

INTERVIEW WITH
Albert P. Toner

by

Dr. Burg

November 19, 1974

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of ALBERT P. TONER.

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, ALBERT P. TONER, of Arlington, Virginia, hereinafter referred to as the donor, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of personal interviews conducted on November 19, 1974 and March 4, 1977 and prepared for deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) During the donor's lifetime, the transcripts may be read by researchers but may not be cited or quoted. Upon the death of the donor, the transcripts shall be available to researchers without restriction.

(2) The tape recordings shall not be available for use by researchers during the donor's lifetime. After the donor's death, access to the tape recordings shall be for background use only, and researchers may not cite, paraphrase, or quote therefrom.

(3) During the donor's lifetime the donor retains all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter the copyright in both the transcripts and tape recordings shall pass to the United States Government.

(4) During the lifetime of the donor, copies of the interview transcripts or tape recordings may not be made for researchers. Thereafter copies of the transcripts, but not the tape recordings, may be provided by the Library upon request to researchers.

(5) After the donor's death, copies of the interview transcripts, but not the tape recordings, may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.



Albert P. Toner
Donor

January 23, 1984
Date

[Signature]
Archivist of the United States

February 7, 1984
Date

This interview is being taped with Mr. Albert Toner in the Park Central Hotel, Washington, DC, on November 19, 1974. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff and present for the interview are Mr. Toner and Dr. Burg.

DR. BURG: Now is it my understanding that you were born in Iowa?

MR. TONER: No, Lewiston, Maine.

DR. BURG: May I ask when?

MR. TONER: Yankee all the way, 1917, December 4. The family had been there for generations. We have an English forebear on my mother's side, Francis Plummer, whose arrival in America dates from something like 1633; so he just missed the Mayflower you see.

DR. BURG: And settled in Maine.

MR. TONER: And settled near what is now Portland, Maine; and the Toners came up through New Hampshire. To get down to the immediate living-memory family, my maternal great-grandfather was a citizen of Portland, Maine and a member of the city council and quite politically active. And then that died out with him. "He wasn't always a Republican." He was first a Whig and then became a Republican and campaigned for Abe Lincoln. So we have that in the family memoirs.

DR. BURG: Now how about your father; what occupation did he follow?



TONER: He was a small business man in Auburn, Maine, a funeral director like my grandfather who was the son of the political man that I mentioned from Portland. He had moved inland to Lewiston. Industry was there because there was a waterfall to provide power.

BURG: And the nineteenth century picture of America.

TONER: Right, shoes and textiles. I think turn of the century was significant; I think that's when the Canadians began to come down in large numbers to man the factories.

BURG: Coming out of the maritime provinces.



TONER: Yes, for many of them just over the border. I'm told they came in freight cars, sometimes whole families in one unit, to work the textile mills or the shoe shops. Now, of course, they're the predominant ethnic element in the population, and they have a very strong professional class, and political influence.

BURG: I suppose that that in part explains Senator [Edmund] Muskie's difficulty using the term "Canucks." My people are New Brunswickers and to me and to my family "Canuck" was perfectly fine; it was not a pejorative at all.

TONER: Certainly they might use it on each other with a little levity intended. But I suppose in a serious political contest, if you don't belong, you better not use it.

BURG: Yes, I suppose that's true.

TONER: It's just that strict.

BURG: Well, was your high school career then in Lewiston, Maine?

TONER: Yes, went the public school route in Lewiston and then on to the state university, University of Maine at Orono. Since then, of course, it's proliferated into all kinds of sub-branches as many state universities have. I believe it was the only one, the only campus, in those days. I majored in liberal arts, English, and began to do some writers' workshop activity.

BURG: What did you have in mind for yourself at that stage in your life, do you remember?

TONER: An academic career, English teaching in college. And stayed with it enough to go on to the University of Iowa and take a master's degree there immediately after I graduated from Maine in 1939.

BURG: Did you have a teaching assistantship at Iowa? Is that how you were able to get out there?

TONER: After I had been there a while, I got a graduate scholarship.

BURG: What drew you there? Did they have a reputation at that time?



TONER: They did, and things were happening in American literature and particularly in creative writing. Of course the creative writing really caught on. The writers' workshop in the graduate school at the University of Iowa is still very well known in academic circles. Paul Engle, I think, still runs it, and he was a bright young poet in residence and a faculty member in my day. And the director of the Graduate School of Letters was Norman Foerster who was a neo-humanist and very well known. He had done some important textbook work, and his American literature textbook for undergraduate work was sort of the standard. We had used it at the University of Maine. Then there was a young professor at Maine who had just come out from Iowa. Grant Wood was in residence there for a year or so. There was activity around the campus known as the "flowering of the valley," written up in Life magazine. It sounds a little fancy, but it meant letters; it meant graphic arts; it meant [John Steuart] Curry, [Grant] Wood, [Thomas Hart] Benton. They were all contemporaries and going strong. They were at their zenith.

BURG: Yes, I had forgotten about that.



TONER: And it was a chance to look at a different landscape. I loved my native state of Maine with the ocean and the open spaces, but the idea of going to a new part of the country appealed to me.

BURG: And come to think of it at that stage Carl Sandburg would be flourishing just north of you, not actually north at all, almost east of you in Chicago.

TONER: Well we associate him with Chicago. He was born in Galesburg, Illinois, and we had had him up to lecture at Maine, and he repaired our literary club budget one year. Robert Frost another year. We used to have a string of failures in our lecture ticket sales and then get one big gun to put us back in the black.



BURG: We've already mentioned a number of writers and painters of the period, very significant people. At Maine or at Iowa, who were the people that you now look back on with the greatest respect, people who meant quite a bit to you in terms of your own development, your own life?

TONER: Well several of the members of the English faculty at Maine. They must have had really a very strong department there in English, though I was not fully aware of that when I went there. I went sort of by taste and convenience, and my friends were going there and so on. I did know what I wanted to major in though; I knew that really before I got there. We had an excellent English faculty headed by Dr. Milton Ellis, who is now long gone. But he was quite well known nationally. He was the editor of a scholarly magazine known as The New England Quarterly. I don't know whether that's still in existence or not.

BURG: Nor do I, but I've heard of it.

TONER: He was Harvard trained as were several of the senior members of his staff. As I looked back upon it a little later when I got into the different environment at Iowa City and could sort of compare standards with students who would come from all over the place, some of them far more prestigious-sounding than the University of Maine, I decided that we had a pretty good outfit.



BURG: You didn't feel at all at sea with that group of people?

TONER: No. Matter of fact, not only did we have good course work, but, for an undergraduate program, I came to appreciate later that we had an excellent basic training for taking comprehensive exams. We had a stiff course of departmental exams, written and oral, in the undergraduate program. I think a piece of it began in the junior year, and it was completed in the senior year. I remember in the summer between those two years, we had an important reading program. We had to pick a major author and read virtually everything he had produced and then be prepared to answer a long essay question in considerable depth as part of the written comprehensives. Some of them would be strictly question and answer facts to try to probe your breadth. And then there would be opportunities for you to exhibit critical skills and your own literary talents, if any. The thing went, I think, over a period of a couple of days.

BURG: Whom did you choose, may I ask? Do you remember now?

TONER: Well it seems odd now; it sort of dates the situation, but it was Thackeray, the nineteenth century English novelist.



BURG: William Makepeace Thackeray?

TONER: The same. Who knows that he existed any more? I guess they made a couple of movies, *Becky Sharp*, or *Vanity Fair*, with Bette Davis and so on. Except for that, I think he has kind of gone into eclipse, and yet he was a major English novelist.

BURG: And I sat here thinking you were going to tell me James T. Farrell or Ernest Hemingway.

TONER: I studied them too. I misled you a little when I said that I had a particular interest in American literature. But, yes, I was probably reading Hemingway by preference and doing Thackeray because I thought I needed a good solid foundation in nineteenth century English novelists as part of my equipment.

BURG: Well really Al, I find that program carried to that level for undergraduates a rather impressive thing. No wonder you felt at home at Iowa and not out over your head. That's pretty firm grounding.

TONER: We had language exams too. To graduate in the liberal arts, you had to pass a reading test in one modern foreign language. And I planned my program so that I could get both more French, which I had studied for three years in high school, and some German, because I knew I'd have to cope with the two at the graduate level. That still wasn't enough when I got to Iowa because of Foerster's new humanist tendencies. He required people going for the Ph.D. in the School of Letters, which he headed at the University of Iowa, not only to have the usual French and German as research tools, but also either Homeric Greek or a combination of Latin and Anglo-Saxon. And my Latin was way back in high school; so I started fresh with the Greek and did manage to pass my exam in all three before I left the University of Iowa.

BURG: Holy mackerel! As Achilles said, I'm sure.



TONER: Not really. The Greek was well taught, and it was not that much a graduate course. We were mostly graduate students in it, but it was just a very difficult language. I would think Homeric Greek is as much more difficult than German as German is harder than French or perhaps Latin. Highly inflected. It hadn't broken down. It's sort of frozen in concrete there, and you've got tenses and moods that nobody uses any more, as well as "dual number" on top of singular and plural.

BURG: Yes. I had the same experience going from Russian to French. I found French a breeze compared with Russian. And also, Al, the idea of three languages for a Ph.D. Not too often today, I suspect, would you find a graduate program that required three languages of you, and my guess is that at that stage your knowledge of those three languages had to be pretty good.

TONER: If you didn't go for the Greek, actually you'd have four. You'd need your two modern scholarly languages and Latin and Anglo-Saxon. I wish I had had a little more. If I had had perhaps one more semester of the Greek, it might have stayed with me a little better. Three fairly rugged semesters of Homeric Greek is not quite enough; you still need more. But it was enough to get you to some of the payoff, to some of the satisfaction of the quality of the language and the subject matter of the Iliad and the Odyssey beyond the early months of drudgery of just learning the forms,--the declensions and conjugations and so on.

BURG: Well that's not bad to advance that far in that period of time in anything so difficult as Homeric Greek. Were there other people who now stand out in your mind on the faculty there at Iowa, people that impressed you enough so that you now recollect them?

TONER: Well I mentioned Paul Engle who has been there ever since and has a good reputation. He has certainly one of the pioneer writers' workshops in the whole country. In another field,



Carl Seashore was still in residence although he had retired, I think, and perhaps came back and taught again during the war. But he was a pioneer in psychology, particularly the psychology of learning and even within learning (musical aptitude tests). He devised a test that I think I took at the University of Maine. For years at least, that was the standard musical aptitude test to check you out on tonal memory and rhythm and whatever the other components are to see whether it's worth investing in piano lessons for junior.



BURG: Did he spell his name as it sounds?

TONER: Right, all one word, Seashore. That may have been Anglicized; he might have had a Scandinavian background. I didn't go out there for that reason, but it used to be interesting to see him around Iowa City. Grant Wood you might say immortalized him in another medium in a picture, I guess a lithograph, called Honorary Degree. And the three figures in the degree-awarding ceremony, with one man getting a hood placed over his neck and the other two participating, consisted of Carl Seashore, Norman Foerster, and Grant Wood. I wish I had one of those. Once you could buy them from the American Artists' Series for something like five dollars by mail, but, of course, they're collectors' items today.

BURG: I feel that somewhere I've seen them reproduced in a textbook.

TONER: I'm sure you've seen it.

BURG: But, of course, American Gothic is the one you more commonly see of Wood's.

TONER: But if you've ever thumbed through a collection of Grant Wood or the American school or the Mississippi Valley school at that period, you couldn't miss Honorary Degree.

BURG: Now in your graduate work, you were basically occupied with the languages, and you and I talked about this before the interview. That language load was pretty fierce, at least by the standards of today I think it was. So that had occupied a good bit of your time. Had you had an opportunity to do much reading aside from the assignments in the language work?

TONER: Yes. Because of the way the program was constructed, we did not have a set of prescribed courses thrown at us. We were turned loose to take virtually any courses we wanted to, that we felt we needed most beyond the bachelor's level. But, there was a hard core of discipline through the whole thing in the form of a reading program. You're given a printed outline of the particular books that you're expected to be responsible for at the end of your program in two or three semesters or whatever it takes you to present yourself for your comprehensives for the master's degree. And you don't have to take courses that involve any of those particular



authors if you feel you've come that well prepared. I can't imagine anybody would be in that extreme condition, but the point is you had a great deal of option. If you felt that you were weak in contemporary American literature but you had your nineteenth century or your Restoration or your eighteenth century reasonably well staked out, you acted to strengthen the thin spots in your reading program. Most of us took the courses that we felt we were behind in. The whole thing, as I look back on it, was rather symmetrically contrived; everything sort of fell into place. You took your two semesters, or three was perhaps more like the average, or two and a summer, maybe, of course work, and then you took your comprehensive exams. Obviously there were certain set requirements in the way of languages that I've already mentioned. Then your reading program in terms of particular works by particular authors. It was a great books program really. That's what neo-humanism means. It's selections from Shakespeare and it's Homer and it's Plato and it's Aristotle, to go back that far. Then just picking the big ones as you come down through, Chaucer, Milton and even down into at least nineteenth century American literature--the New England school--Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau.



I've forgotten about contemporary American literature. We were trying to contribute to same in the writers' workshop. I think we could have picked that for some emphasis. In addition to the prescribed list of books and authors I believe you were to pick

one of three or four designated major eras of English and American literature for your concentration. You could pick the early period; I don't know when that ended for the comprehensive exam purposes, but it was probably with Chaucer. Victorian would be another segment. American literature was the one that I took. And then your exam, your comprehensive exam, would be designed to give you particularly rigorous testing or exercising in that chosen field.

BURG: Now did you, in addition to all of this, write a thesis, a master's thesis?

TONER: Yes.



BURG: Now what was your subject?

TONER: Well I started out doing Mark Twain as a literary critic, which of course he was not primarily, but he wrote prolifically, and, if you go through his works, you'll find all kinds of outbursts of literary criticism. It was just in the nature of the man to sound off about anything that demanded his attention for the moment; so that in particularly his non-fiction works, there was quite a lot. I had made a reasonable start; I had done one short paper on that subject when my workshop instructor suggested that I do a creative thesis instead and turn out a group of short stories in lieu of the Mark Twain. He was my instructor in each context. He was teaching Mark Twain and the Literature of the American West as well as

coaching creative writing in the workshop on the prose side. By that route he became my thesis adviser, and I switched over to the short stories, such as they were. They have not won any Pulitzer prize yet.

BURG: I hadn't read about that part, I wondered.

TONER: They're like most early creative works. We like to forget about them. It was a great thing to do though. I think you can learn more about literary criticism and quality by putting your back into it and trying to perform than any other way. You get a lot of respect for the good ones that way.

BURG: I remember that the British archaeologist, Sir Leonard Woolley, early on, fresh out of Oxford, went to the British Museum, I think, and had only been there a few months, when he felt that he was with book. And the man directing all of his enterprises, bless his heart, said, "Go ahead, Leonard, and write it." And Leonard wrote it and took it to him proudly, and he took it, accepted it, and said, "Now, Leonard, that you have that out of your system, would you go back to work?" And Woolley spoke of the fact that it helped him enormously to have that piece of writing cleared away, and he then went on to bigger and better things.

Now, for you, bigger and better things lay ahead, but that must have coincided with the arrival of the Japanese over Pearl Harbor. You had it in mind to go on for a Ph.D. in the field of literature, American literature, probably.



TONER: Yes, that's right. Your timing is exactly right. I completed my master's degree in the winter convocation in February of 1941. Well that's the year of Pearl Harbor. By that time I had a draft number, as we all did, and it was beginning to get a little bit warm. And it looked as if I would be in uniform by something like June of that year. That weighed very heavily in my decision to pull out of full-time graduate work, which was beginning to seem somewhat artificial with this new life facing me, beginning in June. And I had an opportunity to come to Washington and get a lowly position at least to get off the family payroll in Washington and, incidentally, to continue at least part-time on the Ph.D. in American literature. I made the right moves at George Washington University and took their battery of tests and interviews and so on and did, in fact, get that started. And, like so many people that had come to Washington for six months or perhaps a little less, the way my calendar looked, I have been here ever since.



BURG: Did someone in your family, know someone here, Al, so that you could go into government work at least until the army made its decision?

TONER: Yes, if you weren't too proud to go to work as a messenger in a government agency with a brand new master's degree. And I wasn't, because the depression wasn't that much behind us. The

job market was terribly tight, plus we didn't know that Pearl Harbor was coming obviously, but there was an element of insecurity among graduate students because we all had these draft numbers. In fact, a few people were beginning to think of taking positive action perhaps to get into the reserves or something.

BURG: And, Al, wasn't the draft term at that time, wouldn't it have been approximately twelve months of service that you faced? That is prior to Pearl Harbor; that's what people faced.

TONER: You probably know the famous song that later turned ironic, "Good-bye, dear, I'll be back in a year, 'cause I'm in the army now."

BURG: No, Al, I don't remember that favorite tune, but it sounds--

TONER: Well, I thought you might have found it in a footnote some place.

BURG: --it sounds appropriate to the period.



TONER: It didn't mean as much to you then as it did to me. Later came slogans like "back alive in '45," and from the Pacific, the more pessimistic "Golden Gate in '48."

BURG: What I do remember out of that period was the initials, OHIO. You would remember those--"Over the Hill in October"--which they were beginning to talk either in '40 or in '41 prior to

Pearl Harbor. The draftees were quite upset; there was no war as far as they could see. You may have missed that however.

TONER: Well, I had a cushion of course. I was class of '39 and went right into graduate school, and some of my friends might have had a different experience just because of that small margin of difference.

BURG: The draft started, I think, in '40.



TONER: Right, so I was in college for the early part of that. Anyway I did come to Washington with that mixed objective of trying to keep the academic career at least from being extinguished and at the same time have a little experience in bringing in a paycheck instead of just living in a university on a scholarship situation.

BURG: What was the agency, I should ask that you went with?

TONER: Well, it's what is now GSA [General Services Administration]. It was the Public Buildings Administration of the Federal Works Agency. And it was still like the dark days of the depression to get a job in February of 1941. By six months later, the picture had turned around dramatically. My own fortunes improved. I was able to get out of the office boy category in something like six months and got a more dignified clerical position, which, at the same time, didn't have any particular appeal to me. But by November of that year with a little scratching on my part such as

using my lunch hour for personnel interviews and with the help of a taxicab, I was able to get established in a professional beginning in what was then the Office of the Coordinator of Information, later the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] but already headed by the famous Wild Bill Donovan. And that was very exciting to me. It was a combination of scratching and good luck. It happened that the man that had the ultimate say over my fate in my first interview beyond the personnel office was a renowned scholar from Yale University so that he didn't hold the literary background against me as many people in Washington would have.



BURG: Who was that by the way?

TONER: His name was Wilmarth S. Lewis, known as Lefty, who is a famous biographer of (and collector of the papers of) Horace Walpole (Yale University collection).

[Interruption]

BURG: You went to this office which later became the OSS under Donovan. Was it just one of several places that you called making the rounds, so to speak? Or did you go there with the intention of, "Boy, I'd like to go there?"

TONER: Well something between the two. I would have taken anything that would have improved my status. The depression hiring psychology had pretty well vanished by November, which is still pre-Pearl Harbor. You're the historian, but great things were happening during that year. The America Firsters were going strong on the Hill, and I used to put in some of my time-off in the Senate chamber and saw people like [Gerald] Nye and [Burton] Wheeler and [Arthur] Vandenberg making the last ditch "America first" stand.

BURG: We all heard Gerald L. K. Smith and Father Coughlin and that crew in full cry.

TONER: Right. Of course they weren't in Washington. And I was from out of town and didn't want to miss anything and did try to get around and see the Senate live and so on. Vandenberg was then still an isolationist. He later turned around. And I think [Robert A.] Taft was probably pretty much opposed to involvement at that point, but we did eventually get involved.

BURG: I would guess so.

TONER: And over on the House side, Hamilton Fish I remember. Well anyway, arming of merchant ships I think was one of the milestones, and lend-lease. I may be a little out of whack chronologically, but there was a ferment, and Washington was turning around from a sleepy southern town where it was awfully hard to get a job anywhere into a boom kind of economy. I tried to take advantage of the loosening



up, and I tried every thing that seemed reasonable. I tried the Library of Congress I remember, and the Department of Agriculture. That seems remote, but they did and do a great deal of writing and publication. Perhaps Treasury, and I think the State Department, and didn't get too much encouragement, but all you need is one, of course. I had to dribble these interviews out a lunch hour at a time because I was in no position to go take half the afternoon off. I had a rather strictly disciplined job.

Obviously I did not go into military service in June of 1941 or I wouldn't have been there to be still struggling. But I was examined and not passed in that June zone and put into a kind of in between status, neither 1-A nor 4-F. We had various shadings from time to time. Anyway, that gave me a little more time to bargain with, and I began to look around a little more seriously. It's one thing to expect to come and just have a cooling off period between academe and army for six months or so, but, if you're going to be in Washington for awhile, obviously it's time to get out and hustle. So, all right, along came the Office of the Coordinator of Information which I read about in the local federal column; it was just getting born, and it sounded exciting. It was established in the Executive Office of the President, and I took that very literally. I could see it right in the West Wing or something. I didn't know as I do now that the Executive Office of the President sometimes gets rather encompassing. But anyway it worked, and they hired me, and it was a very interesting group and activity that I went into.



BURG: Let me first ask you, when you talked with Lewis when, he was the one who interviewed you, once you got past the personnel office, what was the nature of that interview? What was he able to tell you about the work you might be doing?

TONER: Not very much. It was pretty one-way. Remember, I was very young and very junior and, well, it was more like an academic examination. I sat and pretty much answered the questions. And they asked me who I was and what I did and what I was interested in and so on. And I answered the questions to the best of my ability. It was touch and go until somebody said, "By the way, you do have a master's degree in American literature, don't you?" I said that indeed I did, and immediately I felt that I had passed through the storm and was in calm waters, and they began to talk about when I could come over. Extraordinary, I mean that would have killed me in many interviews, but that made a positive difference. It was pure whim, pure happenstance. The three people that interviewed me were Mr. Lewis, a young Ph.D. by the name of George Young, who was the son of the then chairman of the English department at Yale, and Kenneth MacLeish, the son of Archibald MacLeish the well-known poet, Government official and later dramatist. So right away, I began to think I was in good hands. As it turned out I worked immediately for Ken MacLeish and as a colleague of George Young and got to know them and a lot of other people like them, not only people with literary backgrounds. The nature of the work was, I



guess we would call it today, information processing. It was a central information division. I was working at a junior research level. The nature of the job was to screen through, skim through actually, the documentation that was pouring in to the central library and make sure we sized it up for what it contained, piece by piece; prepare a little *précis* indicating the high spots and then work out, in accordance with an index code, a series of numbers and word headings so that when the researchers came in and said, "What have you got on rice in China?" We could find it either under "commodities--rice" or under "China" with a code number after it. Depending on what his preference was, he might not want rice and China; he might want everything we have on rice or everything we have on China. I'm getting a little laborious. It was a simple *précis* writing and card indexing operation. In those days, of course, all done manually, dictated or written and typed out, and the cards were multiplied with some kind of process. I've forgotten whether it was carbon or hectograph or what.

BURG: Yes it could have been a hectograph at that time.



TONER: Maybe that came later; I know I got to know what a purple-shedding hectograph was before many years had passed. But maybe we just did them on carbons. The point is, it was a cross-index system. And this was the basic level of research.

BURG: The data was coming in from everywhere.

TONER: From everywhere.

BURG: Gathered by whom?

TONER: I don't know. I suppose a lot of it was volunteered. I suppose people who had perhaps lived in foreign countries and had made collections in out-of-the-way corners of the earth that might have had some significance to the war, I suppose it was just volunteered stuff. Some of it was published. And I suppose some of it they paid people to go out and scrounge up.

BURG: In November of 1941, was it an intelligence operation? Was it ever described to you as an intelligence operation?

TONER: I don't know whether they used the word or not, but it was--

BURG: Obviously, looking back on it now, you don't think of it as having been hush-hush or intelligence gathering.

TONER: Right. Oh, I do. It was. I just hesitate a bit on the word gathering. My impression was that much of this material was from free sources including published sources, but it was classified information basically. We were all cleared through secret in that particular outfit. Of course it was on the eve of Pearl Harbor which--

BURG: And at that stage your job was not to evaluate any of the material crossing your desk but merely to get a précis of it, reduce it to something manageable, code it, get it on those cards. Then,



do you happen to know what kind of people, you called them researchers, would be ultimately using that data? Or was that so far divorced from your outfit that you never really knew?

TONER: Well, no, that was one of the more attractive features of the job. We were realists, and we realized that we were performing a slightly hum-drum but important service. If you don't get this stuff identified and cataloged, what good does it do sitting back in a vault some place. But we did get to see the researchers. I stayed in that activity, including part of my military service, for five years and got to know some of the researchers eventually. I have to run ahead a little bit of my initial job to answer that, but, yes, we did, and they were the best. They were people like Bill Langer of Harvard, William L. Langer, who is--



BURG: The man who did the study on Hitler.

TONER: He's you know as eminent a modern historian as one could find right then. James Phinney Baxter who I think was on semi-leave of absence as president of Williams College. Sherman Kent, of I think, the Yale history faculty, and Conyers Reed who remains probably a bible today of the History of the British Empire but quite an old man even then. And I guess that would suffice. Then of course runners-up--we had people just fresh out of college or graduate school or half-way through their Ph.D.s, but the key people were established in their professions.

I have a little difficulty cutting off the Coordinator of Information, COI, from the OSS which immediately succeeded it. Succeeded is hardly the word. The COI was transformed into the OSS by a process of, largely, expansion and acquisition. I think the COI remained fairly intact, and then it acquired pieces of the Office of War Information, the Office of Facts and Figures, and, I'm sure I've missed one or two, by the typical process of government reorganization accompanied with expansion and spurred by the event of Pearl Harbor.* Meanwhile, I was getting a graduate education in government and in information that I couldn't have bought on any campus. It didn't happen to track with my original literary interests, but suddenly I was in the middle of a professional academic situation surrounded by the best people in many fields. I was reading the newspapers, and I was absorbed in what I was doing. I found it fascinating. The personnel of the OSS reminded me of a description of a similar enterprise in Great Britain during the war. In the Evelyn Waugh cycle he did, I think, a trilogy known as [Sword of Honour] including [Men at Arms]. I've forgotten whether it was Officers and Gentlemen or Brideshead Revisited [The End of the Battle?] or one of those in which he describes a very secret, very exotic institution in London. Then he described all the kinds

*Postscript as of October 1983: recent months have seen the publication of two major books on Wm. J. Donovan ("The Last Hero" etc.) and this period of growth and reorganization is well covered. (APT)



of people that gravitated to it. In the OSS we had both branches of Roosevelts, for example. You know we had I believe, a grandson of Teddy, and we had Jimmy Roosevelt. By chance, I bumped into him in his Marine uniform (it seems to me he was a captain, maybe more) the day that his father went over and met the joint session of congress to declare war on the Japanese after Pearl Harbor. And in all the pictures (we had no television I have to keep reminding myself) but in all the newspaper photographs there was Jimmy at his father's arm. You recall FDR always had somebody to assist him with his walking problem when he was standing up there in the congress. Then, you know, maybe an hour later, I bumped into the President's son down the hall in my office building. Well this is a far cry from graduate school in a few months, and I found it exciting.



BURG: May I conclude that as various agencies including OWI and your original outfit were joined together with OSS sort of formed, in a way, brand new at the top and acting as the gathering-in agency?

TONER: Yes. I think in effect the two or three that I mentioned were abolished and their functions absorbed into OSS.

BURG: So those other initials were lost. Donovan still remained at the head of it.

TONER: Right, and had a bigger job.

BURG: Yes, oh, I can see he would have had. Did all of that take place just after Pearl Harbor?

TONER: Well the Coordinator of Information got going I'd say roughly the summer before Pearl Harbor. And I think it was just a story of success and growth thereafter, and this was almost a technical detail, this change of the name to OSS, because I think the Coordinator of Information was in the Executive Office of the President to begin with as indeed so was the OSS, and the same man headed it, the famous Wild Bill Donovan. He had been a lieutenant colonel of infantry in World War I and, in fact, had some of his old military comrades in his establishment, both at the colonel and right-hand man level and all the way down to the building guards, some of whom had been soldiers under him and who swore by him. And this was good for security because if some bright young man thought he was too impatient or too important to show his security pass to the guard, the guard could have a word with his old boss, old commander from World War I, next time he happened to see him and the general, then colonel, Donovan would say, "If you have any trouble just turn them in to me."

BURG: Donovan, I think had led the New York 79th Regiment.

TONER: 69th, the famous Fighting 69th.

BURG: Fighting 69th, yes.

TONER: And they made a movie of it.



BURG: James Cagney played in it.

TONER: I couldn't remember whether it was Pat O'Brien, but Cagney would be all right.

BURG: O'Brien played in it, playing--

TONER: Maybe he played Father Duffy.

BURG: Yes, he did. Precisely and George Brent I believe played Donovan.

TONER: Yes.



BURG: That's the film, of course.

TONER: Donovan was over sixty but completely in possession of his reflexes, energy and brilliance all those tough years. He was a remarkable man, small in stature, elderly in appearance. I used to see him quite a bit because of the nature of our little research service. It was, I suppose, a comparatively open operation. That is, anybody that could be cleared to come in with the general to be shown anything in the establishment could come into our little shop, and my boss, who continued to be Mr. Lewis, liked to have guests and liked to show it off to properly cleared and qualified people and used to scare the life out of me by saying, "Now this is the most marvelous index system in Washington. Just ask for something."

You know we had a pretty good indexing system, but at the end of every card reference there's a live document some place. We had all kinds of people. We had the British naval attache; we had Senator [Henry Cabot] Lodge; we had General [Joseph T.] McNarney; people like that would come through for the tour. They'd be over on business, and Donovan would say, "Let me show you something. You might be interested in how we handle some of this paper."

So they'd bring them in and then my boss would say, "Ask for something."

I could find the card and get the number, but then the document is down the hall in a vault and suppose it's been charged out, and is sitting on, say, Donovan's desk, we don't look so good. But luck was with me most of the time. One time when it wasn't and the document wasn't handy, I managed to get it in time to run down the hall after them, my boss and Col. Donovan and the distinguished visitor, and say, "Here it is." An hour later Col. Donovan called my chief with compliments and thanks for the "performance." I can see why his men swore by him.

BURG: As you said, no computer retrieved that material, just you and your fingers.

TONER: No, it was still a lending library really in function, and people could charge the stuff out and did.



BURG: Now did things take a different turn as soon as we entered the war in early December? Was there a change in atmosphere or really a change in the actual mechanics of what you were doing and the way in which you were doing things when it converts to OSS?

TONER: Well, yes, there was the change that you could see in the city. The sleepy southern community ceased to exist, and it was a boom town for the rest of the war and in the agency too. I can't put my finger on any one moment but--

BURG: Well did security tighten up, for example, to what it had been, say, in November when you came on?



TONER: It was pretty tight. By the time I got there, my young colleagues had done a good job at getting business-like operations set up, and you had to have elaborate personal clearances to be hired. Then, even beyond that, we kept good track of who used those documents. Even people who were cleared and wore their badges and so on just couldn't walk in the way you do at the public library. They had to have a specific written need-to-know authorization. And I don't remember that that changed particularly as we went beyond Pearl Harbor. It got bigger.

BURG: Oh, I would imagine, yes. Were people like Langer and Conyers Reed on the OSS staff?

TONER: Yes, at that level, they were comparable to bureau chiefs in a large federal agency today. They were the front line.

BURG: Were they handling, in effect, desks as we would think of desks in the State Department?

TONER: No, a desk would be less; there would be desks under them. These were chiefs. As a matter of fact, according to some of the published literature, the colonel made one of his rare mistakes in handing out titles and had given the same job to both Langer and Phinney Baxter but, characteristically, adjusted by making one the chief of the research and analysis branch and the other one the director of research. But this was about as high as you can get on your way from where I was to Donovan's office. I sometimes call him general because in this--all right, that answers in part your question. He was a civilian at first with the courtesy title of colonel because of his Fighting 69th. He put on a uniform after Pearl Harbor I believe and emerged eventually as a major-general.

BURG: And the operation became quasi-military in a sense?



TONER: Yes, I would think that perhaps we saw more military people around. And then, of course, there were whole segments of the agency that I don't know about to this day. I haven't read all the history.* I was in the relatively open, academic, Washington-based

*See footnote p. 25 (APT)

kind of thing that wasn't, frankly, too different from what you would find in more recent years in the Department of State.

BURG: But at that point in 1941 clearly OSS was also gearing up for cloak-and-dagger covert operations, but this had nothing to do with you. They were being carried on elsewhere.

TONER: That's right. If I can believe the movies, there was a lot of that going on. That answers, in part, your question about security. It was so secure that it wasn't necessary for people like me and my colleagues to be in on it. Again, we were sort of the research staff. It was almost like the analogy of a big corporation that has its own think tank today within the total structure of the OSS.



BURG: Well, I should ask too while I think of it, you represented a field of literature, American literature, and that side. Were any of your colleagues, men doing the same work that you were doing, did they represent other disciplines? Were there political scientists and historians?

TONER: Well let me quarrel with the word represent. We were all hired in a borderline wartime situation which immediately became a wartime situation. Speaking for my small service group, this research support activity, I think it is perhaps a matter of chance that we came from different disciplines, but we did. Ken MacLeish was

an anthropologist, Harvard graduate. George Young was a Ph.D. in history who had done all of his work at Yale. Later on, others came in. We had some more of the literary persuasion, some more social scientists. This is in our own group. Now, your question is a little better applied at the more senior levels in the different research functions where you hire a man because you need somebody that is a specialist in the British Isles or in coal economy or something.



BURG: We could assume then that your group was probably hired just on the basis that you had educated minds, that proving that you were indeed educable. They were looking for men of intelligence, and that's one way to judge.

TONER: Right. We were generalists. Mr. Lewis, himself, although he had been employed only as a scholar prior to World War II, actually he was a scholar and a patron really. He's an important patron of the literary arts. He had made possible the monumental publication project on the works of Horace Walpole. I think they still come out at a volume a year. The goal was fifty, and he was perhaps halfway through by then. Anyway, part of which project at Yale had involved an elaborate analyzing and coding and indexing technique.

BURG: I see. Historical editing, in effect.

TONER: I mean there's that much of a direct link between academe and war or pre-war government research. In other words, Mr. Lewis, among other things, had the tools, and he had people working on the project for him with academic training. This was a little before my time. Of course, they had it running by the time I got there, but I assume that he went out and got the same kinds of people to assist in his government operation that he had been working with back at New Haven.



BURG: That's a good clear statement then of how that presumably, was put together and a good statement of how those of you of diverse backgrounds came to be doing it. You mentioned just a few moments ago that the military came to you again. When was that?

TONER: I went into the military in the summer of 1943. So you see I had two and a half years of the rudiments of a government career, allowing for a certain amount of wartime accident by the time I went into the military.

BURG: And during that period of time from, say, November '41 up to the middle of '43, you stayed in that same section and doing, by and large, that same work, or was there a change in your job prior to going into the military?

TONER: Let me back up a minute. In December of 1941 we all went up lock, stock, and barrel (I think we all piled into the same cab or something) to the navy recruiting station at the old navy yard over in the east end of town some place on the Anacostia River. It evidently had been there a long time. And of course they weren't ready for anything. They were suddenly deluged with waiting lines and so on. We all had the academic qualifications. We all wanted to get commissions in the navy instead of being drafted into something less attractive, and a number of us made it. The navy had rigid eyesight qualifications, and some didn't make it because they couldn't pass the eye test, but I think I was the only one that didn't make it for being underweight. They got me twice. I was something like twenty-eight pounds underweight for my height and also X pounds underweight for minimum officer standards. So some of my friends went on and got commissions, and some went off into the field, and some stayed on in some capacity, or the same capacity virtually, in Washington, at least at the outset. And then some of us went and got drafted.

BURG: And that's what happened to you?



TONER: That's what happened to me in the summer of '43. Meanwhile I had improved my status. I had come in at the basic professional grade which was P-1, equivalent to GS-5 today, and in two and a half years had come up to, I guess, head of that operation.

INTERVIEW WITH
Albert P. Toner

by

Dr. Soapes

March 4, 1977

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



This interview is being conducted with Mr. Albert Toner in Washington, DC, on March 4, 1977. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes of the Eisenhower Library. Present for the interview are Mr. Toner and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: The last interview, I think, still had you in the OSS in 1943.

MR. TONER: Which is even longer ago than it was at the time of the last interview.

DR. SOAPES: How long did you stay with OSS?

MR. TONER: Until it expired. In fact my service with the OSS started before it became the OSS, when it was known as the Office of the Coordinator of Information in the Executive Office of the President, then headed, of course, by Colonel Donovan, the famous "Wild Bill" Donovan. Later it was reorganized as other agencies were merged or abolished. The Office of War Information, had some effect there, either it came into or out of existence coincident with the establishment of the OSS. And there was an Office of Facts and Figures and an Office of Government Reports. A lot of agencies that were sort of on the information and facts and figures kick were melted into the OSS. I joined it in November of 1941 and stayed with it until I went into the military. Then I spent a good part of my military service in the OSS in Washington and was demilitarized with a whole group that had been in the OSS. Then over a matter of weeks I would say, the OSS was abolished, and I



happened to be in the portion of it that floated into the Department of State. That was the accidental but very fortunate beginning of my State Department career.

SOAPES: What office was that in the State Department?

TONER: It bore a name that was similar to where I had been in the OSS, something to the effect of Research and Analysis. I suppose it was the forerunner of what today is known as INR, the Intelligence and Research Bureau. I stayed through those rather turbulent, transitional days in which even the people in charge didn't quite know what was coming next or what they would have to do about it. It was a settling period; it was a microcosm of what was going on all over Washington. People were coming back and claiming their job rights after the service, and the best thing the agencies could do was to put them on the rolls and hope that eventually they'd get them assimilated into suitable jobs. If anything, my experience was compounded because the group that I was disbanded with down at --what's that engineer post just south of town?

SOAPES: Belvoir?

TONER: Belvoir. I didn't think I'd ever forget that because it's my favorite military experience--getting out. Anyway, some two hundred of us were let out of the army on the same day, by the same stroke in late 1945. And many of us had some kind of claim



on what turned out to be the Department of State by way of the OSS. As one of them I went through the settling-in period and spent a relatively brief time in the residue of OSS before, as we were all encouraged to do, I had managed to stir around and find something more attractive on my own in the Department of State.

Luckily a man I had met in the OSS was given the management task of helping in this assimilation and the settling process and he said, "You know they're looking for somebody like you in an outfit called the Central Secretariat." It was part of the office of the Secretary. I imagine he didn't know exactly what they were up to, but it turned out to be the early stages of what today is a thriving and influential establishment. That secretariat is similar to apparatuses that you can find in several of the larger and more complicated cabinet departments where they need all kinds of services right at the elbow of the head of the department.

In those days, the part of it that I went into specialized in committees. We provided, for example, committee secretaries to all the inter-agency committees that the State Department chaired and many of its more important continuing internal committees, which again was a little accidental but turned out to be an excellent foundation for me. It was like going to graduate school and finding out what's going on in the State Department and getting to know the working government organization, not merely the subject matter.



Usually the people that would chair the committees would be at least division chiefs, possibly office directors. Then as we progressed in the secretariat we were assigned to more important committees with more senior chairmen. That proved to be a rather interesting way of life. I did that kind of thing, more or less, for several years, till about 1951.

I also did management studies and progress reports on departmental programs and reviewed and edited some of the correspondence and action papers intended for the Secretary's attention. One of the plums, one of the attractive assignments that the younger officers could aspire to was to have the main staff responsibility for the Secretary's staff meeting which took place three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Wednesday the Secretary himself would chair it and, on Monday and Friday, typically, the Under Secretary would chair. By the time I graduated to that assignment the Secretary was Dean Acheson, the Under Secretary was James Edwin Webb, and that was exceedingly interesting duty for a young officer interested in learning and looking for opportunities to move ahead. We learned a great deal about where the real values of the department were and where the interesting jobs were, and the assignment was a pretty full package by then. With the benefit of experience with lesser committees, it was my job to beat the bushes if necessary and see that we had something reasonably stimulating to put on the agenda of those meetings. If that wasn't necessary, if there seemed to be a lot



of voluntary submissions, then it was my job to do the primary screening. Of course I had superiors to consult with, and I'd say, "I think this one ought to be number one on the agenda, and this one I think is a dog and we should reject it, but this one is pretty important; let's put that in number two, and then use this one as number three in case we run out of time and something has to be postponed. The assignment included preparation of an action summary and following up on actions taken, and even physical responsibility for the room--go in and get the key from the messenger in the Secretary's office, open it up and make sure that the place is ventilated and check the lowly details of making sure that there are enough pads and pencils and chairs. Rather full responsibility for supporting both the substance and the administration of the meeting was involved.



I don't mean to overdo the mechanical details, but you know about the war that was lost over a horseshoe nail. One day the messenger who always gave me the key was out messengering someplace with the key in his pocket. As luck would have it, it was the Secretary's day to chair, it was a Wednesday, and the conference room was locked up tighter than a drum and there was no way I could get into it. The assistant secretaries started to pile up in the hallway, and the special assistant to the Secretary, who always gave me the signal when Mr. Acheson started coming down the hall,

was nervously sticking his head out and looking inquiringly at me. Fortunately, at the very last minute, the messenger sauntered back and I grabbed the key and relieved the tension and got the meeting going. But I can assure you that from that time forward, there was another key in a safe place where I had access to it.

SOAPES: You said that you got a feel in this job for some of the values of the State Department, what its priorities were.

TONER: Yes, in terms of where the programs were, geographically or "functionally". Just before I was given that assignment I had a major staff support role in the putting together of the Marshall Plan. Europe in the economic and the military security and political sense was far and away the number one priority. We were still picking up after World War II and the orientation was primarily European.

The personalities were interesting. Averell Harriman used to come over on Wednesdays from whatever his job of the moment was in the White House, probably foreign aid, or Mutual Security. He had two hats, as we say in the cliché, with an office in the White House as an adviser to President Truman, and he headed whatever the aid agency was called at the moment, either FOA or MSA. It had stopped being ECA, I think. Anyway, this is rambling a bit.



Foster Dulles used to come to the meetings occasionally when he was the Republican foreign policy adviser to the Secretary of State. And he was very impressive in those days, long before he became Secretary himself, of course. He always insisted on symbolically sitting, perhaps next to me, with the staff in the circle of chairs around the room rather than at the table. I suppose it was simply a gesture to keep his identity clear in the bi-partisan relationship with the people around the table, who would be the Secretary or Under Secretary and the assistant secretaries.

SOAPES: Do you have impressions still of Acheson running these meetings? Was he a person that was commanding the meeting, or was he listening?



TONER: There was never any doubt as to who was in charge. To contrast it with my military experience, he was the kind of a person who has the natural endowment to take charge without having to work at it. There was no, "Now hear this", or "Let me have your attention", or any of the devices that lesser personalities are forced to fall back on. He kind of sauntered in, and physically, he was imposing with those bristling moustaches which were a lot rarer in those days than of course the face adornment is today. He was also something of a fashion plate, and his toughness was often underestimated. He was a gentleman to the core, but there was also a lot of iron on the inside, and more power to him.

It was a tough period that included the rise of McCarthyism, and some segments of the population saw him as an "English" personality. They needn't have. I saw him depicted in a movie on television recently and they had him speaking with a British accent, which wasn't the case. It had eastern prep in it, but it was a perfectly legitimate class accent. In other words, I'm a great admirer of Dean Acheson; I liked the way he took charge. His mind was very interesting, very complex. And for a person with a literary background like me, he performed sparkingly in that category. He would make Latin puns, Greek references and so on. There was another big gun that used to enjoy the exchange with him, Dr. Philip Jessup, a great international law specialist I believe, mostly identified with Columbia University. It was fascinating to see those two go at each other in a friendly exchange. Of course, they were there not to chitchat, but to do some rather important business around the table. Yet they managed a little color and life and an occasional show of humor, which I learned later is not always to be had in those situations. Committee meetings in Washington, maybe more than fifty percent, can be dreary.

He wrote well, and we kept a list of expressions he disliked, such as "I am pleased," and "as you know" (which he considered condescending). One of the secretariat jobs I liked was being asked to clean up or warm up or tighten up something he was being asked to sign.



SOAPES: You mentioned McCarthyism. Do you remember Acheson responding to McCarthy-like statements in those meetings?

TONER: No. There might have been comments such as, "I suppose you saw the Post this morning, Mr. Secretary," something like that, but that would not be the forum with people like me sitting in, young career officers. If they had any planning sessions or strategy sessions, they would not have been to my knowledge. I had the impression that he played the McCarthy thing pretty coolly, somewhat the way Eisenhower did. You never sensed--well, somewhere the expression, "Getting down into the gutter with him" comes up. I think that's an Eisenhower quote.



SOAPES: Yes.

TONER: And I had the impression that probably Dean Acheson, by natural inclination and maybe by very shrewd planning, chose to keep a distance from McCarthy.

SOAPES: You stayed in that job till 1951?

TONER: Till 1951, and the two major assignments were the Marshall Plan and the Secretary's staff meeting. I did other things leading up to it, like running kind of an information bank based upon the committee activities that I described, and putting out periodical publications of what was going on in committees this week or this month or whatever.

SOAPES: Do you remember any major hitches in the Marshall Plan operation that would be of importance to historians?

TONER: No. The most vivid recollections that I have would be about its successes, including especially its administrative, its organizational successes which I appreciated, but maybe not fully. Maybe I didn't do justice to it at the time. It was a hectic thing. I was brought in after one or two of my colleagues had been handling different aspects. One of them, for example, was assigned to what was known as the CEEC, the international Committee on European Economic Cooperation, which was at the early, informal planning stages. I think it was activated right after Secretary Marshall's speech at Harvard University in which the European Recovery blueprint was launched or unveiled--or whatever you do to a blueprint--for the first time.

Then things happened very swiftly, as I think back, and the next thing you know you've got some thirteen or so European country representatives sitting in more or less continuous session in Washington, right on Pennsylvania Avenue in what is now 1776, the U.S. Information Agency, just around the corner from here. The principle was to let the Europeans do a good part of the job for us: don't put us in a position of allocating who gets what for what purpose and what quantities, but let them put together a kind of master plan that they negotiate out at least to a point among themselves and come in with an integrated request for assistance to which we can react. An awful lot of things were going on simultaneously.



My immediate assignment was within the State Department, to cover the daily meetings of what was called something like the State Working Group, something informal and that's certainly what it was descriptively. And then there was an inter-departmental steering committee that met less frequently that I didn't see much of. I had all I could do to keep that daily thing going. We only met, say, on the average of thirty minutes to an hour a day and it was mostly a matter of finding out where do we stand. "Joe, did you get that paper off to the Hill yesterday?" and "Now what are we going to do about this?" and "Let me read a letter that I just got from so-and-so" or "Will you take that?" The main thing I had to do was a series of one-liners to capture the daily assignment of tasks, and get them run off and distributed,--not by xerox in those days. We had hectograph, "Ditto", which got purple stain all over your hands in the process. It was a quick and inexpensive way to make 30 copies or so, but somewhat messy. And overseeing that process was part of my job. An hour or two after the meeting I'd have that out through the building and everybody would have a record of what he was supposed to do and what the next fellow was up to, and then the chairman would go down the list the next morning and check it off. That's how we kind of grabbed hold of things within the department to make our congressional presentation deadlines.



Very interesting people were involved. An army lieutenant colonel named Charles H. Bonesteel, III, the famous Tick Bonesteel, who became a four-star general before he retired. I think his major assignment eventually was probably the top military post in Korea. Then he was lent by the Pentagon to the then Under Secretary Lovett, this was before Lovett had become Secretary of Defense--he was then Under Secretary of State to Acheson--and by whatever alchemy he arranged to borrow this very bright, able, young Rhodes Scholar who was, incidentally, a lieutenant colonel but who did not appear as military. He didn't wear his uniform; he was often called mister, et cetera, just for practical purposes. He chaired the working group and pulled the operation together in the preparatory stages when we were getting ready to make the congressional presentation.

They got to the stage where they needed to lay on more secretariat hands in about November 1947. That's where I came in. At that point, a lot of people who subsequently became ambassadors or had comparable responsibilities in various administrations were right at the upper-middle level--people that were really still drafting, working, and putting that thing together. People like Paul Nitze, who I think then was a deputy office director, hadn't been in the government too long after the war, although he had some wartime service. And he was very impressive even then. I came to know him later as the Assistant Secretary of Defense I reported to (ISA) in the Pentagon, and he directed the preparation of a book I



edited for the Atlantic Council in 1979, Securing the Seas (Westview). George McGhee, was another, who became an assistant secretary and rather senior ambassador and Under Secretary of State. Harry Labouisse who came to have a major United Nations job later, and Jim Penfield who became a senior ambassador. Link [Lincoln] Gordon came down and consulted as he has done many times for the government since; he was then about thirty-three years old. I guess that was about Bonesteel's age, too. Gordon was on the Harvard Business faculty with rank of professor at that age, already arrived as you see. It was that kind of a thing. Ambassador Lewis Douglas was brought back from London to direct the Administration's legislative presentation of the Marshall Plan to the Congress, working with the same group.



SOAPES: When this job ended in '51, where did you go?

TONER: I was detailed from the State Department to come over to 708 Jackson Place (about 20 years before its architectural restoration) where a new interdepartmental board had just been established. It was, I guess, a couple of months old, and called the Psychological Strategy Board. The nomenclature almost dates it. Psychological was a fashionable word in those very early fifties. You heard for the first time, or more than previously, about psychological warfare or strategy or whatever. Anyway, that was it, and it made a kind of logical progression from my committee and

secretariat work and my foreign affairs background. Again it involved a very interesting staff and had various people in it that reappeared later.

SOAPES: Was C.D. Jackson a--

TONER: C.D. Jackson was one of them, although I think you may have to wait about a year. It seems to me that the Psychological Strategy Board was roughly the last Truman year, and then when Eisenhower came in he had various study groups established, to go over the national security machinery particularly. And you remember he really expanded and strengthened the NSC apparatus and brought in Bobby Cutler, for example, who no doubt had been influential in the studying and planning prior to the event. But I wouldn't have known that at the time; I just knew that there I was sitting in the PSB and about a year later, with a change of administration, came a change of committee nomenclature and structure and emphasis, and we were then tucked under the NSC. Operations Coordinating Board was the new title. And there are some other significant things if you are at all interested in committee technique.

SOAPES: Sure.

TONER: The PSB never had a permanent chairman. It had about the same membership as the later OCB: State, Defense, the AID agency. CIA I believe had either an advisory or a membership role in it.



The senior board met probably once a week, and the chair would rotate depending on what agency head hosted the meeting. There would be usually an office lunch associated with it; and whoever hosted the lunch, would chair the meeting. The Board had a staff with a director, who--when I first went into it--was Gordon Gray. But he did not stay very long. He went back to be president of the University of North Carolina. He reappeared, of course, in the Eisenhower period. But that was my first association with him. A most able and decent kind of a boss. Anyway, a year later there was a series of studies and out of them came the OCB. At that point the Department of State evidently saw to it that the Under Secretary of State was made its chairman, after the "rotating" chair experience of the PSB, in the executive order that set up the Board. Some of the old PSB staff left; some like me, stayed on, and the agency membership remained more or less the same. The mandate was, "Let's have an arrangement that will help us to see that the policy papers that are developed through the NSC are carried out at the operating level."

[Interruption]



TONER: You've got to remember that I worked for these committees professionally, fulltime, for several years so I can easily get drawn off into that kind of thing, which may not be quite what you're looking for.

SOAPES: We're interested in what was going on in some of these committees and some of the mechanics that don't get written down or the access to that sort of material is not too good. Now you stayed on with the OCB after Eisenhower came in.

TONER: Yes, I did. For, I guess counting the PSB, for about five years and continued to do much the same kind of work in support of the agenda planning and getting the documents out and actions reported and the followup actions, what, policed? Is that the word? You don't just sit back and assume. You write down every Board action with a deadline, and then go after it if a response doesn't appear in the form of a document.

SOAPES: Did you sit in on the meetings of the committee?



TONER: Much of the time for both the PSB and the OCB, and the smoke-filled, marathon sessions of the Board Assistants. That becomes rather a long time ago by now, but the two chairmen of the OCB that I remember are Herbert Hoover, Jr., and, somewhat less distinctly, Christian Herter, Sr., who followed Hoover as Under Secretary and of course later became Secretary. Some of the members were Nelson Rockefeller--in fact he was vice-chairman at one point, or perhaps for a major portion of that history. Reuben Robertson was the Deputy Secretary of Defense that I remember; Dillon Anderson represented the White House, and Harold Stassen participated as head of the foreign economic aid agency.

SOAPES: You may be confusing him with Douglas Dillon who eventually became Secretary of the Treasury.

TONER: Even at the time it wasn't easy to keep the names straight, among Reuben Robertson, Robert Anderson who was Secretary of the Treasury (after being Deputy Secretary of Defense), Dillon Anderson, and Douglas Dillon. Herter would have left as chairman when he went up to become Secretary, and I've forgotten who took his place then, Robert Murphy? In the last months of the Eisenhower period in effect State ran out of senior people and the White House took over the chair. It went to Gordon Gray, didn't it?

SOAPES: Yes, right. He was the national security adviser.



TONER: Right. And, as I mentioned he had been the head of the staff of the Psychological Strategy Board a few years earlier.

SOAPES: Now, do you have an impression from the meetings that you were sitting in on in the early years of the Eisenhower administration as to who the leading figures were, who was taking the initiative, who was giving the direction to that board?

TONER: Well, you remember there was also an NSC and there was also an NSC Planning Board.

SOAPES: Right.

TONER: And whoever represented the White House on the NSC Planning Board I believe was concurrently a member of the OCB, and that would be primarily Bobby Cutler--Robert Cutler former B.G.AUS. And in turn Gordon Gray. Now this is a little hard to follow because Cutler had that job, left, came back to it, and then left again before the end of the administration, to go into the international banking field, and Gordon Gray took over both portfolios at that point. But there was that correspondence between the NSC and the OCB which was intentional; it was all supposed to be one hierarchy. Okay, with that aside you'd have to remember the OCB chairman; and Nelson Rockefeller certainly was an outstanding figure, not just one of the people on the committee. He was, at some point, designated vice-chairman of the OCB and again that tied in with some other things that he was doing in the White House.

SOAPES: Right, he sort of took over C.D. Jackson's slot when Jackson left.

TONER: That makes sense. And he had a strong staff, which was always significant. Now that you've jogged my memory, Harold Stassen was very effective in inter-agency committees. I'm sure he's not well known for that fact, but as a connoisseur of the game I can assure you that he was awfully good. He had a staff and a good one.



The same kind of people that would be on the NSC staff or the Rockefeller staff or the upper reaches of the State Department worked for Harold Stassen. And again, didn't he have a combined portfolio of AID agency and the White House office?

SOAPES: Right, that was at the beginning and then he came over in the disarmament agency.

TONER: I don't know whether that takes him out of this context.

SOAPES: Okay, that was a White House office that he headed at that point, about '55, that he was spearheading disarmament.

TONER: I would have known him subsequently, but I'm not clear whether that job was part of the OCB context.



SOAPES: I think he had the AID very early in the administration.

TONER: Whoever was in the AID agency would be a member of the OCB as I recall. And anyway he was good. He did his homework and had his staff come in and help him prepare for the meetings just as I had seen the good people operate then and later in my Pentagon days, and that's the way to do it. There were very few surprises for the principals who came prepared like that. They knew what to look for, what to expect, what the interests of their agencies were and what positions they had elected in advance to press for. I would have to say that he was one of the memorable performers.

SOAPES: Then was it from this position that you went into the White House?

TONER: Yes, it was.

SOAPES: How did that move come about?

TONER: Well, after five years of being in another secretariat job, however interesting, I had decided it might be time to move on and passed the word among my associates in the government, which is the way it's done, and soon got word that "a kind of a research position is opening up on the White House staff that you might be right for and interested in." It turned out to be a project that had been recommended by Carter Burgess in his staff survey during the early days of the first Eisenhower administration. He had proposed all kinds of things be done and they accepted some and rejected others and reserved on a few. Anyway, the project in question turned out to be based on activities that were already going on in other government departments, particularly the Department of State, whereby you had one or more staff summaries prepared for the head of the organization. And Carter Burgess had proposed that in his study that Brad Patterson participated in. It was not accepted then. For whatever reason in the middle of 1956 they decided to give it a try. There was still some skepticism about whether it would work.



But to make a long story short, my phone rang on a Friday and it was General (then Colonel) [Andrew] Goodpaster, the staff secretary, who said that he understood that I might be interested in being considered for a new position that was being established, and he would like me to come over and talk to him about it and, "What about tomorrow? Do you work on Saturday?" We didn't work many Saturdays in the OCB staff, and there was just enough silence to answer the question. He said, "Well, from the pause I think maybe we better make it Monday." And, you know, I was embarrassed by then. I said, "Look, if Saturday is what's convenient, by all means." He said, "No, that won't be necessary, but I would like to pick a time when Governor Adams might be available, so I'll get back to you." Sure enough, out of the blue, ten o'clock or something on the following Monday or Wednesday or very shortly thereafter I got the fateful call and hiked right across Pennsylvania Avenue and met briefly with Colonel Goodpaster, who by that time had my résumé, of course, and asked some questions about what I'd been doing. One of them was whether I had ever had responsibility for setting up an office. And in my various wartime OSS experiences I had and even perhaps in State I had, for the Marshall Plan. Anyway the short answer was, yes. And then, "All right, let's go in and meet the Governor." I think that was the first time I had ever seen a judge's chair, and Sherman Adams had that key office in the corner of the West Wing. I'd never met him before and barely



glimpsed him around Pennsylvania Avenue, but liked him immediately and was impressed by his command of the situation and the easy relationship between the two men. They had done a lot of work together obviously by then, General Goodpaster and Governor Adams. The Governor asked me a few questions including rather brusquely, "Are you a civil servant?" And I remember saying, "Yes, sir." And I don't remember too much about it. And I didn't know how the interview was going or how far along they were in the selection process. Quite often one of those initial sessions will end with "Thanks for your interest, we are considering two or three other people and we'll get back to you."

But the Governor, after a few minutes, looked at Colonel Goodpaster and said, "Where are you going to put him?" That was the official welcome to my days in the White House. Colonel Goodpaster said that he thought that the one remaining space left anywhere was in the East Wing on the ground floor where there was a fairly good-sized room looking out at the Treasury across East Executive Avenue. At the moment it was being used for training lectures for the White House police. And sure enough I found myself being guided briskly down the ramp, by the Rose Garden, past the flower shop and right through what we then called the Mansion, into the East Wing. And we went around and Colonel Goodpaster sort of turned the thing over to me and told me where to find a secretary to get me going and then things happened very quickly after that.



SOAPES: The responsibility was then on to you to--

TONER: To see about a staff. They gave me some suggestions of people they had been considering for one reason or another. Of course I understood the government system well enough by then to know how far to go on my own and when to come back for approval and then proceed. But in no time at all we had a staff and a darned good one, too, put together. Just two professionals besides me and one or two secretaries.

The first professional to work with me on what we decided to call the "Staff Notes",--that was the daily summary of government problems and activities that we were in the process of developing for the first time for the President--the first professional assistant turned out to be Phillip Areeda. He came out of a folder that somebody handed me and I interviewed a few people including him and--

SOAPES: I think he was still a military officer at the time.

TONER: He was. He was winding up his military obligation; he was stationed in the Pentagon. He was already a Harvard Law graduate. In fact he was a summa from Harvard in economics, and one of three Harvard Law School summa cum laude graduates since World War II or something like that. They doled out the distinction pretty stingily, I understand. Anyway, I interviewed him and pledged him up and got, of course, Colonel Goodpaster's okay and got him to work right away,



and Lucile Catlett, known as Katy, Lucile M. Catlett, who was still, I believe, a WAVE commander, just winding up. Or perhaps by that time she was a WAVE reserve commander. Her background had been congressional affairs. She had been representing the Navy Department on the Hill, on the spot literally, and would cover Congressional hearings and debates of interest to Navy and communicate back, either in a memo or a phone call, any interesting developments the Navy ought to know about. Although she was initially attached to my enterprise as a specialist in legislative reporting, she tied into Bryce Harlow's congressional interests. Later she moved over to his office and we went out of the congressional reporting business, but at first we did the two things. We did the "Staff Notes" for the President and a very few other people, Governor Adams and Colonel Goodpaster and perhaps the governor's deputy. And I can't think of anybody else for a long time that was on the--not mailing list, I wouldn't use that expression. We used to joke about having the most exclusive newspaper in the world. It was pretty tight and that really helped us, for obvious reasons, to gather material.



SOAPES: Now had General Goodpaster been the one who had given you your charter, told you what your objective was?

TONER: Well I think that Carter Burgess blocked it out. Said, "You ought to have this kind of an arrangement; they have one in State and they have one in so-and-so. And it's very helpful to

the top man if he can come in every morning and have right before him in a familiar format from reliable sources a selected bit of reporting on the kinds of things that he is known to be interested in and responsible for." So that was, I think, the first crack at a definition. And then people like Governor Adams and Colonel Goodpaster must have been instrumental in saying let's give it a try, though obviously that was before my time. And nothing of that kind could be done without the President's approval I am sure. They probably just mentioned it to him, "Sir, we think it's worth having a go at this Burgess thing." That's all I know about it. Then you evolve as you go along. You learn what works and what doesn't and the best guidance in the world is to have the phone ring and to have Colonel Goodpaster say that Governor Adams was very much interested in your number three item--would you get us last year's figures? Or would you find out more about how that program is moving and what their first target date is? We always felt good when something like that happened. I remember one day Colonel Goodpaster called me and said, "Well, you've had your red meat for the day. The Governor wants to know," or, "the President has asked," or something like that meaning good, we'd like to have more items like that one. So then you go beating the bush for it.

If I could back up a little and forget the housekeeping and the staffing, the first thing you do to set up a reporting system is get the word out to your constituents. That would be the other



sovereign government departments and agencies that were going to look to primarily to produce the information. We also invited the White House staff to contribute. But the first thing you do is put together something in writing, and I believe that was signed by Governor Adams to the heads of the participating departments and agencies, and that would be the cabinet executive departments and a few runners-up. The AID agency would be one, the U.S. Information Agency another. Others, however, were left off limits. There was no CIA; there were no regulatory agencies. Again for obvious reasons. So it was pretty much the agencies that I was familiar with in the foreign field plus some new ones that were very much unknown to me-- like Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, and let's see, HEW did exist then but not HUD. HUD [Housing and Urban Development] would come--

SOAPES: HUD didn't come till the sixties. In looking through the records of that office as I have, I think I've looked at every page --I processed your records of your office when I was on the archives staff.

TONER: You probably know more about it now than I do. I have not a scrap of notes, you know, by preference and by scrupulous adherence to the ground rules.

SOAPES: Wasn't this an information and not an action line?

TONER: That's true.



SOAPES: Did you find that some of the agencies or some of the departments would try to use it though as an action line?

TONER: Yes. And we couldn't afford not to be alert to that. We would get into assorted kinds of trouble if we distorted our purpose, and, we were sensitive to that possibility. I think we put the caveat in the original letter that went out asking the secretary of X to designate a representative to work personally with me, and we stressed from the outset that this is not part of the decision-obtaining, or action channel. You may say anything you want about a problem that is in the process of decision or may very likely have to come up to the White House for decision. That's okay. But don't make the mistake of using this vehicle to get an approval. And deviations from this rule were not a major problem, though once in a while I suppose somebody would step over the line and we'd have to call him up and reason with him and say, "This frankly isn't quite the kind of thing. But I would salvage the item if I could by saying, "All you need to do to convert this to a legitimate information item is to say something like, 'We expect to have a recommendation before the President by next Tuesday,'" then I could deal with it without any difficulty. But if in any sense it implied that "We'd like to know what to do about so-and-so," no.



SOAPES: Why don't you give me a little bit of the process of your daily routine of turning out an issue of "Staff Notes." When did you start and how did you get the day underway?

TONER: I think it only took about a week from the time that I moved into that empty office before we were getting things out on paper. The analogy used to be to drilling for oil. Some water comes up and some sand and so on, and we hoped that some good, black gold will soon follow. And it wasn't very long. We made a few trial runs that presumably did not go in to the President but just would go over to my superiors for them to see how and what we were doing and whether we needed further guidance. I don't remember that that was a prolonged or painful process. In fact, even at the time, I felt we got rolling sooner than my experience would have indicated, but I think that was the White House of it. It's just somewhat easier to do one of these things out of the White House than it is out of the office of the Secretary of State, although in either case, frankly, you're going to encounter resistance from the professionals who have been doing things differently. So you've got to get your auspices established, issue clear guidelines in writing, ask for an agent and a representative of the Secretary, really, of whatever the agency is to work directly with me, and then, of course, we made a sweep. I would go alone or with Phil Areeda or with Katy Catlett or in some combination and meet



with these people, and very often meet the departments' principal officer at least once. Usually we'd have a working session with the staff man and then perhaps a relatively brief, almost a social introduction to the head of the department, but a few of them chose to plunge into it a little more.

Then we would ask to have the material as early in the day as possible. From the outset we realized that it wouldn't be too practical to slap a deadline on something when the real criterion was that we wanted everything fresh and accurate as soon as possible. So we would prefer to have the submissions for the day in by something like three p.m. to give us a chance to sift and select and edit and type and deliver--all of the mechanical processes. But if something really outstanding came in after the rest of it was typed up, we'd adjust to it and redo a page. Or, from an early date, we had a device known as the "Special Staff Note" and if something hot came in between deadlines or between publications we'd put one paragraph on one sheet of paper immediately and walk it over. We didn't drop any of our products into the normal messenger service. That would have been all right; I was told I could do it. But I always felt better if I could walk it over or have one of our own staff hand it to Colonel Goodpaster or somebody designated in his office.



We were part of the Staff Secretariat. My title was Assistant to the Staff Secretary and head of the Research Unit, or something like that. Two different means of expressing the same job.

There was a hectic going-to-press-time period in the zone that I mentioned, from about three o'clock until six-thirty or quarter to seven at night before we usually cleaned up and left, which was a little longer than the ordinary civil service day, but not so long as the day of the more senior people. Colonel Goodpaster, for example, and usually the President would be at their desks between seven-thirty and eight o'clock in the morning. Does that square with your independent knowledge?

SOAPES: Yes.

TONER: Goodpaster I'm sure of; the President you can perhaps tell better than my memory. But things were well underway in the West Wing by the time we got going around nine o'clock or earlier on staff meeting days.

[Interruption]

SOAPES: You wanted to back up just a bit.

TONER: We mentioned a minute ago that one of the classic moves one makes in setting up a new establishment is to get the word out in writing. In our case there was an interdepartmental memo that went out signed by Governor Adams saying that the President wishes to set up a new information reporting system. What I neglected to mention was that at a cabinet meeting in that first week this subject



was given a spot on the agenda, and I had an opportunity to sit in for a few minutes and see the cabinet at work for the first time in my experience. And Governor Adams called attention to the memorandum saying what the President wanted done, that all the cabinet members had by then received; and he perhaps stressed a couple of highlights and introduced me as the person with whom their representatives should be in touch. That gives you your auspices. In telephone contacts with an agency representative we could refer to what was agreed upon with his boss present at the cabinet meeting and go right on from there. Then came the personal visits, after the names fluttered in on paper.



SOAPES: Your points of contact.

TONER: Right. They were good people, of mixed backgrounds but strategically located. Some of them had come in with the administration and some--one of the very finest, in fact--was an old-hand careerist in the Pentagon by the name of Eugene Livesay. He had worked, I think, in at least one of the services before he went into OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] and he was awfully effective. Sometimes when he was on leave, one of the military assistants in the Secretary's office would replace him. One of the people that I am interested, in retrospect, to think about is George Brown, who is now the chairman of the JCS. He was then probably a young brigadier general in the office of the Secretary of Defense, with a lot of career ahead of him.

We would deal on the telephone and do this kind of thing that you asked about--call back and say, that second item you sent us on the 15th was exactly what we're looking for; we'd like to have more of those, and in fact there was enough interest in our readership that we'd like to ask you to do us an updating on that in about ten days. We were always trying to develop the best material our imaginations would permit. It was not automatic. You don't just have a cabinet agenda item and send out a memo, however authoritative, and sit back and wait for things to happen. All this business of phoning and visiting and trying constantly to keep the material moving and fresh was an indispensable part of the process.



Of course some of the material wasn't suitable and we'd have to tactfully say, "On that item, I think not." One of our criteria for rejection would be that it was in the New York Times yesterday morning. Once something had appeared in the public domain, by our standards, it was declared legally dead. We were not a newspaper clipping service; were not aping or mirroring or cribbing from what the President may well have seen before the rest of us did. And he did, too. He did read the newspapers, although he is sometimes unfairly accused of not doing just that, not keeping up with the papers. But I can remember being called fairly early in the morning and my boss dryly asking me if I had seen page thirteen of the New York Times this morning, and I said, "Why no, I haven't got that far." And very likely never would have. The President

had, and he had picked up a little squib and it was on a defense matter. It was news to him and he wanted to know more about it.

That was the most primary kind of guidance in the world, although there wasn't a whole lot of it, frankly. Nor should we have waited until the President came back with specific reactions; but I treasured those reactions, such as they were in quantity.

General Goodpaster would be with the President when the report went in--he would take it in to the President in the morning. That's part of the mechanics. I would usually get it to General Goodpaster by six in the evening, a little before or a little after if I must, so that it wouldn't be the very last thing in the day to happen to him, and give him a chance to go over it and possibly come back with a question or so before we closed for the day. Then before I would be starting my new workday the next morning, General Goodpaster typically would have taken it in to the President and he would have gone through it. The reaction, if any, would come back to me by way of General Goodpaster from either the President or the Governor or himself.



SOAPES: Now in spite of the fact that the President's decision was announced* at the cabinet meeting, that the written orders had gone out, that you did a lot of follow-up, I also noticed a number of comments that certain agencies and departments did not submit sufficient items. Did you get a feeling for why they didn't?

*I believe the Vice President chaired the Cabinet meeting at which the Staff Notes were launched, in the Presidents absence; but the President was in the chair when the subject was brought up at a later session, to help keep performances up. (APT)

TONER: Well you're quite right. And you've reminded me that we did keep score.

SOAPES: Right, we've got the scorecards.

TONER: That's the only professional way to do it. Assume nothing, don't trust them to do anything on one request; keep score and go after them. And if you feel that you have fairly exhausted all of your normal remedies, go back upstairs. Say, "Look, it's my understanding that the President wants things done in the following manner and I can't seem to get these people sufficiently persuaded. Could you help me out?" Again, it would be a point of pride with me not to go running upstairs frequently; just really make a serious effort to try everything short of that. In effect it's an admission of defeat if you have to go get help. So we didn't do it a lot, but we kept a lot of scores and we prepared a monthly scorecard with a bar graph showing the relative standings of our contributors. That, you know, without much written text, was a pretty graphic thing.

The foreign affairs agencies would tend to be on the high side, and, in fairness, it was easier for them to do so. They had masses of communication about their business day in and day out. They were big and complicated enough themselves that they had been forced by then to organize into some kind of synthesis of reporting to their own leaders. But that wasn't true of the older civilian agencies,



particularly the several that were organized along bureau lines. The bureaus had a great deal of life of their own and the departments to which they belonged didn't all have secretariats, to repeat that word, although one or two of the larger ones did. In some cases the person designated to work with me from such agencies would admit, "You fellows have forced us to do something that, frankly, we have found useful and probably should have done before this. We've had to go set up a better system of information reporting across our bureaus than we had when you came to us." In other words, the willingness to cooperate varied among agencies, but so did the inherent problem. It was just a lot easier to work out of some departments than others.

Categorically, we could never afford to be satisfied that we had done all that we should have or wanted to in getting top-flight, fresh reporting out of these departments. I had learned long before in my State Department experience with assistant secretaries, when I was doing program reporting or trying to track down and prepare material that would be interesting and useful for the Secretary's staff meeting that some people like to run a fairly open enterprise, while the other type, the tough one from our standpoint, prefers to hold things close to his chest. But once or twice after the system was well on its way we went back to the cabinet. I remember particularly one cabinet meeting in which they invited me again to sit in for that item.



SOAPES: I remember one particular incident, the Bureau of the Budget, as one that was almost hostile to your request for information, and their suggestion was they had their own lines of communication to the President and they didn't need you.

TONER: I've forgotten that to this day, but I remember the episode and perhaps more than one example of the type, with the budget people getting into it with either me or Tim Stanley. I also remember one time with a State contact when Phil Areeda got less than an appropriate response to a legitimate request, and I felt constrained to get into it to back him up. But the expression of a Budget official was that they weren't here to play "tattle-tale" or something like that. Well, here you have frankly a philosophical issue: one man's tattle-tale is another man's legitimate extension of the staff activities of the President. And you've got to be tolerant; you've got to see the other guy's position. If somebody in one of the subordinate agencies passed something along to me for the eyes of the President that somehow unfortunately got to somebody else who, let's say, didn't have the right to the information that the President obviously would, that I could see as a problem, and from the beginning. That's why I liked the idea of the small readership, that contributed to the, well let's say to the security of the system. A man could fairly comfortably talk about a problem in his department that was troubling him that the President ought to know about without expecting to see it in the newspapers the next day. We were both



sensitive to that possibility and had a good record in avoiding it, so that I think we were entitled to more cooperation than we sometimes got.

Of course the White House staff was another very uneven situation. You'll notice going back over the records that it was not directly a function of rank. Some of the quite senior people on the White House staff were pretty forthcoming, regular contributors of information items. And I tried, of course, to take a quite different approach with them. At the outset I made the rounds and called on all the people on the staff, virutally, and explained what we were up to and how I hoped that they would participate and find it useful both to the President and for themselves. The way I tried to put it was that, "Sir, you don't need me to provide access to the President; you've had that for the last three years," in some cases and longer in others, "but here we're doing something that we've been asked to do for efficiency and convenience, primarily of the President. But, incidentally, if you've got five things you want to tell him and you've got fifteen minutes with him, maybe you can tell him in two paragraphs in my vehicle two of them and then have a little more time in the oval office to talk about the other two or three." That was the best argument I could come up with, and I think some of them, at least, saw it that way and so used it.



SOAPES: I know that the vice-president was on your mailing list.

TONER: After a while. After quite a long while and again not on the first thought.

SOAPES: Was the fact that he was on the list an inhibiting factor for some of these people?

TONER: I don't know. I would be pretty sure--I can't tell you from personal knowledge just who did see it, but all of the circumstantial evidence is that very few people indeed did. Of course the way the issue would arise would be when staff people whom I called upon to contribute said, "Well, that's very interesting," and "How do I get on your list?" I had to pass that on to my superiors and that would be the last I would hear of it, which was fine. That was a good solution for me: "I'm just the editor; the circulation department is over there." It was admittedly a bureaucratic device, but I think in the circumstances fair because I wasn't going to have any discretion over circulation, and that was for the good of the project.



SOAPES: In the actual production of the "Staff Notes" you eventually had Tim Stanley and Chris Russell working with you. Did you tend to work as a team, or was there a structured process there in which each one had his own portfolio?

TONER: We're only going to be turning out a page and a half a day so you don't need a lot of people going off under eye-shades, each

doing his section. Everybody sees everything, and it was simply a pragmatic apportionment as we went through. Now, if anything had either an economic or a legal emphasis to it, I would try to give it to Phil Areeda to use his background. I automatically tried to throw that to him. I would probably tend to try to hang on to the State Department myself. Only at some time during the day each of us would see everything. We'd take a pencil and make a score like yes, no, maybe, or one, two, three, or some sort of a rude cut first and keep it deliberately loose until it got to be go-to-press time, because something might come in to supersede it and eleven o'clock in the morning's number one could become number five or get dropped till the next day if something came in to supersede it. We were all in the same room.

Remember we're approaching the end of the first four years, the jobs are pretty well established, the space is pretty well filled up, and there's not any of it to throw away. For example, General Goodpaster, with one of the key jobs really in Washington, shared an open office with three or four other people in that West Wing until the mid to latter part of the second administration. They finally gave him a break and did a little repartitioning and gave him a private office, but, again, that was good doctrine for me. I saw how he made do under very tough conditions and right away recognized, well that's the way it's done around here. There would be relatively junior officers in the State Department in my background that would have at least a small private office, but not there.



Anyway, to get back to it, the same for us in the East Wing. We were all in one office, so that all you do is call over to the next desk and say, "Well, I've been through this batch, are you through?" And, "What do you think--I like that thing from Agriculture. I think that would make a good lead item." And we'd go back and forth. Sometimes disagree. Phil was very severe. We all agreed we could help the President and tell him something that's ideally both useful and interesting to him and not waste his time. But just where you made that cut was something that we would occasionally differ about. And, if anything, I would be a little more liberal. Once in a while I would throw in an item from an agency that didn't bid as prominently for the President's attention as, say, the national security material would. And I'd say, "Here's something that he could live without, but it looks to me like a good cross-section of the kind of thing that is legitimately occupying these people in such-and-such an agency," and I would pass it on those grounds. Once in a while I might have a little difference with Phil over that kind of a judgment. Strictly a judgment call, a lot of it subjective.



SOAPES: What kind of items did you find that the President was most interested in?

TONER: Well, remember I confess that I didn't get a lot of those direct. I used that as an example of a rare, but ideal means of getting guidance, so I don't think I could give you a statistically

meaningful spread there, but I'll have a shot at it. Anything that--and I've repeated this many times as the formula that we were seeking--anything that the President might have to do something about sooner or later in the event that it doesn't go as the holding agency intends to have it go. That's the kind of thing that I believe the President ought to know about. And I don't know whether that's the same thing that, as you've asked me or whether I can be clear.

SOAPES: What I was wondering was if from any of the feedback that you did get you got the idea that the President was particularly anxious to hear about Department of Defense and missiles or agriculture--



TONER: I think by subject matter probably it's safe to assume that the foreign affairs agencies occupied a position of advantage. I have to be careful, because I can think of random cases--even after all these years I'm reluctant to talk cases. One of the ground rules of my business was go around to the departments and talk to people, but don't give examples of what you're sending in to the President from other agencies. And the ground rules are somewhat different now and you're seeing things that the world didn't particularly in those days, but I still have that feeling. I'm still reluctant, frankly, to give sample items, but simply to speak categorically. We had some ground rules internally, and that was

one of them. Another of them was--well before I found myself in the job I had the word passed to me that for this position we need somebody to do the work. We've got plenty of "executives" and we want somebody who understands that he's there "to do the work." And that, of course, was sustained, that dictum when I got there, plus some further admonitions of no publicity. We were not expected to appear prominently in the news or social columns or speech circuit or whatever. And that was very much to my taste. That was the way I had been brought up in places like the OSS and the Secretary's office in the State Department. In other words, do your job discreetly and do it at the office and don't take it outside. The only exception to that that I can remember was a very carefully written down and cleared description of the Staff Notes business I made for a management group. It was called the Inter-Departmental Management Group, Society, or something like that, mostly professional civil servants. And that request came to me through Art Minnich. Art had, I think, been asked to do it and found himself unable to and asked Andy, "Well what about Toner?" And Andy okayed it and at that point I said, "Well, all right, but I'm, first of all, not that much of an impromptu speaker and second, I don't want to disturb the tranquility of my business here." So I wrote the thing down and cleared it, without difficulty as it turned out. Went over and read it to the group and they were very much interested. I got a lot of questions and even found myself a little interested in luncheon



speaking. That was my total publicity experience, except for one authorized interview by a Boston newspaper reporter after we were established.

SOAPES: Were there other duties that came into your office? I think there were some special projects that came along occasionally, weren't there?

TONER: There were. I mentioned the congressional reporting and how it got started in combination with the "Staff Notes" and later split off. It seems to me that within the congressional category there would be various special studies that Miss Catlett would undertake--on a given bill perhaps. And yes, from time to time we did special notes really that would depend on somebody else's initiative. And I can remember some cases where we were asked to work up a special study. At the beginning of the project it might have been envisaged that we would do more of that than we finally did. As we settled down after the congressional function was transferred, there were after all just two of us, and that gave us time to do some of these administrative things of going around and visiting people and keeping score and getting on the phone. We did this daily, really. It was just a constant process of active contact with our constituent agencies. There wouldn't have been time to do scholarly research in considerable depth as a regular thing. But everybody has to drop everything for their last two or three hours



of the day and turn to the winnowing and polishing process for the day's output. Maybe you recall something that eludes me.

SOAPES: There are a number of items--well not a great number, but say a dozen or so file folders that were labeled "Special Projects," usually having to do with foreign affairs matters where the final product was not in the file. What was there were a few notes and sort of hen's scratch on them, and it was unclear to me when I was processing the collection what this was.

TONER: That doesn't ring a bell very loudly with me. Now I confess to you that I'm reluctant to talk even now in this context about the actual material, unless some of that happened after my time. Remember I did leave six or eight months before the end.

SOAPES: I think this was before that point.

TONER: Before that. I can remember a few assignments; I remember one or two that we gave to Phil Areeda while he was there because he was a great researcher. But I really do not feel that that represented--if you're talking about fairly thorough, and I use the word scholarly, special research projects. I don't remember that that kind of thing, while it did happen, bulked very large throughout the whole experience.

[Interruption]



SOAPES: Turning to some of your relationships on the White House staff. General Goodpaster was your immediate superior?

TONER: Yes.

SOAPES: Could you give me a sketch of what the nature of your relationship was with him and the principal traits of the man that you recall?

TONER: Well--I'm pausing to do justice to a very important subject. I have great admiration for General Goodpaster and, again, with that first phone call that I got from him I quickly sensed that he was someone that stays on top of a real tiger of a job with a minimum of show. Some people like to look busy or pressed, but he always, with or without effort I'll never know, made the difficult look easier than it possibly could have been. I've described the physical setup of his office with a certain amount of confusion and yet he managed to do his job in that environment. Particularly in my early days, I used to be startled and interested to see the chairman of the JCS stopping at his desk to chat and maybe follow up on a couple of items after an NSC meeting, or the Secretary of State. He had that kind of a job. It was a kind of crossroads job where the key people in the administration found it useful and desirable to keep in touch with him.



I once was embarrassed when I was setting up my office,--to get back to the housekeeping, when I was issued a little steel-nibbed government pen--that was before the ballpoint had taken over to the extent that it does now--with a little blob of cement with black enamel on it. I had been doing better than that since about a GS-9 in the Department of State. I'd asked my temporary secretary if she couldn't get me one of the Schaeffer pens with a permanent ink reservoir and maybe a little piece of marble down there. She looked at me a little strangely and said she'd see what she could do, observing that most of the people brought in presentation sets from their law firms or their industries or something so the problem didn't come up a whole lot. But without any difficulty she found one in supply and I had my pen. I think it was that afternoon that I was over on a bit of business with General Goodpaster and noticed that he was using the steel-nibbed and cement blob type. I decided that would be my lesson for the duration. No more perks or creature comforts requested out of my department.

So, he was like that. Unostentatious, but very able. Fantastically hardworking and devoted. I told you what his typical day would be, something like seven-thirty a.m. to quarter of seven p.m. at which point he left, not because everything was wrapped up but simply I think he felt that it was time to quit. It would probably threaten diminishing returns to push beyond that limit.



But then after he got home, unlike me, he was apt to get telephone business for another hour or so, which I thought was a pretty full day of work.

He had so many things to do that had nothing to do with my relatively simple specialty, and he was accountable to so many different superiors and priorities that certainly it was incumbent on me to have my activity come as little to his attention as possible in the sense of trouble or requesting guidance or assistance. I tried to play it that way and he never failed to do anything I asked him that I can remember. It was kind of a point of pride; you're a big boy and you've got a pretty good setup and you only have to do this one thing and if you're not set up to do it it's your fault because you set it up. Of course he had had a great professional career by then and went on in the same vein through four stars, which surprised no one. It was evident to those who knew him that he was one of the professionals in the army that was marked for high command.

SOAPES: Who are the other people on the staff that you came into contact with frequently?



TONER: Well, I did go to the regular weekly staff meeting, so that is one definition of contact right there. And if I was to perform as an extension of the President's staff secretariat in my relations with the other people on the staff and around in the agencies as well,

it was helpful in both the symbolic and practical sense to go to those weekly meetings. Now there are a lot of meetings going on in the White House that I didn't attend. But, just the same, there were announcements made at the weekly staff meeting that were helpful to me in my business. There were topics discussed that helped to alert me on what to look for around the departments. And that was perhaps the best opportunity I had to get some sensing of how the people on the staff related to each other and the President. There were about thirty people I guess that met in what was then called the Fish Room. It didn't get redesignated the Roosevelt Room until somewhat later. I was at the junior level of the group, which typically was chaired by the Assistant to the President. And you know it came as something of a shock years later when I was reminded by some student of the subject that in those days there was one, the Assistant to the President, and in succeeding administrations the rank got inflated. Sometimes there were several assistants to the President. Sometimes the focus of the agenda would rotate among the participants. The Governor would retain the chair but ask someone else to report on a project or an experience or suggest guidelines for some new project that would require staff participation.



SOAPES: Do you recall which individuals that were at your approximate rank that you had contact with? I'm thinking maybe of Art Minnich, some of these other people.

TONER: I saw Art several times a day, just for physical reasons. He was in one open room with General Goodpaster. And I insisted on hand-delivery of my products, so I was in and out several times a day. Also, come to think of it, I was encouraged to come over and do a little reading on some of the files of other things that were going on in the White House for this very reason, to help to saturate me with the values and directions of the Presidency. The way to do it was to sit down in a corner of Andy Goodpaster's office. That's why I remember seeing some of those visitors. I was over there in line of duty. Yes, I used to see Art in that sense and socially, had many a lunch with him and friendliest of relations. And for a while, of course, John Eisenhower occupied some of that same office--maybe about the time that Andy moved a few feet into his improved office situation, improved privacy. But I would work with Art, would turn my report in through Art only in the rare event that General Goodpaster was away, perhaps on a presidential trip or something of the kind. But it was not an in-line relationship; Art was the assistant staff secretary, I was assistant to the staff secretary, which is usually a way to separate the specialists from the general deputy or assistant.



SOAPES: What you just said raised the question in my mind: Did you continue to produce the "Staff Notes" even when the President was out of Washington?

TONER: Yes. I remember two stages. I always felt, "keep it going, don't ever let down or you will inculcate bad habits around in the departments. It's tough enough to keep them producing without saying, 'Cool it for a while.'" So that's point number one. Second, if General Goodpaster remained in the office and the President was away, perhaps at Camp David or something of that kind, no problem. I really didn't concern myself with the mechanics. I'd get it to General Goodpaster and it was his judgement whether to let a couple of them accumulate or pick out an item or pouch it or put it in a briefcase with some other things that had to reach the President. That's the least of the worries of somebody with my position on the staff--the mechanics exist for getting papers physically to the President when you need to. And Andy Goodpaster, better than anybody I know of, kept abreast of those techniques. I do remember a little change after a couple of years perhaps, when my boss told me that both he and the President were going to be away for the next few days and the pouch closes at six o'clock and just carry on with the "Staff Notes" and get them over to so-and-so, for the pouch. There was no professional go-between at that point. At the time I appreciated the gesture of confidence that no one had to screen it before it went out to the President. But that was after a while.

SOAPES: The picture that I get is that your contacts in doing your job were primarily outside the White House, that if you needed counsel or assistance in the White House you went to General Goodpaster.



TONER: Without any question. He was my line supervisor; he was the first person I saw before I was hired, and I reported to him. And if we wanted a memorandum from the White House to go to a department, he would decide whether he would sign it or make a phone call or ask Governor Adams to sign it, and he would clear any drafting I did for that purpose.

SOAPES: And you would not normally have opportunity to have contact with other White House staff people in a normal operation of your job, other than to solicit information items from them.

TONER: That's about it, except for the very pleasant and useful experience of the White House mess. And it was not considered bad form to do a little business in the mess. Part of the rationale for having it was to squeeze a few more minutes of efficiency out of the day by catching somebody at the mess that otherwise might have to return calls back and forth through the day and be more cumbersome. What was the original sense of your--



SOAPES: Well the question I was asking was were there other people other than say Andy Goodpaster that you had normal, official contact with on the White House staff, other than in the process of soliciting "Staff Note" items.

TONER: Well, yes. Oh, no, wait a minute. It was your last dependent clause that spoiled it. No. I didn't. I wasn't for example assigned

to a substantive area such as--well, you name one--any of the specialized areas to work with him on that subject or to help in preparing a draft bill for the President. But you remove that dependent clause and I had a great deal of freedom. Again it was this business about use your discretion and don't become a nuisance; you can go talk to anybody on the staff that you can catch about what you're trying to do. If you step over the line and start bugging people who do have many, many other things beyond reporting about them to think of, then one would expect to get reeled back in. But I don't recall anything like that happening, and, as a matter of fact, enjoyed it. I'd be a little more casual with the people closer to my own age group than I would the people on the senior staff. In those days there seemed to be a fairly good correlation between age and rank, although not a hundred percent. I think in recent years some of that has broken down, don't you?

SOAPES: Yes.



TONER: You get some pretty powerful twenty-year old--

SOAPES: I think we have a twenty-four year old appointments secretary now.

TONER: That sort of thing. But there were people I could count on in the staff, if usually sparingly. You think of credit piled up in the bank; the less you use it, the more confidence you have that it'll be there when you need it. There were several people on the

staff that were very busy but completely accessible and willing to help me out if I had a dull day. It was just like a professional journalist, I didn't like a dull day.

SOAPES: Who were those people that you could count on?

TONER: Bryce Harlow was certainly one. And to me he was one of the outstanding people on the staff anyway for his intelligence and his speaking ability. I remember him more vividly than some from the staff meetings. And he's helped me out on many occasion.

Clarence Randall was another that I could go to and quite often get not only a solid item, but maybe one with a little literary flavor or wit. He was, one of the big personalities on the staff to me. And I think he was generally liked by not only one and all but the younger element which, to some extent, included me in those days, and we used to like to have lunch with him. He kind of held court. He'd get there early and always sat in the long table at the far right. There were some people you might not approach quite so casually. Often there'd be a big business appointment. (I remember that one of my young friends before my time got into an embarrassment, not really trouble, because he didn't understand that when you see one chair cocked at the Governor's table it means that the table is reserved, not just the one chair. So my friend found himself in some awfully important company, which obviously had been arranged in advance. But nobody looked askance at him or in any sense asked



him to leave, but he just didn't let that happen again.) Anyway, we used to like to join Clarence Randall at his table. And he was a great speaker both in public and in small groups. He was colorful and had been one of our legion of English literature majors* on the staff I believe, before going into law and, of course, the steel business. So he was loaded with anecdotes about the world beyond the walls of Washington, and he wrote and published on a professional level. I was particularly interested in what he was doing at the time, too. He was the chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, which was squarely within the sights of my foreign affairs interest, and my assistant and I were invited as observers at its meetings. In the book I mentioned a little while ago that I worked on recently with Tim Stanley (Raw Materials and Foreign Policy, International Economic Studies Institute, Wash. 1976), we have a chapter in which we talk about the organization of Washington for foreign economic affairs and make suggestions drawing on the Clarence Randall experience. I think it is important to have someone in the White House that is close enough to the President to have some leverage in the field of foreign economic affairs.



*It's my impression that there were five college English majors on the Eisenhower staff, which if confirmed, suggests a diversification not generally known and I would guess not likely to have been repeated on successor staffs: Clarence Randall, Gordon Gray, Robert Cutler, Fred Morrow, and Albert Toner.

Others who came through on occasion included Pete Quesada, Steve Saulnier, Gerald Morgan, Ed McCabe, and the military aides. Brad Patterson, Max Rabb and later Bob Gray were helpful in many ways with their Cabinet experience, and arranged for me to attend their regular meetings with the Cabinet assistants. And I certainly should mention Bill Hopkins, who could answer most questions about the White House and gave valuable advice.

SOAPES: Is there anything else about your operation that we haven't covered, that we ought to get on the record?

TONER: That's a fair question and I can't think of anything. We've talked about how you set it up mechanically, what guidance we had and where it came from. How we worked and how hard we worked to make it worthwhile on a daily basis. The fact that it was a quiet, internal activity.

There are one or two anecdotes I might mention. At the very beginning, and I hadn't been there more than a week or so, I got a phone call from a name that I had to adjust rapidly in my head because he was on the phone, maybe without the go-between of the secretary, and I believe his name was Randolph Burgess, Under Secretary of the Treasury.

SOAPES: Right.



TONER: He had either attended the Cabinet meeting at which the Staff Notes were introduced when his boss was out of town, or his boss had talked to him about it. He immediately referred back to that initial cabinet meeting; and no doubt he said that his agency was prepared to participate and give me the name of the representative and so on. But then he expressed a personal interest in what we were trying to do because he said he had done something himself like it for Mr. Wilson. And, you know, Charles Wilson was then the Secretary of Defense, and I thought this is strange though I hadn't had any service in the Pentagon at that time. And then the second wave of recognition came over me and I realized that there were two other Wilsons of note. Not only "Electric" Charlie, but Woodrow. And apparently there was something way back in the Woodrow Wilson era that resembled what we were doing, which I found fascinating though I never had an opportunity to learn any more about it or track it down.



SOAPES: You left the White House then about six months, wasn't it, before the end of the administration?

TONER: I went in as a career civil servant and had rather a long way to go to retirement and intended to remain a career civil servant. So with great reluctance, I looked around and found a suitable spot that would be less vulnerable to the change in administration, which

wouldn't necessarily have been vulnerable only in the event of a change in party. This thing that I did was "iffy" to begin with and depended a great deal on the individual style of one President, and there was no way of assuming it would continue on even if the Party continued in the White House. The prudent thing was to look around and have a maximum element of selection of my own spot, and it worked too well. I started the usual overtures to see what might be available and right away word came back from the Pentagon that there was indeed such a slot but right now, or not later than such-and-such a date because they were losing a man and they really needed the help and it wouldn't keep forever. Maybe General Goodpaster talked to them and extended it a little, but I had to go sooner than would have been my wish. It would have been ideal for my purposes if I could have stayed throughout the end of the Eisenhower administration and then had the career job waiting to move into. But with reluctance therefore, I left in the middle of the last year, about June of 1960 and went over to the office of the Secretary of Defense and worked in the office of NSC affairs. So it was back in the old orbit that was familiar from my OCB days, except that instead of working on the OCB level I was working on the NSC policy papers. We had a whole office in ISA that did just that, and we worked our heads off from then until literally the inauguration of the next President, because Gordon Gray, who was



then running the NSC portfolio wanted things to be in good order when the administration went out of office. I can assure you that as far as the NSC papers are concerned, he accomplished his objective.

SOAPES: Now did you stay with DOD throughout your civil service career?

TONER: No, I had about five years there, including a year as Defense civilian at the National War College and some interesting professional visits to NATO Europe, then back to State. At that point to re-enter State I had to enter the foreign service reserve; and that was fine. I found somebody, who in fact, had had the same background that I did in the Secretary's office, who needed an Executive Secretary to help revitalize an inter-agency committee for research management policy in the social and behavioral sciences related to foreign affairs. So we did it, and I guess that was until about 1971. Then I went over to the Office of Emergency Preparedness in the Executive Office and was assistant to the deputy director of the agency who became acting director in the last six months, after General [George A.] Lincoln had left. They did not reappoint a director for the whole agency and the agency in fact was going out of business in one of those reorganizations of that period in which some White House office functions were getting reapportioned back into the other agencies.



I also had TDY, as we say in the Pentagon, a temporary assignment, in the early Nixon staff in 1969 in which we undertook something very like what I'd been doing in the Eisenhower period, on a somewhat smaller scale. It was a one-man job, except for a summer intern for that one summer. But it was abolished when there was a widespread reorganization of that staff, symbolized by the creation of the Domestic Council as a counterpart to the NSC on the domestic side. At that point the inter-agency reporting function was decentralized and those who had other responsibilities relating to domestic agencies would subsume the domestic agency reporting responsibility. I went back to State and then the OEP after that. When I went back to State I found the external research program dull by comparison and sought something more lively and found it and rounded out my government career in OEP.



Postscript: After an immediate, post-retirement tour in the Office of the Secretary of Commerce, I've been a Washington-area consultant and editor of books and articles on foreign affairs, especially for the International Economic Policy Association. I'm a free-lance contributor of short humor to newspapers and magazines, and recently (as of 1983) published byline articles on English language use and abuse, in the Washington Post Style section. (APT)