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 EUGENE T. ROSSIDES

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This is an oral history interview with Eugene T. Rossides, on May 10, 1990 in his offices at 1737 H Street, N.W., in Washington D.C. The interviewer is Mack Teasley of the Eisenhower Library.

MR. TEASLEY: Well, sir, thank you for your time this morning and I think that we will start off by asking a little bit about your background and how you ended up coming into the Eisenhower administration in '57, I believe it was?

MR. ROSSIDES: Right. I'm a New Yorker. I'm a born and bred and prejudiced Brooklynite. In fact, born in the heart of Flatbush. How did I end up in the Eisenhower? My hobby was politics. When I got out of the service back in '53, late '53 at the end of the Korean war, I joined the Republican party in New York City and was active in the Eisenhower campaign in '56. In fact, I was part of the Citizens for Eisenhower as well. Here's how the sequence developed. I was an active Republican in New York. I knew the President. I had met him when he was at my school, when he was President of Columbia University. And he was a great athletic fan and a great football fan and he would come up to our football practice sessions, besides coming to the games he would come up to the football practice sessions.

MR. TEASLEY: And you were on the football team?

MR. ROSSIDES: And I was on the football team. And, I'm trying to get the sequence of the years. At any rate, I also coached one year while I was in law school and he would come up and visit at the field. I knew Senator Irving Ives, a Republican from New York who was a U.S. Senator at the time. And his son, George Ives, was

his administrative assistant and there was a Bernie Moss, who was the legislative assistant. And I knew them--I had not actually met the Senator at that point. And George was a Dartmouth alumnus and Fred Scribner, the under-secretary of the Treasury was looking around for a successor or replacement to his then special assistant who was leaving to go back to his home state. And Fred asked around to different people if they had any suggestions. And one of the persons he spoke to was George Ives, who submitted my name without my knowing anything about it. And the next thing I know, I got a call, would I come down for an interview? And I did go down for the interview--I was one of several who were interviewed. And Scribner selected me, and so I had a lucky break and had two and a half marvelous years of work in Washington under the Eisenhower administration.

MR. TEASLEY: Were you in law school at the time you got the call?

MR. ROSSIDES: No, no. Actually I was working for the New York State Attorney General.

MR. TEASLEY: You had graduated. Of course, that's right.

MR. ROSSIDES: I graduated in '52, went into the Korean thing and then started with this law firm that I'm still with. The name was a different name at the time and it's had several changes but, one of the great old line New York firms, now Rogers and Wells, as it turned out, Bill Rogers' firm. And I had been with them for two years and had taken a leave to go to do stock fraud investigations

for New York State, the State Attorney General's office. I was actually on my Air Force . . . I got the call, to bring back memories now. Actually, I got the telephone call when I was on a two week tour of active duty my reserve requirement out at Suffolk Air Force Base on Long Island. At any rate . . .

MR. TEASLEY: That's interesting. I don't want to pass this opportunity to ask you a little bit more about Columbia, since that's a period we don't know that much about. Eisenhower, you mentioned him coming out to the football practice field and you were a coach, or a player? He had a real interest in . . .

MR. ROSSIDES: Right, I mean, fine, he was our president, it was a great thing, as far as I was concerned. But I was never that active in public affairs. I was too interested in my own little world of football and so on. But it was a great thing to happen and I think that if you don't have much in that period you ought to do more. Because it was a very interesting time and you had, I think back on it now, not then, as a young kid then I said, "Hey, what could be better?" But then you have a lot of these prejudiced academics who are prejudiced against anybody in the military. So, it was not as if everyone greeted him with great joy. But I think he did a marvelous job and captured most of them, you're never going to capture all of them and the interesting part is that he could handle any of them. He had the ability to meet and greet anybody. And deal effectively with them. But, I think you ought to look into that period. You may

want to find out if there are some papers that Columbia could contribute. Also, oh, what's his name? Colonel McCann, oh dear, I forget his first name.

MR. TEASLEY: Kevin?

MR. ROSSIDES: Kevin McCann. You have his papers?

MR. TEASLEY: Yes, we do. We do.

MR. ROSSIDES: Because Kevin was his aide. As I understand it, he was his aide at Columbia. I got to know Kevin McCann many, many years later doing alumni work at Columbia. A great guy.

MR. TEASLEY: Yes, we've got an interview with Kevin and we've got his papers.

MR. ROSSIDES: I was not as aware then of how much to the left of center many of the professors were, using that in a broad sense. And not being that interested at that time, in day-to-day politics, not realizing that most of them were Democrats. So now I think back and I realize why there may not have been great joy amongst--you'd think everybody would have been joyful that he was named President of Columbia University.

MR. TEASLEY: So you went to the Treasury Department in '57 then, and as special assistant to the under-secretary and what generally were your duties as special assistant to the under-secretary?

MR. ROSSIDES: That's why this is oral history, because I can't go back and look at the job description. [Laughter] No, the duties of the special assistant were really very broad, and anything your boss wanted to get you into. But fundamentally, the special assistant to the under-secretary was the political appointee. That's why they used the phrase "special assistant". Otherwise it might have been assistant to the Secretary for Economic Affairs which would have implied a career person. Special assistant implied a person from the outside and part of the party structure. You were, first of all, whatever he wanted you to do. And I'll give you a range. Secondly, you are the liaison with your fellow special assistants in the other departments. Now in most of the departments there was a special assistant to the secretary, not to the under-secretary. There used to be one to a department. [Robert] Bob Anderson did not have one and that's why it went to the under-secretary, Fred Scribner, and of course, I think Bob Anderson probably at that time, was a registered Democrat. Maybe that would be the reason why he didn't, I don't know. But Fred Scribner was a Republican and active within the party structure, was general counsel to the Republican National Committee and a very distinguished person in his own right. You were liaison with the White House for anything they needed at the level. In other words, if they wanted to call over, well, they're not going to call over and bother the secretary of the under-secretary on nine out of ten items. But there were things that might have been needed so they'd call the special assistant to check on something

and not have to bother the principal. It ranged within the department from troubleshooting--I guess I spent at least a third of my time dealing with problems involving the Internal Revenue Service because traditionally, and today too, the Internal Revenue Service reports directly to the under-secretary, now called deputy secretary. And not through an assistant secretary. Secondly, there'd be an inquiry from the Hill. You were, literally, congressional liaison, also except for the major figures. In other words, the Chairman of the Finance Committee was not going to call me, he would call Fred Scribner or Bob Anderson. Fred Scribner because he was detailed for the day-to-day operations of the congressional relations. And so the members of Ways and Means and Finance, when they called, not the chairman, but a member of Ways and Means down the line, might find it easier to call me and get through and get something moved than to call the under-secretary. I qualify that, in a sense, because Ways and Means and Finance is not as good an example. We had, also, a special assistant in those days for tax policy, again special meaning for the outside. And he was the day-to-day person with the committees. So they would call him. But I would get called frequently because it would be from those committees in trade matters, customs matters and non-straight tax matters. But for other congressmen, not on our regular committees, I was the congressional liaison, that was the extent.

Now, unfortunately, they have these elaborate assistant secretaries in charge of legislation. It's a proliferation which

in my judgment is certainly not needed. The numbers are not needed. I don't care about the title, whether they want to call them the assistant secretary of the legislation, I think that's elevating it too high. It should be special assistant for legislation or whatever. That's a different question but there's too many staff running back and forth. Of course, that may be a reflection of the increase in the congressional staff.

Speechwriting. One of the biggest problems and chores was drafting speeches and arranging and deciding on his schedule. In other words, he'd get a speaking engagement, "what should I do?" So you'd have to check it out, find out what it was all about, where, the subject, how many people would be expected. And the rule of the game was whatever they told you the numbers, you cut it in half. So if they told you there'd be 300 people there, you figured 150.

Personnel matters, dealing with problems, complaints or whatever, or just the normal problems of running the department. You see, he ran the department. He was the day-to-day running of the department. Bob Anderson dealt with President Eisenhower, Speaker of the House Rayburn, Lyndon Johnson was the majority leader, and I'm trying to recall who was the Chairman of Finance and Ways and Means. For instance, we'd have a request from the appropriations committee for additional materials on something. They would request anything, whether it was part of our budget hearings or not they had an inquiry. It would come in and I would have to process it. I'd have to get it to the career person in

the office of administration who would put a little material together, I would have to review it, and show it to the boss. And then we would send it out. Or if it was not that big of a thing to bother him with, I would approve getting it sent down.

MR. TEASLEY: Did you have a staff?

MR. ROSSIDES: No, just myself and my secretary. The secretary was a career person. Now the whole thing has proliferated. I'm not saying we shouldn't have had more, a little bit more then. At that point, it was clearly, that there was not enough institutional thinking regarding certain roles of the Treasury and law enforcement and customs and trade and tariff matters. And so there weren't the papers, there were the issues that developed five years ago, people had them, in the career peoples offices, but it was not easy to find some of that stuff. But no, it was just myself. As I say, that was the extent. And our press office was like two people, public affairs officers, two, I forget how many, but two or three. Niles Leonardson, Niles Leonardson, good gosh. And the secretary had a special assistant, Charls Walker, who then later came back as under-secretary and I came back as assistant secretary. And he was the economics expert who was an adviser to Bob Anderson, and the speechwriter for him and so on.

But you get a request from Interior Department on something and I would move it around. In other words, I had to develop a system where I wasn't always moving it around and having it come back through me. I would have to get it and make sure that the

person responded and every now and then someone would call, "Hey, I haven't heard anything." Well, instead of having an elaborate system just because one out of fifty people may not have gotten a response early enough was just not worth it to have that kind of a big a staff, we didn't need it. But . . .

MR. TEASLEY: What was your assessment of Fred Scribner?

MR. ROSSIDES: Oh, he was an exceptionally, exceptionally able person. I learned a great deal and was influenced a great deal by him. He was a conservative New England Yankee from Maine, no less. So it's even worse. [Laughter] He had a real New England dry sense of humor; an exceptionally able person in everything. If we had more Fred Scribners--my own belief is that we need more and more people active in politics. And he's one of the few of the appointees who had an enormous understanding of the political process. He was an active Republican, devoted time to the party, all on a volunteer basis, and was general counsel to the party for many years. But was active with the Maine Republican party, delegate to conventions and so on and so forth. And an extraordinary able, substantive man in his field. He was a leading lawyer and he just was top-notch. Now, you see, my problem and one of my concerns is we have these stereo-types that people who are in politics are in some way inferior. That's the prevailing attitude among the stereo-type I have of the liberal Democratic academic, biased against anything to do Republican and biased against anything to do with politics, but

particularly Republican politics. And you find that. And you have an unfortunate situation where the word "politician", which should be one of the great words in our language, isn't. And the word "lobbyist", which should be a very fine word, isn't. Lobbyists are the way you get to your elected representative. When the citizen writes on his own behalf, he's a lobbyist for himself. When someone lobbys on behalf of a group, he's a terrible word, a lobbyist, anyway.

MR. TEASLEY: What about Bob Anderson? What was your observation concerning him?

MR. ROSSIDES: Oh, I liked him. Yes, I liked Bob Anderson very much. Can we go back a second on Fred Scribner. He was a quiet-- he was a typical New England Yankee. He was not given to excess language and all, but he was a very fine writer. Very able lawyer, very fine writer and he was a marvelous speaker.

MR. TEASLEY: The speeches that you wrote for him, did he do a lot of changing?

MR. ROSSIDES: Oh, God, yes.

MR. TEASLEY: He took the pen to them, huh?

MR. ROSSIDES: He was basically his own writer. What he would do, I'd get called in and he'd say, I've agreed to accept this speech that you're talking about and so on. Now most of them I'd have to check out, some speeches were obvious that he was going to take,

and he would take them and call me in and "Why don't you prepare a draft and what I want to say is something along these lines." He'd give me the outline of what he wanted to try and get across. And he would blue pencil it and back and forth and back and forth. It was a struggle. Bob Anderson, I didn't have that many dealings with. But I would get called upon by the secretary. When I say I didn't have any dealings, it was not on a day-to-day basis. I was not his special assistant. But his office, of course, was right across the hall, the corner office, my boss's office next to it, and I'm across the hall. It would not be that I wouldn't see him that much, but I wouldn't be doing something for him that much. But certainly, once a month, I'd get a project from the secretary. And my views of him are just the highest. All we would know is that we had a lot of authority at the Treasury because of Bob Anderson and his role with the President and with the Congress. The esteem in which the department was held because of, before him Humphreys, and then the strength that Bob Anderson brought, in that he had the personal confidence and ear of the president, but then also was close with and could deal with Lyndon Johnson and Rayburn.

MR. TEASLEY: So that Texas connection probably didn't hurt.

MR. ROSSIDES: Oh, no, it was central. It really was. It was central. And, I say, my dealings with him were, you know, once a month kind of thing. But he was very gracious, soft spoken, quiet spoken Texan. The exact opposite of a Lyndon Johnson, for

example. In his speech and manner and, great thoughtfulness. He was a great reader. A great reader. I remember someone mentioning to me, I guess it was his secretary or someone, every week someone would be going over to the bookstore or right after the Sunday newspapers were out and he'd be buying at least one book a week. I got to know Bob a lot later and I'm trying to give you the comments then, because I got to know him later when he was chairman of the Eisenhower Board of Trustees at the Eisenhower College and he asked me to go on it. And so we became much closer later and it became a first name basis later.

MR. TEASLEY: What was your feeling about Eisenhower's involvement in the policy making or his knowledge, his understanding of the economic issues that faced the country? Was he really in tune to that?

MR. ROSSIDES: Mr. Teasley, the answer is yes, of course. It was never even a, two things, one, I'm a young special assistant. I'm working literally twenty-four hours a day. It was an enormous job, there was so much to do, and so on. And the idea that I would be worried about whether or not the President was in charge or not, you know, it just didn't even come up in that sense. We all knew the President was in charge. We knew that he made the decisions. And the speculation and the attempts of the, again, you have a great problem of the fact that most of the reporters are left of center, which is--I'm not using the term "liberal" or "left of center" in any derogatory sense. I'm just saying that a

matter of fact, probably 80 percent of the reporters, particularly in Washington, are left of center Democrats. And anti-government generally and anti-Republican administration in particular. And they would get out these "dope stories" because the President was out playing golf or something. And it would never bother us, I don't think anyone in the office, in the entire Treasury, ever took it seriously. Because they knew who was in charge. And, you know, it is surprising to me, and it's an indictment of the academic community, that that kind of rumors and articles in the daily popular press would be elevated to a dogma that held as if it were absolute fact. It wasn't until a very fine person and liberal Democrat, Fred I. Greenstein, writes the book Hidden-Hand Presidency thinking he was going to write it about one situation, or one attitude or one way, one impression and he suddenly changes. Well, that's an indictment, you know, of the entire academic community. In particular, those biased liberal Democrats, and there are some--particularly Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. is one of the worst. And yet, these guys get access to the press and they are taken as if they are the gospel. Now, why should it take twenty years. It's a lot of nonsense. At any rate, you knew, as a young assistant, you'd know it because you would know what your bosses were saying. You'd know, well, what's the President going to think of this? And so on, in other words, it was not as if what we are, as if the President didn't matter. And the President was as everyone knows, was very, very much concerned particularly concerned with the domestic economic matters and the proper growth of the economy.

MR. TEASLEY: I was going to ask some specific things now about the Treasury Department. Perhaps what was it's approach to debt-management? If that's even a proper term.

MR. ROSSIDES: That was not my area, Mr. Teasley, but you know it was a normal--it would be a normal conservative banker's view of debt management. Bob [Robert P.] Mayo, I think, was head of the office at that time. But I just don't know. That would not be my area. It was not my area then nor later, and that was under the jurisdiction of the under-secretary for monetary affairs, the number three official in the department. Who was Julian Baird. I think he's since deceased, from Minnesota, I think it is.

MR. TEASLEY: Which fiscal and monetary policies were used by the Eisenhower administration to resist inflation?

MR. ROSSIDES: You would have to get that from the technical experts. In other words that's the, you know, Ray Saulnier and Charlie Walker. You really should interview Charls Walker as my counterpart with the secretary, but he was strictly really doing the economic stuff and economic speech writing for Bob Anderson.

MR. TEASLEY: I see. You mentioned the . . .

MR. ROSSIDES: Yes, it was the normal that you would do. You know, you'd be careful on your budget, your spending and so on, but the immediate kind of tax policies I just forget. But I remember, our special assistant for tax policies was a fellow

named Dave Lindsay. He was from New York and we had a great relationship. He was from Yale, as was his brother John Lindsay. It was his twin brother, but they were not identical. And Dave and I became great friends--and the families--and he's since passed away, many years ago at an early age. But Dave would come back from being up on the Hill with the Ways and Means committee, and Senate Finance committee, members, staff and so on and give his nightly report to Fred Scribner. When the Congress was in session or something was up and so on, when the bill was actually beginning to move. And I would be sitting in on most of those sessions, or a lot of them. And it was just interesting to see the by-play of what would be happening. But the specific policy at the time, I can't recall. But it will be in the records that kind of thing. But it would be a type of pro-business, you would normally expect as it should be, as far as I'm concerned, there would be a normal tax policy to stimulate economic growth in the proper manner of keeping inflation down, but I don't have those specifics.

MR. TEASLEY: Was the Internal Revenue Service managed in a different manner or did it have a changing function in the Eisenhower administration that you're aware of?

MR. ROSSIDES: Well, as to changing function, no. If the IRS is functioning, the IRS is functioning. What should be interesting to you, and for the scholar and it's a good research paper and so on, is that one of the things that hurt President Truman, of

course, was the scandals in the IRS. And the cronyism that had developed and I think some specifics regarding IRS. And that's why you should try to interview Fred Scribner, he's up there in age now. And Fred came in as General Counsel and was involved in the Treasury Department's internal investigation . . .

[Interruption]

MR. ROSSIDES: . . . looking into and cleaning up the scandals that had occurred in the IRS under the Truman Administration, as general counsel then throughout his eight years literally. As assistant secretary he became in charge. And you should look at that period because I think they did reorganize the IRS before I was there. I think it was 1954 when reorganization occurred. And Fred Scribner would be on top of most of this. There was the development of the Blue Ribbon Committee to have a proper career development program for the personnel in IRS. And Fred went through that whole period, so there was some significant internal reorganizations I believe. But the relationship between the Treasury and the IRS was the same then as it was later during the Nixon administration. The IRS reported directly to the under-secretary, the number two man in the department. In my judgment, they should report through an assistant secretary. But that assistant secretary should be devoting most of his time to the proper operations of the IRS, and not just the tax legislation. The assistant secretary for tax policy just deals with Senate Finance and Ways and Means. Now assistant secretary, then special assistant.

MR. TEASLEY: One of the issues that occurred later on in the administration was the balance of payments concern and I was a military dependent at the time. My father was sent to Germany and there was a dependent travel ban because of the "gold flow." Were you involved in that at all?

MR. ROSSIDES: No, that was Bob Anderson and he raised the clarion call. Probably the first really full public exposure of the issue. Because, what happened? Before World War II we certainly weren't worried about balance of payments. We were in a depression and so on. And we had the war and after the war we had the great reconstruction and, literally, now we were groping in the international arena trying to revive the world economy. And one of the things that Bob Anderson came up with, my recollection, or whether Humphrey did before that, I don't know. But we had this one speech which made quite a play, I think, by Anderson at the time, but I can't recall much more than that, Mr. Teasley, regarding balance of payments. That the U.S. had to have a proper balance of payments, or whatever it is, but I don't know the details of that speech. But he, Anderson, brought it to the floor, it was one of the things that he would be credited with. That gets very complicated, I guess, the balance of payments versus balance of trade, you know, trade deficit, what does that mean? The key figures to measure the balance of payments, the cash flow in and out, and all that. But literally, I guess, you could say that that issue, which we deal with every day now, was

brought to the floor by Bob Anderson. But you'd have to talk with someone like Charlie Walker.

MR. TEASLEY: Did the Eisenhower administration deal with many anti-dumping or countervailing duty cases?

MR. ROSSIDES: Little or none. And again, I knew a little bit about it, very little. I did, as part of my duties, deal with the assistant secretary in charge of customs, Coast Guard at the time also, and Secret Service, he was in charge of and the Bureau of Narcotics, but they did very little, very little.

MR. TEASLEY: Were you aware of any of the background about the establishment of inter-American development bank?

MR. ROSSIDES: Yes, as a matter of fact. But again, special assistant, one of their jobs, the inter-American development bank was Treasury's baby and more by the under-secretary for monetary affairs. But when it was getting done, the legislature was getting approved, my boss called me in and said, "We're looking at different candidates for the job of president," or "executive director," I forget what they called him, president, I guess. He said, "it'll be an American" and I forget if he gave me a handful of names or the one, I forget at the moment. But I had to then check out the background of one of the candidates. And that meant checking him politically, getting a tax check from the IRS. Doing the background investigation that would need to be done for a high position. And then I'd get all of those for any successor at

Treasury. In other words, I would handle all the details. We did our own background check, we didn't have the FBI do it at the time. We had the Secret Service to do our background checks for us. Any Treasury employee, including myself, went through a tax check, which other presidential appointees in those days did not. Whether they do now, I forget. I think maybe they've added that. And that was Grady [T. Grady] Upton, a fellow named Grady Upton. My recollection is he was a banker from Philadelphia. And I had to process his application and get the reports and bring them into my boss. That was another job of the special assistant. And if I had been special assistant to Anderson that would have been one of the things he would have given me. See, I was not responsible for any substantive things. Whatever my boss wanted to get me into--and then I was not the guy in charge of the substance, but I had to go and needle somebody, "Hey, what's happening here or there," and so on. There would be a question about a bank matter and I would have to walk down the hall to the Comptroller of the Currency and say "what is the problem here" or something like that.

MR. TEASLEY: You were the executive officer, so to speak, right?

MR. ROSSIDES: Yes, well, [Laughter] and the word "executive" very loosely used. They had to figure, "hey, does he really mean it, is he really speaking for his boss?" And they found out pretty quickly I was not one to play games. You might have guys, as some departments I'm sure did, that had a special assistant that

would suddenly be doing things, not for his boss, but for someone else that might be calling him. And so then the person who he was talking with would say, "Is he speaking for the under-secretary or is it someone else?" Well, they knew very quickly that I was speaking for the under-secretary, period.

MR. TEASLEY: Were you aware of the role that Anderson or Scribner played in representing the Treasury Department in deliberations with the National Security Council?

MR. ROSSIDES: Very much so.

MR. TEASLEY: The planning board, or the operations coordinating board?

MR. ROSSIDES: Yes, yes, that one I got involved in. Because of my duties, that was one I was heavily involved in. But again, not in the substantive end. But I would be involved and I would read, and I had access to the papers. I had the highest clearances and I was given a special clearance because I did have one specific job. No one else wanted it so they stuck me on that job and that required getting very special clearances beyond the Top Secret and so on. And that was called ICIS, Internal Committee on Internal Security. And although it was one of these things that was the Department of Justice, ourselves, other departments, the FBI was represented there and so on. And that was regarding internal sabotage; the possibility, the problems and so on. So it didn't sound like much to most people but it was a very interesting

subsequent assignment for me because it gave me a real picture of how an inter-departmental committee works. And in particular it aided some of my thinking when I went back as assistant secretary and we were then in charge of the customs service, and the Secret Service and so on. But because of that, and I sort of became his added assistant on the NSC set-up because it was unusual, his role. It was one of the interesting points . . .

MR. TEASLEY: You're talking about Scribner now?

MR. ROSSIDES: Scribner. He had one of the career fellows as his assistant for the planning board. If I'm not mistaken his name was Lyle Whitman, career fellow up in the office of International Finance. Of course our role in Treasury would be the financial end and so on. But Scribner was also on the OCB, the operations coordinating board, which was under secretary level. But he had been a member of the planning board earlier when he was, I guess assistant secretary or general counsel or whatever. But he kept both jobs when he became under-secretary. I got there when he was under-secretary, he was a member of OCB and the planning board. He had another assistant, a career man, on the OCB board. I think his name was Matt Marks, in fact I know it was Matt Marks because when I came back later, I took him on as one of my staff assistants, as assistant secretary. And again, that system may have proliferated. Now they may have--I think they have got an office of national security affairs, and so on at the Treasury. And maybe it should have proliferated more. We didn't have any

problems, you see, our role depended on the voice of the secretary and the voice of the secretary was predominant, so if he had an issue he could stand up to the force of Dulles if necessary. I didn't get into these specific battles that went on during that period. But I remember a number of different issues, I can't recall now but I got a full appreciation of the extra-ordinary and proper function and development of the NSC structure and the way Eisenhower ran it. And then it was destroyed by Kennedy. And then massacred by [Henry A.] Kissinger who did a terrible job in creating the problems that have developed in the national security area in my judgment. And scholars should look into how Kissinger with his meglomania did that. It is one of my pet peeves for many, many reasons and I'll be writing a book on some of his illegal conduct when I retire in a few years. That's just an aside to see if I ever get it done. [Laughter] So the answer is yes, that we had a marvelous set-up and it was an effective set-up. It was effectively run because of the leadership of the president at the White House.

MR. TEASLEY: What was the relationship between the Treasury Department and CEA?

MR. ROSSIDES: It was a normal one and I don't know because I was not involved on a day-to-day basis on that. Even when I came back the next time as assistant secretary I didn't get involved in that. They'd have the troika meetings and the quadrant when the four of them would meet and so on. And Bob Anderson was, you

know, you're talking about a very low-key, effective policy person and a good manager because he knew how to run the department by how he delegated and so on. But you're not talking about a guy who was newspaper happy, headline happy. You had a quiet, effective running of the economic policy of the country. And because you didn't have daily headlines and screams and this and that, and the next thing, maybe people thought nothing was being done, but they look back on the accomplishments of those eight years economically and hopefully your conference in Abilene will bring it out.

MR. TEASLEY: I'd like to ask for your comments on a few of the Treasury Department officials, you already talked about Fred Scribner and you mentioned Julian . . .

MR. ROSSIDES: Julian Baird.

MR. TEASLEY: Baird, the under-secretary of Treasury for monetary affairs.

MR. ROSSIDES: Yes, a very fine person. I didn't have many dealings with him hardly at all. But he was just a gracious gentlemen, older gentlemen, mid-westerner, white-haired as I remember. I just don't know, but just a fine person, that's all.

MR. TEASLEY: John P. Weitzel, assistant secretary for development.

MR. ROSSIDES: Right.

MR. TEASLEY: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

MR. ROSSIDES: Right. Jack Weitzel was my predecessor twice removed. He was a special assistant to Scribner, his first. Then Bob Hartshorne [Robert D. Hartshorne, Jr.] came second, and I third. Bob went back to New England, Jack moved to a subsequent part of the department in the general counsel's office. He was in the general counsel's office for many of those years. And then moved to that last spot. And Jack and I worked fairly close together on a number of things. He was just a fine political public servant. In other words, he was a member of the party who was brought in and he served in different spots in the department and now he's a partner in a Boston law firm.

MR. TEASLEY: Lawrence Robbins.

MR. ROSSIDES: I really only met him a few times, he was a good friend of Mrs. Scribner's and I just had very little to do with him. His responsibilities were finishing up, I think, on something to do with the old RIF, Reconstruction and Finance, RFC or something. He was a gracious older person.

MR. TEASLEY: Clarence Randall.

MR. ROSSIDES: I don't recall him, he may have left before I got there.

MR. TEASLEY: Douglas Dillon and his decision to take the Treasury secretaryship in the Kennedy administration.

MR. ROSSIDES: Yes, that was very much resented by everybody, I can't give you specifics. But I do think normally it would be that a guy who was supposed to be supporting, actively supporting Nixon and the re-election campaign, then you have him suddenly become secretary of the Treasury under the Democrats. Well, that would never sit too well. I'd never met him at that time.

MR. TEASLEY: How was the transition to the Kennedy administration, were you involved in that, because there was a certain . . .

MR. ROSSIDES: I'm trying to think now. I was not as involved in a day to day basis. In other words, they weren't calling me to do this or that as they would Mr. Scribner or Bob Anderson and coming over to consult with them and so on. I recall a very smooth transition. When I say I recall a very smooth, I don't recall any problems that developed at the time. I do know that there was a lot of work to clean up and get my own damn office in shape and get out of there. I had been offered a job by the Kennedy people myself and they were nice and gracious about it but I said, "No, no, that's not the way it should work and I'm going to go back to the law firm." I mention that only because I had gotten to know Senator Kennedy, as a Senator, during the fifties. Ted Reardon was his administrative assistant. His office was next to Irving

Ives office and before I went to the Treasury, when I went down and visited with Ives' staff on a foreign policy matter that I was interested in as a young lawyer--the problem with the island of Cyprus, where my father was born (who was deceased when I was a youngster). After I talked with the people in Ives' office, George Ives and Bernie Morris, bringing back some memories, they said, "Oh, by the way, do you have a minute?" I was down on this problem with Cyprus in 1955, '55 or early '56. I gave them my pitch on this issue and left a memorandum for them. Everybody said, "Do you have a minute?" I said, "Yes, sure." "Someone wants to meet you." So the next thing I know this guy Ted Reardon comes in from Kennedy's office, which was next door. But all three of them were great football fans, and they wanted to see me and meet me to say "hello" because I had been a former football player, not that they cared about the problem on the island of Cyprus immediately at that time. But from that stemmed the fact that I then sent stuff down to Ted Reardon for Kennedy to put into the Congressional record, which he did. Some materials I happened to send to Ted Reardon, Kennedy used them in a speech and they appeared later on in a stamp on Cyprus because Kennedy had made comments about self-determination for Cypress in 1956, following my visit. Anyway, so Ted called up and said, "Gene, if you want to stay, you know, you're perfectly welcome to." I said, "No, that's not the way you do it." And he knew that. But they would have let me stay but I said, "No way." I don't recall any real problems. I just don't know, and I certainly wasn't

following the newspapers in those last few months, cleaning up and getting out of there. But I do remember, it's so funny because, I literally left January 20th. And I didn't own a car in Washington at that time. I borrowed my uncle's car in New York and brought it down. I was going to bring back my one, large efficiency room apartment that I had on Sixteenth and S, and I rented a small U-Haul trailer. If you don't, you may not recall, but we had one of the worst snow storms ever on Inauguration Day and I had one hell of a time getting out and couldn't get out until the next day, but the whole parade was upset at that time.

MR. TEASLEY: I remember seeing those photographs. I guess, in closing, I would just be interested in your assessment of the Eisenhower administration and while you were there, any initiatives, any lasting contributions, any legacies that he may have left.

MR. ROSSIDES: Well, you know, the legacies wouldn't stem from my thinking about it at that time. In other words, being there and leaving at that time, all I knew was that we ran a nice shop and an operation. Now I can go back and give you all the legacies you want but that's more from history. Why I've been so annoyed, and more than annoyed I think, very concerned regarding the proper functioning of our society when such an enormous body of academics have failed in their responsibility for so many years. And so "what about the next guy," and "what about this issue," and "what about that?" And so it's a very serious concern that I have on

that. I mean, you've got peace, prosperity and the whole concept of a human comedy. The whole concept that we're all human beings, that we're all individuals, we all have our individual worth, stems from Eisenhower and his thinking in those days. Not just peace abroad and prosperity at home; it was beyond that. His greatness will go down because of the fact that he personified it, and John Eisenhower's speech the day we had the . . .

MR. TEASLEY: The Joint Meeting of Congress.

MR. ROSSIDES: The Joint Meeting. You read the speech. A man of contradiction, you know, a war hero who hated war. And here's a man who desperately wanted peace, and the importance of it and who desperately felt that by having people work together, the People-to-People Program, that whole concept was his, you see. So I think he's going to rise and rise even more in where we stand with our top presidents. But things that are happening today, he wanted to have happen then, you see. Some of our dear Allies may not have for other reasons, for other agendas, for all their colonial baggage that they had to bear and so on. But just like De Gaulle when he said he was going to free Algeria he had a lot of opposition. Eisenhower was way ahead of his time on a lot of that. I don't think that the unfortunate [Francis Gary] Powers incident on the U-2, would have made much change. I mean, sure it slowed it down and it came at an unfortunate time, it would have been a nice capping, but the Russians were going to be still aggressive for a while. But it certainly, I think, would have

shortened that long period there. But everything--space--I mean, he's the father of space. You talk about the cultural thing, Kennedy Center. Kennedy Center? That's Eisenhower Center! That's what it was supposed to be named, but then the terrible tragedy with the death of the president. Because Eisenhower initiated the concept of the cultural institution of that building, the whole federal infrastructure. I mean, so many things happened. And the proper running of the government. The proper running and staffing of the White House as compared to any other, just do that issue itself. He ranked in my judgment way above, he should rank above so many of the ones that I've considered there. You take Woodrow Wilson, I am not a Woodrow Wilson fan. You know, he may have done a lot of good things but he also did a lot of bad things, and the idea that they were running the government for a year when the man was incapacitated But what did he do? What did he get? He didn't, he failed in the peace plan and buckled under on certain of those issues and was not a man of the people. You know, he was one of these elitists, as far as I'm concerned. Whereas Eisenhower, the people could trust him and feel that he was thinking of them. You never had Eisenhower say, "You can trust me." He wouldn't do that, he would not say, "Hey, trust me," like Kissinger's famous line, "Trust me." Because obviously you couldn't trust Kissinger, it was a known, open secret in Washington. Whereas the average person just said "Hey, he [Eisenhower] is going to call them as he sees what he thinks is

best for the people." So I think he's got an enormous legacy there. I think one thing that could typify a lot of the in operations of how they ran the government was the belief in the importance of team work and the belief in cabinet government. Because one of the unfortunate things was the proliferation of responsibilities in the White House in the last twenty, thirty years and we give lip service to cabinet government to decentralization and yet we don't follow through. Indeed, we've expanded the White House staff and it shouldn't be. It should be cut in half. And the difference between then and the Nixon administration, was I think you had a fair number of second-raters in the White House, who really were not competent and qualified for the job and responsibilities they had. And here I'm now back as an assistant secretary who ran the campaign for Nixon in New York City. I was a Rockefeller man, when Rockefeller lost, and Rockefeller pledged that he'd help in New York and Nixon said fine, and then I was approved by the Nixon people to run the New York City campaign. Nixon knew me from the Eisenhower days and Bob [Robert H.] Finch and I were good friends, but Bob never lasted that long in the administration. Well, you had an attitude in the Nixon White House where anyone who was not in on the Nixon side from the very beginning, early on, was an enemy, no matter what. No matter what. And they acted that way and they were overbearing in their attitudes and called as if they were calling from the Emperor. And I'm an assistant secretary though. But I knew the system, thank goodness, from my training as a special

assistant. And I had running battles with certain White House staff, thank goodness for three and a half years, because it really started in June of '69, not knowing what these idiots were up to. But, hey, "That's a Treasury thing and if that's what you think, fine. Did the President tell the secretary about that," and then they would shut up. Or "have you talked to the Secretary about that?" I mean, they were just throwing their weight around without really having the go ahead. And Nixon was ill-served by a number of them. I give that in juxtaposition to, if you can believe it, a White House staffer during the Eisenhower Administration would call me as a special assistant at Treasury--whether it was under-secretary or secretary it didn't matter because I was the special assistant just like in Interior--"Gene, is there anything we can do to help?" Come on, I'm a lousy special assistant, I'm just a kid there. And then they would say "Gene, you ought to join the Bull Elephants, it's a group of the administrative assistants, the Republican administrative assistants. You'll get to know them and that'll help you in your stuff there." I mean, that was the attitude. I never once had anyone call me from the White House, "Gene, is there anything we can do to help," from the Nixon administration.

MR. TEASLEY: Who were you dealing with in the Eisenhower White House?

MR. ROSSIDES: A couple of guys I knew, one guy [Robert E.] Bob Hampton was the director of personnel and so on. And would call

me from time to time on whether there were some openings for political appointees or anything like that. I'm trying to remember who the other guy was, Tom [Thomas E.] Stevens, I also had gotten to know, but I never would be calling over there. In other words, I would never intrude if I didn't have to call for a specific reason, you see. Whereas some people took the attitude I want to get close to the guy. We did not operate that way, it was not that type of attitude in those days. But Bob Hampton was a particularly helpful person at the White House at that time. And Tom Stevens was helpful on the few occasions that I had to deal with him. I got to know Tom later, and Mary [Stephens] and there were one or two others. But the whole difference was they were neither seen nor heard. White House staff was to be neither seen nor heard, and that's how it should be.

MR. TEASLEY: They are there to serve the President.

MR. ROSSIDES: They are there to serve the President. And the idea of having big interviews and this and that and so on. And that's why I say Henry Kissinger, I think, did enormous damage to the institution of the presidency, to the conduct and proper conduct and coordination of U.S. foreign policy. Where are the academics? Anyway, I thought, I wanted to get that in there about the White House, how they operated in those days. You had a team work, team feeling, team spirit which it may be that the rise of modern television has changed that forever, I don't know. Because it certainly has changed a lot of the people that are running the

political campaigns into full-time professionals, you see. Paid full time professionals, where that's their full-time livelihood. And our feeling was always, in any campaigns I've ever worked in, and I've managed several and was the assistant and deputy manager for several. It has always been on a volunteer basis.

[End of Interview]