

**AN INTERVIEW WITH
RUSSELL E. TRAIN**

by

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Introduction

Russell Errol Train was born on June 4, 1920 in Jamestown, Rhode Island. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Princeton in 1941 and a law degree from Columbia University in 1947.

Train founded the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation in 1961, becoming president and chairman of the board. In 1965 he became president of The Conservation Foundation. He was elected president and chief executive officer of the World Wildlife Fund in 1978; at this writing he is WWF chairman. In addition, he has served with many wildlife committees, commissions, and organizations.

President Nixon in 1970 appointed Train chairman of the newly formed Council on Environmental Quality, and in 1973 he became the second administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. He left government service in January 1978, as the Carter Administration took office.

Clearly, Russell Train participated in and observed a wide range of activities, events, and controversies related to conservation and the environment. He has directly advised the president and other heads of state, testified to Congress, authored articles, and made speeches across the country and around the world. Thus, it is very fortunate that he cheerfully agreed to sit for the interview that follows, sharing with the reader both insights and experiences. The World Wildlife Fund generously provided financial support.

The interview took place in July 1993 at the Train's fine Washington, D.C. home, a few blocks from Dupont Circle. In fact, it is a town house, and Russ was president of the association. The swimming pool was undergoing repair, and a time or two Russ declared recess while he engaged in a bit of hands-on supervision.

We sat across from each other in his second-story study (overlooking the swimming pool), and Russ responded easily and fully to my questions. We had agreed upon an outline in advance, and we generally followed it. His many years of experience expressing ideas orally made transcribing and editing a minor chore. He carefully reviewed the transcript, helping us with the spelling of foreign names and adding a thought here and there.

The walls of the study reflect the man and his life. There is a six-foot shelf of scrapbooks, containing clippings about him, his work, and his interests. There are photographs of Russ with presidents Reagan, Ford, and Johnson. And there are many, many books on Africa.

This interview is the first of a planned series to place in clearer context the role of the White House in conservation and environmental affairs. Scholars and analysts have looked closely at the workings of agencies, Congress, and advocacy groups, but we lack understanding of just how the president and his closest advisors have influenced decisions. Train very much expands our view of Richard Nixon--the man and the president--during the Environmental Decade of the 1970s. When added to the written record, and the folklore of those years, this interview nicely rounds out the story.

Education

HKS: We'll start with an easy one, you graduated Columbia Law School in 1947. Did you practice law?

RT: Depends what you mean by practice law. I never was a member of a law firm. I worked following law school with congressional staffs primarily the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation.

HKS: You were in a law firm in Washington?

RT: No, I never was in a law firm. I remember as a Tax Court judge having a calendar in Chicago when I was given a luncheon by members of the local bar. The speaker, who was a practicing attorney, an older man and a practicing attorney in Chicago, who apparently did not know anything about my background, was bemoaning the fact that judges of the U.S. Tax Court were sometimes appointed to the court who had very little practical experience, particularly trial experience. I said, "I am a living example of the horrors that you are talking about."

I principally worked on the Hill. I was a member of the staff of the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation; then clerk of the Ways and Means Committee and then subsequently minority advisor. I was clerk during the period, '53-54, which is the last time the Republican Party controlled the House of Representatives to this day.

HKS: Is that right?

RT: That's correct. Quite a period of time, forty years now. I was minority advisor for a short period of time, then I went to the Treasury as assistant to the secretary with George Humphrey at that time in the Eisenhower administration. I was in charge of tax legislative matters and other legal matters involving taxation, and from there went to the Tax Court, so I never practiced law in the traditional sense following law school before my appointment as a judge.

HKS: Your time in Congress, working on a committee, did that give you a sense of how government works that has that been useful since then? Do you look back on those days and say you are glad you did that?

RT: I am certainly glad I did it. I think that working for the Congress as a young man one had more opportunity to deal with important issues than would normally be the case for a young person fresh out of law school working in a law firm. I did enjoy it, it was sort of a turbulent life with lobbyists pounding on your door all the time. There were a lot of hot issues, particularly in the Ways and Means Committee, with taxation and tariffs, social security, and things of that kind that were always very contentious and politically hot issues. It was fun. I met an awful lot of people and I learned a respect for the legislative process in Congress which I think many do not share today. I think the Congress today is a far less disciplined institution than it was when I was working there.

HKS: Is this because of a change in the seniority system?

RT: Change in seniority system and the proliferation of subcommittees and staffs. I just think it's lost a lot of its direction. Individual members are so fragmented by so many different issues.

HKS: Your working with lobbyists must have been good experience since you have done a lot of lobbying one way or another in the past...

RT: I suppose in a way. I made a number of friends in Congress, both in the House and the Senate on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats alike, and some of these were still around when I was, a little later on, at the Department of the Interior, CEQ, EPA, and those associations stood me in good stead.

First Trip to Africa

HKS: I read someplace that in 1956 you went to Africa and that changed your life.

RT: Obviously, something did change my life because I made a conversion from a tax lawyer, a Tax Court judge, to a conservationist/environmentalist. I just have to use the two names interchangeably. That was a pretty radical change. I went to Africa in 1956 which was on a hunting safari with my wife in Kenya for a month. At that time, I was clerk of the Ways and Means Committee and it was probably during the summer recess. In those days everything shut down in Washington in August. They don't always now. But when I came back from that experience in Africa (actually after 1958, because my wife and I went back again for a more extended trip), I got together with a small group of Washingtonians including some of whose names you would recognize--Kermit Roosevelt, grandson of the president, and Maurice Stans, later director of The Office Management and Budget and secretary of commerce in the Nixon Administration, in some trouble during the Watergate period, but a good friend of mine and still is.

We got together to see what needed to be done by way of conservation of wildlife in Africa. We reached a conclusion that the most important contribution that we could make would be in the area of education of young Africans and developing them as professionals in the field of wildlife management, parks management, areas in which the colonial powers, particularly the British in East Africa, had really done very little to train Africans. They had done quite an extensive job of preparing Africans for nationhood in areas such as economics and agriculture but nothing in the field of wildlife management.

HKS: Loss of habitat, poaching, what was the issue? What would you train them to be?

RT: As in this country where we have a Fish and Wildlife Service, and a National Park Service to run our national parks and to carry out and enforce federal wildlife laws, so the African countries as they became independent were inheriting national park systems and game departments. Kenya had a national park system. Tanganyika, later Tanzania, had quite an extensive national park system, substantially enlarged after independence. They had very active game departments that dealt with problems of control of wildlife, "control" being a term of art used to describe the activities undertaken to prevent wildlife from damaging natives' crops, marauding elephants, man-eating lions, things of this kind. Game departments would go out and shoot these animals in the name of

"control." As we saw it, the wildlife resources of Africa, particularly in East Africa, were an extraordinary part of the heritage, not only of the people of those countries, but of the world as a whole. With independence coming very rapidly all over the continent it seemed almost self evident that there was a need for developing a cadre of professional resource managers in the wildlife area. I can say the same thing of forests, but that is not the field that we are talking about. Actually, I think the colonial powers did a better job in developing and training Africans in the field of forestry than they did in the field of wildlife.

HKS: You are focusing on Kenya, or you looking all the way down to Zimbabwe?

RT: Our focus was primarily on East Africa, meaning Kenya, Tanganyika, as it was then, and Uganda, but this rapidly expanded because we were instrumental in, we founded an organization called the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation. Exactly what year that was I am not entirely positive, it could have been 1960.

HKS: 1961 I read somewhere.

RT: 1961.

HKS: You were president and CEO. Was that a full-time job?

RT: I was chairman, president, chief bottle washer, and I was then a judge of the U.S. Tax Court, so obviously it was not a full-time job. I did this in my spare time. Just to go back, the title which included the word "leadership"--African Wildlife Leadership Foundation--that title was intended to connote what I have been talking about, namely, the emphasis of the organization on training Africans to be able to be in a leadership role in managing their own wildlife.

HKS: The goal was to improve education there or bring them here to Yale or wherever to study.

RT: A little of both. As a young organization we could ill afford to bring too many to the United States and I would add that there were probably not too many African recruits at that time ready for university training in wildlife management. We brought a total of about five or six to the United States. Almost all of them had distinguished careers later in their own countries. They all returned to their countries. They went to Michigan State, Colorado State, what was then Humboldt State College, and the University of California at Berkeley, that one was for a Ph.D. Then to answer the other part of your question, the great balance of the activity was carried on in Africa proper where we were instrumental in--when I say we, I mean the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, now simply the African Wildlife Foundation--instrumental in providing the initial funding which I think was \$50,000 in about 1961 or '62 to found the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka in Tanzania, still Tanganyika probably then, near the town of Moshi on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro. That was a lot of money in those days for a young organization. The college was a non-degree two-year school which took in only high school graduates or their equivalent in the British system. A number of those went on to university programs later on. But, while it was conceived initially as providing education for Africans from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, which in those days were combined in a sort of East African common market, common postal system, common currency--all of which has broken down since--students came to the school from almost

every English speaking country in Africa other than South Africa, I would say--Rhodesia, later Zimbabwe, and Botswana, Nigeria. So it had a very widespread impact and while it has become more of a regional school today, certainly at one point I would say that most of the professional staff of the African game departments, parks departments, in English speaking Africa, were trained at that College of African Wildlife Management.

Conservation Foundation

HKS: Shortly thereafter, you got involved in the Conservation Foundation. What did that add to what you were doing, what sort of dimensions?

RT: That came about, by the way, through dealing with the African conservation program. Again I remind you that all of this was in my spare time and out of court chambers. I rented a post office box across the street from the Tax Court where the mail went--P.O. Box 125, Benjamin Franklin Station--I'll never forget it! Later, I got a one-room office in the National Press Building which I would visit during lunch hours. I published a little newspaper called "African Wildlife News." I wrote all the copy for it, took most of the pictures for it, I would go in the evening to the printers and I would correct all the galleys, cut and paste the copy, write all the heads. I think I said early on in this that I was chief bottle washer. I was doing a little of everything, and it was enormous fun. It is very satisfying when you are engaged in something of this kind which is so very personal to you.

Well, in the course of all that, I became acquainted with others in the conservation field including Fairfield Osborn who was president of the New York Zoological Society and chairman of the board of The Conservation Foundation, which he had founded back in about 1946 after World War II, in order to give expression to or provide an outlet for his environmental interests that went beyond running the Bronx Zoo. He had very strong interests in human population problems and ecology generally. That was a new term in those days. I think The Conservation Foundation was one of the earliest that articulated the concept of ecology. In any event, the New York Zoological Society had an African program that had gotten underway with fairly limited focus, primarily on East Africa. Fair Osborn found that the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation was competing for funds from people and foundations that he had used as his sources of funding for his programs. We got to know each other quite well. Of course he was a much older man. I must have been about forty I guess at the time and Fair was probably in his late seventies. He tried to talk me out of having an independent organization working in Africa and to persuade me in some fashion to join forces with the New York Zoological Society, and I refused to do this. In due course, in about 1964 the president, Samuel Ordway, of The Conservation Foundation, was retiring and Fairfield Osborn asked me if I would retire from the court and take Sam's place as president of The Conservation Foundation. After about a year's discussion of all this, I finally did. It took a little while after that, too, because I insisted that I complete the decision and the opinion writing with respect to all Tax Court cases that I had heard myself rather to turn them over to somebody else to decide. So, that took quite a bit of time. In any event, in 1965 I became president of The Conservation Foundation and we moved it to Washington.

HKS: You were hired to be president, you are not elected president?

RT: I guess I was elected by the board. Actually I wasn't privy to the process. I assume that was the case, on the recommendation of Fair Osborn, and also Laurance Rockefeller who was at that time vice-chairman of the board of The Conservation Foundation.

You asked how that broadened my sights, and I think it broadened them really quite considerably. We moved the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation into the same offices as The Conservation Foundation so it was part of our operation, although it still operated as an independent entity with its own small staff. The thrust of The Conservation Foundation as it evolved during my fairly short tenure there was to demonstrate how ecological values and environmental values can be built into the development process. Now, that's a very broad generalization. We did some pilot projects, for example, one down at Naples, Florida, called the Rookery Bay Project where with the help of landscape architects, ecologists, other planners, we developed a plan that would permit fairly extensive real estate development while maintaining natural values such as the mangroves along the shore, bird nesting areas, fish spawning areas, etc. I think we were quite early into that field. In fact, perhaps, we were taking the leading role in promoting that sort of concept.

HKS: Was The Conservation Foundation primarily U.S., North America, or was it global at that time?

RT: It was primarily a U.S. organization. We did do a few things internationally, but it was primarily active in the U.S. That was the main thrust of what we did and as part of that--a little bit of interesting history--in '67 I would guess, the senate committee, the Senate Interior Committee, chaired by Scoop Jackson of Washington, Henry Jackson to be formal but I never heard anybody call...

HKS: I'm from Washington State, I know him. So, I know of him anyway.

RT: We never called him anything but Scoop, and a fine fellow. He, with his staff, became interested in developing legislation which later evolved into the National Environmental Policy Act, frequently referred to as NEPA. A young man named Wallace Bowman, who had been secretary of The Conservation Foundation when it was in New York and very active in building its network of ecologists and environmentally sensitive social scientists, by that time was working with the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress. He became involved in the discussions with the Interior Committee staff.

HKS: Jackson saw this as a piecemeal approach--he wanted a national.

RT: I don't know that they were quite sure of what it was that they wanted. In a very broad sense I think they wanted to develop some sort of mechanism for promoting the inclusion of environmental values in government decision-making. I think that is what they had in mind. That is certainly what they ended up with. In any event, I began to join some of those discussions, and at some point I was asked whether The Conservation Foundation could support a consultancy for a particular individual to work with the committee on this subject. The committee felt it didn't really have the budget to do so. The individual in question was Professor Lynton K. Caldwell, usually called Keith, who was a professor of political science at Indiana University and who had for a long time been a member of the Scientific Advisory Council of The Conservation Foundation. He had been

giving a lot thought to the problems over the years. Since I knew him, and he was closely associated with The Conservation Foundation, I agreed. With our funding, Caldwell went to work with the Interior Committee and was essentially the single-most important architect of the National Environmental Policy Act.

National Environmental Policy Act

HKS: Is that right? I didn't know that.

RT: Yes, particularly the whole environmental impact statement process, the EIS process.

HKS: Did Jackson maintain close watch over this?

RT: To the extent any senator could keep close watch over anything.

HKS: Sure.

RT: His principal staff on the matter was his legislative assistant, William van Ness. I believe Bill remains today president of the Henry Jackson Foundation which does good work, in the Northwest, particularly. I think the senator relied very heavily on Bill in this area. I am sure that Bill kept him informed. But the senator always took great pride in the National Environmental Policy Act. It is one of the monuments to his career. In any event, behind the scenes The Conservation Foundation played a very key role in the formulation of NEPA and, in fact, the whole general concept of the National Environmental Policy Act, the building of environmental values into government decision making, which was part and parcel of what had become the principal thrust of The Conservation Foundation. How you build environmental values into development activities essentially. So this was all a very appropriate association and a very satisfying one to me personally, because there we were in effect translating the concepts that had evolved in The Conservation Foundation over the years, translating these into actual legislation, and eventually into government policy which has been very influential, as we all know.

HKS: Is Senator Muskie, is this too early for his influence in this having his own ideas?

RT: No, not at all. Muskie, of course, was not on the Interior Committee, he was on the Senate Public Works Committee (later the Environment and Public Works Committee). After Jennings Randolph, the chairman, Muskie was the ranking Democrat and he was actively engaged, particularly I think, in the development of the Clean Water Act at that time and was rapidly becoming the principal spokesperson in the Congress on environmental issues, particularly pollution issues of various kinds. There became a bit of turf, jurisdictional, fighting between the committees. Fighting probably isn't the right word--friction between the two committees--and I can only surmise that Senator Muskie took a somewhat dim view of the lead role being taken by Senator Jackson of the Interior Committee in an area that he felt was his bailiwick. So he rapidly put together what became The Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970, and it also passed, although not until the following April.

A principal part of the National Environmental Policy Act, in addition to establishing the EIS process, was the establishment of the Council on Environmental Quality which was directed to establish the guidelines and monitor the performance of federal agencies under the EIS process, as well as doing an annual report to the president for submission to the Congress on the state of the environment. Muskie's legislation created an office, not a council, but an Office of Environmental Quality and this, as I said, also passed the Congress. Later on when I was first chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, it was quite tricky to be able to deal with these two parallel track pieces of legislation--one establishing the Council which is what the president went ahead and did, and one establishing the Office which we never did really do. About once a year, Senator Muskie would call me up and give me a certain amount of hell, which he was very able to do, for our not implementing his legislation.

HKS: Do you suspect this was in part competition that Nixon saw from a potential 1972 candidate?

RT: Could have been. Could have been. Actually the Interior Committee bill was a far more developed piece of legislation. It was a good deal more extensive, and they had put an awful lot more work into it. There was companion legislation in the House introduced by John Dingle who was then a member of the Marine and Fisheries Committee and chairman of its Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee.

Undersecretary of the Interior

HKS: When you left The Conservation Foundation and were undersecretary of the interior and you testified on NEPA, let's go back and pick that up.

RT: It follows along, quite logically. The NEPA legislation was under consideration in the Senate and in public hearings by the committee in 1969. I had become undersecretary of the interior in late January of 1969, and I was in charge of legislative matters within the department. I was also looked to within the administration as being sort of an administration spokesperson on environmental matters. I was the house environmentalist, more or less, having been brought into the administration from a conservation organization and, indeed, having chaired the Nixon Task Force on the Environment subsequent to his election.

HKS: Did that come up with a report?

RT: A very neat report, I am very proud of that. It was only about three pages long and it recommended that the president create a focal point for environmental policy-making in the Executive Office of the President. That was our principal recommendation. Of secondary importance, although we thought of great practical importance, we recommended that the administration improve the funding of various environmental programs already on the books which were typically underfunded at the time. In any event, one could say that the proposal by the Congress was really what we were talking about--a focal point for environmental policy making in the executive office.

However, in May 1969, in part I suppose in response to our Task Force report, President Nixon had established an Environmental Quality Council made up of the various cabinet heads involved with

environmental matters. Normally, that council was chaired by the president but, in practice, by his science advisor, Dr. Lee duBridge from Cal Tech. I think at that point the White House felt that it had a satisfactory instrument for addressing environmental policy. When I was asked to go to testify before the Jackson Committee, the Interior Committee, the administration's position on the proposed National Environmental Policy Act was negative insofar as the creation of the Council on Environmental Quality was concerned.

HKS: The interagency..?

RT: We already had this other interagency council in place, and the administration argued that there should be an opportunity for it to work and not to add yet one more organization to the federal bureaucracy. I can't remember actually what the administration's position on the EIS aspects of the legislation were. We probably didn't pay too much attention to them.

HKS: It doesn't sound like anyone really did.

RT: I think you are exactly right.

HKS: Getting back to the conservation literature, again. It is not a controversial bill. There are different bills, there's Muskie and there's Jackson. But all of this stuff is kind of a surprise what happened.

RT: I was reading testimony this morning of someone who was testifying just recently concerning the North American Free Trade Agreement and Judge Ritchie's decision that the U.S. trade representative should do an environmental impact statement on the negotiated text. This witness said that the Nixon administration had opposed the National Environmental Policy Act in the Congress because of the opposition of the various agencies to this potential intrusion into how they ran their affairs. The fact is I don't think anybody had a clue how much influence the environmental impact statement process was going to have on government decision-making. If they had, I think there would have been a riot. My own recollection is that this was not central to my testimony at all. The focus was really the administration's opposition to establishing the Council on Environmental Quality. Now, I, of course, personally, thought it was a great idea and...

HKS: Was it because you were seeing that an interagency committee wasn't working very well?

RT: Well, it wasn't working very well at all. It hardly met. When it met, it didn't do very much. Interagency committees typically can only operate by making trade-offs amongst all the different agencies, so you end up with the lowest common denominator on just about everything. That has usually been the fault of interagency committees. So, I thought the Council on Environmental Quality was a good idea and having had in my private life a fair amount to do with the development of the legislation, I found myself in the somewhat odd position of opposing it. But, I think that although I testified in opposition and fully supported the administration's position, I have a feeling that the members of the committee, in particular the chairman, didn't take me too seriously.

HKS: Does it make sense..?

RT: I could see some of the twinkle in their eye when I would say that I think this is bad legislation.

HKS: I know you were perceived as the environmentalist for the administration, but did it make sense in terms of the prestige to the person testifying that the undersecretary rather than Secretary Hickel, himself. How was that choice made? Do you know how you were picked in terms of who would represent the administration? Someone from the White House, itself, ...

RT: Well, of course, people from the White House don't generally testify. It is usually an agency. And this was of course before the day of the Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA had not come into existence. And of course the Council on Environmental Quality was not in place yet. Interior would have been the department that most clearly fell into the environmental/conservation area with its responsibilities for fish and wildlife and parks. Interior actually then also had the federal water pollution control administration which later went to EPA when it was formed. So, it was an appropriate lead agency on this issue. The secretary had really delegated the legislative program of the department to me to handle. Secondly, I was recognized in the administration as an environmentalist which Secretary Hickel, secretary of the Interior, was not.

HKS: I remember the confirmation hearings.

RT: He had a tough time, probably somewhat unjustly but for whatever reasons, the Democrats picked him out as the one member of the Nixon proposed cabinet to go after. And they did, to a fair-thee-well. My naming was, I think undoubtedly, done in part at least to balance the Hickel nomination, and to provide some assurance to members of the Senate that the environmental side of the equation was being recognized in the department. We can talk about some of that further, but going back to the legislation. After having testified in opposition to the legislation we had further discussions within the administration, and I don't really recall these particularly, really not at all. But the upshot was that by the time I went over some weeks later to testify on the House side before the Dingle subcommittee the administration had withdrawn its opposition to the legislation and I was in a position to support the creation of the Council on Environmental Quality and the environmental impact statement process as well.

HKS: Were you in communication with the White House at this time?

RT: I can only assume I was, but I really have no recollection. It was normal procedure for department testimony to be reviewed by the Administration by the Bureau of the Budget--now the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)--and I assume that had been done in this case.

HKS: Ehrlichman, according to John Whitaker who I want to talk more about later, says he is the guy who did an awful lot for the environment, he might have been the one you talked to.

RT: Ehrlichman was without question the key person in the White House on environmental issues. He had an interest in it personally. I haven't seen him since he left the White House or talked to him.

I had a number of contacts directly with Ehrlichman on specific environmental issues while I was undersecretary of interior in '69 and I think it is a fairly safe assumption that I did have some communication with him over this. Ehrlichman, while he may not have been an environmental activist, certainly saw the political importance of the environmental issue to the president and recognized that at that time, '69. He had been a land use lawyer in Seattle and was naturally interested in environmental issues.

HKS: That is before Earth Day.

RT: This is before Earth Day. Ehrlichman would have tried to ensure that the Administration was postured positively on environmental issues. He may well have been paying some attention to this issue and just made up his own mind that the Administration ought to change its position. It might not have been any argument from me.

HKS: My perception of Nixon is that he was an able administrator in terms of how government functions, and span of control and those sorts of things and would have been sincere in his concern about too many agencies and all the rest. Do you share that view? Is that an accurate reflection of the man?

RT: I think that's fair enough. Sure.

HKS: So the environment itself wasn't the issue, he had a program in place, this interagency group.

RT: I doubt that he paid an awful lot of attention to it at that point...

HKS: I'm sure.

RT: I think you were right when you made the comment earlier that Muskie's possible candidacy at a later time was probably something that they had in mind. I know later when the Clean Water Act amendments were signed by the president in, I don't remember what year, '70, maybe, '71, somewhere in there, the White House did not invite Muskie to the signing although he was the author of the legislation, which I personally felt was inconceivable.

HKS: Uh-huh.

RT: They didn't invite him. He did not come. I was, I think, doing a press briefing at the White House on the legislation following the signing. As I remember, one of the members of the press asked me what I thought about the fact that Muskie had not been invited to the signing. I said, "I think it was wrong." [laughter] Which it clearly was. I never heard anything further about that.

One of the first things that happened to me when I went to Interior was the following: I had been nominated by the president as undersecretary and I had not been confirmed as yet. I don't think I had had any hearings, in fact, but I had been named and I moved into the department, into the office that I later would occupy as undersecretary and started to learn what was going on and learn something more about the department than I already knew. During that period I was visited by Secretary Hickel's administrative assistant, some would refer to him as the keeper of the door, the

doorkeeper--the guy right outside the office who controlled the flow of everything. One Carl McMurray. McMurray came down to see me in my office--I was on the floor below the secretary--and said, "The secretary has a request to make of you." And I said, "What's that?" He said, "He has a recommendation of someone to be appointed as deputy undersecretary." I said, "Who's that?" He says, "His name is Jim Watt."

I had never met Jim Watt. However, Watt had had a considerable exposure in the press within the past two or three days at the time. When Hickel was calling upon members of the Senate in connection with his confirmation hearing and walked in to see Senator Muskie, he was accompanied by Jim Watt who was at that time a paid lobbyist for the Chamber of Commerce whose principal activity, as I understood at the time, was to oppose the clean water legislation that was being promoted by Senator Muskie. Well, of course, when Senator Muskie saw Jim Watt walk in with Hickel, he threw one of his well-known tantrums, got red in the face. All of this made a front-page story in the press. Muskie made some statement, widely quoted.

HKS: It seemed strange to me that Hickel would have done this or was he still a very naive guy from Alaska?

RT: He was. Hickel was probably entirely on his own. I doubt that he was getting any advice from anybody in the White House. He was having a good deal of trouble--"slowly twisting in the breeze" which was a somewhat favorite Ehrlichman expression--but for whatever reason I was asked to appoint Jim Watt as deputy undersecretary. I already had I think four people working for me as undersecretary. I had an administrative assistant. I had a secretary, and I think one other professional staff. Very small. Clearly, given the publicity that Jim Watt had received, for me to accept him as my deputy would have finished any effectiveness I might have had in the department or as a spokesman to the Congress or whatever. It would have made me appear to be a patsy of some kind and destroyed my credibility as an environmentalist.

In any event, I said to McMurray, "Tell the secretary that as much as I would like to help him out in this regard, I have only got four appointments that I can make myself in my own personal office. He has really literally hundreds and hundreds of appointments that he controls. I suggest he let me make my own choices in my office." So McMurray went away and came back about five minutes later and said, "The secretary orders you to appoint Jim Watt as your deputy." I said, "Well, in that case, I have to ask that he request the White House to withdraw my name from the Senate." McMurray said okay and went back and came back about five minutes later, "The secretary says to forget all about it." [laughter] That was the end of that story.

HKS: Why doesn't Hickel talk to you face to face? Tell me about Hickel, the man, for a second. That surprises me, the little I know of him. He doesn't seem quite that distant.

RT: No, he really wasn't. Of course, he hardly knew me at that point. I met Hickel during the Christmas holidays, I think. I had been asked either by the White House or someone working for Hickel to come in and brief him. He had an apartment at the Wardman Park Hotel as it was then called--now the Sheraton Park. Before the inauguration, I was asked to brief him on environmental issues and somehow or other I put together with The Conservation Foundation staff, I presume, a really substantial briefing book for him on environmental matters.

HKS: Had the Santa Barbara oil blowout taken place yet? Is that somewhere in here...?

RT: It was a little later, just a little later. I briefed Hickel in a couple of sessions in his Wardman Park apartment and went over this material. I don't know that he paid much attention to it. He didn't typically, he wasn't a great one for the written word. He seldom sat down and went over papers. He liked to have somebody give him sort of an oral briefing, then he would make his decision from what he heard.

HKS: Alaskan government was probably pretty small.

RT: It suited his style anyway. But that is how I sort of got to know him. Subsequently and obviously pretty soon after, I think it was on New Year's Day or New Year's Eve, I was informed that I was being offered the job of undersecretary. Obviously that was with Hickel's blessing, but it must have been a White House decision. My name went up to the Hill but before I was confirmed at home in the evening, but not this house, but over on Woodland Drive where we lived in those years, for a good many years, I had a call fairly late in the evening from a member of the Interior staff, probably a regional director out in California, telling me about the Santa Barbara oil spill. He knew who I was and knew that I was named the new undersecretary, knew that I was supposed to have some environmental concern. So I was the person he got in touch with. That's about all I remember about that.

HKS: There is only one more thing I would like to bring up. This may be only an anecdote but it caught my eye because I knew the guy. Ed Craft's resignation. Is there anything significant about that or was it just a changing of the guard when Nixon came in? It was written up in *American Forests* in its news section that you carried the word.

RT: I got to know during that early period the professional bureau heads quite well. The heads of the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation--the whole group of them. In addition to legislation, my responsibilities were the budget and I had to deal with all these people and I got to know them quite quickly. Some of them I had known before. I don't think I knew Ed Craft before. I was a somewhat non-partisan Republican, I guess, not actively a very political Republican. I thought these guys were pretty good professionals and career people and I respected them as I worked with them. I didn't like to see them pushed out and actually worked to try to keep a number of them there in the department. But I do remember this, I think Hickel may have asked me to do that dirty work and I did. Of course, nowadays nobody would think twice about it. It has become more political than ever. Bureau heads are typically brought in from outside but at that time George Hartzog, head of the National Park Service, was a career park service person. John Gottschalk, as I remember, head of the Fish and Wildlife Service, he was career, and Craft was career. They were all career people.

HKS: Sure.

RT: I liked that in principle, always have. But you don't see that today.

HKS: The Forest Service may be one of the last that has a career person as chief.

RT: I guess it probably is. It was a political decision in which I had no part, really, at all. Those were decisions that Hickel made presumably in consultation with the White House. It was the kind of thing that he dealt with a lot and sort of enjoyed handling. I was just not privy to those kind of things.

HKS: So, NEPA passed without a whole lot of controversy from what I can figure out. There were a lot of hearings written up favorably in the conservation literature.

Miami Jetport

RT: You are about to leave Interior and I would like to make a couple of points before you do. NEPA was not passed until the end of '69 and was not signed into law until January 1, '70. We had two major federal actions before us in the Department of the Interior during 1969 with very significant potential impacts on the environment. One was the proposal to build a new international jet port in Dade County, Florida, to serve Miami. It was going to be located considerably west of where the airport there is now. Many were saying that such development with the pollution associated with it, and with the interruption of water regimes, etc., that it would have a disastrous impact on the Everglades ecosystem. The project was really the responsibility of the Department of Transportation. They had to provide the licenses. I selected a scientist from the U.S. Geological Survey, Dr. Luna Leopold, Starker Leopold's brother and the son of the great Aldo Leopold. He also had a sister but I can't remember her name.

HKS: Estella.

RT: Estella. Thank you. And Luna went to work and did what was essentially, an assessment of the impact of the proposed airport on the water regime of south Florida and, therefore, the Everglades.

HKS: Was it the water basin, as it were, for the Everglades?

RT: I think it probably physically impacted all of the Everglades National Park, but all the Everglades in the broad definition of the area and had significant impacts indirectly on the park itself. Probably akin to the kinds of impacts that this recent settlement with the sugar growers around Lake Okeechobee is designed to deal with. In any event we stirred up quite a ruckus with the Department of Transportation.

HKS: They were going to approve it, or they had approved it?

RT: They were on their way to approving it until we began to blow the whistle. And on this we had the strong help of John Ehrlichman. When we proposed finally that the permits not be granted by the Department of Transportation, Secretary John Volpe was really quite amazed by this whole process. Ehrlichman supported us. I remember being at the White House with him and he said, in effect, I'm with you on this. Those permits will not be issued. And I think there was a public announcement from the White House at that time. I remember some White House association. In any event, that is interesting because it was an early case of an environmental assessment of a proposed major federal project, or a major project involving the federal government.

HKS: So this wasn't hammered out in the cabinet meeting?

RT: I don't think so. I don't think it ever got to the cabinet. It may have been talked about in the cabinet, but I never heard that it was.

HKS: Was there engineering knowledge available that the jetport could have been built if enough money was spent to safeguard water?

Alaskan Pipeline

RT: I don't remember enough about it now, I really don't. The second thing that was ongoing was the trans-Alaska pipeline issue. The representatives of the oil companies consortium that were building the pipeline--they were called TAPS, I think, Trans-Alaskan Pipeline System, something of the sort. They later called it Alyeska, or maybe they were called Alyeska first and TAPS later, I am not sure. But, they were British Petroleum, Atlantic Richfield, who else I can't really remember now, probably Exxon, Chevron. They came in to see me in April of '69 to brief me on the need for a trans-Alaskan pipeline from Prudoe Bay to the port of Valdez. They said they needed the permits immediately because the construction season was fast approaching in Alaska, June I guess, and there was a very short building season. They had to get going. I guess you know [laughter] it was about four or five years later before they were able to get it going, but in those days I guess we were all getting our feet wet, so to speak, on environmental issues.

HKS: Did Hickel excuse himself from this because of his being Alaskan?

RT: He did pretty much. At that point, at least. I think I probably gave a periodic report on what was going on, but I don't remember Hickel ever trying to really influence my office in the matter at all. To be perfectly fair to him, my feeling now is that Hickel probably gave me a full go ahead from my standpoint, to do whatever I thought was necessary environmentally.

HKS: You were in favor of the pipeline with certain safeguards...what was your position?

RT: Our attitude toward the pipeline reflected the fact that there was a major oil development at Prudoe Bay and they had to get the oil out somehow. The only real alternative would have been tankers through the Bering Strait and on down south but that really wasn't feasible since it is frozen in a lot of the year up there. The pipeline seemed to be the only way. It was a very fascinating challenge because it involved just about every agency in Interior--the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration--because of the impact on water quality of the various rivers that had to be crossed, the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the impact on fisheries. In those days, Interior had the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, now over in Commerce, the National Marine Fisheries Services, I think, NIMS, so called. The energy people in Interior, and the Geological Survey, also had a great deal to do with it. And the department had jurisdiction at that time over anadromous fish such as the salmon coming up the rivers to spawn in gravel beds. The pipeline was going to require huge quantities of gravel.

In any event, this involved almost every aspect of Interior. Also, of course, other outside agencies, such as the Forest Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Coast Guard, just about everybody you can think of in the government seemed to me was in the act. We put together first an in-house task force to try to start dealing with the issues. But that was quickly expanded to be an interagency task force that was established at the behest of the White House, which was chaired by Interior. I guess by me. It was a fascinating subject. I went up to Prudoe Bay. I flew over the route of the pipeline. I began to learn something about permafrost. Most of the oil company pipeline engineers had last worked in the Persian Gulf, and had come straight to Alaska. Their idea of a pipeline was to bury the thing, to get it out of sight and also protect it from interference. What I learned and what they learned was that putting a hot oil pipeline in permafrost would be like laying a red hot poker on a cake of frozen soup. It would have just gone right through it and sunk. One of the first things that we had to require was that the oil companies do soil borings, take core samples throughout the entire route, from Valdez to Prudoe Bay, to determine where was permafrost and where was not permafrost.

HKS: Were the oil companies generally receptive to these..?

RT: Not early on, no, they fought it tooth and nail because it rapidly became apparent that the only way to build the pipeline was to elevate major stretches, probably the preponderance of it above the ground. A very expensive proposition. And creating a whole other sets of problems, how to insulate it, and whatever...

HKS: Then there was the issue of the caribou migrating, blocking the way...

RT: All those things. It was a fascinating issue. We had hearings up in Fairbanks, endless meetings with the companies and interagency discussions. Of course, all of this was still going on when I left, so I wasn't able to bring this to any kind of conclusion. But, then of course, the EIS process came into effect in '70, so it got caught up in all that process, and in the courts. I only tell the story because it demonstrates that prior to NEPA there was a lot going on in the federal government, at least certainly in Interior, at that time on environmental assessments of various kinds. We were, in fact, trying to do a good job environmentally. I think the agencies were getting the message that environmental values had to be protected. Here again, I think the White House was quite supportive.

Hickel's attitude, even though this was Alaskan oil and revenue was going to go, a lot of it, to the state, he never much liked big oil companies. He was a populist in many of his attitudes. I think he wanted to bring the oil straight down to the United States, the lower forty-eight, through Canada, rather than going to Valdez and hook into the existing pipeline network. That became somewhat of a political issue later. It was probably not a practical issue because the oil companies did not want to do it. It would have been hugely more expensive, hugely more expensive. And after all this was a private project, funded by private money. If they didn't want to do it, the government couldn't make them do it. Nixon didn't like putting it through Canada. He didn't like Trudeau, and he didn't like giving the Canadians a sort of stranglehold on U.S. oil supplies. That was a political matter. That was later on.

Chairman of CEQ

HKS: How did you get to be chairman of CEQ? Do you know how it happened?

RT: Oh yes, I know all about that. Toward the latter part of 1969, Hickel and I developed personal problems with respect to one another. Principally, Hickel had problems with me, and there was a very unfortunate *Wall Street Journal* article profiling Secretary Hickel. Front page, right-hand column, their lead story. I forget what the headline was, but the subhead was "Leans on powerful aide." That was me. I didn't even know this article was coming out, nobody ever interviewed me about it. I never heard a word about it until I read it in the morning, saw it on my desk in the morning. One of the assistant secretaries was quoted as saying, "When you want to get a decision in the department you go to the undersecretary."

HKS: Is this because Hickel is indecisive, one couldn't reach him, or what was the rationale behind that statement, or was it clear what the rationale was?

RT: I don't remember if there was any rationale given for the statement. But Hickel was furious, predictably. I don't blame him a damn bit. It was not only an article involving me. I think there must have been two reporters doing the story. It was a sort of a mean story. His use of English, for example. He really resented the article. But I was his principal target. He called me up that morning on the phone, as I said I didn't know about the article at that point, and raised holy hell.

HKS: How far apart were your offices?

RT: We were on separate floors, separate floors. Later undersecretaries have frequently been in sort of a back room behind the secretary's office. What I did was find the biggest office that was available in the building and took it. [laughter] It never occurred to me that I should be up behind the secretary's office. It is just as well that I did what I did. In any event, our relationship from then on was distinctly cool. He removed a number of responsibilities that I had been handling in the past nine months--legislation and budget--from me.

HKS: This happened pretty fast? After a year, I guess...

RT: No, it was after nine months. I left Interior by the end of '69. So this happened sometime in the fall of '69. But from then on, the bloom was off as far as the job was concerned for me. I was not taken into his confidence, he resented me. I always felt that, again to be fair to him, that I had probably been a little insensitive to his needs and ego. Undersecretaries, typically, should be really good staff people and I carved out quite a--I wouldn't say an independent role--but a very visible role in the department. I got quite a bit of publicity. I was interviewed quite often. I don't think I sought this out particularly, but again I think it was because I had some environmental background and this was an issue that was becoming much more visible all the time. And let's face it, I doubtless enjoyed the exposure.

In any event, toward the close of '69 when the National Environmental Policy Act had passed the Congress, or was obviously about to pass the Congress, I called up John Ehrlichman and I said to him, in effect, "John, you've got to get me out of where I am, it is not working, it is a mess over here, I can't work with Hickel anymore, he can't work with me. It seems to me we have an excellent

way out through this National Environmental Policy Act which creates a Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President. The Chairman of the Council would be at the same level I presently I am, level two. Not a demotion, not a promotion. I think it would be an interesting job to have. I had a good deal to do with putting it together in the first place." He said, "Makes a lot of sense, let me check it around." I don't know what checking it around meant, he never told me that. In any event, he told me pretty shortly after that, "Everybody thinks it is a good idea."

HKS: When NEPA says the compensation should be level two, is that really carefully thought through whether it is level two, three, or four? For the political stature of the position, it automatically would be a level two.

RT: No I don't think necessarily automatically, but probably in relation to similar jobs in other agencies. Probably the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors is a level two.

HKS: If it would have been level three there would have been a statement that this wasn't quite up to snuff, is that..?

RT: That's the same level as an assistant secretary. A level three. Yes, the level two is sort of the alter ego, if you are in a department, of the secretary himself, or herself. Two was the appropriate level. The EPA administrator is level two.

HKS: One more question about Hickel. When Nixon fired him, partly because of the Viet Nam publicity and all the rest, some wildlife magazine ran what became a very famous political cartoon, "They got old Wally." When he left office, the environmentalists, in quotes, saw him in a favorable light. Was that in part because of the politics, or did he grow with the job and actually was on the environmental side of the issues?

RT: Well, Hickel having been badly burned in the confirmation process was bound and determined that he was not going to be tagged as anti-environmental. Train was not going to be the environmentalist of the department, he was. But, whatever. He jumped right in and did some visible symbolic things like going down to the Everglades and getting involved with alligator issues. There were some photos in *Time* magazine. He sought opportunities to identify himself in that way. I think the environmental community probably, in general, felt reasonably positive toward him.

HKS: Now you are chairman of CEQ. Reading about the agency, it apparently has no direct administrative authority. I guess it is no longer...

RT: The White House recently announced it was abolishing CEQ, but it forgot that CEQ was established by congressional legislation and so far Congress has not yet abolished CEQ. They were going to do that in the legislation establishing the Department of the Environment which was proposed by the Bush administration and is also proposed by the Clinton administration. That legislation has simply sort of bogged down in the Congress and so CEQ is in a state of limbo. It still exists, it actually has some people there. I am sure that it doesn't have a chairman. But there are some staff. What it is doing, I don't know. But that is not oral history, that's current events.

However, I have gone on record, both with the appropriate committees of the Congress and with the White House--actually, with the vice president--as to why I think abolition of CEQ is a bad idea.

Impact Statement Process

HKS: You advised the president, you administered the impact statement process, ...

RT: One of our principal jobs early on was to issue guidelines to all the agencies for the implementation of the EIS process.

HKS: Guidelines have the force of law? Do they have to follow them?

RT: They are regulatory in nature. Of course, they are addressed to other agencies. That is a good question.

HKS: Something that I want you to talk about is the agencies' reaction to this new outfit. They didn't quite know either, I guess, at that time. There was a famous case, famous in terms of what I have been reading here. The Calvert Cliffs case with AEC, the AEC learned that CEQ had some teeth.

RT: I remember the case by name, but I don't remember...

HKS: Apparently they wanted to put a power plant in and didn't file an impact statement and you guys blew the whistle. And the whistle worked. They had to stop and do their business.

RT: Yes, they came into the process slowly with the kind of judicial encouragement, if you will, that you describe. Interior, also, came into it very slowly. My personal experience there was with respect to the oil leasing, off-shore oil leasing program. Interior decided against our advice that they didn't have to file an EIS on an off-shore, Gulf of Mexico lease auction. They tried to go ahead. And they were immediately enjoined by the courts.

HKS: They made that decision with or without consultation of CEQ?

RT: They made their own decision after consultation with us. They decided to ignore our advice and urging. Because of their bullheadedness, they slowed down the whole leasing program for a year or two, which was not exactly what they were trying to do. I thought it was very foolish. In any event, the courts agreed with us. We never were asked to testify or anything like that in court. I suppose, maybe, documents of ours went into the court records. But the courts applied the words of the statute plus, I presume, our guidelines and reached a judgment that Interior had to comply. It was a slow sell for a lot of agencies. The Department of Defense, for example, was a tough one, and I don't know how practical it really was with respect to the Department of Defense in many cases. Of course, with the Corps of Engineers it would have been. I remember sitting in on a cabinet meeting at the White House. (I was invited, by the way, to cabinet meetings regularly when I first went to CEQ. After a time, the invitations stopped and were not renewed.) On one occasion,

it must have been fairly early, I was asked to take something like three minutes to explain the EIS process to the full cabinet [laughter], and it really wasn't a practical assignment.

HKS: What was the mechanism of the request? Ehrlichman would call you up and say...

RT: I suppose so, or John Whitaker, probably by that time. He was on board and would have been my principal contact. Not directly to Ehrlichman any longer.

HKS: I interviewed John McGuire, he's chief of the Forest Service during your time. He said, "We read NEPA, we thought it was fine. We always thought we did those sorts of things anyway. We did a single impact statement on all wilderness areas." He said, "It never occurred to us that we would have to do area by area."

RT: That probably was not an unusual reaction from bureaus right then.

HKS: They didn't see it as being so detailed.

RT: Well, they didn't. I guess we were all feeling our way. No one had any accumulated experience with this process.

HKS: Impact statements. One of CEQ's responsibilities is to review these statements to see if they are adequate.

RT: We did do that which was pretty overwhelming for a small staff. As I remember it, we divided up the federal agencies into groups and assigned an individual staff person to work with that group of agencies. But that meant that you would have one professional staff person dealing with all the EIS issues of probably three departments. Just overwhelming.

HKS: I have seen impact statements. They are like the Manhattan phone book.

RT: It got worse and worse. That's right. I am not sure that should really be the way it should go.

HKS: The bulk was the reaction to the court decision that the impact statement was inadequate...

RT: Court decisions had a tremendous impact, I think, on the EIS process. Court decisions engendered by citizen suits.

HKS: The court looks at legislative intent. They look at the testimony from people like yourself, and they come up with this legal notion of what impact statement should be, but you were surprised, I guess, by the court decisions. I am trying to figure how the court made the decisions that would have been so surprising to people trained in law, and people who had been involved with it. Or did the environmental community find a judge who made the right kind of decision?

RT: Well, that does happen. [laughter] I think it was not always so much a matter of legal interpretation. In the bureaucracy there is a built-in bias against anyone looking over your shoulder to see what you are doing. You have certain statutory responsibilities and you expect you to get on

with those without interference. It was an NRDC case that resulted in a decision requiring the Agency for International Development, AID, to file an EIS on its actions abroad. I don't think it was difficult for lawyers of the agency to see that they were supposed to follow the EIS. But they didn't want to. They didn't want that kind of interference. It was more a subjective resistance within the agencies than a thought-through legal position.

HKS: One of the instructions that you made, instruction may not be the correct term, that the agencies needed to review their NEPA procedures. Once it was established that EISs were required and no one was exempt from this, then the procedures should be put into the manuals of each of the agencies. Was CEQ involved in that? Or did you tell them to do it and leave it up them?

RT: I am really not sure that I remember this. I didn't, myself, get too much involved in the EIS implementation work at the Council. I am sure that if they put out manuals, we would take a look at those. We did insist that it was the responsibility of the agency itself to implement the EIS requirements.

HKS: Is there more you want to say on the NEPA process? The impact statement process itself?

RT: I don't think so.

HKS: There has been a lot of criticism. It has cost too much, it has been used as a weapon to prevent...

RT: I think on balance it has been a good thing. It has some negatives to it, it can be used simply to try to block or delay something without any particular environmental reason.

HKS: Is there an alternative mechanism that was discussed to replace the impact statement process, or is this the only way it could be done?

RT: I don't think there were any alternatives that were really considered, I don't remember that particularly. Now, one of the issues that the Council was faced with in the very beginning--well maybe it was during the congressional discussion--was the thought that the Council would do the environmental impact statements for the various agencies, for their projects, and we quickly vetoed that one. In the first place, it would have been entirely impractical, given our staffing and other resources; secondly, it was absolutely essential to put the responsibility smack on the agency itself that was doing the project, the one making the environmental evaluation. That was the important issue really. You mentioned yourself these things have become perfectly enormous. I don't think we had any concept of the volume, the time, and the costs involved in these things. Surely, a lot of it has to be boilerplate and an awful lot of consulting firms live on doing EIS statements, and that seems regrettable to me.

HKS: The Forest Service told me that they did a seven pound impact statement on the tussock moth, the request for DDT. I am not quite sure how thick seven pounds is but it sounds pretty hefty.

RT: That would have been '73.

Startup at CEQ

HKS: So here's CEQ, the new kid on the block, so is EPA. Is there trouble getting a place in the Washington scheme of things? You're a new agency, or does that really matter? Did you come with enough horsepower?

RT: We had a surprising amount of horsepower at the Council on Environmental Equality in 1970. We had a receptive president. I would never think of Nixon as an environmentalist, but he clearly recognized the political importance of the issue. He did until in his mind energy considerations outweighed the environmental considerations during the Arab oil embargoes. But, certainly, in 1970, 1971, and 1972, the environment was very much front and center. If you were to do a survey of the political advertising done by the Republican National Committee in the '72 election, the biggest single subject covered was the environment.

HKS: Not China, not the foreign policy.

RT: It might have been in there, but I was always told that smokestacks, oil spills, these were the subjects of most of the political ads, very environmental. We had White House support in terms of the president, Ehrlichman, John Whitaker--EPA was not in existence yet in 1970. Hickel had blotted his copy book at the White House badly, and he had little or no access to the White House. I had an absolute first-rate staff at CEQ. How fast we built up, I am not sure, but as I mentioned, I had a staff of fifty-four which was the same as the Council of Economic Advisors. I took a shot at going to seventy-two but I was cut off at the pass. [laughter] I had a chief of staff, Alvin Alm, who was a master bureaucrat and had been in the old Bureau of the Budget, knew all the agencies very well. He had been the first person to join the staff after Boyd Gibbons who had been my deputy undersecretary at Interior. He brought in absolutely first rate people, many of whom I still keep in contact with, and who have gone on to significant positions, such as Bill Reilly. We had just an extraordinarily good group. There was an excitement about the environment at that particular time. I suppose a little akin to early New Deal days in terms of attracting bright young people. We had two Supreme Court clerks leave the court and come to work for us.

HKS: The parallel may not be apt, but Nixon made a very moving speech that the UN Declaration of Human Rights should apply to American Indians. He was going to give high priority to trying to do right for the plight of the American Indian, and nothing happened. Is it as simple as Indians just didn't have the constituency, but the environment really did by the 1970s and that's why it worked? Or am I just being cynical?

RT: I really don't know. I don't know enough about that situation. That could have been part of it. Or maybe the political ineptitude of the Bureau of Indian Affairs could have had something to do with it.

HKS: Doing something for an Indian is always a popular thing. But doing something for the Indian doesn't seem to happen that much. So the environment really was a major issue. The press thought so...

RT: The press thought so. The White House thought so. Congress clearly was very supportive. Everybody, I suppose, saw this as an important political issue and was jockeying to get ahead. We had lots of support. One of the interesting things at CEQ for me was that very early we got involved with international environmental affairs. Indeed CEQ, even after EPA came into existence, continued to play the lead role in international environmental matters as long as I was there. When I went to EPA I took most of those with me and got away with it.

International Involvement

RT: We opened environmental discussion with Japan quite early, it might have been as early as 1970. I am not sure. It led to a visit by me to Japan. Japan set up a whole environmental office to be able to react to my visit. It also led to their establishing an environmental protection agency.

HKS: What was the driving force with Japan?

RT: Probably politics. They were having some problems over there with their mercury poisoning, the so-called Minimata disease. We sort of cooked the trip up. It was in the summer of 1970. We drafted a letter for President Nixon to send to Prime Minister Sato, which called attention to the fact that we were having a miserably hot summer in Washington. Nixon said he had recently read about some very bad smog incidents in Japan, so it looked as if we had some common problems and didn't it make sense for us to see if we couldn't cooperate in dealing with a common problem.

HKS: Shared technology and that sort of thing.

RT: Whatever. So that letter went off and of course we had orchestrated the response from the other end too. [laughter] I forget how we did that, but it is usually how you do these things. A very positive response came back from the prime minister and pretty soon we had a delegation going to Japan. That sort of initiated an ongoing relationship. Then we took the lead in negotiating what became known as the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with Canada, with myself as the nominal negotiator on the U.S. side and the minister of external affairs, Mitchell Sharpe, leading the Canadian side. That was finally signed as an agreement, I guess it was not a treaty, by President Nixon in Ottawa in, I believe, the spring of '72. We initiated other bilateral arrangements with Germany. I headed the U.S. delegation to a NATO committee, called the Committee on the Challenges of the Modern Society. Do you want to hear all this?

HKS: I am interested in the international involvement of our environmental laws. That was new to me. You stressed that in your letter to me.

RT: I guess I have always had considerable interest in the international aspects of the environment. In any event, the Committee on the Challenges of a Modern Society still exists in NATO, and it was a Nixon initiative taken on the twentieth anniversary of NATO in 1970. It was an idea that came from Moynihan when he was working in the White House, Pat Moynihan. His fertile, imaginative mind created this thing and he kicked it off, but soon as CEQ came into existence, he got out of it. Representation to that committee was passed over to me. I took his staff person at the White House over to my office. His name is Harry Blaney, a State Department officer, Foreign Service officer, now retired. I handled that particular international operation until I left EPA. What

it involved was utilizing a lot of our agencies, and setting up model projects on air and water pollution, automobile safety, disaster relief, just to give you an idea of the scope of the thing. We would have a lead country where two or three other members of NATO pooled their agency resources to work on a model project. It was designed to give NATO a somewhat more positive aspect than simply military and to help engender more public support, particularly among some of the European nations.

In any event, CEQ took the lead in negotiating with the Soviet Union, the U.S. and the USSR Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of the Environment. I think that is the actual, rather cumbersome, name. We essentially wrote that agreement at CEQ. I had one negotiating session with Ambassador Dobrynin when the two of us had lunch at the Metropolitan Club and he had his first soft shelled crabs for lunch. [laughter] As I remember, he had one word change that they wanted which we agreed to quite quickly, quite an innocuous word. They were going through the motions of negotiating. We essentially wrote it. For the next several years until I left EPA I headed the U.S. side joint commission dealing with the implementation of the agreement. It was by far the biggest exchange activity between the U.S. and the USSR.

HKS: How about the UN? Wasn't it involved?

RT: We had in 1972 the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, the first two weeks of June. I headed the U.S. delegation. That was the forerunner of the recent Rio Conference on Environment and Development. While a much smaller event than the Rio event, it was by far the biggest thing of the sort that had ever happened. We had five hundred press, for example, in Stockholm which was absolutely fantastic in those days. They had seven thousand press in Rio, something like that. [laughter] One of the recommendations of the Stockholm conference was establishment of a United Nations environment program in Nairobi. This was the proposal supported by the U.S. and so that led to the UN having a continuing institutional voice in the environmental area. CEQ was also involved with the development of the ocean dumping convention, and I led the U.S. delegation to that conference in London later in 1972. We also proposed the World Heritage Trust Convention, and I would like to give you a little of the background on that one because it has a very particular personal association for me.

Back in 1965 when I was the new president of The Conservation Foundation, President Johnson called a White House conference on international cooperation. White House conferences were very popular mechanisms at that time. I am not sure that President Clinton may not have tendencies in that direction, too. He hasn't indulged them much yet, but I think he likes that sort of thing. In any event, at the White House conference on international cooperation, there was a committee on national resources chaired by the late Dr. Joseph Fisher, president of Resources for the Future at that time, later a member of Congress. A very distinguished individual and a very good friend of mine. He asked me to serve on that committee as president of The Conservation Foundation. I did.

He and I really put together the proposal that went more or less this way. Basic to Yellowstone National Park, which had been established in 1872, was the concept that there are some places in the United States of such unique value that they really belong to all the people rather than being left to tender mercies of local governments or states. We said, just as there are places of that kind that

are unique to our nation's heritage, so there are places all around the world that are so unique they should be part of the world heritage.

The concept at that time was primarily on natural sites such as a Yellowstone, for example, or a Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. Our committee made that recommendation to the conference, it was adopted, it was transmitted to President Johnson, and that was the end of the matter. Later that year, or the next year, I made a speech to, of all groups, a World Wildlife Fund meeting in Amsterdam, chaired by Prince Bernard of the Netherlands, then president of WWF. I took the occasion to talk about the World Heritage Trust fund concept and by that time I had enlarged the concept to include not only natural areas but unique cultural sites, such as the pyramids, the Acropolis, Ankor Wat or whatever. UNESCO and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, IUCN, both kept plugging away with this idea, but nothing really was happening.

President's Annual Message

RT: In 1970 or '71, I can't remember, while at the Council on Environmental Quality, we prepared annually for President Nixon a message on the environment for the Congress. That became a moving force in the operations of CEQ. We had a deadline for a presidential message, we had the White House backing in putting together that message, and we were able to call upon all the various agencies in government to help to develop proposals, policies, specific proposals. We would have interagency task forces working on various matters and putting the message together. This was one of the vehicles, mechanisms, we used for the development of environmental policy.

HKS: What happens to the president's message after it gets to Congress?

RT: It gets referred to a committee or committees. And that is probably the end of it in many cases.

HKS: But you have some ability to follow up on it?

RT: Oh yes. Then it becomes...

HKS: Would you draft bills to implement it? How did you keep it alive?

RT: Generally speaking, the bills that involve legislative proposals or international initiatives or executive orders, or whatever, that were proposed by the president's message would be followed up. For example, in the case of an international initiative, it would be followed up by the State Department. In the case of legislation, it would be followed up by the individual agencies by submitting bills. These would frequently go up to the Hill, practically with the message. In other words, the bills would be written to go with the message. Or in the case of an executive order, we or the White House would develop the executive order at the time of the message. There were a number of those that would be announced in the message, such as an executive order dealing with the use of pesticides on public lands, DDT. We got the president to ban the use of DDT on all public lands. That was before EPA's de-registration of DDT. Anyway, the World Heritage Trust proposal we put into one of the president's messages to the Congress and it was, in fact, taken up by an international conference and the World Heritage Convention was signed in 1972 on the

hundredth anniversary of Yellowstone. So, I have always thought of it as one of my little monuments along the way.

HKS: You have answered some of the questions that I was going to ask you on these messages to Congress. I read through some of them. Wilderness was in there. I thought, where does CEQ get off talking about wilderness and what is the environmental issue of wilderness? You have already sort of answered the question on heritage. It is not dealing with public health and it is not dealing with pollution, but CEQ is writing to Congress about wilderness areas.

RT: We were preparing a message for the president, and wilderness was an important environmental issue and it was not being attended to. I think it was up to us to decide what was embraced by the environment and the president agreed with us and that was all that was necessary. NEPA has a very broad set of definitions that go well beyond the pollution, the EPA sort of functions. The concept of environment certainly includes the management of natural resources, wildlife, forests, parks, public lands, etc. No question about that. We proposed at CEQ national surface mining legislation.

HKS: That would strike me as very logical. You are potentially disrupting the environment.

Historic Preservation

RT: I won't belabor the issue. It never would have occurred to me that wilderness might not have been our proper concern. I'll tell you another area that we got into quite usefully--historic preservation which might not have occurred to you either.

HKS: As being a part of CEQ.

RT: I had a committee working on tax policy. Being an old tax lawyer I had a sneaking suspicion that were various adverse impacts of the tax code on the environment. I had a distinguished panel of tax experts. That was my problem, you see, they were all tax experts. They really weren't looking at it from an environmental standpoint. They weren't familiar with it. So that never got very far. But we did propose a number of tax measures to promote historic preservation, depreciation changes. Up until that time it had always been more favorable tax wise to tear down a building and build a new one than to renovate the old one. We changed that. Later, Congress in its wisdom, repealed that change because real estate operators like to get a new depreciation base. They like to tear down old buildings and build new ones, but we had it in there for a number of years and it was very effective in saving old buildings. We developed with the General Services Administration an award for the best design of a federal building during the year from a distinguished panel of architects. I don't know whatever has happened to that. But we got into that area. The old post office building down on Pennsylvania Avenue we had a lot to do with saving together with Nancy Hanks. So we got ourselves into just about anything, and we were not bashful about sticking our noses into issues, a whole lot of issues, such as government procurement. I had an automobile that ran on compressed natural gas.

HKS: When you testified to Congress, what committee did you testify to? Where does CEQ fit into that?

RT: CEQ's principal committee in the Senate was the Interior Committee and in the House the Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. On the House Appropriations Committee, our appropriation was handled by the agriculture subcommittee. Jamie Whitten was its chairman.

HKS: My next question is, was Congress trying to get you to narrow your mission? Were there substantial pressures?

RT: I never had any problems of that kind at all.

HKS: That strikes me as surprising, you step on someone's toes out there, and you could hear about that.

RT: Well, we were pretty diplomatic. I think looking back on it, I think our presidential messages, annual messages on the environment, were best sellers. I mean, they were really quite dramatic if you look back upon them and read any of them. The scope of them, both domestically and internationally, the things said by the president.

HKS: In libraries there are lots of commissions, councils, studies, and reports on the shelf, but you never know which ones amount to something. So it is very important that you identify the annual messages to be of real significance.

RT: Of course, I am prejudiced, but I think they were of great significance. I was thinking, as we were talking, about the National Land Use Policy Act, for example, which we drafted in CEQ. It is interesting to note that Bill Reilly was the principal staff person involved in the development of that legislation. It was a matter that John Ehrlichman was personally interested in. He had been a land use lawyer in Seattle, so he knew something about the issues, and it was quite a revolutionary proposal for its day. In fact, it still would be today. Land use policy is not something that the United States takes to very easily. In any event, the language that Nixon used in the message about the importance of the land and the impact of land use decision on the environment reads extraordinarily well. Of course, they were drafted in CEQ [amusement], but I think any reference back to those old messages leaves you with considerable regard. Land use management is an increasingly high priority in the U.S. today in my opinion.

President Nixon

HKS: Let's talk a little bit about President Nixon. Ehrlichman, as you probably observed, took notes. As a matter of fact, he attended over one thousand meetings with the president and there are notes of every meeting, everyone who was there. These are all on microform and we have them at Duke. Your name appears half a dozen times or more in Ehrlichman's notes in meeting with the president. A couple were on Air Force One going to San Clemente. Do you recall, what is the process by which this happens? Do you call Ehrlichman and say you want a shot at the president, can you get us together somehow, or are you invited, or does it happen in all different ways? It is a very select group, I would assume, going on Air Force One.

RT: I don't ever remember going to San Clemente with the president on Air Force One. I don't know what that was all about. I flew to Chicago with the president. The Council had just been formed and the president decided I should be there. I wasn't in on the decision-making on that at all. I was brand new in the job. I had probably been sworn in the day before, something like that. I didn't have a clue as to what was going on. They called a meeting of the Great Lakes governors in Chicago at the Field Museum and I was there. Ehrlichman was there. Haldeman was there. Laurance Rockefeller was there. He was chairman of the Citizens Committee on Natural Beauty inherited from the Johnson administration, which we later converted to the Citizens Committee on Environmental Quality. Who else would have been there, I don't know. There were about five governors, and prior to my coming to CEQ, the White House had, with its own staff, borrowed largely from HEW, written a new air pollution act which I knew absolutely nothing about. President Nixon opened the meeting by greeting everybody and then called upon me to explain to the governors the new air pollution act which I had never seen and knew nothing about at all. Ehrlichman was across the table. He finally came to my rescue and described the air pollution amendments.

There was a funny occasion on that particular trip. Nixon took a helicopter out to Hammond, Illinois, about twenty minutes or so by helicopter from downtown Chicago, to inspect a new tertiary sewage treatment plant. I was asked to accompany him. Of course, I was the important person, you see, in all this. The new CEQ chairman. The first CEQ chairman. The environmentalist. And they were trying to promote all this. There were two fairly nice seats facing each other in the helicopter. I sat in one of those with the president and Haldeman, I remember, was sitting on a bench on the side and Ehrlichman was in the back somewhere--must have been a big helicopter. When we got to the sewage treatment plant, we went inside and there was this very clear pool of water resulting from the treatment of the waste, after the waste had been treated. One of the attendants of the place had a long pole on to which he had affixed a glass on the end and he was standing on the other side of this pool from President Nixon. He put the pole down and dipped up the clear liquid into the glass and moved it over across to where the president was standing on the other side and said, "Mr. President would you like to take a drink of that?" And Nixon said, "Thank you very much, but I never drink before lunch." [laughter] I thought it was quite a quick response in a somewhat funny situation he was suddenly put into. On the way back in the helicopter I was again knee to knee with him and he looked very tired and discouraged and kept looking down into the backyards of the worst neighborhoods, slums, of Chicago. Finally, he said to me, shook his head, and said, "I suppose Lyndon Johnson will be remembered for saving the redwoods and I guess I will be remembered for sewage treatment." [laughter] I thought afterwards, "You should be so lucky."

HKS: During the Reagan years, that wasn't really happening where the president was put into sort of an embarrassing position. Could have been...

RT: Could have been. In the Field Museum we met in the board room. A great big room. All around the walls of the board room were marvelous bronzes by Carl Akeley of various African scenes. I had seen these when I had done an advance inspection of the location. I told Nixon about the bronzes as we were walking into the room, and I said, "Carl Akeley accompanied Theodore Roosevelt on his trip to Africa and was always a close friend of his." I thought that would interest

him, because he often expressed his admiration for Theodore Roosevelt. He showed no reaction whatsoever.

What other references to me did you locate in the Ehrlichman notes?

HKS: Very cryptic. He used shorthand which has been decoded by somebody. He used the Greek letter pi for president, and so forth. That is why I am asking you why you were on Air Force One because it is not clear from his notes the purpose of the trip. What the agenda was. I assume that the president basically works most of the time and has conferences. Maybe he takes a nap, I don't know what presidents do on Air Force One. I think I counted about three or four trips on Air Force One. I could attribute Ehrlichman's...

RT: With me?

HKS: Yes.

RT: Well, that surprises me a bit. But it could have been true. Presidents, typically, work all the way on trips of that kind. Staff meetings, often staff meetings.

HKS: You sit in the back compartment and you are summoned up for your presentation or whatever it is?

RT: Yes, come up and sit and have a drink or a sandwich or something.

HKS: Was Nixon a congenial guy?

RT: I didn't know him that well to be able to say. When he put himself out to be congenial, he had sort of a quick sense of humor. Such as those remarks I mentioned.

HKS: From Kissinger's memoirs, I got the impression that Nixon had a difficult time relating one on one.

RT: I think he did. I didn't have that many occasions. You asked about meetings with the president and how they came about. I don't think I really initiated them as a rule. Usually John Ehrlichman or John Whitaker would call up and say, "Russ, I think it's time you saw the president." We came to call them stroke sessions. It was time for the president to say something nice to Russ Train.

HKS: In preparation for a press conference, did you...

RT: Most of the meetings weren't terribly substantive. For example, I remember meeting in the oval office when the first Soviet chairman of the Joint Commission on the Environment came to Washington for his first meeting with us. I took him to meet the president. In later years they wouldn't pay that much attention in the White House to that sort of thing, but on that occasion I had the present for the president to give to the Russian chairman. I had a hell of a time getting it through Secret Service. [laughter] It was a piece of old carved walrus ivory or something or other done by an Eskimo, an antique carving, it was quite nice. Wouldn't mind having it myself.

There were things like that that were mainly ceremonial. I remember going in one and actually meeting one on one with Nixon, I don't recall any staff in the room at all, very unusual, to talk about land use--the land use policy. I knew he was uncomfortable with the whole thing. He was uncomfortable with environmental regulation in general. He thought this was interfering and intruding on people's lives and business activity. He was never comfortable with that sort of thing. I guess I was sort of naive in a way, but I thought land use was something that he wouldn't feel quite as much that kind of discomfort with because it wasn't trying to regulate stack emissions, effluents into the rivers, and crack down on industry or something like that. I remember we had quite a long conversation and I was pointing out how England, although it was extremely crowded in many ways, managed to preserve a lot of landscape amenity. He listened to all this. I don't know that it meant a great deal.

There is an interesting story on this particular occasion. Nixon had a Filipino valet, I think his name was Manuel, and on this occasion Nixon rang a bell for Manuel to bring in a cup of coffee--he drank a lot of coffee. He was in the midst of talking to me about land use. He said, "You know, I play golf down at Key Biscayne." I guess this was with Bebe Rebozo, he may have mentioned Rebozo. And he said, "The golf course is right along the edge of the water, but it is hidden from the water by mangroves. We wanted to cut a few small avenues through the mangroves so you could see the sea, but the environmentalists all raised hell." He said, "Russ, nothing lives in those mangroves except gooney birds." [laughter] He was telling this as Manuel was walking in with the cup of coffee and Manuel heard all this dialogue. Actually, it wasn't a dialogue, it was a monologue at this point. Nixon looked up at Manuel and said that Manuel usually accompanied him down to Key Biscayne and said, "That's right, isn't it, Manuel?" Manuel said, "No, Mr. President, that is not

right." Nixon looked at him somewhat startled. [laughter] Manuel went on to say, "You know when we are down at Key Biscayne, and I have my day off, I go fishing. I know all the fish I catch when they are very small they grow up in those mangroves and that is where they are protected and if you took those mangroves out, we wouldn't have any more fish." Nixon sort of stared at him for a moment and then changed the subject. Afterwards, when I ran into Manuel in the halls of the White House West Wing, I would say, "Manuel, have you given anymore ecology lessons to the president recently?" It was a very interesting little exchange.

HKS: It certainly was. Ehrlichman wrote a novel and it is about the fictitious president named President Mockton. It obviously is the Nixon White House.

RT: I never read it. I did read his first novel which I thought was dreadful.

HKS: What impressed me about it was that the president was portrayed having a very low regard for the bureaucracy. That was why he was building up the advisors within the White House structure, because he really couldn't deal with the agencies, especially the State Department. Because foreign policy was his main thing. Do you have any sense that this is an accurate portrayal of President Nixon?

RT: I think it is probably true. I think it seems to be true of most presidents. I don't think it was unique to Nixon at all.

HKS: Is that because they issue an order and nothing happens?

RT: Well, never having been in that position [laughter], I am not sure quite what the problem is.

HKS: Of course, you weren't the bureaucracy, but you would be in a couple more years. You were a White House agency, in his CEQ.

RT: I think there is generally a feeling in the White House that the departments, cabinet heads, do their own thing, that they are probably captives of their own bureaucracies.

HKS: The iron triangle.

RT: Yes. There is some truth to all that, but I have always in principle thought that the way presidents should act is to get good people as head of the agencies and give them a lot of discretion and let them go to it. But that's really not the way it's usually done. It is not the way Clinton is dealing with it. He's keeping an iron hand on the appointments right across the board. I think Ford was more relaxed in that regard. I don't think Nixon was unique at all in this.

HKS: Harry Truman commented, made a lot of comments that have become famous, that Eisenhower was a great general, and his first day in office he was going to give an order and nothing would happen and it would be a learning experience for Eisenhower. I have always remembered that.

RT: I think that was probably true.

White House Contacts

HKS: Is this a good time to talk about John Whitaker and the Domestic Council? Is the Domestic Council, itself, significant?

RT: As a council, I don't think it was. As a vehicle which was chaired by Ehrlichman, and which gave Ehrlichman a handle to domestic policy, it was significant.

HKS: Is that to balance for domestic affairs the great influence that foreign affairs has?

RT: I guess so.

HKS: I read about Whitaker. One citation was secretary of the cabinet, one was chairman of Domestic Council. Maybe he was all of these things.

RT: He was secretary of the cabinet early on.

HKS: You said you reported to him instead of Ehrlichman. He was your contact at the White House?

RT: He would be my normal contact in the White House. And afterwards it was Dick Fairbanks, after Whitaker went to Interior as undersecretary. I think it was a very logical arrangement. I think the idea of a Domestic Council was more a symbolic thing than anything else. I don't know that the Domestic Council ever really met that much. Later on, Nelson Rockefeller was chairman of the Domestic Council, I think.

HKS: I didn't know that.

RT: Rockefeller's operation didn't work very well.

HKS: Are you familiar with Whitaker's book, *Striking A Balance*?

RT: I am not sure that I have ever read his book.

HKS: I have used it as a text book. It is a very powerful, positive statement about the period that we are talking about. There are not a whole lot of positive things written about the Nixon administration for obvious reasons. So I wanted to ask you if you thought the book was a fair characterization.

RT: I can't answer the question. I don't know why. I don't think I've got it. It's odd that I wouldn't have it because it covers an awful lot of things that I would be interested in.

HKS: Let's talk about the start up of EPA and whether or not there are any turf issues between you and Ruckelshaus or was the mandate clear enough, unless we have skipped over something you would like to talk about-

RT: Under international involvements I have commented on everything except international trade and endangered species. We had, in 1973 I think, a conference called at the State Department in Washington to consider a convention on the trade in endangered species. I headed the U.S. delegation. The convention which we finally concluded was known for a while as the Washington Convention but later became known as CITES, the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora. That was, I would say, the result of CEQ promotion, getting that going, and it was something that had been talked about internationally for some while.

Relationship to EPA

RT: In 1970 when I first went to CEQ, there was in place in the White House the so-called Ash Council, named for its chairman, Roy Ash. Roy had come in as past chairman of Litton Industries. The Ash Council was officially the President's Advisory Council on Executive Organization. One issue before it was the proper organization of environmental responsibilities, and the big issue in that was whether to create a Department of Natural Resources in which the pollution regulatory functions would go along with the Fish and Wildlife Service, along with the Geological Survey, and Bureau of Land Management, and fisheries, and the national forests. I think the latter was always the stumbling block that brought the concept of a Department of Natural Resources to a grinding halt to mix my metaphors. In any event, that was the preferred option in the White House.

I gave some thought to it and decided that it made a lot more sense to have a free-standing independent agency dealing with the environmental issues rather than submerging it in a great conglomerate. I thought that was true politically because I thought from a political standpoint it would lose its visibility if it was put into a Department of Natural Resources. It would lose its definition in the public mind and I thought that from that standpoint, it made a lot of sense for the president to propose an Environmental Protection Agency or something like that. I also thought that from an institutional standpoint this was the way to go--that an independent agency could act as a sort of sharp cutting edge for government environmental functions, advocacy and implementation, in a way it would have great difficulty in doing if it was a simply part of a larger department. I went over and I testified at their invitation to the Ash Council to this effect. Whether or not I had anything to do with it or not, that's the way they came out, and that, of course, was the way the president finally came out. EPA was proposed by the president in his reorganization plan #3 as I recall, of 1970 along with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) as reorganization plan #4. When he proposed those to the Congress I was asked as CEQ chairman to take the lead in presenting these proposals to the appropriate congressional committees. There were quite a few involved--the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Interior Committee, Public Works Committee, Agriculture Committee, among others. I was the principal administration spokesman on the creation of EPA and also NOAA as well, although only to a lesser extent on NOAA. So I had a rather active engagement in the approval of the reorganization plan in the Congress. By the way, early in 1971, Nixon did send to the Congress legislation establishing a Department of Natural Resources. The new department would have excluded EPA but it would have included NOAA and the national forests. Congress never acted on the legislation.

I had never met Ruckelshaus until a mutual friend of ours told me that he was a very likely candidate to head the new agency and that I ought to get to know him. He and I had lunch together and we seemed to hit it off and we--I don't think we ever had any turf problems, really at all. I

would credit Ruckelshaus for that completely. He's not turf minded. I am apt to be myself. I recognize that tendency on my part.

HKS: But CEQ has a much broader mandate as opposed to EPA?

RT: Yes, but CEQ was always sort of a small policy group, covering a very wide spectrum, about as wide as we wanted to make it. EPA was a large organization with a large budget, and many thousands of employees, and with a potential impact on our society all across the board. So by its very nature, EPA had an enormous amount of clout and visibility, and we had practically no visibility. That latter is an interesting point because when Nixon introduced me and my two fellow councilmen, Gordon MacDonald and Robert Cahn, to the press in the Roosevelt room of the White House, he said that the Council on Environmental Quality would be the environmental conscience of the nation. Well, that was great rhetoric [laughter].

HKS: Did you write that, who wrote that for him? Or do you know?

RT: I imagine that was probably a speech writer in the White House reporting to Ehrlichman. I don't know. I have no idea. It was pretty good stuff but I quickly realized that wasn't possible. You couldn't really use a White House office as a bully pulpit and you had to act as part of the Executive Office which meant that you subordinated your role to that of the president very much and you really weren't out seeking publicity. Of course, that's true to a point. We obviously promoted the environmental cause wherever we could appropriately, but you could never really take a public position that significantly diverged from that of the White House.

HKS: I imagine the budget is a sticking point on a lot things you might propose, it cost too much for this year's budget or whatever...

RT: Yes, although I never really had too much problem with budget issues at CEQ. Of course the National Environmental Policy Act didn't have big budget implications. Surface Mining Regulation Act was not a big budget item. By the way, many of our policy initiatives, such as the one agreement that Ruckelshaus and I struck early on had to do with international matters. He found that he had so much to do to get EPA off and running, he had so much to do on the domestic front, he said to me that you continue to handle the various international matters and we will stick to the domestic side. Of course, in implementing international matters, we had to use EPA staff and, in developing policy initiative generally, we had to use EPA staff. We called upon them all the time. So they were always involved, but maybe because of that agreement between us we always had a very easy relationship.

He and I have always had a very good personal relationship. But as time went on, looking ahead to say 1973 or so, the Council had pretty much exhausted its bag of tricks as far as presidential environmental messages were concerned. We had dredged up everything we could possible conceive of [laughter] and with the growing energy crunch the bloom was sort of off the environmental rose. The president, I think after '73, never sent another environmental message to the Congress. He sent energy messages. Maybe it was after '72, I'm not sure. But the action really moved to EPA. When Ruckelshaus left EPA and became head of the FBI, I began to think about the job of EPA administrator. It was very much part of my thinking, you know, that CEQ had been

a wonderful base for quite a while, that we had really gotten a lot going and could be very satisfied with our contribution, but that the action was more and more with EPA.

Council on Environmental Quality

HKS: In preparation for these interviews I looked through the CEQ annual reports. The first few I could read and after that they become very technical. You have to be a chemist or a physicist or engineer. I don't know what your undergraduate work was in, but it was pretty technical stuff that you were dealing with.

RT: Yes, a lot of that was being written by people from EPA. I remember that when I was at EPA somebody showed me a report proposing something or other and cited as their authority the CEQ report. Well, I knew that that portion of the CEQ report had been written by EPA. [laughter] It was pretty much of a bootstrap operation. In any event, the time came when it was apparent to me that the action really had shifted from the council to EPA, that the emphasis was not on the development of new policy but on implementing policies that had been put into place, and that's when I decided that it would be great to move to EPA.

HKS: Whitaker in '75 or '76, somewhere in there, he suggested CEQ should end by 1980 because any agency like that becomes predictable and it is of very little use to a president. You don't have to ask them what they think about something because they always think the same way. Now, we see in 1993 that CEQ in fact may be ending. Did you share Whitaker's view at all; I guess what he was saying was that many people advise the president, and the president sorts through the deck and finds some people who actually bring some insight into the oval office.

RT: I suppose that is true. But I suppose you could make the same damn argument for every executive office, agency, Council of Economic Advisors, or whatever. I suppose in a sense that maybe is a conclusion Clinton reached because he's got a national economic council or something like that that is sort of superimposed on top of CEA.

HKS: That is my interpretation of what Whitaker was saying.

RT: There is something in it, but every president to my recollection sort of wanted to get rid of CEQ. I don't mean Ford, and not Carter, but Reagan did and Bush probably did. And in both cases, I took up the cudgels for CEQ. And have again with the Clinton administration, not to much avail.

HKS: Who is in the Clinton White House that you talk to?

RT: I haven't actually talked to anyone in the Clinton White House. I have talked to the key members of the Senate, Max Baucus and John Chafee, and written them a letter on the subject and sent a copy of the letter to the vice president, which he has responded to me on. But I haven't actually gone and talked to anybody. I don't get invited to White House meetings anymore.

HKS: So Congress is reacting to Clinton's statement of intent.

RT: Yes, they have created an Office of Environmental Policy in the White House, headed by Katie McGinty who used to be in the vice president's office when he was in the Senate. They feel that that will probably supplant CEQ and be more effective because it will be more central to the White House. I doubt the latter because my experience is that offices in the White House proper get inevitably drawn into the political crisis of the day and they just can't keep out of them, whether it is the spotted owl, or whatever the heck it is. She is going to have a fairly small staff, and I just don't think there is probably going to be much room for long-range policy thinking.

My view has been that most major issues in government today are inherently complex in that they tend to cut across the normal functional lines of government. Environmental issues don't really exist in isolation from everything else; they exist in relation to energy policy, or transportation policy, or agricultural policy, or trade policy, or economic policy. I think the president, any president, badly needs mechanisms for cross cutting approaches to policy making. Or, you might say, innovative mechanisms for policy making. He doesn't have very many. OMB, the Office of Management and Budget, likes to think they perform that role, but the entire focus of the Office of Management and Budget is on the budget, as it should be. It is on a one year cycle too. I just don't think that every issue should be dominated by budgetary considerations. That is a very important consideration, but it shouldn't necessarily be the dominant factor. So I think CEQ is there to be used by the president who has the imagination to use it. I think CEQ can be used for all sorts of purposes for the president. When I was in government, there was an Interagency Committee on Water Policy, probably still is--these things never die--but an interagency committee with a rotating chairmanship between the Corps of Engineers and Interior, etc. There again, decisions are usually made by trade-offs among the agencies involved. The lowest common denominator I think normally tends to prevail.

I would think that responsibility for coordinating water policy could be given to the Council on Environmental Quality. With respect to energy and the environment, a big issue confronting the nation at the moment, CEQ would be made to order for trying to deal with the interface between those two areas. It is very hard for one agency, whether it is an independent agency in the executive branch such as EPA or whether it is a full fledged department, to really deal easily with another agency. Its efforts of that kind tend to be looked upon as an intrusion, getting into my business, why don't you stick to your business. I'll deal with energy, you deal with environment. That is sort of the general reaction. CEQ can, I won't say avoid all those problems because they arise in part from human nature and the nature of bureaucracy, but I think CEQ is a mechanism that with a proper presidential mandate can really help cut across a lot of that, cut through a lot of it.

HKS: To follow up with that, Nixon created an energy czar. I mean he wasn't satisfied with the cabinet. He wanted something that would cut across...

RT: He did. I don't know how effective the czars were.

HKS: But he is agreeing with what you are saying.

RT: I guess that's right. I never thought of it that way. Although, I don't know how effective the various czars were, in fact.

HKS: That is why he wanted Kissinger in the White House because the State Department was not responsive enough to what he needed doing.

RT: And also a National Security Council can integrate foreign policy issues with defense policy, with intelligence inputs, plus others. The Security Council now has an environmental person on the staff. Anyway, that is my view of the CEQ situation. I think it is unfortunate to let it go.

I chaired a National Commission on the Environment starting in '91, we had our first meeting in '91, and we filed our final report in December 1993, after the election. We had nineteen members including every former head of the EPA except Ann Burford, as well as two former chairmen of CEQ, Gus Speth and myself. I, of course, wore both hats--EPA and CEQ.

HKS: The commission was established by presidential..?

RT: It is probably a misnomer to call it a national commission. I have always said facetiously that I proposed to four different presidents the appointment of a national commission on environment, but they never paid any attention to me, so I finally went ahead and did one on my own. It was brought together and convened under the auspices of the World Wildlife Fund and funded by World Wildlife Fund.

HKS: I see.

RT: No one currently in government, that is nobody who was serving in government at the time I put together the commission, was asked to join the commission. I thought it was, I never felt anybody in government was a free agent as far as this sort of thing was concerned. We met for two years. One of the central proposals we made is for the development of a national environmental strategy with a principal focus on sustainable development. We suggested giving lead agency responsibility for that task to the Department of the Environment, assuming it ever gets established. We thought it would be established quite quickly but saw an important role for CEQ in the process, particularly in terms of bringing together all the agencies on something of this kind. A major need that a national environmental strategy would address would be how does the Department of Energy or Transportation or whatever integrate the concept of sustainable development into its programs. Well, this is the business that CEQ has been in for many years with respect to the EIS process. CEQ has a unique, with a presidential mandate, convening capability. That is another reason I hate to see it go because I don't think a White House office can really do that job. They may be able to order people around more.

HKS: Well, Clinton has an awful lot on his plate right now. I am not sure...

RT: He sure does.

Cross-Florida Canal

RT: We didn't mention the cross-Florida canal. I've got some documentation that I think Whitaker may have sent me not so long ago, a memorandum from John Ehrlichman. CEQ played a

significant role in stopping the cross-Florida barge canal, but, frankly, I think it was basically a political decision.

HKS: Wasn't that started back in World War II?

RT: It went back a long, long ways. There was a lot of political clout behind the canal in Florida, particularly from the Jacksonville area. At CEQ we got a list of all the water projects around the country and developed a sort of a hit list, the ones we thought were environmentally destructive, perhaps with little or no benefits associated. In any event, the cross-Florida barge canal was one of those and the White House jumped on it. In announcing that the funding for it would be stopped, the White House said the president was acting on the recommendation of the Council on Environmental Quality. They made quite a point of that. So we took all the heat [laughter] from the various...

HKS: According to the newsletter in *American Forests*, "Train supports cancellation." That was the little thirty or forty word announcement of the cancellation that you were the point man, I guess.

RT: We used to like to take credit for it because it showed our clout. We had stopped one of the biggest public works projects of the country. But in my opinion it was basically a decision made in the White House for political reasons, probably financial, budgetary reasons as well. They said it was the recommendation of the Council on Environmental Quality, and that they were accepting that. Of course, the White House action also showed that the president and his staff were anxious to find ways to dramatize their support for environmental protection.

HKS: I want to ask you a question about the refuse act of 1899. There wasn't a sense that it needed to be updated in any way? Apparently it was effective. But still a very old statute.

RT: Well, I don't really remember the details of the law. It was what we used to control discharges as I remember. Industrial discharges.

HKS: It was assumed that it had to be concerned with navigation, but there was a court decision in the '60s or sometime that said liquid discharges were also covered. Hickel used it to fine some company, and it struck me as strange that an act that old would still be used.

RT: Well, it worked. It is also good to know that something has some continuity to it. I'd like to add something about CEQ on the international side. The 1972 meeting of the International Whaling Commission was held in London and followed immediately after the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. President Nixon sent me to the meeting of the International Whaling Convention as his personal representative on that occasion. The United States sponsored a proposal for a world-wide moratorium on the commercial hunting of whales, which I presented at the meeting. It did not prevail at that time. It required a three-quarters majority and while we had a majority, we didn't have three-quarters of the IWC with us. It was not until 1986 that the IWC finally voted a ban, or moratorium, on commercial whaling which is still in effect. That was an interesting event, and the United States unilaterally stopped commercial whaling on its own and prevented the importation of whale products into the United States. An interesting sidelight on the IWC meeting was that after the vote on the U.S. moratorium proposal I called a press conference--I

believe at the U.S. Embassy--to announce the result and to identify which countries had voted for and against the moratorium. The IWC had always acted as sort of a club and did not like its deliberations exposed to public scrutiny in that way. I made them quite unhappy but I started the process of building public support for the moratorium. That is all I wanted to add on CEQ.

Technology Curve

HKS: Ruckelshaus told a story about the problems of Congress being too far ahead of the curve in terms of technology. They had passed a law making something illegal but the technology wasn't there, like auto emissions, to actually enforce it in the short term. Somewhere in the mid-'70s, there was to be zero discharge by 1985. Do you recall that? That seems rather impractical to set that as a goal.

RT: I don't remember the zero discharge goal particularly. Congress did use, and I think this was a rather favorite technique of Senator Muskie, technology-forcing deadlines, emission targets, and deadlines for achieving them which were probably at the time of enactment not achievable with existing technology. I use the phrase technology-forcing because the motivation behind that approach was in fact to create a powerful incentive for industry to develop the technology in order to meet the standards. In the case of the automobile industry, it was sort of like a nuclear weapon, it probably would never have been actually used although the law required it. Both Ruckelshaus and I, after I followed him, spent quite a lot of time on auto emissions problems.

I don't remember the details of it all, but Congress gave the EPA administrator some discretion in terms of the dates by which certain emission standards had to be met. In my case, the issue was the subject of extensive public hearings in which I and other officials in the agency listened to many, many hours of highly technical testimony on the available technologies and also on the health effects of those technologies. The catalytic converter had become a known technology sometime during that period and would have permitted the meeting of emission standards by a mandated date. Absent the use of catalytic converters, there did not seem to be any possibility of meeting the standards at least by the date in question.

There was a big argument within the agency between the Mobile Source Division of the Air Office that dealt with auto emissions. It was their view that catalytic converters were available, were proven technology, and should be installed. The health effects scientists in the agency, or at least a substantial number of those scientists, were adamantly opposed to mandating the use of catalytic converters. Actually we never ordered the use of the converters, we simply ordered the industry to go ahead and meet the standards by a given date, knowing that the only way that they could do it was through the use of catalytic converters.

HKS: Was the technology, itself, controversial? Auto industry scientists said it wouldn't work and others said it would, was the basic science agreed upon?

RT: I think it was pretty well agreed that the technology worked. Now the auto industry arguments against it probably would be based upon additional costs and perhaps the lack of necessity for trying to achieve standards at that level. The health effects argument was that the use of a catalytic converter with gasolines which typically contain sulfur would produce a sulfuric acid aerosol, a

very fine mist, I suppose totally invisible, or hardly visible, but very fine particles of sulfuric acid which would have the ability to penetrate the human lungs very easily. It was an argument where there were a lot of fears expressed. There had not been a great deal of research done and as is so often the case the administrator was called upon to make a decision. One portion of the agency was saying that it would perhaps result in substantially adverse health effects on many, many thousands of human beings and the other part of the agency arguing with equal force that if you don't use that technology you are going to continue to spew more pollutants into the atmosphere, with far more damage to the health of the population as a whole. My decision finally was to go ahead with the catalytic converter.

HKS: That made it necessary to take the lead out of the gas at the same time or was that a different issue?

RT: That was part of the movement to the catalytic converter. You could not use a catalytic converter if you had leaded gas, at least the catalytic converter would have been incapacitated by the lead in the gas. The converter would have become coated with lead and no longer continue to have catalytic properties. I think I am sounding rather technical, and I really have no technical background in any of this. [laughter] In order to provide an incentive to the oil companies to start making unleaded gasoline generally available we proposed a higher tax on gasoline containing lead. As I remember that was enacted by the Congress and had the desired effect. We later set specific lead content standards but we used the economic incentive first.

HKS: The converters reduced mileage, was that a difficult political argument to deal with? We are short of energy and now we reducing the mileage that the car gets.

RT: I don't think we had reached the energy crunch at that time. We were just ahead of that. It might have been more difficult to make the decision later on. You said we reduced the mileage, I don't recall that particularly, that could well have been the case.

HKS: I remember reading in the Sierra Club journal. In the letters to the editor, one guy argued, "I get forty miles to the gallon. That's better for the environment." The other guy said, "Well, I get twenty-five, but I don't pollute." They are interesting arguments.

RT: Quite typical though of many environmental issues. No matter which way you go, there are pluses and minuses, and it is a complicated process of balancing.

HKS: One of Ruckelshaus' favorite stories was about when he was administrator. He was under court order for not forcing some statute in Los Angeles, LA was in violation of air quality, I assume, and there was a lawsuit to force him to enforce the law. He flew to LA, got off the plane, publicly proclaimed LA to be in violation of the law, got back on the plane, and flew back to Washington because there was no way to shut Los Angeles down. Is that just a good story?

RT: Well, the issue was very real. I don't remember Ruckelshaus flying to Los Angeles. If he said that is what he did, I'm sure that's what he did. The Clean Air Act amendments of that time authorized the agency to develop and impose what were called transportation plans for urban areas that were not meeting auto emission related pollution standards. These plans addressed matters

such as speeding up the flow of traffic so automobiles weren't blocked at intersections with idling engines, that being a rather simple aspect of the transportation plan. The plans could involve the promotion of car pools to reduce the number of automobiles out on the road or it could require the introduction of mass transit; or conceivably, the transportation plans could have said no driving on certain days. I think they also got into the design of parking areas around shopping centers and things of that kind. Typically, the plans required annual inspection of auto emission control systems. These transportation plans tended to be different for every area, depending upon the particular problems of the area. They were highly controversial, politically extremely difficult, high unpopular in the areas where imposed.

The Ruckelshaus story was designed to demonstrate that there really was no practical way that Los Angeles could meet air quality standards with respect to the automobile, short of making everybody walk. There was no mass transit in Los Angeles. No way to get around except by automobile. I would say some of the young crusaders in the Air Office, probably in some friendly agreement with public interest law firms on the outside, pursued these plans very aggressively. Finally because of the political reaction during my time as EPA administrator the House Appropriation Committee included language to the effect that no monies appropriated under that act could be used to implement any transportation plan. So we had the authority on the books, but were not allowed to spend any money to implement the authority. That passed the Senate, too. So that was the end of the transportation plans to all practical effect.

I used that once as a sort of a lesson from which I thought the agency should learn. We used to have an annual awards day ceremony for EPA, either at the agency or we'd borrow a larger auditorium, such as the Department of Commerce's auditorium, and have a big celebration on the anniversary of the adoption of the Reorganization Plan of 1970 which created the agency. At one of those occasions I referred to these transportation plans. I said one of the failures of the agency in trying to put those plans into effect had been to not involve the public, to not have consulted with the local communities enough, and essentially a failure to build public support for what the agency was trying to do. The altitude inside the agency had been: we have the authority, therefore, let's get in there and enforce.

At that time I had just been reading the oral history of Harry Truman, *Frankly Speaking*. If I can remember generally the particular dialogue, Miller said to Mr. Truman, this is of course after he had left the presidency, something to this effect, "Mr. President, the president of the United States has all the power in the world doesn't he?" Truman replied, "Oh my, no (sounds very uncharacteristic of Truman), the president only has as much power as the people of the country will really let him exercise." Later on I was reminded of that during the Nixon Watergate mess. The arguments over the president's constitutional right to withhold tapes and that kind of thing. I thought that practically speaking, the president's constitutional authority really isn't just a matter of careful legal definition, but it really is sort like the English unwritten constitution, it is based upon the consent of the governed. I thought it was a lesson that needed to be conveyed to the troops at EPA. We became arrogant at times and in this instance got slapped down by the Congress.

HKS: So the people who applied for jobs at EPA tended to be activists, they wanted to be cops. Would this be a common characteristic in that time?

RT: I don't think it is that they wanted to be cops. They were young, enthusiastic, highly dedicated environmentalists and with sometimes an almost evangelical fervor in carrying out their jobs. I won't say that is absent entirely in the environmental movement today. But while that is acceptable on the outside, I don't think it is acceptable in government. You need dedication and commitment, yes. But you also need to be sensitive to the views of the public.

HKS: I'm involved with the School of the Environment at Duke. It is common for a student to tell me they want to get out of school with their masters of environmental management, work for EPA, and enforce the law. They want to be cops.

RT: That may be. I never really thought of it that way.

EPA Administration

HKS: Let's go back and get you installed as administrator, we skipped over that. You said earlier that when you were at CEQ, you looked over at EPA and you thought that might be kind of interesting. I forget the Watergate sequence, but the head of FBI was fired, Ruckelshaus was made head of the FBI, so EPA is now vacant. How did you get over to EPA?

RT: Let's see if I can reconstruct that. My recollection is that Ruckelshaus left EPA in April of '73. There was no announcement at that time of a replacement, it was a very sudden decision for the president, and I don't believe he had any list of candidates at all. There were two or three that surfaced fairly early, that were interested in the job.

HKS: It was obvious that Watergate was going to be a serious situation?

RT: Yes. At some point after that, as I have already mentioned, I thought of myself as a possible EPA administrator. Somewhere along in that period, maybe early May or something of that sort, I decided that was a logical next step for me and put my hat into the ring. The person I saw in the White House at that time was Al Haig. He was then chief of staff, having taken the place of Haldeman--I assume Ehrlichman was also gone--so, the Watergate sequence was well underway.

Haig and I discussed the matter. It seems to me that he questioned me a little bit about my approach to regulation. Was I a fanatic environmental activist, or was I a sensible, balanced individual? I think he knew the answer to all that because I had known Haig a bit, because of his role as deputy to Kissinger. I didn't have very much interaction with the National Security Council, however, I did know him slightly. Anyway, I think he was satisfied with whatever the answers were that I gave him. It wasn't much after that President Nixon sent my name up to the Senate as replacement to Ruckelshaus at EPA. I don't recall having a conversation with the president about it myself. I think he was pretty distracted by other events at that time, and I think he probably delegated a lot this kind of thing to Al Haig who doubtless reviewed it with him. I suppose I was a known quantity, somebody they had worked with. In any event, my name went up.

I did talk to the president somewhat later. I had a confirmation hearing in June of '73 before the Committee on Public Works in the Senate. It was at that time that one of the members of the committee, Republican Senator Scott of Virginia, asked me to explain why in my *Who's Who*

biography I had listed after my name, "environmentalist." He said, "Weren't you a judge in the United States Tax Court?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Are you ashamed to have been a judge in the U.S. Tax Court?" I said, "No, sir." "Then, why do you list yourself as an environmentalist?" Well, that was sort of the dialogue. I can't reconstruct all of it. In any event, he put a hold on my nomination. Senatorial courtesy permits any senator to do that, I think, up to some period of time. Another senator, Senator Hansen of Wyoming, also put a hold on me and my nomination.

HKS: Did you have any sense that there was a constituent back home that asked them to do that?

RT: I think that the Scott hold was somewhat inexplicable. He is dead now, and I don't want to say anything critical of him. He was not very highly regarded in the Senate. He was extremely conservative. I think he probably didn't like any environmentalist, ideologically. I went and saw him once or twice in his office after that, and discussed the matter, but he never gave me any particular reason why he put the hold on me. I think that he thought that my listing myself as an environmentalist indicated a lack of balance on my part or something of that sort. Clifford Hansen, on the other hand, it was always my understanding, although not from him, was acting on the behest of the coal industry who was concerned about my environmental policies potentially. Coal mining being a big thing in Wyoming. They probably didn't like the surface mining legislation that we had produced in CEQ. I don't know. I never had any real discussions of that with anybody. That was just my understanding. However, those holds were all eventually lifted and I was confirmed in September of '73. So it was about three months from the time I was nominated until I was confirmed. I was approved by the full Senate with perhaps one negative vote, so it really was not a controversial appointment. Just this business of senatorial courtesy held it up for that period of time. So EPA was effectively without an administrator, except for of course the acting administrator, the deputy, for six months as a result of all that.

HKS: John McGuire was appointed chief about that time. Maybe a year earlier. He said that the secretary sent him over to the White House to see how they reacted to him becoming chief. He talked to Ehrlichman, I believe, just talked a little bit. Nothing about his philosophy, and Ehrlichman says, "I'll call the Hill and see if there is any opposition. If not, you'll be the next chief." I presume they didn't do that in your case, or you would have found out that Scott and Hansen were both opposed.

RT: I don't think they did. They might have checked with the chairman of the committee, Jennings Randolph, and the ranking Republican, Howard Baker. They were both good friends of mine. They would have gotten a very affirmative response at that time. I doubt that they would have ever checked with Scott. I don't think that would have occurred to anybody.

HKS: Did you have anything to do with Russell Peterson being selected as your successor at CEQ? You obviously had been involved with him. He won some award for conservation.

RT: I had some contact with the matter. He was certainly a candidate for CEQ, and he seemed like a logical successor to me. He had been governor of Delaware. He was a Republican and had very clearly stated pro-environment views. I don't recall any other particular candidates at that time. He's the only one I really remember. I had a call from George Bush about it. I was still at CEQ but presumably my name had gone to the Senate, and they knew that eventually I would be confirmed.

Bush was then chairman of the Republican National Committee, and he said, "Russ, what about this fellow, Peterson? He seemed pretty far out on some of his positions while he was governor." Peterson had either supported or initiated a coastal area planning act or something of the kind and was interested in pretty tight land use controls on development in coastal areas of Delaware. A lot of people didn't care for that and were quite antagonistic to him as a result. I imagine this is what Bush was referring to. I said that I thought that Peterson would make a good CEQ chairman, and I said that I never found him unbalanced or anything of that kind. And he got named.

HKS: Did Mr. Scott and Mr. Hansen go after him, too?

RT: I don't recall that at all. I mentioned seeing Nixon one more time in connection with my going to EPA, and I guess it was after I had been approved by the Senate. I was waiting to be sworn in and I was in the Oval Office talking to the president. It couldn't have been a very long meeting because my recollection of the conversation is with us standing in the middle of the room, and he was obviously at that time deeply into the whole Watergate problem. I said, "Mr. President, I think it would be wonderful if you would come over to EPA and swear me in, publicly, with all the troops there." He looked at me, he said, "That's probably the worst thing I could do for you." He said, "I think you ought to get somebody else." He was, of course, absolutely right. He had extraordinary faculty for sort of stepping outside of himself, and viewing himself dispassionately. He didn't always have that ability, but on occasions like this, he did. As a result, I guess I went to the other extreme. I asked an old friend, the attorney general, Elliot Richardson, to come over to EPA and swear me in in the company of Bill Ruckelshaus whose place I was taking. Bill was then deputy attorney general. The two of them came over, and we had a very nice ceremony.

HKS: I think Nixon was still president, I don't have the date. There was a newsletter in the *American Forest* magazine that you had requested written confirmation from the White House that EPA had the final authority on enforcement. I thought that was kind of gutsy.

RT: Just because it was a news item doesn't mean it was true. I can't remember it. I don't know why I would have thought I didn't have final authority.

HKS: Apparently it was being challenged by other agencies, Atomic Energy Commission or some such thing... I don't remember the exact context. It was portrayed as a requirement of yours for you to accept the position, you wanted a written statement saying everyone agreed that you had this authority.

RT: You are stirring a vague memory. [laughter] The EPA does not prosecute its own cases. The Department of Justice does so on behalf of the government. EPA has a large legal staff, obviously, and a large enforcement division, but the actual bringing of cases, the approval of cases, comes from the Department of Justice. That sometimes makes for an uneasy relationship. Sometimes the Department of Justice will refuse to pursue some case that EPA thinks should be pursued. Whether that was what was involved, I am not sure.

HKS: Political scientists have written many books about the Nixon years, it intrigues a lot of people. Some suggest that Watergate greatly increased Muskie's influence in environmental issues because he got more out of the White House under Ford than under Nixon. Congress exercised

more authority. You, at EPA, would have been encouraged to talk to Congress more than during the Nixon administration. Is there truth to all that?

RT: I think there is truth in all that. Going back to the latter part of the Nixon administration, the *Wall Street Journal* did a front page piece, this time it was the left hand column, not the right hand column, about agency responses to Watergate, or more accurately what the impact of Watergate was on the administration of various agencies in government. I remember that the reporter from the *Journal* asked me something to the effect that: Has Watergate made your life more difficult here at the agency, getting decisions made, etc.? I said, "No, in some ways it is the best thing that has ever happened to us [laughter] here at EPA because the White House is definitely distracted and they really don't pay that much attention to what is happening over here on a day to day basis." There really wasn't much, if any, oversight as Watergate moved along. In the Ford administration, there was a much more relaxed, more collegial kind of atmosphere in the White House. Ford came from a different background. He never sought the presidency, he was accustomed to working with political and other associates on the Hill and brought a number of friends into the White House operation.

HKS: Did you ever sense that Ford was more interested in environmental issues than Nixon was? I ask that because his son went to forestry school, somehow you would be interested in what your kids do.

RT: I don't think he really was. He never participated on the Hill in any environmental matters. He wasn't a member of any of the environmental committees. I don't think he was antagonistic toward the environment at all. I went in to see him shortly after he became president, and we had a meeting in the Oval Office. No one else was present that I can recall. He had been invited to give a speech out west, perhaps at Yellowstone, I am not sure of this, but some well known natural site. The theme of the speech was to be a conservation message, environmental message. He was unable to go personally and asked Rogers Morton, then secretary of the interior, to present his speech for him. Morton did, and the president got lambasted I think by a *New York Times* editorial.

HKS: It was the World's Fair in Spokane, I think you are talking about.

RT: Is that what it was?

HKS: I remember reading about Morton read a speech for Ford. That must be the time.

RT: He got lambasted by the *New York Times* because his speech had emphasized the importance of striking a balance between the environment and business, or environment and jobs, or environment and the economy, whatever. He recounted this to me with some surprise and dismay, and he asked, "Russ, don't you believe in balance?" I said, "Of course, Mr. President," I said, "but may I give you a word of advice on this. You know the Republican Party tends to be viewed as the party of business and largely big business and to have a very pro business orientation, so when a Republican talks about balance that tends to be read frequently as tilt toward business." I said, "Now, my advice to you, sir, is that when you give an environmental speech, don't talk about the importance of balance. Let me do the balancing. If I don't do a proper job balancing these various interests, values, you can fire me. But when you get up there to give a speech on the environmental,

make a strong environmental speech so there is no question in people's mind about what you are trying to say." That is what I told him and he listened to me.

HKS: Who do you suppose wrote that speech for him?

RT: I have no idea. Could have been Bob Hartman who was his good friend and speech writer. It might have been written in the Department of the Interior, that would have been a possibility. Sent over to the White House where the speech writers may have massaged it a bit, but we never saw it at EPA. In fact, I never heard about the speech until after it was given.

HKS: A news item said, Train and Peterson have met with Ford on several occasions. That's the good thing because that is part of the openness of government. Did you and Peterson make joint ventures very often?

RT: Peterson and myself? No. I don't really think...

HKS: You may not have been there together, the way the item was written it sounded like you went over as a team and reported on the environment, but it may have been a sequence.

RT: I don't recall ever going to the White House with Peterson.

HKS: Did you know Ford when he was in Congress?

RT: Yes. Not well, but we knew each other. He knew who I was. He always called me by my first name. When I went to the White House to see him, we always had a very friendly relationship.

HKS: When I was preparing for this interview I went over to the Duke library to get the EPA annual reports, and the librarian said they don't have any here. I called the EPA library, and they said the agency doesn't issue an annual report. How do you report to Congress? What is the formal document that is sent over?

RT: There isn't any.

HKS: Is that the only agency that doesn't have an annual report?

RT: No. I don't know. Interior used to have an annual document. It was a nice, glossy, puff piece that...

HKS: Well, CEQ had a very solid annual...

RT: That was required by statute. The National Environmental Policy Act requires the CEQ to prepare an annual report. You file it with the Congress and that's the document you have seen.

HKS: Obviously an agency reports to the White House and to the Congress from time to time. What is the mechanism if there is no formal annual report?

RT: Generally speaking, the agency reports to the Congress in response to a committee chairman's invitation to come up and testify on a particular issue, it can be a broad issue, or a major bill, or it can be a relatively narrow problem of some sort. Almost always what the committee wants is the administrator, a deputy administrator, or an assistant administrator--those being the presidentially appointed officials of the agency. They want the politically responsible officials to testify, in most cases, unless there is some highly technical issue. If they just want to sit and talk about catalytic converters or something like that, they get an expert from the agency. By and large, they want the politically responsible officer. I think I counted up once that during my three, almost four, years as EPA administrator I testified before fifty-four different committees and subcommittees of the Congress.

HKS: Which suggests the breadth of the clout that EPA has.

RT: Yes, and a measure of the disorganization of the Congress. [laughter]

HKS: How did you report to the White House? You are an independent agency, so there is no cabinet person you report to. Who did you report to in the White House? Ehrlichman?

RT: Legally you report to the president. In practice, you usually don't report except when somebody calls you and says, "What the hell is going on?" or "What are you going to do about so and so?" Generally speaking that would be Ehrlichman or John Whitaker. Later on, Dick Fairbanks, who took Whitaker's place. Ford had several chiefs of staff--Mel Laird, Dick Cheney, and Don Rumsfeld, later secretary of defense, and our ambassador to NATO, too. As a matter of fact, all three of them were secretaries of defense at one time or another.

Anyway, I used to have direct communication with all of them on various matters. I remember that Mel Laird called me when I was out in Kansas City. We had a regional EPA office there. I was spending the night in the old Mullenbach--at least I think that's right--hotel, and I was staying in the presidential suite. I hasten to add that EPA didn't arrange presidential suites for me and this must have been a gesture by the hotel management. It was where Harry Truman used stay when he was president. It had a big grand piano in the corner, and there was a desk that I understood he used when he signed the Marshall Plan at the end of the war. So it was an interesting place to be staying in. [laughter] Mel Laird called me, and I think I probably told him just what I have told you now. He called me about lead in gasoline.

EPA had proposed regulations to reduce the level of lead in gasoline and the White House was getting a lot of complaints about the proposal. Laird asked me about the matter and told me they were getting a lot of complaints from industry and I guess others. So I told him why we were doing it and what the situation was. He said, "Okay, fine." That was the end of the matter as far as he was concerned. I didn't have any problems with somebody saying, "You can't do that, Train. Don't do that, Train." Sometimes they wanted an explanation. Laird certainly had no technical background in the field. So, if the president had confidence in me, I had a job to do. He assumed that I was doing the best job I could. If I said I wanted to move ahead on something like that--okay.

HKS: Except for the annual meetings with the OMB folks for the budget to agree on the request, there was no timetable for reports or anything else. 'This is now February, I've got to report to someone.' There is no annual report, it is a case by case basis.

RT: Right. I don't remember any annual report. There weren't any annual reports.

HKS: Okay.

RT: I might mention that in connection with the budget process, Ford reinstated the process of the president personally hearing agency appeals on their budgets. Nixon had done this in the beginning of his Administration. When I was undersecretary of the interior, I represented the department at those appeals. Hickel must have been away somewhere. I represented the department in presenting our appeals to the budget that had been given to us. This meeting with Nixon was in the Oval Office with probably the director of the Bureau of the Budget and other staff. You knew you couldn't pursue more than about three things, and you thought you could probably get one of them. So there was quite a strategy session beforehand to figure out what three things you were going to push for. [laughter] The president, for sure, wasn't going to overrule his director of budget on very many things. Nixon gave up his personal involvement in the process at some point and turned it over to his budget director. I think Roy Ash was OMB director at the time. I remember carrying appeals to him which was sort of difficult because he was the one who had made the decisions in the first place. Roy Ash was a fair person, but not entirely impartial. Ford reinstated the personal appeals and I remember going into the cabinet room for that purpose. He sat on one side of the cabinet table in the middle and I sat on the other side in the middle. It was the same kind of process that Nixon had followed. You got the same consideration, you couldn't get too much, and had to pick out two or three things that you thought were really important.

HKS: I don't know if it was government-wide, I assumed that it was, but within the Department of Agriculture at this time, there was a very severe constraint on travel, foreign travel. A deputy chief of the Forest Service would have to personally go over and talk to the assistant secretary and get permission to go to Europe to a conference. The chief of the Forest Service didn't have the authority to authorize travel, you had to go to the assistant secretary. Maybe there was some scandal about junkets or some such thing, does this ring any bells? It may have only been within Agriculture, I don't know.

RT: There are always constraints on travel in government, budgets don't really provide anything much. EPA had extensive international contacts, we were looked upon as the primary technical resource by countries all over the world. We tried to respond as much as we could but never had any appropriation for doing this kind of thing. It was always tough to find the money to support that sort of activity.

HKS: Before we get to specific issues, would you care to comment at all on the Reagan years and Ann Burford as head of EPA and how that turned sour. You obviously maintained an interest in the agency.

RT: I wasn't very close to EPA at that time and anyway I was already by then president of the World Wildlife Fund. World Wildlife Fund's issues don't tend to be EPA issues as a rule. However,

I did maintain an interest in what was happening over there. I determined after talking with some other past officials in EPA that the budget that the Reagan administration was proposing would really seriously damage EPA and its ability to carry out its various missions. I wrote an op-ed piece for the *Washington Post* very critical of Ann Burford's administration of the agency, particularly with respect to budget cutbacks, as well as enforcement and research. She had been in office over a year and I had never met her, never talked to her. Bill Ruckelshaus had told me that he had called her something like five times before she returned a call. I think he had actually gone in to finally see her which was important to him. I think at the time he probably was representing the paper and pulp industry. It was important in his work that he see the administrator.

I decided I didn't want to put myself in the position of making a number of calls and never getting them returned, etc. I felt that I was an elder statesman in the environmental area [laughter] and a fellow Republican, and it would not be out of order if she were to call me at some point and ask whether we might get together sometime. At any event, that op-ed piece was highly critical, it was entitled by the *Washington Post*, I didn't write the title for it, "The Destruction of EPA." It got a fair amount of notice. She called me up, very upset, and said, "Perhaps we should have met before." I said, "Well, that's very likely true. I will be happy to come over to see you anytime you want." She said she would like to talk to me and she wanted to set things straight. So I did, I went over, we set up an appointment in a week or two, so I went over and saw her. Spent about an hour, just the two of us, and she told me what she was doing. I don't really have any further comment on that.

HKS: Do you have a sense that she had marching orders from the White House to do the things she was doing?

RT: I used to say she got her marching orders from Jim Watt. I don't know whether they came from White House or Jim Watt, or a combination thereof. Her husband worked for Watt at Interior.

HKS: I was intrigued when she was on the nightly news so frequently and the comment that her husband was an official in the Department of the Interior. I thought that was interesting, he's head of BLM, but apparently Dan Rather's script writers feel that the public won't know what the BLM is, so if they had just said the Department of the Interior. This is supposition on my part, but he was never identified as head of BLM, [laughter]

RT: That was my only association with her, really.

HKS: During the break I was looking at the photos here. There is a photo of President Reagan and you shaking hands, "With best wishes." What was the purpose of that during the Reagan years? He was thanking you for something.

RT: I think that may have been a Rose Garden ceremony in which the president presented a World Wildlife Fund award called the J. Paul Getty Award for International Conservation. As I remember, that year we had two co-winners from Costa Rica and the White House agreed to have the awards ceremony in the Rose Garden with the president. It is the only time it ever happened. He made a little speech. I think the picture shows me pinning a panda pin on his lapel. (The panda is the logo of WWF.)

HKS: This was after the EPA problems that he was trying to show he was an environmentalist or some such thing?

RT: I don't know. [laughter]

HKS: You mentioned, to get to specific issues, that EPA was a world wide resource for other governments for technical information. Do you want to expand on that, or is that statement enough?

RT: I think it is pretty much enough. EPA had bilateral relationships with Japan and Germany, West Germany in those days, the Soviet Union, and elsewhere.

Soviet Union

HKS: You took a trip to the Soviet Union and wrote a two-part article for *American Forests*, was that part of this, was that an official trip?

RT: I don't remember that particular article, but I made at least one trip a year to the Soviet Union following the approval of the U.S./USSR joint agreement on the environment which was signed by Nixon and Brezhnev at the summit meeting during Nixon's first visit to Moscow.

HKS: Are these fact-finding tours? What do you accomplish, other than the fact that you go over there and they show you what they are doing...

RT: We had a commission made up on the U.S. side of myself, as chairman, and either an undersecretary or an assistant secretary from each of the other U.S. agencies involved in implementing the agreement. That would have been obviously the State Department, and also Interior, Agriculture, Transportation, and Energy. I can't think of others, there probably were others as well. The Soviets had equivalent opposite numbers. The agreement called for an annual meeting of the commission itself. We would meet alternately either in the U.S. or the USSR. In the year in which the meetings were held in the U.S., I would make a personal visit to the Soviet Union along with my staff coordinator for the agreement. We would meet with our two opposite numbers in the Soviet Union and go over the various projects underway and see whether there were problems in terms of the whole agreement and its implementation. That was usually a one or two day affair in Moscow. I, because I was over there and because I was curious, would always use the occasion to avail myself of Soviet hospitality and take a trip around various places in the Soviet Union that I was interested in seeing.

HKS: Did technical people precede you to develop an itinerary, so you could be briefed on what you were going to see?

RT: The trip wasn't always related directly to the agreement. For example, I went to Bokhara and Samarkand. These were of interest to me as a tourist, and generally speaking any place I wanted to go I was welcome to go to. I suppose we knew where they wouldn't have wanted me to go, and we probably didn't ask for that. Generally, I would, some months in advance, indicate what kind of visit I would like to make. For example, I wanted to go to Lake Baikal, which had had considerable

publicity because of two polluting paper plants the Soviets had built on the lake. Actually, I think there had been one or two articles in the *New Yorker Magazine* about the problem. So I wanted to go to Lake Baikal and I did, accompanied by my wife and a pretty limited staff. I think I would have had one person with me and that would have been the coordinator on the U.S. side and usually be accompanied by the coordinator on the Soviet side, by the chairman on the Soviet side to the extent he was able get away for that amount of time, and usually by an individual I assume was KGB, keeping eye on all of it.

HKS: When John McGuire and some other foresters went to the Soviet Union, some of the meetings were very hostile. I assume because the political situation hadn't calmed down enough and detente was on paper, but in effect the Soviets were doing as little as possible apparently to cooperate. Did you sense that? ...each trip got more open?

RT: I never remember any hostility of any kind whatsoever.

HKS: Hotel rooms were bugged.

RT: Oh yes, I expected that. That was a fact of life in the Soviet Union. I didn't put that down to hostility, they do the same thing with themselves. The only time that I found that annoying was, I used to carry a little notebook either inside my coat pocket or my shirt pocket, a little 3 x 5 notebook, and just jot down things to remind myself of a particular occasion, or names or something like that, and I used to keep it with me. Well, one day staying in the hotel in Khabarovsk, which is way over on the Pacific side, a fairly good sized city in the bend of the Amur River, right on the border with China, I remember going down to breakfast in the hotel and I wanted to make a note about something, I had forgotten to put the notebook in my pocket. When I went back up to the room, the notebook was gone. It was the first opportunity they had had in two weeks and they grabbed it. [laughter] They took the notebook to see what the hell I was writing in it. They never brought it back either which really annoyed me. I mentioned it, but I never saw it again. The Soviets were reasonably agreeable in all our meetings. They had a fairly limited interest in the agreement. Their main interest was in getting access to American manufacturing plants, production lines, and things of that kind. Or, getting access to American computer technology. The teams who were working on automobile emission control technology, they were very popular with the Soviets.

HKS: I would assume that smog in Moscow was a problem?

RT: It became a problem, it hadn't really been, they didn't have too much in the way of automobiles. But it did become a problem, and they had no controls on their vehicles at all. Their chairman, who was Yuri Israel, was visiting in the U.S. and I took him in to meet President Ford. I alerted President Ford beforehand that I understood that Israel was going to raise the question of getting access to a certain computer technology which they said they needed for air pollution modeling, etc. which would have required an exception to our export licensing program as far as the Soviets were concerned. Ford handled it very well. He did bring it up, my Soviet friend, and Ford said, "We'll look into it and the department with the responsibility, I guess Commerce, will handle it in the regular course of business." They never got it.

They were obviously way, way behind us in just about every field that you could think of with some exceptions, such as earthquake prediction technology. They had done quite a lot of work on that. We had scientists from Cal Tech actually living in Dushanbe, the capital of Uzbekistan. They were building a huge dam down there, a huge earthen dam. I think the biggest in the world. I visited it while it was under construction. As a dam of that size fills in behind, the weight of the water tends to trigger earth tremors, even full-scale earthquakes. They had set up a computerized network involving the drilling of deep holes in the earth in two bands around the dam site, one perhaps a quarter of a mile away or a half a mile away which the Soviets manned. And one considerably further out which was manned by Americans. Those Americans were living in Dushanbe, in very good houses provided by the Soviets. I think that our people felt that we were really in a position to learn something from them.

HKS: Their purpose was to warn the people downstream? To evacuate if the dam gave away, or what?

RT: Earthquake prediction is an important science in the United States particularly in California. Obviously the immediate purpose was to provide a warning in case there was an earthquake in the vicinity. Very sensitive measuring devices would be lowered down these bore holes and would measure changes in the gases that exist at that level, such as argon and others, I am just guessing, I think argon may have been one of them. Apparently, the mix of those gases undergoes changes with a change in the pressure on the surrounding rock. They had all of these holes and the measuring devices hooked up to a computer system in Dushanbe. In any event, our scientists thought they were learning something from this experience. That was one example of a positive thing from our side. Another was that the Soviets tend to be very good at mathematics, particularly theoretical math. Not the Soviets, the Russians. This was an area where they had developed some skills in air pollution modelling, environmental modelling, and so forth. But in other areas, obviously automobile emission control technology, air pollution controls generally, water effluent controls, pesticide management, wildlife management, in all of these areas the Soviets were way behind us. The wildlife management people of the U.S. told me that the Soviets were at sort of the 1930 level as far as our people were concerned. Now mind you, this would have been in the '70s. Almost a half century behind.

HKS: What accounts for that? The rigidity of government? Lack of money? Because the books are available. It is possible to keep up with what is going on. Why wouldn't they have?

RT: Isolation, I think, lack of communication invariably has something to do with it. But, more than that, there was sort of an ideological fix that socialism cannot pollute by definition, and so they tended to disregard these problems. In fact, I attended a meeting of the Presidium, I can't remember which of the various institutions but it was in the Kremlin and it was a very large hall and it was filled with delegates from all over Soviet Union and up at the top was the premiere, Brezhnev. I guess there was the three of them in those days. Brezhnev, Podgorny, and Kosygin. The opening speech was made by the chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology, and he actually started his speech with more or less the words I have used. The fact that by definition socialism does not pollute the way that capitalism does. However, having made that rather obligatory statement, he went on to say: of course, there are some problems. [laughter] That was more or less the tenor of the speech. But beyond that, their problem was just the way the system

worked. This wouldn't have been true with respect to wildlife and things of that kind. But with respect to pollution controls, the problem with his thesis about socialism is that in the Soviet model, the enforcer and the polluter is the same guy--the government. I think that is an inherent problem in that system as far as pollution control is concerned. As a result, there are really no incentives for controlling pollution in the normal sense. You don't have the public opinion pressure as you do in a society such as ours. As a result, you would never see the whole environmental ferment of the '70s and the flood of legislation through the Congress and all the initiatives taken by Nixon and Ford. The new institutions of CEQ and EPA. They had none of this.

HKS: Where they curious about NEPA?

RT: Probably a little bit, but they didn't much bother with it. It would have been totally foreign to their whole system. I don't think they ever instituted anything of the kind. The factory manager, his incentive was to meet his production targets and anything else was a distraction. So all the forces, really, worked against any kind of effective environmental regulation. As far as wildlife management is concerned, they had a lot of protected areas. I visited some. They were maintained and in fairly good condition. I think their budgets were very low and the priorities weren't there. Much of the public opinion pressure that did exist in the Soviet Union came to bear through the scientific community, the academicians. They are the fellows that really blew the whistle on Lake Baikal and began to get articles into print in the Soviet Union criticizing the situation. So, even at that time, you couldn't generalize about the Soviet Union being a police state with nobody having the ability to express themselves. That is just something that wasn't true. There was a limited form of self-expression, especially by various elites, such as the scientific community.

HKS: So the minister of forests, or paper, authorized the construction of those mills on Lake Baikal. But they didn't have the broader interest.

RT: That's true. They made some effort. They had secondary treatment for those paper plants. In fact, when I visited the outflow of effluents into the lake from the plant, they had a woman out there in a white nurse's costume which made it all look very sanitary, [laughter] She dipped up a glass of the effluent and offered it to me to taste. Actually, I did.

HKS: Unlike Nixon.

RT: Unlike Nixon. He was probably more sensible. I later discovered that it was not only the effluent from the paper mill but from the neighboring village as well. [laughter] So I had somewhat of an unusual cocktail.

HKS: But you had no after effects?

RT: I had no ill effects. The problem was that Lake Baikal is of such extraordinary purity and is such a unique water resource containing one-fifth of all the fresh water on the planet in one lake, six hundred kilometers long and extremely deep.

HKS: That's a world heritage situation.

RT: Yes it is.

HKS: I read about seals in Lake Baikal. Was the evolutionary process, how did they get there?

RT: They were cut off from the sea, many, many thousands of years ago.

HKS: But they must have evolved into a separate species by now.

RT: They have. I never saw one in the lake proper. I saw them, one or two, in a laboratory environment. I think they were going to ship them somewhere for display. Some exhibition outside the Soviet Union. They looked just like any seal to me, although quite small. I don't know much about seals. They had quite a few species endemic just to Lake Baikal.

HKS: How about tropical nations, Latin America and Africa in terms of EPA's outreach? In some sense they weren't any poorer than the Soviet Union but they still lacked the technology.

RT: I simply am not familiar with this. I presume there were some associations, but most of the EPA contacts would have been with what you would think of more as the industrialized nations.

HKS: AID probably handled a lot of that officially.

RT: AID often was a source of funding for EPA technical assistance in a given area.

Energy Policy

HKS: Energy policy. That's a pretty broad statement. It is still in the press. Energy needs versus environmental needs. Is there something specific that you want to comment on? We talked about this earlier when we talked about Ruckelshaus--were you under pressure to go easy on energy?

RT: Yes. There was a lot of pressure at that time. From the White House, from the energy czar of the day, whoever it might have been. We had a succession of them, John Love, former governor of Colorado, Bill Simon, later secretary of the treasury, Frank Zarb, John Sawhill, and from the Congress. There was quite a bit heat generated on this subject, and there was a feeling that, to the extent environmental standards inhibited the use of fuels, they should be relaxed. Looking back on it, I don't think we ever relaxed anything.

HKS: How much discretion did you feel you had under law. When you say you are relaxing, you are not enforcing the law, is it that kind of discretion?

RT: I can't really remember the particular cases, now. Typically the EPA administrator had very little discretion in the application of law. That has always been one of the complaints, by Bill Ruckelshaus and by myself, specifically, to the Congress that they don't permit any flexibility within the agency. The agency has to hue a very tight line, and you move one way you get sued and you move the other way you get sued. None of us felt that it was the proper way to legislate, but environmentalists wanted everything spelled out, they didn't trust the government to do a good environmental job. They wanted to make sure that the language was there so they would have something to sue on in case the need arose. Industry really felt pretty much the same way. If they were able to get certain protections for themselves in the course of discussions with the Congress, they wanted to make damn sure that these were spelled out in the statute. One of the consequences of all this, of course, was legislation of great complexity, with detailed prescriptions as to the administrator's responsibilities, and very little left to administrative decision. Regulations promulgated to implement such legislation becomes even more complex and voluminous as the

lawyers try to address every conceivable situation. Overall--and this situation was exacerbated after Watergate--it became the norm that Congress had very little confidence in the good intentions of the executive branch. It is much different, of course, under a parliamentary system, and legislation tends to be much simpler and more general, with great discretion left to the government. The problem may be unavoidable under our system emphasizing separation of powers. I guess I would have to add that the general lack of trust on the part of the public in their government at all levels doesn't help either.

HKS: So the industry wanted certainty.

RT: Yes.

HKS: Someone wouldn't come along and change the rules on them.

RT: I always felt and Ruckelshaus always felt that this was a mistake on the part of the Congress.

HKS: You testified on NEPA. Did you recall feeling that way at the time? I guess it is not NEPA that is in question, I guess it is EPA. Marching orders we are talking about.

RT: I talked about this primarily as I was leaving EPA. I think they had a hearing at the time of my departure, really just to give me a chance to say anything I wanted to say. That is pretty much what I said. That would be in the record of the Committee on Public Works in the Senate. We had a lot of fusses over energy. Some of the more colorful ones that come to mind: one was during the Nixon administration pretty much toward the end I think. Bill Simon was the energy czar, Haig was chief of staff, and we had a meeting in the Cabinet Room in the West Wing of the White House with Nixon presiding. I was sitting about two or three to Nixon's left. There were probably about eight or nine people at the meeting. There was discussion about ..., seems to me it had to do with the allocations of fuels, I'm not sure now what that meant. Nixon got it fixed in his mind that it was important to relax the sulfur oxide emission standards, and that was the proposal before the group. Now you asked the question, how could you do that? I'm not just sure offhand. I don't believe we had the authority to relax the standards, and I opposed this proposal insofar as the environmental aspect was concerned. I didn't think the action necessary or would really do much to help the energy situation. In any event, Nixon then went out into the press room, probably with Simon, and announced the allocation program and that the environmental sulfur oxide standards were going to be relaxed by EPA to make this possible. I wasn't invited into that meeting with the press, nor had I been told what, if any, announcement was going to be made. I didn't have any idea what they were saying. I was called that evening at home by, I think, a *Washington Post* reporter who covered environment in those days, George Wilson, I think--he later covered the Department of Defense. He told me what the president had said in the press conference. He said that the press had asked the president--perhaps it was Wilson who asked--whether Train supported the relaxation. And he said that the president replied that I did. Wilson said, "Mr. Train, is that true?" I said, "Of course not. We had the meeting and I opposed the relaxation. It was unnecessary for one thing." Or maybe I said we didn't have the authority. Following your line. Whatever it was. I said I had not approved it. And we had no plans to do so. Well, that was reported in the *Post* the next morning. I never heard anything further about it.

All of this was interesting, in part, because obviously Nixon intended to overrule my opposition, yet did not tell me so to my face but went out to make his announcement to the press without my knowing--until a member of the press told me.

HKS: Obviously, you didn't say I'll get back to you in the morning. You call the White House and find out what is going on. You felt free to just say what happened. Did you have a typical perception of autonomy for people in your position in government, that they would have been calling the next morning and saying, what is this in the *Post*?

RT: It was a very unusual situation because the president and his energy team were simply trying to go around me in a very disingenuous way. [laughter] I guess I just didn't know any reason why I should be cautious in what I said. I felt that I had to make the situation plain. There were hearings up on the Hill on sulfur content in fuel at that time, and I could not leave my position unclear. I think when Phil Shabecoff wrote his book, reading about it within the past year, and I can't recall the title of it, it is sort of a history of the environmental movement. When he came to interview me (he used to be the environmental reporter for the *New York Times*) he said at some point, "Russ, what was the single greatest accomplishment you thought you made while you were at EPA?" Well, I said sort of facetiously, "I can't really think of anything, Phil." That was sort of the end of the conversation [laughter]. I thought later, "my god, that's going to be a terrible thing to have in his book" [laughter]. It struck me that during all the presumed energy crisis days there in '73 and '74 and maybe beyond that, we never really lost an important battle at EPA in terms of the energy relationship. We stuck to our guns. Nobody ever threatened us with getting fired or anything like that. I think we managed to defend the environmental position and keep it intact throughout that time. We really had the support of Congress in that too, particularly in our committees, the Republican side as well.

I had one issue during the Ford administration concerning an issue described as "significant deterioration." It meant that whatever the air standards may be, you can't permit significant deterioration in the air quality of the area. This was particularly important in portions of the West where perhaps there were not major polluting sources. In any event some of the conservative senators not on our Public Works Committee cooked up a bill to gut this requirement of the law and did so with the consent and cooperation of the congressional liaison people in the White House. I thought this was outrageous. They never consulted with me. For the White House, at the least the White House staff, to be taking a position on environmental legislation that was contrary to the policy that we were pursuing, I thought was absolutely unacceptable. I went up and saw the ranking Republican on the committee, Howard Baker, and he agreed with me. He consulted with all the other Republicans on the committee, there were about five all told, they all agreed. If, for nothing else, they didn't like having their jurisdiction fiddled with in this way. They asked for a meeting with the president which he gave them. The meeting was held in the Cabinet Room of the White House. All five Republicans came, led by Baker. The others would have been John Chafee, Pete Domenici, Jim McClure, and Jim Buckley. The president was there. I was there. I guess the congressional liaison staff in the White House was there as well. The Republican senators told the president that this kind of nonsense had to stop, and that they supported me and wanted to White House support for the proposal withdrawn. And the president did.

There were things of this kind going on which weren't always comfortable, but I will have to say that that kind of support from our key committee was extremely important. It was great having it come from the Republican side. If all the Democrats had marched to the White House, it probably would not have accomplished a damn thing. There were a good many other critical happenings in the energy area. I knew all the energy czars really quite well, they were all personal friends of mine which made the relationship not difficult.

HKS: This was later, but the president created a Department of Energy, but there was always talk about abolishing it. By your observation, is that more or less effective in dealing with energy than having an energy czar, which was Nixon's approach to a lot of things.

RT: Oh, I think it is important to have a Department of Energy. There is an enormous set of functions, and they do need to be brought together. I think the energy czars were never particularly effective as czars, even though they were pretty effective people. John Love, former governor of Colorado, was not very strong, just a nice guy. He was too nice for the job. Simon and Zarb were both extremely effective bureaucrats, but would have been far more effective if they had been running a department. They did create ERDA, the Energy Research and Development Agency. I guess Zarb headed that. That was sort of an interim step on the way to the Department of Energy.

Degree of Autonomy

HKS: That changes the ground rules a bit. Now you have a department that is outside the White House. Where the energy czar theoretically reports directly to the president, I am not sure how to characterize it, but presidential authority or influence is lessened. Is that true?

RT: That's true. An energy czar can only deal with major issues. He can't be running all the energy programs scattered around the government. The secretary of the Department of Energy does run all the energy programs. As far as energy policy is concerned, the White House still maintains pretty tight control. During the Bush administration, I guess, the Department of Energy developed a national energy policy which, although not perfect, did put a great deal of emphasis on conservation and greater energy efficiency as an alternative source of energy. Much of that was knocked out by the White House. It became largely a supply-side kind of policy in what went up to the Congress. So the White House continued quite a strong role. My impression is that the White House staffs and the presidents themselves have tended more and more to maintain tight control over what is going on. I wouldn't have cared for that very much. I think you can gather from much of my own history that I had a lot of leeway. Maybe some of that was due to special times. For part of the time the environment was sort of the in-thing, and almost any proposal would get through. Then we were faced by the energy problems and we had much tougher sledding. But this was quickly followed by the disintegration of the Nixon White House during Watergate. Then, although the energy problems continued during the Ford Administration, the Ford White House was a much more relaxed institution. They did not try to maintain tight control and generally let you run your own show. Certainly during the Reagan and Bush administrations, the White House kept a very tight rein on the agency, particularly on EPA. I remember when George Bush was vice president, he was assigned by Reagan to the task of reducing regulatory burdens, and he headed up a committee for that purpose. Essentially it was him and his staff and some staff from OMB. A lot of this was directed at EPA. The vice president held a meeting one day in his office to which he

invited about five heads of environmental organizations. I was there for World Wildlife Fund. The head of the National Wildlife Federation, Jay Hair, was there. Bill Reilly from the Conservation Foundation, later head of EPA. Paul Pritchard of the National Parks and Conservation Association. Jack Lorenz of the Izaak Walton League. I sat next to the vice president. It was just a small dining room table kind of thing in his office. He was sitting at the head explaining the whole process and what they were doing and when he got through, I'd known him for many years as a personal friend, he turned to me and said, "Russ, what do you think of all that?" I said, "Well, Mr. Vice President, if this had been in effect when I was head of EPA I would have resigned." [laughter] He looked a little bit startled but didn't say anything in response to that. We just went on.

HKS: I would assume that when the White House exercises authority over something, that committees in Congress get pretty agitated. Would they challenge this? Is that a correct observation?

RT: Yes. There is some tugging going on both ways constantly about the balance of power. The principal target over the years has been the Office of Management and Budget insofar as Congress is concerned. First, your testimony is reviewed by OMB before you deliver it. OMB tries to ensure conformity with administration policy and to make sure that the interest of other agencies is taken into account and that you are not just going off on your own. Sometimes you get into real arguments with OMB over your testimony. Those arguments are principally handled by staff. But OMB was always the villain as far as Congress was concerned. If you had a friendly relationship with the committee, there was always sort of an implicit understanding that when you said something they didn't like it was because of OMB. Or if you hadn't done something it was because you couldn't get the money for it. In any event, that was probably true a good deal of the time. Now, of course, during the Bush administration, there was the Quayle Commission on Competitiveness, sort of the successor to the Bush Committee on Regulatory Reform.

Operations within the White House and the vice president's office tend to be somewhat out of the public eye and they are not part of the regular administrative procedures. They do not involve public hearings and notice and so there is a lot of complaint in the Congress about things of this kind because something is going on behind the scenes, undisclosed influences being brought to bear. And presumably sinister. That is a fairly familiar source of friction between the Congress and the executive branch.

HKS: I recently read in the @MDBR US News comments about Clinton getting his health care package ready to go public. This was maybe two weeks ago. A White House spokesman whoever that happens to be said, "We had to get rid of a lot of garbage, we had to take care of the spotted owl." I thought what an insensitive way to talk about an issue in Pacific Northwest, it is not a lot of garbage. Who is this spokesman? I don't know how typical that is.

RT: I think the Clinton administration has a particular problem due to the lack of experience of most of the people working in the White House. They are mostly quite young, and often this is their first government job. Maybe their first job of any kind.

HKS: There must have been a lot of pressure, or difficulty, in dealing during the oil boycott with strip mining of coal. I mean here was an alternate source of energy and we were making it more expensive to get. Is that a correct observation?

RT: I think so. Regulation of coal mining comes under the Department of the Interior, and what you are talking about occurred long after I left the department. Newspaper reports would have it that the mining laws, particularly the surface mining laws were being very laxly enforced during the Reagan administration which I had no direct knowledge of myself.

HKS: How about the use of pesticides which is the major issue of agriculture? Was that ever a tough one to deal with?

RT: Yes.

HKS: Was the science agreed upon? Or was that debated whether or not there was too much in the food chain and all the other issues?

RT: Science is always debated. Nobody ever brings you undisputed scientific opinion on anything. At least it seems to me that is the case. Yes, pesticide regulation was an extremely sensitive issue. The pesticide law, technically the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, is usually referred to by its acronym, FIFRA. Jurisdiction over that was in the agriculture committees of the House and Senate, and those committees were interested in the economic welfare of farmers and in agricultural production and had little or no sympathy or interest in environmental regulation. I'd say that is a fairly safe generalization. Whenever we had a difficult regulatory decision to make with respect to the use of pesticides or herbicides it was usually the subject of a very unpleasant hearing. Not always, but I can remember some very uncomfortable ones. Generally speaking the members just took turns giving you one unshirted hell. Of course you were following the statute which had been passed by the Congress, so that was your defense. You just had to hang in there and take it. One of the most powerful people in the House in those days was Jamie Whitten, later chairman of the full Appropriations Committee. I think he still is the nominal chairman but he has had a severe stroke and is really incapacitated. Congressman Natcher is acting as chairman. Well Jamie, in those days, was chairman of the agriculture subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee and that had jurisdiction over EPA pesticide regulations or activities. I will say that my experience with Jamie was that he would give me a certain amount of hell in private about something or other but when time came for me to make a decision that I knew was going to make him very unhappy, I would call him up a few hours before it was announced and let him know what I was doing, he would say something like, "Russ, you know I don't agree with you, but I appreciate your call." I seldom had any further flack from him. The one thing I learned early on in this business is that members of Congress hate to be taken by surprise.

HKS: Consultation is very important.

RT: If somebody should come up to Jamie Whitten on the floor and say what the heck is this guy Train doing about so and so, that doesn't make any sense at all, and if Whitten didn't know about it, he would feel embarrassed. And rightly so. That was often 90 percent of the relationship, just keeping him informed.

HKS: That is not a very mysterious..., when you explain it, it makes so much sense.

RT: It does make sense.

HKS: Don't most agency heads feel that way?

RT: It may take them a year or two to find that out. [laughter] And go through a certain amount of pain in the process. I usually had a pretty good working relationship with... My principal appropriations subcommittee was headed by Ed Boland of Massachusetts. You couldn't have asked for a fairer, better chairman. With him, the secret was, he had a good staff and I had an excellent staff. The key individual for us in that regard was Al Alm whom I mentioned before was my assistant administrator for planning and management and had been chief of staff for me at the Council on Environmental Quality. He had originally come from the old Bureau of the Budget. So, he knew the whole process, the appropriations process in and out. He would always see to it that the subcommittee staff was kept informed on everything we were doing that had budgetary significance. They almost always were very helpful. Never had really severe problems. That is just an aside.

I had one problem with the Republican side, this is just a silly little story. A fairly junior member of the appropriations subcommittee on the Republican side, he came from California, I can't remember his name now. He was considered to be a very anti-environment member of Congress, and the League of Conservation Voters had by that time developed their list of the Dirty Dozen. You remember that?

HKS: Right.

RT: He was one of the Dirty Dozen. They sent an appeal for funds to my house for support of this Dirty Dozen campaign. My wife sent in a contribution in her name, I think it was \$100, something like that. I didn't know a thing about it. Well, this particular congressman, either him or his staff, got the list of contributors to the Dirty Dozen campaign, and there was Aileen B. Train. He wanted to know if she was any relation of mine. I said, "That's my wife." [laughter] So that became a somewhat sensitive problem. [laughter] I ended up going around his district with him and appearing at various events with him. He sat with me in a press conference in his district one time. I didn't endorse his environmental record, I don't know what I said, but I said nice things about him personally I guess. He was a nice enough fellow socially. But I concluded by saying, any elected official's record on environmental matters should be carefully looked at by the electorate and be weighed in how you cast your vote. So I don't know whether he felt he had gotten something from me, or not.

HKS: Presumably there was some justification for him being a member of the Dirty Dozen. If he didn't like that, why didn't he change his vote? I'm being naive here, but he obviously felt strongly that environment was overrated or however you would characterize it, but he didn't like the publicity, it seems.

RT: I think he got defeated, actually. It went away as far as I was concerned as a problem.

HKS: I remember reading if one pound of DDT is good, two pounds is twice as good. How do you educate the farmer? Is that for the Soil Conservation Service? I am trying to figure out the role of EPA with on-the-ground solutions to so many of these issues.

RT: Of course, that is a problem for EPA. EPA does not have what I call a retail distribution system which the Department of Agriculture sure as heck has. DOA has a county agent all across the United States and county agents are pretty well, at least they were, pretty well imbued with the more-chemicals-the-better view of agriculture. I think there has been considerable change in that respect but the fact still is, EPA has no real way of reaching the agricultural community at the grass roots. The regional offices of the EPA, I guess there are ten around the country, typically had one or two professional pesticide people on the staff to cover four states or something like that. That was an impossibility. All they can do is deal with the paper work, let alone get out and visit a farm. So that is a real problem for EPA.

I don't know how that can really be solved. I think one of the best educators is the price of pesticides and herbicides. Farmers operate on a fairly small margin as a rule. I farm on the eastern shore of Maryland and I don't know how anybody makes a living at it. Of course, I've got a relatively small acreage. As the costs have gone up on a lot of these chemical products, farmers have become sensitive, a good deal more sensitive to how much they use. That is the best educator I can think of. Farmers, by and large, I think are learning. It may be a generational thing. The younger generation typically knows more about integrated pest management and non-chemical approaches to managing the land.

HKS: How about the production side? Dow Chemical and others, were they hard to deal with? Sort of like the tobacco industry, they never stopped insisting that things were going to be okay.

RT: They used to defend their products with vigor.

HKS: And they had science to back them up. They said they did.

RT: Yeah. Usually they had their scientific studies and we had our scientific studies [laughter]. The deregistration of a pesticide was a somewhat cumbersome process, but we went through it. Ruckelshaus did it with DDT. I dealt with aldrin, dieldrin, heptachlor, and endrin--quite a host of them--also fungicides--and it was a rather carefully outlined administrative procedure that had to be gone through. Then you made a decision, and you had to write out an opinion. It was pretty much of a judicial kind of process.

HKS: When the Forest Service appealed the use of DDT to control tussock moth in eastern Oregon.

RT: Before you get to that, I had one problem that was with a small chemical company by the name of Velsicol, I think it is no longer in business. They made some of the pesticides that I just mentioned, probably chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides, such as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin. They took our regulatory activities almost violently to heart and they were always issuing press releases attacking me. I remember for a period of time, whenever I held a press conference in some city on some issue--not necessarily involving pesticides--there would be someone representing Velsicol

unannounced, sitting sort of in the back row. I'd start saying something and this voice would start saying, "Liar. Liar."

HKS: My goodness.

RT: That was the Velsicol Company. Later, after I left EPA and became president of the World Wildlife Fund, Velsicol came under new management and the new chairman asked me one day to have lunch with him here in Washington, which I did. He knew some of this background. I filled him in on a bit more. He invited me to come out to meet with all of his management people and to talk to them about regulation, which I did. It was an interesting occasion.

HKS: Ruckelshaus commented one time when he went to work for Weyerhaeuser, how he laid it out to the company that government regulation was a fact of life. And, essentially stop bitching about it and start working within the system, you'll make more money if you play ball than if you oppose it. Do you think he probably did that? Would he actually stand up at a stockholders meeting or executive committee meeting or whatever.

RT: I don't know. That sounds typically Ruckelshaus. He is a very pragmatic individual and that sounds typically like what he might do. I don't know what forums he might have used for expressing such views. I doubt that he would have used a public occasion to address his own management.

DDT and the Tussock Moth

HKS: Conceivably that is why he was brought in. The company needed somebody. George Weyerhaeuser wanted someone there who would bring everyone around. We are getting off the subject here. I started to ask you about an agency applying for a permit to use DDT, such as the Forest Service did on a couple of occasions--at least one. Was this a difficult process to get permission to use DDT? The monitoring requirements must have been...

RT: This was in '73, it may have started in '72, that the cycle of the tussock moth population was peaking, and was going to get worse. And it was already being quite destructive. When I went into EPA, in September of '73, that issue was on my desk to deal with. The Forest Service had applied for the right to use DDT under certain controlled circumstances in those northwestern forests, utilizing an exception in the deregistration of DDT. I may not have my legal phraseology right. But, there was an exception both for the use of DDT if essential to the protection of health, or I guess a sort of cataclysmic natural disaster which was claimed that the tussock moth was. I don't see how human health was being affected by the tussock moth. There was a lot of very strong feeling on the issue as you know. I got a tremendous amount of political heat. Every senator from the three states, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, all six senators favored the use of DDT. All members without exception of the House delegation from all three states urged the use of DDT. All three governors were strongly in favor of the use of DDT. This was a bipartisan full press. I finally gave in. I gave permission to use DDT under what we felt were tightly controlled circumstances. Although there was some basis for feeling that the tussock moth population had peaked and would then die down of its own accord, which is what does happen naturally in its normal cycle. But the feeling was we couldn't risk waiting for that for another year. So I permitted the use of DDT. It was

a very unhappy decision because all the environmental community was up in arms over it. I made the announcement in Seattle, called a press conference in Seattle. I will never forget it. There were local environmentalists there, and several of them were sitting there with tears streaming down their cheeks at the horror of this decision. However, it was done and the tussock moth went away as a problem. I don't know that it has ever come back, has it? I don't remember hearing much about the tussock moth ever since.

HKS: I haven't either.

RT: That has been ten years now. Nor have I ever heard of any particular damage caused by the use of DDT in this instance. But that I am not sure of. I don't think there was.

HKS: That's the case. Carefully controlled application of DDT does not cause unacceptable damage to the environment. At least in terms of the tussock moth, why not use it more?

RT: I don't want to really argue the DDT issue here. It is much too technical to be dealt with briefly. It is a chlorinated hydrocarbon and, thus, does not breakdown in the natural environment for a very long period of time. Therefore, it remains in the environment and typically builds up in the tissues of whatever ingests it and it tends to accumulate the higher you go up in the food chain to the point where, for example, on the coast, ospreys and in the west the eagles finally can't successfully produce eggs that will hatch--they are thin shelled and break. And populations just plummet which was true of the osprey certainly. The osprey has now come back very well, I think primarily because of getting rid of DDT. So it is not something to be used casually. I don't know of any other uses that have been permitted of it since then.

HKS: It is on the news right now about the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

RT: I saw that this morning. I didn't have a chance to read it.

HKS: You can come down with various forms of cancer if you have been exposed to it. When I was in the Navy in the late '50s on Guam, we were sprayed routinely with DDT. We would be sitting at an outdoor movie and they'd come by and spray us.

Leaving Government

HKS: You stayed through the Ford administration?

RT: Yes.

HKS: So when Carter came in, it was logical for you to move on.

RT: I left. I told Doug Costle, my successor, I was going to use the car and driver until 12 noon on January 20, 1977, which I did. I am not sure whether the administrator still has a car and driver. That used to be one of my Senate Appropriation Committee annual dialogues. Senator Proxmire was chairman of the Senate subcommittee and had a thing about my use of a car and driver. He would read various laws that talked about the use of autos by secretary of departments, "Are you a

secretary of a department?" "No, sir." Well, he got a lot of publicity back home. It was always a big story in his local newspapers about how he had given hell to the administrator of EPA. That is always a popular target. But nothing would ever happen. I continued to use the car. I found it very useful. I used the car in getting from my home to work and I think they may have outlawed that by now. Rather than spending a half an hour, myself, fighting the traffic, looking for parking places, something like that, the driver picked me up and I'd do the mail and save myself a half hour going and a half hour coming back from work. After all, you were working about a twelve hour day as it was. I still think it makes a hell of a lot of sense. But that was one of the symbols that politicians liked to brag to their constituents that they had gotten rid of.

HKS: Carter really cut back on the use of cars it seems like. So possibly he lost his car that first day.

RT: Yeah, I think Costle did. And Carter got rid of the presidential yacht, which I thought was perfect nonsense. The Sequoia.

HKS: That was one of Harry Truman's favorite things.

RT: It was a great thing for the president to be able to entertain either a visiting dignitary on sort of a little historic trip down the Potomac, off Mt. Vernon, etc. or just to go and relax with a few friends. It is the kind of thing that it seems to me that any head of state is entitled to. It is perfect nonsense to me that they insist on keeping our presidents in a hair shirt, or whatever.

HKS: Mr. Clinton found out about haircuts not too long ago.

RT: That one was pretty silly.

HKS: I remember my first tour of the White House, I was surprised at how poorly it was painted. The guy who painted the baseboard sloped paint, and it was never cleaned up. In the west wing where the tourists come in, the paint was peeling which was during the Nixon time. I felt rather startled that this symbol of America would be so poorly maintained.

RT: It is really pretty simple quarters. This White House. The ground floor which is essentially what the tourist sees, they are all state rooms. They are not really suitable for private use. No president or his wife really use those rooms at all. Now, the second floor which they do use, the living room that they typically employ is at the end of the hall and it is very comfortable and it is on a scale which is a good deal more than most people have but relatively simple compared to most heads of state. I think of London with Buckingham Palace, the White House would comfortably fit in one of several courtyards. Actually, I don't think any American president has ever wanted a grander residence than the White House. It is just about right which is amazing considering that it goes back to the beginning of the country.

HKS: But the president goes across to the old executive office building.

RT: He works in the west wing, yes.

Institutional White House

RT: What is sort of your objective here? What kind of information are you not interested in?

HKS: What we are trying to find out, we don't even know if it is feasible--you are the first person we have been able to interview in what we are calling our presidential series--is the role of the White House in environmental policy. We don't know much about what the White House actually does. The institution of the White House. Scholars haven't looked at that. A lot of political scientists have studied the presidency in the generic sense and they are fascinated by Reagan and by Nixon. Two very successful presidents in terms of creating an institution that they said they'd create if they were elected. So in the study of the environment and the conservation issues, we are trying to find out what the White House does. You are a logical person to be interviewed. We are not sure if secretaries of the interior would be logical.

RT: Okay, that is helpful.

HKS: What I have learned from you so far, it is hard to pin down and it changes from White House to White House. There won't be a pat answer. Each president creates his own institution. His personal interests and the kinds of staff he happens to select has far more to do with it than the issues themselves.

RT: You are absolutely right. I remember the Ford White House, the people he had there as his key staff people were extremely easy to deal with as compared to the Haldeman regime. I was thinking earlier of Bill Siedman, more recently charged with the responsibility for dealing with the savings and loan mess. Bill was a close friend of Ford, I think from Grand Rapids, and was his chief economic advisor. I had quite a lot of interchange with Bill. Very friendly. Didn't always agree. But you didn't feel under siege, or threatened by, or anything of that kind. It was a nice atmosphere. I always felt that I certainly had access to the president any time I wanted it. I didn't want it all that often and it was not a privilege to abuse, but I can think of one or two occasions and I certainly saw him very promptly. I can't remember what the issues were at the time. I may have mentioned them earlier. You did run into cases where you proposed a regulation, completed your hearings on the proposed regulation, and they go over to OMB for review for a period of time. I can't remember the particular one, but Jim Lynn who was then the director of OMB, later secretary of commerce, later chairman of Aetna insurance, now retired, simply sat on some regulation of ours for an almost indefinite period of time. I can't remember what it was. They just didn't like it. I called him first, I couldn't get it dislodged. I finally wrote him a letter, say on a Thursday, saying if I do not hear from the president by noon on Monday that I am not to issue this regulation, I am issuing it. And I did. I didn't hear a word. Except I got a blast from Lynn. Made him furious. But you do have to take the ball in your own hands once in a while. That was one kind of case.

Another potentially unpleasant political situation--getting toward the end of Ford's administration, the regional administrator for EPA, regional administrator in Dallas, retired and I had a person that I wanted to put into that job. All of a sudden, Senator Tower of Texas weighed in with a candidate who was in the regional office. He was a Democrat of long standing, but one who had made a career out of doing favors for members of Congress one way or another. Tower made up his mind that he was going to make him the regional administrator, which would have been a disaster

because no one really had much respect for the guy. The White House called me and told me that they would really prefer to have Tower's man put in the job. Tower was going to be Ford's convention floor manager which was going to be held in Texas. So they were really trying to do favors for Tower. This was when Rumsfeld was chief of staff. Rummy called me and said the president really wishes you would do this. I am not sure he invoked the president's name in that. I finally said, "Rummy, the guy is a disaster. It would not be a credible appointment. If the president really wants him, he can have him, but he's got to make a choice between me and him. I will not appoint him." [laughter] Rumsfeld said, "Well, if you feel that strongly about it. All I can ask, Russ, is that you go and make your peace with Tower because he is important to us." So I went up and saw Tower. He had one staff person with him. This was in some little back room in the Capitol, I can't remember where it was. He told me that I had to appoint this guy. He really put it to me. He said, "You know, I am going to be floor manager for the president at the convention, they are going to need me." I said, "I'm sorry I am not going to appoint (so and so)." We made a deal in which his man didn't get the job, and the guy that I had said I wanted to appoint didn't get it either. I appointed somebody from outside, from the Atlanta region, who was excellent. Perfectly acceptable to me. We both saved face. [laughter] I didn't have many things like that. I didn't really find myself in sort of that nitty gritty politics very often, but there again, the White House really gave me no problems.

HKS: The presidential libraries have been very supportive of our effort. The Ford library was extremely excited about it. They sent me a bunch of stuff about the holdings of the Ford library and the figure that stuck in my mind is incomprehensible about the magnitude of the presidency. Ford was president for only twenty-eight months. The five White House photographers took 243,000 photographs. [laughter] There are a lot of photo ops going on in the White House. The world crosses the president's desk, how can this one man, this one individual handle--obviously you delegate almost everything, you have to. So where does the environment fit in the pecking order? That is what we are trying to get a handle on.

RT: I have thought from time to time that I really should try to go to see Nixon, and I thought if he would let me make a tape recording that would be fine, but not pressing that point too much. I was intrigued and am intrigued by the fact that there are those who say that the greatest accomplishments of the Nixon administration were in the environmental area. Nixon's own book on this, it was his first book I think, was on his domestic program. He only mentions the environment once in the entire book and that is in a footnote. It is about Ruckelshaus coming in to see him about, it's two lines, about DDT. That is the only mention of anything to do with the environment in the entire book. I wanted somehow to try to put together in my own mind those two extreme views. I also had in mind, if Nixon really doesn't think he accomplished quite a bit in the environmental area, I would like to change his thinking about that.

HKS: Your anecdote earlier about riding in the helicopter. He said that Johnson will be remembered for saving the redwoods and he would be remembered for sewer treatment plants, maybe he was sincere. Maybe he took that to heart. That he hadn't done anything glamorous for the environment.

RT: It really is curious. In the various international activities that I took part in, which I described here earlier, both while I was at CEQ and EPA, throughout the Nixon administration, invariably

Nixon was looked upon abroad as a great environmental leader. No question about it. The fact that our government was out front in practically all these programs, air and water pollution, pesticides, radiation, whatever, wildlife management, then institutionally with EPA and CEQ, NOAA. We were just miles ahead of everybody else, and they saw this as a reflection of Nixon's leadership. It was. It was his administration and he is entitled to the credit for it.

I remember once coming back from a Committee on the Challenge of a Modern Society meeting of NATO in Brussels. I said something to this effect in the meeting: I had given a report on something, and I said that I had talked with the president before coming over about the particular issue and wanted them to know that he very strongly supported it, or something like that. The next time I saw him, I told him, "I did a terrible thing last week when I was over in Brussels. I said that I had talked to you about this and you fully supported it. I was lying in my teeth. I had no business in doing that." He said, "That is exactly what you should have done." [laughter]

HKS: One of the authors of one of these political science books I have been reading said that Nixon felt that environment was important but he didn't want to deal with it and he gave it to Ehrlichman.

RT: That is probably true.

HKS: Because he could only do a certain number of things. Foreign affairs obviously...

Meeting Richard Nixon

RT: Let me go back, as long as this is a special interest here, to the pre-inaugural Nixon. In 1968. During the transition period Nixon had his headquarters in the Pierre Hotel in New York prior to the inauguration, January 20. I mentioned to you earlier I had been chairman of a task force on the environment for the president elect. He had a large number of task forces--some of them very big. On space, on taxation, agricultural problems, everything you could think of. He gave a dinner at the Pierre for all the task force members. Well, they filled the entire ball room. I've never seen such a mob. It was a huge crowd. Very bipartisan in its makeup. It was not just some of the old Republican faithful. I don't know how many people I had on my task force, there were about twenty. They were all picked by me. Nobody in the Nixon group made any suggestions to me about it. I didn't really care whether they were Democrats or Republicans or what they were. Probably tried to have a little mix of both. In any event, I found out that afternoon that I was going to be sitting next to Nixon at dinner and there was a head table up on a sort of raised platform.

The president-elect was in the middle with all his task force chairmen strung out on either side. I am guessing there were twenty of us. Exactly how I was chosen to sit on his left, I don't know. I've got a suspicion, but it is not really relevant to your purpose here. The fellow on the other side was head of the space task force. He got Nixon's ear first, and I could see Nixon enthralled by all the things orbiting in space and the space stations and everything under the sun and landing on the moon. Actually, I guess we had already done that. My thought was, I'll never get a word in edgewise in this crowd. Finally Nixon turned around to me and I said, "Mr. President, (President-Elect, I forget how you address the president-elect) I've got sort of an apology to make." He said, "What's that?" I said, "Well, I heard that I was going to be sitting next to you and I just spent the last two hours thinking to myself that maybe this is the one and only time in my life I am going to

be sitting next to the next president of the United States. What is the one single thing I should try to get across to him. That is not a great way to be planning a dinner conversation." [laughter] He said, "That is exactly what you should have been thinking." He said, "What did you decide?" I said, "I decided to talk to you about the politics of the environment and why I think it is an important political issue."

I don't know exactly what my thesis to him was, but I know I said that the environment was an issue that cut across the entire country geographically, cut across all sectors of the economy, all sectors of our society. I said that I thought that the environmental issue could be a great unifying force in a country where so much is divisive. He listened, and then he said, "Well, I hear what you are saying but what about the poor and the black in the inner cities? How do you fit them into what you are talking about?" I thought that was a fantastically perceptive question. Because environmentalists have frequently been classified as being elitist or something of that kind. Politically he put his finger right on it. A very real question. I don't remember exactly how I answered it. I probably answered it by saying that people who live in the inner city suffer the worst from air pollution, more than anyone else in the country, from automobiles and industrial pollution. The problems of solid waste and trash and litter are the worst in the inner cities. The lead paint problem afflicts the poor and black children probably more than anyone else in the country. Anyway, that was our dialogue. I don't know quite what else we talked about, but that was essentially the whole thing. It was a very fitting introduction to him for me.

HKS: In your experience, most people of achievement, aren't they good listeners?

RT: I think probably that is the case.

HKS: They wouldn't have been successful if they couldn't absorb information. That's one of the reasons we hope we are successful in getting this going is that we don't know much, beyond campaign promises, what the president really does or how they delegate, the quality of the people in the White House who are assigned to the environment as opposed to foreign policy and all these other issues.

RT: I think Nixon had good people. I think Ehrlichman was, I always liked John.

HKS: I was impressed during the Watergate hearings when Ehrlichman and Haldeman testified. I mean their arrogance was rather obvious but so was their intelligence. Those were very, very smart people.

RT: I didn't really know Haldeman, had very little association with him, but Ehrlichman I knew a good deal better. I knew his wife, Jean, very nice woman. Still see her occasionally. She has remarried. They had a couple of nice children. One of them worked as an intern for me in the CEQ. So we had sort of a personal relationship. I always found John extremely intelligent, very tough minded, good at what he was doing, he was tough, he didn't like Hickel.

HKS: Personal chemistry problem, or was Hickel not a good administrator?

RT: I would say both personal chemistry and probably Haldeman's idea of loyalty to the president. Hickel was sort of going off on his own, by trying to make himself look good in terms of the Vietnam situation and the president look bad. He didn't really like Hickel in the beginning I don't think. In any event, I've lost my thread.

HKS: The role of the White House.

RT: I was going to say what a really competent man Ehrlichman was. He ran a very taut ship in the naval sense. He gave a lot of authority to John Whitaker and I think John did an extremely good job. He was very supportive of obviously the president and his policies. I think he did his best for the environment and for me and my particular role whatever it was at the time. Insofar as I know, he did a credible job of representing my interests and my positions to Ehrlichman and if necessary to the president.

HKS: It is pretty flimsy evidence, but in Ehrlichman's novel on the presidency, one of the controversies that goes across the stage in a very short paragraph: "The president was angered by the clear-cutting controversy, [didn't specify what that meant] and directed that somebody called the secretary of the interior to straighten it out." Well, you call the secretary of agriculture because it is over the Forest Service. I thought..., isn't that interesting that Ehrlichman would have written that and had...

RT: Might have been on the BLM lands.

HKS: It could have been.

RT: [laughter]

HKS: Specially, say national forests.

RT: That is funny. It is surprising too. Particularly since Ehrlichman came from Seattle and the northwest. He knew the national forests and who was dealing with them.

HKS: It is good to know as a citizen out there in the states that by and large the government is run by a lot of very competent people.

RT: Much of the time.

HKS: Do you have any speculation why Congress has so much trouble with this proliferation of committees. The work load on members of Congress must be extraordinary.

RT: It is.

HKS: Potentially. If they do their job on each committee that they are on.

RT: And that has led them to get bigger and bigger staffs. Of course, each staff person wants their own opportunity for glory, visibility, lime light. I think part of the whole thing goes back to a

breakdown in party discipline, parties just don't exist in the same sense as they used to. I think television is the principal culprit, if you can call it a culprit. A candidate for office, all he needs is some money and exposure through television. He doesn't need state machines or anything like that, or the national committee to help them. Probably the farther they can keep away from them the better. So I don't think there is typically a great sense of loyalty to a party organization or absent loyalty a sense of discipline. It just doesn't exist anymore. Everybody is on their own. They feel that probably pays off better than toeing the party line.

Debt for Nature

HKS: I have a couple of specific questions on wildlife. I watched the video tape that WWF produced for your 30th anniversary. Came out a couple of years ago. You were talking about the achievements and debt for nature. Was that a single person's idea? Did that involve a lot of trial and error? It makes so much sense, the little I know about it, when you see it.

RT: Debt for equity is an old concept that has been used quite a lot. That is, a business investor wants to go into Mexico and perhaps buy out a state-owned business and buy up debt at a discount presumably, otherwise it doesn't work, and trade that debt in for equity in the company. I haven't described that very well because I don't know much about debt for equity swaps. And debt for nature swaps are like debt for equity swaps. Each one is different, they all have their own characteristics.

HKS: I can't remember the number you gave, but it was like twenty or something. I thought it would have been a lot more.

RT: I don't follow this, but there hasn't been that great many. We have done more, I think, than anyone else. The last I heard, we'd done something like sixteen million dollars debt for nature swaps. There may be more than twenty now, I am not sure. The bloom is sort of off them... In the first place, many of those debt securities have recovered a good deal of their value. The third world debt picture is much better now than it was.

HKS: Interest rates have come down for one thing.

RT: I guess that has a lot to do with it. The glowing opportunity such as buying Ecuadorian debt at ten cents on the dollar, there aren't many of those around any more. I suspect that if there are you don't want any part of them, I don't know. And, some of the central banks are not enthusiastic about debt for nature swaps, nor debt for equity for that matter. I think they think it is a little bit inflationary so they haven't supported it very much. I think Tom Lovejoy was the first person to publicly articulate something like a debt for nature swap. In an op-ed piece, you know whom I am talking about, Tom Lovejoy?

HKS: Yes.

RT: He was then our senior scientist at World Wildlife Fund, I forget what year that was. I don't recall that his op-ed was very specific in terms of debt for nature, but it called attention to the fact that many of the most environmentally important countries in the world such as Brazil or Mexico

had mountains of debt and there should be ways in which this could be used to promote environmental objectives in those countries. Actually, the first swap was done by Conservation International in Bolivia. I don't think it was a very successful one. The swap got postured as Bolivia selling its sovereignty over an area to pay back some debt to a foreign nation. It sort of gave debt swaps a dirty name for a while.

HKS: A guest speaker at Duke, maybe three or four years ago, the present CEO of Simpson Timber Company. He was on the way to Chile on a debt for nature swap and looking forward with great optimism. This was going to be a very important thing in his portfolio for keeping the company thriving and whatever the private sector wants to do with the company. I know very little about it. That is one reason I am asking. I don't know how important it is. It sounds so good.

RT: Well, it has been important. I mean it is in certain places. It was very important in Ecuador. We've got a major, major program down there now. It's a very important country, very biologically rich country. The same is true in Madagascar. The same is true in the Philippines where we have a multi-million dollar program now, largely funded by debt swaps. Financed by AID. So we have succeeded in using the vehicle and leveraging our modest resources into very, very major involvements. Particularly in a country like the Philippines. As a result the World Bank is now coming in and providing fresh funding through their global environment facility. I think some twenty million dollars for what they call the Integrated Protected Areas System, IPAS in the Philippines, all of which is going to be managed by WWF. That is a big thing for the Philippines.

We have used debt swaps to endow about a twenty million dollar fund for the Foundation for the Philippine Environment. I am the only non-Filipino trustee. I went to my first meeting in May in Manila. All the other trustees are Filipino and by and large they represent the non-governmental organization interest in the Philippines. WWF is still sort of monitoring the financial administration of the trust funds. We have an office in Manila. But there you've got that plus the IPAS program. Twenty million dollars at work in a country like that is very important conservation-wise.

We have been doing a lot of what I call innovative financial structuring for environmental purposes. We set up an environmental trust fund in Bhutan and that it is on its way to twenty million dollars. This was a concept that we really developed in our own office with the Bhutanese. Over a period of time we worked out the details with the Bhutanese. We got the United Nations Development Program, UNDP, to take on the management of the fund for us and we now have a trust located in Bhutan, with five trustees, three of them Bhutanese. They have a majority, plus one representative of the UNDP, and one from WWF. The director of our Asian program, vice president Bruce Bunting.

Where's the money come from? We put the first million into it, the WWF, we felt that if we are going to be trying to sell this idea, we have to demonstrate our good faith and our confidence in the validity of the whole idea. So we put up a million dollars out of our reserves to get it off the ground. We have since repaid that by special solicitation of people and foundations and recovered that money. The global environment facility of the World Bank I think is putting up seven or ten million, I am not sure which, I think that probably has been done now. We have approached a number of the bilateral AID agencies around the world, Danish, Austrian, maybe Swiss I am not sure, to contribute to that fund and that has been fairly successful at the one, two, three million

dollar levels. As I say, it is approaching twenty million dollars and that covers the entire range of environmental matters in Bhutan including population as part of the responsibility of the trust. We are doing the same thing in Papua New Guinea. We are doing the same thing in one or two countries in West Africa. We have set up a foundation in Guatemala and there are others of these that I am just not familiar with because I am not that close to the day to day operation of the organization any more. These are ways of trying to get the concept of environmental programs away from the up and down funding picture. Typically the programs are totally dependent upon the varying financial resources of private organizations like ours. So this is a way of providing stability and also permitting longer range planning and longer range projects and the recipient countries know they will be able to carry on and funding will be there. It is all an interesting idea as long as you can keep finding the money to endow these things.

HKS: A twenty million dollar endowment only releases a million dollars a year for operations?

RT: Something on that order. We have typically provided out of our regular operating budget continued support for our Bhutan program at the level of around four to five hundred thousand dollars a year anyway which we were doing before the trust fund was set up. So this hasn't been a technique for politely backing out at all. We have been very much involved and continue to be very much involved in these areas.

HKS: How do you pick your countries? There are a lot of countries, a lot environmental wildlife habitats.

RT: That is a complicated story, and I am not sure that I am the one who can tell you. It has to do with the biological diversity in a particular country. In the case of Bhutan it was very much the fact that it was a country that was biologically rich and relatively unspoiled. And for a change, instead of coming in, as in the Philippines, to an environmental disaster, coming in after the fact and trying to put the fires out, trying to rescue things and restore things, Bhutan is not a similar situation. They have very little income. I think their total budget for conservation is something like a hundred thousand dollars a year with an office in the forest department. Our own program, essentially, quintupled that and now the trust fund is doing more than that. There is no question there is an opportunity factor involved.

HKS: What I was thinking about when you said what you just did. If you do a Guatemala program would you be less likely to do a Nicaragua program because there is a similarity in ecosystems and biodiversity?

RT: I suspect that Central America is looked at as a whole rather than from the individual country's standpoint as far as priority is concerned. I am guessing a bit.

Human vs. Animal Habitat

HKS: I am not sure how to phrase the question, but you mentioned it in this World Wildlife video and I can't remember the language you used. So I'll just say habitat for animals versus habitat for man. The competition for land. When you started this in 1956, your hunting trip to Africa that sort of changed the way you viewed wildlife. I am guessing this now, your primary concern was protecting the animals, their habitat. The evolution to the sociological side, did that come later or was that always parallel?

RT: I guess it was always there, but I guess it became evident, more clearly evident over time. I think the traditional conservation viewpoint and program was to identify an area which for one reason or another conservationists found it important to protect. Or a species. It has always been hard to disassociate the species from the habitat. That is not always clear to the politicians. I remember the story of Julius Nyerere when he was president of Tanzania, as of course he was for many, many years, Louis Leaky the great paleontologist went to see him about protecting the chimpanzees of the Gombe stream emptying into Lake Tanganyika which has been where Jane Goodall has worked now for many, many years, and there was going to be a timbering operation. They were going to cut down all the forests in that area. Leaky went to see Nyerere about this and explained the problem about the chimpanzees and that this was their habitat. Nyerere said, "Dr. Leaky, don't worry about it at all. I will give strict instructions that when the trees are cut down they are not to hurt the chimpanzees." That is a true story. It sounds sort of simplistic. As someone is really exposed to these issues, it probably represents a fairly commonly held view. Of course, today WWF recognizes more and more the importance of interrelating conservation and economic well-being. We recognize the importance of providing benefits to local people from wildlife conservation. Once you succeed in doing this, you find that the local interest in conservation goes up dramatically. It makes sort of obvious good sense.

HKS: Has Prince Phillip been active in World Wildlife?

RT: Very.

HKS: This may be unpolitic of me, but I was in a conference in Canberra in 1988. At this conference there were many people giving papers on Southeast Asia, Indonesia, etc. what was going on, a full range of environmental concerns. Somebody got up and made a very angry statement about World Wildlife and Prince Phillip putting animals ahead of people. I had never heard a criticism of what was going on before and it stuck in my mind. I think about it often, about the spotted owl issue. The same language is used. Has World Wildlife received criticism like that? Is this unusual in your experience?

RT: No, it is not, but it is certainly not common. I don't think we receive much of that sort of criticism. Frankly, I often feel that if anything we have a surplus of people on this planet and that there probably are occasions when you ought to put animals ahead of people, but not as a generalization.

HKS: The specialists that you retain for your studies, you hire for your staff, what is the balance between the social scientists and natural scientists? I am not sure that is the right way to ask the question.

RT: I would guess that we probably have considerably more social scientists than we do natural scientists. I am just guessing. I know we have got a lot of lawyers.

HKS: How do lawyers help you when you are working outside the country? They don't know the law of...

RT: Well, we wrote the conservation laws of Bhutan for one thing.

HKS: I see.

RT: [laughter] We wrote the trust instruments, too. We get a lot of pro bono legal help from top flight firms around the country, both in Washington and New York. It is very gratifying. We have economists on the staff and communication experts, educators. Of course we also have forestry people. Having said all that and having said that we have a surplus of people on the planet, we do have a population expert on our staff now. She is a woman, she is also a Moroccan. She is a third world female and a Muslim. So we have brought together a rather unique background to bring to bear on the population problems and what we are trying to do is to see how we can, through our conservation field projects, build a population dimension into these, not necessarily by the distribution of contraceptives although I think that is probably a useful thing to do in many areas--and in fact do in the Annapurna project in Nepal--but through improving the status of women through education, through economic improvement, all those things, including the availability of reproductive health care.

HKS: During the '60s there was a lot of outcry about the population explosion and the population bomb. Am I wrong? It is not front page news any more. It somehow went away. We talk about it from time to time, but it is not the disaster any more.

RT: I am afraid you are probably right. It is not the great cause that it once was. There is a world population conference coming up in Cairo which is a good place to have it because Egypt has an almost out-of-control population growth situation. In '94, I think, and maybe that will help refocus public attention. Of course, it has been politically, sort of a no-no with the Reagan and Bush administrations. It is interesting though, having said that, the U.S. government's Agency for International Development program is the largest international effort in the population field, I guess, among all the bilateral programs. I don't know what the UN program is, I don't have any idea how big it is. But ours has been running at the level around \$300 million a year, and that has continued through all the Reagan and Bush years. Many people who feel very deeply about the subject because of some of the rhetoric that is thrown around have reached sort of the conclusion, false, that the U.S. doesn't do anything about international population problems. We really do. The so-called Mexico City policy which prevented our putting any money into any international program that had any relationship to abortion was a much publicized negative in our program and, I think, properly criticized. Now that has been reversed by the Clinton administration. We need to do a good deal more funding in that area.

The level of funding has remained high, it has remained level in real dollars going back to say 1970 or so, and the program has gone down quite considerably. But still, it is the biggest in the world. But what I was going to get at is that our projects and programs around the world more and more do have a close human relationship. We have one fairly good sized program in the World Wildlife Fund called wildlife and human needs. That has addressed particular things like conch fisheries in the Caribbean, a principal source of food for the people down there. Some of the sea turtle problems in the area as well. But more generally, I think that we have reached the conclusion quite some while ago now that unless the local people in an area where we are trying to achieve a conservation objective are involved in the project, in its design, and in its implementation, unless there are demonstrable benefits to the local people that can come out of the project, the chances of its being viable for any very long period of time are remote. That is a rather convoluted statement. But anyway, you get the idea. Did we talk at all about the Annapurna project?

HKS: No we didn't.

Nepal Venture

RT: That is one in Nepal. One that I was and am still quite interested in. I am a trustee of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal. One of the programs that we started with almost entire WWF-US funding was to establish a conservation area established by the government of Nepal. It involved about 2500 square kilometers around the Annapurna Massif in the central Himalayas, west of Katmandu. There are a number of villages in that area, there is a variety of wildlife, there are forests, there is substantial deforestation, there is tourism, there are whole ranges of factors involved. Before developing the project at all, we sent a three-person team, two Nepalese and one young American anthropologist, into the area for six months. They went from village to village and met with not only the village head men but also with the town meetings of these villages, called panchayats, I think. Everybody lets their hair down and says what they think about what is being proposed. Or somebody else tried so and so and it didn't work, and things that come out of Katmandu never do work.

It's the same kind of thing you hear in this country probably. With all of this background of information that was developed over a six month period, only then did we put together the project. Today it is looked upon as quite a model. It has many different aspects obviously, actual protection of the wildlife resource, reforestation, the managing of nurseries by the local people themselves. The program is not seen as coming from the forest department in the capital coming in and doing it, then going off and they let the cows eat the stuff. We have trained the people at the different levels required. There are a number of tea houses, or hostels, where trekkers can stay in the area of very varying quality. Some perfectly dreadful. We have established sort of a quality control board to upgrade those that are below standard, to develop a uniform tariff because the trekkers would come in and they would go from one hostel to another and say that one over there will charge me a dollar night will you do it for twenty-five cents a night? These people are terribly poor, the locals, and they would get beaten down. So we have improved the economy considerably from that standpoint. We have provided training in the use of English so that the local people can compete with the sherpas from the other side of Katmandu around Mt. Everest in acting as guides. Now trekkers don't have to bring all the guides in from outside, they use the local people. We have introduced

mini-hydro-electric projects to substitute energy, electric energy, for wood fuel. We have introduced, I won't say revolutionary but, innovative kinds of stoves that use less energy and can be used for several purposes. Not only providing heat, but heating water. We have improved the sanitation of the area. There are 270,000 trekkers a year that go around the Annapurna circuit. I say 'we', this is a joint effort of the WWF and the King Mahendra Trust and the government of Nepal and the local people in the area. It is practically all managed now by a local committee. The government has imposed a \$10 fee for going on the Annapurna trail. It started a little bit lower than that, it has gotten up to the equivalent of \$10 U.S. It is about a two week trek, I think, something like that.

HKS: It must be crowded on the trail.

RT: Can be. I have been on parts of it. Each trekker is given a little written explanation of what the fee is used for and I think they have practically no complaints with it. There is a lot of complaining when they pay the fee. When they read this little pamphlet and after they have been on the trek, there is never the slightest complaint. Now, we have improved all the sanitation, it was really terrible, there were no facilities at all. We put in latrines at convenient locations along the trail, these are all maintained by the local people. As far as I know, they are doing quite a good job. We have established kerosene dumps, supply depots, so that trekkers can bring in kerosene stoves rather than going out and chopping the trees down for their evening fire. It is really unfair to expect them to have to carry all the kerosene with them too. Not very practical, so we have established these depots. That was helped by funds donated by a German Alpine club. The King Mahendra Trust committee in Great Britain supplied the funding for an education program. But by and large it has been essentially World Wildlife Fund-US funded. There is a health clinic paid for by the program and there family-planning information is provided and contraceptives supplies are distributed. The Annapurna project may be a highly developed example but a lot of our conservation work today involves quite a broad mix of traditional conservation methods and sociological-economic aspects.

HKS: Being non-governmental, does that really help getting things going?

RT: It does. It is a source of some friction because the Department of National Parks and Conservation of Nepal feels that you are getting into their business and they have been suspicious of the King Mahendra Trust and the way we got away with it was because the King Mahendra Trust has been the child of the royal family. The king is its patron and it is named for his father. Of course, now they have had a democratic revolution in Nepal and the royal family has taken a much lower key role in everything. However, after I had been to Manila on the recent trip I mentioned, I went to Katmandu for two days and they had a meeting of the trust which they had not had in about four years because of the revolution. I visited the prime minister and got from him his absolute assurance that he thought the trust had been doing a very good job and saw no reason to disturb it. He also saw no reason to disturb the fact that the king's brother is the chairman. He said if the trust is working well, he must be doing a good job too. He said, "I have instructed all my government officials to give complete support to the trust and its work." I was able to report that to the chairman, the king's brother, Prince Gyanendra.

HKS: If you had to choose between your achievements in World Wildlife and your work for the federal government, where do you think you have made the greatest contribution?

RT: I think those questions are sort of unanswerable. They are really different worlds and government in its way is often enormously satisfying because you really are not only affecting public policy and influencing public policy but you are carrying out public policy on a very broad scale. That has to be satisfying, although it is often frustrating when you see how difficult it is often to get things done. You have mission after mission given you by the Congress but are not given the resources commensurate with all those missions. That is still the case in EPA--which has just taken a very large budget cut under the Clinton administration. I don't think you can compare the two worlds. I enjoyed my time in government. As you may gather as I have gone along, I had fun--and that's awfully important. I am afraid that much of what I have said and the stories that I have told, the anecdotes and things, are very much "I, I, I" and tend to make me look good in most cases, I suspect. Others could doubtless give you a more negative side. On the other hand, [laughter] this is an oral history of me.

HKS: One chief of the Forest Service criticized me one time for being too impressed by official annual reports. There are a lot of subtleties behind these scenes that you can't get from that which everyone realized, but what choice do you have? All a historian or political scientist can use is the record that exists. The oral history provides a lot links between bits and pieces. And there is also the substance of the interview itself.

Thank you very much for the interview.