

INTERVIEWEE: WILLIAM W. HEATH (Tape #2)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

May 25, 1970

F: This is a second interview with Ambassador W. W. Heath in his office in Austin, and the interviewer is still Joe B. Frantz; the date is May 25, 1970.

Mr. Ambassador, we were talking at the conclusion of the most recent interview about the selection of an architect for the Johnson Library, and that's where we quit. Do you want to pick up the story there?

H: Yes. We had the policy at the University at that time of having regular architects who did a certain amount of the work. There was a division of work between them and then we would bring in for various buildings other architects. The purpose of having a regular firm of architects was a matter of reserving a certain degree of uniformity to the appearance of the campus. You get thirty different architects in with thirty different concepts--one man wants to do a modernistic building and another one wants a Gothic and another Georgian.

F: I've seen a few of those mishmash campuses.

H: And we thought as a manner of planning--to assist in planning--the faculty committees and the administration, location of buildings, maximum usage of the land--At that time we had the Brooks, Barr, Graeber, and White firm who were doing that. Both Mr. Brooks and Mr. White--well, I suppose all members of the firm knew the President well, were good friends of his. But we thought we would follow our usual pattern of obtaining outside some other architects to work in

the matter. We felt that this was an important building. And finally we decided to design it in conjunction with the large building where the School of Public Affairs will be, as sort of a single unit of buildings. So we made a study. We wanted to get architects who would do a fine design; who had an international reputation.

We looked at a great many buildings. I made trips to many places looking at buildings. Mrs. Johnson went on some of those trips with me. We looked at a number of buildings. We were quite impressed with some of the buildings which had been designed by the Skidmore-Merrill firm. They were building the Beinacke Rare Books Library.

F: At Yale.

H: At Yale. If you've ever been in it, you will see some similarity from the inside to this in the great hall. We were really impressed with that library they built particularly. We looked at some of their commercial buildings--one I believe in Lincoln Center in New York; looked at commercial buildings as well. I remember Connecticut General Life--we looked at their building, Mrs. Johnson was with me. Not only their buildings, but of many other architects. We narrowed the selection down finally to three or four architects--architectural firms. I know the President was very well impressed with the work of a famous Japanese architect. I don't recall his name at the moment, not the one who's a famous Japanese architect that planned on the Kennedy Library--this is another man. But President Johnson mentioned him to me two or three times, seemed to be well impressed with his work. And we remarked the name once to Mr. Watson of IBM, who commended him very highly.

F: The President didn't make any of these tours?

H: No.

F: Did he look at photographs of what you'd seen?

H: Mrs. Johnson made the tours; he did not. We discussed the results of our tours at some length with him. And I gained the opinion he was leaving--as far as his recommendation might have been concerned, you know the final decision was up to the University, but I felt he never did quite say so--he was leaning to this Japanese architect. I had two thoughts about that: First, I felt that a library of a President of the United States ought to be designed by an American architect. I thought we had architects in this country as good as anywhere in the world; and particularly being it was going to be done with tax funds or State funds of the State of Texas, I didn't think too well--I don't know if the man is an American citizen, I'm not sure about that. That was one thought.

Then I had another thought. This Japanese architect--one building he did that we looked at was the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Affairs at Princeton. I also saw another building too. And while they're beautiful and elegant buildings--I don't know if you've ever seen the one at Princeton?

F: Yes.

H: If you will recall it mentally, I felt that it was sort of effeminate, so to speak. It's very graceful. And I know I remarked to President Johnson once when he was saying something about the Japanese architect--after we returned from this trip where we'd seen several of his buildings, I told him, 'Mr. President, if this library was to have this big building to house the papers of some famous Queen--a woman--I would expect that it would be a beautiful and a dainty style of

architecture I can't see you in it. As you've always been known as a man forceful, strong who came from the harshest hills out here, and I just can't visualize the type of building. I'm not criticizing his style of architecture. I just don't think it's fitting to house your papers, Mr. President. I would like to see something that would sort of give me some thought of you when I look at the building. I certainly don't see it in that of the Japanese." But after I mentioned something about it being effeminate, I don't know if that is what caused it, that was the last time he ever mentioned this Japanese architect.

So really it was sort of a process of elimination. And feeling that we had competent architects--it's being done jointly by the Brooks firm and the Skidmore firm. I sat in many conferences with them in the early planning days here and in the White House. I will say that there were never any real difficulties.

F: There wasn't any great difficulty when Gordon Bunshaft came up with the design to get the President to see what he was trying to do?

H: No. I recall their reproducing in miniature designs and drawings of the inside of the building. We first met and went over the matter in some detail with Mrs. Johnson, and she indicated her approval. We later had a meeting in the White House which the President attended, where the matter was gone into a considerable amount of detail with him. He essentially approved the design. Then we also talked with the people in GSA--the library people--and got their thoughts. I believe that over a year we looked at the Truman Library and Eisenhower Library and other libraries--tried to--

F: Was Wayne Grover often with you on this?

H: Oh, yes. He'd sit in on most of these conferences, which I did profit by the strong points as well as what we might have considered weaknesses in the other libraries. We came up with a design that happily I think was pleasing to everyone as far as I could tell.

F: Did you receive much criticism from the outside, from people who misunderstood what a Presidential library is about, who thought that this was just some sort of a political memorialization?

H: To tell you the truth, I was surprised how little criticism there was. There were one or two people who criticized it, but the sources were highly political. The people who were criticizing it were dedicated Republicans.

F: Looking for something to criticize.

H: But actually I didn't know whether--I will confess I was a little bit afraid that in the legislature, for instance, we might have criticism that we were using considerable amounts of State funds for--

F: This largely came out of the permanent fund, didn't it?

H: Yes. Well, the available funds which is a revenue from the permanent school funds.

F: There wasn't any problem on this?

H: We had no real problem. I think the people had a better understanding of it than I thought they did, plus Johnson being the only President Texas has ever had. I think there was a considerable amount of State pride involved, and they wanted to be sure that--

F: Of course over the long haul it's an enormous bargain for the State as a research facility.

H: Oh, yes.

- F: You couldn't buy a library like that.
- H: Oh, no, there's no way--there just isn't any way to do it. So, as I said, we had remarkably little criticism.
- F: To get into another facet of your career and your association with the President, as of December 1, 1966 you resigned as chairman of the Board of Regents. Was this an anticipation of an appointment?
- H: Yes. I knew then that--
- F: That something was coming.
- H: It was just a question of the timing of the thing. My personal affairs had got sort of behind, and I needed a little time. Being chairman of the Board of Regents, if you live in Austin, it's very time consuming.
- F: You're too available.
- H: You're too available. If you live in El Paso or Beaumont, it would be much easier.
- F: Then you were named in March and confirmed in April of '67.
- H: Yes, I was named in March. As a matter of fact, at the time I resigned I think the President was ready to--except that I had some things that I needed to get out of the way, personal matters, business matters--arrangements I needed to make. I was, yes, in early March and confirmed the 5th or 6th of April.
- F: It was announced, I think, on the 6th of April. What did you do between that time and the time you left? Does the State Department try to teach you a little bit of conversational Swedish, or do they just let you go on the way you are? And what do they do in the way of briefing?
- H: Well, I did not undertake to--as far as the language, as they would

have perhaps if I had been going to some countries; because practically everyone there speaks English. But they did give me an intensive briefing in Swedish affairs. In the first place, every department in the government which has any affairs with any foreign country from the Department of Commerce--for instance, in Stockholm the Department of Commerce had a large United States trade center for all of Scandinavia, where they had trade shows. Under our procedures under orders President Eisenhower first wrote, all installations of the United States government in any foreign country, no matter what department of the government, is under the jurisdiction of the Ambassador--

F: You don't have any semi-independent operations then going on?

H: No. Sometimes they like to think they're semi-independent. They have the right of appeal to the President if they don't like what the Ambassador is, but they're directly under him. So I had a great deal for weeks and weeks of briefing in Commerce in economic affairs, trade relations between our two countries; problems, the Defense Department,--

F: You must have spent a lot of time both listening and reading?

H: Oh, yes. Every department in government which has anything overseas has a tremendous amount of briefing.

F: Now, you arrived there in mid-May.

H: Yes.

F: The war crimes trial had ended just before you got there, right?

H: The Russell Tribunal--the so-called Russell Tribunal.

F: Right. Did that leave some kind of a situation for you to walk into? How did, for instance, Prime Minister Erlander--did he talk to you

about that when you presented your credentials?

H: Of course, I presented my credentials to the King, who is very pro-American incidentally, and a very fine man. Erlander, who was then the Prime Minister, I think was essentially was pro-American. I think Nielsen who is still the Foreign Minister, is essentially pro-American. I'm sorry to say the present Prime Minister I don't think is as much our friend as they were. But yes, my predecessor had a situation. He had been there for nearly six years, which had steadily deteriorated. Before my arrival he had of course had the infamous Russell Tribunal.

F: Now, you had also at that time a Swedish Committee for Free Asia; you had a Stockholm attorney who offered to defend the United States with out charge; that is, what I'm trying to establish in my own mind and for the record--was Sweden pretty well divided on this? This wasn't a one-sided anti-U.S. feeling?

H: There were perhaps three groups in Sweden. I was constantly met with the suggestions from people, when I would say, "Why are you anti-American?" "I'm not anti-American at all. There are certain things your contry is doing such as in Viet Nam, we don't agree with. But do all of your friends agree with you all the time? Why do you say that that makes us anti-American because we don't agree with you on everything? That's the trouble with you Americans--you demand too much of your friends. You demand that we agree with you on everything, and the first time we disagree with you on anything, you take the position we're your enemy." And there was a great deal of merit in what they said, but there were about three groups.

There were those--the hard-core anti-Americans, the Communists,



Communist sympathizers, people who just plain didn't like us, who constituted a small minority. There were those who thoroughly approved of our country and were as hard-core as the other group--anything we did, they were with us. And a lot of people who had lived in this country, had been here at one time or another, and the business community primarily. The more substantial business people who travel backwards and forth to this country--they were usually very sympathetic. Perhaps it was in their interests to be. The president of Volvo automobiles is very pro-American, but he also sells an awful lot of Volvos over here. So the top business people--bankers, business people over there were essentially pro-American.

But they were quiet about it. For instance, the president of Volvo was telling me how he agreed with all our policies. And I said, "If you and some of your leading friends would make a few noises over here instead of telling me this--why don't you get quoted?" But he says, "You know, I sell cars over here too, and a great many people over here who don't agree with me. I can't afford--I'm not in politics--I cannot afford to--I'm in business; I want to sell everybody." So as here, the noisy group is the group who opposed us--were anti-American. We had another group, I think, much larger than that who were very pro-American.

Then the third group which I really think constituted the majority were those who basically all their lives felt friendly towards this country because of the great emigration over here and other things. Although as time and generations go by, that gets further and further apart. At one time everybody had a cousin or an uncle over here, whom they knew, wrote backwards and forth. But now it's sort of like

our ancestors who came over here. I don't write anybody in a foreign country, and it's sort of a dim thing. And it's becoming more so in Sweden and in many parts of the world; that tie is becoming less and less. But there is, I think, the great majority who feel basically friendly towards our country, but who disapprove of--maybe it's civil rights, either actual or what they imagine it to be over here; maybe it's Viet Nam; maybe it's some aspect of our--They're critical of those things. Sometimes too often we take the position that those people are not our friends when maybe basically they are our friends, but just don't approve everything we do.

F: Along that line, you mentioned civil rights. President Nixon named a Negro as your successor, and the situation between the United States and Sweden has not cooled at all. Did you discern any sort of a latent racism in Sweden? In other words, are they in a sense pro-black because they don't have any?

H: I think that is partially it. I recall a conversation I had with the Swedish Foreign Minister, who is still Foreign Minister. Even though we disagreed quite often, I liked him personally, and I think he liked me personally. There had been some riots--I don't know where--maybe in Watts or some place, maybe the day before--I was in a conversation and he brought it up, and started out to say something critical. And unlike a great many of them over there, he stopped. He said, "No, I'm not going to say what I started to say because I live in a country where we don't have those sort of problems. We don't have but a handful of black people here. You have problems over there, I don't understand the problem, and when you don't understand a problem, you ought not to criticize it. I

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have no right--let's pass on to something else. I don't have enough information about your problem to intelligently discuss it with you."

F: That was Nielsson.

H: Yes. As an illustration. I told people in the Swedish government-- I had two illustrations I would use. One, I talked to them--I said, "You're worried about your Negroes in our country, you've expressed your concern. The United States is thousands of miles away from here; East Germany is just across the Baltic--just a few miles; it's right on your doorstep. There's not a Negro in the South or in the North or Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, where if he is unhappy and there's any place in the world he wants to go, we will give him a passport. And he is free to go anywhere he wants to go and do. That is not to say that he is not entitled to be treated properly and to have equal rights here, but at least he is free to go."

"Now right across the Baltic on your doorstep, if some man on Christmas Day who lives in East Berlin wants to visit his old mother who lives over in West Berlin, what happens to him when he goes over there? They murder him! He's a slave. They've built a wall, and they'll murder him if he tries to leave. And right on your doorstep just barely across the Baltic! Why do you have this great concern about these people who are free--at least free in the sense that East Germany is not free--why are your papers and your television day-after-day full of all of this about? At least we don't keep them ground under our heel that way. Why don't you talk about what's going on over here? And if West Germany should invade East Germany, or, let's turn that around--Suppose the Communists in East Germany should invade West Germany like the Communists in North Viet Nam did

in South Viet Nam, would you feel the same way about that, when it's right here on your doorstep, as you feel about that 'way on the other side of the world? I think before you criticize us on civil rights, perhaps maybe we would be willing to permit you to divide your attention on this great cause that you're so assiduously pursuing. Divide it with the East Germans over here."

I also used to tell them about what the Tanzanian ambassador told me when I called on him. He's of course very black; his wife is very black. I've seen a great many Negroes in East Texas that look like they could be very much related to them. Nice people; I liked them. But when I asked him in my conversation how he liked it in Stockholm, I said, "How do you and your wife and family like it?"--he had six children, in the American school incidentally. "Well," he said, "I suppose it's all right, except I'm very lonesome here--my wife and I." I would tell Swedish officials about this conversation, with the permission of the Tanzanian. I asked him if he objected. He said, "No." I said, "Mr. Ambassador, surely you don't mean to tell me that you're discriminated against--you and your family--here in Sweden!"

"Well," he said, "Mr. Ambassador, discrimination takes many forms, and being ignored is one of the worst. I'm a long ways from home. There are very few people of my race here. I'm very lonesome, my family and I." I said, "Well, what happens to cause you to feel lonesome?" "Well," he says, "If there is a large cocktail party or reception--some country's national day or something and the Ambassador has a cocktail party--if it's something to which all Ambassadors and their wives are automatically invited, we receive

an invitation, and we go. And the host and hostess greet us very graciously at the door. And inevitably within five minutes, I find myself in a corner somewhere with the rest of the Negroes who are there. And I spend the evening there. If somebody happens to come by and I see them before they see me, well they very graciously shake hands and walk quickly off. But," he says, "I hear of these small dinner parties that people are having--Swedes--even in the diplomatic community. We're never invited to those. We sit at home and we hear of these small--somebody will have a small dinner party and maybe have ten Ambassadors in, we're never invited. So we're lonesome here."

Sometimes when my fellow Ambassadors would say something critical of our civil rights problem over here, I would tell them what the Tanzanian said, And I'd say, "Now, don't you think before you worry too much about what's going on in the United States, why don't we clean up our own little diplomatic community right here in Stockholm?" And they'd say, "Oh, but I don't discriminate against the Tanzanian or anyone else." "Well, he has been here three years longer than I have. You've been gracious enough to have my wife and me in your home on small occasions two or three times, and we appreciate it. It's been very nice, very kind of you. Now, the Tanzanian has never been there when I'm there, but undoubtedly you've had him many times, since he has been here so much longer than I have. Do you mind telling me when was the last time you had the Tanzanian and his wife to a small affair?" Well, that always sort of ended the conversation. He'd stutter a little and walk off.

So when you say do they have prejudices, perhaps it's sort of

like people here in our country, in the North. In areas where there aren't any Negroes, they don't think they're--. And I think the Swedish people think sincerely that they're not race conscious; but I feel very sorry for Ambassador Holland and what he's going to have to experience. He had more personal difficulties in the first three weeks after he arrived than I had in the whole two years I was there. They met him at the airport and a bad demonstration-- anti-American, anti-Nigger, they called it--"Nigger, go home," and all that sort of stuff. When I arrived on May 17, there was a pro-American demonstration, and welcome signs everywhere. A bunch of pro-American students; no anti-Americans at all.

F: I judge from a personal, social standpoint that there was no problem in your relationships.

H: No great problem. We did have some of these hard-core people. I received a few threatening letters. I received those when I was on the Board of Regents at the University.

F: You're building a pretty good file.

H: I thought the Swedes overdid to some extent the job of protection and that sort of thing. I wondered at times if they weren't purposely doing it for the newspaper effect.

F: Did they furnish a bodyguard for you when you went out? I know they put police around the chancery and the Embassy.

H: Oh yes. In fact, there are very few American embassies around the world that don't have them.

F: I've never seen one without them.

H: I got a little more publicity about mine. There was a time when they had a policeman in plain clothes who rode in the car with me, sat up

in the front seat with the driver. For a short time they had a car in front of me and one behind me, but that didn't last long.

F: You never did feel any real danger?

H: No. They would talk to me about it, and I always took this attitude: I never asked for any sort of protection of any kind. Several times they would send people from the Foreign Office to talk with me, and ask me what I would like for them to do. Usually when some screwball would write the Foreign Office threatening me. And my attitude was it's the duty of every foreign government to protect the lives and the property of the diplomatic personnel of all countries while they're on their soil. "That's your responsibility. I'm not going to tell you how to discharge your responsibility. Yes, I recognize that it's your responsibility to protect the property and the personnel, not only me, but of all diplomats; but I'm certainly not going to tell you what to do and what not to do. You'll just have to do whatever you think is best."

When I returned--they called me home, President Johnson and Secretary Rusk--

F: Was this when you came back in March of '68 for five weeks?

H: Yes, they called me home, and it was intended as a rebuke to the Swedish government for some of the things that had been happening. However, we agreed we would play it on a very low key. I would come home for consultations. A man would ask if it was intended as a rebuke, and all I would ever say and all the State Department ever said was, "The Ambassador has just been called home for consultation." They asked me when I left, "Well, are you leaving permanently?" "No, I will be returning." "When will you be returning?" "When I get

through with my consultations. I don't know yet when I'll be returning."

When I returned about five weeks later--I have some pictures--there must have been five or six hundred Swedish police there at the airport. They were everywhere--I've got some pictures of them--just all over everything, because it was publicized the flight I would arrive on, and they anticipated there'd be a large anti-American demonstration. Actually, didn't a human being show up except the police; except people to meet me--some of my friends and some of my staff were there to meet me. But I mean as far as any protests, there wasn't any at all.

I suppose the worst thing that I had to happen was they had the 300th anniversary of the University of Lund, which is in the southern part of Sweden, and the chancellor there--the head of the university--his wife is American. And he was educated partially over here and is very, very pro-American. As matter of fact, his wife under my appointment was a member of what we called the "Fulbright Commission" there--the wife of the chancellor. So they were conferring some honorary degrees, among them to about three Americans--who were receiving honorary degrees. So as a result of that I was invited to attend and march in an academic procession and that sort of thing. The King was also receiving an honorary degree and maybe citizens from a few other countries.

So after I was invited, they had a small meeting--maybe a hundred and fifty people, students, faculty--at which some of these hard-core anti-Americans demanded that the invitation to me be withdrawn. Finally the chancellor who was present--he and about half of them got up and



walked out on the meeting. Well, they voted this resolution after those who opposed it had left; and those who were of course, they had made it up to come--you know, they would come for that purpose. Then they sent me a rather threatening message that my life wouldn't be safe if I was to come down there and participate.

Anyway I went. I first called the chancellor and asked him did the invitation still stand. He said, "Certainly it stands, more so than ever. You've been officially invited. These people don't represent anybody except themselves--a small group." "Well," I says, "in that case I'll be there, because every paper in Sweden has carried headlines, waiting to see if I'm coming. I don't have any choice except to go. I can't let a handful of people run me off."

Well, I went; and the paper said that there were between six and seven hundred Swedish policemen there. They had them sleeping in school buildings. And so they had the procession. The difficulty about it was, it started in one building and went clear across the campus to another building; so you had to walk about a half-a-mile.

Well, the papers and television played it up so a lot of people, I guess, came down there to see if I was going to get killed, or what was going to happen--curiosity seekers. The fact that the King was going to be there, that attracted a lot of people. In this march, the Russian ambassador was just in front of me and to one side. They lined them up in the order of their seniority when they got there. He got there just shortly before I did. I told him jokingly, I said, "I'm very glad you're near me." And he says, "Why?" "Well, after all the threats I've received, maybe your friends will be more

careful since you're so near me!" And he sort of frowned.

But we made this march, the half-a-mile thing. I don't know how many thousands of people, they were really thick. And there were a few of these demonstrators--there must not have been more than thirty or forty of them--running along and hollering, "Go home, go home!"

F: Just a handful.

H: Just a handful.

F: Did you know Olaf Palme personally?

H: Well, yes, but rather casually.

F: Now he had spent some time studying in the United States, or at least hitch-hiking or something here.

H: I think he spent one year in some college. [Kenyon].

F: Was he sort of a doctrinaire anti-U.S. type, or had he arrived at this on Viet Nam? What was your feeling on this?

H: Well, this is just a personal feeling--I hope I'm wrong. I really had the feeling that as far as his predecessor--the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister--that they were really at heart pro-American with this Viet Nam thing and all. And from a political viewpoint, they were taking the line--I had the feeling at times that they were a little ashamed personally. Maybe I'm wrong, but that was sort of my appraisal--that their's was purely political; and as heart they were really very pro-American. And they would assure me they were pro-American.

F: They felt this was an attitude they had to adopt.

H: They would tell me things; and I recall once with the Prime Minister I asked him, I said, "You tell me these things. Would you be willing

to make the statement to the press of what you just got through telling me?" He says, "I don't think I should now." You know, he wasn't going to admit--I finally said, "Mr. Prime Minister, I know why you won't, and you know why you won't, so I guess there's no point in discussing that." It's political, of course.

But with Palme, I think it's a different matter. I think during his stay over here, it must not have been a happy stay. Something happened--I don't know what. Anyway, I had the feeling that at heart he disliked this country; that maybe the opposite would be true--maybe he would like to be worse than he is rather than better at heart; but that politically he didn't think it wise to go any further than he is.

Now, for instance when the Ambassador that I don't recall that I talked about in the first [interview], but Ambassador from the North Viet Nam--

F: No, we haven't talked about that. In fact, when you went there Sweden was not represented either in South or North Viet Nam, was it?

H: At the time I came there to Sweden, it had an Ambassador from South Viet Nam, but they finally sort of got rid of him. Yes, the Ambassador to Russia would come down there occasionally. On this particular trip there was to be a large anti-American demonstration. And so he timed his visit, I assume, to coincide with this.

F: This was, if I recall, February of '68.

H: Yes, that was shortly before they called me home. That was one of the things that triggered it more than anything else. They had this demonstration; and the two principal speakers were Palme and in North Viet Nam Ambassador to the Soviet Union. All of the papers

carried pictures of them--these thousands of people marching from where they were going over to where they were going to speak. And they had the two of them walking side by side leading the parade--Palme and the North Viet Nam Ambassador to the Soviet Union with these torches in their hands. They made the two principal speeches. I don't know which one of them took us a part or attempted to--the worst of the two. I, of course, called on the Swedish government the next day to present our protest that a high minister in the government, a man who even then was reputed to be the next Prime Minister--and the inquiry his speech represented the official position of the Swedish government. And if not, why was he permitted to make such a speech? They told me, "Well, it don't represent the official view--it was a personal speech." Of course I said, "Well, in that case if you don't agree with it, do you expect to reprimand him in any way for publicly doing this?" The next day this Ambassador came to the Foreign Office and used the office of the Foreign Minister as a forum to deliver a thirty-minute tirade against the United States government.

F: Whom was he talking to?

H: He was talking to the press, but what he did--he came up to see the Foreign Minister. But he let the press know he was going to be there, and they were waiting outside so when they opened the door--and the Foreign Minister premitted him to use his office as a forum to deliver this tirade. I asked the Foreign Minister, "Do I have your permission to do the same thing? Can I call in the press and use your office to make a thirty-minute speech on any subject and say anything I want to?" Well, he studied a little bit, but he finally

said, "Yes, you can." "Well," I said, "I don't think I'll do that. But I did want to see what you would agree to."

F: Was the press more critical of the United States than, say, our home press tends to be; or was it pretty balanced between the extreme left criticism and the middle-of-the-road and the quite conservative?

H: More so, but there were some friendly papers, but they were the exception rather than the rule.

F: Now when you talked with the press--

H: I didn't talk too much to them.

F: But when you did, could you depend on getting quoted correctly?

H: No, sir. When I returned from the United States after being called home, the press were eager for a press conference, and were very insistent; so I decided I would hold one in my home the afternoon after I returned at the residence. It was after 5 o'clock and I served them some drinks, and Aftonbladet I suppose is the most anti-American paper there is. And their reporter sat as close to me as I am to you. I answered questions until they got through. I answered them in my own way. I don't mean that I gave them what they wanted to hear maybe. After it was over with of course, I served a drink to everybody. His headline the next day and I had this set of pistols that Spike Brennan [San Antonio lawyer--member U.T. Board of Regents] and Frank Connally [Waco doctor--also Regent] gave me--the old western--all they are are replicas of the old Colts, you know. They're just sort of a museum pieces. I don't even have any bullets for them. They gave them to me as a going-away present when I left--the two of them. And so I had them over on the desk. And I also had a wooden fish that I had bought there in Sweden--some

sort of Swedish fish. But his headline was "Pistols and Whiskey, but No Answers to Questions." And then down in there he talked about the shark that I had on the walls that I had brought with me. Actually it was some sort of a wooden Swedish fish. In other words, this type of venomous, vicious thing--For instance, Ambassador Holland, when he was first announced, these same papers, I understand, had a picture of him in his football uniform when he was a boy in college. He was an all-American football player. And the headlines says, "He Tackles Us Next," over this picture of him in his football uniform.

F: You didn't find them, though, anti-U.S. on issues other than the Viet Nam war as a general rule?

H: Are you talking about the people or the papers?

F: I'm talking about the people. And I'm talking about officials.

H: Most of the officials, no. And people even more so. I don't think we would have had anything other than that little hard-core group; but the hard-core group seized upon what they thought was a popular issue. Sweden professes to be highly neutralist; and you can't have a conversation with one of them without their telling you very quickly that they haven't been engaged in a war in over two hundred years; how much they're opposed to war. That was the great issue over there.

F: In those five weeks while you were home, President Johnson made that now famous March 31 speech in which he took himself out of the '68 Presidential campaign and also announced the cessation of bombing of North Viet Nam. Did this make any difference at all when you got back, or was the feeling among the anti-U.S. people so intense that there wasn't really anything you could do?

H: No, things got considerably better really. It took the ammunition away.

At that time the Paris peace talks, when they came along, there were great hopes that they would produce results. They took most of the bodyguards away, and everything got quiet.

Then about that time the Soviets went into Czechoslovakia. And just as my comment about East Germany, that was pretty close to home. And it happened that Kosygin was in Sweden on an official visit, and the troops were in there the day after he left. I heard him make a speech in Sweden where he referred to Sweden as Czechoslovakia three different times, to show you what he had on his mind while he was there. But the biggest demonstration that was held while I was there was against the Soviets at the time of the Czechoslovakian invasion. They were very bitter about that--the people were.

F: That must have shaken a lot of people.

H: Because they're right across the Baltic from Russia and all of that, and they're very sensitive to it. I asked the Prime Minister once why he was publicly so critical--the government was--of us at times, and wasn't of Russia. "Well," he says, "don't think I don't have my problems with them. It has been only a few days since the Soviet Ambassador was here to register some protests. You're up here telling me what you don't like. He comes up and tells me what he don't like." I said, "What is it he don't like?" "Well, one question he asked me the other day was why, with Russia just across the Baltic, why is English a required course in all of the public schools rather than Russian? Why does everybody speak English as a second language, and why does the government require it to be taught? He couldn't understand. It presented some difficulty in answering it. I won't go into what we said.

"He had another question. He asked me why all of our defense installations--all of our air bases--" And incidentally Sweden at that time had the fourth largest air force in the world. Fourth--a little country of that size.

F: Pretty good for a neutral country.

H: Yes. But he says, "They wanted to know why all of our military installations were along the Baltic facing east--the Russian Ambassador wanted to know--why didn't they face west?" And he says, "I'll tell you what I told him about that. I told him, 'Well, all of yours are pointed towards us--in our direction.' He says, 'Well, you know they're not directed at you.'" And so he says, "I have my problems with them as well as with you. They don't like a lot of things that are happening also. The path of a neutralist country is difficult."

One of the things that I had the most trouble with with the press was that I insisted I didn't think they were neutral. I took the position, I said, "Now, you're neutral according to your own definition of the word neutrality. But one of the difficulties I have when I go back home is that the average American concept of the meaning of neutrality--they accept the dictionary definition, not to take sides. Neutrality means not to take sides. And whereas you have a contrived definition which if you want me to, I can tell you what it is, but my people at home--they don't know what it is and care less; because to them neutrality means something else. Now when you take a position and side when we're at war--you side with the enemy, say you think they're right. When you send them supplies, we don't call that neutrality. We don't think that's being neutral. I'll agree that you're a non-combatant, but being neutral and being



a non-combatant in my book is two different things."

I know the Prime Minister told me--he said, "Well, no, we're not neutral in the sense of the dictionary definition. We don't claim to be. If we were, we'd have to get out of the United Nations. You know, the Swiss are not in the United Nations; we're not neutralists in the sense the Swiss are. If we are not going to take sides, we couldn't vote on any controversial issue in the United Nations--we'd have to abstain. What's the use of belonging if you're only going to vote where it's unanimous. No, we're not neutrals in the sense of not taking sides. If we think you're wrong, we'll say so. And if we think the Russians are wrong as when they invaded Czechoslovakia, we'll say so freely openly. We don't think that being neutral requires us not to speak our opinion." But you know this, if you comfort and advise, even more than that, when you have your [ ] which is controlled by the government, all its funds come from the government; you have them to furnish millions of dollars worth of supplies to North Viet Nam and don't give any to South Viet Nam; I think that goes beyond saying what you think."

At any rate we had considerable difficulties. I suppose the most difficult thing was the deserter situation. Actually that was blown up out of all proportion.

F: Well, it's a comparative handful in a sense, but I presume it really was a tremendous irritation.

H: There are more deserters and draft dodgers in Canada or France either one, and were then by far, than there ever were in Sweden. But the difficulty is that Sweden has an official board where the deserter has to go and register, and the press is there every day to see what

deserter got here today, see, and to get his picture and publicize it. Well, they don't mind registering because they know they're going to be welcomed.

F: Are they welcomed really?

H: Oh, yes. They're welcomed, and they even get a small government pension, not because they're deserters but along with other people who can qualify. There are committees which help them find jobs and all that sort of thing, and they're quite welcome. But in, let's say, France or Canada there was no way of knowing how many were there; where over there we got the publicity of the thing. I used to talk about the little handful who were there, and how many thousands had volunteered to go to Viet Nam from western Europe--it seemed to me like 130,000 as I recall it--I think that's the significant figure. You get several hundred thousand young men together, I don't care whether they're in the United States, West Germany, or Sweden, or wherever they are--you're going to have a few bad boys. And most of these people who desert, they know if they come over here and say it's conscientious scruples about the war in Viet Nam they'll be welcomed. But that's not really what's [aching] 90-percent of them, yes; but most of them are young men who have gotten in trouble. You look at their records in the service prior to the time they deserted, they've been in and out of the guardhouse, have got all sorts of problems. There have always been deserters in every army since time immemorial.

F: Now they have an acceptable rationalization.

H: That's right. Many of them. There were some of them who arrested for drugs. I had this experience one morning. I came in; I saw a

woman sitting in the lobby of the Chancery with about four or five children around her. I went on upstairs, and as soon as I got up there my secretary says, "There's a woman downstairs. She's the wife of an American deserter, has her children with her." I had a rule I personally wouldn't talk with any of those people because they'd misquote me, but I had a man and it was his job to do that. So my consul came up and talked to me about it, and he says, "Now this woman--her husband deserted, came here; she's from a very poor family, as you see. He has got a little job here that this committee helped him get. He's got a little pension. But his wife went around and raised money among her friends and relatives, enough to get a one-way ticket over here to try to--"

F: She was U.S.?

H: She was United States citizen, just as he was and his children were. She came over here to try to get him to come home and take his medicine. But says, "He has taken up with some Swedish girl over here, and he won't pay them any mind; and he says he's not interested in going home. Now, she don't have any money to buy a ticket for herself and her children. No, she's over here, she's destitute. And she came in here to tell us her sad story and to ask us if there's some way that she had tried her best to get her husband to go home. Is there any way? This committee wasn't interested in her and her children. They're just interested in her husband; but that she didn't have the right political background." Well, she didn't have any money. It took all everybody could get up to get her over there. She had thought that some way that her husband would join her, and they'd work there awhile or do what was necessary to get back home.

Well, there's one pitiful case. We took it up with the State Department, and they finally advanced the woman enough--she was an American citizen, and she was a loyal citizen--to get her and her children back home, they were destitute there, to her family.

We had cases--fathers, many of them mothers, of these boys would come over and try to persuade them to go home. Some few cases were successful. I remember, there was one fellow--one of the leaders, a fellow named Jones as I recall--he was a Negro soldier--had married a girl down in Denmark--a white girl, and he'd gone AWOL I don't know how many times, going over to visit her--got enamored with her; got in a lot of trouble and finally he deserted; came over there to join her and then finally came on up to--because he wanted to get in Sweden where--. So he came up here and began talking about Viet Nam--And that didn't have anything to do with his problem at all, but you wouldn't have known it reading in the papers.

So that was one of our great problems. One thing that people didn't understand, our official position was, we have no extradition treaty with Sweden, which provides for the return of military personnel. And second, any country has the right to determine who they want to admit to their country and who they want to reject. And I often said to people over there, "I may not admire your taste, but I have to concede your right to admit anybody you want to."

I had two or three people to make an interesting observation to me when the subject would come up about deserters. It was about the time Stalin's daughter came over here. And I had a couple of people say to me, "Well, now we don't admire much your taste in admitting Stalin's daughter. We don't understand what you want with her any

more than you can understand what we want with these deserters. But we have to concede that you're a sovereign nation--you have the right to admit her."

F: She chose us.

H: "And if you want to admit her, that's your and her business. And if we want to admit these deserters here, we don't have any treaty with you about returning military offenders for military offenses, we think that that's up to us." As I always say, "I certainly agree you have the right to do it, even though I don't admire your taste any more than you may admire ours about Stalins' daughter."

F: Did the deserters there tend to cling together, or did they just become individuals and get sort of lost?

H: They sort of clung together with a certain group. There was a Swedish lawyer named Franck, who represented them. They'd always go directly to him when they first got there. They had a committee that'd try to help them get a job and see that they got located.

F: Was there any anti-U.S. feeling over the shooting of Robert Kennedy?

H: Not in the sense of its being Robert Kennedy so much. I would say that perhaps there wasn't as much feeling as there was over Martin Luther King, for that matter. There was some feeling, but it was not--

F: Kind of like this country or--

H: I know the wife of the then Indian Ambassador was seated by me at dinner right after Kennedy's assassination. She sympathized with us, I thought, in a fashion that was sort of a--I didn't know if it was too sympathetic really, what she was saying. So finally I told her, I said, "Well, I appreciate your sympathy in our tragic loss. While it has been a long time ago, maybe you feel much as I felt when your

great leader Gandhi was assassinated. You certainly had my sympathy. By the way, it was an Indian who killed Gandhi, wasn't it?" And she said, "Yes." "Well," I says, "either fortunately or unfortunately this fellow was a Jordanian who killed Kennedy." And she says, "Oh, but he has been in your country for twelve-thirteen years." I says, "Yes, that's the tragic part of it. He never had seen fit to apply for American citizenship--he was still a Jordanian. Now take this man--he had come to our country, land of opportunity; he was a guest here. And the way he repaid us for our twelve years of hospitality to him was to assassinate one of our leaders. Again though, let me sympathize with you on the loss of Gandhi back there. It was he who was really one of the worlds great leaders. And again it was an Indian man who killed him." "Yes, yes."

So I discovered that maybe I am not as diplomatic sometimes as perhaps I might be. But you know, when you think people are needling you, you sort of have to respond in turn.

F: When that Swedish newsman wiped his feet on the U.S. flag on TV, did you make an official protest, or did the Swedes take care of that?

H: We made the protest. And the remarkable thing about that was, this particular man who did that was really one of the most pro-American of the Swedish reporters. What he was trying to do--he was trying to re-create another incident which had happened. It was symbolic. He was not doing it in any personal vengeance; it was just as though, let's say, something like that had happened--it had happened and somebody else had done that. Well, of course, he wanted to depict what had happened with effect, but the people weren't there and probably wouldn't have been willing to have done it anyway, so he

went through this as a matter of depicting the other scene. We did protest. He made a mistake; he shouldn't have done that. But the part which I regretted was that I know the man personally actually didn't have that sort of feeling. And I hated for us to have to protest about one of the people who had been nice to us most of the time over there.

F: He understood the situation?

H: Oh, yes. And realized his mistake. He actually personally apologized to me about it later. He told me he was sorry; he didn't mean it. In that fashion he was just trying to re-create the scene to show what had happened.

F: When you left, were there any demonstrations?

H: No. We had a large number of the people, Swedish and other ambassadors, to give farewell parties for us. We had our farewell party to which we invited people--the press, even the anti-American press commented on it at the time, saying that it was the largest and best attended farewell reception ever given the American ambassador in their memory. And when we left at the airport, we had half the diplomatic corps, I suppose, out to tell us goodbye, a great many Swedish friends--and no demonstrations of any kind.

F: Including the Ambassador of Tanzania?

H: No, I don't believe he--The truth, is Tanzania is not as pro-American as I would like for it to be. He was a delightful fellow. But you can always tell who the--On an occasion like that I can tell you in advance who's going to show up--people like the British Ambassador and the Turkish Ambassador, the Belgian Ambassador, the Mexican Ambassador, the Canadian--

F: Just before you came home there was a rumor that you were going to be dean of the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Was there any substance to that?

H: None whatever. In fact I was sort of irritated about the thing because I had not given--any such matter had not even occurred to me, and I'm sure it hadn't to the University either. What I think happened, one of the Swedish papers about that time carried an article which said it had learned from Austin sources--Austin, Texas, sources--that.

F: They didn't identify them?

H: Without identifying them--that I was likely to become the dean or head of the Johnson School of Public Affairs. Then later the Austin paper carried an article saying that Swedish sources--It started out Austin, so then they picked it up and say Swedish sources. Well, the Swedish sources--I tell you what I think happened--my judgment of what happened. The President did make me one of the three trustees of his foundation--originally the Lyndon B. Johnson Foundation, the name of which has been changed--I forget the current name of it, some other name. And I'm one of the trustees--Dr. Ransom's one of them, Frank Erwin is the third. And that decision was made shortly before that, and it became sort of known around that I was going to be a trustee of the Johnson foundation; and I think with the language situation like it is--A great many terms, although nearly everyone speaks English, a great many terms mean different things. For instance, the word "director" means president over there. The President of a bank--his title is director. And I think that that type of confusion arose over the fact that I was a trustee of this other. It's the



only explanation that I can think of because certainly I never had  
any conversation with anyone about that, and no one ever had any  
conversation with me.

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