

Oral History Interview

with

CARROLL H. KENWORTHY

Reporter for the Hartford (Conn.) *Courant*, 1926, for the *Japan Advertiser* (Tokyo), 1927-29, and the Washington bureau of the *Wall Street Journal*, 1929, before serving as diplomatic reporter for the Washington bureau of the United Press, 1930-40, and as editor of the foreign department of the United Press (United Press International after UP merged with International News Service in May 1958) in Washington, D.C., from 1941 until his retirement in 1967.

Washington, D.C.
January 29, 1971

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
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HESS: To begin this morning, Mr. Kenworthy, would you give me a little of your personal background; where were you born, where were you educated and what are a few of the positions that you have held?

KENWORTHY: All right. I was born in Indiana, the city of Kokomo, 1904. I was educated in public schools until the age of 13 when I went to a small boarding school in central New York on

Lake Cayuga, later moved to Poughkeepsie and I graduated there in 1921. Went to a small college in Indiana with which my family had close connections, my father had been a professor there. It was Earlham College. I graduated there in 1925. I got a master's degree from Columbia University in 1927.

I had done a little newspaper work in the meantime for papers in Richmond, Indiana, and Indianapolis, just

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as a stringer, work on the college sports and things of that sort. I worked eight or ten months for the *Hartford Courant*, in Hartford, Connecticut, the oldest (it claims at least to be the oldest), paper in the United States of continuous publication, having published the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Following my master's degree at Columbia, I got a job in Tokyo, Japan, working for an English language newspaper, which had a good deal of prestige in the Far East in those days. It not only circulated in all of the foreign community in Japan and among many Japanese who prided themselves on their English, but in China and the Philippines. It was called the *Japan Advertiser*. I worked there for upwards of three years and then came to Washington, and began work with the *Wall Street Journal*, because I had done correspondence with them out of Tokyo. I caught on with the *Wall Street Journal* when I came here and I worked for them only a short time (that was in 1929), while I was just trying to get a job with United Press International because of my international interests.

I got such a job in December of 1929 and worked with them until my retirement in 1967.

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My work was generally to furnish news to papers outside the United States for our world-wide service, so that my job in covering the White House and other news sources in Washington was to pick up news which would interest newspapers in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Tokyo and you name almost any other capital in the world. We had -- when I first started -- we had only five hundred papers around the world which we served, but before I was finished, we were serving 2,500.

So, when I attended a White House press conference, I was there primarily to get news to be sent quickly to capitals and other cities overseas. I had my own telephone just outside the press room door and I was competing with newsmen from German agencies, British agencies like Reuters, French agency like Havas, Italian agency, and individual correspondents of papers like the British correspondents; *London Times* and *Tokyo Mainichi* and *Asahi*, and of course with the Associated Press, and while it was still existing, the International News Service. The last two were American agencies which also served papers overseas.

HESS: At the time that you were in Asia and Japan did you

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detect any rise in the spirit of militarism and militaristic feeling?

KENWORTHY: Yes, it was beginning to show. I'll be very inexact on this as my memory is fuzzy, but the Black Dragon Society in Japan was beginning to exert influence on the government. And I don't recall any assassinations while I was there, but there were threats to the government and pressure was being exerted. It grew much more rapidly after I left, because I left there in 1929.

It was a good era as far as relations with the United States were concerned while I was there, because the Japanese were seeking American capital to build hydro-electric plants and other capital investments, and they were very eager to please Americans. So, it was pleasant living for me as an American in those days, while they were trying to borrow money, and they did borrow large amounts. I remember Owen D. Young, an outstanding New York banker, came out while I was there in connection with floating a loan. The greatest rise was after I left there.

HESS: What are your earliest recollections of Mr. Truman?

KENWORTHY: Well, I think the earliest recollection was when he was voted as being the most respected Senator. I

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really hadn't paid much attention to him before then, but I believe it was in 1944. Well, I can't recall the exact year, but it was very shortly before he became President that I believe the press gallery voted him the most respected Senator. Perhaps I have the wrong word there, perhaps he was the most admired, or most efficient, anyway he won the number one vote of the press gallery. This drew my attention to him, although, I had no personal experiences with him while he was at the Capitol whatever. I got to the Capitol occasionally, but not very often, and since he did not figure much in foreign affairs, I had no personal dealings with him up there.

My next recollection was when he held his first press conference after Roosevelt's death. And I was struck then with his humility, but he also seemed to have a very determined way about him and I at once had reasonable confidence in his ability to do the job. His impression was good at that moment on me.

HESS: Moving back just a little bit, back to the 1944 campaign, did you or did you not think it was unusual for this man to be selected for the second spot on the ticket of that year?

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KENWORTHY: Yes, I was surprised at that. I didn't pretend to be a great expert on United States politics, but Truman seemed rather obscure. After we had had such men as [John Nance] Garner and [Henry A.] Wallace on the ticket, I was surprised at his selection, and I didn't know at the time what the real reasons were.

HESS: Did you travel on any of the campaign trains?

KENWORTHY: No I did not. That was domestic politics and out of my field. I attended all White House press conferences and I was in and out of the White House almost every day

because there would be some news of foreign affairs there; visiting statesmen, generals, admirals.

The Secretary of State would be in and out, and I often went to the news conferences conducted by the news Press Secretary Charlie Ross, Joe Short, and sometimes Bill Hassett, and a few times Roger Tubby, because there would be news break at those events which I would have to send overseas. But I didn't go to all of those by any means.

HESS: Fine. We'll get a little further into that in just a moment.

Did you attend Roosevelt's inauguration on the South Portico of the White House January the 20th of 1945?

KENWORTHY: I didn't think it was on the South Portico of the

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White House. You said Roosevelt's inauguration?

HESS: Yes. On January the 20th of 1945. It was held at the White House.

KENWORTHY: No, I was not there. I thought it was held at the Capitol as usual, or anyway, to answer your question, I was not there, no.

HESS: Were you present at the joint session of Congress after Mr. Roosevelt returned from the Yalta conference?

KENWORTHY: I don't remember it.

HESS: One question on the Yalta conference: As you were an editor in a foreign department for United Press, what is your opinion of Mr. Roosevelt's handling of the situation at Yalta? Did you think he gave away too many concessions to the Russians at that time?

KENWORTHY: Yes I did. I have never known why, I haven't dug into the history of it or the documentation that is available, but I felt that the United States had the upper hand in the war, its impact had been decisive and Roosevelt should have pressed more for the things he wanted. I felt that he was too compromising with Stalin.

HESS: Did he place too much trust in Stalin and in the Russians in carrying out their agreements?

KENWORTHY: Probably. Too much, probably -- I'm guessing now,

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probably giving too much weight to the part that they had played in the war. They would have lost the war badly except for us, they would have been terribly defeated except for our help.

Of course, it is true they had held the Germans at bay for a long time, they get a good deal of credit for that, but it was their treachery in a sense that brought the war on in the first place. If they hadn't reached an agreement with Hitler there might never have been a war, so I didn't feel that the Russians deserved much credit.

HESS: Where were you when you heard of the death of President Roosevelt?

KENWORTHY: I believe I was in the office, I really don't remember exactly.

HESS: What were your impressions at the time?

KENWORTHY: Well, I wasn't -- I was startled, but I wasn't terribly saddened. I felt that he had probably been in office too long, that he lost his effectiveness. Yalta was an example. And I thought that perhaps for the country it was a good thing. This was irrespective of thinking of what qualities Truman might have in succeeding him.

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HESS: What kind of qualities did you think that he would have? What kind of job did you think that this incoming man, that you didn't know too well at this time, was going to do in the White House?

KENWORTHY: I didn't have enough impression of him to estimate it very well, or to evaluate it, but I felt that the war was going so well that we didn't have to have Roosevelt's leadership anymore, that we had extremely able generals in [Dwight D.] Eisenhower in Europe and [Douglas] MacArthur in the Pacific area, and I wasn't the least bit dismayed.

HESS: In July Mr. Truman traveled to Potsdam and the United Press man that went along with Mr. Truman was the regular White House man, Merriman Smith. Did Mr. Smith ever tell you of any impressions he may have gained of Mr. Truman at this time on the trip to Potsdam?

KENWORTHY: I don't remember ever discussing it with him.

HESS: Okay. On August the 21st of 1945 President Truman directed that all lend-lease operations be discontinued. Did you think that was a little premature?

KENWORTHY: I can't remember at the moment what my impression was then. Looking back I would be inclined to say that it was not premature, after all we had made an enormous

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expenditure. Of course, we later had to go in -- we felt we had to go into a substitute for lend-lease, foreign aid, but I've always felt that that was overdone, we needed some of it, but you're asking my appraisal now of...

HESS: That's all right. You thought we got too involved in foreign aid later on, is that correct?

KENWORTHY: I would say now that I think there was too much of it and it was dragged on too long. I would say now that I think probably Truman's, President Truman's, cancellation of lend-lease was a good thing, a good step at least to jolt the other countries into the realization that they had to begin to take care of themselves.

HESS: Mr. Truman's foreign aid boiled down to three major attempts at foreign aid, the Truman Doctrine aid to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall plan, and then economic aid under point 4. What are your opinions of those three efforts?

KENWORTHY: Well, I think it was very important to give aid to Greece and Turkey. The Russians were, in a wily way, were already grasping at everything they could and trying to capitalize on our good will and kindness and

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our lack of imperialism. They saw an opportunity to greatly expand. They were really imperialistic. And I think it was very important to stop them. In this respect I support all the foreign aid in general, wherever it would stop the Russians from seizing and controlling other people.

HESS: Was the Marshall plan overdone?

KENWORTHY: It's hard to say on that. It was a great job of getting Europe back on its feet. But perhaps it was a little overdone. It was awfully easy for those countries to lean on us rather than jump in and work vigorously for their own reconstruction. Certainly some Marshall aid was very important, I would approve a lot of it. Perhaps it was overdone, I don't have figures in mind now enough to make an estimate of that.

HESS: And point 4, the technical assistance, came along after Mr. Truman's inaugural address of 1949. Do you think point 4 was a success or not, or was overdone?

KENWORTHY: Well, my memory of that is so hazy that I hesitate to give an opinion, but I think I would say as I have on these others, that some of it was a good thing, but probably it was too much.

HESS: All right, we have mentioned the press conferences and I have several questions on those. In general, how

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skillful was Mr. Truman at fielding questions at a press conference?

KENWORTHY: In general I would say he was quite good, he was better than average, but he had some faults. He was a little hasty, he was a little short-tempered sometimes. But by-and large I felt that he answered promptly and concisely and with as much frankness, candor, as a politician can be expected to use.

I can give you an example, whether you want it now or later...

HESS: Fine.

KENWORTHY: ...of his short temper. It was a personal incident in which I was involved.

HESS: Those we remember better than some of the other things that happen.

KENWORTHY: That's right. They say that men remember the bad things that happen to them, whereas, women remember the good things, psychologically.

It must have been in 1952 after he had dropped out of the presidential contention. At a press conference someone asked if he would support the Democratic ticket, although he wasn't going to be a candidate, and he said well of course he would. And someone asked what he would especially stress. He said, "Well, if you want

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peace you'll elect Democrats." Well, since my job was to furnish news to foreigners in the seventy-five or eighty countries at that time, I immediately thought this is an implication at least, or some of them may think he is saying that if the Republicans are elected there will be war.

So, I jumped on my feet and I said, "Mr. President, do you imply that if the Republicans win, there will be war?"

And he snapped back at me, "Don't put words in my mouth. I don't like that."

Well, one doesn't argue with the President, of course, and I had no intention to put words in his mouth. I was only seeking a clarification for the leaders abroad who might be misled by that. Of course, I dropped the matter without saying another word. But immediately after the press conference I headed for the Press Secretary's office in the White House to explain why I had spoken as I did, that I had no ulterior motive and I wasn't against Mr. Truman.

Before I got there, I met in the corridor Roger Tubby, one of the Assistant Press Secretaries. I think that day he was actually Acting Press Secretary. He

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had sat near the President during the conference. He came towards me and said, "Carroll, the President asked me to come to you and say he was sorry he was so sharp," and that was the end of it. But it was to me an illustration of how he was a bit short-tempered.

Of course, an incident that you have in your records already, is the instance of the *Post's* music critic...

HESS: Paul Hume.

KENWORTHY: ...comment about his daughter's singing, when he fired off a sharp letter -- he never backed down on things like that, except to the extent that he sent a considerate word to me,

through Roger Tubby. That was in a sense a reconciliation. It wasn't an apology, but it was an attempt to soften it a bit.

HESS: Do you think that Mr. Truman made proper use, or adequate use of the press conferences as a method of educating and informing the public and trying to lead congressional action, to influence congressional action? Could he have used his press conferences more effectively?

KENWORTHY: My opinion on that is very shallow, but I do have the opinion that he didn't use the press conference very much, at least as much as he might have in that direction. I have the feeling that he was -- that he didn't attempt to use the press conference very much as a tool. Now, perhaps

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I was naive in that, but it seemed to me that he used it less than most Presidents and that his policy was mainly to answer questions as candidly as he could as a politician and not as a device for affecting Congress certainly. And undoubtedly, he did try to use it for a device for affecting public opinion, but he wasn't very obvious in this. I'll put it that way. If he did it he was adroit enough to make it seem frank and candid and honest.

HESS: The press conferences were held in the Oval Room until 1950 and then they were transferred to the Indian Treaty Room. Which particular location did you like the best?

KENWORTHY: Well, I liked the Oval Room better. It was informal and we were able to stand around the President's desk; get closer to him. There wasn't the separating factor of the chairs and aisles, and I liked it much better. But the press corps were growing slowly and there were more and more foreign newsmen assigned here since after the war we were a great power in the world. London no more was the main news capital of the world, we were.

And I suppose it's probably true, radio was growing

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with more correspondents. I can't remember when television began to come in. Of course, television people were not admitted early. They weren't admitted until Eisenhower, so perhaps I shouldn't mention that. But anyway, the press corps was growing. It got to be a little unwieldy in the Oval Room and it was probably necessary to transfer to the Treaty Room across in the old State Department, although it was never very satisfactory there. Either under Truman...

HESS: What were some of the things that were wrong?

KENWORTHY: Either under Truman or under Eisenhower?

HESS: What were the main difficulties?

KENWORTHY: Well, it was crowded because they undertook to seat everybody and this resulted in crowding because the chairs keep people further apart than when you're standing

shoulder to shoulder. And the acoustics weren't too good, it wasn't a very large room to start with. And well, I can't think of anything else at the moment.

It got worse later when Eisenhower admitted the television camera people, and they were placed on platforms at the rear of the room which was an attempt to keep them back and out of the way and reduce the sound. But they took up space; the platforms and the cameras alone took up more space than the chairs would take for the few

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people operating the cameras. The cables were in the way. The sound of the cameras made a whirring, or a buzzing that would cut down on the ability to hear and were a certain distraction.

HESS: Did they use the same room, the Indian Treaty Room?

KENWORTHY: In early -- during Eisenhower, yes, I guess it was entirely through Eisenhower's administration. I guess they used that as far as I can recall. It wasn't until Kennedy came along that they switched to the State Department auditorium, and by that time it had got...

HESS: Was that an improvement? What was your opinion of that?

KENWORTHY: It was an improvement to the extent that it was more comfortable. I think the television cameras weren't quite so disturbing there, but it became too big, there were entirely too many newsmen admitted in. It became a staged affair, theatrical in nature, and from then on the press conference hasn't really been satisfactory.

HESS: What are your main objections to the press conferences as they are held today? When they are held.

KENWORTHY: Since they are, most of them, now held on a television format, it's too theatrical. The newsmen are self-conscious that they are on camera when they are

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asking questions, but when we were huddled in a group of twenty-five or thirty, or even forty perhaps, around President Roosevelt's desk, or President Truman's desk at the beginning, it wasn't too hard to get a question in. And the give and take was far better, far more follow-up questions. Sometimes on a subject there would be four or five follow-up questions and the last question very often would draw the best news and the best explanation from the President's standpoint of something that he was trying to get across.

HESS: Whereas now many of the newsmen ask their one question, the President answers it, and then someone else asks his .

KENWORTHY: That's right.

HESS: ...with absolutely no follow-up questions.

KENWORTHY: There are very few follow-up questions now. They also try to cover too many subjects now. Of course, the President now is spokesman for not only every major domestic issue, and even such things as crime, and states, and municipal problems, plus all of the world problems, there are far more things to talk about than in the Roosevelt day, at least a greater variety of topics seem to come up. That is an unfortunate factor too.

HESS: What was your opinion of the manner in which Lyndon Johnson held his press conferences?

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KENWORTHY: Well, it was mostly unsatisfactory, strangely. Because of his background you would expect that he would do very well with the press, his long years in Congress, dealing with the press, but for some strange reason he was never at ease and never found a satisfactory formula.

I think the best ones were those held in the auditorium in the White House, but they were limited in space. Certainly those held outdoors, even when they were seated, were not very satisfactory. And the worst of all were those in which he attempted to walk around the inside of the White House fence with the reporters straggling along beside and behind him like so many dogs, trying to take notes on pads as they ran and jostled each other and bumped into bushes and guywires and trees. It was a horrible mess. Many of them couldn't hear. Only those very close to him could hear. Sometimes then only the ones on the side to which he was turning his head. If he spoke to the right, those men might hear, but the men on the left of him couldn't hear.

HESS: What is your opinion of Mr. Nixon's handling of the press conferences that he has held?

KENWORTHY: I think he's produced an excellent image of himself in the press conferences. He gives an impression of candor and forthrightness on television. I think he

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goes over very well, the fact that he stands up there without even a podium in front of him as a protective device. and without any notes, and speaks clearly, strongly, gives a good impression.

I do think that a lot of this is then distorted by commentators who come on immediately following him and try to give a different impression of what he said, or try -- and so-called interpretations -- to whittle down or alter some of the impressions that he has given.

But he has a -- I think he is at fault in not holding more press conferences. This shows some (I'm groping for a word), I don't know whether uneasiness is the right word, or dissatisfaction with the press conference on his part. And of course, it is well-known that the newspapermen are dissatisfied.

HESS: It has been brought out in the press that a good many of the commentators that come on after Mr. Nixon has spoken do just exactly as you say, they distort what he says. It seems that many of the commentators and newsmen are Democrats, old New Dealers, or old Fair Dealers, or new frontiersmen. If you agree with that observation, why do you think that has come about?

KENWORTHY: Difficult to explain, I suppose there are several factors.

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In the first place a great many newspapermen lean to Democratic tendencies because most of them think of themselves as rather poor and underpaid and they have the conviction that the Democratic Party is more helpful to that kind of people.

In the second place there is a vogue of being Democratic, because it is believed to be the smart thing to do. There are many intellectuals who are of Democratic leanings for that reason.

In the third place, Nixon's personality is not very attractive to a great many people. The campaign dodge used by the Democrats some time ago, I forget in which campaign, in showing a picture of Nixon with a grizzled face and a mean look in his eye and saying, "Would you buy a secondhand car from this guy?" is typical of the attitude of a great many people toward Nixon because of his personality.

Those are three reasons I can think of and there may be other reasons.

HESS: Moving back a good bit in time, but we have discussed the Presidents of late, what is your opinion of the handling of the press conference by FDR?

KENWORTHY: He was a wizard at the press conference. He's

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undoubtedly the best that there has been in my time, and I have covered since about the middle of the Hoover regime. I covered presidential press conferences up through a part of Johnson's.

Roosevelt certainly was far more adept at handling the press. I think he was a magician and I think that many of his policies were the work of a magician, that they really fooled the people. But as far as his skill with the press, he was tops. I think there is no doubt about that.

HESS: Did he try to use the press as an instrument for fooling the people?

KENWORTHY: Oh, very much, very much. He had learned that at least as Governor at Albany and perhaps much earlier, I don't know when he learned it. Perhaps he developed it over a long time, but he knew -- it seemed to me he was conscious every time he had a press conference that he was talking to the people of Kansas, or California, everywhere.

HESS: How adept was President Hoover at his press conferences?

KENWORTHY: Very poor. He acted frozen, stiff and unsure of himself, and of course, he had the system most of the time, as I recall, that questions must be passed him

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in writing. I think that's not quite -- he developed that during his regime as I remember it. And this formalized the press conference to the extent that it was of very little value.

It needn't have been, you know. A President could answer written questions, of course, and produce a good deal of news, or lead the public to his way of thinking, influence the public to his way of thinking. But the written formula coincided with his general stiffness, and of course, he was entering a very difficult period and he had to be very careful what he said. I excuse him somewhat to that extent.

Roosevelt was doing it during the war, but he had a much greater skill.

I think in general Hoover was a greater man, this is shown by his personal success. He had a wonderful career as a private citizen, made a vast amount of money very young, which showed his skills. Whereas, Roosevelt, it was said, was never able to live on his income at any time in his life. But the difference between the two men as political leader was just as vast as the contrast was in their personal careers.

HESS: Before you would go to a press conference did you work

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out questions that you would like to ask if the opportunity arose?

KENWORTHY: Oh yes. I usually had three or four questions in mind before I would go to a press conference, all of course concerning international affairs because that was my job. The questions, the answers to which would interest the people in Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Chile, Manila, Singapore, wherever.

HESS: Were there various ways in which your questions were developed? Did you sit down with some of the people in the office that you worked with, and were there times when other reporters for the United Press would say, "If you have an opportunity would you ask this question?"

KENWORTHY: Surely, that happened, but not a great deal. We didn't usually have any formal staff meeting before I would go to a press conference -- but it was occasional, certainly, that our Latin American men, or one of the Latin American men, would say, "We've got a delicate situation arising with Argentina, if you get a chance, would you ask the question." Of course, I knew what it was because I was probably handling his copy for Buenos Aires. The same might have been from one of our Asian men or European men.

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But usually everyone -- there was just a consensus just from the flow of the news as to what the big topics of the day were and it was almost automatic what questions you would ask. I'm sure the Associated Press man in my position, or the International News Service man generally had in mind much the same questions, and often I would ask -- get in one or two of my questions during a conference and the AP man would get in a couple of questions, and they were also on my list, so I didn't have to ask them.

HESS: Just fewer things for you to ask.

KENWORTHY: That's right. That's right. Or a correspondent for some London newspaper or some Berlin newspaper would ask a question which I had expected to ask in that area, in those areas.

HESS: I would like to ask a few questions about the men who served as Press Secretary and their general effectiveness in that job. Who was President Hoover's Press Secretary?

KENWORTHY: Well, there was George Akerson and Theodore Joslin. The one I remember best was Akerson, a newsman from Boston.

HESS: Was he effective at the job.?

KENWORTHY: Generally no, it was felt that we got very little

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news out of him, whether he was protective, or whether President Hoover just didn't want him to give out news I wasn't in much of a position to judge. I wasn't in the White House quite as much in the Hoover days as I was later. I was over two or three times a week at least, but I wasn't on the inside as much then, and that's one reason I can't remember.

HESS: Two of the men who held that position under Roosevelt were Steve Early and then the last few months of the Roosevelt administration Jonathan Daniels was moved in as Press Secretary. How would you evaluate Steve Early?

KENWORTHY: Steve Early was excellent. He was one of the best we've ever had. Of course, he had a good man to work with, a man who was very interested in cultivating a press and skilled in getting out the news, so that helped Steve Early's position. But he was good. He was very, very rough and tough, he was gruff even, but he was efficient and a good news source.

HESS: How would you evaluate...

KENWORTHY: And Daniels I don't remember much about.

HESS: When Mr. Truman came in, for a few days there was a man by the name of J. Leonard Reinsch. Is the name familiar to you?

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KENWORTHY: No, I'm afraid I don't remember him at all.

HESS: He did not have the title Press Secretary, but he was in charge of the press office...

KENWORTHY: I see.

HESS: ...more or less for a few days, and then of course, Mr. Truman's boyhood friend, Charles Ross, was brought in.

KENWORTHY: Yes.

HESS: How would you evaluate Mr. Ross' handling of the press office?

KENWORTHY: I think that Charlie Ross was excellent. He was very good, he was a little slow and deliberate, but of course, being a long, longtime newsman and being friends with nearly everybody in the press corps, he was sympathetic and considerate, and I felt he did a good job. I think his health was very frail, and he probably wasn't able to devote as much energy to the job as he himself would like to have, and as the press corps might have liked. But he was a very able man and very understanding of newsmen's problems: Incidentally, maybe I don't remember Reinsch because I left almost immediately after President Truman took office to go to San Francisco to prepare for the formation of the United Nations.

HESS: For the UN Conference?

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KENWORTHY: The United Nations Conference in San Francisco.

HESS: What do you recall about the UN Conference, anything in particular?

KENWORTHY: Oh, I haven't set my mind to that, but it was a great torment of course, to try to get all those nations to agree to a charter, and the Russians were particularly obnoxious, extremely resistant to any program that would really set up a good constitution for the nations of the world to organize their affairs. It was very rough, it was obvious already that the Russians were going to be troublemakers. They were from the very start.

HESS: One question on Mr. Ross: I have been told that he did not fully appreciate the news gathering services' need for speed and for meeting deadlines, since he had been, as I understand, mostly in the editorial department of the papers. Did you feel that that was a valid criticism?

KENWORTHY: I think that I perhaps implied that a little bit in my remark about him being slow and deliberate. I didn't notice it nearly as much as the men who would be stationed all day long at the White House would notice it. They'd have far more problems in that than I would. I would

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go over there and attend his news meeting with the press around his desk and I could go immediately to my telephone and transmit whatever news he gave, so I didn't personally have as much problem on that as the men on -- who were more intimately associated with him and the President. I would suspect that that was a valid criticism however.

HESS: And his Assistant Press Secretary was Eben Ayers, do you recall anything about Mr. Ayers?

KENWORTHY: I knew Eben Ayers moderately well as a competitor in the Associated Press before he went into the White House press office and I liked him as a fellow newsman and as a competitor. I felt that he was a little too gentle and easy-going probably to be the very best type of newsman. But he was good. He was all right.

HESS: And then Mr. Ross died on December the 5th, 1950 , and shortly thereafter Joseph Short, with the *Baltimore Sun*, was brought in as Press Secretary. How would you evaluate Mr. Joe Short in his handling of the office?

KENWORTHY: Well, I -- as I recall, Joe Short had been an Associated Press man before he went to the *Baltimore Sun*.

HESS: That is correct.

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KENWORTHY: So he knew the problems of the wire associations as well as the individual papers, and to what extent he was a good man.

I felt that he was, in temperament, a little bit unsuited to the job because I thought he was easily irritable, and a job of that sort has a tremendous amount of pressure on a man, day and night. But I felt that he was sincere and knew the problems and tried hard, and did the very best he could, but that it was a difficult job for him and that therefore, he was not the very best. I think he was good, but not the very best. And I doubt -- I sometimes felt that he was really sorry that he had taken the job; that he himself realized that it wasn't his bowl of soup. That was simply a guess on my part.

I know that I couldn't possibly have handled such a job, although I did reasonably well as a newsman and editor, but I certainly wouldn't have the temperament, and I felt that many newsmen did not have the temperament to move into a job of that sort even though it was -- they understood the problems and theoretically should be a good medium between a President or any other high Government official as a newsman. But it often doesn't work that way.

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HESS: What do you see as the prime qualification for a good Press Secretary?

KENWORTHY: Well, there are several. I would name availability day and night as one of the first, certainly from the standpoint of a wire association serving newspapers and radio stations all over the world, because some very big news may break in Rome at 10 o'clock at night or at midnight, and it's awfully important to have a man in real authority, whom you can reach. Therefore, accessibility is a prime consideration.

Secondly, forthrightness or honesty, saying that he can't possibly tell you, even if he can't give the reasons why he can't tell you, but not misleading you, and using as seldom as possible, using the cover-up of "No comment."

Thirdly, certainly he must have a lot of knowledge of what's going on. He must have the confidence of his boss. He needs to know everything really that's going on so that he won't mislead you into saying, "Oh, there will be nothing to that," whereas there is something to it, and two hours later his boss asks him to announce something which he has denied shortly before, and thus caused consternation and maybe serious ramifications somewhere in the world.

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HESS: Did you find that during the days of the Truman administration that there were times when the Press Secretaries lacked these three attributes; accessibility, forthrightness, and knowledge?

KENWORTHY: Well..

HESS: Were there times that this was a problem?

KENWORTHY: Oh, I'm sure it was. I can't remember specific instances. It's always a problem in every part of the Government in dealing with news people or new people dealing with the Government. The Government people want to be cautious and careful and be sure that they don't make mistakes, and also they want to cover up their indecision, or their lack of knowledge, or their mistakes, and so their natural tendency is to view the press with a good deal of misgivings except when they want to make an announcement or to use it as an instrument for influencing policy. Therefore, there are many times when they really resent newsmen being around or asking questions.

On the contrary, it's a newsman's duty to try to learn as much as he can about what's going on, to dig in and find out and uncover the facts and inform the people and give them as much light as he possibly can. So this sets up a natural conflict of interest in a great

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many situations, not always, but in a great many situations. So, it's bound to happen that there will be press secretaries or any other official for that matter, who will try to withhold, or cover up, or deny the information which the newsman is seeking and therefore clashes result.

HESS: Mr. Short died on September the 18th of 1952, and Roger Tubby and Irving Perlmeter served as Acting Press Secretaries until December of that year, and then Mr. Tubby was made Press Secretary on his own. What are your evaluations of those two gentlemen; Roger Tubby and Irving Perlmeter?

KENWORTHY: I thought Roger Tubby was quite efficient. He had served at the State Department in the press section and as an assistant to Michael McDermott the Assistant Secretary of State for Press Relations, and so he had a good background. He was a quiet, very knowledgeable, intelligent, reasonably efficient person. He was not very aggressive. He didn't go out of his way to dig up information. I suppose that he was prone to lean towards the cautious side. But he didn't make any mistakes that I can recall, perhaps because he was a little cautious. I would describe him as quiet, efficient,

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well-liked and generally satisfactory, although, because of his cautious nature, I wouldn't say that he did a conspicuous job.

HESS: What do you recall of Irving Perlmeter?

KENWORTHY: Irving Perlmeter was an Associated Press news man I believe, at least that's where I first knew him I think, and I had very little contact with him during the period he was in the White House press office.

I would classify him very much a Roger Tubby type, quiet and efficient, reasonably satisfactory. I don't remember anything outstanding about him. The few times that I dealt with him I believe he was sitting in for Roger Tubby at the press desk, holding the daily, semi-daily news conferences. He would read the announcements and such explanation as he could in an efficient manner and I would say he was satisfactory, not outstanding.

HESS: At the time that Mr. Truman took over, he cut the number of press conferences back, Roosevelt had held two a week, Mr. Truman held one a week. Looking back at that time did you think that that was a mistake or what were your views on Mr. Truman's reducing the number of press conferences?

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KENWORTHY: Well, as a newsman serving hundreds of newspapers day and night with deadlines every hour of the twenty-four, I naturally liked a news system of the type Roosevelt organized because it gave the news breaks part of the time for the morning newspapers and part of the time for the evening newspapers. That was, I felt, not only fair and good for the domestic newspapers for whom he set up the system, but it was of value to me as a worldwide writer, because it helped me meet deadlines and provide more news in countries where it was daylight in half of the world and dark in the other half of the world. So to some extent I regretted Mr. Truman's reduction in the number of press conferences, but I could see his viewpoint. A news conference was getting to be a terrible chore.

As I mentioned the number of correspondents was greatly increasing and I sympathized to some extent with him in his desire to regularize it a bit, and so I didn't complain too much, I think, even privately, even among my colleagues and my staff associates. I really didn't like it, but I suppose I accepted it as something inevitable.

HESS: Concerning the events of 1948, did you go to the

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convention in Philadelphia?

KENWORTHY: No, I had no work in domestic politics, so I never attended a national convention or covered a President on his travels around the United States.

HESS: All right, now a subject dovetailing in with that, might well be the fact that Mr. Truman called a special session of Congress just after the convention, called the 80th Congress back into special session. That was the Turnip Day session, and this was probably a part of a plan to work up a case against the so-called do-nothing 80th Congress, which he ran against, more or less, in the 1948 campaign. Still, this is the Congress that passed the Greek-Turkish aid bill, it passed the Marshall plan, it passed what he wanted in the foreign field. As a former editor on a foreign desk, does it seem to you that elections are run more on domestic matters than on foreign matters? Here was Mr. Truman running against a Congress that did what he wanted them to in a foreign field, but not the domestic field.

KENWORTHY: Yes, I certainly believe that most elections are decided on domestic issues, because that is what affects the average voter, whether he has a job or not, whether his economic conditions is relatively good,

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whether he feels that his family is making progress, living better, perhaps a little bit, than his parents and grandparents did. The education of his children. These are the things that affect voters far more than overseas problems. Therefore, I suppose that voters didn't care too much about the Greek-Turkey thing or the Marshall plan. Well, naturally, there are tens of thousands of voters who attend to these things, but the great mass of people don't pay much attention to it, the milkman in Omaha, or my farmer cousin in Howard County, Indiana, and people of this sort. When there is a war on, naturally that's the biggest issue, and sometimes as has happened, a man can win an election by a slogan that he has kept us out of war as Woodrow Wilson did, and then...

HESS: And then we go to war.

KENWORTHY: ...took us right into war. But, by and large, foreign issues are not a major factor. Of course, in these days when the United States is the leading nation of the world, every President thinks he has to show some knowledge (and he should), he has many decisions to make, so he makes trips abroad to demonstrate to the people that he knows what's going on.

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Here's [Edmund S.] Muskie now, a Democratic prospect, and he's beginning to develop a foreign interest and is traveling abroad to show the voters that he will have some experience in that field if he runs in '72.

It's a natural tendency, and it's a good thing, but it isn't a major factor in decisions I don't think in this country, important as I think foreign affairs are, because it was my area of work.

HESS: Do you recall where you were on election night in November of 1948?

KENWORTHY: I'm sure I was in the office.

HESS: What are your views and impressions of that evening? Did you think Mr. Truman was going to win that election?

KENWORTHY: I certainly did not. I was one of the hundreds of newsmen who were completely fooled on that.

I had been to Indiana on vacation just a short time before election and I was astonished at some of my newspaper friends and relatives in Indiana who said there was a strong trend toward Truman there.

HESS: Did they give any reasons for that trend?

KENWORTHY: I can't remember what they gave, but I'm sure one of them was the fact that he went down through the

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state talking to the people from the back end of a train. I believe I'm right that he stopped at such towns as Logansport, Kokomo, Anderson, Muncie, Richmond, some of those towns certainly he touched at, and he was making that famous "give them hell" campaign with great vigor, and I think this impressed a great many voters.

Also there was a dislike for the New York politician who was running against him, whose name slips my mind at the moment, but...

HESS: Thomas E. Dewey.

KENWORTHY: Yes, Thomas Dewey. Some people made fun of him saying he looked like the little man on a wedding cake, and this hurt his image I'm sure. But I really think it was more the campaign that Truman put on, plus the fact that the country was still fundamentally Democratic at that time.

HESS: Were you ever with Mr. Truman in some of his more relaxed moments, at Key West, aboard the *Williamsburg*, or at a gathering in the White House?

KENWORTHY: I don't recall any such certainly never traveled with him to Key West. Our regular White House man would do that, or an assistant who would fill in for him. I can't at the moment think of times he there were times when he came into the press room, but I didn't happen to

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be there, as I recall, any of the times.

No, I don't -- can't at the moment think of any. He didn't give as many White House parties as some of the President's have done, so I wasn't over there. It would have to have been a large party given for many of the newsmen and not just those immediately assigned to the White House to have included me, and I was included in some of those, but I don't recall any with Truman.

I recall, if you're looking for a personal incident, I...

HESS: That's fine.

KENWORTHY: The one that is most impressive to me was the night we were called to the White House quite late. I may be wrong on my time, but I think it was 9 or 10 o'clock at night. Certainly he was at the White House and in and out of the press room until after eleven at night, when the announcement was made that General MacArthur had been discharged as our commander in Asia.

This was a bombshell, of course, it was a tremendous news story, not only in the United States because the people could hardly believe that the President would fire such a great general as MacArthur, but it was an enormous news story in Asia. And it was my job to feed every tiny particle -- every wisp of things I could

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get about that -- to the newspapers and radio stations throughout Asia.

So, I was in there not only sending urgents on the announcement itself, but any little comment which any Press Secretary made in talking to some of the newsmen around the White House lobby, getting their impressions. It was a tremendous night, and great excitement, and I remember asking the Press Secretary (I can't remember at the moment which one it was), but I...

HESS: It was Joe Short at that time.

KENWORTHY: Was it Joe Short?

HESS: Charles Ross had just died in December of '50 and this was April of '51, so Mr. Short had been Press Secretary roughly five months.

KENWORTHY: I see. All right, I asked Joe Short. I knew that the people in Asia would immediately want to know whether MacArthur was continuing as commander of the Allied forces in there -- in Korea, because there were troops of several other countries in there; Turkish troops for example, and I knew all these people would want to know how it affected the commander of their troops. So, I asked Joe Short, "Does this mean that he is out as

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Commander in Chief of the American troops, but will remain as Allied Commander?"

And Joe Short was very brusque about that, he said, "Absolutely not, he's out in both jobs."

Well, this was a big story, in the second phase you might say, or second aspect of a big story which was very important for my readers and listeners. So, I ran to the phone and sent a flash on that, apart from the flash of his discharge.

HESS: What seemed to be the general view of the people in Asia of this? Were they surprised that MacArthur would be dismissed in this manner?

KENWORTHY: Yes, I'm sure they were. I don't remember any details of that, but they couldn't help but have been very, very much surprised and many of them shocked I think.

HESS: What in your opinion was the view that most Asians held of General MacArthur?

KENWORTHY: Well, I would suppose that since he had won a sensational victory with almost genius strategy in crossing the Pacific, that they admired him -- probably even some Japanese.

HESS: What is your personal opinion, do you think that

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General MacArthur should have been discharged?

KENWORTHY: I would have had a very difficult decision on that, because I was a great admirer of General MacArthur in most ways, although I scoffed at his tendency to megalomania,. And I had a personal incident with him which fortified that, but I...

HESS: What was that?

KENWORTHY: Well, after he drove the Bonus Army out of Washington I was covering the Bonus Army side of that, and got a lot of the tear gas as they drove the men backwards over the river into Anacostia. Then I went to MacArthur's headquarters, as my office asked me to do, and he held a press conference, and he strutted up and down in his office and with his hand on his chest, in rather a Napoleonic posture, he said, "I have driven the headhunters into the mountains of the Philippines! I have fought the bandits in Nicaragua! I drove the Hun from the poppy fields of Flanders!" And he mentioned one or two other victories he had in wars, and then he concluded, "But never, never in my career have I seen a subjugated people so happy at their freedom as the people of Washington tonight from the Bonus Army!" It was a strutting posture and a gross exaggeration, of course.

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HESS: You had gone down there that day and to see for yourself and to observe and report?

KENWORTHY: I was one of many United Press men sent out, scattered over the city that day on both sides. On the Army side were the tanks and the troops. Others of us were with or behind the Bonus Army men.

HESS: So you had been assigned behind the Bonus Army.

KENWORTHY: Yes, the rag tag "army;" as they were driven back with tear gas bombs, as they were driven out of their locations on Government property along Pennsylvania Avenue, and other places, and driven towards -- well, they retreated towards -- the Anacostia Bridge and over into Anacostia where they had their huts and shacks.

HESS: Do you think that their actions deserved the force with which they were met?

KENWORTHY: Oh, I do, yes. I think it was one of the worst political things that President Hoover did and hurt him badly. But a lot of the Bonus Army was a fraud anyway. There was a genuine corps of men who wanted their Army bonus, and came to Washington for it, but their action was quickly seized upon by the opposition political party as a great step to embarrass the President. And thousands of men were brought in here by railroad cars

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and busses and so forth to add to the Bonus Army, and it was built up and financed obviously to embarrass the President. They became very defiant and they had to be broken up and driven out, they were taking over the city, but...

HESS: Was too much force used or not? Did the Army over-react?

KENWORTHY: Not by the Federal Government. No, I think they did the right thing. The day before the real driving out too much force was used by District of Columbia policemen. They had shot maybe three or four, I don't recall exact numbers, of Bonus Army men. I believe a couple of them were killed, and that of course, was unfortunate. That shouldn't have happened. They should have used tear gas or some other means as the Army eventually did under President Hoover's order.

The story is told that MacArthur went home to get his medals before he rode down the Pennsylvania Avenue in the command of the troops that drove them out. I can't vouch for that, I didn't see him. I did phone my office the first news that tanks were going to be used and that was quite by accident.

I had gone to the State Department to get some

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foreign story and I went in the side door and there I saw tanks being massed in a little park behind the State Department, and I ran to a pay phone to tell the office that tanks were massed there, and that was the first that they had heard of it. And then the Army used them behind the troops in the movement for expulsion.

Well, I'm sorry I've gotten you off of MacArthur, but...

HESS: No, we're still on MacArthur.

KENWORTHY: ...my estimate -- you asked me the question; did I think it was right.

As much as I admired MacArthur, and as much as I believed he could have accomplished a tremendous blow for peace had he gone on and crushed North Korea, I suppose that President Truman was correct. MacArthur was insubordinate, and I don't think any President can tolerate

that, even if it's in a good cause, and with good results and prospect. I think President Truman did the right thing. I admire his courage for it.

HESS: Do you think that it could have been handled differently? Rather than complete discharge, could he have been reassigned someplace, sort of a half-way measure, but still remove

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him from the spot? Would that have softened the blow?

KENWORTHY: I never thought of it. I suppose it was suggested by writers and political commentators at the time, I don't remember it.

I hesitate to reach judgment on that. To have removed him -- I mean by removing him I think probably any chance of a wizard-like strike against the North Koreans and the crushing of the Communist opposition there, was probably wiped out, because probably he was the only one who could do it. He had the genius for that sort of thing, and thus what he could have accomplished would have been lost by transferring him anywhere else. Therefore, any excuse for softening the blow wouldn't have had the results desired, and probably Truman wouldn't have gained anything politically by it. I really believe that he gained politically by it because I said, and others must have said, "Wow, a man who has the guts to fire MacArthur has really got the guts." And thus I think it was of advantage to him, although I hated to see it done.

HESS: When the Koreans invaded South Korea that June of 1950 and then Mr. Truman took the action that he did, we actually entered a land war in Asia.

One of the things that has been brought up for years and years was the necessity of staying out of land

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wars in Asia. We entered one; should we have entered one?

KENWORTHY: Oh, yes, I think so. You're more of a historian and have your facts probably; but I'm skeptical about the view that we had been told for years to stay out of land wars in Asia. I know there's one leader who had told us that. I thought it was Eisenhower. Perhaps if it was anyone earlier it certainly didn't get very much publicity and it wasn't very well-known by the American people.

Perhaps history since then has supported that, and many people could claim that history has supported that as a wise advice, but I am so alarmed at the Communists, especially the Russian aggressiveness, that I am generally in support of moves to contain them, and I think that not only would Korea have gone all Communist, but if we hadn't begun resistance then, I think it's very likely that Japan and the Philippines, all of Asia, and maybe even Australia would have collapsed in short order.

You remember there was a very strong movement of Communists in the Philippines in those days, the Huk movement, it came very near succeeding. The Communists did succeed in taking over Indonesia. There was a strong

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movement -- a big and very difficult to put down revolution -- in Malaysia, Singapore, around Singapore. They did succeed of course, in China.

Yes, I think Truman did the right thing in ordering resistance there, it was another act of courage I felt on his part. At least it seemed to me it saved Japan and the Philippines. I think that we would have done far better in -- well I'm getting beyond the purport...

HESS: That's all right.

KENWORTHY: ...of this interview, so I won't go into that.

HESS: In September of 1950, General MacArthur had his very successful landing at Inchon, and in October of 1950 Mr. Truman took a trip to Wake Island to confer with him. There are those who think that Mr. Truman was trying to attach himself to the military victory and to the military glory at that particular time for political purposes, because of the off-year elections that were coming up in November. Have you ever heard anything on that nature?

KENWORTHY: I don't recall anything specific, but I don't doubt that that was true. It would have been a very natural move and very proper I would say. After all, he was Commander in Chief, he was the leader of the nation,

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if we were doing well in Korea why shouldn't he claim some of the credit? I think any President is entitled to that and any President probably would do that, Democrat or Republican.

I would like to make clear here that while I'm expressing opinions now as to the wisdom -- or not -- of some of these things, and I've expressed some opinions about Russia and communism, I was not allowed to have any opinions in what I wrote at the time. I was a straight news writer, straight factual reporter, and no comments whatever was allowed in what I wrote, and I think I was reasonably successful in achieving that as a...

HESS: As an objective reporter.

KENWORTHY: As an objective reporter during the years. I think I couldn't have satisfied these 2,000 or more papers that we served all over the world if I hadn't been reasonably impartial.

HESS: Operating with 2,000 papers you get into a lot of different editorial opinion and standards don't you?

KENWORTHY: That's quite true. That's quite true. Actually what I -- well, at the end of my career -- I was serving 2,500 papers. My particular responsibility was for those 2,500.

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HESS: All right. What was your general opinion of the handling and development of the Department of State during the Truman administration, and its increasing role in the formulation of foreign affairs? Mr. Roosevelt had had Cordell Hull there, but he had really been his own Secretary of State.

KENWORTHY: Now, there is a great deal of truth to that, yes.

HESS: And in the Truman administration, the State Department began to reassert itself and to return to its proper role, was that correct?

KENWORTHY: Now let me see, [Edward, Jr.] Stettinius succeeded Hull?

HESS: Stettinius was there from December the 1st of '44 to June the 27th of '45.

KENWORTHY: So he was in at the very end of Roosevelt.

HESS: That's right.

KENWORTHY: I'd forgotten the exact sequence there.

HESS: And he stayed on through the United Nations Conference.

KENWORTHY: That's right.

HESS: He signed the document in San Francisco.

KENWORTHY: Right.

HESS: And then James Byrnes came in in July of '45 and served

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until '47.

KENWORTHY: Well, I can't help but feel that the State Department's influence subsided a good bit in that period.

Stettinius was a wonderful fellow personally, but I don't think he was qualified to be a great Secretary of State, and Jimmy Byrnes was extremely able domestic politician, and he had had some experience with Roosevelt, his position in the White House under Roosevelt, but he wasn't basically oriented towards international affairs. He was basically a domestic politician, and I don't think his influence was very strong.

So, I have a feeling that along in there the State Department wasn't as strong as it had ought to have been in a formative period in world affairs. Wasn't it Marshall? Didn't George Marshall succeed Byrnes?

HESS: That's right. He came in on January the 21st of '47 and he served until January the 20th of '49.

KENWORTHY: Well, Marshall was a great man, I admired him tremendously. In some ways he perhaps was greater than Eisenhower or MacArthur, for the particular job he did here at home, and he never got nearly the credit that either Eisenhower or MacArthur got. But again, his was a military mind and while the military must think in terms of overseas constantly they don't think of it in

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the same way that a statesman does, and I never felt that Marshall really was best suited for a job of Secretary of State, in spite of his enormous talents. So, continuing on through his period, I don't think the State Department was as strong as it ought to have been.

HESS: One question before we move on. One of the most important developments that took place during the Truman administration was the Marshall plan.

KENWORTHY: Yes.

HESS: Do you recall how much of a hand Secretary Marshall had in the formulation of that plan and just how the plan was brought about?

KENWORTHY: I wasn't on the inside enough to know much about that. I simply reported what they said and what the people of Congress -- how they resisted it, or not, and what was expected to be allocated to different parts of the world and what type of reconstruction and assistance it would provide and this sort of thing. I wasn't really very much aware of the formative part of it or as to how it was brought about and what things were deliberately discarded and who was an influence in discarding this or putting in that. I have no recollection at least of

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those things: Undoubtedly many people were talking in those days, private organizations, industrialists, Red Cross, what have you were giving opinions, and of course, many Senators and Congressmen, but it's all faded from my mind I'm afraid.

HESS: And then Dean Acheson was the Secretary of State through Mr. Truman's second term from January the 21st of '49 through January the 20th of '53. What is your opinion of Mr. Acheson's handling of the Department?

KENWORTHY: Well, there was a very skilled man. I had known him personally since he was Under Secretary of the Treasury, and I called on him there, and I must admire Acheson a great deal. He had a very good mind. Probably a little bit too much of the Harvard attitude, so to speak, to appeal to some of the politicians in Congress.

HESS: Yale attitude.

KENWORTHY: All right, eastern intellectual, thank you. But a far above average man I would say in that position.

I think he made one big mistake, that was a speech in which he said (I can't quote his exact words), but more or less to the effect that Korea was outside of our line of defense, or line of major interest in Asia, which

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seems to have been taken by the Communists as a trigger at least for the attack. Now, probably they would have attacked sooner or later anyway. They undoubtedly had in mind to do so, and this may have been only an easy excuse for them. But still it was unfortunate that he said it I think.

But we all make mistakes and there have been far greater mistakes than that one because the whole trend of the Communists around their rim was to attack wherever they saw a soft spot, or wherever they thought they could get away with it. I don't blame him too much for that.

HESS: During the events in Korea, there was a very large army on Taiwan that wanted to be "unleashed," as the saying went at that time. What is your opinion on that subject?

Should we have used Chiang Kai shek's army or not?

KENWORTHY: On the face of it it sounds sensible doesn't it? I can't remember the factors, I'm fuzzy on that now, but I suppose it had to do with whether the Chinese would come in sooner than they did. Is that possible? That would be the normal reaction of the statesmen trying to decide whether to use these troops or not. Perhaps it was a factor whether they thought Russia itself would come in too.

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I don't know how that was appraised, but I can see that they might have withheld them for such a reason as that. Of course, the Chinese eventually did come in, and whether there was time then to get them armed and transported to make use of them, I don't know. There probably was some fairly good reason for it at the time.

HESS: Do you have any recollections about the 1952 convention, campaign, election, other than what you've already mentioned about Mr. Truman, the press conference after he had made his announcement?

KENWORTHY: Nothing comes to mind at the moment.

HESS: One general question: After Mr. Truman had made his announcement removing himself from the race who did you personally see as the best bet for the Democrats?

Who did you think would make the best standard-bearer?

KENWORTHY: Oh, who was prominent at that time?

HESS: Well, Stevenson finally got the nomination. Did you know anything particularly about Mr. Stevenson at this time?

KENWORTHY: Not a great deal. I had been to one or two press conferences which he conducted here. I just had the impression that he was not very -- that he was admirable

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intellectually and for his humor, but that he wasn't as decisive a man as was needed to run the country. I suppose there were some Senators and Governors, that...

HESS: Alben Barkley would have liked to have had it.

KENWORTHY: Alben Barkley was a great man. I admired him greatly. I think he was, as far as personality is concerned, I'm not sure, but I think I would put him first of all the people that I've known in Washington, but whether he would have made a good President or not I don't know that I had any leaning at the time towards hoping that he would be nominated or not, I can't recall it. I think he would have done better than Stevenson. Were there some Governors who were very capable?

HESS: Well, Estes Kefauver, the Senator, was the one who would have liked to have had it; the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Fred Vinson, was mentioned.

KENWORTHY: Well, he never would have done. Stevenson, of course, had been a Governor of Illinois, so...

HESS: Was at that time, in fact.

KENWORTHY: He was the outstanding one in that category apparently. Who was Vice President then?

HESS: Barkley.

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KENWORTHY: Barkley. Well, maybe Barkley would have been the man.

HESS: Tell me a little bit about that. When did you gain such a favorable impression of Mr. Barkley, or just why did you hold this view of Mr. Barkley?

KENWORTHY: Well, I gained it from sitting in the Senate press gallery from time to time, and of course, I wasn't a regular up there. I only went up there now and then when there was a foreign issue being debated on the floor. I would go up there to interview the chairman of the foreign committee on the Senate or the House or something of that sort, so I was in and out of

Congress, not constantly, but considerably. I gained it from his efficient leading of the Senate, his composure, his geniality, his accessibility to the press, he would always see the newsmen at his desk at the end of each day's session and chat with them a few minutes. He seemed to be more communicative than many of the leaders had been.

Going back to Jim Watson I remember from my state of Indiana, and I liked him, but I don't think he was nearly as admirable a character as Barkley. It was just the glow of his personality and his efficiency I felt were

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excellent. Now, he wasn't -- perhaps he wasn't domineering enough, or driving enough to have been a great President. I couldn't vouch for that. And some men who have come out of Congress having done very well up there, didn't turn out so well in the White House, like Kennedy and Johnson, are illustrations of that.

It doesn't mean that you'd be a good President because you were good in Congress, although I think Truman was a good President after having voted the most respected Senator. But...

HESS: Don't you think that Johnson and Kennedy lived up to their potential once they entered the White House?

KENWORTHY: Perhaps they did, but I expected more of them from the records they had made in Congress, particularly of Johnson. I thought Johnson would be vastly better than Kennedy and would be a tremendous President because he had been such an able leader of his party in the Senate, but he -- it didn't work out. What the factors were I'm not ready to analyze, but I think he came down, he declined in efficiency and effectiveness and in leadership after he got into the White House.

HESS: Could it be that it's a great deal harder to lead Congress from without than it is to lead from within?

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KENWORTHY: You probably have hit it right, I would -- of course it's a much bigger job, with many, many more responsibilities, and its enough to break even the hardest man.

HESS: Do you think if Vice President Barkley had received the nomination that year, which he did not, do you think that he might have been able to defeat Eisenhower in the '52 election?

KENWORTHY: Probably not. There's a great aura of heroism around a military leader. Look how many we have elected. Nearly every war in our history has produced a President, eventually at least. Even the Spanish American war produced Teddy [Theodore] Roosevelt. The Mexican War produced a President. Andrew Jackson out of the 1812, George Washington.

HESS: Ulysses S. Grant, from the Civil War.

KENWORTHY: That's right.

HESS: But we didn't get one from the First World War did we?

KEN WORTHY: Not unless we count Truman.

HESS: Not unless we count Truman. How about that, that's right. My own man. Good heavens!

KENWORTHY: Well, what was he a major?

HESS: He was a captain of Battery D.

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KENWORTHY: I am told, I don't know Missouri politics, but I'm told he was a very popular man. The American Legion was a strong backer of him in Missouri politics.

HESS: That's right.

KENWORTHY: And this, plus the Pendergast machine, was what launched him. So in a sense you could say that World War I produced a President. It's not as clear and distinct as the others.

HESS: All right, what do you see as Mr. Truman's major accomplishments during his administration?

KENWORTHY: Oh, I'd have to go back and read, I'm afraid to give you an estimate on that. You see, going back, starting with the middle of Hoover's term and coming up through Johnson, there's so much of it in there, so many years, thirty-seven years in there, it's all...

HESS: You've seen several changes in the world.

KENWORTHY: It's all fuzzy and hazy, almost all of it. And you've listed there the number of press conferences, some hundred for Roosevelt and Truman, I suppose I've attended perhaps altogether some five hundred press conferences. I don't know, it would be a wild guess. And naturally I can't remember very much of any one of them, just a few little things here and there.

They all blend into

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one foggy background of history for me I'm sorry to say.

Well, of course, the thing that will go down in, I suppose, all of history for Truman is that he approved the launching of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

HESS: What is your personal opinion on that subject? Do you think that that should have been done or not?

KENWORTHY: Oh, I think it shortened the war. It probably didn't kill nearly as many people as the napalm bombs and fire bombings of Tokyo and other cities in Japan. And philosophically, it's no different, I think, if you kill a man with a club as the Stone Age men did, or kill them with an atomic bomb.

It's unfortunate that the world's got the atomic bombs, that we have to live with this threat over civilization all of the time. But, having produced it, learned how, other nations are going to do it anyway.

It's the scientists who led us into this that have to be blamed, I believe, not President Truman for authorizing its discharge, or its explosion. If he hadn't, in a few years, some German regime, or some Russian regime, or others would have done it. Look how many nations are producing it now. It's not proving

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so hard, they even say that Sweden and India and Israel and many other nations could produce these bombs now, and some people think Israel already has them.

I suppose that the creation of the United Nations should be mentioned as an outstanding accomplishment in the Truman administration. It wasn't his idea in the first place, it wasn't fostered by him originally, but it reached fruition in his time. The actual signing of the charter was during his regime, and so I suppose that this is likely to go down as one of the great steps in the development of mankind.

It's been a disappointment so far, it's been futile in most respects, but it's a step forward towards the organization of mankind which can't help but have great significance sometime even if it collapses entirely and a new organization has to be created in its place. There surely will be something that will follow which will be of vast importance to the human race.

HESS: What do you see as Mr. Truman's place in history?

KENWORTHY: Well, because of his association in these world shattering events; World War II, the atomic developments, the United Nations, I'm sure he'll always be remembered as a man who stepped in and carried those things through

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to conclusion. Even though they were to a certain extent dropped in his hands at a late date in their development I can't conceive of Truman being lost in history since these events, like the first landing on the moon, Lindberg's flight across the Atlantic, and Bleriot's flight across the English Channel; those are events for mankind that are bound to be remembered even though the human race goes to live on some distant planet sometime, so I think that his place in history is secure. It's automatically determined by that. He did a good job in his way. I think he was as efficient a President as we've had. And while he had faults like his quick tongue and his sharp temper and some mistakes he made...

I'll cite another one: During a steel strike in one of the years, I don't know which year that was, he announced at a press conference that they were going to bring pressure on the steel industry because it had 19 percent profits. Well that was a ridiculous statement, they hadn't had anywhere near that much profit. Somebody fed him some information that was wrong on that, whether those were pre tax profits or profits of one particular company, or what they were I don't know, but

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it was an outlandish figure. And he was challenged on that later in another press conference, but he was stubborn about it. That was one of his qualities, stubbornness, he stuck by it, insisted that was right, and he rode out the little storm that it provoked.

Although I do think he was very wrong in being so violently against the steel industry, the steel industry had taken a beating from all -- it's a popular whipping dog, it's going down the drain like the railroad industry has gone, largely because of Government failure to support it. However, I cite that only as an instance of the little mistakes that Truman made. But he was big enough to ride over those and his total record will be an important one I'm sure.

HESS: Do you have anything to add on Mr. Truman, the Truman administration, or your job with United Press?

KENWORTHY: I think you've questioned me for a long time, I think I've given you enough, or probably more.

HESS: Well, we thank you for your time.

KENWORTHY: All right, I'm glad to. It's an interesting period.

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