

Francis T.P. Plimpton Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 10/21/1969
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Biographical Note

Francis T.P. Plimpton (1900-1983) was the Deputy U.S. Representative to the United Nations from 1961 to 1965. This interview focuses on Adlai Stevenson's appointment as Ambassador to the United Nations, United Nations negotiations that occurred during the Kennedy administration, and the relationship of the United States mission to the White House, among other topics.

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Francis T.P. Plimpton
Francis T.P. Plimpton

November 9, 1971
Date

Herbert E. Angel
for James B. Rhoads

November 16, 1971
Date

Francis T.P. Plimpton– JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

FRANCIS T.P. PLIMPTON

October 21, 1969
New York, New York

By Dennis J. O'Brien

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'BRIEN: I guess the logical place to begin in an interview like this is with the question, when did you first meet--I imagine it was then Senator Kennedy?

PLIMPTON: Well, I think I first met him in Boston--I don't remember just when; it must have been when he was a Senator--at some sort of a social gathering. I remember having a very pleasant talk with him about what it was like to be in the Senate. I didn't detect any presidential ambitions at that moment, but I'm sure he probably had them. I remember meeting him--also when he was Senator--at the time my daughter graduated from Smith College, and he was the commencement speaker. I saw a little bit of him then. He spoke extremely well, and gave me an inferiority complex, because I had to give the commencement address at Smith about two or three years later. I had this uneasy precedent to think about.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any other contacts before he was nominated by the Democratic National Convention in 1960?

PLIMPTON: I must have met him once or twice in New York, but as is perfectly obvious, I never had any detailed talk with him. He was in and about

New York, of course, somewhat, and I probably heard him speak, before he was nominated, a few times and shook hands with him afterwards or was on a receiving committee to greet him or something like that. But, to my regret, I never was even a close acquaintance.

O'BRIEN: How did your appointment as Deputy Chief of the United Nations Mission come about?

PLIMPTON: That obviously originated with [Adlai E.] Stevenson. Stevenson and I had long been friends. We were roommates at Harvard Law School, actually, for a year, 1923-24. We'd seen each other fairly constantly, either in Chicago or here in New York. We went together to the Democratic National Convention in 1924. We were assistant Sergeants at Arms. He lived at my father's house with me in Murray Hill, then. We've been pretty good friends ever since.

I saw quite a bit of him when he was running for the Presidency. I was a strong supporter of his in '52 and '56. Going back to his first U.N. days in 1945 and later, I saw him quite often when he was here in New York for the General Assemblies in those early days. We used to visit him at Libertyville and used to get in on those very pleasant birthday parties that they started when he was Governor of Illinois. Then, just after he finally accepted the appointment to the U.N.--I was here in New York--he got hold of me and asked me if I would come with him. He, I think, was given a pretty broad mandate by Kennedy to take anybody he wanted to.

Actually (I'm a little ashamed of the fact) I voted for [Richard M.] Nixon in 1960 largely because I'm very much interested in the population problem, and I was afraid that Kennedy's Catholicism would be a block there. Of course, I couldn't have been more wrong. He was so much more broad-minded on the subject of birth control than [Dwight D.] Eisenhower was that there just wasn't any comparison. One of the things I really give Kennedy greatest credit for is his broad-mindedness on an issue where his Church was, at that time, not very broad-minded.

Stevenson asked me if I would come along. As I say, I don't believe that President Kennedy--well, yes, I think he probably did remember me, know who I am. I remember that when I went through the receiving line of the first Presidential reception for the Presidential appointees, the first question that both Kennedy and Jackie [Jacqueline B. Kennedy] asked was, "How is George [Plimpton]?" My son, George Plimpton, is much more famous than his father and was and is a very close friend of the Kennedys. You really ought to interview George rather than me.

O'BRIEN: Well, I'm currently beginning a series on the United Nations, and certainly you are very important there. I understand that Governor Stevenson had some very strong reservations about taking the position as Ambassador to the United Nations. Did he ever consult you or talk to you about this?

PLIMPTON: Somewhat, yes. Of course, there's the well publicized reservation of the difficulties one has in any ambassadorial position, particularly one as exposed as the U.N. is, where you have to take public positions on behalf of your government, on behalf of your country, on all sorts of very controversial topics. And he, needless to say, has always been conscious of the awful problem; suppose he doesn't agree. As I think he said publicly--he certainly said it privately to me--it would be practically an earthquake if he were to say, "I disagree, and I resign." He would do that only about some sort of life and death matter. He was conscious of that awful difficulty.

I think--I'm sure--that he regarded himself as knowing very much more about foreign affairs than did President Kennedy. He was always pretty darn generous minded. I never heard him say an unkind thing about Kennedy. I once did--I can remember his saying once, "That young fellow down there. . . ." But I'm sure that Adlai used a good deal of self-restraint in holding back what obviously was his confidence in his own knowledge and ability to handle foreign affairs. I'm sure he was always a little uncomfortable in taking orders from someone who, he thought, was not only younger, but much less experienced and much less informed and wise. But he was a good soldier. In a situation that might have been difficult, I think he handled himself really very well.

Of course, when it comes to the [Charles ^{Leffingwell} Bartlett] episode and the Saturday Evening Post thing, that, of course, hurt him very bitterly inside. I'm afraid that he really did think that Kennedy had let him down on that. Of course, Kennedy did do his best, rather belatedly, to patch that one up, through making, I thought, rather inadequate public statements.

O'BRIEN: Going back to this time of the appointment, were there a group of people in Democratic circles-- and particularly people that had been in some way associated with Governor Stevenson during his presidential campaigns before--were there a group of these people that were, in a sense, working or applying pressure for the appointment of Governor Stevenson as either Secretary of State or to the Ambassadorship to the U.N.?

PLIMPTON: Well, there certainly were, I'm sure, a great many letters and telephone calls made to Kennedy in support of Stevenson for Secretary of State. I'm sure that Stevenson was very disappointed that he wasn't appointed, and that some of his misgivings as to the U.N. job grew out of the disappointment of not having the other one. I think he had a good regard for [Dean] Rusk, but he thought of him as a technician rather than as

a broad-minded, knowledgeable citizen of the world, so to speak. I'm sure that a great many people urged Kennedy to appoint Stevenson. I'm equally sure that--no, I'm not sure, but I suspect that the lingering political doubts that the Kennedy entourage, particularly Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy], had, by reason of Stevenson not quite being willing to declare himself out of the race in 1960, were certainly responsible in part for Kennedy's not appointing him Secretary of State. There was a little jealousy between the two of them; there's just no doubt about it.

O'BRIEN: Did you know any particular people who were working or making an effort to secure or suggest the nomination of Governor Stevenson for either of those posts in 1960?

PLIMPTON: I would think that Chester Bowles had. You'd better ask him on that. I'm really nothing but a non-political New York lawyer, who never really has done anything in politics. I say I supported Stevenson, but I didn't really do very much, except to make a few speeches for him. I never was on any real committee.

O'BRIEN: Did you get involved in the Stevenson effort in 1960 at all?

PLIMPTON: No.

O'BRIEN: Was Governor Stevenson disappointed that he didn't get the position as Secretary of State?

PLIMPTON: Oh, yes, I'm sure of it. He never talked much about it, but I'm sure he was.

O'BRIEN: Never had any conversations with him in this regard at all?

PLIMPTON: Only somewhat inferentially. He always moped a little about the future, but never about the past. I never heard him express sour regrets about anything in the past. He was quite capable of being sorry for himself as to what he was doing at the moment or something that was going to happen, but I never heard him go backwards.

O'BRIEN: A little while earlier you mentioned that he must have come to some kind of an understanding with President Kennedy in regard to his duties and also the extent of his authority and judgment in regard to his position as Ambassador to the United Nations. Did you get any insights into those agreements or understandings of what they were?

PLIMPTON: Of course, there was an understanding that he would be consulted on foreign affairs; there's just no doubt about that. There was, I think, somewhat of an overemphasis, which is understandable, as to the possibilities of his being consulted. This U.N. operation is a very demanding one, and the idea that you can spend one or two days a week in Washington and do the job up here is just out of the question. You can't do it. Adlai had an office down there, a little cubbyhole in the assistant secretary's office. He would try to get down there to Cabinet meetings and so on--there weren't too many Cabinet meetings anyway--but it was almost hopeless.

In terms of the telephone, he talked quite a bit to Kennedy on the phone, but not an awful lot. Necessarily, most of the conversation between the White House and the U.S. Mission was channeled through either [McGeorge] Bundy or [Arthur M., Jr.] Schlesinger, and of course, at the State Department he talked to Harlan Cleveland and sometimes to Rusk. But Adlai's typical daily conversation with Washington was with Harlan Cleveland, who's the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations. If there was something he had to talk to the White House about, it would be with Schlesinger, who was designated to deal with the U.N. end of things in the sort of a shadow State Department that Kennedy had in there--to the irritation of the State Department.

O'BRIEN: Did Governor Stevenson have a hand in the appointment of Harlan Cleveland as Assistant Secretary?

PLIMPTON: Oh, yes. He talked that over with me beforehand. Well, of course, Stevenson's responsible for--I know you've heard. . . . Well, Kennedy did say it: "This fellow Stevenson knows everybody in the country; all I know is the voters." Also, remember Stevenson's famous statement, "I regret that I have but one law firm to give to my country." There was [W. Willard] ^{McGermick, Jr.} Wirtz, who was eventually Secretary of Labor; [William M.] Bill Blair, Ambassador to Denmark; what's his name, who was on the Federal Communications Commission . . .

O'BRIEN: [Newton N.] Minow.

PLIMPTON: Minow. It seems to me there was another one, too, George Ball, Under Secretary of State.

O'BRIEN: A number of ambassadors.

PLIMPTON: A number of ambassadors. I think, really, Adlai had more influence on appointments in the general area of foreign affairs than, in a way, Kennedy did.

O'BRIEN: Can you discuss--well, from your own viewpoint and perhaps from Governor Stevenson's as well--can you discuss some of the problems you had in staffing the United Nations Mission in 1961.

PLIMPTON: Well, as to the U.S. Mission, Stevenson, I think, was given a free hand by Kennedy on that. He picked his own people--they were all personal appointments. Well, one was a career appointment, that was Charles Yost, the number three man. (I was the number two). Adlai talked at considerable length with the people in the State Department as to who the experienced people in the Foreign Service were and as to who was available. I think Yost was his second choice. I can't remember who was the first, now, but it turned out he wasn't available. It's a little hard to get people to come to New York who are in the career Foreign Service; they can't afford it. There's no living allowance. There was a living allowance for Adlai, but not for anybody else, you see. Then he picked--oh Lord, the fellow from Chicago . . .

O'BRIEN: [Phillip M.] Phil Klutznick?

PLIMPTON: Phil Klutznick. He was a personal friend and a very able fellow from Chicago. [Jonathan B.] Jack Bingham was an old friend and supporter. Marietta Tree, of course, was an intimate friend--and Jane Dick. Every last one of us was actually a personal friend of Stevenson's, with the exception of Yost.

O'BRIEN: Were there any outside appointments that were pushed by the State Department or the White House?

PLIMPTON: No. Oh, let's see, Clayton Fritchey was--yes, he was a Stevenson friend, too.

O'BRIEN: I understand he was.

PLIMPTON: Adlai resisted somebody vigorously. I can't remember who it was now, some political wheel horse, but we just wouldn't take him. I've now forgotten who it was. But on the whole, there was very little pressure from anybody.

O'BRIEN: Well, now in regard to the appointments, were they normally cleared through the Democratic State Party channels?

PLIMPTON: I would doubt it, but I don't know.

O'BRIEN: I understand that in regard to your own appointment there was some objection on the part of the regular Democrats.

PLIMPTON: I wouldn't doubt it. I don't know. I never heard it.

O'BRIEN: Did you ever run across anything of that nature?

PLIMPTON: No. I happen to be a registered Republican. I register and vote out in Suffolk County, Long Island. At least when I first registered in 1936 or so, there were hardly any Democrats there. On these local things you want to be able to vote in the primary, so to speak. Actually, I've voted Democratic much more than I have Republican, nationally.

O'BRIEN: Well, I suppose the first major issue that you had to deal with was, of course, the Bay of Pigs incident. I know in your little article, "As We Knew Adlai," you discuss the coming of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] agent. Do you have any further reflections on that that you care to . . .

PLIMPTON: Well, I can't remember just what I said there. I probably exaggerated a little bit, but certainly I had the impression that we were going to send a few canoes across in the dead of night and gather up in the mountains and then, eventually, do something. Actually, the CIA fellow who came up and talked to us was Tracy Barnes. He's a very good fellow. I'd known him before and haven't seen him much since. I suppose that I wasn't entirely accurate in thinking that we really got no impression--I'm sure we got no impression of what was actually going to happen. I remember they said that the thing was financed by Cuban émigré money; that no U.S. property was involved except an abandoned army camp in Louisiana. Adlai and I both said, "For God's sake, get those people out of there right away." Certainly there was great lack of candor in that interview.

O'BRIEN: Well, now this took place just prior to the Bay of Pigs invasion . . .

PLIMPTON: About a week before.

O'BRIEN: A week before. And this was the first that either of you had any inkling at all that anything was being mounted?

PLIMPTON: That's right.

O'BRIEN: When did you realize that there was a much deeper involvement on the part of agencies of the United States government?

PLIMPTON: Well, actually, not until right in the middle of the thing, so to speak, as far as I was concerned. In the U.N. operation, you see, you tend to go off a little bit in different directions. Just as an example, the committees: That first year I was in the Special Political Committee, whereas the Cuban thing was in the First Committee. Of course, when the Cuba thing broke, we were all on that, needless to say. But that had been handled in the First Committee and I was always in other Committees. Beside the Special Political Committee, I was also involved in the Sixth Committee (the Legal Committee), and in the Fifth Committee (the Budget Committee), none of which Adlai paid much attention to. So we were never going into everything together all the time--our functions were usually separated, quite a bit.

But I certainly never will forget the pictures of the Cuban warplanes which Adlai showed on the U.N. screen and said, "Look, it shows that the Castro deserters flew these planes--they have Cuban markings on them." I didn't suspect anything wrong then, but about the next day things began to break and it became perfectly obvious that we were deep in it and that the photographs were faked.

O'BRIEN: How did you finally find out? Was it through the news media rather than through any official communication?

PLIMPTON: Well, Bundy came rushing up from Washington and I'm sure told us. I was not in the middle of that one nearly as much as in certain other things, and I don't remember being in on any definite talk between Adlai and Bundy on those two days. What I was doing, I can't remember, but I wasn't in the eye of the hurricane; so to speak.

O'BRIEN: You must have caught some of the responses of other nations. Is there anything that stands out in your memory in those days after?

PLIMPTON: Well, of course, Adlai felt absolutely sunk at having misled the United Nations.

And I--I guess I've written this somewhere, or you must have read it somewhere, that it was such a traumatic experience for him that when it came around to the Cuban missile crisis, he was unwilling to show the photographs of the Soviet missiles at the U.N. It was practically by force of arms that I made him do it.

I had that easel and the photographs concealed in the room outside the Security Council, virtually in defiance of instructions from him and from the State Department, who wouldn't let us use them because they wanted to save them for [Pierre ^{Emile Zola} F. G.] Salinger who wanted them for some television show. I had to call up to the White House in the middle of the wrangle in the Security Council and get hold of Rusk and said, "Look, we've got to show the U.N. those pictures." He said, "Wait a moment," and then came back and said okay. I'd already written out--or rather, the Navy had written out a text describing the pictures, and I'd sort of rewritten it the night before so as to make it a little more intelligible. We practically forced Adlai to go ahead and do it. His reluctance was entirely due to the Bay of Pigs misuse of the pictures of the supposed Cuban Air Force planes.

O'BRIEN: Did he consider resigning at that point?

PLIMPTON: I don't think so, no.

O'BRIEN: How about yourself and other members of the delegation? Any of you at that point consider

PLIMPTON: No. No. I didn't, at least. You were caught up in a crisis; we didn't have time to think about it because we were busy trying to defend the U.S. position against criticism from the Soviets and others. I know that Adlai felt very bitterly about it, but I don't think he thought of resigning.

O'BRIEN: Did the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs and particularly the false assumptions that you were operating under as far as the nature of the origins of the Bay of Pigs, do you feel that this in any way weakened the position of the United States in the United Nations in those months after?

PLIMPTON: Oh, yes. But not disastrously--never underestimate the ability of people to forget. It was obviously a very strong thing to forget for quite a while, but other things get talked about, and it just goes into the past. That's one of the pleasant things about unpleasant episodes, people forget them.

O'BRIEN: Well, passing on to the next Cuban crisis in a sense, the missile crisis. Do you remember about when you first learned of the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba?

PLIMPTON: I certainly do. I was not in Washington during the fatal week during which the missiles were discovered. The first time I knew was on Sunday; that's about four or five days after the discovery. Everything was very tightly held. Adlai was in Washington on Wednesday or somewhere around there, and was there, I think, practically all the rest of week, while we were so blindly carrying on up here. I remember Clayton Fritchey came out and spent the weekend with me at our house in Long Island. On Sunday, Adlai called from Washington and said, "You've got to cancel all my engagements." And Fritchey and I said, "What's going on?" He said, "Just do what I say." We said, "Is it good news or bad news?" He said, "The latter." And that was all we got out of him. Then he came up to New York on Monday and, of course, told us all about it on Monday. From then on, it's history.

O'BRIEN: From that point on were you kept tightly briefed about what was going on?

PLIMPTON: Oh, yes, every minute from then on. I did not go to Washington--I wasn't in on any of the Executive Committee meetings in Washington; I was up in New York the whole time.

O'BRIEN: Did you get any insight into Governor Stevenson's role at this point?

PLIMPTON: Well, he never talked about it very much, because I was not in on the crucial discussions in the Executive Committee. I do know that he was prepared to. . . . I do know that he was insistent, and I think very rightly so, on getting the U.N. into the act. I also know that he certainly did talk about our missiles in Turkey and in Northern Italy, which as it turned out, the Defense Department had been perfectly willing to get rid of for quite a while.

O'BRIEN: Was he aware of that before he suggested it?

PLIMPTON: I think so, yes. I think so. I remember his saying to me something like, "All those Defense Department people don't think about anything except shooting planes at theirs."

There's one item of history I've always felt was misrepresented in connection with that episode--Schlesinger's book gives Bobby Kennedy the credit for our answering the Soviets' first cable and ignoring the second. You may remember that there was a Friday afternoon cable from [Nikita S.] Khrushchev which was written in very "Khrushchevy" earthy style. I remember it had the very good analogy: "You, Mr. President, and I have both ends of a rope with a knot tied in the middle. The harder we pull, the tighter the knot is. If we both loosen up, maybe we can untie the knot," something like that. It was a very good sort of earthy analogy. I remember Averell Harriman said-- I think he was in New York at the time--I remember him saying, "I'm sure that Khrushchev wrote that."

Well, in any event, when that cable came in, we, of course, got it at the same time the State Department did. The communications system is such that when something important comes from New Delhi or wherever, it hits Washington and us at the same time. And I remember shouting with glee when that came in. I said, "We've got them now!" The next morning, of course, came a long, formal cable, obviously drafted by someone in the foreign office, with all sorts of conditions and so on. I know that I said, "For Christ sakes, let's accept the first one and disregard the second." Schlesinger gives Bobby credit for that idea, but I'm sure that everybody had it; I certainly did. I remember yelling it on the telephone to somebody in Washington. I think Adlai felt the same way. This is a minor point, but I always thought that Schlesinger was giving too much credit to one person, Bobby, for an idea that certainly occurred to me, and I'm sure to Adlai and to a lot of other people.

O'BRIEN: Passing on to the [Charles L.] Bartlett-[Joseph W.] Alsop article, which was written in the Saturday Evening Post, did you ever get any insight into the origin of that article?

PLIMPTON: I was always suspicious that either Jack or Bobby had leaked it, but I have no proof at all; it was just a suspicion. I don't know who. . . .

O'BRIEN: Ambassador Stevenson was quite upset about that?

PLIMPTON: Yes.

O'BRIEN: Did he consider resigning at that point?

PLIMPTON: Well, I can't truthfully answer. I think I would say he was hurt more than anything else. I'm sure he must have thought of resigning, but he isn't the resigning kind. There wasn't in him the sort of resentfulness that makes one say, "the hell with it," and resign. That wasn't in his character.

O'BRIEN: Backing up a bit, of course one of the major questions I suppose you faced when you assumed your position in the United Nations was the question of Red China. What were your expectations in those early months of 1961? Did you expect at that point a change in policy and . . .

PLIMPTON: Well, certainly Adlai wanted to change our policy on that one. He discussed it quite a number of times. He was perfectly loyal about the policy, indeed, it isn't the kind of issue one feels like getting up on the barricades about. It seemed to me, perhaps even more strongly than it did to him, that we were really just idiots to take all the blame of keeping Peking out when actually Peking wasn't going to come in anyway, except on conditions that practically nobody would consent to. We were idiots to take all the blame for keeping them out when they would have kept themselves out if you had sort of let it ride. But Rusk was very strong in opposition and I don't think Kennedy ever really dug into it very much.

O'BRIEN: Was there a period of time in the beginning that it seemed that there was going to be a change in policy?

PLIMPTON: Well, I would have thought there might. You see, in '61--it was due to Adlai that the thing was even debated, you may remember. In the [Henry C.] Lodge regime, we always blocked it off in the General Committee, which is sort of the steering committee of the U.N. And it was due to Adlai that we changed gears there and said, "Let's debate the thing." So there was a big leap forward, if you want to put it that way, as a result of Adlai's ideas, right there at the very beginning.

One always has to remember the problem is not only Peking but also Taiwan. I don't think Adlai for a moment ever felt that you ought to throw Taiwan out and let Peking in. Yet those, of course, were the proposals that were always made. That was the only way the Soviets put it--of course, they don't even do that anymore; now, it's Albania that has to carry the ball. In those days, the Soviets would always propose a resolution, something like this that "the General Assembly invites the lawful government of the People's Republic of China to take its rightful place in the United Nations and expels the bandit clique of the usurper, Chiang Kai-shek." Well, quite apart from the substance of it, it was damn insulting to the perfectly well

behaved Taiwan delegation which has always done a very good job at the U.N. So you would almost think that the Soviets themselves didn't want Peking in because they always framed the resolution so insultingly.

Adlai, certainly, would never have supported that resolution; but he certainly would have supported and regretted that the State Department wouldn't go along and accept a resolution for a "two China" policy. We never could persuade them to do it.

O'BRIEN: A little while later the question of Outer Mongolia and Mauritania get involved in this.

PLIMPTON: Yes, I had to handle that damn thing. It was an awful mess. That was a--let's see if I can remember it now; I certainly do remember my anguish at always having to explain in my somewhat battered French the position of the United States to the French-speaking Africans. Well, as I remember, it came down to this: the Africans were all very anxious to get Mauritania into the U.N., and the Soviets would veto it unless Outer Mongolia came in. I had the nice little job of trying to persuade China--Taiwan--not to veto Outer Mongolia, which they regard as part of China. You get curious crossruffs there. It's a mild revelation when you get into U.N. affairs to realize how terrifically political a lot of these issues are. It's no question of right or wrong; it's just a question of straight political muscle. Well, we finally exercised our political muscle on Taiwan and made them agree to let Mongolia in, which they could have blocked with a veto in the Security Council, so that we could get Mauritania in and get a few votes out of the Africans.

O'BRIEN: What kind of political muscle did ^{you} apply?

PLIMPTON: One just sort of mildly reads the riot act and says the United States Government really thinks it would be very much in your interest to let Outer Mongolia in. You say that long enough and loud enough and pleasantly enough, and eventually they get the point. I'm sure we put pressure on them in Taipei, too.

O'BRIEN: So this was really being done not only in the United Nations but it was also being done at the . . .

PLIMPTON: I'm sure it was in Taipei.

O'BRIEN: . . . at the embassy level as well.

PLIMPTON: Yeah.

O'BRIEN: Did you get any insight into that, into what pressures were applied at the embassy level?

PLIMPTON: Well, I know it was a serious question that needed to be taken up there, and the tactical term for that is "going to the capitals." In other words, the U.S. Mission here is supposed to be able to persuade everybody, all the members in the rest of the world, to do what we want. Much of the time you can't quite do it. Then, if it's a terribly important issue, the State Department applies pressure on the capitals to get them to get their delegates to vote for what we want. That doesn't happen many times, but I'm fairly sure this was one of them.

O'BRIEN: Was there any difference here between the Department and the U.N. delegation in regard to . . .

PLIMPTON: Mauritania and Outer Mongolia?

O'BRIEN: . . . Mauritania, Outer Mongolia, or over the Red China issue, the admission of Red China as well as the recognition of Red China, that you recall?

PLIMPTON: Well, little differences in degree. I think almost everybody at the U.S. Mission felt we were idiots not to recognize Peking. But having said that, you have to take into consideration more than principle because--well, take what happened to the British. They recognized Peking, and all they got from it was a kick in the pants--and a continued kick in the pants. Not even yet have they gotten anything out of recognition. Having said that we in the U.S. Mission felt we were idiots not to recognize Peking, you have to go right on and say, "at the right time and under the right conditions." I don't believe there was very much disagreement as to the fact that the conditions were not ripe at that particular time. I don't think they were right now. Anybody who's a diplomat in Peking from a Western country is just going through hell. We wouldn't want to subject anybody to that at the moment.

O'BRIEN: We also had in 1961 the problem of what to do with the Algerian rebels, and that came up for a resolution vote. The United States, I understand, abstained for procedural reasons. Are those the real reasons?

PLIMPTON: No. I'm sure there was pressure from [Charles A.] de Gaulle. The French always remember with irritation Kennedy's speech when he was a Senator on Algeria, favoring independence, and always tried to make us remember it. We were very uncomfortable about that abstention, which made us look anti-Algerian independence.

O'BRIEN: You also were involved in some of the Arab refugee problems, as I understand.

PLIMPTON: Yes, Adlai, it always seemed to me, gave me the nastiest things to handle: Arab refugees, South African apartheid, the financial problems of the U.N. Three absolutely impossible things to have to try to deal with. Kashmir, (also impossible, but not continuously critical), outer space and Alto Adige (or Sud Tiröl, depending on the point of view) were easier.

The Palestine refugees was a very painful experience. Both sides are absolutely intractable. Israelis, I think, behaved extremely badly, and the Arabs too. I can talk a little bit about that for the history book. The story is all in the State Department, buried somewhere, but it certainly isn't well-known.

The United States is a member of the so-called Palestine Conciliation Commission [United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine]. There were three members: United States, Turkey, and France. There's a long background to that. At the time of the Lausanne Treaty, the Commission sort of fussed around and got a little bit done. Then it lapsed into lassitude. In 1961 or '62--I can't remember just when it started--there had been quietly going on a Conciliation Commission project as to Arab refugee property in Israel. The Conciliation Commission had succeeded in getting the Israelis, after a good deal of difficulty, to unfreeze Arab bank accounts in Israel. We had quite a lot of trouble getting the Arab governments to announce to their own people that these accounts were unfrozen, that they could go and get their money. The Arabs sort of hate to admit that the Israelis will ever do anything decent. However, that project worked out pretty well. We also succeeded in getting the Israelis to release the safe deposit boxes owned by Arabs in Israel--unfreeze them.

Then we had a study made of the value, as of 1945, of Arab real estate taken over by the Israelis in what is now Israel. That was a fabulous operation--done mostly by British civil servants--valuing each parcel in terms of sales, at the time, of comparable property. It works out to some 800 million dollars worth of Arab property taken over by Israelis in 1946. The calculations were as of '45 because that was the last time there were any sales under ordinary circumstances. Well, the report really does establish one factor, the almost 800 million dollar value, yet the Israelis have never been willing to pay anything for that property.

My own view as to what ought to be done about the refugee problem is to have Israel offer to pay that billion dollars to the owners, plus interest since 1946. And I would cheerfully recommend that the United States lend the money to do it, so that you could get the money into the hands of the refugees and get them thinking about something else besides going back to Palestine.

At about that same time, the Palestine Conciliation Commission, at the instance of the State Department, retained Dr. Joseph E. Johnson, President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, to explore possible solutions for the refugee problem. He spent over a year going around the Middle East, talking to the Israelis, King Hussein of Jordan, Nasser, et cetera, and also talked with the refugee leaders themselves. You ought to go and interview him because he can tell you the story of his mission better than I can. He presented a really viable plan for the refugee problem. His plan has never been officially published, but I think that almost everyone knows just about what it was. His suggestion was that the Israelis admit some 30,000 or so refugees a year. This would not present any danger as regards Israel's security and, at the same time, would partially comply with the U.N. General Assembly's

resolution as to the return of the refugees, which provided that all refugees were entitled to return to their homes in Palestine and that those who did not wish to do so would receive compensation. His thought was that the refugees who did return would find that Israel was a very different place from the Palestine that they used to know and that the word would seep back to the refugee camps that life in Israel was not as pleasant or advantageous as would be staying in the Arab countries with a good healthy payment for Arab property in Israel.

Joe Johnson is one of the nicest and most transparently honest men of good will that I know, yet he ended up by being virtually repudiated by both the Arabs and, I think in particular, by the Israelis.

Solving the refugee problem is really, I think the key to peace in the Middle East, but the deep emotions that persist on both sides make any solution extraordinarily difficult. My own view, as I have said, is that I think that the Israelis would be well advised to offer almost any reasonable sum to the refugees if the problem could be solved; this the Israelis have never been willing to do--they express vague willingness in principle, but then start talking about compensation for property left behind by Jews who left Arab countries to go to Israel.

O'BRIEN: Did you ever put your own plan into a proposal form and suggest it within the United Nations or within the State Department?

PLIMPTON: Well, my so-called plan was really part of the Johnson plan, as to which we were under wraps-- it has never been publicly disclosed, for some reason that has never been entirely clear to me. Of course, you're playing with egg shells in this area.

Right now, we're in entirely different posture; we're being tarred, if you want to put it that way, with being the outright supporter of Israel. In those days, we tried to maintain an even balance between the Arabs and Israel. Golda Meir would spit in my eye if she saw me today, she so disliked my trying to be impartial--I don't think she really would, because she's too big a person for that, but she is the foreign potentate I came closest to having a real fight with of anybody that I ever dealt with at the U.N. However, I was in Israel the summer before last with the New York Philharmonic when she was away on vacation, and somebody in a position to know told me, to my surprise, that she held me in highest esteem, but you certainly would never know it from the way we wrangled back and forth in the sixties. She was furious with me for not getting up and defending Israel in the Special Political Committee meetings when [Ahmed] Shukairy, who was then the head of the Palestine Liberation Movement--actually, at that time he was the U.N. delegate from Saudia Arabia. He would get up and talk for seven hours, slanging Israel up and down and backwards and forwards, vilifying them. Golda felt I ought to get up and answer him. Well, the Israelis were perfectly capable of answering for themselves; it wasn't our policy to get up and defend Israel any more than it was our policy to get up and defend the Arabs whenever the Israelis slammed them.

O'BRIEN: Did she ever confront you directly about that?

PLIMPTON: Oh, Lord, yes. She used to stay up on Central Park South--I've forgotten what hotel--and she got really very angry that I had not gotten up and defended Israel. She said something very extreme--I can't remember exactly what it was--and I remember saying, as icily as I could, that I hoped it would not be necessary for me to report to my government what she had said. At that she backed down, and we ended up on reasonably friendly terms. But there certainly is an attitude on the part of the Israelis that they can call the tune for American policy. They know their political power here, and they use it; no doubt about that.

O'BRIEN: In the time that you were in the United Nations and particularly as to the refugee problem, were you ever pressured by either the White House or by--particularly here in New York--groups that were very pro-Israel in the sense of foreign policy?

PLIMPTON: To some extent, yes, but I would like to think that I had good relations with them--I don't remember all the names. But I can remember speaking to a Jewish ladies' group (I think it was the B'nai B'rith) on the refugee issue where the United States was taking a stance that obviously the Jewish community didn't like at all. I started out by saying that I knew that they were all Americans and that they wanted to know and understand the American position on the issue as distinguished from one's own prejudices. They just took it like lambs.

No Jewish group ever threatened me at all. Indeed, I have very good relations with the--not the chief rabbi--but the very nice Long Island rabbi who was the top boy in the Jewish organizations dealing with the U.N. I thought he was a very good fellow. The closest I ever came to being threatened was by Golda Meir, as I've said. I got along fine with the Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. of those days, Michael Comay. We disagreed every so often, but we were always polite to each other. I had a very pleasant time with him in Jerusalem the summer before last, when I went there with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra.

The Arabs were quite something to deal with. [Jamil M.] Baroody, the representative of Saudi Arabia, is the one who makes the interminable and often hare-brained speeches in the U.N. He is actually a Lebanese. We got to be quite friendly, with the result that he always poured out his anti-Israeli sentiments on me. He and many of the other Arabs deeply resented what they considered the unfair and discriminatory treatment given the Arab cause by the New York newspapers and what they believed the dominance in this country of Jewish political influence.

Shukairy, a Palestinian who was in those days the top representative of Saudi Arabia, was reputed to be paid \$100,000 a year by the Saudis. He is the one who spoke for seven straight hours (lunch intervening) without looking at a single note. Rumor had it that he spent the entire time between General Assemblies rehearsing the same speech.

I always thought the State Department people took a very balanced view of the Arab-Israeli problem, but the extreme Jewish press always accused them of being pro-Arab.

[Myer] Feldman was Kennedy's, so to speak, Jewish antenna. He was a very good fellow. I thought he was very pleasant to deal with and very understanding of the problems up here.

O'BRIEN: Did you see him much?

PLIMPTON: Not much, no. Just a few times.

O'BRIEN: Well, a little while earlier you were talking about your work with population control. I saw your name the other day associated with the group--what is it, the. . . .

PLIMPTON: Planned Parenthood [Federation].

O'BRIEN: Planned Parenthood, but there's another one, too.

PLIMPTON: Well, there's a fellow named Hugh Moore who gets out full-page advertisements every once in a while. I forget what it's called.

O'BRIEN: Right. Well, now you've been active in that area for some time?

PLIMPTON: Yes. I'll tell you about my first run-in with Kennedy, so to speak. My wife has always been very much interested in population problems, and in the fall of '61, I was asked to speak at the annual dinner of the Planned Parenthood Federation. They wanted the thing written out, so I laboriously struggled and got something out on paper.

Along about--three days before the dinner, it suddenly occurred to me that maybe I ought to submit the speech to the State Department. I had never had to do anything like that before, but I sent it down to the State Department, and all hell broke loose. As far as I could make out, the wheels of government stopped for forty-eight hours. Everybody in the State Department seemed to read it, and it went over to the White House. The Department called me up, and said, "I'm sorry, but you can't make this speech." I said, "What do you mean?" They said, "Well, we're cutting so much out of it, there's hardly anything left." That just infuriated me, and I had a hell of a wrangle with them about it. I had never been censored by anybody before, and for a while thought of resigning in high dudgeon. They objected to virtually any reference to the Catholic position and the White House actually insisted on cutting out some literally accurate direct quotations from Kennedy's speeches, where he had said a few kind words about population problems. The Irish Mafia, or somebody over there, felt that he'd be damaged by these quotations, and, by God, these quotations got cut out of the speech.

I finally cooled down a little, and ended up by thinking that the audience was probably the winner because the speech got shortened by possibly a quarter.

The speech turned out to be a great success, and was reprinted all over the place.

O'BRIEN: You don't happen to have an original draft somewhere, do you?

PLIMPTON: I could probably find it.

O'BRIEN: I think that might be something that would be well worthwhile putting in the Library. There was a time there that you--it seems to me in looking in the New York Times--that you felt obligated to defend population control against the charges that this was some kind of example of American imperialism, as I recall, or something of that sort. Did you get that kind of a reaction in the United Nations?

PLIMPTON: Well, I've heard much more about that particular attitude in recent years. I don't remember it in 1961-'65. I was sort of on the periphery of the population problem at the U.N. It was dealt with in a wholly different committee from the ones I sat in, but due to the notoriety of my connection with my wife, who's been very active in planned parenthood, and my own very strong commitment to the movement, I kept hearing about it and following it all the time. But I never had the chance to debate it because it was handled in the Third Committee, the Social Committee [Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee]. But it's mostly in recent years that one has heard this nonsense about how family planning is a genocidal attempt by the West to bear down on Africa and bear down on the blacks. All these ideas have come up fairly recently, much more so than in my days at the U.N.

O'BRIEN: So it never really became an embarrassing thing to you while you were in the United Nations, and the only real problem you had was with the State Department?

PLIMPTON: Well, actually the State Department was awfully timid and timorous about anything like this. It's just pure politics; they were scared of the supposed Catholic reaction against birth control, which turns out to be somewhat of a myth, anyway. It's only the Pope who cares about this now, maybe a few ancient cardinals. I could tell you the story about my private audience with the Pope, if you're interested in birth control.

O'BRIEN: Well, why not?

PLIMPTON: This happened in the summer of 1963, while Diem was still the President of South Viet Nam. There had been a good deal of talk in the newspapers about his regime's and the Catholics', persecution of Buddhists, and just the day before I was to fly to Italy for a vacation, the Ambassadors of Nepal, Cambodia and Ceylon waited on me and delivered a long protest against Catholic persecution of Buddhists in South Viet Nam. They insisted that I get President Kennedy to get the Pope to stop the persecutions.

The next day I flew to Italy, where we have a Villa on Lake Como. It then occurred to me that I had never met a Pope and that this was a good excuse. I wrote to our Embassy in Rome and asked them to see if they could get me a private audience with His Holiness to discuss the Catholic persecution of Buddhists in Viet Nam and population problems. My wife has always been very interested in the population problem, and has been on various Planned Parenthood boards for years. A few days later, I went down to Rome where I was staying at the American Academy. I had no more arrived when I got a call from the Embassy that I had a private audience with the Pope the next day. I went out to Castel Gondolfo in an Embassy car with one of the Embassy people.

I was taken up in the creaky two-man elevator to an upper floor where, to my embarrassment, a squad of Swiss guards presented halberds. After being ushered through successive waiting rooms, I finally was received by the Pope in his small library. He had with him a Monsignor as an interpreter--he really does not speak English. I did not want to waste time by translation, so I spoke my battered French. The Pope's French is very fluent, but he had a heavy Italian accent which makes it easier for an American to understand him.

I started off on the Catholic persecution of Buddhists and he was very defensive. He said he had sent a message over to be "raisonnable," which I thought a curious word, and he said he would do so again. Actually, the next morning's papers did say that he had sent a message to Viet Nam as to Catholic-Buddhist relations.

I then brought up the population question, merely saying that most everyone at the U.N. was very troubled by the excessive population growth, and that I hoped very much that it would be possible to have a free and open discussion of the problem at the U.N. and that the Catholic countries' representatives could be persuaded not to object to such a discussion. The moment that I mentioned the population problem the Pope's face hardened into wooden inflexibility. He said you couldn't change God's law and he actually used the phrase "tuer la vie humaine," which certainly betrayed a considerable ignorance of female physiology. He also said that it was a matter for FAO, the Food and Agricultural Organization.

I got absolutely nowhere with him--he was completely unyielding. He did display very considerable interest when I mentioned the articles which had just been running in the New York Times as to the difficulties Catholic priests were having in connection with the birth control issue and the obvious desires of many Catholic women to practice it. He had not heard of the articles, and asked the interpreter to get them for him.

I was not at all surprised when the Pope later came to New York and made uncompromising statements against birth control at the U.N.

The Planned Parenthood people have good reason to believe there are many in high circles in the Vatican who favor liberalization of the Church's position on birth control, but I am convinced that any change will have to await the present Pope's elevation to a higher place.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

O'BRIEN: Was there any organized resistance in the U.N. to population questions?

PLIMPTON: Well, again, this isn't my field, but up until about three or four years ago Latin America was just completely against any family planning at all. The Catholic Church, of course, is extremely powerful in Latin America. However, when anyone talks about Latin America as a whole, he must be careful because Argentina is one thing and Chile is another and Bolivia is another. But in general, there was no awareness of the population problem and no willingness to deal with it until, say, five years ago. Now there has been a terrific breakthrough down there. When the annual conference of the International Planned Parenthood Federation was held in Santiago, Chile, about two years ago, President [Eduardo] Frei opened the proceedings. They had one in Bogota and the President of Colombia opened the proceedings. That would have been unheard of ten years ago. Now, there's been somewhat of a reaction that seems to have come with the general anti-American cycle that seems to be prevalent down there right now.

As far as the U.N. is concerned, the Catholic countries back in my day were almost unanimous against even letting the thing be debated. [Richard N.] Dick Gardner, who, incidentally, is a very bright fellow and whom you ought to talk to, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations under Harlan Cleveland, was the population man in the State Department and knows much more about population problems than I do. He and I saw eye to eye. He was as anguished about the Department's censoring my 1961 population speech as I was, except that he was in the Department and kept on saying, "You've got to do what they say."

At the U.N., the Scandinavians were the only ones who had any urge really to push the population problems. And they really did push. Gardner was always trying to hold them back; the general U.S. position was "don't push it too hard." I remember that when the Scandinavian resolution was introduced calling for a U.N. discussion of the population problem, Gardner, as the U.S. representative on the Committee, abstained. My wife heard about this while she was in Singapore attending a Planned Parenthood meeting. She sent Gardner a postcard simply reading "Your abstention was heard around the world." He still blushes about that.

But the atmosphere has changed very much now. In those days the French, the Belgians and the Spanish were very anti. I don't know if any of these have changed very much, but the general atmosphere is quite different, now, from what it was in 1961 or '62.

O'BRIEN: Backing up here a bit, when you were talking about the State Department's reaction or the White House reaction to your speech, I understand that Governor Stevenson actually preferred the bureaucracy to write speeches for him, rather than writing a speech and submitting it for their approval, for this very reason. Is that an accurate assumption?

PLIMPTON: Well, you have to face the realities of life in a job like Adlai's. It was virtually physically impossible for him to write a speech, he had so much else to do. I had a horrible time finding a chance to write the one of mine we've been talking about, which was, of course, a private speech, nothing official at all. My recollection is that I got somebody from Planned Parenthood to make the first draft, but I didn't like it at all, and I rewrote the entire thing. Adlai made the same speech about three or four years later. It wasn't a very good speech. I don't think it was nearly as good as mine, first of all, because he hadn't had any time to do any work on it. It was undoubtedly drafted by someone in the U.S. Mission.

But, to come to the point, no speech by anyone in Adlai's position is ever written by him. It's just a question of where the first draft is made: Is it made in New York or is it made in Washington? That often depends on where the pressures are at the time.

Take Kennedy's annual speech to the General Assembly. That would go through a terrific series of drafts. Sometimes we'd make the first draft in New York. Then it would go down to the State Department and the Department would rewrite it. Then it would go back and forth; finally, it would go to the White House, and the whole thing would be rewritten by [Theodore C.] Sorensen, who's a damn good speech-writer, that fellow. He'd take the ideas, which were usually a mix of New York and Department, and rephrase them in what came to be known as the Kennedy style--much more Sorensen than Kennedy I suspect--and it would be a damn good result. My hat's off to him.

I wouldn't know where to apportion the credit as between Sorensen and Kennedy. I know a little about the speech that Kennedy made at Amherst College in 1963 at the dedication of the Robert Frost Library. I'm told that that speech, which Schlesinger originally got up, was pretty much rewritten by Kennedy while his plane was going around and around over Westover Field for about an hour or so due to bad weather. It was one of his best speeches.

I was furious about that affair. I'm a trustee of Amherst and my brother is the President of Amherst; I was at least partly responsible for getting Kennedy to go up there. And damned if Stevenson wasn't away somewhere, and I got a call from George Ball who said if I didn't stay in New York that particular weekend, he'd have to come up here himself and stay. So I missed the one and only trip Kennedy ever made to Amherst, my own college, and never saw him up there at all. Very sad.

O'BRIEN: Well, as to the Kennedy appearances at the United Nations and the speeches, you mentioned that there was a good deal of rewriting, a good deal of rehashing of those. I suppose you took some part of that?

PLIMPTON: I certainly did.

O'BRIEN: Is there anything that comes to mind about that, about the speeches, the general topics and ideas that went into them, and the response, in a sense, to them?

PLIMPTON: Well, the response to Kennedy at the U.N. was always very good. Of course, he only did it twice, I think, in '61 and '62, and both times he made an extremely good impression. Of course, he was young compared to a great many of them, and gave an impression of vigor and the forward look. I would say the reaction was extremely good both times. I don't remember anything in particular about those speeches. The rewriting of speeches was an endless process. I don't remember any particular one--I'd have to go back and reread them, which I have not done.

O'BRIEN: Is the visit of the head of state an influential thing on U.N. policy--not only President Kennedy but other heads of state as well?

PLIMPTON: Well, once in a while, it makes an impact. Of course, a great deal depends on who it is and what he says. I think one of the most effective speeches I ever heard there was by [Paul-Henri] Spaak, the Belgian Prime Minister, almost the best speaker I ever heard outside of [Winston S.] Churchill, just fabulously good. But even that speech sort of wore off. It was about the Congo, against a background where all the Africans were terribly anti-Belgian, and although he made a superb speech and was well received, it all wore off and the Africans all resumed slamming Belgium only a few days afterward.

O'BRIEN: Well, passing on to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, on which you served as the representative of the United States, as I understand it, the big problem was getting some kind of a--well, first of all getting the procedural questions worked out and getting some kind of an agreement. What were some of the major problems you had in regard to working out something that the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union and the United States could agree upon?

PLIMPTON: Well, outer space is almost entirely a duologue between the Soviets and ourselves; everybody else is just an onlooker. In certain minor areas (for example, assistance in launchings), a few countries have a direct practical interest--in a way everyone is interested, but really, it's just face to face with the Russians on everything. The first important item was the resolution as to the non-appropriability (if there's such a word) of celestial bodies to national sovereignty. Then came the applicability of international law to outer space, and the prohibition of the stationing in outer space of missiles of mass destruction. Several years ago the Soviets made quite a play of announcing space platforms which would circle the earth in outer space, and on which missiles could be stationed. Needless to say, putting nuclear missiles on such a platform would be a violation of the U.N. resolution. I don't really think the Russians had that in mind, but their announcements were certainly cause for suspicion.

These points were all fought out between the Russians and ourselves. They are terribly difficult to deal with. I remember the endless arguments about whether the subcommittees (technical and legal) were to meet in Geneva or in New York--hours of wasted negotiations on a thing like that--and the intractability of the Soviet positions. One real trouble in dealing with the Soviets--there are a lot of other, more substantive troubles--but the trouble that most people don't realize is the extent to which Soviet representatives have no authority except on instructions from Moscow. You can argue with a fellow here in New York until you're blue in the face--secretly, he may agree with you. A particular meeting, let us say, really should be held in New York because all the people who were going to go to it are here anyway. But his instructions from Moscow say Geneva, so he interminably says Geneva, Geneva. It just goes on, and on. Finally, after you've argued for two weeks, suddenly he gets up and says, "I suggest we have this meeting in New York," as though he'd always wanted it to be in New York. Obviously, his instructions had finally changed.

In point of fact, the Russians had insisted that they would not even take part in a Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space except on the understanding that there would never be, in principle, any votes, and that the Committee would only act by "consensus" in accordance with the so-called principle of unanimity. This is an old Soviet position, going back to their insistence on their having a veto in the Security Council (we actually insisted on the same thing). They do not want to get involved in any operation in which there is a chance of something being done which they do not like.

This caused a lot of trouble in the Outer Space Committee, even though there were not very many points of difference between us--for example, it was clear one time that almost all of the members of the Committee except the Russians and the other Commies wanted to have a certain Subcommittee meet in New York, but when I suggested a vote the Russians screamed to high heaven that I was violating the understanding.

The fellow that I had to deal with all the time, [P.D.] Morozov, has now--God help the International Court of Justice--been nominated to the Court (and I suppose by now has been elected) to take the place of [V.M.] Karetsky, who's just retiring. And boy, that Court is going to go to hell in a wheelbarrow with Morozov irritating everybody and infuriating everybody. Morozov was really a very able, if unpleasant, lawyer, and was a past master of handling problems relating to U.N. procedures. Hardly anyone was willing to tangle with him on a procedural matter.

I had one experience with him that taught me a lesson. In connection with a debate in the Special Political Committee on Apartheid, he accused the United States of being far too gentle with the South African Government and of merely waving a finger at it instead of being willing to enforce economic sanctions. He then told a very long-winded Russian story about a cook who had put a large fish on the kitchen table, and had wagged a finger at the cat not to touch it. Needless to say, the cat ran off with the fish and all the cook could do was to shake his finger again--the U.S. position was similarly a futility. I then asked for the right of reply and said that the fish in question must obviously have been a red herring. A few of the English-speaking members of the Committee smiled, but everyone else was puzzled and Morozov was furious. Afterwards he confronted me angrily and said, "I did not say that fish was a red herring." I had a terrible time trying to explain to him what a red herring was and quite a crowd surrounded us. He finally went away still muttering, "I did not say that fish was a red herring," while I solemnly resolved never to try to tell a joke which had to be translated into four other languages.

As I have said, we finally hammered out a resolution, unanimously adopted by the General Assembly, against appropriation of celestial bodies and against stationing of weapons of mass destruction in outer space. It's sort of good law, now.

Then we struggled with two other things: first, a convention as to the return of astronauts and space craft, et cetera, that have come down in someone else's country. This, I think, has finally been negotiated out since my time. I don't think it's been ratified by anybody, but there is a convention.

The second thing was the question of liability, which we've always had a lot of trouble with. You get a lot of curious questions as to who is responsible if one of these things clatters down the middle of some town, which actually did happen. There was a big fragment like this that fell off some Soviet space vehicles and ended up, smoking hot, on a street in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. I remember with considerable pleasure producing it at a meeting of the Committee on Outer Space, where, needless to say, it created a sensation. We knew it was from a Soviet vehicle because it contained part of a screw, and the screw thread intervals were measurable in millimeters and not in fractions of an inch--clear proof that it was of Soviet manufacture. I publicly offered to give it to Morozov, who shrank away as if it were a puffed adder. After the furor had died down, some days later, he did come around and ask to have it.

We had a lot of trouble with American lawyers and other self-starting outer space experts, all of whom wanted to frame a definition of "outer space"--in other words, where the ordinary atmosphere ended and outer space began. Numerous weighty articles appeared in various journals, attempting definitions. We always took the position, which I am sure was right, that we had to wait and let the definition develop out of actual practice, just the way the Common Law was developed. What was it that Mr. Justice Holmes said--something like "an ounce of history is worth a pound of logic." One thing is clear, the old concept that one's property rights or territorial rights extend outward from the earth into infinity is definitely outmoded, for no one

seems to contend that either private property owners or governments should be allowed to stop vehicles crossing one's "property" or "territory" in outer space.

Your questions about outer space make me think you must have been reading the New York Times morgue about me-- have you.

O'BRIEN: Yes, I have. [Laughter] Some of it, at least.

PLIMPTON: Somebody told me that it was rather insulting, that I wouldn't like it if I read it; is that true?

O'BRIEN: Oh, I wouldn't say that. No, in fact, I wouldn't at all. There are very few secrets, state secrets, I think, that aren't published somewhere in the New York Times. They really get at things. Well, I was curious, in shaping policy, U.S. policy towards outer space, now, you must've been in contact with some other agencies of the United States government. What was the organizational structure policy-wise?

PLIMPTON: Oh yes, that's one of my most vivid experiences. We'd have a problem in outer space, and there'd be a meeting in the State Department. It would be in one of those great big committee rooms down on the first floor to the left. And the room would be as big as this, three times as big as this; it would be a great, big room. Presiding would be the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations, Harlan Cleveland. From the State Department there would be two or so layers of people from the Russian desk, from the scientific advisor's office, from UNP (United Nations Political section of IO, Bureau of International Organizations), from the Legal Advisor's office, and a whole lot of other people from the State Department itself--I can't remember all the different bureaus that would turn up. Then, there would be representatives from the Defense Department; there would be the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]; there would be the Federal Communications Commission; there would be the Air Force, the Navy and the Army, and NASA [National Aeronautics and Space

Administration], and who else not. There must've been a hundred people in the room. Cleveland was a very able fellow, and he would guide the reports and conversation so that all these people could have their say. But the proliferation of problems that these particular agencies were all involved in and their varying viewpoints made me for the first time realize what a complicated business it is to formulate policy in the United States.

Gee, I remember going in to the Quai D'Orsay in Paris once to talk about the Palestine refugees. If I were to have a meeting in the State Department on Palestine refugees, there would have been a mass meeting of about, let's say, thirty people, all of whom would have a perfect right to be there, and probably, that would be a lot more than should have been. One man in the Quai D'Orsay was the only fellow I needed to talk to about the Palestine refugees, and I'm not sure the French don't handle their foreign policy about as well as we do. But the sheer numerical problem in dealing with the State Department on anything like outer space is terrific.

O'BRIEN: Can you get anything done in these kinds of organization meetings, or is there some geometric . . .

PLIMPTON: Well, actually, I overstated all of this, because, when all the shooting was done, nine times out of ten what Harlan Cleveland and I had worked out as what we thought ought to be the result would be the result, because the CIA fellow and all the others have got a lot of other things to think about besides outer space. The CIA man really isn't going to dig as hard into an outer space problem as those of us who are intimately involved, generally speaking. Outer space really was mostly our hunt. You would have felt the Air Force would be terribly excited, but, after all, outer space is way up. . . . They just can't get there. It was the NASA people who were more interested than anybody else--NASA and the State Department really worked out the policy.

O'BRIEN: I guess there are two things here that, in a sense, concern Africa: the peace-keeping operation and the financial crisis which resulted from the Congo and which was primarily a later problem in the Kennedy Administration. And the other is this question of apartheid in South Africa. I'm curious about one question that's, in a sense, related to the domestic situation in the United States: while you were there--really, this doesn't relate to apartheid in the general sense of race. While you were there, did you ever have contacts with civil rights groups in the United States; or did civil rights groups in the United States, while you were in the United Nations, ever attempt to make contact with black African nations in an attempt to bring problems of a racial nature in the United States to the attention of the United Nations at that time?

PLIMPTON: Astonishingly enough, no. That always amazed me because in the arguments in the Special Political Committee about apartheid, one always had the uneasy feeling that the orators in damning South Africa would take a sideswipe at the United States. But believe it or not, quite a few--I remember the foreign minister of Nigeria at the time was Jaja [Jaja Wachuku]. . . . I'm sorry, I've forgotten his name, but he was a flamboyant character, one of the most flamboyant orators back in those days. He lost his job a little later. But he actually would make a contrast between the attitude of the United States, which was trying to solve and give civil rights, and the attitude of South Africa. Well, anyway, I remember it very vividly, and the sort of warm feeling inside that he gave you that here was somebody who really felt we were trying to do something about our race problem and civil rights. And with others it was the same way. Even the Soviets never really slammed into us on that, except once in a great while. I never heard an outright onslaught in the United Nations against the United States' treatment of the blacks. I was very surprised.

O'BRIEN: Did you ever have any contact with or any involvement in the thing that Angier Biddle Duke's office did in regard to desegregation of white-only facilities in Washington for African diplomats?

PLIMPTON: Well, yes. See, I was the only New York lawyer in the U.S. Mission, so I got into it, particularly in New York City problems, but also down the line. I didn't have much to do with the highway between here and Washington; I had a lot to do with what happened here in New York. I had to go and deal with the Mayor and the Police Department and God knows who else--real estate interests on making housing available and so on. I'd rather have had something else to do, but I'd do it.

O'BRIEN: Did it take a lot of your time?

PLIMPTON: Quite little. It would all depend on what happened. Of course, what would set these things off would be when some black ambassador would get mugged by a white man or something like that. There would be a terrible row over there in the U.N. There would be speeches about getting the U.N. out of the U.S. Very, very difficult. The [New York] Daily News was always mounting campaigns against the DPL [diplomatic] automobile licenses. They'd take photographs of two DPL cars parked--double-parked--by a hydrant, and they'd put that in the front page of the Daily News. The Daily News was always very anti-U.N.

O'BRIEN: Well, how were these problems handled? Were they handled directly through the United Nations, the U.S. delegation here?

PLIMPTON: Yes, all of the complaints would be made to the U.S. Mission. So we got them all.

O'BRIEN: Did you have some kind of informal working agreement on handling cases involving diplomats with the Police Department and various city administrations?

PLIMPTON: Oh, yes, we had several meetings with the police commissioner, and we got up sort of a little brochure to be distributed to all the police as to what the rights of diplomats are and how the police ought to treat a DPL who's exceeding the speed limit and what you do if somebody is parking where he shouldn't be and the whole problem of diplomatic immunity. I wasted an awful lot of time on the real estate tax problem of the Soviet Mission, who had bought George Pratt's enormous house out in Glen Cove, and claimed tax exemption; Glen Cove would never admit it, and we had a terrible time over that one.

Foreign countries that have properties connected with the U.N. do not per se have diplomatic immunity, since they are not accredited to the U.S. (in which case they would have immunity from all taxes), but instead of the U.N. The tax exemption accorded to the U.N. people comes by reason of the "Headquarters Agreement" between the United States and the United Nations.

That is supposed to accord about the same privileges the people in Washington get, but is really governed by a New York State statute that says that the residence of an ambassador to the U.N. is exempt from New York real estate taxation.

Glen Cove always claimed that the Soviet place is not a residence but a weekend refuge, whereas the Soviets always claimed that one of their ambassadors did live there.

I once persuaded the Russians that it would be a good idea if they were to invite the Glen Cove officials to lunch, which produced one of the funniest luncheon affairs I have ever been to. The election had just been held and the result was that we had two mayors and two city attorneys, with all their wives, all of whom were obviously afraid that drinking vodka would make them betray their secrets, their country or their virtue. Unfortunately, although a good time was had by all (despite some singularly inept toasts by one of the mayors), nothing happened, and the argument is still going on.

O'BRIEN: With only. . . . Pardon me.

PLIMPTON: Well, I was going to say this doesn't have very much to do with the history of Kennedy . . .

O'BRIEN: Well, in a sense . . .

PLIMPTON: . . . for the Kennedy Library.

O'BRIEN: In a sense it does because I know we've done a number of things on civil rights problems, and this is part of civil rights. Several basic civil rights issues get involved with the African diplomats--it is a rather exciting chapter in many ways. Just, really, one final thing on that: With all the African countries that were coming in at that time, I imagine there was a real housing problem there. Did you do anything in an attempt to find them housing in the U.S., through the Mission?

PLIMPTON: Well, a lot was done, which I tried to follow somewhat. I'm trying to remember--I interceded personally a good many times to try to get apartment houses to take particular ambassadors or others. We gave every support we could to the apartment finding bureau at the U.N. There's a little department there that tries to find places to live for them. I remember trying to intercede with Alcoa [Aluminum Company of America] who finally got so fed up with the Africans down in those large Alcoa apartment houses between the U.N. and Bellevue Hospital there--I don't know what has happened recently--finally they wouldn't take any more Africans at all. They were playing bongo drums all night and various mistresses kept wandering around.

There were often vigorous complaints against United States' treatment of foreign diplomats, but I once got our people to make up a list of things that had been done to U.S. citizens by the U.N. diplomats. It started off with--I've forgotten--two or three rapes in Mission headquarters, and two or three single-spaced pages of defalcations. There was one--I don't remember whether he was an African or a Central American who had borrowed from a bank--I think it was a thousand dollars--to buy a television set for fifteen hundred dollars, and he never paid one single cent of it. U.N. people were always walking out on rents. There were about three or four single-spaced pages of sins of the diplomats against the U.S. people, against the New York community. I, of course, never published it, but there were many moments when I felt like doing it when, as I say, something would happen, some African Diplomat would be insulted by somebody or other, and then the news would go all around the U.N. And then the cry would be, "Let's get the U.N. out of the U.S."

O'BRIEN: Did you have anyone on your staff that was specifically assigned to this sort of thing?

PLIMPTON: Carmel Marr.

O'BRIEN: Carmel Marr.

PLIMPTON: M-A-R-R. She's a very nice Negro lawyer by training, very amiable, very pleasant, very good. She's now working in the UN. Secretariat. In [Arthur J.] Goldberg's day they cut down on personnel and quite a lot of people were let go, including her. As I say, she's now working over in the U.N. Nice person.

O'BRIEN: I have a few other questions here in regard to working relationships with people in various areas of the government of the United States. One that always seems to come up in things that people write about the U.N. is the working relationship, first, between the White House, the State Department and the U.S.-U.N. Missions, and, of course, in your time, as I understand it, Schlesinger, Cleveland, and Stevenson . . .

PLIMPTON: Bundy.

O'BRIEN: . . . and Bundy as well. I really don't know how to phrase a question in this regard, but were you entirely satisfied with the way that the U.S. Mission here was allowed to contribute to policy?

PLIMPTON: I might give you a footnote on the relationship between the White House and the State Department. They had a sort of shadow State Department over in the White House. There was quite a strong undercurrent of resentment in the State Department against the White House setup. It was not so much that the White House shouldn't be damned interested in what's going on in the State Department, but it was at the extent to which the shadow boys over there were always bothering the hell out of the people in the Department, who were trying to get a job done and would have to take several hours a day off to justify their existence to some fellow in the White House who was calling up to say, "Why haven't we got this paper on the future of Zambia that we asked for yesterday?" I don't want to exaggerate this, but the feeling that there was somebody always sort of poking you and wanting to follow along and know exactly what you were doing and not giving you quite time enough to do your own job was, I think, resented quite a bit.

So far as the attitude toward the White House of the U.S. Mission, we weren't bothered by them enough to have any feeling at all along those lines. Schlesinger used to come up every so often and sit around and listen. [Richard N.] Dick Goodwin was up once. I think for a while there was a theory that he was going to do the liaison work. He just sort of sat around and didn't say very much, and then went back. There was no feeling that the White House was trying to ride herd on us at all.

Now, as far as the State Department is concerned--of course, you've heard, I'm sure, the old story that the U.S. Mission always feels that it's easier to deal with the Russians than it is with the State Department. That, of course, is somewhat exaggerated. It's a give-and-take proposition. The U.S. Mission does resent the fact that every once in a while the State Department feels that we have to clear with them on every single vote on any old damn thing.

You see, the debates in the U.N. go off on wires down to Washington. So Joe Sisco or somebody can sit there and listen to the debate on Palestine refugees, just as though he were here in New York. This happened very infrequently, but, you know, you might say something in a debate, and then, all of a sudden, somebody calls from Washington, "What'd you have to say that for?" I can't remember that ever happening to me, but we were followed much more closely by the State Department than any other mission was by its foreign office, because, of course, of the telephone's bringing us so close. But if there is a disagreement and you stand up and fight for it and say, "Look, you've got to let us decide how to vote on this, because it's a local tactical issue, and we're better judges of this than you are," they'll fold up. They have to. But we never had very many such disagreements. We always used to joke, as I say, about, "Give me [Nicolai T.] Federenko any day instead of X" (X being whoever in the Department we were dealing with at the time), but that's joking. Most of the time we got along with them fine.

O'BRIEN: Well, did you happen to see this book by Beichman, Arnold Beichman, on the U.S.-U.N. Mission [The Other State Department]--it was published last year?

PLIMPTON: There were several very bad ones. I've forgotten. I think I've seen it, yes.

O'BRIEN: I was just wondering how you reacted to it.

PLIMPTON: It's just sort of blurred in my mind, now, as to . . .

O'BRIEN: He's the guy who sets up a theoretical framework; then he discusses the tenure of Ambassador Lodge and Ambassador Stevenson, and Ambassador Goldberg and leaves off with Ball.

PLIMPTON: I must have seen that, but I don't remember it, I'm ashamed to say.

O'BRIEN: We mentioned--you said that. . . . I thought of it, but perhaps you can't. He does make a great deal of reemphasizing this business of the feeling of the U.S.-U.N. Delegation that, you know, they are not listened to at the State Department.

PLIMPTON: I never had that feeling, particularly, because if I wanted to say something to the State Department, I'd call up and say it. I'm sure I can remember being overruled on some things, but I had no feeling that we were being kicked around or that our views weren't being adequately considered.

O'BRIEN: A lot has been written about the social side of the United Nations as a place where policy is not necessarily made, but at least influenced. Is that an accurate appraisal?

PLIMPTON: Well, I'd rather put it a little differently. I'm sure that [John J.] Rooney (Congressman, Chairman of House Subcommittee on Appropriations for State Department), for example, thinks that all that the U.S. Mission does is go around and drink every afternoon at five different parties, and that that's all that happens, just the consumption of drink. Well, it is perfectly true that the U.S. Mission, at least during the General Assembly, does have to go chasing around to three or four cocktail parties every afternoon. But what happens at one of these things is that you come in and you say respectful things to whoever the foreign minister host is, and then you walk a little further and there is the Ambassador from Upper Volta, whom you want to talk to to see how he is going to vote about something. You talk to him a few minutes, and then some Canadian comes up to you and says, "What do you think we ought to do about this?" and that goes on. There's some idle chitchat involved; some woman will grab you, and you'll have to get rid of her. But there are useful interchanges of information and lobbying that do go on.

As for the influencing of policy, you do get a chance to talk to your New Zealand colleague and say, "Look, what are you going to do about this development that just happened today? Can you get the Australians to go along with us if we do this?" It's mostly that sort of talk. It's lobbying in the real sense of the word, and trying to line up votes. Of course, liaison officers from the Department are supposed to do that when they come up from Washington for the General Assembly. They're supposed to know the Latin American delegations particularly and do a lot of lobbying for you. But you yourself have to argue with the Argentine Ambassador that he ought to come along with you on such and such. It's mostly in trying to get other people to do what you want them to do that these receptions are useful, that sort of work.

But in terms of influencing the policy of Costa Rica by running into the Costa Rican Ambassador at a reception, not so much. You see, the Latin American group always has group meetings on really important matters at which they decide how to vote as a group. You have to go in aggressively and tell them what you hope very much the Latin American group will do. And those are awful experiences. Adlai and I used to go together--they, of course, wanted to see him. He makes a five-minute speech and then walks out and says, "Mr. Plimpton will answer your questions." Then I have to talk for fifteen minutes. Then I have to sit there and listen to seven hours of oratory by the Latin Americans as to whether they agree as to how they agree with us or how they don't agree with us--it is an interminable process. Even if they all do agree, they all have to say why. It's a most painful process.

You bring back all of my quasi-nostalgia for the U.N. I haven't talked this much about it for years.

O'BRIEN: Well, I'm glad that I could do that. We've covered a number of things, and I'm sure that you could go into a great deal of depth about any of them. Of course, any kind of question framework that I could put together is a very imperfect thing.

PLIMPTON: One thing you haven't asked about, which is one of the things I feel most strongly about in this whole looking backwards process, is the financial problem, Article 19, which I really was in the middle of and had a lot to do with. It's kind of a long story.

You remember that in 1956, after the Israelis, British and French invaded Egypt after the Egyptian takeover of the Suez Canal, the U.N. General Assembly (after the Security Council became hogtied by British and French vetoes) demanded that the Israelis, British and French withdraw and authorized a United Nations Extraordinary Force (usually known as UNEF) to occupy the Gaza Strip and the Sharm el Sheikh at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. Almost everybody (except the British, French and Israelis) voted for the resolution; the Russians abstained.

Hammarskjold, somewhat unfortunately, set up a separate expense account, apart from the regular budget, to take care of the expenses of the UNEF, which were fairly heavy. This special account was assessed against all the members, but the U.S., characteristically, offered to put up 40% of the expenses, rather than its usual quota of 31% or 32% for the regular budget. Furthermore, as some of the smaller countries protested it was even so too much to pay, the U.S. voluntarily took a larger share than 40%, thus reducing the assessments on the little fellows. The Russians, and the other communists refused to pay anything, claiming that the aggressors (British, French, and Israelis) should pay. The refusal continues to this day. Furthermore, the Soviet position as regards all so-called peace-keeping operations is that they can only be authorized by the Security Council, and that the Security Council must handle the whole thing. Incidentally, the French, who, as I will say later, have always taken more or less the same position as the Soviets, always have paid their share of the UNEF expenses, presumably because they have a guilty conscience.

Then, in the fall of 1960, came the Congo, when, following independence, the Congolese Force Publique revolted and there was chaos. The Congolese Government asked the U.N. for help and the Security Council, I repeat, the Security Council, organized what became known as ONUC [United Nations Operation in the Congo], a force which grew up to 20,000. The Soviets voted for the force in the Security Council several times, although intermittently they were furious about what the force did or did not do. Again, Hammarskjold set up a separate expense account, but the amounts involved

were so enormous that trouble developed at once. The Soviets and the French both refused to pay anything, even though the Security Council had authorized the operations, and the assessments were so big that the little people couldn't pay either.

As I said earlier, Phil Klutznick dreamed up, or was one of the ones who did dream up, the U.N. bond issue in the authorized amount of \$200,000,000 which was to be serviced out of the regular U.N. budget. The U.N. General Assembly duly authorized the bond issue, although the Russians and the French both said it was illegal and ever since have refused to pay the portion of the regular budget allocable to the service of the bonds.

As told earlier, Adlai made me take Klutznick's place and sell the bond issue to Congress. One of the selling points was that we would only have to pay our regular budget percentage of the cost of the bonds of some 31%, as compared with the more than 40% we were paying for the Congo expenses. Congress finally authorized the U.S.'s buying up to half of the bonds, provided that other countries bought an equal amount. As I remember it, the U.S. investment eventually came to \$76,000,000. Most of the \$150,000,000 bond proceeds were used to pay up the U.N. debts for UNEF and ONUC, but a lot of those debts still remain.

In June of 1962 the International Court of Justice handed down an advisory opinion, requested by the General Assembly, that the UNEF and ONUC expenses were "expenses of the Organization" and therefore binding on the U.N. members. The vote was 9 to 5, with almost 300 pages of different opinions that contain some of the most turgid and inept prose I've ever read. But the result was certainly right, and the General Assembly "accepted" it by an overwhelming margin. Still the Commies and the French refused to pay.

Article 19 of the U.N. Charter reads in part:

"A member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

By the fall of 1964, when the General Assembly was about to start, Article 19 had caught up with the Soviets and clearly they were not entitled to vote--it didn't catch up with the French until January 1965.

For the preceding six months we at USUN had been doing our best to persuade the Soviets to make a voluntary contribution so that a confrontation over Article 19 would be avoided, making it clear if they wanted that they denied any legal liability. Also, we tried out on them various formulas as regards future peace making that would come closer--but not up to--their theory that only the Security Council can have anything to do with peace-keeping forces. We got nowhere.

In the meantime the State Department had been as they say "going to capitals," that is, cabling our ambassadors to go around to the foreign ministers of all the other U.N. members to get them to tell their U.N. people to vote our way on the Article 19 issue; it was a very close thing indeed, because we almost certainly needed two-thirds of those voting, and one or two votes one way or another would or wouldn't make two-thirds.

Why a vote at all? Article 19 says that a member in default to the stipulated extent shall have no vote in the General Assembly. The Soviets were in default to that extent, and that should have been it.

Here began a series of bad luck. If the issue had come up the year before, the then President of the General Assembly, that magnificent bearded Pakistani, Zafrullah Kahn, would have unhesitatingly ruled from the chair that the Soviets had no vote, and his ruling could never have been overruled.

What we had as President of the G.A. was Carlos Sosa Rodriguez, the Venezuelan permanent representative, a charming but wishy-washy Latino who embodied all the defects of the overtheorizing civil law lawyers who remind one of the medieval theologians arguing as to how many angels could dance on the head of a pin.

I spent literally almost hundreds of hours arguing with him that "shall" means "shall" (the French version says the defaulter "cannot" vote) and is self-operative. But he stubbornly insisted that nothing is self-executing and that the G.A. had to implement it. Since an "important" matter requires a two-thirds majority of those voting, we were up against it.

Incidentally, in recent years defaulting members, such as Haiti, have been deprived of their General Assembly votes without any vote at all.

Apart from the disaster of Sosa Rodriguez, three other things happened just before the Assembly opened.

First, Khrushchev was thrown out. The result was everyone thought the new regime ought to be given a chance to change policy, and that the Article 19 issue shouldn't be pushed, so that they would have a chance.

Second, a very nasty situation broke out in Stanleyville in the eastern Congo. Fanatical tribesmen killed several Europeans, and the city was in complete disorder. Finally American planes were flown in with Belgian paratroopers and the Europeans were rescued. This perfectly humane exercise infuriated many of the Africans, who damned the U.S. for interfering with African domestic affairs, and cast into very serious doubt some of the commitments to vote our way on Article 19.

Finally, the report came in from Ghana that a visiting top Soviet Foreign Ministry character, Jacob Malik, now their permanent representative at the U.N., had hinted to Ghanaian officials that the Soviet Union was prepared to make a voluntary contribution as USUN has suggested. The result of all this was a quandary. Should the U.S. proceed to force the Article 19 issue to a vote at the very beginning of the Assembly, or should there be a pause to permit negotiations?

First, pushing to an immediate crunch would have thrown away the apparently real chance of a negotiated settlement with the post-Khrushchev regime via the rescue fund suggested by the U.S.

Second, our chances of winning were considerably darkened by African resentment at the Stanleyville rescue operation.

Finally, the temper of the Assembly, always anxious to avoid a U.S.-Soviet clash and prone to compromise, would probably have led to a postponement of the issue anyway.

For better or for worse, as it turned out for the worse, Stevenson and I chose the path of non-immediate enforcement, and the famous--or infamous--arrangement of proceeding with the Assembly on a no-vote basis was worked out.

There followed a series of frustrations; the Russians kept saying they'd make a voluntary contribution simultaneously with being permitted to vote, but they wouldn't tell anyone, not even the Secretary General, the amount or whether it would be enough to make Article 19 inapplicable, so those negotiations broke down.

Then the Afro-Asians turned out to be more anxious to vote, to proceed "normally," than they were about preserving the integrity of the Charter and Article 19. They kept proposing "compromises" under which voluntary contributions would be made and, to avoid a confrontation, the question of Article 19 would not be raised. The Soviets "accepted," but we of course, refused unless the Soviet contribution would be enough to make Article 19 no longer applicable.

So the Assembly dragged on with action being taken on a "without objection" basis on several important matters and with members "advising" the Assembly President as to the filling of a vacancy on the Security Council by going into his office and leaving straw ballots so that he could announce that so and so would fill the vacancy without objection.

As the charade went on, France on January 1, 1965, became subject to Article 19, which made everything more difficult. Finally, as the "voteless" Assembly was about to adjourn, Albania, perennial troublemaker, in defiance of the agreement (announced as such by U Thant without dissent at the beginning of the session), forced a vote on whether there should be a vote, and Stevenson could not prevent a vote with the Soviets and French voting in defiance of Article 19--offering only the somewhat lame excuse that it was only a procedural matter.

And so the 19th General Assembly passed supposedly voteless into obloquy and history, with the Article 19 battle obviously lost. The denouement occurred in August 1968 when Goldberg, speaking for the U.S. and recognizing the inevitable, announced that the U.S., while continuing its view that Article 19 was applicable, recognized that the General Assembly was unwilling to apply it, and said that the U.S. could not frustrate the consensus that wanted the Assembly to "proceed normally," but that there could not be a double standard and that in effect, the U.S. reserved the right not to pay for something it did not like.

All sorts of curious and absurd myths have grown up about the Article 19 episode.

The most egregiously erroneous is that the U.S. attempt to have the charter mean what it says was a cold war effort to humiliate the Soviets and drive them out of the U.N. This nonsense has been perpetuated by the eminently ignorant [John Kenneth] J.K. Galbraith and by Clayton Fritchey, avidly anxious that his newspaper column be read by those who do not know any better than he does.

Far from seeking a confrontation with the Soviets, USUN constantly sought solutions--i.e., the voluntary payment scheme--which would let the Soviets off the hook with honor and prestige. For example, I remember telling [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin (Soviet Ambassador in Washington), in a private Council on Foreign Relations meeting, and Federenko (Soviet Ambassador at U.N.) many times, that they would make themselves heroes of the U.N. if they would announce that although they believed the assessments were illegal, they wanted to pay them voluntarily because they believed in the financial integrity of the U.N. and wanted to preserve it. I honestly believe they were foolish not to do exactly that, but they almost laughed at me.

The U.S. motive was pro-U.N., not anti-Soviet. From the legal point of view (my own, incidentally), the U.S. believed that, accepting the ICJ's [International Court of Justice] advisory opinion (as it was overwhelmingly accepted by the General Assembly), Article 19's clear and unambiguous provisions should be enforced as they read, and, from the political viewpoint, that there should be U.N. collective financial responsibility for the peace-keeping operations.

On a more personal side, those responsible for the Article 19 policy could hardly be called "cold warriors"--Adlai Stevenson, Harlan Cleveland (Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations), Dick Gardner (his deputy), Rusk, Schlesinger, Kennedy, and myself--all in favor of peaceful co-existence (the favorite Russian phrase) and accommodation with the Soviets, and not at all hard liners.

It can and has been argued that we were going against U.S. interests in insisting that a U.N. member loses its Assembly vote if it doesn't pay, in effect, two years' assessment levied by a General Assembly controlled by Afro-Asians. This argument is harder to meet; suffice it to say that although the U.S. is very far from the dominant influence in the U.N. that it was in the forties and fifties, it is difficult to conceive of a peace-keeping operation being authorized and the expenses of it assessed against interests and opposition of the U.S. Also, we should remember that no peace-keeping operation against the wishes of the member where the forces would be stationed (Egypt consented to UNEF and the Congo invited ONUC) could be authorized except by the Security Council, and there, of course, the U.S. could veto anything that it did not like.

Taking it all in all, it still seems that the Article 19 fight to establish the principle of collective financial responsibility for peace-keeping operations was right, despite the preponderant Afro-Asian influence in the General Assembly.

As a political matter vis-a-vis Congress, Article 19 had to be enforced. U.S. purchase of one-half of the U.N. bond issue would never have been authorized if Congress had not been assured that it would be enforced. And were it not for the bond issue, the U.N. Congo operation would have had to be stopped and that country might still be chaotically disunited today. The same would have applied to UNEF in the Middle East.

Indeed, on August 17, 1964, the House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution that the President should direct the U.S. Representative at the U.N. to make every effort to assure the invocation of the penalty provisions of Article 19.

It would have been politically impossible for the State Department or USUN to have let the Soviets and the French openly flout the ICJ opinion and Article 19.

There was a myth that the Article 19 operation was pushed against the recommendations of the career diplomats in the State Department and at USUN. This, again, is just not so. I never heard of anyone in the State Department who opposed the Article 19 operation, although there may have been a few who wanted to avoid at all costs a confrontation with the Soviet Union. So far as USUN is concerned, I will have to admit that Yost was not as firm about Article 19 enforcement as the rest of us--he being a career diplomat and by nature avoiding controversy and favoring compromise.

The most valid criticism of the Article 19 operation was that USUN made a serious mistake in ever agreeing to a no-vote General Assembly and in not having pressed, at the very opening of the Assembly, for a showdown vote. This may be so, although, as I have said, I am sure that the showdown would have been postponed in one way or another. However, if we had pressed, there eventually would have been a showdown vote and we would not have drifted into the lingering downhill tobogganing of the long no-vote Assembly, and would not have incurred the growing and hostile frustration of the Afro-Asians at not being able to vote.

Probably it would have been better to insist on the showdown, even if we lost, and, despite the two vote marginally favorable nose count made before the Stanleyville rescue operation and the resulting African anti-U.S. irritation, I think we probably would have lost through failing to get a two-thirds majority. As it was, we lost anyway.

I have no illusions about Article 19's being an important episode in history, but in lots of ways it is. I myself think that the failure of the United Nations General Assembly to enforce its own Charter, or to do anything about the financial crisis to this day, is almost spiritually responsible for the erosion in the morale of the U.N. Of course, I think there are lots of other reasons for the sliding downhill: the failure to be able to do anything about Vietnam; the frustrations about South Africa; the frustrations about the Middle East and so on. There are a lot of reasons, but I would mark the beginning of the slide downhill as the fall of '64, when the General Assembly didn't have guts enough to enforce Article 19 and deprive the Russians and the French of the right to vote in the General Assembly, and they've been going on voting ever since.

Now, the Communists and the French are refusing to pay their share of the regular U.N. budget allocable to the U.N. bond issue, and I don't know how many years it's going to take before there will be a default on the bond issue. The U.S. won't be hurt, because Congress, when it authorized the U.S. purchase of the bonds, provided that in paying our share of the U.N. regular budget, we could set off against it the amount owed us on the bonds. That was at least silently agreed to by the U.N. when we bought the bonds. But others, and the U.N. credit, certainly will be hurt when the default occurs--and it is inevitable unless the Soviets and French repent or someone gives the U.N. the money.

A couple of years ago, India proposed in the General Assembly a resolution that the service of the U.N. bonds be taken out of the U.N. regular budget and put into a special account--an absolutely shameful attempt to renege on the Assembly resolution which authorized the bonds and which provided that they would be serviced by the regular budget. That resolution was relied on by everyone who bought the bonds, and welching on it would certainly destroy whatever faith anyone ever had in U.N. good faith. Fortunately, the Indian proposal did not get anywhere, and has not recently been renewed.

I should have added that the Communists have also refused to pay their share of the portion of the U.N. regular budget allocable to the U.N. Korean War Cemetery, and certain other little peace-keeping items--how pusillanimous can you get!

O'BRIEN: During the Kennedy Administration when policy was being formed on this, I understand there were some differences between the U.N. Mission and the State Department. Could you go into it?

PLIMPTON: Well, maybe I'm just innocent, but I never heard of anybody in the State Department who was not in favor of enforcing Article 19. I am perfectly well aware of the fact that, as I have said, Yost (Charles W. Yost, then number three in the U.S. Mission, now--October, 1969--U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N.), for example, who was a career diplomat and always by nature wanted to compromise everything, took a dim view of the enforceability of Article 19 and was tepid about it. After the event, and I repeat, after the event, there have been--by Fritchey and Galbraith, for example--claims that we were trying to drive the Soviet Union out of the U.N., but, as I have said, that is nonsense. The entire hope and expectation was that if the Soviets realized that Article 19 meant what it said, and that they really would lose their vote in the General Assembly if they didn't pay up, they would make a voluntary payment (denying, if they wanted to, any legal obligation) and the thing would be cleared up.

The Soviets muttered hints about their leaving the U.N. if they lost their vote in the General Assembly, but I think that was just bluff--just as they came back to the Security Council during the Korean War, having walked out after saying they would never come back until Peking took over the China seat in the Council.

As I have said, there is another school I've already mentioned, which Dick Gardner (then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, now professor at the Columbia Law School) represents, which thinks that it was disastrous (and I'm not sure he isn't right) that Stevenson and I--and I'm perfectly willing to take the blame for it--when the issue came up in the fall of '64, agreed to the suggestion (which I may well have originated) that we try to rock along for a while without any vote and give the Soviets a chance to work things out without a confrontation. There's a school of thought that thinks that was a disastrous surrender, so to speak. Somebody in the State Department later put it very well: "Having taken the cork out of a champagne bottle, you can't very well put the fizz back in again." That is a vivid phrase, and I think it turned out to be true.

Adlai and I genuinely thought that there was a real chance that the Russians would make a voluntary contribution if they were given time through the no-vote device and that it wouldn't be necessary to press for a knock-down which we might well lose. Unfortunately, as I've indicated, we were wrong.

O'BRIEN: I do have a list of White House appointments here. I wonder if you could perhaps look over them, and if there's anything you remember in particular about them, it would be a very nice historical record.

PLIMPTON: This was in 1961. That's the first General Assembly at which I was a delegate. [Clifton R.] Clif Wharton, of course, is the Negro who was Ambassador to Norway, and his son has just been named President of Michigan State [University].

O'BRIEN: Yes. Yes, I didn't realize the connection.

PLIMPTON: Well, Omar Burleson, I remember very well. He was a very quiet and extremely conservative Democratic Congressman who was a member of the U.S. delegation to the General Assembly. Each fall there are always two people from Congress named as U.S. delegates to the General Assembly. One year they'll be from the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, the next year they'll be from the Foreign Affairs Committee from the House. That year, 1961, it was the Foreign Affairs Committee from the House: Burleson and Mrs. [Marguerite S.] Church. Arthur Dean was in the delegation on account of disarmament. Yost, of course, was in the permanent Mission. Wharton, [Phillip M.] Klutznick, [Jonathan B.] Bingham, Mrs. [Gladys A.] Tillett. She was a pleasant lady from the Carolinas.

O'BRIEN: You just reminded me of one specific question. It's been suggested that [John J.] McCloy was sent to the United Nations during the Cuban missile crisis to keep an eye on Ambassador Stevenson. Is there any truth to that?

PLIMPTON: I think that there were probably mixed motives there. What was involved was a protracted negotiation with ^{VASILY} ~~Aleksandr~~ V. [Aleksandr N.] Kuznetsov (Deputy Foreign Minister), whom the Russians sent over just to handle that one thing. He's the boy who's in Peking now, much the nicest Russian I've ever run into. He's quite a fellow. I think McCloy was sent by Kennedy partly because Stevenson was too damned busy trying to run the show, that is, the continuing U.N. General Assembly, to have time to negotiate with Kuznetsov, and partly because of some feeling that Adlai wasn't as tough as McCloy; I think it was a mixture of motives.

I remember this episode very well because I got the mumps just after the Russians agreed to take the missiles out and was out of commission for two or three weeks. When I came back McCloy and Kuznetsov (and also, to some extent, Adlai) had been arguing interminably about the agreement that was supposed to wrap up the solution to the crisis. You remember that U Thant's formula, which the Russians and we accepted, was that Russians would take the missiles out, and [Fidel] Castro would permit inspection by the U.N. to see they were all gone and that none would come back, and the U.S. would agree not to invade Cuba. Of course, Castro refused to permit any inspection. So we said we don't have to agree to anything because Castro won't let anybody in. The Russians argued that we'd have to agree that we wouldn't invade just the same. Well, McCloy and Kuznetsov wrangled about this for the two weeks while I had the mumps. I got back and got into the act, and joined McCloy in the negotiations with Kuznetsov.

Negotiations with the Soviets are almost always alike. You sit down, and after a minimum of quasi-pleasantries they produce an interminable exposition of all the arguments ever made for their side--even if they've made them dozens of times before. In this case, we met at the Soviet Mission on East 67th Street between Park and Lexington, where they had bought a cooperative apartment house right opposite a fire station, a police station, and a Jewish synagogue. Incidentally, I had warned them that that was no place for their Mission to be, but they went right ahead and bought it and, as a result, certainly suffer from fire engines, police sirens and Jewish demonstrations. As a sovereign power immune from local law, they filled up the backyard with two large ugly reception rooms in violation of New York building laws--I interceded for them with the New York City authorities, who appropriately winked.

We sat on the monumentally overstuffed Grand Rapids type sofas that the Russians favor, and Kuznetsov started out with almost an hour's recitation of why the U.S. had to sign an agreement that it would never invade Cuba. I had the feeling that there was a recording instrument in the sofa upholstery, and that Kuznetsov had to repeat what he had obviously said many times before so that the Kremlin boys would realize that he was doing his job fully.

McCloy simply grinned and said, "Mr. Minister, as you know, I have heard that line many times before--just consider that I have made the same reply that I have made many times before. Now let's get down to business."

By that time, it was clear we weren't ever going to agree, so we finally agreed to disagree and got up a little bit of a half-page communique that really said nothing much except that we hadn't agreed. That wasn't very hard to work out. McCloy went away somewhere, and I ended up by negotiating the final wording with Kuznetsov. We got along fine; he made a harmless suggestion to which I agreed, and that was it. He looked at me and said, "Mr. Plimpton, you remind me of the story of the Russian peasant who went to the fair. He was very hungry and he bought a big loaf of white bread. He ate that and still he was hungry. Then he bought a loaf of black bread and he ate that and still was hungry. Then he saw a little piece of chocolate cake and he bought it and ate that little piece of chocolate cake and then he wasn't hungry any more. And then he said, 'What a fool I was; I should have got that little piece of chocolate cake first.' You, Mr. Plimpton, you are that little piece of chocolate cake." Kuznetsov told the same story about me to Kennedy when the President came up here later. Kuznetsov was a very attractive fellow. McCloy and he and I all got along fine.

O'BRIEN: Well, in working relationships, you mentioned that Ambassador Stevenson would hand out certain tough tasks to you. Was there any kind of division of tasks, in a sense, in your working relationships with Ambassador Stevenson, in preference of issues?

PLIMPTON: Well, I don't know quite how to put this--I think he threw me out on my own as to handling things perhaps somewhat more than in the case of others, probably because we'd known each other such a long time. For example, he once asked me if I could take over from Arthur Dean in First Committee work, because he heard that Arthur was alienating people too much. I was pleased and complimented, but told Adlai that he would really have to leave things as they were, since I was too snarled up with the things he had already given me.

Once Adlai really did do me dirt. In the Mission, Phil Klutznick was supposed to be the fellow that handled financial matters. He's the one who, in the winter of '62, worked out the U.N. bond issue. I wasn't involved in this end of things at all. I was then handling the Special Political Committee, which was this nasty collection of Palestine and apartheid and so on, and Klutznick was supposed to handle the financial matters. I was also handling the Legal Committee, which was set off by itself.

Then Klutznick was sent down to Washington to talk to the Senate and the House about the U.N. bond issue and lobby to get them to authorize the U.S. purchase of half the bonds. He apparently alienated some people on the Hill, although I cannot imagine why, because I thought him not only extremely intelligent but also very pleasant to deal with. In any event, Stevenson got me in and told me that unfortunately this had happened and asked me to take the whole problem over. I said, "Good Lord, I think Klutznick is one of the ablest and nicest people I know." He said, "Well, I'm sorry, but I just want you to do it." I was very reluctant to do this because I thought Klutznick A-1 and because I had my hands full with these other things. But, of course, I said, "I'll do whatever you want me to."

Then, horrifyingly enough, he did not tell Klutznick, which I of course assumed he would do. Klutznick heard about it through getting a copy of a telegram that I had sent to the Department indicating that I was more or less taking over this whole problem. Klutznick was terribly upset, and I'm not sure to this day that he doesn't think that I'm an s.o.b., although I had nothing to do with the change and tried to avoid it. That's one of the few things that I ever really could fault Adlai on. He just was unwilling to face up to a difficult situation and do his duty and speak up. He really let me down very badly on that one.

And the result is I had to take this damn thing over. I spent, oh, months taking the 8 o'clock shuttle to Washington every day and talking to senators and congressmen and getting the 6 o'clock shuttle back. I'm air-minded, at least, but it was no fun. So that was what threw me into the financial end of things. But the bond issue was entirely Phil's idea. He deserves all the credit for that insofar as it did save the situation for the time being.

Now, of course, the Russians and the French aren't paying their share of the bond service, and in several years there'll be a default on the bond issue. As I've said, when Congress authorized the U.S. participation in the bond issue, it stipulated that we could credit bond payments due to us against our payments due to the U.N. That might be called a preference, but that's what Congress voted, and we'll stick to it so we won't be hurt if the U.N. runs out of money for the bonds, but somebody will.

O'BRIEN: Well, what other responsibilities did Klutznick have?

PLIMPTON: Well, he represented the United States in the Fifth Committee, which is the Budget Committee, and there, of course, is where the financing problem came from. The U.N. couldn't pay its bills for the Congo, and the bond issue was dreamed up by Klutznick--I don't know if it was his idea alone, but it was the Department and Phil who dreamed that one up. Later on, after the financial crisis developed, I had to take on the Fifth Committee work, too, in order to try to get through the appropriations for the peace-keeping activities. Adlai did not have very much interest in these financial things; he just didn't want to hear about them very much. I'm not trying to run Adlai down at all; it just wasn't the kind of thing that interested him as much as other things did.

O'BRIEN: What were the kind of things that interested him when you were working with him in the issues that came up in the U.N.?

PLIMPTON: Well, he was interested more in the idea of the U.N., its potentiality for peace. He really was an idealist, and, while he was a perfectly good enough realist about the U.N., it was the idea of the place that captured his imagination. He was a great man; we miss him.

O'BRIEN: Well, we've covered a number of issues, and I imagine we could go on. Is there anything you'd like to add here on the last few inches of tape?

PLIMPTON: Another difficult situation that I had to deal with was Kashmir, which has been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan ever since the partition of India. Kashmir was almost entirely Muslim, but it had a Hindu Maharajah, who proceeded to opt for India. Fighting broke out, which ended in India's controlling about two-thirds, including the famous Vale. The U.N. passed a resolution providing for a plebiscite and India said there would be one, but there never has been.

Periodically the Pakistanis and Zafrullah Kahn, who was then the Pakistani Ambassador (he is now on the International Court of Justice) brought the thing up in the Security Council, despite our efforts (mostly by me) to get him not to do it--on the ground that nothing could result but frustration (the U.S. always tries to keep awkward issues like that off the table, since, when two friends of the U.S. go against each other, the result is nothing but woe for us).

This involved my one and only contact with Krishna Menon of infamous anti-U.S. reputation. He is certainly an extraordinary character--looks exactly like the devil, with the most Satanic features imaginable. Oddly enough, I found him very polite and pleasant to deal with, although we disagreed on virtually everything.

The great trick when the Kashmir issue comes before the Security Council is to have someone other than the U.S. introduce a resolution which is somewhat evenhanded but comes down in favor of the plebiscite. The most logical member of the Security Council at that time to introduce the resolution was Ireland. Its Representative, Fred Boland, was a marvelous character--he was the President of the General Assembly when Khrushchev pounded his shoe on the table.

I had several talks with Boland to try to persuade him to introduce the resolution. He was most agreeable but said that nothing could persuade him or his Government to step in the middle of a scrap between India and Pakistan. I reported this to Washington and, a day or two later, Boland came around to see me and said, with a smile, that somebody named John F. Kennedy had telephoned his Prime Minister or Foreign Minister and, by a strange coincidence, he was now going to introduce the resolution. That was the only instance that I can think of that President Kennedy actually intervened in a U.N. matter.

The resolution was duly introduced, but was vetoed by the Soviets--as it happened, their 100th veto.

Another time I got involved in a scrap between two friends was over what the Austrians call "Sud Tirol" and the Italians call "Alto Adige"--namely, the German speaking part of the Northern Italy bordering on the Tyrol which Italy took away from Austria as a result of World War II.

Once again, I was the one who was supposed to persuade Austria not to bring the matter up--in this case, it was in the General Assembly. I failed to get them to change their minds, so the dispute was put on the agenda. I spent an awful lot of time on it with [Bruno] Kreisky, then the Austrian Foreign Minister and now its Prime Minister, and with [Antonio] Segni, now dead, who was then the Italian Foreign Minister and subsequently became President. Finally, we worked out one of these typical U.N. resolutions which is pleasantly fuzzy and ambiguous enough to mean slightly different things to each side, and so that the mild dissatisfaction is equally distributed. Both Kreisky and Segni, separately, came up and shook my hand and congratulated me on working the thing out, and Segni later sent me a Christmas telegram of greetings. That was the nearest thing to a diplomatic success that I came to during my five years at the U.N. Almost everything else was a losing struggle. I'm afraid I've wasted a lot of your substance here.

O'BRIEN: No, on the other hand, I think this has been a very good, valuable interview.

PLIMPTON: Of course, there are things that we haven't covered, but that will have to be.

O'BRIEN: What are some of those things that we haven't covered, just out of curiosity?

PLIMPTON: Having said that, I'm not sure that there are many. I'm afraid I didn't organize myself in this interview--I apologize for not having had topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

O'BRIEN: I think the organization is really my responsibility.

PLIMPTON: I think, actually, you've done awfully well, as far as I'm concerned. We haven't really dealt very much with the U.N. structure, as such; the problem of the one nation, one vote in the General Assembly, the whole problem of the Security Council. I must take most of the blame, if any, for the enlargement of the Security Council from 11 to 15 which was just inevitable. As a matter of fact, if it hadn't been enlarged, the Afro-Asians would have broken the old understanding as to how the six non-permanent members were to be chosen. As I remember it, the unwritten agreement was for one Western European, two Latin Americans, one Eastern European, one British Commonwealth and one Afro-Asian. An Afro-Asian revolt as to the six non-permanent members would have produced a much worse result for us than what we all eventually agreed on as to the new setup of the ten non-permanent members, i.e., as I remember it, two Western European and old Commonwealth, two Latin Americans, one Eastern European and five Afro-Asians. But anyway, I had to work that one out. It would have been much nicer if we hadn't had to do it. The Security Council looks difficult now, with so many more Afro-Asians.

The general future of the U.N. bothers me a good deal. It's perfectly obvious that the Security Council is never going to amount to a damn insofar as Soviet-American policies diverge; either one of us is sure to veto anything significant that we disagree with. The General Assembly legally, of course, has no power to do anything but make recommendations, but it has really turned out to be somewhat irresponsible in passing a hell of a lot of resolutions that just don't mean anything. I have a great sympathy for the African viewpoint toward South Africa, but it doesn't do them any good or anybody else any good for them to pass resolutions that South West Africa is now free and so on, and that the U.N. is in charge of South West Africa. It's debasing U.N. credibility, and this bothers me. I think the resulting frustrations over there at the U.N. are pretty unhealthy.

O'BRIEN: Well, sir, if you have the time sometime in the future--I do get up to New York frequently--we could perhaps sit down for a hour and go into some of these organizational and structural things and . . .

PLIMPTON: Well, of course, I'm old hat so far as the U.N. is concerned. I am still a member of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal so I keep a little bit in touch there. But the Tribunal has nothing to do with policy; it's just an administrative court. But we still keep getting invited out by U.N. people--tonight we're going out to dinner with the Finnish Ambassador to the U.N. in Larchmont. We still like to see the U.N. people sort of half keep in touch. That's a very able fellow, by the way, [Max] Jakobson, the Finnish Ambassador. He and I have some strong views about U Thant, even though his is an impossible job. However, that isn't for the Kennedy Library, today.

