fascinating, yes.

GREEN: In his early days he was slender and balding. Today he is plump with a reddish brown hairpiece.

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: I wouldn't have recognized him if I had met him on the street.

POWELL: Really? I think he lives in Philadelphia.

GREEN: I think so.

POWELL: Now the British, they had two future Prime Ministers on that team. There was Clement Attlee and Anthony Eden.

GREEN: Oh, yes.

POWELL: I mean that's in addition to that strong team that they had already brought to Dumbarton Oaks.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Did you see anything of Eden or Attlee?

GREEN: No. Just at a distance.

POWELL: And of course the French, they had Georges Bidault.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: I have not read an estimate of the influence of the French at San Francisco. I don't know,

beyond trying to get French to be a working language of the U.N. (laughs) I know that.

GREEN: Yes. Well they won that point.

There's an amusing little point on that one. The British and the Americans insisted on the United Nations "is" and "does" you see. A plural subject with a singular verb. The French said, "no. No way."

And so it became (speaks French).

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: French grammar took priority.

POWELL: Yes. I had a friend, a Frenchman who had spent the war in New York. As he put it in the Park Avenue Underground, and when the French delegation came to New York they picked him up and they said, "Rene, you're coming to San Francisco with us, and you have one job, and that is to make sure that French becomes one of the working languages of the U.N." (laughs)

GREEN: Very good.

POWELL: We were also mentioning Romulo. He was another fascinating character. I believe that he was keenly interested in the role of dependent territories.

GREEN: Oh, I think so. Yes.

POWELL: Did you see much of him?

GREEN: Just at a distance, and at this fortieth anniversary, of the originals Stassen, Romulo and Dr. Malik of Lebanon.

POWELL: Oh, did Dr. Malick come there?

GREEN: Yes, he was there and I went up and introduced myself because I had known him in Committee Three in Mrs. Roosevelt's day. Romulo was in a wheelchair and of course died a few months later.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: But he was a very colorful, very able person, I'm sure.

POWELL: He was one of the first persons we interviewed in this Oral History Program. One of the last times he came to New York.

GREEN: Oh, for heaven's sake.

POWELL: Yes. Now since you were working in the Secretariat and at San Francisco, presumably you were not privy to a lot of the behind-the-scenes discussion?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: Among the delegations.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: At the same time Secretariat members, as I know from experience, have a pretty close knowledge of what's going on.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: From your viewpoint did you ever have a feeling that the conference might fail?

GREEN: I don't think so, but again my memory is very hazy on that.

POWELL: Yes. Alright. What was the relationship between the Secretariat and the various delegations in San Francisco? You lived and worked cheek-by-jowl, as it were, for about two months. Did the delegations cooperate and understand their problems?

GREEN: Oh, I think so.

POWELL: Were they suspicious of a Secretariat that of necessity was primarily American?

GREEN: Not that I remember, and they had such respect for Alger Hiss.

POWELL: They did.

GREEN: His intelligence and ability.

POWELL: But there was a good interaction?

GREEN: Yes. As far as I know. Yes.

POWELL: Good. Now, I believe that we're almost up to June 26th, and you had a special assignment on the day that the Charter was signed. Tell us about that.

GREEN: Well, I was asked to be State Department Usher for President Truman who had flown out to address the conference I think the night before, or the afternoon before, and then was to witness the signing by the United States Delegation.

Alger Hiss asked me to be his usher, and someone else was usher for the delegation proper, so I'm in all the photographs, as you saw this morning, standing behind President Truman.

It was a more poignant occasion than I had realized when I picked up the papers the next day because Secretary of State Stettinius was the first to sign, and his hands were shaking visibly. He said, "well can't I just fake this and do it later?"

Well, this was before the days of television so they called the newsreel cameramen down and he said, "no, Mr. Secretary. We have a telescopic lens on to pick up every signature, and we're going to send them off to Guatemala and Luxemborg as souvenirs."

"Alright. I'll sign." He had just been fired that morning.

POWELL: As Secretary of State?

GREEN: As Secretary of State by the little President standing behind him, and he was visibly

shaking. And the reason was obvious, in retrospect, after it occurred. In those days, under the Act of Congress, if the President died or was incapacitated without a Vice President, as was the case of Truman, the Secretary of State became President.

Everybody in the White House agreed that Ed Stettinius was not up to the top job and a rump session of the Cabinet was called by the Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, and Forrestal went to the President and said that we all agree that Ed Stettinius should not continue as Secretary of State and we would urge you to find someone with a broad political base.

Truman couldn't wait for the conference to end. The last day, the morning of the last day when the Charter was signed he fired Stettinius and announced the next day that James F. Burns, Senator Burns, would become the Secretary of State.

The law has now been changed that in case the President dies without a Vice President the Speaker of the House inherits, which is much more sensible.

POWELL: But Stettinius, of course, did stay on for some time as the first permanent representative to the U.N.

GREEN: I believe so, yes.

POWELL: Because he was in London. I saw him there.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: How did they do the actual signing? Did they do it in alphabetical order? Or how did they take the signing of the Charter? Was that quite a sound one? It must have been one of the things to work out.

GREEN: It was a very complicated ceremony and I was one of the head ushers. I got it organized. It was supposed to be completely alphabetical, but they broke the order in the afternoon so that President Truman was in town and could be there.

So the United States came somewhere in the middle of the ceremony, just to accomodate the President. Argentina and Guatemala, who were supposed to come first and sixth, asked that they come at the end after the United Kingdom signed because they were fearful that the United Kingdom, in the case of Argentina, might take an exception to the Malvinas Islands.

It was the first time I'd ever heard of the Malvinas Islands. Not the last time.

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: Guatemala was afraid that the British might take an exception to Belize, which was a disputed territory, so they came last. And the British, of course, put in no reservations at all. So they signed last, out of order. So there's two very special political reasons. But it was a very complicated business, alphabetically.

POWELL: How did you feel when the signing was over that day, Mr. Green? Did you think that the government had done a credible job? Had they put together a workable and effective instrument?

GREEN: Oh, I think so, yes. Granted all the difficulties it's a pretty good document and it's held up very well.

POWELL: That's my next question. I was going to say looking back over forty years, and in that interval we have had the arrival of the nuclear age.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: The completion, almost, of the decolonization process, and the emergence of scores of new nations.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Is the Charter of 1945 adequate for the world today? Or does it need drastic revision?

GREEN: No, I think it's adequate, and speaking of these new nations, at this fortieth anniversary ceremony there was a very impressive opening.

Mayor Diane Fienstein, with a white dress and a white hat, greeted the audience. Then there was a brief black and white newsreel in which I'm standing behind President Truman as the Charter is signed by the United States.

Then on the stage where the Charter had been signed were the original fifty flags, just as they had been before with a big round table in front of them. Then down the two aisles came Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts carrying a hundred and nine flags of the new members. It was very touching, and all 109 flags behind the original fifty. It was a very impressive ceremony.

And now up to 159 members. But the Charter, I think, works, on balance, very well.

POWELL: Before exploring the next phases of your association with the United Nations it might be appropriate to ask you your impression of the attitudes of the major colonial powers toward the provisions relating to trust and non-self-governing territories in the Charter, as the system developed in the U.N.

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I'm thinking in particular of Britain, France, Belgium and Portugal. Did they consider that the United States was pushing them too fast and too hard?

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: I'm thinking of Churchill's remark that he did not become the king's first minister to preside over the liquidation of the Empire.

GREEN: Yes. They were very unhappy with our anti-colonial stand and we pushed it pretty hard because we were a colonial power ourselves on a modest scale, compared to them.

They were very unhappy with the way we were opposed to all this. You're coming, a little later I presume, to the London Preparatory Commission meeting.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: There the United States pushed through, Benjamin Gerig and Ralph Bunche, and I on the sidelines, pushed through a resolution requesting the states administering dependent territories to submit their first annual reports in time for the meeting of the General Assembly in September.

This would be January, and that was not very popular with the other colonial powers, but we wanted to focus attention on that issue. One of my jobs was to

collect the papers for the United States. We were the first ones to get them in, get our annual reports in.

That was one of my major gaffes in my State Department career. Under Alger Hiss's direction I was told to get the latest Governor Report for Puerto Rico, Hawaii, the Virgin Islands and whatnot, and I also collected one from the War Department on the Panama Canal.

I drafted a press release which made the front page of the Times. The United States, the first administering power to submit its reports to the General Assembly, and the roof fell in on me because the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs said that the Panama Canal is not a dependent territory. It's just a canal. You must withdraw that report immediately.

Well, Secretary Acheson had a major confrontation between Alger Hiss, on my side, and the Assistant Secretary, whose name escapes me at the moment. Sperl Braiden? Does that sound right?

POWELL: Yes, Sperl Braiden.

GREEN: On the Latin American side, and Acheson reached one of those marvelous Solomon-type decisions that if Panama objected, we would withdraw the report. Braiden insisted that we withdraw the Panama reference. Only if Panama objected would we withdraw the

report, but under no circumstances would we ever submit another one.

Well fortunately Panama did not object, so the report stayed.

POWELL: They didn't object? That's what they did?

GREEN: I don't think so. As far as I can remember. But it was a very embarrassing moment for me. I just goofed. I didn't consult enough people, especially Mr. Braiden.

POWELL: Yes, and those inter-bureaucratic -- I know what you mean.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now, after San Francisco I hope you had a well deserved vacation before you took off for London?

GREEN: I think so.

POWELL: At that time you were Acting Associate Chief of the Division of Dependent Area Affairs.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: What precisely were your duties in London and during the Preparatory Commission? Were you assigned to Committee Four which dealt with the trusteeship matters?

GREEN: Yes. As I remember Gerig, Bunche and I were all in that field and lobbying to get this resolution through calling on the colonial powers to submit their reports in time for the regular session of the General Assembly, and we did a great deal of lobbying in this field.

One of my favorite Bunche stories is that just a day or two before the Preparatory Commission broke up we decided that we would give a cocktail party for all the people who had helped us, the Western Europeans and a few of the Latin Americans, and especially the Scandinavians.

The Danish delegate had been most active and most helpful. Benjamin Gerig was to invite five and Bunche was to invite five and I was to invite five, or something like that, the delegates. Bunche's list included the Scandinavians, the Danish delegate.

Well, the party started off and there was no Danish delegate. The Swedish delegate was there. So after the party was over Gerig and I corralled Bunche and said, "for heaven's sakes, where was the Danish delegate? Why the Swede?"

"Oh," said Ralph Bunche, "you know to us black folks all the Scandinavians look alike."

POWELL: (laughs) Oh that sounds like Ralph Bunche. We've been talking a lot, Mr. Green, about Ben Gerig.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: I remember meeting him on a number of occasions both in London and later on. What was he like? What was his background? He was a specialist in dependent areas?

GREEN: Yes. I cannot remember his background, I'm sorry to say, and he was a very difficult person to work with.

POWELL: He was?

GREEN: In fact I changed jobs. Finally I just couldn't take it any longer. He was very self-centered, very independent, wanted to take all the credit for himself and I just couldn't take it any longer.

That's when I shifted jobs over to Walter Kotschnig in Economic and Social Affairs.

POWELL: He stayed on in the State Department?

GREEN: Oh, I think so. Yes.

POWELL: I think so. I recall he was there for a long, long time.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now I recall that this Committee Four of the Preparatory Commission drew up the provisional rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, but it couldn't do much more because no trusteeship agreements had yet been drawn up.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now there was a proposal, I believe, before the committee that a temporary trusteeship committee should be set up to carry out certain of the functions assigned by the Charter to the Trusteeship Council, before the council could be established.

GREEN: You've really done your homework.

POWELL: But the Russians and the Yugoslavs, among others, said this is contrary to the Charter and it was never done. Do you recall anything like that?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: Now did you remain in London after the Preparatory Commission for the first session of the General Assembly or did you go back to Washington for a time? There wasn't a great deal -- I think there was only about six weeks in there.

GREEN: I think so. I think I went back to Washington.

POWELL: You did? Now you're listed in the delegation to the Assembly as an adviser. That was particularly in trusteeship dependent areas.

GREEN: I think so. Yes.

POWELL: Next to the British, where after all we're in their home town, the Americans had the largest delegation of all.

GREEN: Yes. As usual.

POWELL: And there were as many categories, I guess, as there are prelates in the Vatican. I have seen delegates of alternate special advisers, senior advisers, and just advisers.

I see Alger Hiss was listed as a special adviser. What, for example, did he do then?

GREEN: I really don't know. That's strange.

POWELL: I don't remember him particularly in London.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: But he was there alright.

GREEN: I just don't remember. I'm sorry.

POWELL: And I remember, of course, seeing Leo Pasvolsky there.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: What was he doing? Seeing whether his Charter was working?

GREEN: He was probably running the show.

POWELL: (laughs) There were a couple of new names that appeared on the delegation list for the first time. I'm thinking of Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson.

Did you see either of them in action?

GREEN: Not much. I'd forgotten that they were there. This is the Preparatory Commission?

POWELL: No, this is the first session.

GREEN: Oh, the first session.

POWELL: In January.

GREEN: Oh yes, the January session. I'm sorry.

POWELL: Adlai Stevenson was actually at the Preparatory Commission.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Mrs. Roosevelt didn't come over until the January.

GREEN: Yes. That's right. And in those days you travelled by ship. We all came back, I think, on the same ship.

POWELL: Yes, they used to say that the end of the General Assembly depended on the final sailing of the Queen Mary.

GREEN: Yes. Before Christmas.

POWELL: Before Christmas.

GREEN: Absolutely.

POWELL: Now Bunche did not join the Secretariat until after London. I don't know when it was. Did you work closely with him in London at that time?

GREEN: I really don't recall. I'm sorry. This is the London Assembly?

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: Well probably.

POWELL: I remember seeing him in London.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And I believe he was working on trusteeship matters at the time.

GREEN: I think so.

POWELL: Because that's what he came to in the Secretariat.

GREEN: It was always Gerig, Bunche and Green, in that order.

POWELL: (laughs) Yes. If you had to describe Bunche now for future generations, and I'm

thinking that this is going to be used in the next 25 or 50 years, how would you describe the man?

GREEN: Oh, an extraordinary combination of intelligence and warmth and humor. He had a great sense of humor. The only time -- these were the days of semi-segregation in Washington and blacks were not admitted to commercial restaurants.

So when some of us white folks would be going out for lunch with Ralph Bunche he would speak French and we were going to introduce him as the Ambassador of Haiti.

POWELL: (laughs) Really?

GREEN: And we got him in. And even in the government cafeterias the whites were always out in the center part and the blacks were around the corner, out of sight, and we always plunked Ralph right down in the middle of the central part of the cafeteria, especially over at the Pentagon. The colonels were not amused.

POWELL: (laughs) You can't believe it.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: That's was only 40 years or so ago.

GREEN: That's right. And the only time Ralph ever lost his temper on the segregation issue was when the family dog died and the Bunche children wanted a

proper burial out in the national pet cemetery or whatever it's called, in Washington.

So Ralph went out to make the arrangements and he found, to his dismay, there's one section for the pets of white folks and another section for the pets of black folks. He said, "that's too much." That's the only time he ever lost his temper. It's certainly an occasion. It's unbelievable.

POWELL: Yes. And he never lost that fighting spirit right up to the end.

GREEN: Oh no. I still remember the conversation, we were having lunch with him and it had just been announced that Paul Robeson was going off to Moscow and Peking, and Ralph said something I have never forgotten.

"You white folks" -- he always said "you white folks" -- "must understand that a black man that has a sense of humor like me" -- Ralph -- "can survive anything. But a black man who does not have a sense of humor, like Paul Robeson, turns to wine, women, song or communism."

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: I've never forgotten that. (laughs)

POWELL: Well I remember, it was in the sixties, probably about '68. It was during the Vietnam War. We had one of the biggest demonstrations on a Saturday in April than I've ever seen in New York, and it was led by Martin Luther King.

GREEN: Oh.

POWELL: And it was announced that King was going to come to present a petition to the U.N.

GREEN: Hmm.

POWELL: And there were literally hundreds of thousands of people out there in the streets, and the question was who was going to accept the petition? Was it going to be U Thant? And everybody advised U Thant to stay home that day.

So it came down to Ralph Bunche. He was black, he was an American, and he was a Nobel Peace Prize winner. You couldn't touch him.

GREEN: (laughs)

POWELL: Well I, for some reason or other, was elected to go down to the gate to collect King, and when you collected King you collected Benjamin Spock and -- I don't know -- about a half a dozen others, and take them up to the 30th floor.

King was very nervous, and I think Ralph Bunche was very nervous.

GREEN: I would think so.

POWELL: Suddenly they shook hands and Ralph Bunche had a marvelous sense of timing, because he leaned over and he said, "Martin, I haven't seen you since we were on that Freedom March together in Selma." And it broke the tension completely.

And here were the one Nobel Peace Prize winner and a future one sitting there talking about the Civil Rights Movement in America. And Ralph accepted the petition. It went off beautifully, smoothly, but that's one of my favorite memories of Ralph Bunche.

GREEN: Oh, yes. Impressive.

POWELL: Because he felt very, very strongly about the Vietnam War, as you know.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Despite his feelings Ralph Jr. volunteered to go to Vietnam.

GREEN: Oh really?

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: I didn't know that.

POWELL: Now, let's come back to the London session of the General Assembly, that first session

there. Again, the trusteeship agreements hadn't yet been negotiated.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: As I recall reading, certain of the countries that had League of Nations mandates -- I'm thinking now of the U.K. and Belgium, for example.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Indicated that their governments were preparing draft trusteeship agreements and that Australia and New Zealand said they were prepared to place their mandated territories under trusteeship.

The two countries that, from my reading, appeared to have been in the dock a bit during that session of the Assembly were France, which announced that it would continue to administer the mandated territories of Togoland and the Cameroons, in the spirit of the mandate, and South Africa which didn't make any offer at all about Southwest Africa and Namibia.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: Do you recall those circumstances?

GREEN: No, but that sounds correct.

POWELL: Yes. Was there much tension during that session of the General Assembly?

GREEN: I don't think so. Of course the South Africans have always been absolutely adamant.

POWELL: Yes. They never have moved an inch on that. In that first London session, did the committee concentrate, Committee Four that is, entirely on trusteeship matters? Or did it devote at least a part of its time on the declaration on non-self-governing territories? And that Article 73 information?

GREEN: I think the latter. I think we went beyond trusteeship into the general colonial area.

POWELL: They did?

GREEN: But it's very shaky now. I'm very shaky.

POWELL: And during that session of the General Assembly did you get to know or see in action the first Secretary General Trygve Lie? Because he came in around the first of February.

GREEN: I think so. No. I have no memory of that.

POWELL: You have no memory of that?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: When we come up to the second part of the first session of the General Assembly, which was held at Lake Success beginning in October of '46, did you

come up to New York for all or part of that session? Or where you working from Washington?

I say that because there are telephone records showing that you were consulted in Washington.

GREEN: Um-hmm. Well I certainly was at Lake Success part of the time. It could have been the following year, because I well remember the one advantage of being at Lake Success was you had a captive delegate for forty-five minutes and brief on the way out.

POWELL: Oh, I see.

GREEN: Going.

POWELL: In the car?

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And the hotel.

GREEN: It was very dull coming back, because the meeting was over and everybody was hungry and wanted to get home. But going out it was a great advantage because you have a captive delegate and he had to listen.

POWELL: (laughs) Well, why I say this -- did the State Department prepare a lot of briefs in your division for, say, the London meeting?

GREEN: I don't remember. Probably.

POWELL: I didn't know how this was done. Obviously a lot of work had to be done for the committee delegates.

GREEN: Yes. I would think so. I just don't remember doing it.

POWELL: There was one thing that was provided for in the Charter, which was sort of a time bomb I believe, and that was in this Article 79 of the Charter which says that the terms of trusteeship for each territory are to be placed under the trusteeship system, including any alteration or amendment shall be agreed upon by the states directly concerned.

Now that phrase was never interpreted at that time, and it was during that London session of the General Assembly that the United States finally came down and said that it should be interpreted to mean only the state administering the trust territory, whereas the Soviet Union took a diametrically opposite view.

Were you involved in all that?

GREEN: No. It sounds correct.

POWELL: Yes. In fact, after the trusteeship agreements were approved at the second part of the first session, the Russians tried to get them thrown

out and didn't come to the first session of the trusteeship council.

GREEN: Yes. That's right.

POWELL: I don't know -- do you recall -- this is a question which has intrigued me and I haven't checked the record -- of course eventually they came back.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Do you recall the circumstances under which they did that?

GREEN: No, but I remember people speculating that the Soviets realized they'd made a mistake absenting themselves from the decision.

POWELL: The Soviet boycotts just never work.

GREEN: No. And they decided they made a mistake and swallowed their pride and came back.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: That was the speculation at the time. It didn't work.

POWELL: Now did you come to the first session of the trusteeship council? I know Saire was the

--

GREEN: Francis Saire.

POWELL: He was the U.S. delegate.

GREEN: Yes. A very able man, too.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: I thought I was at the first four sessions, but I may be wrong.

POWELL: There was, about that time -- this would be '46 -- I see in one of the State Department records that notes a telephone conversation that you had with a Mr. Middleton, the First Secretary of the British Embassy.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And who wished to know the U.S. position on a British trusteeship agreement before communicating with London.

GREEN: Hmm.

POWELL: According to the record you replied that the U.S. did not oppose the provisions presented by the British but you sought omission of the clause which stated "subject to the approval of the General Assembly or the Trusteeship Council."

Who was this all about? Do you recall?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: Heavens.

POWELL: It's on the records, Mr. Green.

GREEN: It's rather frightening, isn't it?

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: They actually record all those telephone calls?

POWELL: This is all printed.

GREEN: Hmm.

POWELL: State Department records.

GREEN: Goodness. Awful.

POWELL: (laughs) And then late in November of 1946, there is a record of a meeting with you and Joe Johnson, among others, attended in Hershel Johnson's office, and this dealt with the question of a proposed trusteeship agreement for the Japanese mandated islands.

GREEN: Hmm.

POWELL: And according to the record there were three questions on the agenda. Under what authority is the United States proposing this trusteeship agreement? Is it possible to contend that the U.S. is the only state directly concerned? And, what would be the position if Russia, for example, insists that it is a state directly concerned?

Do you have any memory of the background of this discussion? Obviously you must have been involved with those Japanese mandated territories for a long time.

GREEN: Yes. And there was a major row in Washington about the future status of the Japanese mandated islands. State and Interior wanted to place them under ordinary trusteeship. The War and Navy Departments as they then were wanted outright annexation.

And there was a terrible row. Finally it went to President Roosevelt just a few days before his death, and according to the reports at the time one of the last decision he took at Warm Springs was let's try a strategic trusteeship agreement as a compromise, and of course that's what we did.

It was a very imaginative compromise.

POWELL: Yes, indeed.

GREEN: Yes. But it was a terrible row. I was just on the sidelines.

POWELL: But tell me this, it was reported in the press at one point that the U.S. was considering turning over the Japanese mandate to the United Nations as the administering authority. Is there any truth in this? Did Washington ever seriously consider such a proposal?

GREEN: I don't think so.

POWELL: It may be just one of those press rumors.

GREEN: I don't believe so.

POWELL: It disappeared. Well, immediately after the adoption of the trusteeship agreements, the Assembly in New York, in Flushing Meadow, proceeded to the Constitution of the Trusteeship Council. In addition to the eight members who were going to sit there either as permanent members of the Security Council or administering members, there were two to be elected.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And initially we favored Iraq and Brazil. According to the record Ben Gerig who was with the delegation in New York called you to report that Mexico was actively campaigning for a seat and becoming an important candidate, more important than Brazil.

He claimed to have the backing of 16 Latin American and 6 Arab states. However, Senator Austin felt committed to Brazil. I believe you consulted with Mr. Dulles, among others, and reported back that there would be no objection to a switch in the U.S. support.

Among the reasons you gave was that the Mexicans had been very helpful on Committee Four, whereas the Brazilians had done practically nothing. Do you recall any of this?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: (laughs) I know it's a very interesting point.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: How we would switch, and of course Brazil got elected. I'm sorry. Mexico.

GREEN: Mexico. Yes.

POWELL: And I'm wondering, why I ask is how did this effect our relationship with Brazil if we suddenly switched? I guess I'd have to ask a Latin American expert in the State Department.

GREEN: That's fascinating.

POWELL: Well you said that you continued your work for some time with dependent territories.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And then you switched over to the economic and social side.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And that would be in Committee Three, is that correct?

GREEN: Yes. I had six years in Committee Three. Deputy to Walter Kotschnig in that department.

POWELL: Yes. Before we get on to that I want to ask you one or two questions about the perspective of forty years. Now, apart from the trust territory of

the Pacific islands, the trusteeship council had just about completed its agenda. What kind of a job has it done?

Let me be a little bit more precise. Was the trusteeship period long enough to prepare these countries for independence? I'm thinking of a country like Tanzania which seemingly has impossible economic and social problems.

Or was the surge to independence inevitable? Was it a development whose time had come in the 1950's and '60's? How do you feel?

GREEN: Oh, I think so. Yes. The joke at San Francisco was that the trusteeship council will be the first U.N. organ to work itself out of a job, and it's proved to be true. The only trust territory left is the U.S. islands.

POWELL: This leads me directly to my next question, Mr. Green. I was going to say did anybody, when the blueprints were drawn up at San Francisco, did anybody in the State Department or anywhere else ever pause to say, "how are we going to get rid of the machinery once we put it in place?"

GREEN: No. I don't think they thought that far ahead.

POWELL: No?

GREEN: I don't remember if this question ever came up.

POWELL: Do you have any ideas on that?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: But it's very interesting. There was originally what? Thirteen mandated territories. Palestine, of course, was a separate case. It became Israel. Southwest Africa is still a separate case, but the other 11 all graduated except the Japanese mandated islands. They've all gone in to independence.

POWELL: Yes. And one of these months, unless the Soviets veto it in the Security Council, it's going to become independent.

GREEN: Yes. That's right. So the council played its role. I went out to Anaheim, California for the International Studies Association annual conference and presented a paper on the trusteeship council then and now, and it was very interesting.

It took a lot of research work in the U.N. library. I'll send you a copy.

POWELL: I'd like to read it very, very much. Because this is a question. Once the custody of the Pacific islands is gone --

GREEN: The council's out of a job.

POWELL: Some people will argue, perhaps, that we have to keep it in existence in case somebody else wants to put a trust territory under the U.N. But I don't think that's going to happen.

If something comes up like -- oh, what did we have? We had a temporary executive authority out there, the transition of West Aryan from the Dutch to the Indonesian.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: But that was an ad hoc arrangement.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: That wasn't a trusteeship arrangement.

GREEN: That's right. In that beautiful conference room at the U.N. (laughs)

POWELL: (laughs) What should be the future for the trusteeship council? Got any ideas?

GREEN: No. I hadn't even thought about it.

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: I should think it would just -- I suppose it's in the Charter it has to be elected, and they don't have any work to do.

POWELL: I guess they'll have to keep it from being the way they do in the military staff committee.

GREEN: Yes. (laughs) That must be the easiest job in the world.

POWELL: Right. Now, I've noticed that in the 1950's presumably -- now tell me about the Third Committee. What were you actually doing there?

GREEN: Well, I was the kind of senior adviser, sitting right behind first Mrs. Roosevelt and then Mrs. Lord, and when special questions arose, like narcotics and so forth, the State Department would send up an expert.

But I was just the general adviser and had to see that the speeches were ready and the documents were in hand and so forth. And then I would draft remarks for the U.S. spokesman, or if Mrs. Roosevelt or Mrs. Lord were absent I'd actually sit in the chair occasionally, which was very pleasant.

It was just general advice and keeping the delegate on the track.

POWELL: Did you get involved much in the human rights discussions in the Third Committee?

GREEN: Oh yes. They were a very active part, as I remember. Of course Mrs. Roosevelt's prestige was such that as Chairman of the Human Rights Commission she could speak for herself on that level.

POWELL: Because I know that you did a book in 1956 on the United Nations and Human Rights. Is that correct?

GREEN: Oh yes. Part of a Brookings study.

POWELL: The Brookings Study, yes. And I was going to say did this grow out of your work with the Third Committee?

GREEN: Yes. I think so. I did not go with Mrs. Roosevelt to the Human Rights Commission. She had two other State Department advisers in whom she trusted and liked. But when Mrs. Lord took over she immediately took me on as adviser for that Commission.

POWELL: How would you say Mrs. Roosevelt was? Did she take advice easily, gracefully?

GREEN: Oh yes. A very thoughtful person. She was extremely intelligent. She wrote so much and talked so much that she made gaffes all the time, as anybody would, and therefore people laughed at her. But

she had a first-class mind behind all the rest of it. But she just did too much and she did make mistakes.

POWELL: And how about Mrs. Lord? Was she easy to work with?

GREEN: Oh yes. She had a very difficult position, succeeding the most famous lady in the world, and of course Mrs. Roosevelt's policy on human rights was reversed.

The first policy statement Secretary Dulles made was that we will not sign or ratify the Human Rights Covenants, which meant all Mrs. Roosevelt's work had gone down the drain. So poor Mary Lord not only had to replace the most famous lady in the world but she had to reverse her policies.

She came down to Washington at least once a week to figure out how to get out of this imbroglio, and we developed, but it was her idea really, to introduce an action program in the Human Rights Commission of rapartare on special individual rights, regional conferences and seminars, technical assistance to states that wanted it, all sorts of action in the field of human rights, and it actually saved the commission.

The commission was just bogged down polishing commas and semicolons, and now they had

something to do. It was too bad that the covenants got lost in the process. Mrs. Lord brought the commission to life. The action program went along very well indeed. I gave her full marks on imagination and energy pushing this along.

POWELL: In the past 40 years the U.N. and it's agencies have been busy about human rights in a variety of ways.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: We've mentioned the Declaration on Human Rights.

GREEN: Which was a masterpiece.

POWELL: There was the Convention on Genocide.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: There were the two conventions on Human Rights, Political, Civil, Economic and Social.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Then we've had the agencies been active. ILO has conventions on the rights of workers. UNICEF has the rights of the child. The convention on refugees, essentially the rights of refugees administered by the High Commission, and you can go on and on and on.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And then there's the perennial effort to get the creation of a High Commissioner for Human Rights.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: But with all this activity, how effective do you think the U.N. has been in this field?

GREEN: Well, that's a very good question. I've given a speech or two on it in the past. My theory has always been that the important thing in the field of human rights is publicity.

Constantly expose violations. Constantly criticize governments that violate the declaration or the covenants and so forth, because in my estimation no government likes to be exposed and criticized in public. The Soviets, I'm sure, don't enjoy it. And publicity is the chief weapon. In the press, in the NGO community. Everywhere. Just publishing and exposing the violations. I think that's the key to the human rights activities of the U.N.

POWELL: Now this leads me to another question in this field. The U.N. in dealing with human rights matters has been accused of being much more ready to discuss the abuse of human rights in certain countries than in others.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: It has been charged, for example, that the U.N. is prepared to discuss human rights or the lack of them in South Africa, or in Chile, or in the Israeli-occupied territories, but it is silent about the lack of freedoms, let us say, in China or the Soviet Union.

How far is that charge of a double standard justified?

GREEN: I think to a considerable extent, but things have improved, I believe, in the last year or two. There's been more discussion of other areas beside the favorite three or four or whatever it is.

I believe they're beginning to move out and broaden their activities. I certainly hope so. There's been much too narrow a focus, as you indicate.

POWELL: You have said that you think that the constant exposure of the violations in human rights is one of the most effective ways of keeping governments in line.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: What do you think about the argument that public finger-pointing has perhaps been counterproductive? That it would be best to use the good offices of the Secretary-General or the media effort,

quietly, of a High Commissioner of Human Rights? That's the alternative approach, isn't it?

GREEN: Yes. I don't see why you can't do both at the same time, but I feel strongly that publicity is a key function. I've always been disappointed we don't have a High Commissioner for Human Rights. I believe the Soviet opposition has killed that.

POWELL: The Soviet opposition, and also Ambassador Barudy. (laughs) Do you remember?

GREEN: Oh, forget him. I'm a little sorry that when the Universal Declaration was adopted at the Paris Assembly in 1948, that was one session I missed because my chief, Benjamin Gerig, wanted to go to Paris so I stayed home and tended the store.

But Mrs. Roosevelt used to tell the story, both publicly and privately, that the final vote on the Universal Declaration that was -- I forgot -- in 86, it was unanimous in U.N. parlance, but there were eight abstentions.

Six Soviet-bloc states, on the grounds that there were not enough economic and social rights. Saudi Arabia, because Article something or other, everyone has the right to change his religion, and we as defenders of the faith cannot accept that concept.

Now the other Moslem states went along with it, but not Saudi Arabia. They could not vote for that. And finally it was South Africa. They could not accept the opening clause that all human beings are equal in dignity and human rights. Said the South African delegate -- this is Mrs. Roosevelt's story -- "they never have been equal, they're not equal today, and they never will be equal."

And Mrs. Roosevelt said you could feel the chill in the air in the Palace de Chaix. If he'd just stopped with the past and the present it would be alright, but to say that they never will be equal was too much.

POWELL: (laughs) I don't know whether Prime Minister Botha would say that today.

GREEN: I don't think so.

POWELL: Now. I'm going to ask you a question about -- this is because of your long association with the decolonization effort. We see the results in the U.N. after forty years. There were 50 governments represented at San Francisco. Today 159 flags fly outside of the U.N. and this increase has been largely due to the decolonization process.

TAPE CHANGES SPEED

POWELL: How has this effected the world organization?

GREEN: Well, it's obviously become much more cumbersome to operate. It's diminished the influence of the United States. In the good old days the United States acted as party whip, consulting all the time behind the scenes pushing draft resolutions around and for ten years it worked very well.

We were the party whip, but now of course we're in a very small minority and can no longer exercise that function, and for that reason the U.N. doesn't -- in the good old days when the U.S. was the party whip the U.N. functioned very efficiently in terms of structure and adopting resolutions and things.

Today there's no one playing that role and it takes much longer to get things done and you get ten resolutions all saying the same thing adopted which would not have happened in the good old days. But that's just a change which is inevitable.

POWELL: Has the U.N. worked out the way you, Pasvolsky and the others in the State Department were envisioning it in 1944 or 45?

GREEN: Well, it's kind of a yes and no answer. Certainly the Security Council has done some good

work but it hasn't done the kind of peacekeeping work they had hoped for in the early days.

The General Assembly has, I think, performed very well as a debate forum for getting ideas out, and the first few weeks of the General Assembly are very useful for the bilateral talks. That's where the foreign ministers get together and deal bilaterally with problems, so it's been useful from that idea, that function.

And the Economic Social Council I think has done basically a pretty good job. It doesn't get much publicity for it. But on the whole I think the U.N. has succeeded.

POWELL: What about the Secretariat? Over the years you've watched, for forty years now, the growth of the Secretariat. Has the quality of the Secretariat changed? How do people shape up in 1986 compared with what they were in 1946, 47?

GREEN: I don't see enough of them personally to be able to give you a judgment on that. There's a general complaint that it's much too big. That's quite possible. Bureaucracies tend to grow larger than necessary. But as far as I know it's just too big, but usually efficient.

POWELL: What would you consider the greatest strengths of the U.N. today?

GREEN: I think probably the General Assembly has a meeting place for heads of state, foreign ministers at the beginning, and then a forum for the discussion of issues. I think that's their chief contribution, the exchange of ideas and occasionally agreement. I would think that's the most useful function.

POWELL: Well what is it's greatest weakness?

GREEN: Well probably the size, on the reverse side it's just much harder to get things done, much harder to get an agreement in the General Assembly, but it's inevitable when you have 159 states which we have welcomed.

POWELL: Would you have done anything differently in your planning in the State Department if you could have looked ahead and seen the U.N. in 1986?

GREEN: I don't think so. To me it's functioned basically very well, serving the purpose for which it was designed. There are constant proposals, of course, to change the voting procedure. One state, one vote. Base it on population or national income or whatnot, but I think that's a non-starter. The

mini-states are not going to give up their one state, one vote, their prerogatives.

POWELL: You think once it's been established it's there?

GREEN: It's there.

POWELL: Yes. Now here we are 41 years after San Francisco. Does the U.N. have a future?

GREEN: Oh, absolutely. That old cliché if it didn't exist it would have to be invented I think is perfectly true.

POWELL: That's a good question that I've just been handed here and I think that's a very good one about the U.S. withdrawal, in effect, of support for the U.N. I mean we've seen it in several different ways, and particularly in financial support. The U.N. is going to have a terrific crunch in the year to come if this financial support withers as much as it's expected.

GREEN: Well I don't want to take a partisan position but part of the trouble is at the White House. The Reagan administration is just not interested in the U.N. and Ambassador Kirkpatrick I think was a disaster for four years. So confrontational. None of the old-fashioned leadership behind the scenes. She was always just fighting with everybody.

Vernon Walters I don't know personally at all but I've heard him speak twice now on different occasions and he's a much more useful ambassador. Warm, friendly, cooperative, and I think things will change. I think we'll get more of our leadership back after the four years of disaster under Mrs. Kirkpatrick.

POWELL: You think these things may be cyclical then?

GREEN: Oh yes.

POWELL: Other than sort of a long term thing?

GREEN: No, no. Cyclical. So much depends on the personality of the U.S. representatives. We've had great ones and we've had weak ones. Kirkpatrick was the low point.

POWELL: But how about the various secretaries of state with whom you've worked? How did they feel about the U.N.? I'm thinking now, you began with Stettinius and then there was Jimmy Burns and there was Cordell Hull, of course.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: And right down through the years have they been fairly warm supporters of the U.N.?

GREEN: As far as I know, yes. I haven't been personally involved anymore.

POWELL: Yes.

GREEN: But the first team I worked under, Roosevelt, Hull and Sumner Wells was I think in some ways the best. Roosevelt had the great national leadership. Hull had the contacts with Congress, and Sumner Wells was the technician that made things work.

POWELL: What was Wells' actual role in the State Department?

GREEN: He was Undersecretary, I believe.

POWELL: Hmm.

GREEN: Undersecretary of State, and a very able man, and that was, as I say, the best trio I worked under. I don't think Eisenhower was particularly interested in the U.N. He wasn't opposed to it. It just wasn't in his field of interests. The others have been largely supportive.

POWELL: I think you've known quite a change with Kennedy, for example?

GREEN: Yes. And Lyndon Johnson was very useful, I think, in pushing U.N. activities.

POWELL: And even I guess Dr. Kissinger eventually discovered that the U.N. had some utility, particularly at the time of the 1974 Yom Kippur War.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Well, I think -- have you got --

GREEN: Oh dear. All the hard questions come from other there.

POWELL: (laughs) Is there anything else you would like to add to the record regarding any of the events that you participated in?

GREEN: I don't think so. I think you've covered the waterfront.

POWELL: Because you were really in this from 44 right onward.

GREEN: Oh yes.

POWELL: And when did you finally leave the State Department? Yes, you told me before we began recording that you went over to the Foreign Service.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: When did you go over there?

GREEN: Let's see, '56 I believe it was.

POWELL: Then you were in Africa during that important decolonization process?

GREEN: Yes. Belgian Congo, Ghana and Morocco. The best party I ever gave anywhere was in Casablanca. I showed the film of "Casablanca" in my own front yard. The mayor of the city council, everybody who was anybody in town. It was the best party I ever gave.

POWELL: Were you actually in the Belgian Congo at the time of independence?

GREEN: No. I was the penultimate consul general, '56, '58, and Thomlinson followed me. He was the last one before that independence in 1960.

POWELL: Because you know Bunche was there?

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Hammarskjold had sent him on to represent him there.

GREEN: That's right.

POWELL: That celebration.

GREEN: The Belgians goofed very badly on that one. They didn't have the worldwide experience that the British had. The British would have called a roundtable conference and stalled for ten years and got some educated civil servants and all, but the Belgians just panicked and dashed home.

It was a great tragedy because I think there were 17 university graduates in the whole country. There

was just nobody to take over the civil service. Whereas the British, when the British changed the Gold Coast into Ghana they took Kwame Nkrumah out of jail and made him prime minister.

POWELL: (laughs)

GREEN: That's the way a real imperial power does things.

POWELL: That's really fascinating. Well we discussed a lot of personalities. Was there any particular person besides Bunche that you worked with closely in the Secretariat?

GREEN: I don't think so. He was my opposite number most of the time. I don't believe there was anybody comparable to him.

POWELL: Now, let's see. Who else would there be? You talked about Ben Gerig.

GREEN: There was another in the Africa session, **Heinz Wieschoff** who died with Hammarskjold, I think.

POWELL: That's right.

GREEN: Yes. He was a very able man.

POWELL: And an expert on the Congo, I believe.

GREEN: Yes. I think so. I know that was a great tragedy.

POWELL: Now was Gerig -- you described Pasvolsky as the chess player.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: At the very beginning of our conversation. Did Gerig do a lot of drafting himself? What was his role?

GREEN: Well, he was the boss. He did some drafting himself but usually left it to Bunche and me and Bill Carter who was on the staff at that time. But Gerig always took the credit for the documents that went upstairs. He didn't do much of the drafting as I remember himself.

POWELL: I'm supposed to ask you now how you three divided up your responsibilities.

GREEN: Well, that was always up to Gerig, who said you do this and you do that. There was no fair line...

POWELL: No...

GREEN: No, just whatever had to be done.

POWELL: Yes, yes. Gerig, of course, was at San Francisco as well as at London and all these other ones.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: I've heard it said, somebody told me, I forget, in one of these interviews, that one of the reasons that Alger Hiss went to Yalta was that Pasvolsky refused to go. He hated to fly. Is that true?

GREEN: I never heard that.

POWELL: Never heard that?

GREEN: No.

POWELL: That when they had the inter-American conference, at the end of February, I think it was, in Mexico City, when the U.S. went down there. In fact, Satinia flew directly from Yalta to Mexico, the only way Pasvolsky would go to Mexico City was by train.

GREEN: Train. Sounds like him.

POWELL: And somebody who went with him said it was a miserable trip but that's the only way he would go.

GREEN: Sounds just like him.

POWELL: Yes. You said that you had written a -- well, you did, you wrote in that Brookings Institute, a series. You wrote a book on human rights.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now, Ruth Russell has done that sort of definitive book on the charter.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Now, she was in the State Department. But she was more on the economic side wasn't she? Working on I think Breton Woods and the international financial institutions. I can't find a record that she was -- she didn't go to San Francisco I don't believe did she?

GREEN: I don't think so but I...

POWELL: Did you know her?

GREEN: Yes, yes, in fact I saw her out at this Anaheim conference. We were on a panel together and she says she's keeping busy and doing some writing. I haven't seen any papers by her but I'm not up to date on this. She was a very active person in those days. Very able.

POWELL: In fact, I believe that the book was really -- the idea by Pasvolsky and then when he died she picked it up and completed it.

GREEN: I think so. Yes.

POWELL: Did Paslovsky then -- when he left the State Department did he go over to Brookings do you know? Was that the idea?

GREEN: I don't remember. Sorry. I'm three months older than President Reagan so...he forgets things.

POWELL: Yep.

GREEN: And why he had to have an afternoon map.

POWELL: Why did -- how did Pasvolks get involved in this. He wasn't clearly a State Department man, was he?

GREEN: No, I think not. He was Cordell Hull's right hand man and he was just kind of a single brain trust for Hull. And Hall trusted him and gave him assignments and he was the think tank for Cordell Hull and a very useful citizen but I don't remember where he came from or where he went.

POWELL: Now Hall is listed on the delegation at San Francisco but I understand he wasn't very well. I don't think he spent very much time out there. Do you know?

GREEN: That's my recollection. He was there just for the opening and then went back. I've forgotttn what the illness was but he was weak from something. I once knew a speech writer for Secretary Stettinius who said the trouble with the Secretary is he always got the emPHAsis on the wrong syLABBLE.

POWELL: Yes, well, now, I wonder how it was with Satinias. After all, you said he was fired that morning of the 26th of June.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: Did you notice when you saw him afterwards in London, say he went to the preparatory commission and then he went to the first session of the General Assembly and so on, was he a changed man as a result of that or did he just carry on?

GREEN: I think he just carried on.

POWELL: Because Burns went to London.

GREEN: Yes.

POWELL: I think he technically headed the delegation.

GREEN: I think so.

POWELL: But Stettinius ...I mean he was...

GREEN: I think so but my memory is very hazy. He was a very likable person and, as I say, a marvelous manager. He is a perfect Undersecretary of State. Period.

POWELL: But he didn't have the intellectual conceptual qualities.

GREEN: No.

POWELL: To be Secretary.

GREEN: It was too bad.

POWELL: We covered that.

GREEN: Good.

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POWELL: Well, I think that we've covered a great deal of material, Mr. Green, and I appreciate your giving your time.

GREEN: Thank you. I'm afraid I haven't done as well as I should.

POWELL: No, I think some of these things we've got on record this morning are good. I think it's excellent.

GREEN: Good.

POWELL: So, I hope that you'll have time to join us for lunch.

GREEN: Yes, indeed. Let's have a drink right now.

POWELL: I've got a couple of telephone calls I've got to make before that but we'll be reopening the dining room today as you may know.

GREEN: Good.

POWELL: I hope it measures up.