INTERVIEW WITH

Grayson L. Kirk

by

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Oral Historian

on

May 12, 1975

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
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This begins an interview with Dr. Grayson Kirk at his office in New York City, May 12, 1975.

MR. HORROCKS: Dr. Kirk, could you give us a personal summary of your background?

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DR. KIRK: I was born in Ohio and I am a graduate of Miami University. Then I did a Master's Degree at Clark University, my Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. In the course of my graduate education, I spent a year at Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris. Subsequently I spent a year at the London School of Economics, completing my formal educational background. I taught political science and particularly international relations at the University of Wisconsin during the '30s and moved then to Columbia in 1940 where I became professor of international relations. Then after Pearl Harbor I went to the state department to join the Division of Special Research under Leo Pasvolsky which was engaged in post-war planning. And I had a short period of residence at Yale as a research associate. Then I was on the U.S. delegation staff at the Dumbarton Oaks conversations in '44. I was the executive officer of the third commission of the U.N. conference in San Francisco in 1945. After that I

came back to Columbia to resume full-time work and then when President Eisenhower came, I was the chairman of the inauguration committee for him in October 1948. Later when the then-provost, Albert C. Jacobs, left to become chancellor of the University of Denver I took over his post as provost of the university. In the following year I became the vice-president, and then in 1951, I think it was, when General Eisenhower took leave from his presidential post at Columbia to go to SHAPE, I took over then as the acting head of the university in his absence. After having been elected President of the United States in 1953, General Eisenhower resigned his university post; I became his successor as the fourteenth president of Columbia and so remained until my retirement in 1968.

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HORROCKS: When was the first time you met General Eisenhower?

KIRK: It was about the time of his inauguration.

HORROCKS: You hadn't known him before then?

KIRK: No, I had not.

HORROCKS: What was the nature of your work with post-war planning?

KIRK: Well I did a good deal of work on proposals for a peace treaty settlement. But most of my work, in Washington, was devoted to the preparation of the American draft for a United Nations' charter.

HORROCKS: Did you ever discuss that work with General Eisenhower afterwards?

KIRK: No. No.

HORROCKS: What was the status of Columbia University as General Eisenhower became its president.

KIRK: Well there had been a long period, from 1902 until 1945, under the presidency of Nicholas Murray Butler. He retired in 1945, and the then-provost, Dr. Frank Fackenthal became the acting head of the university and so remained until General Eisenhower was elected.

HORROCKS: Was the university in any financial difficulties as the General became president?

KIRK: Oh, yes, all universities, all private universities,

with perhaps one or two exceptions are chronically in financial difficulties.

HORROCKS: But nothing out of the ordinary at the time?

KIRK: No, no nothing very serious. I don't remember the budgetary situation during his fairly brief time, but during the seventeen years when I was responsible for the budget, we only had small deficits in two out of the seventeen years. So it wasn't a bad situation.

HORROCKS: When he did become president of Columbia, were there any unusual problems in relations between faculty, administration, trustees?

KIRK: You mean before he came?

HORROCKS: Before he came.

KIRK: I don't think so, although my knowledge of that period is not perhaps as precise as it might be because, mind you, for most of the preceeding five or six years I'd been away. I'd been in and out. The university had been disrupted a great

deal during the war as all universities were. We'd undertaken the training of a great many midshipmen for the Navy in order to use the physical plant when students were off at war. Thus, the university had been through a period of very considerable disruption as all universities were during the Second World War.

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HORROCKS: At any rate, there were no unique circumstances as the General came in as president, unique to Columbia.

KIRK: No. There was a feeling that the time had come when we needed a fresh look at the future of the university because, mind you, before this brief interim period there had been a very long period of rapid growth and development under Nicholas Murray Butler and President Butler stayed on a bit, perhaps a bit too long, with the result that a certain amount of stagnation had set in, simply because there wasn't a younger, able and energetic head of the university.

HORROCKS: Stagnation as far as curricula or fund-raising or physical development?

KIRK: A little of all those.

HORROCKS: Why was General Eisenhower chosen? I guess that's the obvious question.

KIRK: Yes. I don't know. Because I wasn't on the board of trustees, and I don't know.

HORROCKS: Was there any rumor that he was particularly under consideration before it was announced?

KIRK: If so I had not heard it. No.

HORROCKS: How did the faculty generally react to the selection?

KIRK: Well I think they were intrigued by it. It's very hard to say how did the faculty feel, because no university faculty as a whole ever has a common feeling about anything.

HORROCKS: Did the General ever tell you why he chose to come to Columbia?

KIRK: Well I think partly because of the example of his brother, Milton. He had or thought he had an interest in higher education because his brother had become president

of Kansas State Agricultural College and had moved from there to Penn State, then eventually from Penn State to Johns Hopkins.

HORROCKS: He had expressed, as far as his interest in education goes, a preference for, or at least an initial interest in a smaller, quieter school.

KIRK: He used to say that to me. He used to say on occasion that what he really had in mind was a small, rural, liberal arts college which, of course, is not what he got.

HORROCKS: Not at all.

KIRK: Far from it. About the opposite end of the spectrum.

HORROCKS: Well what happened that he went to Columbia?

KIRK: What happened? That's rather difficult to say. You mean in terms of his own interest or--

HORROCKS: Yes.

KIRK: He was subjected to a great deal of external pressure during his entire time at Columbia. Mind you, his time there

was brief. He was subjected to a great deal of external pressure; he was constantly being sought out by this organization or this group, political and otherwise, and it was very difficult for him to concentrate on Columbia affairs. Second, he came with no background about the nature or organization or operation of a large, very complex, research-oriented university. But he never really had time to master the problem.

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HORROCKS: Why would he have chosen a university the size of Columbia, with its problems over, say, a smaller college like Amherst or something like Kansas State?

KIRK: That I don't know. That I don't know. I often wondered about it too. But at any rate that's the way it turned out. I simply can't answer that; I don't suppose anyone can. Milton might know more about it.

HORROCKS: Did he ever express a feeling that he got something that he hadn't bargained for or something different than what he expected?

KIRK: Oh, yes. Yes. I think so, I think he was somewhat

surprised at the complexity of the problem, surprised that he was unable to solve these problems in the quick and decisive fashion that the professional military man becomes accustomed to.

HORROCKS: And what kinds of problems would these be?

KIRK: Problems in dealing with the faculty, problems in fund-raising, problems in the coordination of the various shcools and faculties. You see we had some sixteen schools and faculties at the university.

HORROCKS: Did he anticipate doing a lot of fund-raising when the trustees--

KIRK: I think not. I think not. I think this was something of a shock to him when he found that he would be expected to raise money for Columbia because I think he had been led to believe by the trustees that he would not be obliged to do much of this. He found that this simply didn't work in terms of large fund raising, fund-raising insofar as important donors were concerned--they wanted to talk to the president. They always do.

HORROCKS: Did he become unhappy with any of the people on the trustees who had convinced him otherwise initially?

KIRK: I don't know.

HORROCKS: He never expressed--

KIRK: If so I wouldn't have known that, no.

HORROCKS: Well I guess there were two fund-raising activities really to be carried on, some would be for his own projects, such as the American Assembly.

KIRK: Such as the American Assembly, yes. He was very much interested in that. He regarded that as his particular pet project.

HORROCKS: Fund-raising for Columbia University as the trustees would want him to do, did he follow through on that?

KIRK: Within a reasonable extent, yes, although it was not very congenial to him. He hired a professional fund-raiser, Paul Davis. And Davis set up quite a staff and Eisenhower gave them some support. Davis got into trouble and didn't

stay. He left before Eisenhower did.

HORROCKS: Davis left in about '50, I think.

KIRK: I think that's right.

HORROCKS: What sort of problems did he run into? This is Mr. Davis.

KIRK: I think chiefly in dealing with the faculty and in being unable to solve the problems of coordination. During the early Butler period, Butler did everything, practically all the fund-raising. At that time it was a smaller institution and more effectively coordinated. Then as Columbia grew and became a great sprawling institution, inevitable various deans began to do fund-raising of their own. Hence, one of the growing problems was that of coordination, which Davis was unable to do.

HORROCKS: Did the General primarily rely on Mr. Davis for fund-raising advice and technique?

KIRK: I suspect so.

HORROCKS: Where did General Eisenhower get these funds? Was it primarily from new contacts or Columbia alumni?

KIRK: Oh, a combination of both: Individuals who believed in him and to whom he could turn, some corporate support, alumni support, the usual range of such things.

HORROCKS: Did he especially get a lot just because he was such a charismatic, unique figure?

KIRK: Some. But the fund-raising during this period was not spectacular because he was there only a short time, you see.

HORROCKS: I get the feeling that when he became president of the university, he had in mind that he would kind of become a senior statesman to whom faculty and students would look to for advice and general guidance.

KIRK: Let's put it this way, he brought to the university his military staff approach to problems, and this approach did not work very well in a university. He was rather timid about the

faculty. Frequently he would ask me, as the provost of the university, provost and vice-president, to preside at the faculty meetings which was his own stated obligation. And he would say, "You go I'm busy, you go and preside. I'll come in later and sit on the side lines." He didn't really want to preside over university faculty affairs.

HORROCKS: Was it because he wasn't interested in them, or was he a bit intimidated, insecure about it?

KIRK: Perhaps a little of both. I don't know. I really can't tell you about that. But I can report that he didn't establish the warm faculty contacts with senior faculty members that I think some of the senior faculty members expected would occur.

HORROCKS: Was the faculty receptive to him? Did they give him a fair chance on this?

KIRK: I think so. Yes, I think so. But a number of them, a number of the senior people became alienated long before he left--I think in large part because of the fact that he

had brought some staff people along with him who weren't very sophisticated about who should be allowed to see him and these staff people controlled his calendar.

HORROCKS: Are you speaking now of Kevin McCann and Robert Schulz?

KIRK: Speaking primarily of Schulz. To some extent McCann.

HORROCKS: I guess Schulz was primarily an administrative aide who would handle appointments--

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KIRK: That's right.

HORROCKS: --scheduling and such.

KIRK: He did Eisenhower immense harm at Columbia.

HORROCKS: Did anyone speak to the General about this and try and straighten it out?

KIRK: I don't know. I don't know.

HORROCKS: What was Kevin McCann's role?

KIRK: Well he wrote speeches and served as a general adviser on things.

HORROCKS: Did he fit in reasonably well?

KIRK: Let's say it this way--he fitted in a bit better than Schulz but Schulz didn't fit at all.

HORROCKS: How did you become provost?

KIRK: Well, as I say, Albert Jacobs who was the then-provost, who had come from the law faculty, left to become chancellor of the University of Denver and I was asked to take his place. What the procedure was by which my name was turned up and they decided upon me, I, of course, never knew.

HORROCKS: Had you developed a close personal relationship with the General before this?

KIRK: No. No.

HORROCKS: Afterwards.

KIRK: No, only afterwards. I had not before that time.

Which leads one to the normal conclusion that the decision was not made by the General so much as by some other people around and that he had accepted it.

HORROCKS: Who would have made these decisions, someone like Jacobs?

KIRK: I suppose that he had quite a lot to do with selection of his successor.

HORROCKS: Did Mr. Fackenthal play any particular role in helping administer the university after the General came?

KIRK: No. No.

HORROCKS: I guess he made the comment, or he has been quoted as having said that, "The General came; I offered him advice, that my door would always be open, and he never asked for my advice."

KIRK: I think that's true. Which I thought was unfortunate because Fackenthal had spent all his life at the university. He could have been very helpful. But Schulz and McCann

wanted no part of that and Eisenhower didn't interfere.

HORROCKS: Was anyone at Columbia serving as his close adviser during this period, when he first got there?

KIRK: Nobody that I know. He formed, rather early, a fairly close personal relationship with the then-Dean of Columbia College, Harry Carman. How much he relied upon him I don't know. I know he respected him and liked him, and it was a mutual feeling.

HORROCKS: And developed a close friendship with Phillip Young of--

KIRK: Oh, yes. Phil Young of the business school, that's right. The two of them were closer I think to him than most other administrators.

HORROCKS: What attracted them to General Eisenhower?

KIRK: Oh, I don't know. Harry Carman is dead, but Phil Young isn't--you'll have to ask him.

HORROCKS: I know he's up in Van Hornesville. I wanted to interview him, but it's too far.

It's just kind of a mystery, not a mystery just a problem, how the General came in to Columbia surrounded with these two people as his watchdogs--

KIRK: Yes, which was a great mistake.

HORROCKS: --and never was really able to break out of it.

KIRK: No. If he'd been here longer I'm sure he would have, but he was there such a short time that he didn't break out of it and this was a very bad arrangement for him.

HORROCKS: He expressed, well before he went to Columbia and afterwards and in a couple chapters in At Ease--his recollections of his time at Columbia--a yearning for more contact with the students. And one gets the feeling that that's one of the primary reasons that he wanted to come to a university.

KIRK: I think that's right. He wanted to be sort of a father figure to a lot of students, but this expectation didn't work out too well.

HORROCKS: And the reason?

KIRK: Well partly because he finally found that his time was taken up with all the other things that bedevil the life of the university president. And he was subject, in addition, to a vast number of local, external but local pressures--I mean New York City, and then from Washington as well as from professional politicians coming to see him.

HORROCKS: It's kind of curious his relation in his book about Dean [Louis M.] Hacker's invitation for him to speak to his class, a general studies class. And I guess he appeared and gave a lecture and then was, from what he writes, it seems he was grilled rather intensively by the students afterwards.

KIRK: Columbia students are like that.

HORROCKS: And then he decided he didn't want to make a return engagement on this for the next year.

KIRK: Yes, I suspect that's right. Hacker would know more about that than I, but I think that's true.

HORROCKS: Would you say that he never really adapted to Columbia University?

KIRK: Yes, I would say that.

HORROCKS: I guess Columbia Teachers College had a problem when Eisenhower came as far as its image and public relations go--McCarthyism, of being a "Red" institution, so to speak. How did he handle this?

KIRK: I don't know. The problem didn't arise in any way as far as my own work was concerned as provost of the university because Teachers College is a separate corporation and Eisenhower, the president, was ex-officio member of their board. But it didn't arise as far as I was concerned in my work. So I just don't know.

HORROCKS: What exactly was your work?

KIRK: Well he looked to me as the person to really administer the university and to come to him for major decisions.

HORROCKS: Would you have to filter your way through Kevin McCann or Robert Schulz?

KIRK: No. This created a bit of a problem because they would have preferred to have it that way but I couldn't have it that way.

HORROCKS: Were you left pretty much on your own as far as initiative and handling university problems?

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KIRK: Except that he naturally wanted to make major decisions, because the president should make them himself. He had a tendency born out of his long military experience to want to have all the problems presented to him in very brief form--not more than one page and then he would make his decision quickly, sometimes too quickly. He would shoot from the hip, as the colloquial saying goes, in order to dispose of the problem.

HORROCKS: Through habit or a lack of interest in the problem?

KIRK: Habit, I think, habit. Often, I think that he felt it was better to make a decision than to postpone it.

HORROCKS: Can you think of any specific instances where this--

KIRK: No, I don't think of any specific ones, but he had the executive habit of, having made the decision, to dismiss the matter from his mind, which was a good thing to do. If in my judgment it was the wrong decision, I'd very frequently assume the authority not to carry out what he had told me to do and I would go back two or three days later and say, "General, I've been thinking about this and I wonder if we ought to do it this way rather than that way." And by that time it was out of his mind and he didn't care.

HORROCKS: Would you feel that, this is a personal judgment, the way you saw his administration of Columbia University followed a very similar pattern as President of the United States?

KIRK: I wasn't familiar enough with the way he administered the White House. I don't know.

HORROCKS: How did the American Assembly come about?

KIRK: I don't know. He had had for some time in his mind the notion that there ought to be some means whereby people of good will could reach some kind of a consensus about major national problems--that if some mechanism would be created whereby intelligent people, interested in the welfare of the nation rather than in individual or group advancement, could be brought together to talk about major national problems they might be able to reach a consensus which then would be nationally useful.

HORROCKS: Was this an idea that he came in with, or did this develop?

KIRK: I don't know whether he had it when he came. Certainly it was an idea which he developed very shortly after he came to Columbia.

HORROCKS: Who were the people who worked most closely with him in developing it? Were you personally involved in developing it?

KIRK: Not to any great extent. My recollection is that he

turned more to Phillip Young on that than anyone else.

HORROCKS: Somehow it strikes me as rather, in some ways a naive or innocent approach to education, the American Assembly idea.

KIRK: I agree.

HORROCKS: Did he ever realize that?

KIRK: I doubt it.

HORROCKS: It's real curious because it's that same approach that follows through in a lot of his approach to the presidency.

KIRK: It was a very simplistic approach, extremely simplistic. But he had great faith in it as the way to solve major national problems and of course it didn't work out that way.

[Interruption]

HORROCKS: If you were studying General Eisenhower at Columbia from the historian's viewpoint, what sort of things would you look into?

KIRK: That's a rather difficult question because of the shortness of time he was at Columbia and the fact that it was not, in my judgment, for him a very happy experience. I think he regarded the opportunity to take leave from Columbia and to go to SHAPE as a welcome change. So from a historian's point of view, I would be interested in why he ever accepted the Columbia appointment, but I don't know of anyone who could help except possibly Milton, with whom he must have talked about it, or Mamie who is still living. But it's not the sort of thing I ever could ask him. I couldn't go over and say, "Why the hell did you come here?"

HORROCKS: And he never said, "Why the hell am I here?"

KIRK: Not quite, no.

HORROCKS: Is there anything concrete that happened as he left for SHAPE that would have given you this feeling that he was glad to leave?

KIRK: No. No.

HORROCKS: Just a general sense--

KIRK: Just a general feeling that he was becoming increasingly frustrated.

HORROCKS: He left almost all of the administrative work first to Mr. Jacobs and then to you.

KIRK: That's right.

HORROCKS: Were the trustees ever unhappy at this, or had they expected this to happen?

KIRK: I would have no way of knowing about that. I think they were pleased to have a man with his international reputation as the head of Columbia, feeling that this was a good thing for Columbia. They liked him personally. It was very hard not to like the man personally because he had an enormously attractive personality. And whether there was any sense of disillusionment on the part of the trustees I would not know because I was not then involved with them.

HORROCKS: When he did go off to SHAPE, did he continue to have an active involvement with the university?

KIRK: No.

HORROCKS: In other words he was really--

KIRK: No. He simply wrote me a letter, which is in the files somewhere, saying "I'm leaving. During my absence you are to exercise all the functions of the presidential office for me." and so on.

HORROCKS: Did you have the feeling then that he wasn't coming back?

KIRK: Yes. I had nothing to go on. It was just a hunch. But I had the feeling that, in all probability, he would not come back.

HORROCKS: Not just because of the election, but perhaps for any reason.

KIRK: No. I just had the feeling that he hadn't been terribly happy there, although I could be wrong about that.

I don't think Mrs. Eisenhower liked it there. And I had the--

[Interruption]

HORROCKS: --in citizenship education.

KIRK: Yes, he believed that something seriously lacking in American education at all levels was education for citizenship. This was a something that was almost an obsession with him, and the result is that he tried through the American Assembly, the Citizenship Education project in Teachers College, and subsequently from the White House in the National Goals Commission, to do something about it.

HORROCKS: What did he mean by citizenship education and what did he feel was missing in our teachings, in our education system? Was it--

KIRK: Go on.

HORROCKS: Or maybe he never really had it clearly defined.

KIRK: I'm not sure how clearly defined it was. I think the concept was perhaps a little vague in his own mind except that he knew a good citizen from one who wasn't a good citizen, and he felt that there must be some way by which the educational system could be retooled a bit so as to turn out as a product people who would be good American citizens.

HORROCKS: Those who would agree with him.

KIRK: In terms of the great verities on which this country was founded, democracy, freedom for the individual, the free enterprise system and so on, yes.

HORROCKS: It kind of reminds me of some material I saw relating to the American Assembly, and it was a brochure and if the American Assembly was designed to kind of unify and hash out opinions to reach common goals--

KIRK: That's right.

HORROCKS: --I read this definition of those who should join the American Assembly as those who believe that we must fight

the communist threat in western Europe and wished to explore how to do it. And this strikes me as isolating those you disagree with and then working out an agreement with those who already agree with you, to some extent.

KIRK: I really don't know how far in his own mind he thought it was important to bring in people with differing points of view and then try to reach a consensus, or how far consensus would be dependent on the selection of persons who had a common approach. This I don't know. You'd have to go over, which I have not done, the personnel invited to the early American Assemblies.

HORROCKS: Well you were involved in the American Assembly as--

KIRK: Well I was on the board, ex-officio, for a long time. Then I helped pick Henry Wriston to direct the Assembly.

HORROCKS: Just basically, how was the American Assembly structured during those early years.

KIRK: Well we had a board, partly Columbia people. There

were a great many people from the outside, as is still true. The funds were raised directly for the American Assembly and they were administered, by Columbia through the School of Business.

HORROCKS: And how was Lewis Douglas chosen as executive director?

KIRK: Lew Douglas? Was he director of that thing? Was he--

HORROCKS: Yes.

KIRK: Well I knew Lew very well. I didn't realize he was ever executive director of the--

HORROCKS: I think he was the first one.

KIRK: He may have been, very briefly.

HORROCKS: Or he may have been a figurehead.

KIRK: I think pretty much so, yes. I think so. I knew Lew very well but I don't--I knew he was on the board but I had

forgotten, one's memory does this, I had forgotten that Lew had ever been--

HORROCKS: I may be wrong.

KIRK: I had forgotten that Lew was ever actually--my secretary here might help us on that. She used to take General Eisenhower's dictation and she was around the president's office before. You might want to talk to her.

HORROCKS: Helen King.

KIRK: Yes.

HORROCKS: I thought I recognized that name on the letter.

KIRK: You might want to talk to her because she was in the president's office long before I was. She worked with Mr. Jacobs there and so on.

HORROCKS: That may be a good idea.

KIRK: I suggest that you do that when we've finished here if you have time.

HORROCKS: So the American Assembly was really guided by an advisory board.

KIRK: That's right.

HORROCKS: Was it mostly by Philip Young who administered it?

KIRK: I think so. And then later on he got Henry Wriston to do it.

HORROCKS: What was the size of the American Assembly as far as its focal discussion groups which I think was really the kind of ultimate aim of it.

KIRK: Well they would get--forty, fifty people together for a weekend up at Arden House.

HORROCKS: And then they would publish the results and have it go out to local discussion groups throughout--

KIRK: That came later. The formation of the little assemblies came after Eisenhower's time.

HORROCKS: Was that envisioned by him?

KIRK: I don't know. He certainly would have approved of it.

HORROCKS: Did he take an active interest in the types of American Assembly programs that were sponsored after he became President of the United States?

KIRK: I think he had a benevolent interest in it, however remote, but I'm not sure because I've never been involved in the direct administration of the Assembly. I've gone to make opening speeches on occasion to the Assembly and to preside occasionally at the sessions of the Assembly in the past.

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HORROCKS: You're a professor of international affairs and government. Correct?

KIRK: That's right. I was yes.

HORROCKS: Did you ever discuss international affairs and international politics with the General?

KIRK: Not directly to any great extent because we were both so busy with administrative jobs. The things I discussed with him were Columbia problems.

HORROCKS: What was Columbia's contribution to him, if any, when he left in '51.

KIRK: I don't know, on the positive side, what one could say. It had been a brief interlude in his life--as I indicated earlier, I don't think an altogether happy one. I don't know what he had expected to find at Columbia, but I don't think he found what he had thought he might find there, possibly because, his experience with higher education had been limited to West Point, which is a very different kettle of fish.

HORROCKS: And with the citizenship programs, it seems as though his idea of education was to disseminate existing knowledge to people rather than exploration and the job of learning.

KIRK: I don't think that interested him very much. I think

what he was interested in--his real passion--was not in training the mind but turning out good citizens.

HORROCKS: Would you say that he was interested in using the university to mobilize for the cold war through the American Assembly, citizenship education, of the conservation of human resources project?

KIRK: I think that's putting it in too stark a fashion. I don't think he thought of using the university as a mechanism to mobilize for the cold war. I think he was disturbed about the way in which the allies fell apart so soon after the end of the war. I think he was disturbed about the threat which Soviet Russia posed. I think he felt that Americans were perhaps not as aware of the problem as they ought to be. And this may have been one of the major items in his mind as he developed this notion of the importance of education for citizenship. But I think it was in broader terms. I think it had to do as much with the ability of the federal government to grapple with domestic problems and the necessity to have a broadly-educated and patriotic and fully-aware body

of citizens behind the government. And I think he was as much concerned about the domestic situation as he was with the cold war.

HORROCKS: The kind of statism, stalking the government--

KIRK: That's right. He was strongly of the opinion that the federal government was expanding into fields where it had no business being, that the function of government ought to be minimal and should not reach out and try to direct the lives of the individual citizens to the extent that it was then doing.

HORROCKS: This may be a question that you may not have direct knowledge of. Did he have feelings such as these when he came into Columbia as president? Or, to what extent was he influenced by the friends that he made--I'm thinking of people like William Robinson and William Byrne.

KIRK: I don't know.

HORROCKS: Cliff Roberts.

KIRK: I just don't know. I couldn't answer because

I have no knowledge of it.

HORROCKS: Did he ever say why he thought the allies fell apart after the war, what was really the crucial problem?

KIRK: No. I assumed he felt that it was because Stalin decided to go his own way, but I don't think I ever heard him say so in so many words.

HORROCKS: He often expressed the feeling that the Soviet social organization was based on the right . In fact that's, I think, the phrase he used in describing it.

KIRK: He did occasionally I think.

HORROCKS: How literally did he believe that?

KIRK: I don't know. I don't know. As I say, my discussions with him were largely on university administrative matters.

HORROCKS: Then, given that I'll pursue one more question on that line, if I may. You wrote a book in '36 on Philippine independence.

KIRK: Oh, yes.

HORROCKS: And at that time--

KIRK: You've done some homework, I see.

HORROCKS: Oh, yes. And at that time he was in the Philippines training Philippine defense forces; did you ever get together with him on that?

KIRK: No. Never did. I wrote the book before I came to Columbia, you see. I don't know whether he'd ever seen the book or not. I don't think I ever mentioned it to him.

HORROCKS: Was he ever interested in the School of Social Work? Is it the New York or the New School of Social Work?

KIRK: Well at that time it was the New York School of Social Work, and I've forgotten the year when it was brought into Columbia but I think it was after Eisenhower's time. It was an offshoot of the Community Service Society in New York and was independent at that time but with some affiliation with

Columbia. We gave the degrees for them, I think, by an arrangement that had been made some time before. And then later on when they were disowned by the Community Service Society, it was decided that they could no longer afford to live independently and they were brought into the Columbia picture. But my recollection is that that was after Eisenhower's time. I can check that. But I think it was.

HORROCKS: Were you involved or close to him at all when the pressure was built in '48 for him to get involved in politics?

KIRK: No. No, he kept those parts of his life separate from the university.

HORROCKS: Did you ever sense before, really before he came back to campaign, had you reached any conclusions on your own as to whether he was interested and would run or not?

KIRK: Well I thought that, knowing the pressures to which he had been subjected and the fact that he was not, in my judgment, prepared to make a lifelong commitment to return and stay until he retired at Columbia, I reached my own

personal conclusion that in all probability he would be receptive to a political draft.

HORROCKS: This would have been well before the '52 election year?

KIRK: Yes, oh yes.

HORROCKS: Are you familiar with any of the political pressures that were brought to bear on him in '50, '51?

KIRK: Not particularly.

HORROCKS: Did he continue any contact with Columbia University while he was President of the United States?

KIRK: No.

HORROCKS: After he was President of the United States, in retirement?

KIRK: No. Not really.

HORROCKS: He was happy to be away from New York.

KIRK: I think that's right. Oh, if anybody from Columbia was in Washington, some of his old friends, they were welcome to come to have a talk with him, but he didn't involve himself in Columbia affairs after he left to go to SHAPE at any time.

HORROCKS: And you never noticed him particularly turning to Columbia for advisers or advice or--

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KIRK: Oh, yes he did turn to some of the people he knew at Columbia, for instance, he took Joseph Campbell, who then was the treasurer of the university. He appointed him as Comptroller General of the United States.

HORROCKS: Well Philip Young would be another, I guess.

KIRK: That's right. Philip Young would be another.

HORROCKS: There was no drawing on Columbia as a think-tank or anything else.

KIRK: No. Just a few people who were friends of his.

HORROCKS: Another thing that I think he helped found while he was at Columbia was the Institute for War and Peace.

KIRK: War and peace studies, yes.

HORROCKS: What could you tell me about that?

KIRK: Well, he felt that it was important for the university to give special attention to some of these problems chiefly relating to why wars come and what can be done to prevent them. His approach was a bit, I must say, simplistic about some of these things. But he felt that there ought to be an organized effort at Columbia to study problems of peace and war. So he undertook to try to raise some money, and he got a little, not very much, to launch an institute to study those matters.

HORROCKS: Are you familiar with who might have funded this?

KIRK: I don't remember now. We'd have to check the records on that. Mostly they were personal friends.

HORROCKS: Did he think that there was some special sort of problem that caused wars or certain structural problems as far as--

KIRK: I don't know. He just had the feeling that more systematic study ought to be given to the problem.

HORROCKS: He had an idea and let someone else figure out how to do it.

KIRK: That's right.

HORROCKS: What was William T. R. Fox, is that his name?

KIRK: Yes, Bill Fox. We brought Bill down from Yale to Columbia to take my place as a professor of international relations--after I had to give up teaching after I became provost of the university.

HORROCKS: And how did he become involved, as opposed to other professors in the field?

KIRK: Well he was the natural one because he was interested in matters of this kind. He had been giving a lot of time to the research institute in international relations up at Yale and in terms of his own interest, he was the natural for this assignment.

HORROCKS: Did he develop a personal relationship with the General?

KIRK: Not to any great extent.

HORROCKS: Did the Institute for War and Peace develop or have any sort of relationship with the American Assembly?

KIRK: No. They were entirely separate.

HORROCKS: Entirely. Would never have served, say, as a researcher background--

KIRK: I don't think so because the Assembly was dealing with a wide spectrum of problems, domestic and foreign. No, there was no organic or even administrative or intellectual relationship between the two.

HORROCKS: Was it ever thought that the American Assembly, especially with its first two programs, U.S.-Western Europe relationship and inflation--General Eisenhower's two big concerns--was a political podium for him, or served that purpose?

KIRK: Some of the people that were interested in it, from the outside, may have thought about that. I never heard it said. And I doubt if he did. I think he was genuinely interested in the assembly. I don't think he was using this as a tool for political advantage.

HORROCKS: Are you familiar with a General Ed or Edwin Clark? I think he was involved somewhat with this Institute for War and Peace.

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KIRK: Yes, he was a friend of the General's. The name's pretty vague now. It's a long time ago and I don't think I could be helpful on that.

HORROCKS: Are you familiar with how the Harrimans got involved in donating the Arden House estate?

KIRK: I don't know how the initial proposal was developed. I was involved, as provost of the university, in the negotiations about our taking over Arden House. This was a property that neither Rowland nor Averell wanted. It had been built by their father and it was a very large house, about a hundred rooms. Both had houses elsewhere. It had been used during

the war as a naval hospital, and then at the end of the war there was a question of what they would do with it; it was just sitting up there. And so how the initiative came to give it to the university, as a home for the American Assembly, I don't know. Averell would know about that more than I. I was involved in the nuts and bolts of the negotiations, how much land we would take, what they do about helping us to refurbish the house, put in new kitchens, new furnishings and things of that kind.

HORROCKS: There was no problem at the time with really getting the facilities you needed and fund-raising for the American Assembly?

KIRK: No, I was concerned about Arden House as to whether it would prove to be financially a white elephant because the American Assembly would use it only a couple times a year for weekends. It was a very large property and it was obvious to me that it would have to be used as a conference center for a wide variety of other things if it would be financially viable, I was worried about the winter period.

But my fears were unfounded because it soon became apparent that the number of desirable organizations that wished to make use of it on a paying basis would be such as to carry the whole property so it wouldn't be a charge on the university budget.

HORROCKS: So it all worked out quite well.

KIRK: It worked out very well, yes. I went back to the Harrimans once when I needed to put a new roof on the house, but that was after Eisenhower's time.

HORROCKS: Are you familiar at all with Eli Ginzberg's conservation of human resources project?

KIRK: Yes. It was a thing in which Eisenhower was considerably interested.

HORROCKS: How and why?

KIRK: Well, Eli could tell you more about that than I. I just know that Eisenhower was interested in it and that the two worked together on this very successfully.

HORROCKS: How about the engineering center?

KIRK: Well, what about it?

HORROCKS: Was Columbia's engineering program in trouble when Eisenhower came in?

KIRK: Yes, in the sense that our physical engineering facilities were becoming pretty old because Columbia had one of the oldest engineering schools in the United States. It had begun with the School of Mines founded at the time of the Civil War and then had been expanded into a school of engineering. It was a school with a fine reputation and with many eminent graduates in various fields of engineering. But there were two problems. One was that we didn't attract as many students as we really ought to have; and second, we needed new facilities. But those were provided during my time--the new facilities--after Eisenhower left.

HORROCKS: While Eisenhower was there, John Dunning--

KIRK: Yes.

HORROCKS: --was appointed head of that.

KIRK: Yes.

HORROCKS: Was there any internal dissension?

KIRK: There was always internal dissension about the appointment of any dean.

HORROCKS: Between engineers and physicists or--

KIRK: Yes, there was some feeling that after all he wasn't an engineer, that he was a physicist.

HORROCKS: Was the General actively involved in this sort of work--in the selection of who would be head of that? Or is this something that he would leave up to others?

KIRK: Well he left a great deal of that to others, but he took some interest in that appointment himself. How much I don't remember. I remember he did make an effort to have us consider Lucius Clay. He really wanted Lucius Clay, first of all, as dean of engineering. That didn't work out.

HORROCKS: Why did he want Lucius Clay?

KIRK: Well because Clay's background had been partly in engineering, you see, and Clay was also a military man whom he respected.

HORROCKS: Did Lucius Clay want it?

KIRK: No.

HORROCKS: Did the faculty want it?

KIRK: It didn't reach to that stage. It was just one of many suggestions. If the President is favorable, the individual is approved. Then if the faculty is agreeable the matter moves forward.

HORROCKS: Did he take an active role like this very often in appointments?

KIRK: No.

HORROCKS: Do you think he was surprised, or came in under a misapprehension as to the loyalty and dedication of professors.

KIRK: It is possible, but I just don't know because he had had very little contact with university faculties before he came.

HORROCKS: I just wondered if he was under just a general misapprehension.

KIRK: It is possible, I suspect so, but I have no basis except just a hunch, for such a judgment.

HORROCKS: Did he ever commiserate with you, let's see in '67 or '68, when Columbia was having its problems?

KIRK: No. We had no contact at that time.

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HORROCKS: He just never even wrote a letter or--

KIRK: No.

HORROCKS: Didn't that strike you as unusual or--

KIRK: Little odd, yes. But then--Columbia was long since out of his mind and the range of his interests.

HORROCKS: I kind of thought he would have written a letter of indignation or--

KIRK: No. No contact.

HORROCKS: Columbia must have been an interesting place in '52 when he ran his campaign from there.

KIRK: Yes it was. It was in the sense that naturally faculty people were divided, which they always are, between his supporters and those who were not in favor of him.

HORROCKS: Did it become an interesting place beyond just the internal debate as to--

KIRK: No, not particularly.

HORROCKS: Wasn't particularly involved in the campaign.

KIRK: No. Not to any great extent.

HORROCKS: You, as acting president, had initially hoped that the faculty as a whole, as a group, would not express a preference.

KIRK: Yes. Well, in the sense that I did say to Carl Ackerman, I think, that I had hoped that the faculty would not become overly involved in a bitterly partisan sense about the election, but would sort of keep this problem off campus.

HORROCKS: The faculty ended up overwhelmingly in favor of Stevenson.

KIRK: I suspect so.

HORROCKS: Would that be a fair--

KIRK: I think so. Because most university faculties are generally Democratic anyhow. Republicans, thorough-going Republicans, are always in a minority on most university faculties.

HORROCKS: Was there any political activity by people close to Eisenhower on campus? Phillip Young, I guess, would be--

KIRK: Harry Carman organized some kind of faculty group to pay for an ad in the New York Times, I've forgotten now--it's a long time ago. That was in support of Eisenhower.

HORROCKS: When he was running, Morningside Heights was his residence.

KIRK: Yes.

HORROCKS: And being on campus and you were acting president of the university--

KIRK: But he wasn't on campus a great deal. Occasionally he used the house, the president's house a bit, but that's all.

HORROCKS: With the campaign going on, you're at Columbia, who were you in contact with on the campaign train, or who--

KIRK: I wasn't in contact with anybody because he was on leave, you see, and he had other concerns.

HORROCKS: And his use of Morningside Heights, for instance, was--

KIRK: Simply a matter of geography. He hadn't moved out of the house during this period when he was in Paris. His personal things were still at the house. The house was just sitting there, so he made some use of it, but only in that sense.

HORROCKS: You requested a meeting with him--this is after the election--right before his trip to Korea. I'm sure you had many meetings with him, so maybe this is unfair, this question.

KIRK: Where was this?

HORROCKS: A meeting at Morningside Heights, and I think the day before or the day he was to leave.

KIRK: Curious. I don't remember that. I remember calling on him once or twice when he was in Paris when I was there just to call and say hello and chat a bit about--bring him up to date on some university problems so on. This was at my initiative, not at his. But I don't recall this other meeting at all. May well have been, but I--

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[Interruption]

HORROCKS: --more interesting, complex character than many people think.

KIRK: Yes, I suppose most people are,particularly as one gets to know them more intimately. I think he was, at all times, interested in his public posture, which is not surprising and shouldn't be a matter of criticism because any man in public life of needs must be. I think he was always interested in how people thought about him and general public attitudes toward him. He was not devoid of ambition,

which is a perfectly normal human attribute, though I think he was also profoundly concerned about national welfare. His ideas were frequently somewhat simplistic in a programmatic sense. It added up to a person who did not have deep intellectual interests. He was not a great reader of serious books.

HORROCKS: This is the old, corny question that everybody asks: Did he really read westerns?

KIRK: Yes. Escape reading, sure.

HORROCKS: Did he do much other reading that you know of.

KIRK: Not that I know of. I think he enjoyed biography, but he was less interested in serious books about social problems.

HORROCKS: As a person who was concerned about his public image, his public posture, was it a matter of ego and vanity or did he see for himself a role to play, a contribution to make, if he preserved his posture, his popularity?

KIRK: I suppose a mixture of the two, because that would be

normal for people who had been in public life as he had been, who had been pushed into positions of great international prominence. Normally, any human being, having been subjected to that kind of an experience, would not be overly modest about the role which he might be able to play.

HORROCKS: Did he develop or have any particular relationship with Robert Harron, the university publicity director, I believe?

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KIRK: Well he liked Bob Harron as we all did, yes, I don't think there was any special relationship.

HORROCKS: While he had this posture, it didn't particularly impinge or affect his--

KIRK: Well mind you, his personal friends were mostly, not wholly, but mostly outside the university.

HORROCKS: Did the two ever mix?

KIRK: To some extent, but not much. He kept his life pretty well compartmentlized.

HORROCKS: Was he available to the university very much?

KIRK: No. But I think that was more the fault of Bob Schulz than anybody else.

HORROCKS: So it wasn't really solely a matter of being consulting in Washington, D. C. or health reasons?

KIRK: No. I think all these things had some influence but I think his staff, as I said earlier, performed a great disservice for him at Columbia.

HORROCKS: I think we've covered a lot of bases here.

KIRK: Yes, I think so.

HORROCKS: I guess kind of as a recap or hit anything I might have missed.

KIRK: I don't think so. I think we've pretty well boxed the compass here.

HORROCKS: All right. Thank you very much, Dr. Kirk.