



INTERVIEW WITH  
General Andrew J. Goodpaster

by

Dr. Maclyn P. Burg  
Oral Historian

on

June 26, 1975

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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Andrew J. Goodpaster  
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Andrew Goodpaster

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This interview is being taped with General Andrew J. Goodpaster in General Goodpaster's offices in the Smithsonian Building on June the 26th, 1975. Present for the interview, General Goodpaster, Dr. Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: General, what I'd like to talk with you about today, if I may, would be recent allegations in the press with respect to CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] assassination plots. And I'm, naturally, particularly interested in this allegation insofar as it might refer to the Eisenhower administration where you were one of those in position as staff secretary to know something about the workings of that administration and to know whether indeed any such plans were drawn up or considered during the period late 1959 and throughout 1960.

GENERAL GOODPASTER: Well I think my overall response to that would be first to say categorically that nothing whatsoever of that description came to my attention during that time insofar as I am able to recall. And I believe that had anything of that sort come to the White House, I certainly would have known about it and, in all probability, I would have been present at any discussion of that sort. So I have to say that my very firm belief and my very strong and clear





recollection is that there was nothing whatsoever of that kind during that period either involving the President or any member of his staff of which I was aware.

BURG: Now could we expand it moving from the Cuban situation and moving from the time span which I gave you--I gather that the same statement that you've just given me could be made with respect to [Rafael] Trujillo in the Dominican Republic or [Francois] Duvalier in Haiti. In short, assassination as a means to carry out policy or to reshape the course of another nation's destiny was not considered in the Eisenhower administration.

GOODPASTER: At no time while I was on duty with the Eisenhower administration was any plan or plot for assassination brought to the White House in connection with any other world figure whatsoever or whomsoever, again, insofar as my very clear recollection of the matter is concerned.

BURG: Now it's my understanding that perhaps in '59 or perhaps it would have been in the Spring of 1960, Mr. Allen Dulles did bring to the White House a brief plan which had



as its object the sabotage of sugar refineries within Cuba as a means of harassing the then-new Fidel Castro government and that this was examined by the President who, it has been reported to me said, "Well, if you're going to do that, why monkey around with just sabotaging the sugar refineries? Why not work out some kind of plan that will perhaps lead to his downfall?" Does that sound at all familiar to you, General?



GOODPASTER: The business of sabotage of the sugar refineries does ring a bell with me; I do have some recollection of that. I do not have a recollection of the President's connecting that with a wider plan of action against the Cuban government. I do have the recollection of consideration of a wider plan somewhat later in the year if my memory serves me--mid-1960 or something like that--perhaps the latter part of 1960--but I do not remember it being connected specifically to this discussion of the sabotage of the sugar refineries. I'm not quite clear in my memory as to the action taken concerning the sabotage of the sugar refineries, but my inclination would be to think that either the operation

was approved or that no objection was stated to such efforts and that such efforts could go forward. But, referring back to your original question, there is no association or connection between that kind of thing and the question of assassination. That was a question which as I said before, so far as I'm aware, was never raised.

BURG: There is no connection between the sabotage plan and assassination. Let me then take it a step further. My information indicates that Mr. Dulles then returned to the agency headquarters and over a period of two to four weeks perhaps--and I think the initiation of this, the sugar refinery plan, would have been given perhaps in February or perhaps in March 1960--over a period of two to four weeks he and/or his staff came up then with a four-point plan which had far broader scope than did the sugar refineries plan. I do not remember all four of the points; I do recall that one of them dealt with the training of Cuban exile cadres for some, I believe, unspecified use later on; although it's my understanding that the intent at that time was very small units of Cubans armed with small arms who would be at





no specified time, perhaps infiltrated into Cuba, there to become cadres if there were within Cuba any kind of resistance movement. And in fact when I learned of this, it seemed so much like the situation in Europe--let us say 1944, '45, where there were governments in exile waiting to get back onto the continent where resistance units on the continent, and it struck me forcibly that this might be the very sort of thing that General Eisenhower was quite familiar with, would understand, and would be interested in. But that would then be the next step, the refinery plan dropped and this four-point program presented to the General. Does that ring a bell?

GOODPASTER: I can't put it in terms of four specific points, although I believe I do remember a reference to a four-point plan. What I do recall, although I would place it somewhat later in the year, is a proposal to bring together and to train individuals as an organization--give them training--so that they could be used if the decision were taken to intervene in some manner or to take some action within Cuba. But along with this, what causes it to stick in my mind, is two





further points. One, the President, making very clear and stressing very clearly that the approval of the training did not constitute a decision and the approval of the plan did not constitute a decision that such intervention would indeed be carried out or would indeed be approved. That's point one.

BURG: Who did he make that point to, General Goodpaster?

GOODPASTER: Again, my recollection is that it was to Allen Dulles and I would think also Gordon Gray. I associate the two of them with this expression of view on the part of the President.

BURG: Do you think it would have been as part of a Forty Committee meeting or perhaps even smaller than that?

GOODPASTER: I'm not able to say. It could have been this, the term we would have used at the time would be the Fifty-Four Twelve Committee.

BURG: It had changed its name to that--I see.



GOODPASTER: It's now called the Forty Committee, but at that time it was called the Fifty-Four Twelve Committee. I'm not sure whether it came that route or whether it was of these matters brought in on an ad hoc basis to the President so that he could give it specific and deliberate consideration. But the first point, as I say, was that the decision to approve the plan--and I recall it as a plan for training these people for possible use at some later time--it was stressed that it did not constitute a decision for such intervention or an approval for the commitment of these people. That's the first point. The second point, however, was--and this I remember on the part of the President--was a recognition that having done this, one must expect a difficulty to arise: That once this body of people was trained, then the pressures for their commitment and for their intervention must be expected to increase, and that made it all the more necessary that there be a clear understanding that there was no such commitment and that he, the President, was not going to be pressured into a commitment by the argument that now having trained these people we have to use them or we'll have some kind of difficulty on our hands.



BURG: So he agreed--I don't wish to put words in your mouth--it would seem that he had agreed to the training of these people as a contingency measure: It might be possible or desirable to do something later, therefore the training would have to occur now if they were to be ready.

GOODPASTER: I think that's a fair description of it, but I don't believe that the term contingency was used at the time. I think he was speaking more in terms of carrying out the training and taking other preparations which would equip and prepare this group for this kind of action if it should be decided upon. But I do not recall that the characterization contingency was applied to it at the time.

BURG: Was it possible for Allen Dulles to gain access to the President without passing, well let's put it very bluntly, without passing you, without moving through you in some way?

GOODPASTER: It was possible for anybody to get to the President without going through me. The President reserved and retained his own decision about whom he would see and how he would see them. I know of no instance, however, in





which Allen Dulles saw the President without either Gordon Gray or myself or both or John Eisenhower, substituting for me, being present at the same time. Physically there, of course, was another route into the President's office around through his private secretary's office. And he always had at least the opportunity to see people over in the mansion itself. But I know of no instance when Allen Dulles was seen in that way. In fact, if the meeting were more formally arranged or if a serious policy question was involved, it would be set up by Gordon Gray, or, if it was just a matter of his wanting to see the President on some specific thing, he would call me and I would arrange it through the President's appointment secretary.



BURG: The normal way in which, what should I say, covert operations would be considered, they would not be considered by the NSC [National Security Council] meeting as a body, I take it, but rather would be considered by the Fifty-Four Twelve group?

GOODPASTER: That's correct. In the time I was there, that is from October '54 until the end of the Eisenhower administration,



I do not recall any specific covert matter coming before the NSC as such for approval. The Fifty-Four Twelve mechanism was the mechanism employed to consider these matters. I will add that I do not believe that in every case I was informed of the outcome of the Fifty-Four Twelve consideration of the matter. In other words, Gordon Gray or one of his predecessors might very well have taken the matter to the President and reported it to him either for information or for approval after having attended and carried out the Fifty-Four Twelve consideration of the matter. There were, however, other covert operations which would come to the President after having been raised with me with the request that the matter be brought to the President.

BURG: Is it correct to say that your responsibilities tended to be more focused upon immediate matters, whereas Mr. Gray's responsibilities tended to be focused more on longer range matters.

GOODPASTER: That is correct. His was the more formal procedure, the longer range procedure, the policy procedure



--matters involving broader issues of policy. Those were handled on his side. On my side, the day-to-day operations, the questions having immediate aspects were dealt with in that way.

BURG: And I also understand that you gentlemen, as I believe many on the Eisenhower staff seemed to have done, without the necessity of mechanism, almost automatically kept one another abreast of developments, each in your own special service.



GOODPASTER: So far as I know we did that very, very thoroughly --each of us working toward the other to make sure that we kept each other completely informed and completely abreast so that if there were any question of whether a matter should be taken up as a day-to-day operation or as a more serious question of policy with broader implications, we would work that out between us and then organize whatever kind of a meeting would be required to give effect to that.

BURG: So really someone investigating the allegation with

which we started our conversation, it would be difficult to suggest that Allen Dulles could work through Mr. Gray and thence to the President in a matter such as that without your having been told about by Mr. Gray.

GOODPASTER: It would be my very, very strong belief that whichever way a matter of this kind, if a matter of this kind were taken up with either of us, the other would certainly be brought into it and thoroughly informed.



BURG: Mr. Goodpaster, can you speak from your own knowledge of any occasion when the President himself expressed an opinion on this kind of, if I may use the word "solution," to international problems? Did he ever express in your presence an opinion about this technique?

GOODPASTER: I don't remember any expression on his part in my presence on this kind of thing.

BURG: And I believe there have been times in the National Security Council, perhaps this is where it occurred, or it could have been in cabinet meetings, where, with respect to



some world leader, someone at the table would say, "Why don't we bump him off?"--using a quote that was given to me--and the opinion would range from that far end of the spectrum to the other end of the spectrum where people at the table were happy to embrace the particular world leader named. Have you ever been a witness to that sort of thing?

GOODPASTER: I'll have to say that I simply do not remember any proposal, not even a facetious proposal along these lines being made in the presence of the President. I've no memory at all of anything of that kind. And I'm confident that if a proposal of that kind had been made and it had had even an ounce of substance to it, that I would remember it.

BURG: One particular incident to which I refer involved Nasser, and someone in the group, and I believe this to have been either at a cabinet or NSC meeting, made this remark and would not have been from a department that had anything to do with it all. It was tossed out. The agency that wanted to embrace him, I have been told, was the, in that instance, the CIA, who felt, as it was put to me, that





Nasser was the wave of the future in that particular instance and the last thing in this world that they thought ought to be done was anything so crude as what had been advanced, perhaps facetiously or thoughtlessly, at the table.

GOODPASTER: As I say, I have no recollection of that and I'm sure that if, as I say, I'd sensed that any serious attention was being given to it, that it would have registered with me.

BURG: Now, one further thing. You indicated that at meetings with the President, and these would be meetings in the Oval Office--



GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: --notes were generally kept, some kind of an account was kept there. Whose task was that, General? Did you do that?

GOODPASTER: In almost all cases there notes would be kept, and that was one of my jobs in these ad hoc meetings that were held--to see that an adequate record of the main points of discussions and the outcome of the discussion would be kept.

John Eisenhower shared that duty with me as did Arthur Minnich. There were a very, very few instances where the matter was regarded as being of such sensitivity that we did not keep a record. The two types that come to my mind were both in the intelligence field. One had to do with a--and they're both publicly known by now--one had to do with a project in Berlin through the use of some tunneling to tap the telephones.

BURG: An operation which was blown, I believe.

GOODPASTER: And that was done and it operated with very valuable success for a considerable time and finally it was compromised and blown. And the other was the President's consideration of the U-2 flights. On that we did not keep a detailed record.

BURG: With respect to the decision to approve the overflights.

GOODPASTER: That is correct, the individual overflights. When those were brought in for approval, we kept necessary informal notes, but my recollection is that we did not write up an official permanent record on those. Those were regarded as too sensitive and the knowledge of those was very, very



closely restricted.

BURG: Do you give me those as examples of two of the sorts of things that were regarded as being too sensitive?

GOODPASTER: Yes, and that's the complete list as far as I remember it. It was only those. Those were the only ones that I can recall on which we did not keep some kind of a record.

BURG: I see. I'm very glad to have that information. I wondered if that might be true. So, aside from this, we might suggest that historical records, records that can be used by scholars, pretty thoroughly cover the various meetings at which any covert activities are going to be at all considered. We'll find that a memorandum for the record, a minute, notations were kept except for the two circumstances that you have just described.

GOODPASTER: Yes. That was our practice and I think that's exactly what you will find.

BURG: Is it your impression, sir, and I know it can only be



an impression, that the Eisenhower administration was at all unique in keeping rather detailed records of its activities?

GOODPASTER: I really can't say because I did not have that much connection with any other administration. Even during the short time that I stayed with the Kennedy administration I did not participate in meetings of similar kind so that I'm not able to say what their practice was.

BURG: General, I think that you've responded to the questions that I wanted to submit to you today and I thank you so much for doing it.



GOODPASTER: Happy to have this opportunity.



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This interview is being taped with General Andrew J. Goodpaster in General Goodpaster's office at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, August 20, 1976. Present for the interview are General Goodpaster and Dr. Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

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DR. BURG: First let me ask you when and where you were born.

GEN. GOODPASTER: In Granite City, Illinois, on the 12th of February, 1915.

DR. BURG: And were you educated then in Illinois?

GEN. GOODPASTER: Yes. We lived there and I went through the schools there in that area except for a period of about two years when my family lived out in central Indiana. We went out to a farm near my father's home in central Indiana from the time I was seven till the time I was nine, that is from 1922 to 1924. Then we came back to Illinois, to Granite City. I completed high school there and I attended two years plus a summer term at McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois, which is about, oh, fifteen or so miles away from Granite City, one of the small Methodist supported colleges.

DR. BURG: A liberal arts school.



GOODPASTER: Liberal arts, yes.

BURG: And after the two years and the summer session there, what was the next move for you?

GOODPASTER: By that time we were deep in the depression and my family had run out of money and McKendree had run out of money pretty much, and it was necessary for me to drop out and I got a job and worked for--it turned out to be about two years, through 1933, 1934. Toward the end of 1934 there was an opportunity to compete for an appointment to West Point offered by the congressman there. And I competed for that and won that appointment in late 1934 and then entered West Point in 1935.

BURG: Who was the congressman, may I ask?

GOODPASTER: This was Congressman [Edwin M.] Schaefer. He had just taken over. His predecessor either had become quite ill or had died and Congressman Schaefer, I heard, found that there were conflicting promises or partial promises as to who might get the appointments. So he decided to put it open for competitive examination rather than have the difficulties over what promises might have been made. Interestingly his



secretary at that time was Mr. Melvin Price, who, after Schaefer became ill and dropped out of Congress, became the congressman and is still the congressman from that area and is now the chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the House.

BURG: What was your age at the time that you secured that competition?

GOODPASTER: Let's see, that was in the fall of 1934; so I would have been nineteen years old. And I was twenty years old when I entered West Point.



BURG: Now your own father had been in part at least, a farmer?

GOODPASTER: Yes, he came from a farming family, but then he had worked on the railroads during his early life and then was with the Interurban Railways in the St. Louis area and was sort of the supervisor of the operations of one of its major sections running from St. Louis, Missouri, through Granite City to Alton, Illinois.

BURG: Now had you been at all drawn to the idea of a military career?



GOODPASTER: Not at all. In fact my primary interests were in mathematics. I thought I might be a teacher of mathematics. And while I was working I was also interested in the possibility of going into engineering. Being on the Mississippi River and near to the Mississippi I knew of the river and harbor work and I was attracted by construction--road, bridge construction--and that kind of thing, and in fact was doing some night school study on surveying and other preliminary subjects that would perhaps qualify me to get started in an engineering career. I learned in this connection that the army engineers had a very major role in such construction, and this then sharpened my interest in the possibility of becoming an army engineer and going to West Point for that purpose.



BURG: Did anyone counsel you, advise you?

GOODPASTER: No.

BURG: You heard about this opportunity and simply took it.

GOODPASTER: I learned about it. I think my father heard about it through one of the people that worked with him who had a relative who had become an army engineer via West Point. And

in fact I believe that I looked through an old Howitzer and learned something of West Point through this Howitzer, which is the yearbook, which showed what their life at West Point had been.

BURG: Now am I correct in assuming that in 1935 you would have reported there in the summertime?

GOODPASTER: That's right, 1st of July, 1935.

BURG: You had no further preparation for it, simply stepped into it.

GOODPASTER: None at all. That's right.

BURG: Did you find the particular kind of reception a plebe gets at West Point shocking or were you prepared for that?

GOODPASTER: I had a vague notion of what it was. It was still quite a shock to go in there. But they left no doubt as to what was expected of you, and I very soon concluded that it was well within my capabilities to do what had to be done.

BURG: So you adjusted to it without any real problem.



GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: May I ask what things, what academic studies at West Point over that four-year period of time pleased you the most?

GOODPASTER: Well I like all academics. I might make one or two exceptions to that. Things that are pretty much rote or just have no particular intellectual challenge to them, that doesn't interest me very much. But I've always loved mathematics, and I've always liked speaking, debating, literature, and history. In fact, I'm devoted to just about every line of academic and intellectual activity that I've ever encountered.

BURG: Is there a man, now, who stands out in your mind on that faculty as having had pretty strong influence over you, someone that you particularly admire, let us say?



GOODPASTER: Well both while I was there and then in subsequent years, then Lieutenant, later General Lincoln was a man for whom I had a high regard, both as an instructor at West Point and then in my service with him through all the years since.

BURG: What was his field, General?



GOODPASTER: He was in the field of what's now called social sciences; then it was economics, government, and history. Also he was the officer in charge of our debating council, so that I had a good deal of contact with him. And then in later years I served under him and with him in many capacities. That would certainly be one.

BURG: I'm sorry, I don't remember General Lincoln's first name.

GOODPASTER: This was so-called "Big Abe" Lincoln. This is George A. Lincoln, one of the very fine and outstanding army officers. In mathematics, then Lieutenant, later Lieutenant General Don Booth was one of my instructors for whom I had a very high regard. And in English, Lieutenant [Thomas M.] Watlington, later General Watlington, I would say the same with him. In engineering and military history, Captain [John Paul] Dean, an engineer officer, I found really very stimulating. He was a man who had done a lot of research on his own and did his own thinking and developed his own methods in the field of civil engineering. And this was, as I say, quite stimulating to a young cadet.





BURG: These men and their competencies still look good to you after many years.

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes.

BURG: And quite some familiarity with the academic world at large.

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes.

BURG: It would sound as though West Point was fortunate in some of the people that they had.

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes. They used young officers very much as instructors. The regular method was to send them off for a year or two years of graduate study before they came back to West Point to serve as instructors. It was a very prized assignment, and they brought up just absolutely superb people, superb in terms of their intellectual capabilities and also in terms of the kinds of men that they were.

BURG: I believe all of you had some contact with compulsory athletic program, physical education program. What sports did you indulge yourself in?



GOODPASTER: Well I played football for four years, never first string. In fact I played what we called B squad football, never on the varsity, but I liked that very much. And then along with that, such things as golf, and of course part of our education, so to speak, was riding, and I enjoyed that very much. Those were the principal sports that I played at the time. I played some tennis and then we had such things as tobaggoning and ice skating in the winter time.



BURG: Do your interests still include golf and tennis today?

GOODPASTER: Yes, yes, not tennis much, no. Prohibited to me to play seriously at all, although I get out and bang the ball around, but I still do play golf.

BURG: I'm sure it's a matter of record in Cullum [Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy], what was your final standing in the--

GOODPASTER: Number two in my class.

BURG: Indeed, indeed. Let's ask who number one was that year.

GOODPASTER: A good friend of mine named Stanley Dziuban. A

young man of Polish background, which was interesting because I'm partly of Polish background myself.

BURG: And he took one and you took two.

GOODPASTER: He was number one; I was number two.

BURG: You were permitted to choose your branch then, General?

GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: And did you go into--

GOODPASTER: I chose the engineers, and we could also choose our first station on the basis of class standing. We chose the branch and then made your choice of station according to what was available. I wanted to go overseas and I somewhat preferred the Philippines or Panama to Hawaii, those were the three choices. Dziuban went to Hawaii. I would have gone to the Philippines except that there was no vacancy that year. The 2nd lieutenant who was out there extended his tour, so there was no vacancy. And, as a result, I went to Panama for my first station.



BURG: May I ask what happened to that young 2nd lieutenant who extended his time in the Philippines?

GOODPASTER: He completed his service there, but the man who replaced him, who took the post that I would have had was killed on Bataan.

BURG: I wondered. Because you would have come out class of 1939.



GOODPASTER: That's right. And I would have been there instead of the man from the class of 1940 who was there.

BURG: May I ask if Dziuban also went into engineers?

GOODPASTER: Yes.

BURG: I see. I'd always heard that--

GOODPASTER: Traditionally the engineers go out at the top.

BURG: May I ask then, when you went down to Panama, where were you stationed?

GOODPASTER: Initially at the post of Corozal on the Pacific side and then our unit moved a few miles to the post of Fort



Clayton, also on the Pacific side. But I spent, I would say, the majority of my time away from the Zone out doing building of various kinds, building airfields principally, although we also built some of the outer defensive positions for the canal and that's what I--then training my company, after I became a company commander and I spent almost one year as the adjutant of the regiment and I spent that in the Zone.

BURG: It was an engineer regiment?

GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: Can you give me its designation?

GOODPASTER: Combat engineer regiment, the 11th Engineers.

BURG: And you commanded a company as a 2nd lieutenant.

GOODPASTER: I was a 1st lieutenant when I commanded the company. I think I took command of the company in mid-1941, so, yes, I was six months with the company as a platoon leader as a junior officer; then I was adjutant for a year; then I commanded the company for the remainder of the time I was down there, which was from mid-'41 until August of '42. Then I came back to the states.



BURG: So the war found you there.

GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: And by that time you had been working on, I would assume, artillery positions for example--

GOODPASTER: Infantry positions--

BURG: Oh, more infantry.

GOODPASTER: Yes. But principally this work on airfields and building cantonments for some of the increased forces that were coming down there.

BURG: The airfields I would imagine were relatively crude things, hacked out of jungles and--

GOODPASTER: Well, or more usually a big savannah area. These are the grasslands that exist down there. In one or two cases they were low and were in jungle-type terrain, but more often you tried to get up on higher ground, particularly in these grassland or savannah areas.



BURG: Would you lay down runways, the wire mats, steel mat runways, or--

GOODPASTER: In most cases that wasn't necessary. You could operate right off the natural surface. In one area we did have to put down a concrete runway because the natural ground wouldn't support the aircraft. But in most other areas they were grass strips or dust strips.

BURG: With hangars?

GOODPASTER: Hangars in several cases; in other places you just had parking areas for the planes.

BURG: The kind of work that you were doing would be in the nature almost of construction engineer in a large construction company, supervising.

GOODPASTER: That is right. And then you would build a cantonment to go with it, the barracks and the latrines and the kitchens and the mess halls and maybe a movie, in other words, the facilities that go with an outlying airfield.



BURG: Were you married at the time?

GOODPASTER: Yes. We were married just before we went down to Panama in the fall of 1939.

BURG: So you married immediately upon graduation from--

GOODPASTER: No, at the end of the summer. We had three months summer leave on graduation at that time, and just toward the end of the leave and before going to Panama I got married. I spent the summer as a counselor at a boys camp up in New Hampshire, just to have something to do.

BURG: Was your wife an Illinois girl?

GOODPASTER: No, she was an army brat. She had lived up at West Point in fact during the first two years when I was a cadet and I met her there, and then we stayed close to each other. The following year her father went up to Newport to the Naval War College, and then my final year he was stationed down here in Washington and she would come back up to visit from time to time.

BURG: So she's with you down in Panama.





GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: And I would suppose by then the living conditions there for army personnel were not quite as crude as they had been at the time the Eisenhowers were down there.

GOODPASTER: No, the living conditions I would say were excellent. We enjoyed it very much.

BURG: Housing was--



GOODPASTER: Housing was good. She occasionally came out to the field when we were building cantonments. Oftentimes we would build a BOQ [Bachelor Officers Quarters] and then while the building was going on we would bring our families. Most of us had no children at that time, but we could bring our wives up and they could stay with us while the construction was going on.

BURG: The pace of your life must have changed dramatically in early December of 1941.

GOODPASTER: Well, it had changed really before that. About the time we went down to the Canal Zone our armed forces there

went pretty much on an all-out emergency basis. There was a big expansion and strengthening program that was going on.

BURG: Did that mean more personnel brought into your regiment and--

GOODPASTER: Our regiment stayed about the same; I think we were brought completely up to strength. But what it really meant was that a lot of other units were being sent into the Canal. The 5th Infantry, for example, coming into the Pacific side and then an additional infantry regiment on the Atlantic side. Lots of build-up of anti-aircraft units; many more air units coming down and dispersing out to these outlying airfields that I mentioned. So this was a very active build-up phase going on down there. And the whole tempo of life changed at just about the time we arrived. Now when the war began it became even more so, and particularly in the first days and weeks. My company, for example, which was in a training period at the time, got the job of building a cantonment for all of the people of the enemy countries that were picked up, the Japanese, Germans, Italians, who were picked up in the Zone.



BURG: And had to be interned.

GOODPASTER: And were interned. And we built the internment camp.

BURG: How many people, do you recall, had to be housed there?

GOODPASTER: My first instruction was that we could expect about four hundred, as I recall, and within twenty-four hours we were being told to expect about eighteen hundred. And we did it. They were brought in and we accommodated them after about one day, guarded and in tents with tent frames and with latrines and mess halls and kitchens that we had built in that short a period.

BURG: Could I ask you a question about the quality of the enlisted men and non-commissioned officers in your company when you arrived as a platoon leader. These would be inter-war regulars. There would be no intermixing yet I suppose of the new draft army.

GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: What was the quality of those men?





GOODPASTER: The technical quality and professional expertise of the non-commissioned officers was quite high. They knew their business very well. They knew how to run units; they knew how to do all of the specialty tasks whether it's construction, whether it's maintenance, whether it's supply, and so on. The caliber of the young enlisted man varied rather widely, but within that variation you would have quite a number who had fine potential and who could then be brought along as technicians, as apprentices in various of these specialties. Then you had some that for one reason or another were not going to go very far, either limited intelligence, limited motivation, limited sort of control of themselves, limited ambition, that kind of thing. So you had that kind of arrangement. We have very few real misfits. Once in a while you would see some of those around. I don't recall in my companies, the companies I served in, that we had any that I would call real eight-balls, real misfits. But there were a few of those around. Once in a while you had a man who had been given the choice of going to jail or coming in the army, but that had pretty well disappeared. And if he were brought to trial for some offense, you would then find that that this wasn't his first offense.





There were a few of those. I wouldn't want to leave the impression that there were too many of them, but you might have a few of those that would come down on every boat. Some of them would adjust and straighten up and work out all right. Others were just not going to make a go of it.

BURG: They perhaps were not going to make a go of it at any point, in any kind of work. Now you would not have gotten, I take it, a large contingent of draftees in 1940 or '41, because your outfit merely had to be brought up to strength.

GOODPASTER: I think we began to get draftees probably some-  
time in 1941, in appreciable numbers, and also we got some reserve officers being called in and assigned to us at that time to bring us up to strength in officers, and we had been quite far below strength in officers.

BURG: Were all of these people, your new reserve officers and the draftees that you got, considered to be an asset to your unit by and large?

GOODPASTER: Yes. You had a little problem of attitude and some of them were resentful, but, by and large, they made the adjustment. They saw there was work to do and threw themselves into



it and began to perform.

BURG: I wondered if you had seen anything of what we saw here in the states, or heard about in the states, I believe it would have been in the early autumn of 1941, the OHIO rumors that were running around, "Over the hill in October."

GOODPASTER: We didn't see much of that. I think that some of the reserve officers were rather counting the days until they could complete their obligation. And I've forgotten just whether the obligation had a terminal date, but many of them initially were hoping that they would be released to go back to their families or to their jobs. But then when the war came, of course, all bets were off.

BURG: As far as you were concerned, you were, in 1941, presumably in a potentially active war zone--

GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: --stationed in the Panama Canal, although nothing to my knowledge ever did occur there of a threatening nature.



GOODPASTER: That's right, although for the first few days there were all kinds of reports and rumors. We thought something was likely to happen.

BURG: You were afraid to go to your apartment door and open it for fear there would be a Japanese soldier standing there or heaven knows what.

GOODPASTER: No. In fact so far as any subversive threat was concerned, the very quick action of scooping up and picking up all of the Japanese, Germans, and Italians was very efficiently done, both by the American military and particularly by the Panamanian government. They did quite a job there. I think our concern was whether there would be carriers that would try to attack the locks, try to attack the Canal itself.



[Interruption]

BURG: I can see that that would be a problem since that's precisely what they had done at Pearl Harbor, to our complete dismay. And I think that those carriers immediately faded from sight once more. There was no way to know whether they returned to Japan or refueled and headed on for the Canal.



GOODPASTER: Or whether some had come on to Panama while the others were going against Hawaii.

BURG: But as time passed, we move on past the Battle of Midway; August of '42 when you left the Zone we had hit Guadalcanal, if I recall correctly. What was the circumstance under which you left the Canal and where did you go?

GOODPASTER: I was reassigned back to the states to join an outfit that was being formed here in the United States. And by this time a rotation cycle had been established and the families had been evacuated from the Zone, and--



BURG: Soon after Pearl Harbor?

GOODPASTER: Well it began soon after Pearl Harbor. It wasn't really completed until about mid-'42, because they never really wanted to finally order them out on any particular passage. But the pressures rose to get your family out and they were given the opportunity to come back to the states and my wife came back up to the states in something like May of 1942.

BURG: May I ask, did she go to live then with her parents?



GOODPASTER: Yes, she went out to Carmel [California]. Her father was commanding a division out there at Camp Ord by that time, and she went out to stay with them while I stayed on down in Panama. Then I came up, being reassigned to an engineer general service regiment--the 390th Engineers--that was being formed down at Camp Claibourne, Louisiana. This was typical because there'd been a lot of regular officers serving in the 11th Engineers and of course no unit, in this expansion period, could expect to have more than one or two regular officers in it. So we were all fanned out to join these new units that were being created at that time.



BURG: You formed a cadre situation.

GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: And then more reserve officers and the leavening of a few regular non-coms.

GOODPASTER: That's right and officers candidate school graduates provided the great bulk of the officers that we had. I think we had in our regiment the commander who was an engineer, lieutenant colonel. I was a regular and I was an engineer

captain by this time, and the rest were second lieutenants.

BURG: That was it.

GOODPASTER: Fresh out of officers candidate school.

BURG: Oh, you mean not even any reserve officers in your particular unit?

GOODPASTER: I think we had none in this particular unit. We operated, I think, entirely on officer candidate school. Again, the capabilities varied but by and large they were quite a capable although, of course, inexperienced group. But they'd gone through a very intense course in the--

BURG: The ninety-day course?



GOODPASTER: That's right, in getting their commission.

BURG: You described the unit as a general service engineer unit.

GOODPASTER: Colored. It was a colored unit, although all of our officers were white. We were supposed to have half white and half colored officers, but there were no colored officers

available for us.

BURG: Were they trying to bring them into the OCS program at that point?

GOODPASTER: I think so, but I couldn't say for sure how many they were getting. In any case we didn't get any and we knew that there were very, very few in the army. Some reserve, some national guard, and I don't know how many they had in the OCS at that time, but, in any case, we didn't get any.

BURG: So the men and the non-coms were black personnel entirely.

GOODPASTER: That's right.



BURG: Let me follow my original line here for just a moment. General service, in the sense that this kind of engineering unit presumably can be sent to do any number of tasks.

GOODPASTER: That's right. Construction work, road improvement work, road maintenance work. It's a rear area unit, typically.

BURG: As differentiated from a combat engineer unit.

GOODPASTER: From a combat engineer unit, that's right.



BURG: How about the caliber of these men. Are the enlisted personnel basically newly drafted men?

GOODPASTER: Yes. Now we had a cadre and the cadre was drawn from other engineer, general service regiments, colored. The cadre was not of high quality, I would say. Part of the difficulty was that good non-commissioned officers were very, very, very few in relation to this tremendous expansion that the engineers were trying to carry out.



BURG: So whether we were talking about white non-coms or black would make no difference; they were hard to come by.

GOODPASTER: That's right. And I had something of the same experience later with a white outfit. We had two non-commissioned officers who were older men who were just worth their weight in gold. They were so old they were not going overseas with us. I think they were well up in their sixties. One had come from the 9th Cavalry; I've forgotten where the other came from. One was the sergeant-major, and the other was the chief of maintenance, I believe, or chief of supply. And they were wonderful in their ability to work with the black non-commissioned officers and soldiers.



The cadre, by and large, tended to come from the north where they'd had more education, and they had been moved along rather fast into non-commissioned officer positions. But many, many of the cadre that we needed were lacking. You simply didn't have the technicians of many kinds, and officers had to take on many of the jobs of giving technical direction and so on. Now what we called the fillers, the troops then that came in to fill out the unit, those came to us generally from the nearby area of the South, from Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Oklahoma. And there the educational level was quite low. Some had gone on to school to where they could read and write quite well; others were barely able to read and write, if at all. Also we found the physical condition of these men to be deplorable. Even though they'd come off farms, most of them, where you think of them as being physically fit, in fact they'd been undernourished and many of them had difficulties that had to be dealt with. Many problems with their teeth so that our dentists were very, very busy getting them in some kind of shape. And then we just had to build up their stamina so that they could stand a hard day's training. And we did this by feeding them, and the amount of food that they consumed was



just unbelievable. But we got extra rations and were able to provide the food that they needed. We found some difficulties of reluctance to eat many kinds of vegetables and we had to actually put the pressure on to get them to eat any kind of a balanced meal.

BURG: They had a preference for the meal or meals that they were accustomed to which might not have been nourishing? They were going to eat them, no matter what.

GOODPASTER: That's right. And the amount of food that they had had, energy-giving food, had been quite low. Their diet was pretty meager. But gradually we worked up their fitness and of course we went into all kinds of training--little schools and short courses to train them to do all of the things, whether it was driving, or whether it was handling equipment, construction equipment, or even handling surveying instruments, that kind of thing. Running the supply, all of the things that have to be done in an engineer outfit, they began to develop all of that as part of our training program.



BURG: And since some of them, I would assume, could not read a field manual or technical manual, simple basic educational tasks then--

GOODPASTER: That's right.

BURG: --that you gentlemen had to put together yourselves.

GOODPASTER: That's right. You had training aids that were provided if you could get them. But mostly what you did was to show the people the equipment and the task and then you showed them how to do it. And if it was building something, show them how to build it. Put a building together. Learning by doing, but with some kind of supervision and direction.

BURG: Generally speaking, did you find them willing pupils?

GOODPASTER: Yes, we did. We had one difficulty and it was, in a way, a curious one. We found that there was no problem in their response to white officers, but we found from many of the blacks that they were reluctant to take instruction from other blacks of about their age who were non-commissioned





officers. And the notion of that chain of command of discipline was foreign to them. And we had many instances of what has to be called insubordination until the idea of the organization began to get across and be accepted.

BURG: Was that kind of problem handled with restraint by you and other officers?

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes.



BURG: You understood what that problem might be.

GOODPASTER: Yes. And you had to try to follow a moderate course of requiring the performance but not throwing the book at a man when he simply had not been trained in the army's methods. So it was done, I hope, with tolerance and with a good degree of understanding of just what the issue was.

BURG: Did you also have to work with your own non-coms, your black non-coms?

GOODPASTER: Yes.

BURG: Did they have any tendency to call down some of this upon themselves?



GOODPASTER: There was some of that, yes.

BURG: Morale in the unit was relatively high?

GOODPASTER: It rose and I would say that the morale was good. It was good, strong morale. They began to get real confidence in themselves, to understand what the outfit was and what it did, and so on, so that what we had here was a good attitude toward the duty that had to be performed.

BURG: You suggested earlier that the unit was destined for overseas duty. Is that what, in fact, happened?

GOODPASTER: Yes. I then was sent up to Leavenworth to one of the short general staff courses in, let's see, that was in February of 1943. I left the unit and I never went back to it. But, in the meantime, they went on with their training. They passed their overseas test--as a matter of fact passed it quite well--and the outfit was taken overseas and functioned as a general service regiment in the European Theater in the war in France. And then while I was at Leavenworth, I was ordered to take command of the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion, which was down in the training area near Camp Polk, Louisiana.



And I did that, took command of it. We had to do some retraining in getting that outfit into shape to go overseas and we did that both down in the training area and then back at Camp Gruber in Oklahoma, which was its home station from which we left then sometime in July of 1943 to go overseas. We were moved to North Africa, and by that time the North African operation was completely over and I think the operation in Sicily was over, or practically over by the time we got there, and we prepared for the invasion of the mainland of Italy.



BURG: Let's go back a moment then to Leavenworth. You spoke of a short course there, and I personally have not run into anyone yet who attended a short course. Let me ask, how were you told of this? Were orders simply sent down?

GOODPASTER: That's right, yes. And I did nothing. I think that what was being done, quotas were established for these courses and then the various army areas were told to send so many officers of such-and-such a rank. And by that time I was a major and eligible for it.

BURG: The usual course there was a year.

GOODPASTER: Yes, and this had been cut. It was cut, I think, to thirteen weeks. It's either nine or thirteen weeks, let's see--probably nine weeks.

BURG: They had drastically shortened the syllabus.

GOODPASTER: What they did was squeeze a nine-month syllabus into nine weeks. That was, at least, what we claimed.

BURG: You were being run very, very hard.

GOODPASTER: It was quite a rat race. Of course, they had obviously cut out an awful lot, but they'd left in an awful lot, too. So it was a pretty fast pace.

BURG: Was there an intention, General, or did they ever tell you that those of you who had been passed through that, say nine-week course, would return there after the war for that longer, more thoughtful kind of--

GOODPASTER: No. No, that was left completely open.

BURG: So no one knew.

GOODPASTER: We had no idea.



BURG: And having been selected to go there in early 1943 was no guarantee that you would be selected to come back there for the full course.

GOODPASTER: That's right, yes, that's right.

BURG: In effect they are attempting to give you a hurry-up grasp of staff work.

GOODPASTER: At the division--

BURG: At division level.

GOODPASTER: At division level, that's right.

BURG: Knowing that many of you are going to have to perform duties of that sort.

GOODPASTER: That's right. Either we would command outfits as part of a division or in support of a division or we would be at division staff level or in some higher staff for which this kind of knowledge would be fundamental.

BURG: Did they pass you out of there with a particular standing in your group at the end of nine weeks?





GOODPASTER: No. They did not announce standings, but I think the commandant told me that I was number twelve in a class of about seven hundred. Which I have no great complaint about that.

BURG: You then went back down, took your unit, the 48th, exited this country, I suppose from Kilmer or some area there on the northeast coast.

GOODPASTER: We went up, in fact they sent us just short of Boston, a place called Camp Miles Standish, which was between Boston and Providence. There were so many units that were being sent out at that time they had to use all of the ports of embarkation.

BURG: You went out with a convoy?

GOODPASTER: Yes. We actually loaded, as I recall, loaded out of Brooklyn. We then were brought back to Brooklyn to load out and we went in convoy, then, across to Oran in North Africa.

BURG: Was the trip uneventful?

GOODPASTER: Quite uneventful, that's right.

BURG: Was the unit, the 48th, a white unit in contrast with your other unit?

GOODPASTER: Yes.

BURG: Aside from color of course, were they a radically different group from the black unit that you'd served with?



GOODPASTER: Oh, yes. This was a unit that had been in existence, I guess, for a year or so at that time. They had had some difficulties. It started out as a regiment; then it was split into a group headquarters and two separate battalions attached to the group. And they were required to redo part of their training cycle as I remember. In other words, they initially had not been found ready for overseas shipment. So we had to do some retraining and re-readying of the unit and part of this was because it was very much under strength down in the maneuver area. It had been used as one of the maneuver support battalions and we got some assignments that enabled us to function in our regular combat capacity rather than simply to maintain the maneuver area. And then when we got out of the maneuver area and went back to Camp Gruber, we had a very intensive training and equipping and readying phase and passed our inspections without difficulty then.

BURG: Your officer cadre, were I suppose, again, reservists or, basically, OCS.

GOODPASTER: Some OCS, mostly reservists in this case.

BURG: So perhaps that was a little better arrangement for you as the commanding officer.

GOODPASTER: They were more experienced and more highly qualified than had been true of these brand-new, young officers that we'd had in the 390th General Service Regiment.

BURG: When they loaded you in Brooklyn, did the battalion's full complement of equipment go into the ship with you so--

GOODPASTER: No. I've forgotten just how we did that. It was shipped at the same time. I later learned that the unit had been planned to go up into the United Kingdom to go into the main operations. For that we had turned in all of our equipment. Then our orders were changed and we had to draw it back out again and prepare it for shipment ourselves, and it went in the same convoy with us. And I think we were able to get everything, and, whatever we did not have, we were able to draw in





North Africa so that as we went on up into Italy we were essentially a full complement.

BURG: You disembarked in Oran. Did the unit then move along the North African coast by rail?

GOODPASTER: No, we moved out down into the desert below Oran and established ourselves and conducted training and got in our equipment and reassembled ourselves down there. And we did that, I guess, through most of the month of September. In the meantime--

BURG: 1943.

GOODPASTER: '43. --the landing in Italy had begun. And after the fight had been going on for several weeks, we went in in the Naples area. They had just cleared through the Naples area when my battalion was landed.

BURG: Salerno was behind them.

GOODPASTER: Well behind them, that's right.

BURG: And what was the nature of the work that your unit was assigned to do then.





GOODPASTER: We were given the job of supporting first the 6th Corps and then the 2nd Corps and this would have quite a wide range of engineer jobs--putting in bridges, maintaining bridges, maintaining roads, opening up tracks where we had to move off the road, improving passage for vehicles up in the combat area, clearing mines, and, in one case, opening up a road for tanks out of what had been a railroad in order to get past some of the German prepared positions and so on.

BURG: Am I correct in saying that from the time you reached Italy that kind of work got tougher and tougher to do?



GOODPASTER: Yes. It became very, very tough as we closed up against the main German positions, up around Cassino. And my battalion then was used as infantry in one attack up just short of Cassino. And then we were used to provide regular combat engineer support for various task forces that were being formed that were conducting the approach and some of the attacks on Cassino.

BURG: Now when you say your battalion was used as infantry, does that mean that their battalion commander was used as an infantry officer for a period of time?

GOODPASTER: That's right, yes.

BURG: Had your men received basic rifleman instructions?

GOODPASTER: Yes. As you know, that's a second assignment for combat engineers; they are to be capable of employment as infantry. It was in connection with that action that I was wounded the first time and was out for about, oh, a week or ten days, something like--maybe a week. And then I was back and we were engaged in some of the attacks around Cassino. And I was up there as the combat engineer commander in a task force when we were shelled and I was wounded the second time, and that was when I was out of action for almost six months over that one.



BURG: Was that a shell fragment wound?

GOODPASTER: Shell fragment, in both cases, shell fragment. Or mortar fragment the first time in January and then shell fragment in February.

BURG: Of '44 these wounds occurred.

GOODPASTER: Of '44, yes.

BURG: And I think anyone who has any knowledge whatsoever of Cassino does not envy you your opportunity to serve there at that particular time.

GOODPASTER: Well, it was a very tough affair for everybody concerned in it, particularly for the infantrymen.

BURG: Did your unit take fairly stiff casualties there?

GOODPASTER: Not too much. We lost a number of men, both in that infantry action and then to mines and that kind of thing as in the other operations that we were conducting, had people wounded, killed by mines of various kinds.

BURG: Yes. I've seen, as so many of us have--

GOODPASTER: And some shell fragment of course, artillery, effects of artillery.

BURG: The British Thames television series, World at War, showed some tremendous footage, motion picture footage, of the Cassino operations, both American and British operations there. Well I've taken of your time precisely what I threatened



to take, and this is a place to stop, I believe. And, if I may, on a succeeding interview we'll pick it up at this point, following you from the time of your hospitalization forward.

GOODPASTER: Okay, fine.





INTERVIEW WITH  
General Andrew Goodpaster

by

Dr. Thomas Soapes  
Oral Historian

on

October 11, 1977

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



This interview is being conducted with General Andrew Goodpaster in his office at West Point, New York on October 11, 1977. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes.. Present for the interview are General Goodpaster and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: When Dr. Burg finished his last interview, you were at Cassino and wounded. Could you relate to me, briefly, what course your career took at that point?

GEN. GOODPASTER: Yes. I was hospitalized in Italy for the better part of two months. Then I was hospitalized briefly in North Africa, then evacuated to the United States and wound up at Fitzsimmons General Hospital in Denver. There I made progress--this was bone and nerve damage to an elbow--and was able to get out of the hospital in late July of 1944.

I had been slated, while I was in the hospital in North Africa, to come back to the Operations Division, OPD, General Marshall's command post in Washington. Then when my hospitalization continued for quite a time out in Denver, I was released from that and I had arranged to get command of an engineer combat group and take that back overseas. And I was delighted at that prospect. So when I got out of the hospital I started to my engineer group, but I had instructions to phone in to Washington to be sure that my assignment was clear. Well, when I phoned



in to Washington, I found out that my assignment was not clear and that I had been reassigned to the Operations Division. Colonel [George A.] Lincoln, a man who'd been an instructor of mine at West Point, was in the Operations Division and when he heard that I was again available for duty, he got me assigned to the Strategy and Policy Group of the Operations Division. So I went there and served through the remainder of the war in the Operations Division. The central job that was assigned to me was to work on the planning for the redeployment of our forces from Europe to the Pacific war once the European war had ended. And I then, because of that, became a Pacific planner and was involved in quite a number of things related to the strategy of the final operations against Japan.

Once the war ended, I was assigned to the Joint War Plans Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I served there for about a year as the member assigned from the Army Operations Division on a wide variety of planning--strategic planning, atomic tests, and studies of many, many kinds. Then I was assigned back to the Pentagon to something that was called the Political-Military Survey Section under Colonel [Charles H.] Bonesteel [III], who in turn was

under, by then, General Lincoln who was heading up the Strategy and Policy Group of the Operations Division. I worked on a number of things there. One project brought me into contact with General Eisenhower and that was to set up an advance study board of young officers who, on Eisenhower's request, would try to project themselves forward five years, ten years, to look at what the future shape of the Army might be and ought to be. My final assignment was to work on a comprehensive program of aid to foreign countries. This was one of the inputs to General Marshall's offer at Harvard to set up a coordinated aid program for the benefit of western Europe. This was a State-War-Navy coordinating committee that worked on this and we provided basis staff material as to what the size of the need might be and so on.

About that time, I'd completed three years of service in the Pentagon. I was coming up to the time when I should go to graduate school, and between Lincoln and the Corps of Engineers, a compromise solution was worked out by which I could go to graduate school to take the engineering studies that the engineers required plus study in international relations that



Lincoln required. So I had a composite course, initially for two years, of graduate study at Princeton University. At the end of those two years I had received two master's degrees; one a Master of Science in engineering and the other a Master of Arts in political science. I was invited by Princeton University, on the initiative of Professor Harold Sprout, to stay on for a third year to complete my doctorate. The Army, after agonizing over this for a bit, approved my staying and I did complete my doctorate in June of 1950.



I was then sent back to the Pentagon and assigned to the Joint Advanced Study Committee which had taken over, on a joint basis, the work of the advance study board that the Army had initiated some three years before. But I lasted only six months with them because at the end of that time General Eisenhower was asked to go over to Europe and set up the NATO command, which he did with his headquarters at SHAPE in Paris. I went over and was a staff officer, assistant to the chief of staff, General [Alfred] Gruenther, but I worked very closely with General Eisenhower, particularly on something called the "Three Wise Men Report." [Averell] Harriman, [Jean] Monnet, and Plowden--

Sir Edwin [Noel] Plowden--had been commissioned by the NATO council to make a study which would correlate military needs with political-economic capabilities of the member nations and come up with a force program. We worked on this through the fall of 1951 and finally the result was the Lisbon Goals. In this I was General Eisenhower's representative to the committee and its supporting staff, part of which was headed by General [Joseph] McNarney and again General Lincoln was detailed from West Point to come over and work with that committee in preparing this program.



Then after General Eisenhower came back to the States to run for the presidency, I worked with General [Matthew B.] Ridgway, who was Supreme Commander, and then General Gruenther in much the same area, the main policy questions having to do with the formation of the command, and the principal force programs that we were involved in. I completed my tour with a study in which four or five of us participated, a new approach which would weld the use of atomic weapons if necessary with the employment of our conventional forces in Europe. And this, then, became the new doctrine by which

NATO would operate. General Ridgway had asked that I come back to go into the office of the chief of staff of the Army, but I asked General Gruenther, his successor, if I might write a letter to General Ridgway--

[Interruption]



GOODPASTER: General Gruenther said sure that I might write to General Ridgway and tell him what was on my mind, which was that at that time it was nine years according to my calculation since I had had any engineer, troop, or command duty and in my view it was time for me to get back to that. But as General Gruenther put it, "It's okay, but I think you're phoning from the jail." However I wrote my letter to General Ridgway. He responded immediately with a telegram saying that he agreed with what I'd had to say and he would see that I would be assigned to an engineer district, which was command duty, in the Corps of Engineers. So I was assigned then to the San Francisco engineer district. And I recall I stopped by the Chief of Engineers' office and the people there said, "We don't ask much of you; we understand you haven't been with the



engineers in a long time. All we ask is continuity and stability." I said, "You don't have to feel any concern. I've been assured that I'm here on a two-year stabilized tour."

Well I went out to San Francisco, and at the end of two months, a man who had served with me in SHAPE, General Paul T. Carroll, who was serving in the White House as Eisenhower's staff secretary and defense liaison officer, died of a heart attack. And General Eisenhower, by then President, asked that I come into the White House to take up that duty. So that brought me back into the White House just two months after I'd gone out for my stabilized two-year tour in San Francisco. And my stay in the White House with General Eisenhower and then for two months with President Kennedy was to last for six and a half years. And that brings me up, I think, to the White House time.

SOAPES: When you were at NATO, were you in a position to see the working relationship between General Eisenhower and General Gruenther?

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes.





SOAPES: Could you describe that for us?

GOODPASTER: General Gruenther, I'd have to say, is an absolutely brilliant man, as able a staff officer as I've ever seen. A man of tremendous force, determination, and energy, and he invites all those associated with him to display the same characteristics. So that he would take the broad principles and the main lines of effort that General Eisenhower laid down on how to solve or resolve or satisfactorily meet the defense need, the security need there in Europe, and he then would convert that into proposals for our staff organization, for the organization of our command and so on. I was invited to come over as one of the initial planners. And in those early days I would work on the plan for the organization of our headquarters and the plan for the organization of the command, the terms of command authority and things of that kind, submit them to General Gruenther and he would then take them up with General Eisenhower. We would have the guidance from Eisenhower to go on and of course, he drew very heavily on his experience as the Supreme Commander during World War II.



then we would attempt to negotiate this and put it into effect. We built up our headquarters very swiftly and it became really a first-class operating organization. General Marshall, then the secretary of defense, gave unlimited support in terms of providing the personnel that we needed. All we had to do was ask by name and we got the man that we needed and wanted. So it came into existence very, very quickly. The next thing that Eisenhower did was go around to all of the countries to talk to their top military and political leadership with two or three things in mind: to find out how they sensed their capabilities, what their problems were, and to give them a shot in the arm, encourage them and hearten them. And he did that in a very great degree. He was able, then, to point to, as he termed it, "an expanding spiral of strength and hope and confidence." And he was a major contributor to that. That was made effective because of the staff work that Gruenther did in running the headquarters and in beginning to knit together the organization of the supporting commands in each of our three regions: Northern Europe, Central Europe and the Southern Europe-Mediterranean area.



SOAPES: Is this building of confidence in NATO, is that what you would estimate would be Eisenhower's principal contribution in this period, or were there other things that he contributed to?

GOODPASTER: Well, I think it's building confidence and strength. You have to consider the two together and he knew how to do it. This fact was immediately recognized, that here was a master military executive. He knew how to build forces, he knew how to put them together in plans, arrange for their intelligence, arrange for the communications to support them, work in the logistical area with the appreciation of the fact that logistics will inevitably be largely a national function, yet it has to be knitted together and tied to our planning and so on. But I think there was tremendous respect for Eisenhower as a military executive, as a military leader, as a man of wise judgment insofar as security policy, security objectives and so on were concerned.

SOAPES: How about his appreciation of domestic political considerations in each of the countries with which he was dealing?





GOODPASTER: He was, I would say, very sensitive to that without getting involved; he was very skillful in avoiding any involvement in the particular interplay of particular individuals. But he had a great sense of how the governments of the various countries worked and what the practical constraints were on the political leaders, that you couldn't crowd them too far, you couldn't ask too much of them, or you would be presenting them with impossible political tasks. But at the same time he was constantly able to point to the basic scope of resources on which we, in the West, could draw if we could simply mobilize them and organize them properly. So I would say that he had a great sense of both aspects, both the constraints and the availability of the resources.

SOAPES: Turning now to your White House experience, you came in to replace General Carroll. In the chain of command in the White House, who was your immediate superior, what kind of a staff did you have, and what was your portfolio?

GOODPASTER: My immediate superior on the staff secretary side was Sherman Adams, who was the assistant to the President and





in effect the chief of staff of the whole White House office operation. In addition, I had the job of defense liaison officer and I would describe that as the President's staff assistant for all affairs that were connected with the international aspects of the government policy in action. That is, it had to do with the State Department, with the Defense Department, with the CIA, with the Atomic Energy Commission, and the USIA, everything that operated on the international side. On that, Governor Adams kept himself informed through attendance at NSC meetings and such like, but he did not exercise supervision over any of that. The President, in terms of policy, worked through the NSC structure--on policy and major plans. In terms of the day-to-day flow of activities in those fields, however, he looked to me as the defense liaison officer/staff secretary to support him in that wide range of functions. And that really is the way it worked through the remainder of my time.

Initially, I had as principal assistant Arthur Minnich. And because some of the domestic activities that came to the staff secretary would involve political considerations, or might



involve political considerations, I left all of that side of things to him. And, in fact, the tasking of the departments on the domestic side was handled by him acting in my behalf. Then, as staff secretary, Governor Adams asked me to supervise the administrative operation of the White House, the functioning of the secretaries, of the budget people, of the travel people, of the telephone people, communications people, that whole range of things. Initially, I did most of that directly with the people involved. Later I had as my assistant Frederic Morrow, who helped me in that regard and also took on another facet of the function which was support for study groups that Eisenhower liked to set up, or people who would take a particular topic and advise and assist him in that regard. Among those would be General [John S.] Bragdon, who advised him on public works; General [Elwood] Quesada, who came in to advise on really a modernization and expansion of the federal aviation authority. When Jim Killian set up the science advisory group directly under the President, we provided staff support there. The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, we provided staff support there and so on. I



think that's the range of principal functions that we were involved in.

SOAPES: How did your work in the international military field interface with what Bobby Cutler was doing?

GOODPASTER: We worked side by side and very, very closely. That was true while Bobby Cutler was there; then Dillon Anderson, then Bobby again, and then Gordon Gray. They would deal with the policy papers that would come via the NSC route, broad plans, major programs, things of that kind. I would get the day-to-day flow of things that involved the President. If these matters came to the White House for coordination but did not require the President's attention, they would oftentimes go to the Operations Coordinating Board which was part of the structure that was under Cutler's and then Gray's supervision. It was necessary for us to work very closely together and to pass tasks or topics back and forth, to check with each other to see that each was informed of any significant thing that the other was concerned in. Lots of opportunity to go wrong, but we were able always to work very harmoniously and very





effectively together. Quite typically in the latter years, both with Bobby Cutler and with Gordon Gray, we would have many ad hoc meetings in the President's office; we would set up a group of the people in the government principally concerned. It might be the secretary or the under secretary of state, the secretary or deputy secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the director of CIA. A particular subject then would be investigated, would be dealt with by that kind of a group. And as you undoubtedly know, we tried to keep memoranda of those meetings, reporting those meetings, and those are out at the Eisenhower Library.

Now in 1958 John Eisenhower came aboard as an assistant to me and he worked on the international side of the house. And this was a great help to me because he and I could substitute for each other in taking these meetings and writing up the results of the meetings and then following them up in the government. So by the time the administration ended, my principal assistants were John Eisenhower and Arthur Minnich and Frederic Morrow.

Then I had oversight over a considerable group of the





more permanent offices in the White House, headed up by the chief clerk, Bill [William J.] Hopkins, who, of course, was a central figure on that side.

SOAPES: Was Al Toner under your--

GOODPASTER: Yes, I should have mentioned that. We set up and had, initially, Al Toner, and it was initially Chris Russell and later Timothy Stanley or vice versa, but then--

SOAPES: Stanley was there first.

GOODPASTER: Yes. Stanley there first, and Toner. And their job was to reach out into the departments and to get information of the things that were going on; much of this was information of actions that had been taken or actions that were contemplated in the various departments. It was not to be an action channel in that they could not submit something for reporting to the President in that way and take that as approval or tacit approval. It was an informational channel and it was really quite helpful in keeping a flow of specific information of particulars of what was going on in the government, getting down below the



kind of broad generalities and major programs which could be reflected in, say, budget and the money provided, to knowing some of the quite specific things that were going on which either did or did not conform to and support the line of policy that the President had in mind. We tied in very closely with the cabinet secretary in that regard and furnished [Maxwell] Rabb and [Bradley] Patterson and Rabb's successors with this same information so that they could keep informed of what the government departments were doing in detail. And this way we guarded against surprise. And also this helped to discipline the system and keep it aligned with the policy directions that the President gave.



SOAPES: Was this information more of use to the staff or to the President?

GOODPASTER: It was of use to both. The President was interested in it. We did not overload him with it. We tried to keep this to very short, concise items. If he would mark some that he'd want more detail on it, we would get fuller detail. But we could report on a daily basis maybe thirty or forty

specific and concrete actions that were taken in the government in the various sectors of the government. Very concise items, maybe five lines, maybe ten lines in length and the daily report would come to perhaps three pages, perhaps four pages, but you got a very good sensing of what was going on in the government.

SOAPES: And the President did see each issue of "Staff Notes"?

GOODPASTER: Yes, he saw all of the "Staff Notes" and would occasionally mark on them to follow up.



[Interruption]

SOAPES: You were in the Oval Office frequently meeting with the President and I'm wondering what type of a presentation did Eisenhower expect when someone came in to see him?

GOODPASTER: Well he expected them to lay the problem out and indicate why it was appropriate to be talking about it, either to give policy guidance or to meet some immediate crunch or immediate crisis. He expected them to have the key facts,



to lay them out, and then there would be an airing of different points of view and an airing of the implications, both the favorable and the adverse implications. And oftentimes there were differences of view between one department and another. Frequently these were differences of emphasis or the weighting of different factors. For example, on the U-2 flights, the various considerations would be laid out, what was to be accomplished from a particular flight and what the hazards were thought to be and what some of the consequences might be. And then Eisenhower had his own views and judgments that he would apply to that. If a decision were needed, we'd normally work until the decision was taken. If further information was needed, sometimes the group would retire and develop their facts better and come back to illuminate some aspect that he had challenged and that we couldn't respond to. And then we'd go out with the decision having been made, as I put it, by having heard the views of each in the presence of all.

SOAPES: In regard to the U-2 decisions, what, from your view, seemed to be Eisenhower's priorities in those decisions?





GOODPASTER: I would say the characteristic thing was that of all the people in the room he had the greatest sense of what the turmoil and turbulence was likely to be if we ever lost one of these. But having all of that, he then considered what were the reasons for doing it, how useful was the information to us both in terms of knowing what they (the Soviets) were doing, of forming our own programs, of forming our own plans, and of dealing with the many pressures that were being exerted, as he put it, to indulge in excessive programs on the military side. One of his great motivations was to restrain and restrict the military programs that were being put forward by proponents, generally by the services which were highly competitive with each other.

SOAPES: What was his principal concern as he was trying to restrain the military programs?

GOODPASTER: First of all the waste, as he put it, the actual military expenditure, and the second thing, he had a very great sense of the importance of trying, as I would put it, to demilitarize the nature of the international relationships,



to draw away from this very highly militarized sense of confrontation with the Soviets. Any promotional activity to try to promote or to give emphasis to our military activities, any promotional activity of that kind by the services was just anathema to him. He wanted gradually to reduce the military content of the international relationship. He was strong to have, as he termed it, an adequate defense posture so that we could be confident of our own security, but he did not want that to be the pivot of all international concern, discourse, intercourse, and so on.

SOAPES: His was a doctrine of sufficiency, to use the more current term?

GOODPASTER: I'm reluctant to try to impose somebody else's term, which is an ambiguous term, on Eisenhower. He had very clear notions of what we did need, what would be sufficient, in the various categories of force. He outlined this on one occasion to Secretary Charles Wilson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, what we needed in the way of strategic power or bombers, what kind of a Navy we needed, what we should do in the way of



supporting NATO, what we should do in the way of supporting friendly regimes elsewhere and the limits of that kind of support, what our research and development target or objective should be, and what our air defense posture should be. He had quite a clear concept of that in his mind, and he did not take kindly to people trying to push or promote or puff up their own particular part of this.

SOAPES: Your phrasing of his attitude towards wanting to de-emphasize the military nature of the conflict strikes me as similar to some of George Kennan's remarks about his view towards containment, that he was misunderstood in the Truman years, that containment was more militarized than he felt it should be. Is there a similarity between what you're saying about Eisenhower's view and what Kennan has said?

GOODPASTER: Well he had a lot of respect for Kennan's view, but I think that Eisenhower felt that there was a strong military component to containment. But it was containment by deterrence, very largely, such as he had had a hand in building in Europe. He also recognized the tremendous role that nuclear



weapons had come to play in the process of maintaining a military balance and felt that the nuclear weapons, if properly postured, could be a great restraint against military adventures. It would be a bit speculative to say, but he was not one to bluff or to bluster with the nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union. In fact what he would often say was that nuclear war would be just unmitigated disaster for the whole human race. His idea was that if the other side, the Russians, were aware of that, that would impose a great restraint on their expansionist tendency. But he, I think, was very cognizant, had a very definite view that the Russians were expansionist in their tendency, particularly on the evidence of the expansion that they'd carried out just after World War II until they came to places where they were confronted with a countervailing military power.



SOAPES: He did undertake several proposals in the nuclear disarmament field; his speech on the death of Stalin made some suggestions in that regard, the Atoms for Peace, the Open Skies proposal. What was the motivation behind those?



What did he expect to get out of those?

GOODPASTER: He came to feel that this was a major responsibility of government and should be a major thrust of his government. As you know, he appointed Harold Stassen as a special assistant to develop proposals and initiatives in this area. It was very hard going, and it brought Stassen crosswise with the State Department on occasion and with other established segments of the government, and yet Eisenhower felt that this was an initiative that should be pursued. He felt that if arrangements of this kind could be made they would bring stability and lessen the chance of nuclear war occurring, so that this became a major thrust and he was willing to take specific initiatives, such as the moratorium on testing, in order to see if he could draw the Russians in that direction.

SOAPES: The phrase that comes up sometimes in his writings, particularly with General Gruenther and some of his conversations with Dulles on the subject, suggests that he's talking about a step-by-step approach, trying to get them working at a lower level, then trying to expand this to a larger area.

Did he have any hope that he would actually get to that larger, more comprehensive agreement during his term of office?

GOODPASTER: Well, he had the hope that if agreement could be reached on specific things, even if they were small, even if they were limited, this would provide a starting point and other agreements could be reached. He was very disappointed over the breakup of the summit meeting in 1960 as a result of the U-2 affair. He had felt, from the time of his talk with Khrushchev on, that a basis was being formed on which the views of the two super-powers could be brought into a reasonable relationship. In fact that went back all the way to Geneva in 1955 where he did try his Open Skies proposal. And his feeling was that if the Russians were shown that they weren't going to obtain further conquests or further domination, then it ought to be possible, progressively, to take some of the intensity out of the conformation and reduce the military risks and the military threat and counter-threat in terms of active threat and counter-threat that had existed up to that time. Gradually bring it to a somewhat more passive and stable



relationship of these opposing forces.

SOAPES: Some of the scholars who have written about Eisenhower's work in the disarmament field have focused on the Open Skies proposal and they focused on a remark that he made in an interview similar to this after he was out of office in which he said--I think his phrase was--"We knew the Russians wouldn't accept it." And they have taken that as evidence that the proposal was disingenuous, that it was made for propaganda purposes.



GOODPASTER: No, I don't think that's so. I don't recall his ever saying it in that way. I do recall his saying that we knew the proposal would not be accepted when Khrushchev came to him. The others had kind of left it open and indicated that possibly this could be a basis for discussion. But he said that he knew that it was not going to be accepted at Geneva when Khrushchev came to him when they broke up for tea after one of the sessions and told him that it would not be permitted. I've forgotten the terms in which Khrushchev made that statement, whether that was the time when he said that



it's like looking in somebody's bedroom window, but he had some very definite expression. And it also indicated to Eisenhower very clearly where the power rested in the Russian delegation, because it was Khrushchev who made clear what their stand would be. I think that our feeling was that there was at least a chance that something along these lines might be, if not accepted at least accepted for study at Geneva. And in any case, he felt that it would show an openness, show a readiness to deal with this problem in a way that would give more confidence on both sides.

SOAPES: So the pessimism came more after the proposal had been rejected by Khrushchev than before?

GOODPASTER: Yes. I don't think that we had any illusions. We didn't think for a moment that it was a certainty or even an overwhelming probability that they would accept it, but we regarded it as a good try with at least a chance that they would accept that or some part of it, respond to us in some way that would have some constructive element in it. I think that was Nelson Rockefeller's view and Stassen's, and I



know that that was my own view.

SOAPES: Another question that scholars debate about foreign policy in the Eisenhower administration is whether or not Eisenhower and Dulles were on the same wave length, to what extent there was a difference of view, or differences simply of style.

GOODPASTER: There were differences, I would be inclined to put it, of temperament. Eisenhower always hopeful with an optimistic set of mind, but with the great knowledge of the difficulties and the problems of the realities with which we were concerned, feeling out of his own knowledge of the Russian role in World War II that here was a nation that had undergone a terrible military experience. On Dulles's side, he was very much impressed with the doctrinal aspects of Soviet policy, their expansionist tendencies which he regarded as inherent in the whole communist system and the communist philosophy. I would say that he entertained very little optimism about any improvement in Russian behavior insofar as trying to gain control of one country after another and



subjecting it to the communist system might be concerned. In terms, however, of a policy that would conform to the views and interests of the American people, Dulles always deferred to Eisenhower on that and it was quite characteristic of him to say, "Mr. President, this depends on the attitude of our people and on our public opinion." And in that he would always say that the President's sensing of that was the strongest and he would want to be guided by that. So that's the nature of the differences. Now that doesn't begin to describe it in all of its aspects, but the two men had come to know each other and know the thinking of each other very, very completely on all of these matters. They spent long hours together, particularly in the early part of the Eisenhower administration. And Secretary Dulles regarded himself--often he would say that he was the President's lawyer in the international field.

SOAPES: I saw one document in the Eisenhower papers in which Eisenhower is critical of Dulles, and he was making an analogy to the lawyer, that Dulles always felt he had to





prosecute and convict the Soviet Union of something before he went on to anything else. Is that a characteristic view of Eisenhower's attitude toward Dulles and his style?

GOODPASTER: I've seen that aspect of it, yes. But that does not fully describe the relationship of the two men. There was that aspect and there were many, many other aspects. The controlling aspect in my opinion was the sharing of the objectives toward which they were working, Dulles always taking a somewhat more dour view of the world and particularly the Russians than Eisenhower did.

SOAPES: A great deal of mention has also been made of Dulles's religious views being very strong. Did that come out in his discussions of the nitty-gritty of foreign policy?

GOODPASTER: His view of the moral factor in international relations did come out. He thought it was sinful, it was immoral of many of the nations to try to take a neutral stand when truth and right were in jeopardy, so to speak.



INTERVIEW WITH  
General Andrew Goodpaster

by

Dr. Thomas Soapes  
Oral Historian

on

January 16, 1978

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



This interview is being conducted with General Andrew Goodpaster in his office in West Point, New York, on January 16, 1978. This interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes. Present for the interview are General Goodpaster and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: Last time we focused on outlining your portfolio in the White House and some discussions on disarmament policy. What I would like to start with this time is some discussion of staff work in the White House. One of the themes that many authors have come up with in talking about Eisenhower and his staff is that they insulated him from issues and information. What was your impression?



GENERAL GOODPASTER: It was really quite the opposite. Of course he was very experienced in using a staff out of his executive experience, both in high positions in the Army and when he was a staff officer. Under General [Douglas] MacArthur, he saw the operation of the government then. He came back and was a senior staff officer under General [George C.] Marshall. Both of them were, of course, very capable commanders and executives themselves, as he was out of his own experience. The role of the staff was to assure that the pertinent, the important information, did in fact get to him. The staff was never allowed to interpose itself between him and what he called his



principal lieutenants. I am here speaking principally of my own field--that is, the international side of the house, the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and the secretaries of the respective services, the chief of CIA, the head of the Atomic Energy Commission, the head of the U.S. Information Agency, the head of economic aid which I think was then called Mutual--

SOAPES: Security



GOODPASTER: Mutual Security Assistance. And then various assistants in broad areas that he staked out such as Governor [Harold] Stassen in the field of disarmament and arms control, General [John] Bragdon in the whole field of public works, General [Elwood] Quesada in the field of the Federal Aviation Agency, others in such fields as telecommunications. Here was a senior executive working with his immediate subordinates but supported by a staff system which took care of the flow of paperwork and information. And we, the staff people, were charged with the follow-up on meetings in the President's office where decisions were made to check to see that they were

indeed carried out and to keep an eye on operations and activities within the departments, and if there was an discrepancy between them and the policy guidance that had been given to bring that back in to the President.

I think that this is largely a matter of Washington mythology on the one hand, and also it's the product of people in the media who are more attuned to highly personalized and individualized actions and publicized actions than to orderly and not too visible executive process. And the same applies very much to politicians, especially those in the Congress who think more in terms of the public splash that an action can make--many of them do this--than of the orderly conduct of executive affairs. And this is an area where, as the saying goes, "Good news really is no news," and so when things are going along reasonably smoothly it may not create much notice, but it can be and I think then was a pretty good government.

SOAPES: Can his staff system in the White House be described as a military style staff system?



GOODPASTER: No. His chief of staff, so-to-speak, was Governor [Sherman] Adams in the early period. Then he established the secretary of the staff--my predecessor General Pete Carroll and then myself in that post. But the principal staff members were far from having the kind of definitive and hierarchical assignment of functions that you associate with the traditional and established military staffs. On the domestic side, Governor Adams did exercise a considerable measure of supervision over the work on the staff, but the responsibility would still flow to people like Gerry [Gerald D.] Morgan, who was the special counsel to the President; Jim [James C.] Hagerty, who was his press assistant; General Jerry [Wilton B.] Persons, who headed up the liaison with the Congress. And, I would say, it was not on any strict military model. We did attempt to provide staff support for a number of activities. Max Rabb, the cabinet secretary, saw that the Cabinet meetings were documented and supported. On the international side, which did not come under the active supervision of Sherman Adams but operated essentially between the President's special assistant for security affairs and myself, on that side we dealt directly with the President





on all of the staff aspects of those matters.

Insofar as the actions are concerned that came in from the major departments, those on the domestic side did come to the attention of Adams in the general case or to another member of the staff or both. Those on the international side normally did not come to the attention of the bulk of the staff unless there were some important domestic implications. The Office of Defense Mobilization, for example, did some of the so-called continuity planning for the American government in the case of a national crisis or in the case of a large scale military operation for modern war. Many of the things that they were concerned with had to be considered by the Attorney General and by the President's own special counsel. There you did get staff involvement in the preparation of these actions for the consideration of the President.

SOAPES: Was Eisenhower, as he has been described by some people, a passive president who waited for issues to be brought to his attention?



GOODPASTER: No. He gave instruction that put on the shoulders of his principal subordinates, that is the department heads and also his principal staff, responsibility for bringing matters to his attention. But in addition, he talked very widely, met with a lot of people, often privately, and talked about a lot of things that were on his mind. I mentioned the matter of disarmament, regulation of armaments, for example. This was on his mind for a considerable time before he took the action of appointing Stassen. Then he would discuss this with Stassen from time to time, and they would keep current with each other's thinking. He did the same in the field of working with his science adviser and setting up the expanded organization for the control of the space program.

There was a give and take I would say and a continuing concern on his part wherever very large amounts of money were being spent or wherever he got from whatever source a sensing that action was needed in some sector of the government. He established the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board to look into operations of our whole intelligence structure, including both sides of the CIA, largely, I believe, because of concern



that had him wondering as to whether we were getting the quality of intelligence that we required. Some of the intelligence analysis that came to him suggested that we were hearing special interests of the various services reflected and also, on occasion, special assessments and ideas from the other elements of the intelligence community--the CIA in particular.

SOAPES: You mentioned the President's Science Advisory Committee and one of the impressions I get from reading [James R.] Killian's recently published memoir is that perhaps PSAC was a bit out front of the rest of the administration on subjects like disarmament. Is that a correct impression?



GOODPASTER: Oh, I think they were a leading element in the administration on this and their input to Eisenhower, I think, contributed a good deal to the interest that he took in this. He had in fact set Stassen up before the reconstruction of the PSAC, if my memory for the dates is correct.

SOAPES: Yes.

GOODPASTER: So he had an interest in this, and I think they



saw this interest and they saw the need for work in this field. And of course, many of them came in with the attitudes that they had formed toward the atomic weapons, and in many cases against the atomic weapons, and they also had concern about the military confrontation at the strategic nuclear level that they saw developing. So they were a major source of initiative and push, I would say, in this field.

SOAPES: An initiative and push that was beyond Eisenhower's inclination?

GOODPASTER: No, I wouldn't say beyond Eisenhower's, but beyond the established departments in the administration. I would say that they were well forward of the Department of Defense in their attitudes. I would say that Stassen was forward of just about everybody else, including the State Department on occasion. But Eisenhower, interestingly, had a very great interest in this and he felt--and I speak of this because I spoke to him many times, we had long talks about this. And I shared with him, I think, a view that action in the field of disarmament was really a third major limb or line of our



policy at the time. I discussed this with him and, over the years, it has seemed to me that he was one of the first to see it in those terms.

SOAPES: The third major limb. The other two being--

GOODPASTER: Defense and deterrence. Actually defense capability and then deterrence as a line of policy. He had, of course, just been over in NATO. And in NATO, they formulated the security policy as being a dual policy of defense and deterrence. But he was one of the first to see that control of armaments was really a third main line of policy.



SOAPES: Was there a concern on his part or on some of the others of what Herbert York later called "the ultimate absurdity," that with this increased expenditure on armaments, in spite of that increased expenditure, American security was in fact declining?

GOODPASTER: Yes. I would say again that Eisenhower had a very clear picture of that and he was one who, first of all, made the point, as he said, "Large scale war would be a catastrophe

and nuclear war might well be the destruction of all civilization." That's essentially a quotation from him. And he made the point over and over and over again that simply piling up armaments was not a way to obtain security for the United States. I think that's in part--in good part--what led him to his interest in trying to reach control of the armaments. And he found that this was a very responsive chord between him and the scientists that you mentioned. That was concentrated on a variety of efforts, one of them being the cessation of nuclear testing. I think he pursued that but always with the feeling that nuclear testing was of nowhere near the significance that the sheer volume of arms had attained.

SOAPES: One other point that Killian makes in his memoir was that PSAC was responsible for vetoing what they thought were some of the wilder proposals that came out of the Defense Department. Do you recall efforts of PSAC that were particularly significant in that field?





GOODPASTER: I can't really get the timing quite clear in my mind on this, but there were a succession of quite elaborate programs that were finally either set aside or discarded--a couple that come to mind were the Bomarc anti-aircraft missile and the Navajo. The latter was a very large pilotless supersonic delivery aircraft which really lost its significance after the big missiles came into existence, although the engine for one of the missiles, the Titan as I recall, was in fact the engine that had been taken off the Navajo--it was just a different application. Then I think they evaluated the idea of a nuclear aircraft quite a number of times and never found it to be a viable proposition. There were quite a number of things of that kind that they investigated.

SOAPES: One further point that Killian suggests is that Eisenhower's defense secretaries he says were all weak with the exception of Tom Gates. Herbert Parmet in his volume on the Eisenhower administration is very critical of Charlie Wilson, saying he's unable to control the Pentagon. What was the view from the White House of the defense secretaries?



GOODPASTER: Well, there was an impatience every now and then with what's here called "inability to control the Pentagon." But the President was wise enough and experienced enough to know that this was a pretty unruly bunch over there and that their tendencies toward rivalry and competition were very, very strong. And finally in 1958 he had had about enough of it and put through a major modification which was intended to clarify the authority of the secretary of defense and strengthen the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think it strengthened the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a body, as a corporate body to a degree, but what it really did was strengthen the authority of the secretary of defense. But prior to that time, the secretaries of defense had not been people who could handle the strategic issues or the combination of strategic issues with major weapons issues. They were more managers and very definitely handicapped in getting hold of this great big, very active set of organizations and welding them into any kind of coherent whole.

Eisenhower himself gave guidance, and I may have referred you to the letter that he sent to Secretary Wilson early in



1955. This grew out of a session that he had in his office at Wilson's request with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then Wilson asked afterwards if he would convert this into a letter of guidance. And I used my notes of that meeting to draft such a letter in which Eisenhower really gave what I would call a military concept or framework on which the Defense Department and its major programs should be patterned. It took many years to begin to accomplish that and it still hasn't been accomplished completely.



SOAPES: Was Eisenhower at any time to your knowledge unhappy with Charlie Wilson's performance?

GOODPASTER: As I say, he was quite dissatisfied with what was being done over there and was vehement on many occasions about it, but at the same time recognized that this was a very, very tough row to hoe and that in Wilson and [Neil] McElroy he had people who were essentially managers but were not deeply grounded in matters of military policy or strategic direction. He recognized that and would have been the first to object to any attempt on their part to fulfill or to perform this strategic function or function of higher operational



direction for which they simply had no preparation or qualification.

SOAPES: The major military policy that we associate with the Eisenhower period in the early administration was the New Look. Was there more to that concept than saving money as is frequently said?

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes, and fundamentally I think it came from the conviction on Eisenhower's part that we were in the nuclear age and that the nuclear complement of war had really already, even then, become a dominant component--we're talking large-scale war. Now the institution, the Pentagon and its major component elements were far from having made the adjustment to that kind of a concept. But he had no doubt in his mind. He expressed it in highly simplified terms that, for example, any major war in Europe was bound to become an all-out war and a nuclear war. There were many for whom that was too simple, and that was very harsh medicine, but that was a conviction on his part, and the attempts to preserve forces as they had existed in a previous time simply cut very little ice with him.





SOAPES: So in essence can we call this an attempt to update the military system?

GOODPASTER: I think that is correct. Now, along with that he found very attractive in that the fact that by doing that it would be possible to make major cutbacks in the size of the program, the size of the forces, and in the size of the military budgets. Although another thing in which he always took pride was that when the Korean war was over he was able to prevent the pell-mell demobilization and destruction of our forces that had always been characteristic of post-war periods in the past--that he wanted to go on what he called a program for the long haul. And in that area he felt that having a man like Wilson and Wilson's subordinates and then McElroy, a manager, could be very useful in putting the Defense Department on an efficient, operating basis.

SOAPES: Did he see any contradiction between the New Look and his interest in disarmament?

GOODPASTER: No, I think it was his interest in the New Look

that very much drove him in the direction of disarmament, because he felt that the nuclear weapons were here to stay and they had given a new character to warfare. It would be far more destructive than anything that had ever been seen before, that you could not go back. You couldn't dis-invent the nuclear weapons, and that they were a centerpiece of major confrontation and potential military conflict and that over a period of time it should be possible to reach disarmament arrangements which would be in the interest of both sides. But he recognized how difficult that would be.

[Interruption]

GOODPASTER: Now I might just add to that that in the latter part of his administration, probably under the impetus of Foster Dulles, Eisenhower was really almost driven to recognize that there was more to it than just the nuclear weapons, that problems were arising in the so-called "third world" that introduced the requirement for conventional military strength and a conventional military position. And this also existed to a degree in NATO, but it was particularly in other areas



of the world where Foster Dulles drew this to the President's attention. The President was reluctant to acknowledge that. I think part of that reluctance came from a concern that he would lose the ability to keep a limit on the buildup of military forces. He was more interested to see if ways couldn't be found to demilitarize the confrontation in those third areas of the world. But it was either at the very beginning of 1956 or the very beginning of 1957 that Foster Dulles in an article for Foreign Affairs laid out this particular facet of security policy.



SOAPES: What was Eisenhower's assumption about the proper role of the Congress and public opinion in military and foreign policy?

GOODPASTER: Well, first to start about public opinion, he said often, "Democracy is public opinion in action," and I think that expressed very well his idea about public opinion. But he recognized that there was a great leadership responsibility in forming and advising public opinion, particularly in difficult



areas removed from their own direct experience, such as foreign policy and military activity. Now, he was deeply concerned and vehement over efforts of the military services to try to promote, as he put it, "military hysteria," to try to keep emotions whipped up and fears high far beyond what he felt was needed to provide for the security of the country.

With regard to the Congress, in so far as military and foreign policy matters were concerned, he was often very much concerned about the way in which some of the arms manufacturers, particularly the missile manufacturers, lobbied the Congress with the support of the military services with the idea of increasing missile programs and introducing new types of missiles and the like. The whole story of the bomber gap, the whole story of the missile gap, this was very largely fed by the--in his view, and I think in fact--by the arms manufacturers, the military services, and the politicians who saw this as something that they could exploit and on which they, of course, could receive the support of the services and of the arms manufacturers.



SOAPES: Something that he was interested in in his farewell address.

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes, he came back to that. And this proved to be a very difficult area for him through the last years of his Presidency, an area where he had constantly to battle against what he thought were pressures in the wrong direction.

SOAPES: And that you think was the source of his closing statements in his--

GOODPASTER: Oh, yes. I would say that's a major part of the background of that statement from the time of the reorganization of 1958--that was part of the reason for that reorganization--to get a stronger control over these pushers to enlarge their own service programs and weapons projects of many, many kinds.

SOAPES: One of the major crises of the Eisenhower administration was in Suez in '56. What position did you have in that situation?



GOODPASTER: Well, he was flying back from some political activity I think down in Florida and stopped off in Richmond and then was coming back to Washington when we got word of this. And I went out to meet him and ride back in to the White House with him and bring him up to date on what was going on. And then at his request I got a group over--it was either the secretary of state or the undersecretary, the secretary of defense or the undersecretary, and probably the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the charge' d'affaires of Great Britain, the ambassador not being available. He then immediately, that night, moved into this, sent Anthony Eden a message or asked that the British diplomat send Eden a message calling on him to explain what they were doing and provide us full information. And from that time on he was deeply and directly in this and I was his, I would say, his principal assistant in the White House on this matter. We studied the problem of the oil, and we studied the problem of the financial implications, the threats that had come from the Russians and the proposal that they join with us in placing forces there, Eisenhower's decision to take the matter up to the United Nations. On all





of those he was directly and deeply into this. He had immediately come to the view that the line of action that was being pursued by the French and the British and the Israelis was simply not internationally acceptable and that we would disassociate ourselves completely from them. My role as staff assistant in these matters was to make sure that the issues--that he was able to deal with them in a timely way by getting the people in and keeping him completely up to date, up to the moment, as the thing developed.



SOAPES: You mentioned a number of factors that you considered--oil, finances, Soviet Union and its role--which of those was primary in his mind?

GOODPASTER: What was primary on his mind was, as he had told the British over the weeks ahead of this, was that they were unable to show how it would be brought to an end, that they really had no conception of how this was to be dealt with. They could get themselves into it, but there was no international basis on which they could attempt to hold the canal area by force. And I would say that this was the

predominant factor. Along with this, he recognized that they simply did not have the assets or the resources to be able to sustain this indefinitely because of the cutoff of oil, because of the financial implications that this would carry with it.

He regarded, and I have to say I shared the same view, the Soviet action as just being bluster and an attempt to get cheap credit with the Arabs by making threats that obviously they were not going to have to carry out. As I recall we had word, I think from General Gruenther over in Europe, that there was great concern among the Europeans over these Russian threats. And although Eisenhower wasn't concerned about them, he then took action to have Hagerty make a statement that, of course, any attack on our allies would constitute an attack on us, so that, in effect, that read the Russians out of the situation.

SOAPES: Was that a common reaction of his to pronouncements coming out of Moscow? Khrushchev was famous for saying all sorts of things that were inflammatory. Did Eisenhower see most of that as bluster?



GOODPASTER: Yes, I think so. He saw some dangers in it. There were dangers particularly in Khrushchev's actions and statements over Berlin, because had East Berlin been turned back to the East Germans and had the East Germans been given control over our access to West Berlin, that would have been a very dangerous situation which could very well have caused hostilities. Now that he was very concerned about. But he regarded much of the rest of this as just sheer bluster.

SOAPES: How strong was his support for Israel?

GOODPASTER: I think for the existence of Israel he felt that that was a fact of international life and that that had to be assured. His support for the Suez affair was nil. As a matter of fact, it was far from support, it was opposition to that. But I believe that he felt that--I've forgotten the sequence--but that this was a very dangerous and escalating affair. And again my memory doesn't quite serve me, but the Arab fedayeen as I recall this were infiltrating and trying to carry on terrorism against the Israelis. And in that he was very strongly opposed to the what the Arabs were doing,





denying Israel a peaceful life for its own self-development. I think it was the Israelis then that conducted a heavy punitive operation against the Arabs at El Auja, and that's the name that sticks in my mind. My recollection--and this is somewhat dim--is that there was a general feeling in which he may have shared, although I can't say that for certain, that the Israeli response may have been excessive in this case. Then the Arabs felt that they were humiliated and they took a compensatory step-- I think this may have been one of the causes for them asking for arms from the Russians. So you had an escalatory effort going on here. What interested him more was the effort to redirect this in a constructive way, and the effort that he discussed with Eric Johnston to go out and try to sell a program of atomic energy development in the area in which both the Arabs and the Israelis would have a stake, which would be a force for peace in the region.

SOAPES: The other big crisis of '56 was in Hungary. What were his major concerns about that episode?

GOODPASTER: Our concern there--we didn't know whether the Russians would invade Hungary with force. I think that we all felt that this evolution, a freer Hungary, would have been a very welcome development. I was concerned, and I remember he shared my concern. I pointed out to him that we were beginning to hear things from the Hungarians that could be viewed as very dangerous and challenging by the Russians, that in addition to declaring a much wider range of freedom for themselves they had talked about affiliating with the West and with NATO. And it was his feeling and mine that this would be anathema to the Russians and would be a challenge that they were likely not to accept, and that would cause them to respond with armed force. I recall talking to him about the possibility of our ambassador, Ambassador [Llewellyn E.] Thompson who was either our ambassador in Russian or in Hungary at the time--I've forgotten which, I think in Russia--going to the Russians and saying that we would not entertain any thought of bringing the Hungarians into NATO, with the idea that this might save the Hungarians at a time when they were moving into a position of very great danger. There was no feeling



on Eisenhower's part of any possibility that the West would or could intervene with force to protect them.

Later he was very concerned that there might have been previous inducements and enticements held out to the Hungarians to lead them to think that if they took this action that we would intervene to support them. We had a couple of surveys and examinations made, investigations really, of what had been beamed out to them over Radio Free Europe and other ways. I would say that the results were inconclusive and left Eisenhower with a good deal of concern that the messages sent to the Hungarians may have gone beyond or been in conflict with our government's policy, because the policy was contrary to such inducement or holding out any idea that we would intervene, or even trying to foment a military rebellion. There was no basis in policy for that. I think he never ridded himself of some feeling that our government, elements in our government--and specifically the CIA--had gone beyond their authority and in fact had carried out a line of propaganda of their own which was not in accord with his policy.





SOAPES: In addition to trying to save the Hungarians by telling the Soviet Union that we would not entertain them as NATO allies--

GOODPASTER: --and I don't know whether that was ever accomplished or not. I was never able to get a clear-cut answer as to whether that was done or not.

SOAPES: But might that view be construed to mean that Eisenhower accepted the Soviet's sphere of influence in eastern Europe as a fact of life that "we can't roll back the Iron Curtain."



GOODPASTER: I don't believe that he ever used that term. And I think that he felt that there could be an evolutionary, erosive process in the Soviet position in eastern Europe. Early in his administration in the so-called Solarium Exercise this issue of what our policy should be was brought up before him on his initiative, as you probably know, and very thoroughly examined by three study groups. The overall study group had three main components: one investigating a roll-back policy; one

investigating the policy of military containment; and the third investigating drawing the line--essentially what I would call a sphere-of-influence-type of policy. This study after five or six weeks was presented to him and to all of his principal subordinates extending down through the level of assistant secretary in the departments affected. He then summed up at the end of this--and this is the famous time when some years later George Kennan, who was involved in it--I was in this as well--George Kennan used the expression to me that Eisenhower in his summing up after all of these presentations had been made, analyzed the policies and their values and potential costs, and in doing so, in Kennan's words, "showed his intellectual ascendancy over every man in the room," including some fairly ascendant people. In that, Eisenhower, in effect, rejected the roll-back policy. In effect, he also rejected the drawing the line which would have been simply held with the sanction of the so-called massive retaliation force in case that line was breached, and came down for a policy which I think can be characterized in very summary form as containment, including military containment.

SOAPES: Turning briefly to the Pacific, what was his evaluation of the situation in Indochina? What were his main concerns there?

GOODPASTER: Well, when I came back to join him, which was in the fall of 1954, Dien Bien Phu had fallen and the French under Mendes France had in effect sued for peace on any terms that they could get. And the United States had said that we would not join in that, but would not try to upset the arrangement that was made between the French and the Indochinese.

It was just at about that time that Foster Dulles came and said that there was still a possibility that the South Vietnamese could survive independent of the North Vietnamese and asked if a senior military officer might go out there to examine this possibility. And former Army Chief of Staff General Joseph Lawton Collins was picked to do that. And he went out and provided an assessment that with military assistance they would have a good chance of maintaining themselves and surviving. I've forgotten the timing. It was about this time that the South Vietnamese overcame the various





dissenting groups, the various war lords and so on that had been in opposition to the government. Eisenhower was then prepared to provide support, but it was always support conditioned on action that the South Vietnamese should take, and it was support without commitment on our part. I would say those two principles were very strong in his mind. And as you know, South Vietnam really made very substantial progress toward viability. They were a viable country and government by 1960.

The real threat was coming in Laos at that time, and it went from one form of disorder and discord to another. And it was quite obvious that the North Vietnamese were building up their position in North Vietnam. And when Eisenhower met with Kennedy just before Kennedy took over, this was one of the main areas of discussion between Eisenhower and Kennedy, just to tell him that the situation in Laos was very, very dangerous, and dangerous not only to Laos but particularly in its threat to South Vietnam.

SOAPES: Did he believe in the domino theory for Southeast Asia?



GOODPASTER: I don't think I ever heard him use the term, but the concept that the Communists would continue this outward expansion and would move from one position to another, I think that was very much in his mind, and concern as to the threat that would develop to Indonesia and Malaya--those were two that he named on occasion--and to India. Those things were very much on his mind. I think that the rather mechanical picture image of the dominos, I think that was a product of the press.

SOAPES: We've had four sessions with you now and we're getting close to the end of the day here, and I have just a little bit of tape left on this side. You're a scholar as well as a military man, as well as a participant in these events. How do you think historians should evaluate the Eisenhower presidency?



GOODPASTER: Well, I'll talk about both the process and a little bit about where they would be likely to come out if they follow what I would regard as sound historiography. The process should simply be to apply the tools of the historian

to this, to dig below the rather popular reports, many of them written by the political opponents of Eisenhower and his party, most of them by people who did not participate so that the quality of this evidence is not of the highest. But historians have passed this back and forth among themselves as though they were working with sound historical materials. Now the materials are becoming available out there at Abilene and I believe that quite a different picture begins to emerge. My own memos are now on the public record or are coming on the public record. Killian's work shows what can be done. George Kistiakowsky also has provided a bit. Others have the feeling that something more may need to be done. Eisenhower himself took most of this material, and we all thought that was the thing that should be done, to write his books, Waging Peace, as his own account of his presidency.



How will it come out? My own feeling is that as people of competence and serious scholars go into this more fully, more and more it is going to appear that he dealt really quite effectively with a wide and diverse group of dangers and that he gradually brought them into a much more stable



condition which was quite consistent with American security interests and with an enlightened avenue of development for the world at large. He was very constructive in his outlook, as you may know, always accentuating the positive, even in relationships with the Soviet Union, while recognizing the threat and the antagonism of their system toward ours. My own feeling is that as more and more serious work is done the contribution that he made will be more and more appreciated.

