

*UNITED NATIONS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY PROJECT*  
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**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF**  
**RICHARD N. GARDNER**

**BY**

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THOMAS G. WEISS: This is tape one, Tom Weiss on the thirty-ninth floor of 101 Park Avenue, the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, interviewing Richard N. Gardner. Dick, I wondered whether we might begin at the beginning, and if you could tell me a little bit about your family background, particularly whether you think the family background—how they shaped your interest in international affairs, in international cooperation, and public international law. But it would be nice to go back for a minute to the late 1920s and 1930s.

RICHARD N. GARDNER: Very well. My father was a single practitioner lawyer in New York. My mother was a housewife. I was an only child. I think that the things that influenced my worldview were not so much my parents, who didn't have that great an interest in international affairs, but my education. I went to the ethical cultural school in New York, and to the Fieldston School. And as you may know, those institutions came out of the ethical cultural movement founded by Felix Adler. And the basic theme was bringing up young people with ethical values. There was great concern with ethical values in the sense of social justice at home, but also—and with Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt in the White House, and they were sort of our role models—how to do good things in the world.

Then I went to Harvard College, and I majored in economics. I was very fortunate in having as professors people like Alvin Hansen and Seymour Harris who were very interested in international monetary and trade issues. Then I had a wonderful professor, Payson Wilde, who taught courses in international law. He also had a profound effect on me. By this time, I was pretty well convinced I wanted to do something in my life that had to do with peace and security, economic development, and human rights.

At Yale Law School, I fell under the influence of two great professors—Myres McDougal and Harold Lasswell. They were very much interested in a modern approach to

international law—one that used law as an instrument of social policy. At Yale Law School, I co-authored an article in the *Yale Law Journal* with McDougal called “The Veto and the Charter: An Interpretation for Survival,” in which Professor MacDougal and I laid out the international law basis for the action of the UN Security Council in 1950 in coming to the aid of South Korea. The Soviet Union had boycotted the Council and argued that as a result the Council could not act. We argued that under the Charter, the absence of a permanent member could not act as a veto. I did much of the research on that, visiting the State Department, and consulting a lot of people. So that again influenced me. Oscar Schachter was, I believe, the head of the general legal division of the UN at that time. I met him and was deeply impressed. So the article got me in touch with a lot of people.

Thanks to McDougal, I applied for and received a Rhodes Scholarship and went to Oxford. I decided to do a Ph.D. in economics, and wrote a book called *Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy*, which was a history of the origins of the World Bank, the IMF (International Monetary Fund), and the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). That really occupied me for three years, just talking to everybody who had anything to do with these institutions. It was quite inspirational to me to see the kind of constructive internationalism that had come out of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations in these areas.

One little sidelight—while at Oxford, I attended the Sixth UN General Assembly, which took place in Paris. And when Warren Austin, who was the chief American delegate, became ill, Eleanor Roosevelt became the pro tempore head of our delegation. During the long winter vacation from Oxford, I followed Eleanor Roosevelt around the Palais de Chaillot, which was where this meeting was held, and wrote an article about her, about her role, and sent it to the *New York Times Magazine*, thinking, “Well, they’ll never use it.” And to my surprise, they used it.

She was so pleased with the article that she invited me up to Hyde Park. I spent a weekend at Hyde Park in the summer of 1952 in which she would walk me around the grounds and tell me about her life with the president. I learned an awful lot from her. So these were very formative influences on me. I knew I wanted to do something related to the United Nations and to international trade and development.

TGW: That's a fascinating itinerary. In your memories, such as they are of this period, what role do you recall the experiments in international cooperation in the 1930s and 1940s having played? For instance, in your schooling, were these issues that came up? Similarly, in 1944 and 1945, when the next experiment was on board, was this a topic that came up at Fieldston.

RNG: Yes. I am sure that in Fieldston, perhaps in junior or senior year, we were writing articles about—let's see, I graduated from Fieldston in 1944. So yes, certainly 1942, 1943, and 1944, my last years at high school, knowing the place that Fieldston was, we were certainly debating the building of a peaceful post-war world. We talked about the League of Nations and why it had failed. And of course, for most of us, Woodrow Wilson was a great martyr. I think maybe now we have a sort of revisionist history about Wilson's mistakes. He might have saved American participation in the League if he hadn't been quite so stiff-necked.

There was a film called *Wilson* that affected me deeply. I forget when it came out, but it was a very pro-Wilson film in which Henry Cabot Lodge and the Senate were made to look like the ultimate evil isolationists. The message was that we must recapture the Wilsonian vision, and if we had only understood what Wilson was doing, and become members of the League of Nations, there might not have been World War II. That was somewhat simplistic, but that's basically the way we felt about it.

Speaking of films—and sometimes we underestimate the impact that films can have—there was one film that absolutely transfixed me and shaped my thinking profoundly. It was a film called *Things to Come*. It was based on an H.G. Wells story. Do you know that film?

TGW: Unfortunately not.

RNG: Oh, it was an incredible film. It was a film made around 1940, 1941, or 1942, which extrapolated events from the beginning of World War II on for fifty years. It took the very gloomy view that after World War II there would be World War III, and then civilization would just collapse. Then a group of people—engineers and technocrats—formed something called “Wings over the World” and they brought peace to the world through advanced aviation. The last scene shows them going off to the moon. It was an apocalyptic vision of what would happen unless we did something to end war.

Indeed, on that subject, Payson Wilde, in his last lecture to us at Harvard, used some phrase like this: “If mankind does not end war, war will end mankind.” That’s the kind of phrase that really sticks with you over the years.

TGW: In Cambridge, right after the war, how did students look upon—

RNG: Oxford. I was at Oxford.

TGW: But I thought you finished at Harvard in 1948.

RNG: Oh, you mean Cambridge, Massachusetts. I’m sorry. Sure.

TGW: I just wondered. Many people speak about those first years within the secretariat as an exciting moment, full of idealism. For some of us that don’t go back that far, it’s a little hard to imagine. But I just wondered, in the union or elsewhere at Harvard, whether this same sort of euphoria almost, with this experiment, permeated discussions.

RNG: Yes and no. I was very interested in the creation of the UN. I'm not sure that the students generally were as much interested as I was. I read carefully every dispatch that Scotty Reston wrote in the *New York Times* about the Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco conferences. I am not sure that all my colleagues did.

I do remember one thing. There was a very dramatic visit to the Harvard campus by Cord Meyer the founder of the World Federalists who then went on to become a CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) operative. I got into a big argument with him because he said, in speaking to students, that the UN was all wrong and that we had to form a world government right away. He was so dogmatic and said, "We have to form a world government." Even I, at that early age, had done enough reading to say, "That sounds great, but how would it work? And who's going to be willing to yield that degree of sovereignty. The UN is the best we can do at this moment. Don't badmouth it." He didn't like that at all. Later he became disillusioned with world government and joined the CIA and engaged in some questionable operation in Third World countries. So that shows you that people go from one extreme to another.

TGW: Were you there for George Marshall's speech? I guess that was the year before you graduated. It wasn't your commencement.

RNG: That's fascinating. Why wouldn't I have remembered that? He spoke in June of 1947. Where was I? Of course I remember reading of the speech, but I was not present for it.

TGW: Subsequently, you obviously wrote about it.

RNG: I wrote about it, but I somehow missed it.

TGW: While we're on the Marshall Plan, I'm struck, and some of our other interviewees are struck, by the extent to which the image of the Marshall Plan reemerges every time there is a crisis. A "Marshall Plan for Afghanistan" came up most recently. Are there elements of that

that might be replicated elsewhere? Or was it *sui generis*, like so many other historical experiments?

RNG: My answer to your question will be rather obvious because this has been said so many times. Europe was unique, and is a very different situation from Africa, for example. Europe needed an infusion of capital to get itself going again. It had the skilled manpower. It had the technical base, the infrastructure. They knew how to do things. So it wasn't a matter of a massive training of people. It just was giving them the capital to start up again. What worries me about people who say, "let's have a Marshall Plan for Africa,"—I certainly favor a great increase in development assistance for Africa—but the Marshall Plan is a poor analogy because the Africans don't start with anything like the trained manpower, the entrepreneurial culture, and the drive for economic development that you had in Europe. So if we use the term Marshall Plan for the developing world, we have to understand that we are using it as a metaphor, but it is a very different sort of challenge. That's an obvious point. Others have made it.

TGW: How did you feel when—this is a feeling question—how did you feel when your dissertation actually was published and went on to be a classic of sorts. Not many doctoral dissertations, I say with all humility, actually get that kind of attention. Was this a surprise?

RNG: I guess the nicest thing that was said was by the great British historian. He wrote the *Life of Hitler*. Allan—

TGW: Bullock?

RNG: Bullock, exactly. He called it a classic. So I'm very pleased that somebody calls it a classic. I think it probably is an overstatement. But of course, what greater thrill for a young student than to have Oxford University Press publish his dissertation. I had to substantially

rework it, rewrite it, to make it publishable. I did that at Harvard Law School as a teaching fellow in international affairs.

It was great to have it published, but the biggest thrill of all was the people I met in the course of writing it—to be able to interview some of the people who had had a hand in the creation of the Bretton Woods organizations and GATT. I was truly inspired by what I guess I too-melodramatically then called the “thin blue line” of internationalists on both sides of the Atlantic who devoted themselves to creating these post-war institutions, combining idealism and pragmatism. I didn’t get to interview Keynes, who had passed away, but I had access to his private papers. I didn’t get to interview Harry White who, by then, was discredited in the McCarthy period and also no longer living. I had access to Harry White’s papers at the Firestone Library at Princeton.

I interviewed a lot of the people who were involved and just learned a lot about life from them. Of course, they disagreed on some things. They had different perspectives. But I began to understand what creating international institutions really meant and decided I would like to do a little of that myself at some point. But of course, having the book published was nice, and to see some nice reviews. And that led to contacts. In fact, I suppose one practical thing did come out of that. I got a job offer to join the Columbia Law School faculty, and I got taken up by the Foreign Policy Association. A wonderful lady, named Vera Michaelis Dean, who ran their publications in those days, invited me to write a *Headline Series* booklet. I was very young at that time. I sent the booklet to Adlai Stevenson, and Adlai Stevenson wrote back a beautiful letter in which he had a wonderful phrase. He said, “Dear Richard, with so much enlightenment, why is there so little light?” It was typically Stevensonian.

Then, John F. Kennedy was nominated in 1960, and my wife Danielle and I attended the Democratic convention in Los Angeles. After Kennedy was nominated, he asked Stevenson to head up a foreign policy advisory group during the campaign, and for the presidential transition period, to start him off on foreign policy. George Ball was asked by Adlai to run the group.

Lo and behold, I find myself invited. It was very small group, six or seven people. We met several times in Mary Lasker's townhouse on Sutton Place. It was Ball, and David Bruce—who went on to be our ambassador in England—and Mary Lasker. I think Adlai came once or twice. And there were just one or two other people. I was the youngest there, and it was a great thrill. Then I got asked to take part in the transition planning in George Ball's law firm's office in Washington. So it was inevitable then that I would be asked to join the administration in some job or other. I had come to know Harlan Cleveland. He was a role model for me. By the way, I just visited him. He is now eighty-five years old and living in a retirement home outside of Washington, but still very productive.

TGW: So he's no longer in Minneapolis? He's in Washington now?

RNG: In a retirement home. He had an enormous influence on me. I had always followed his writings. He was then editor of the *Reporter Magazine*. So I was excited when he invited me to come down and be his deputy and help run the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. I went down as deputy-assistant-secretary of state for international organizations. That was just the ideal slot for me, and I was then thirty-two. So it was a great opportunity.

TGW: Were you a Democrat before you went strolling in Hyde Park?

RNG: Yes, I think so. My parents did have a role in that. My father was a Democrat. Like many children in New York at that time, Roosevelt was the hero—there was no question

about that. And there was no question about which political party I'd be part of, although since, I have often voted as an independent and don't always support Democrats. But it was pretty clear that I was going to support Kennedy as against Nixon.

TGW: In that first set of research, and in your conversations, the third pillar that never made it, the ITO (International Trade Organization), did this come up as a major shortcoming in the infrastructure? Or did people feel that the GATT did enough? And eventually we get around to what we've gotten around to, the World Trade Organization (WTO). How seriously was this lacuna seen?

RNG: I don't want to generalize, because I'm sure different people had different views of that. My interpretation of that bit of history, which is in my book, is that the ITO had the bad luck to come up in the period of 1948 to 1950. Actually, the Havana conference was 1948, and the failure in the congress was 1950. The Bretton Woods institutions were done during the war. It's one of those accidents of history. If the Bretton Woods stuff hadn't been done during the war, it would never have happened. These institutions were miracles—political miracles. They were only done because we were in the midst of a war. They were carried forward by wartime idealism. We didn't get the trade stuff done at the same time. Had we done it, we might have gotten the ITO, also because during the war there were many fewer countries participating.

It was essentially a U.S.-British show with a few others. By 1948/1950, you had a lot of developing countries coming in. Then the ITO became burdened with a very ambitious agenda. It wasn't just trade. The ITO had anti-trust things in it, and foreign investment protection—things we're getting back to now in the Doha round—and it had labor rights as well. But there wasn't a sufficient consensus on those things. And the U.S. Congress—the Republicans took over the Congress, as I recall, in 1948, and the whole character of the Congress

became more conservative and more concerned with American sovereignty and all that. So the ITO just was more than the political traffic would bear at that stage in history after the war.

So I think I felt, “Well, it is too bad, but the GATT is the best we can do. Let’s build on that.” Then an effort was made—few people remember this—in 1956, to put over the GATT an administrative structure called the Organization for Trade Cooperation (OTC). I was very pleased as a young man to be the lead witness from the private sector on behalf of the OTC. Hearings were held before the House Ways and Means Committee. The OTC was negotiated internationally, but that failed also. And the OTC was very modest. It didn’t have all these substantive provisions on anti-trust, and foreign investment, and labor. All it did was provide an administrative structure.

Out of the woodwork came every nutcase in the country saying, “This is going to take away American sovereignty, this is going to dictate American trade laws.” And then OTC got defeated. Even the American Bar Association (ABA) opposed it. There was a man named Albert McClellan Barnes from the ABA that I debated in the House Ways and Means Committee. He said this would take away the constitutional rights of the Congress to set trade policy.

So we couldn’t even get the OTC. So I guess my feeling, and probably everybody’s feelings by that time, was, “Look, let’s just nourish the GATT, and hope over time it will develop legitimacy and strength.” And you know, during these years, the Congress, every time it renewed the trade agreements legislation, which was every three years, put in a clause saying, “Renewal of this legislation does not constitute either approval or disapproval of the GATT.” They thought they had to put that in there to suggest that they didn’t even approve of the GATT,

because it was not presented to the Congress as a treaty. It was an executive agreement, and therefore they didn't feel obliged to live up to the rules of the GATT. It was a terrible situation.

So when we finally got around to the World Trade Organization—notice we didn't call it the International Trade Organization—we didn't use the word ITO. We had to think of a different name. Mickey Kantor was smart about that. We called it the WTO, not the ITO, to suggest that this was something entirely different. In fact, it was much more ambitious than the ITO in many ways because it had compulsory dispute settlement in it.

TGW: Before we get into the Kennedy administration, or to the period leading up to those elections, what do you recall of the role of decolonization in discussions about the future shape of international trade and finance, or international anything? A whole rash of countries are becoming independent, which happened more quickly than some people thought would. But what do you recall, for example, of Bandung (Asian-African Conference)? Was this visible, or was this a topic that, in retrospect, looks important, but at the time was not?

RNG: I have to admit, I did not think deeply about decolonization. Probably I should have during that period. I really was not an expert on the developing countries. I was interested in them from the viewpoint of economic development, but I hadn't really thought through the whole background of colonialism.

But I'll tell you one thing that does remain in my mind. It was almost a traumatic experience, and it remains in my memory even to this day, which is very much related to what you asked. When the UN was formed, of course, it was fifty-one countries. When I joined the Kennedy administration—I was sworn in and took up my job in March of 1961—I think it was ninety countries, roughly. I came in on the cusp of one of the big expansions of the UN membership. I'll never forget the first time that Nigeria took its seat in the UN. Adlai, very

idealistically, said something about welcoming Nigeria and said, “Our administration is committed to helping African countries, developing countries.”

And the Nigerian ambassador, instead of being gracious about it, came back with a really nasty speech to the effect that, “Well, the West will have to pay for its decades of colonialism, and we are not here with our hand out asking for your charity, Ambassador Stevenson. We want a whole new world economic order based on justice. We want higher prices for our exports, and different terms of trade. We want control over multinational corporations,” and so on. It was a terrible speech.

Adlai just couldn't believe it. We were all shell-shocked. Welcome to the new United Nations, with a large developing country majority. The point, of course, was that the so-called automatic majority of the U.S. in the General Assembly had disappeared, and we found ourselves in a very different General Assembly, and a very different United Nations. Of course, by this time the Russians were working behind the scenes. And not only behind the scenes, but very overtly—to form an alliance with the most radical part of the Afro-Asian group against us.

Adlai had a wonderful team up in New York. He had as his deputy Francis Plimpton. Then he had Charlie Yost as number three, Jonathan Bingham, number four, and Sid Yates, number five. It was a wonderful group of internationalists. And suddenly Harlan and I and all of them found that we were in a different United Nations, and there were an awful lot of hostile people out there that were not accepting at face value what we were trying to do. The Russians were making a lot of hay, pressing their view of a revolutionary world economic order, not based on market capitalism but based on communism, or at least socialism and state ownership. That was quite a change, and that was part of my practical education in international politics.

TGW: I was going to ask, what was it like dealing with Africans, right after independence, within the context of a United States whose own internal racial policies were about to be thrown totally into question? Was there any awkwardness at that time?

RNG: I didn't have any awkwardness in terms of personal relations. I don't think Adlai did, either. But of course, the Africans were very bitter about the fact that, in those days, when they came into the UN in the late 1950s and early 1960s, we had not put through our civil rights laws. There were restrictions on where they could eat, where they could stay. And they encountered a lot of prejudice, even in New York, and certainly in the South. That certainly didn't help things.

Not all the Africans were as belligerent as the Nigerians. I have learned since then that the Nigerians are the most prickly type of African you can find. The Ghanaians are much smoother. But we found that the Africans didn't fall into line behind our views at all. This gets a little bit off economics, but another traumatic event for me was the Article XIX crisis, because this really was a big setback for the United States. We were paying for the peacekeeping operations in the Congo and the Middle East—the so-called Congo and UNEF (UN Emergency Force). The Russians weren't paying for either of these, and the French were withholding on the Congo. The Africans and Arabs weren't paying for anything. So we were actually paying seventy cents on every dollar, or some such number, and the Congress was absolutely furious about this. Harlan Cleveland and I were taken to task right away—"How could you allow this? Doesn't Article XIX have any application? It's supposed to be an enforceable mandate on countries to pay their dues."

Now, of course, it's rather amusing looking forty years later, when the shoe's on the other foot, and the United States fails to pay its dues. But in those days, we were the great

protagonists—the Kennedy administration—of collective financial responsibility. So we promised the Congress, “By golly, we’re going to enforce the law. And if they don’t pay up, they’ll find themselves two years in arrears, and we’ll take away their vote.” Then came the 1964 General Assembly. We tried to take away their vote, and the African and Asian group wouldn’t go along. So we found out that our concept of the rule of law internationally was not necessarily theirs.

TGW: Tell me a little bit, in your own words, about the origins of the First Development Decade.

RNG: Harlan Cleveland was, and is, one of the most imaginative, great public servants that I’ve ever known. He was quite inspirational. And by the way, when he and I went down there, it wasn’t as if we were the only people in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs. We inherited a terrific set of professionals, including Joe Sisco, for example, and Bill Buffum. These were the career people that we found there. And Walter Kotchnig—does that name mean something to you?

TGW: No.

RNG: Well, Walter Kotchnig was the man who sort of—he was Mr. ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) in those early years. He was a career official, and head of the Office of International Economic and Social Affairs. Sisco was head of the Office of UN Political Affairs. So we really had some old-timers there who had a lot of knowledge. But Harlan and I were the political appointees of Kennedy. We had the great good fortune of having Arthur Schlesinger in the Kennedy White House, whose job, very explicitly given to him by Kennedy, was to keep Adlai in line. And keeping Adlai in line meant keeping Harlan Cleveland and me in line.

But we were also asked to come up with big ideas. One of the things that I also learned in those days was the way that you get new policy initiatives in Washington is to put them into the president's speech. So Kennedy's speech to the UN General Assembly in September 1961, his first UN General Assembly speech, was our opportunity—Harlan and mine—to load into his speech as many policy initiatives as we could think up. We had one initiative that had to do with peacekeeping—and then there was outer space, which was one of the things I worked on. But in the economic field, we wanted a big economic idea. At that time there was a wonderful man in AID (U.S. Agency for International Development) named Frank Coffin. I have forgotten if he was the AID administrator or the number two. He had been a judge in Maine, a district court judge. He was a very fine person. We were exchanging memos, as you do in the Washington bureaucracy, back and forth between AID and our Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and I guess others. And Coffin sent a memo to Harlan saying, "Why don't we have an international development year?"

So Harlan calls me into his office and says, "Well, let's see. Maybe we can use something like this in the Kennedy speech." But Harlan then said something very wise: "But Dick, let's not call it an international development year. You don't do international development in a year. Let's call it something else." Then we joked. We said, "Should we call it the eon of development? No, that's a little too long." So we came up with the idea of a decade of development, and figured maybe we would have a First Development Decade, and a Second Development Decade, and so on. So that is how the phrase came to be, and it was quickly agreed.

Then we said, "Kennedy is going to propose a First Development Decade. That's just a nice phrase. What's the content?" The main content, and I have to look at the speech just to

check, but the main content I think was the creation of the UNDP (UN Development Programme), putting together the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and the UN Special Fund, and to build these up. We did propose—Kennedy in his speech proposed—a big increase in the U.S. financial contribution. We were then giving forty percent of the total, and I think we said we would give substantially more if the rest of the members would put up the other sixty percent.

Now in the course of this, we had a major input. And here it gets to the point that you and I were discussing before on how intellectual contributions get started by governments, but then get refashioned through international institutions. A major contribution was made to this whole thing by Paul Hoffman, who was then in the UN. He became the first head of the UN Development Programme. I would have to check the exact dates of this, but I think Paul was already in the UN when Harlan and I came in. Paul had a lot to do with coming up with practical things to do in the UN Development Decade.

We also had, of course, a lot of experts in development in the Kennedy administration. Walt Rostow had written all kinds of books about the take-off in economic development. Orville Freeman knew a lot about agriculture. David Bell, as I recall, was a very important figure in AID. So we had a lot of very wise people. Kennedy himself was very interested in the whole concept of economic development, but more on the political side. We had a lot of conversations in this community about these issues.

TGW: Within the administration, what was the UN's comparative advantage in the development arena? How did you see a division of labor, if we can use these old Marxist concepts, between New York and Washington, and the UN system in general?

RNG: That's a very interesting question. Actually, the basic argument that Harlan and I made was a familiar one—that multilateralism has a comparative advantage over bilateralism in that it insulates the U.S. from criticism about conditionality and other things that are asked of aid recipients. You collectively legitimize the development program by making it a UN program. If we're out there alone with AID, putting down conditions, then rocks start going through the American embassy windows. So we felt that this was a very good case. Also, the other thing was the multiplier effect of getting other countries to contribute. So it was burden-sharing, plus the political value of multilateralism.

But we weren't doctrinaire about it, however. We said, "Of course, we're going to have a bilateral program." But I guess Harlan and I would have said that the bilateral program should focus on Israel and Egypt, and the more politically motivated assistance. Those are economic support funds for politically important countries; they have a political content. But real economic development assistance should be increasingly multilateral.

But then the argument came—and Harlan and I quickly got our noses bloodied, because there were people in the government that were for multilateralism, but not for UN multilateralism. There was the U.S. Treasury, which said, "Look, it is the World Bank, and don't you guys start messing around with the World Bank." And in those days, the Treasury and the head of the World Bank, Eugene Black, were so hostile to the UN. I remember there was a proposal to have a UN postage stamp. They wanted to put in the postage stamp the alphabet soup of the different specialized agencies, and the World Bank did not want IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) on that postage stamp. It's very different now, because the Bank is under Jim Wolfensohn. And indeed, it really goes back to McNamara, who made the World Bank part of the UN system. But in those days it wasn't.

So that was one bit of tension. They said, “Well, you can have your UN Development Decade, but don’t think you’re going to put ECOSOC in control of the World Bank, or that you’re going to set up another fund in the UN that’s going to duplicate the World Bank.”

Then there was a second group in the government that gave us a tough time. It was the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) group. Bob Schaezel, who was very influential then, he started out as a special assistant to George Ball. Bob later went on to become the U.S. ambassador to the European Union. And George Ball and Bob Schaezel were really on a very different line from Harlan and me, at least at that time. They were multilateralists, but not UN-ers. They saw Europe as our main partner, and they wanted to use the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD as the principal place in which you would multilateralize aid. Of course, the DAC was never a fund, but it was the coordinating instrument for bilateral aid. And their vision was, “Let’s work out, with the Europeans, a division of labor in Africa and Latin America, and coordinate aid.” They weren’t that enthusiastic about getting the UN into the picture. So really the battle in the Kennedy administration was, “Which kind of multilateralism?”

TGW: We have the same battle today.

RNG: Yes.

TGW: Amongst the other observation points that you enjoyed, you mentioned earlier that you had the distinct pleasure, if that’s the word, of sitting through the entire first UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) conference. What do you recall from that?

RNG: Well, that was not a pleasure, I tell you. Actually, what happened there was that I only sat through the last half, but that was the most violent part. I was doing other things in Washington, but I was sent over as the vice-chairman of our delegation to replace whoever had

been the vice-chairman. I have forgotten who was the chairman of our delegation. But I was sent over about five or six weeks from the end of the conference, so it would have been about May of 1964.

It was the first time that the so-called Group of 77 (G-77) organized themselves politically. That was very unpleasant for us, because every day the 77 would introduce another unacceptable resolution. We were told they were non-negotiable and that the 77 had agreed. The Group B countries, which were the developed countries, from Western Europe, Japan and North America—I think there were about twenty of us, or twenty-five at most—we were continually on the defensive.

By that time, in 1964, the UN was up to about 120 countries, I guess. And the Group of 77 saw obviously that here we were sitting in a conference based on one-nation, one-vote. The resolutions were really outrageous. They were very extreme. You referred to the intellectual contributions of international organizations, and here I am going to be very critical. The secretary-general of the conference was Raúl Prebisch, whom I came to like very much. But Raúl Prebisch, at least at that stage—I think he had some change of heart and mind later on—was really very radical. And he encouraged the radicalism of the developing countries. Others may think I'm overstating this, but he had come out of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). And he came out of this intellectual mindset of dependency theory, and the marginalization of the developing countries who were on the periphery, and the rich countries were supposedly exploiting them in various ways. One was the terms of trade. They had this theory that the terms of trade were inexorably moving against the raw material producers in favor of the industrialized world. I always said that I didn't think that was necessarily right, but it became an article of faith. And the second argument was that

multinational corporations (MNCs), in their search for profit, were exploiting the Third World and taking advantage of it. I didn't agree with that either. I thought we ought to encourage foreign investment. Of course, you can always show bad examples of multinational corporations, but I thought most of them were bringing capital, and technology, and know-how to the developing world.

So suddenly, I said to myself: "Here I am, a believer in the UN, and I don't think I agree with anything that's going on here." Then George Ball came to the conference, and he gave a very tough speech telling the Third World that their demands were ill-considered and unacceptable. I remember there was an editorial in the *New York Times* called "Mr. Ball's Homily." Then I got involved in something that was then—probably not many people remember this or care about it—something that was for me fascinating as someone who cares about international institutions and structures.

Having had this experience of confronting the 77 with their unreasonable demands, we got to the point in the conference where we were going to set up permanent machinery. And the permanent machinery was going to be called UNCTAD. And the question was, "How is this machinery going to work?" It's going to be a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. The first thing we said was, "Wait a minute. This is not going to be a new UN specialized agency. At least if it had been, we could have refused to join. But it's going to be a subsidiary body of the General Assembly under Article XXII of the Charter, so we're going to have to pay for it as part of the UN. It's going to be one-nation, one-vote, and we're going to have a permanent organization voting resolutions on 'sovereignty over natural resources,' which was a euphemism for the right of developing countries to nationalize without compensation, and to have commodity agreements to raise prices. We can't live with that."

So I was asked by the State Department to devise some new machinery for the continuing UNCTAD. Of course, weighted voting—I didn't even begin with that, because that would have been laughed out of court. So I came up with this idea of dual voting, or a system of double majorities—that for substantive resolutions, there would have to be a majority of the developed countries as a group, and of the developing countries as a group. In other words, there had to be an overall majority that would include a majority of both groups. This became a battle. Of course, we were accused of everything. This was considered undemocratic. The Russians exploited this issue.

I found even among some Western countries a lack of enthusiasm. Indeed, I went off to Paris to try to convince the French to support this idea. I sat with the head of the *Quai d'Orsay's* international organization directorate, who personified French cynicism in the extreme. He said, "Monsieur Gardner, we don't want any special voting. We would prefer they vote anything they want in the normal way and then we can ignore it. If we follow your recommendation, you'll give legitimacy to these things. And then we'll have pressure on us to do something. Leave everything as it is."

So UNCTAD was very tough. We stayed up night after night negotiating in Raúl Prebisch's apartment. This went on for a week. I thought my wife would divorce me. I represented Group B along with Roy McLaren of Canada and Paul Jolles of Switzerland. We couldn't agree on a text for the new organization. So finally, I said, "Let's get Oscar Schachter over here."

So we brought Oscar from New York to Geneva, and he listened to the debate for several nights. Then we said, "Now go off and weave it all together." Amazingly, he came back with a consensus text. We were able somehow, on the basis of Oscar's draft, to get a final agreement of

this conference. How he did it I don't know. Sometimes you need a third man to come in and find a form of words which gives a little to each side.

UNCTAD plus the Article XIX crisis were two episodes which began to show me that the UN was not always so friendly as an instrument for the United States, even with a U.S. administration that had its heart in the right place.

TGW: Was UNCTAD at the time generally perceived as anti-GATT, or was that subsequent?

RNG: Oh yes, it was. In fact, another great figure I should mention here was Philippe de Seynes. He was the under-secretary for economic and social affairs. The 77 were hostile to him, as well as to the GATT. The GATT was headed by Eric Wyndham White. Of course, Eric Wyndham White was British and De Seynes was French, so the 77 said, "Well, you see, these men are representatives of the colonial powers of the rich world. We have to have our own organization." And "our own organization" was going to be UNCTAD headed by Raúl Prebisch.

There was a whole issue of the journal, *International Organization*, which I edited into a book. I wrote an article on UNCTAD and the whole experience of the UNCTAD conference. I said that Prebisch was not setting up a secretariat, he was setting up a "sectariat" which would represent the views of just one group of members. Whatever you could say about Philippe De Seynes, I think he did have a secretariat that tried in good faith to represent the interests of all the members, although the 77 probably wouldn't admit that.

UNCTAD today is not as radical as it was then. At that time, UNCTAD was seen as an antidote to the GATT. How interesting it is that the developing countries that were so against the GATT were all scrambling to get into it in the 1980s and 1990s. So it is a totally different approach. The developing countries and the former communist countries discovered the

importance of markets. They wanted to enlarge their trade. And GATT became a valuable thing for them. But in those days you couldn't get a good word for GATT out of an African or a Latin American, or from the Soviet bloc.

TGW: You have mentioned that this was indeed a different United Nations than the one you had thought about in the late 1960s. What was the logic behind the creation of the UNFPA (UN Fund for Population Activities)?

RNG: That's a wonderful example again of the interplay of national and international intellectual development. In 1959, as I was writing that essay for the Foreign Policy Association's *Headline Series* on "New Directions in U.S. Foreign Economic Policy," I became very interested in the world population problem. I became convinced that, unless a major world effort took place, well-rooted in the countries, to make modern methods of family planning available on a voluntary basis to all those who wished to use them, we would find that development was hopeless.

And the issue wasn't the carrying capacity of the earth. That's always questionable. The issue was the implications for specific countries. Take Nigeria, which had thirty million people when I was a student, and now has a population of over 150 million. It is likely to reach about 300 million by 2025. With a doubling every twenty to twenty-five years in countries that don't have effective family planning, with rates of population growth of three to four percent—there is no way you could find jobs for these people, decent housing, food, or protect the environment. And it would create such instability as to make democracy and human rights, as well as development, impossible. So I began to really feel very strongly about this.

In 1959, a great man named William Draper, General William Draper, was asked to do a report on economic development for the U.S. government. He had the temerity to put into his

report a recommendation that a portion of U.S. aid should be devoted to family planning. This went up to President [Dwight] Eisenhower. I will never forget when Eisenhower was asked at a press conference, “Do you agree with this recommendation that family planning, from now on, should be part of aid?” And Eisenhower said—and this is almost a direct quote—“I disagree totally with that. This is not something that should be part of U.S. government policy.” I was appalled. So I said, “By God, if I ever get into government, I’m going to do something about that.”

I got my chance in 1962, when the Swedes introduced a resolution in the General Assembly called “Population Growth and Economic Development.” Imagine that, it took sixteen years for the UN to even discuss population as an element of economic development! There was a silent conspiracy of the Vatican and a number of Catholic countries to keep this off the agenda.

Well, here Sweden comes in and puts it on the agenda. There was a terrific fight in the UN committee that decides on the allocation of agenda items. The Argentines said, “This item is out of order. We can’t discuss this.” And Emma Lindstrom from Sweden, a formidable but rather tactless woman, started to lecture the Argentine representative, and the Argentine said in a loud stage whisper, “Well, if all women in the world were like Emma Lindstrom, there would be no population problem.” That was the kind of male sexist joke that you could get away with in those days.

Anyway, so here is the United States with a Catholic president, John F. Kennedy. The last president had said this is not a proper subject for government action. Adlai Stevenson was reluctant to handle the issue, so Harlan Cleveland accepts my request that I take it on. It’s the last item on the agenda of the Second Committee. On December second, the U.S. is scheduled to speak. I had been gathering notes and materials and was helped by a very good foreign service

officer named Layton Van Nort. I went to New York and wrote the speech at the U.S. mission on Friday and Saturday, November 29 and 30, and then faxed it to the State Department. I was scheduled to speak at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December second. Dean Rusk came into his office on Sunday, December first expressly for the purpose of reading my draft.

Rusk had been the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, so he understood the issue very well. He read the speech and took out only one line. I had put in some population projections, and I went probably too far with the projections, going not just ten years out, or twenty years out, but, I think, fifty years. So he took that out, and said, “You can’t make projections that far into the future.” Otherwise, he said the speech was fine. But Rusk also said that the subject was so politically sensitive that Kennedy would have to approve it personally.

So they take it over to the White House. On Monday morning, Ralph Dungan takes my speech into Kennedy. Ralph was part of the so-called Irish mafia around Kennedy. And he was the man that Kennedy used for a liaison with the Catholic bishops. Years later Dungan told me that Kennedy read the speech and said something like, “Well, this is obvious, tell him to give the speech.” And apparently, Dungan said, “Mr. President, what will Cardinal Cushing say?” Cardinal Cushing was the cardinal up in Boston, and the dominant figure in the American Catholic community. Kennedy replied, “Ralph, let him give that speech. I’ll take care of Cardinal Cushing.”

So Kennedy had the courage to do something that Eisenhower didn’t dare to do. Being a Catholic with an enlightened view, he was prepared to take this on. It was a miracle. So I gave the speech. Now, if you read the speech today, you would say, “It just said the obvious thing—that unrestrained population growth threatens economic development, human rights, and political stability, that the UN should be in a position to make available information and means to any

country that wished assistance. And that the United States, for its part, in its bilateral programs, would be willing to do this upon request.” And of course, I made clear that we were against coercion and would not use abortion as a means of birth control.

So today, it looks like nothing, and yet it was a groundbreaking statement then. Now, I had some great good luck, although I didn’t think it was such good luck at the time. There was a newspaper strike in New York at that time. The *New York Times* was not publishing. What’s the use of giving an historical speech if there’s no *New York Times*?

But it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The UN press corps didn’t know what to make of the speech. Because I had put in the speech a lot of negatives—“We will not dictate to any country what its population policy should be”—some thought that was the story. The AP (Associated Press) lead was, “Richard Gardner, on behalf of the United States, said today, ‘The United States will not dictate population policy.’” The UP (United Press), or somebody else, had the wit to see that that was not the story: “For the first time, an American delegate said the U.S. would be willing to assist other countries.”

Without the *New York Times*, and because of this confusion, it wasn’t a big event. And the Catholic bishops didn’t say anything. Maybe that’s because Kennedy said something to them. I don’t know. Remember that when Kennedy was nominated there was a big issue about whether a Catholic could be president? Would he be president of all the people? And maybe Kennedy saw this as a way of demonstrating that he would not be bound by religious dogma. So the thing was done. It got a little attention in the *Washington Post*, but otherwise not much.

Then, the people in AID said, “Wait a minute. What is this? This is a new policy? What does it mean for AID?” AID had tried to draft a policy statement on population assistance to send to AID missions around the world, but could not get clearance for it. So they decided to use

the speech for policy guidance since the president had approved it. So the speech went out to AID missions with the statement: "You are to take into account this authoritative speech, approved by the president, saying what our policy is."

Then the next thing that happened was that John D. Rockefeller called, because he had a great interest in this subject. He said, "That's a great speech. Now let's get the UN to do something about it." So we went to see C.V. Narasihman and Philippe de Seynes. And they set up the UN Fund for Population Assistance to carry out the Swedish resolution. We had Rafael Salas of the Philippines, as the first director, who was succeeded by a wonderful lady from Pakistan, Nafis Sadik.

TGW: One of the other things we discussed briefly before starting was the creation of the World Food Programme, a little later in the administration. I wondered if you could talk a little bit about that, but also speculate a little bit within the context of UNFPA and the World Food Programme the extent to which, once an idea takes the form of an institution that the idea becomes more important, or at least seems more important because there is now a bureaucracy that is charged with pushing it.

RNG: The World Food Programme is a shorter story. We had a wonderful secretary of agriculture under President Kennedy, Orville Freeman. And we also had George McGovern as Food for Peace administrator. His deputy was James Symington, the son of Senator Symington. And of course, behind this was a lot of American idealism, church groups, civic groups that were worried about hunger in the world, and also the big farm lobby that had surpluses and wanted to get rid of those surpluses.

So all of this fused into this idea which found its way into some of Kennedy's early speeches that we should do something to feed hungry people in the world. So I'm not the

originator of this. This came from other people in the government. But I found myself going off with George McGovern and Orville Freeman to the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) general conference in December of 1961. There, the U.S. put forward the idea of establishing a World Food Programme. And there was a big debate in the U.S. government about where to put this new organization.

And here I have to mention Phil Klutznick. He was our delegate to the Economic and Social Council. He was an enthusiastic and effective supporter of UN development efforts, but he got very upset because he wanted the World Food Programme to be somehow under the ECOSOC. He thought it a mistake to set it up as a separate entity off in Rome, which would make coordination more difficult. Probably in some sense it did. We were all concerned in those days—Harlan Cleveland and all of us—with trying to coordinate the UN better. We wanted to put the UN Development Programme in charge of everything. Well, there were just too many special interest groups that said, “No, we’re not putting food into the UNDP. It’s going to be a separate thing.”

So it was set up in Rome, and it took its place in Rome alongside FAO. The World Food Programme was then supplemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Council. These four agencies got awfully confused. And George McGovern, years later, became our ambassador to those four organizations. In any case, we set up the World Food Programme, and of course the main input into that in the early years was American grain. I think that right up to this day in Afghanistan, it’s a major factor.

TGW: Did you regret leaving Columbia for the government? And did you regret leaving the government to go back?

RNG: I certainly didn't regret leaving Columbia, because I was very excited about the Kennedy administration. I was then thirty-two, and it was the right moment for me to get some government experience. And all the people I respected, like Harlan Cleveland, Adlai Stevenson, George Ball—all these people were going into the government. So it was a wonderful opportunity to do that. I really am grateful to Harlan to have chosen me. To be a deputy assistant secretary of state at the age of thirty-two—that's not an opportunity everybody has. I had some other alternative things I might have done in that administration. I was considered for general counsel of AID. But the IO (intergovernmental organization) job gave me much more variety and policy experience than I would have had in the AID.

Did I regret going back? Well, to a certain extent, yes. After Kennedy was assassinated, I felt increasingly uncomfortable with Lyndon Johnson. And I felt a lot of the things that we were trying to do, Harlan and I, were increasingly being overshadowed by the Vietnam War. It just became a different experience. LBJ (Lyndon Baines Johnson) and his people were not particularly sympathetic to what I was all about. And also, I had a leave-of-absence of only four years. Columbia was very generous. Harvard only gives you two years. Columbia gave me two years, and then another year, and still another year. The fourth year they said, "We cannot keep your professorship unless you come back." So that, combined with LBJ and the Vietnam war, led me to return. I didn't get back into government until Jimmy Carter.

TGW: So you had a foot at Columbia, but you're obviously keeping involved with UN and UN-related affairs.

RNG: Yes, indeed. And I should add that Arthur Goldberg—when Adlai Stevenson died in London in July of 1965, Arthur Goldberg was appointed to replace him. And I had come to know Arthur in Washington. He had invited me to the Supreme Court for lunch. I had published

a book called *In Pursuit of World Order*, which was a collection of essays on all the different things the UN did in peacekeeping, development, and human rights. That was published in 1964, and I sent a copy to Arthur Goldberg. He was very nice about it. Then, when Arthur took up his job at the UN, he asked me to be a senior advisor to him for the General Assembly in 1965 and later for the General Assembly in 1966. So I was involved with the U.S. mission part-time.

TGW: But subsequently, you also get involved in Stockholm (UN Conference on the Human Environment).

RNG: In 1972, exactly. That's right.

TGW: I wondered, a little like the last question—you were present at the creation of UNCTAD, the conference to end all conferences. Stockholm is really the beginning of a different kind of conference—not a permanent conference, but an ad hoc global conference.

RNG: Well, it became a permanent thing with the UNEP (UN Environment Programme). Let me tell you about that, and again I'll make it very brief. Just as population had been on my mind going back to the late 1950s, so had environment, although the word environment was not one that was used in those early days. We talked about conservation. I was very influenced by books like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, and by other environmental pioneers. Indeed, I put into Kennedy's speech that he gave in the UN General Assembly in 1963 a reference to the conservation of wildlife in danger of extinction and to the protection of the forests, seas and atmosphere. It was just one paragraph.

It didn't have an operational conclusion. It just said that these are issues that the UN should consider. But then along comes Sweden, again. Sweden put the issue of the environment before the UN General Assembly—I believe it was 1968 or 1967. Sverker Astrom, who had been the Swedish permanent representative here and I think later had a major position in the

Swedish foreign ministry, was the driving force in introducing the environment to the UN's agenda.

The General Assembly decided to call a conference, and they appointed Maurice Strong to be the secretary-general. Maurice asked me, while I was at Columbia, to assist him in the preparation of the conference. He formed a prepcom (preparatory committee), and I was part of his informal little secretariat—not full-time, but just as a part-time advisor. Then I organized, at the Aspen Institute, a series of meetings that took place in the summer of 1971, with a lot of environmental experts, in which Maurice took part. We brought people from all over the world for this—to provide intellectual input into the Stockholm conference. Barbara Ward was involved, by the way, and very much so.

One thing that Maurice Strong did very well was to mobilize what we now call civil society and the intellectual community to help him. He reached out to NGOs (nongovernmental organizations). Then I went to Stockholm as a member of his team and had something to do with the drafting of the action plan, especially the institutional part, which set up UNEP. Now, a great disappointment at Stockholm, frankly, was when the developing countries—again, the 77—took the position that UNEP had to be in Nairobi, which was a terrible mistake from which we are still suffering to this day. Their attitude was, “Well, you have the Headquarters of the UN in New York and in Geneva”—and by that time, they had put something in Vienna—“Now it's our turn.” I thought: “That's your idea of economic development? To set up another UN organization in Africa to create jobs? You're not going to get the scientists down there.” But it was done. I felt it was a terrible mistake. UNEP has been hobbled ever since, as a result.

Then, when they called a second world environment conference—Rio—of course, Maurice was very smart. The first conference was the UN Conference on the Human

Environment. The second one was the UN Conference on Environment and Development. He understood that you had to link the two. I was at Rio also, working with his team. Those were great experiences for me. At Rio, we produced Agenda 21, covering four hundred pages—sort of a road map of all the things that should be done to preserve the habitability of the planet for future generations. It had chapters on forests, and soil conservation, and the marine environment, and air pollution, and global warming, for the first time. Also presented for signature at Rio, were the climate change convention and the biodiversity convention.

I attended Rio and spent some time with Al Gore there. Gore headed the Senate delegation. It was a very dramatic time because 1992 was the presidential election. [George W.] Bush was running, and the Bush administration took what I thought were very negative positions at Rio. And now we have Rio Plus Ten in Johannesburg. I wrote a little booklet for the Council on Foreign Relations called *Negotiating for Survival*, in which I critiqued the Rio meeting. It was certainly a meeting worth having, and the output, in terms of the roadmap for the future, was good. But again, the countries have not delivered what they should have delivered on this. So you can't say it was a great success. It was a consciousness-raising experience and it did, perhaps, affect some things at the margins. But really, you can't say the global environment has been improved in most areas. There has been a lot of deforestation since, and marine pollution. My friend, Nitin Desai, secretary-general of the Johannesburg meeting, will be issuing a report on ten years after Rio. I think it's going to be a very mixed report card, with a lot of C's and D's.

TGW: In your view, when do these conferences work, or work better than other ones? There had been a huge number of ad hoc conferences in the 1970s, and once again in the 1990s, as you mentioned. We have Beijing (Fourth World Conference on Women), and Beijing Plus Five, Beijing Plus Ten. Are these important when they're one-off events, or a series of events?

Does it depend? There are several products. You've mentioned the consciousness-raising, the ideas, institutions, et cetera. When, in your view, is it most appropriate to hold such a session?

RNG: That's a very hard question, and I'm not sure I know the answer. I think timing obviously is a very important question. It has to be done at a time when there is a sufficient consensus building among at least some key countries to drive the process forward. Holding it too early is not useful, or too late. So I think the Stockholm conference came at the right time. I think probably the Beijing women's conference (Fourth World Conference on Women) came at the right time. I think the Cairo population conference in 1994 came at the right time. Of course, a lot depends on the leadership, who is the secretary-general, what kind of team he assembles, whether he is as effective as Maurice Strong in reaching out to the scientific and scholarly communities, as well as to business leaders and NGOs. The commitment of key governments is critical. We have a UN of 190 countries, but there are ten or fifteen that really drive the organization.

And how do you evaluate the results of these meetings? I wasn't at the Beijing conference, or the population conference in Cairo (International Conference on Population and Development), but I think if you take Stockholm and Rio, I think they made a real contribution in consciousness-raising and intellectual clarification. But of course, we don't have a world government. The UN is an intergovernmental institution, and if governments don't have a commitment, well, things are not going to happen. And I wouldn't just blame the developed countries, although they should have put up a lot more resources to help the developing countries meet their commitments. But many governments in the developing world have no interest at all in delivering.

TGW: You mentioned scientific personnel, academics, NGOs. What is their utility within these intergovernmental contexts in terms of producing gray matter—intellectual output that actually is useful to governments, or useful to the secretariat?

RNG: Well, it's fundamental in a thing like environment. Take global warming, which was just coming over the horizon when the Stockholm conference was scheduled. I don't believe we even discussed global warming in Stockholm, but in the run-up to Rio it became a big issue. Al Gore was holding hearings, and most governments didn't have a clue about this. They had to rely on the scientific community to tell them whether this was a real issue or not. The whole concept of greenhouse gases and how they functioned was something that came from the scientific community.

Maurice Strong insisted in involving ICSU, the International Council of Scientific Unions, and panels of scientific experts. UNEP made a real effort to bring scientists into it. We had a wonderful American, who has since passed away, who was a very dear friend of mine—Peter Thatcher. Did you know him?

TGW: I met him once.

RNG: He was deputy-head of UNEP. He always insisted on having scientists involved. Most heads of UNEP—certainly the first one, Maurice, but I think subsequent ones, including Klaus Topfer, the present one—have all understood that they had no credibility unless they could bring in scientists. And I think it was the scientists who gave legitimacy to the decision to negotiate a climate change convention, and the Kyoto Protocol. Then they set up this International Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, of 3,000 scientists from around the world.

And you know, there are still people in the United States who are in total denial about this problem. But increasingly, they have a difficult time because the IPCC, which is 3,000

scientists all over the world, have put out these reports. And each report is more conclusive. The last report said, "We are confident that we are going to see a rise in the sea level, and an increase in mean temperature." Even the Bush administration now, under the impact of this, although they didn't accept Kyoto, they were forced to come out recently with a plan. You can say it is inadequate, but at least they recognize, for the first time, that there is a problem to which we have to respond.

TGW: In 1975, you actually were a member of this expert group under a Republican administration. So you crossed a frontier here.

RNG: Well, it was very strange how that happened. The General Assembly mandated the creation of this, quote, high-level Group on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Machinery of the United Nations, or some such title. Somewhere on my bookshelf here, I have the report that we produced. It was the Nixon administration, and John Scali, by that time, was our ambassador. But there were some people in the State Department who knew me, and I guess thought I knew something about the UN. So when this thing was set up, they asked, "Who can be the American member of this group that will know how to talk to the Group of 77 and others?" And they appointed me.

It was the spring of 1975, and the most amazing thing happened at the first meeting. I get to the first meeting and the question is raised, "Who is going to be the *rapporteur* and write this report." You know, in every UN committee somebody has to do the drafting. I had kept in touch with many of the Third World delegations, and several said, "Let Gardner do it." Someone said, "What? You're going to have an American as *rapporteur*?" Nevertheless, I was given this unhappy task and worked for three months on the report. I had the great advantage of having a wonderful secretariat official named Uner Kirdar to help me.

TGW: I spoke with him this afternoon.

RNG: He was the person in the secretariat who was appointed to handle this. And we got, incredibly, a unanimous report out of this Group of 25. The chairman of the group was from Tanzania. He was quite cooperative. And the Russian who was appointed to this was quite reasonable. So we put together a pretty good report, but Kurt Waldheim was utterly cynical. He got this report, and he had no interest in our recommendations because they all involved major changes in the status quo, and he didn't see how this would serve his purpose. And he had a couple of people on the 38<sup>th</sup> floor who didn't like our proposals because it would have shaken things up, and maybe diminished their authority. So we worked our hearts out on this report and nothing happened—nothing. It was very frustrating.

TGW: This particular kind of mechanism, actually, is one that is used with some frequency, putting together a geographically representative expert group. Is this a sensible thing to do?

RNG: It works only under certain conditions, and one is you must have a Secretary-General who is sympathetic. And the timing is important. You must have key countries who really have a serious commitment to implement the results. And we didn't have a sympathetic Secretary-General, and we didn't have secretariat people with a stake in it. The Nixon administration had no real commitment to do anything.

TGW: Is the quality of the report of any consequence, or is it the politics and the logistics that are—

RNG: Well, I can't be objective about this report. I think obviously the report, like anything produced by twenty-five people, has a lot of compromises and ambiguities in it. But I really think there were some nuggets, five or six useful ideas. Let me just take one idea, which

was to create a UN fellows program, in which we would have 100 outstanding young people from all over the world, who would be brought into the UN system each year and assigned to key UN departments and specialized agencies. The idea would be that this would provide a pool of new generation talent who would be enticed into the UN system, or go back into their home government, or their home political systems with some knowledge of the UN. We put this in the report but it never happened.

Anyway, the report gave me the opportunity to meet Kofi Annan, because we had a whole section in the report on the UN personnel system. We had very strong, and I think good, recommendations about selection out of deadwood, and how to recruit better on the basis of merit. We got this in the report because the then-head of personnel was Kofi Annan. I had a series of lunches with him and absorbed the wisdom that he gave me.

Well, I hope this has been helpful.

TGW: Very helpful, indeed. I'm very grateful, as are Richard and Louis, for your time.  
Thanks so much, Dick.

RNG: Thank you.

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