

Oral History Interview
with
JACK K. MCFALL

Executive secretary of the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1928-42 and 1946; Foreign Service Officer, Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Foreign Service, 1947; U.S. Consul in Montreal, Canada, 1948; First Secretary of the Embassy and Consul in Athens, Greece, 1949; Assistant Secretary of State, 1949-52; U.S. Minister to Finland, 1952-54; and Ambassador to Finland, 1954-55. During World War II he served as a commander assigned as senior naval observer in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1942-44 and as First Assistant Naval Attaché and Naval Attaché for Air in the U.S. Embassy, Ottawa, Canada, 1944-45.

Washington, D.C.
June 24, 1970
by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
December, 1970
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HESS: All right, Mr. McFall, to begin would you give me a little bit of your personal background, such as where were you born and where were you educated, and a little bit about your career?

MCFALL: I was born in the State of Washington, in Tacoma in 1905. We have lived at various times over a good portion of the United States. As a matter of fact, at the time I was eight or nine, I had been in all of the then forty-eight states of the Union with my father, a

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lawyer, who at that time was national sales manager for a large encyclopedia. He used to take me with him on his trips.

I was an only child and was brought up, the early part of my life, in Denver, Colorado. We settled down for several years in Denver, bought a home and I went to grade school, junior high school, and a year of high school there. Then we moved to Kansas City, Missouri. I finished high school in Kansas City after which we moved to Gary, Indiana where I took employment with a bank, having had a never flagging desire ever since I was a little shaver, to go to college to study for the diplomatic service.

After three years in Gary, at the age of nineteen, I made the decision to leave and come to Washington to study at Georgetown University Foreign Service School. I left Gary when I was nineteen and came to Washington

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and entered Georgetown University. I had to put my way through Georgetown at night school and, after four months of barely keeping the wolf from the door, I finally succeeded in getting employment with a Senator from Indiana named Arthur Robinson, who had just been appointed following the death of Senator Ralston. I worked in his office during the day and went to school at night. I received my degree at Georgetown four years later, in 1929 -- a Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Service, (BFS).

Unfortunately, I finished just at the time of the financial crash in 1929, and the State Department didn't give examinations for the Foreign Service for several years thereafter. This development was a deep disappointment. I went on then and secured my LL.B. at National University, which was later taken over by George Washington University.

In 1928 I affiliated with the Appropriations

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Committee of the House by transfer from the Senate where I had been working for Senator Robinson for three years. I started on the staff of the Appropriations Committee as an apprentice and I continued working there during the day and going to law school at night. I acquired my law degree in 1933.

I moved over to the House Appropriations Committee, thanks to the fact that one of the senior members on the committee was the Congressman from my district in Indiana, Will [William R.] Wood, who later became Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. He, through intercession with the then chairman of the Committee, Congressman [Daniel Read, Jr.] Anthony of Kansas, succeeded in having me appointed to the staff. I worked on the staff of the House Appropriations Committee for some fifteen years. I ultimately moved from the apprenticeship on the staff to taking over

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the staff responsibility for one of the major annual appropriation bills. This was the bill for the State, Justice, Commerce and Labor Departments. Those four departments were combined in one appropriation bill at that time.

I carried on then as executive secretary of the staff in charge of those four Government departments until the war came.

I had gone over to Europe with Mrs. McFall when we were married in 1933. I visited there again in 1936. In that 1936 trip, having traveled through Germany and seen what had happened there since my visit in 1933, I came back absolutely convinced that we would be in a war within five years and I was so dedicated to my belief that the day after I returned from that trip to Europe, I walked into the naval gun factory down here -- Washington Navy Yard is what I was trying to say, and informed them

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that I had just come back from Europe the day before; that I was sure that we were going to be in a war within five years and hence I wanted to qualify for the Navy so I could start training to do my stint.

I remember the Admiral looked at me as if I were stark raving mad. As you probably remember, during that period of the 1930s, there was just about as much isolationism extant as there was before the First World War, but nevertheless I was convinced of an impending war and I applied for a commission which was promptly forthcoming. Then I took my Naval Reserve training religiously for five years and I was called up in 1942, shortly after Pearl Harbor.

So, it was then I left the Appropriations Committee. I spent approximately four years in the Navy serving in Sierra Leone for a couple of years and then as the first Assistant Naval Attaché in our Embassy in Canada. I had three very bad setbacks with malaria during the time I was in Sierra Leone, West Africa, so the Navy doctors decided to use me to test a theory that the malaria would not reoccur if the carrier were posted in an area of acute cold weather. In my case, at least, the theory worked.

I then came back with the Appropriations Committee after the war and picked up from where I'd left four years previously. This time in addition to having responsibility for the State, Justice, Commerce, Labor Departments they asked me to handle the Naval Appropriations bill because of my background in the Navy. This was the year of demobilization. This was when I became close to Navy Secretary [James V.] Forrestal, who later became, as you know, our first Secretary of National Defense.

In working on this Navy Appropriation bill

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I had a very interesting experience with Forrestal. The clamor of the mothers in particular, and the public demand in general, to get everybody out of the service "overnight" after the war was over, created a situation, politically, that the Appropriations Committee, in providing the funds for the Navy at this time, simply couldn't do anything about. The result was that after we had had

the hearing with Secretary Forrestal and the Navy officials as to their operating needs for the next year, the committee decided to make severe reductions in the budget figures, to cut it way back to such a degree that it caused the chairman of the committee at that time, Congressman Harry Sheppard, great concern. So, he asked me if I would call up Secretary Forrestal and Admiral [Forrest P.] Sherman, who was then, if I recall correctly, the Chief of Naval Operations, and brief them on the details of what the committee had done before the action taken became public information the following day. So, I had the chore, the unhappy chore, of asking the Secretary to come to the committee room and we sat opposite at the table as I went over the bill item by item and told them what had been done. And I can see Forrestal sitting there now getting paler and paler as I proceeded to inform him of the Committee action. And when I finished explaining he said, "Oh, it can't be. It can't be. It can't be." And with that he threw his arms over on the desk, buried his head in his arms, and just cried like a baby. When he lifted his head, I could see the green felt of the table covered with his tears. I am confident that this was really the beginning of his undoing. The inception of the insurmountable problem that beset him. It was this terrific shock that beset him in seeing this great Navy that he had

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done so much to develop, torn asunder. He said, "Oh, you will never know what this is going to do to the country in terms of the future, and the injustice of it, the absolute wanton cutting down of the naval establishment for no rhyme or reason!" He was very emotional and I'm confident it had a telling impact in bringing on his future illness.

Well, you can get sidetracked so easily in this kind of reminiscing.

So, we come back to the matter of my going into the Foreign Service. I had never given up the yen, since I was five years old, to go into the Foreign Service and I explained to you that I had this disappointment in the cancellation of the Foreign Service examinations several years back following my graduation from college. But, on occasion, fate plays a very strange hand in determining one's life course. At this time, as I recall,

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I was either fifth or sixth in seniority on the staff of the Appropriations Committee. One day, a little less than a year after I returned to the Committee staff, I went to the door in response to a rap and there was standing Congressman [Clarence] Cannon, who was the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and Congressman [John] Taber, who was the ranking minority member of the Committee. Seeing the two of them together, I mused, "Well, this is probably the end of everything." Cannon and Taber had no use whatever for each other. They had had a fistic encounter in fact, so whenever they got together, you knew something important was going to happen -- something that required their cooperative agreement. They said they would like a discussion with me so we proceeded to the committee table where we sat down. The chairman then said, "We are now going to have a change in the Chief of Staff of the Committee.

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As you probably know, we have had only four Chiefs of Staff since the Civil War," and he added, "Mr. Taber and I have talked this over and have decided that we'd like to have you take over as Chief of Staff of the Committee."

Well, I was completely dumbfounded, as there had been no advance notice; no suggestion of an impending change, nothing. It was a terrific shock. As I was so far down the seniority list of the Committee employees, it had never occurred to me that I would be considered for such a vacancy, if and when it ever did occur. In any case whatever caused me to do it I never will know -- just one of those flash decisions that comes from somewhere outside of one's control, I guess. I turned to them and said, "Well, I am both honored and flattered beyond words at the confidence displayed in me by both of you, but I know you will understand when, before accepting, I ask for an opportunity to

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discuss this with my wife."

With this Chairman Cannon looked quizzically at Congressman Taber and then said to me, "Discuss this with your wife? Certainly you couldn't possibly think of not accepting the appointment. I think this is probably as fine a position as there is in all of government and here's an opportunity for you, barely into middle age, to step into a highly paid position of great responsibility, power, prestige and security."

I replied, "I know, but it's a change that's going to involve a commitment for my life, and I do think I should discuss it with my wife." They begrudgingly consented then, but, I am sure they thought it was a very ridiculous request.

That very same afternoon at 2 o'clock, the phone rang and it was my old friend, Selden Chapin -- Ambassador Chapin -- who was then

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the Director General of the Foreign Service. And he said, "Jack, about an hour ago the President put his signature on a bill authorizing the State Department to take into the Foreign Service, in the middle and the upper grades, some two hundred people." You see we had to double or triple the size of our Foreign Service overnight, so to speak, following the war, and as they couldn't bring all these new appointees in at the bottom grades lest they have an unbalanced organization, this legislation gave the State Department a one year, one shot arrangement so they could feed people into the middle and upper grades who had had experience in their particular background of employment which the State Department would find to be compatible with the demands of the Foreign Service.

Chapin said, "We want you to apply for appointment as a Foreign Service officer under

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this new law."

Well, I couldn't believe it -- it was just beyond belief that two developments like this could happen the same day. So I said, "Well Selden, first I want to tell you what just happened to me this morning," I told him.

He said, "Jack, I know you have wanted to go into the Foreign Service ever since you were a kid. Now here's your chance." He added, "Of course, you have to pass the examinations."

Well, in any case, without dilating further on this, I went back to my wife that evening and told her of the two developments of a most eventful day. Her reply was, "This is up to you. You have to make your own decision and whatever you do will bring my enthusiastic approval."

So, I went back to the Chairman. I asked him for a couple of more days to think about

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it. I went back on the third day and I told him that I had decided to embrace what was my first and unabated desire and apply for the Foreign Service. In doing so I gave up -- I think it was about \$6,000 a year difference in the two pay scales, and that was a lot of money at that time. And so I went into the Foreign Service where I served for nearly ten years. Shortly after taking the oath of office in 1947, however, I came down with a severe case of hepatitis and I was four months in the Naval Hospital. I thought my career was really finished. I didn't think I was going to pull out of that one.

My first post then was as U.S. Consul in Montreal where they sent me as a compassionate situation, where I could get medical attention and have a year or so to work toward regaining my complete health without being subjected to heavy work pressures. Next I was sent on emergency

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transfer orders to Greece and I served there for only a short period, much too short -- if my memory doesn't fail me it was something like four or five months -- and then I was called back from there for an interview with Secretary Dean Acheson in connection with the job as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

So, I came back, on the summons, and I took the job with Acheson, and that's the way I came into the position as Assistant Secretary. And from there on I went as Minister to Finland and finally as Ambassador to Finland. Then I had my heart condition develop and I was retired, medically.

HESS: All right. You mentioned that you went to a high school in Kansas City.

MCFALL: Yes.

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HESS: Which high school?

MCFALL: Northeast.

HESS: Northeast. What year did you graduate?

MCFALL: In 1923.

HESS: At the time that you were in Kansas City, did you ever hear Mr. Truman's name?

MCFALL: Oh, yes. Yes, I heard his name. Wasn't he a judge at that time? I was just a teenager in high school then. I remember I heard his name, but I can't tell you how. This was too long ago. That was nearly forty years ago.

HESS: All right. At the time that you were in Greece, were you there long enough to get any evaluation of the success or failure of Mr. Truman's doctrine for Greece and Turkey?

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MCFALL: Well, while I was there at the very height of the development, I think that it would nonetheless be improvident of me to be too authoritative inasmuch as my tour there only covered as I say, about four months of the total program, but I believed in the approach and I felt definitely that it was going to work.

There was a situation that developed there, however, that I just could hardly believe in the beginning. Fortunately it ultimately worked itself out. The issue revolved around Grady, Ambassador [Harry F.] Grady and John Nuveen who was the head of the ECA Aid Mission, I think it was called ECA then -- it went through so many changes of names. They apparently had formed a personal animosity towards each other during a period of time which corresponded with my arrival in Greece where I was sent to be in charge of the Economic Section at the Embassy. I

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had been told nothing whatever before leaving Washington, about this situation. I never had been given any briefing or had any knowledge about this feeling that existed between the Ambassador and John Nuveen. So, I had difficulty in believing it when I arrived there and my deputy told me that this situation existed and they didn't even speak to each other. And here we were in the midst of a "bailing out" operation that was really a massive undertaking. At this time the guerrillas were very, very close to Athens -- within a few miles. In any case, I think I may have been a little instrumental in getting them, the two of them, together.

HESS: How did you do that?

MCFALL: To begin with our entire Greek operation was somewhat of a question of the tail wagging the dog. The Embassy had about -- I don't know

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the exact number, sixty people, sixty-five, and as I recall, the head count at the ECA then was something in the nature of 2400 all together, local employees and all. So, ECA had this huge building in downtown Athens. They had taken over the whole building. So, when my deputy told me of the communications gap between Grady and Nuveen, I decided the best way to start activities was to make a dedicated effort to meet the people in ECA as a first priority of business. So, I told my deputy that I was going to take time off for at least a week and confine myself to going down and rapping on doors in the ECA building. That's what I did. It didn't make any difference who it was, messengers, clerks, anybody, I just walked in offices, door to door, to

door to door, introduced myself, told them that I had come to be in charge of the Economic Section at the Embassy and that I

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believed it was highly important that we work together and therefore I wanted to know the people with whom I would obviously, later on, be having some working contacts.

Well, after about a week going through the building meeting these scores, and scores, and scores of people, I received a phone call from Mr. Nuveen. My deputy called me down at the ECA building and said that John Nuveen had called and wanted me to come in and see him. So, I proceeded posthaste up to his office, and after greeting me very cordially, he said, "I understand that you've been over here going through my shop."

I replied, "Yes sir, I have. And my reason for doing so is to meet your people whom I know I'm going to be associated with here in the course of my tour of duty."

"Well," he said, "I think that's very commendable. I think this is a very fine

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attitude on your part."

And so that was the beginning of what eventuated into a pretty good liaison on the economic side, between the Embassy and ECA.

HESS: Do you think that he, at first, thought that you were over there snooping?

MCFALL: I don't know whether he did or not, but I'll tell you a subsequent story about Grady, the Ambassador, where the question of suspected "snooping" came into the picture.

In any case, if Nuveen did think that my motives were impure he didn't display it to me in any way, because right from the beginning he showed cordiality. Possibly it was because he had some reports from subordinates all along the line that I appeared to be sincere in what I was trying to do and that I was not holding a chip on my shoulder about anything. Well, this was the beginning of a

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development wherein I began to serve as a catalytic agent between these two men. From time to time, Nuveen would call me up and would ask me to come down and see him and he'd say, "Now listen, I want you to tell Ambassador Grady so and so."

My reply, "Yes sir, I'll try to do that."

So, I would go back and tell the Ambassador and the Ambassador would say, "You go back and tell Nuveen so and so." It is incredible to think that any government could work this way. It's just unbelievable -- but that is what happened.

So, as time went on then at a cocktail party where they were both present, I remember I prevailed upon Nuveen to come over with me and talk with the Ambassador that day. As far as I know -- and I think it's probably true -- they hadn't spoken during some period of time. So things began to get a little better thereafter

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and finally Nuveen was transferred to another country. But this situation had been allowed to fester for quite a long time.

HESS: What was the basis of their misunderstanding?

MCFALL: I think it was to be found in the fact that ECA had such a vast number of personnel and the Embassy employed only two or three percent of that total number. Yet, the Embassy was charged with the overall responsibility. This can provoke a real management problem unless there is a meeting of both minds and personalities on the part of top officials. This "meeting" did not take place on the part of Grady and Nuveen. Fortunately I got along well with each of them save for a brief period in my dealings with the Ambassador.

It was about this "brief period" that I thought I might tell you.

HESS: That will be just fine.

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MCFALL: It is quite interesting in the context of what happened later. One day after I'd been in Greece for about four months, maybe five, the Ambassador called me into the office. He was livid. He was waving a telegram which he handed to me. And he was shaking. I thought he was going to have apoplexy. He said to me, "Read this!"

The telegram read: "McFall to return for consultation State Department, soonest. Signed, Secretary of State."

He said, "What is the meaning of this? You've only been over here a few months. You're not yet a senior officer, so to speak. Calling you back for consultation, what is this all about?"

I replied, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, I have not a shade of an idea, not even one slight inkling of why I would be called back for consultation. I admit it, it's a very strange

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order."

"Well," he said, "I think you know the purpose of your recall."

And I said, "Mr. Ambassador, when you say that, you're impugning my honesty, and I refuse to accept such an intimation. I told you I had no idea what it is all about, and I don't." I was as mad as I could be, and I just walked out of his office and slammed the door. I remember thinking,

"Well, this may be the end of my career, but if I have to put up with unfair charges like this, it's probably all for the good."

Nothing happened for several days. I didn't see the Ambassador at all during this period. He didn't call me and I didn't call him for a period of about a week or ten days. And then a telephone call came to my office saying that the Ambassador wanted to see me right away in his office.

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So, I went up to his office, and with a wide smile, he greeted me most cordially and said, "Please sit down. I have a very happy report I want to talk to you about." And then he added, "I want to know how long is it going to take you to get ready to leave here to go back to Washington?" He said, "I want you to leave just as quickly as you possibly can."

I said, "Mr. Ambassador, this is indeed a strange situation." Then I asked him, "What is this all about? Do you know something now more than you knew when we talked ten days ago?"

He said, "Well, yes I do." Then he added, "I sent a telegram to the Department telling them I refused to release you for consultation until I knew the purposes of your visit." And he said, "Inasmuch as I've been very much satisfied on that score now, I want you to leave promptly."

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Flabbergasted, I said, "Now that's very interesting, Mr. Ambassador. You recall that you previously intimated that I was privileged with some knowledge as to why I was going back, which I denied, and when you insisted that I must know the reason I took personal offense at it, because I felt that my honesty was impugned, and now I wonder -- you seem now to know the purpose of my visit. Do you?"

And he said, "Yes I do."

I said, "Then would you impart it to me?"

He replied, "Unfortunately I'm under specific instruction not to inform you. I cannot tell you why you are going back to Washington."

"Well," I said, "this is quite an unusual turn of events, isn't it?"

So I boarded the plane about three or four days later and I came to Washington still having no earthly idea what it was all

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about. I walked into Jack [John E.] Peurifoy's office -- he was Deputy Under Secretary for Administration and I was directed to report to him. It was there that he disclosed to me the purpose of my summons. He informed me that I was there to talk with Secretary Acheson who had asked that I be sent for because he wanted to discuss with me the possibility of taking over the job as Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations. My surprise and shock was total.

I next had a luncheon engagement with Under Secretary of State Jim [James E.] Webb and he catechized me for what seemed to be an endless period of time, about all my background and my wife's background and everything connected with it, including a query as to whether I had any skeletons in my closet. I told him that I would question whether there was any man alive that didn't have some kind of

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a skeleton in his closet, but on the other hand the main thing was to be sure it had stopped rattling and that I didn't think that I had heard any rattles for several years.

So in any case, I followed this interview with a very interesting chat with Acheson, which lasted something in the nature of an hour. He told me that he'd sent for me because, although he did not know me and I did not know him, he had had reports on me from the Hill and from other quarters and he wanted to discuss the possibility of my taking over the job.

At the conclusion of my interview, he asked me what I thought about the idea. He said, "I've made up my mind. I would like to have you take this job, but I want to know first what you think about it."

I remember I told him that I had two or three caveats on the idea. One of them was

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that I was wondering what this would do to my career as a class three officer. I had only been in the Foreign Service for three or four years, and to be catapulted from a middle-grade rating into a presidential appointment was quite some jump and hence I wondered if I wouldn't get unwelcome repercussions from some of my colleagues in the Service.

The Secretary said, "Well, let's look at the other side of the coin. I can't tell you that this wouldn't happen to you. You may well have some reverberations, some of them may even last with you through your career, I don't know. But," he said, "you must look at my position. If I give any validity to this thought, that means that I'm circumscribed in terms of appointing anyone in the Foreign Service to any kind of a job at any time, and I don't think the Secretary of State should have any limitations of this nature imposed

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on him."

I said, "Good, you've explained that." And then I remember the second reservation I set forth. I said, "I have very strong and dedicated feelings about the absolute necessity for us to work to achieve a bipartisan foreign policy, and therefore, the only way I could work successfully would be in a completely bipartisan fashion, and that if there were any conflict of thought with that concept, then I would hope that he would choose someone else for the job."

I remember Acheson said, "You'll have no concern whatever on that score, that's exactly the way I want it. And I want you to work fairly and honestly and candidly with both sides," and he said,

"if there are, at any time, any political considerations laid at your door that would cause embarrassment to you from any source, I want you to come to

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me and I will stop it promptly, or neither one of us will be here."

So I took up my next concern. I said, "In former days you handled this job," (Acheson did handle Congressional Relations work as a part of his responsibility when he was Assistant Secretary of State some years previously. It wasn't designated as a specialized job then as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, but he handled it as a part of his other duties, and he did a splendid job on the Hill. He had a very fine record up there, and I had heard about this during my career on the Hill), and I added, "I know the successful kind of work you did and I'm just wondering if being different personalities, with a different background, whether I could operate the way you did. I'm just wondering if we'd run into any problem of you directing me into paths of approach that

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would be successful for you, but might not be productive for me to follow."

He said, "You'll never have any concern about this because I don't work that way. I get the person that I think is the man for the job and I 'give him his head' and if he doesn't do the work well, I let him know and take appropriate action. But unless you come to me and ask for suggestions or help or counsel or advice, you'll be left on your own to do your job and if you do it right you'll remain."

I said, "Well, that's it."

So, that's the way I went into that position in which I continued almost three years. And then as I say, of the three years tenure, most of it took place during the [Senator Joseph R.] McCarthy era -- all but the first few months. It all started out so placidly with Senator [Arthur H.] Vandenberg

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being, to all intent and purpose, the spokesman for the Senate on foreign policy, one of the few times when you had almost complete bipartisan agreement on accepting Vandenberg's leadership in this field. And as I had had a personal relationship with Vandenberg for some years previous - I knew him back in the years when I worked with Senator Robinson -- I thought, "Well, this is going to be a splendid opportunity for me as I move into this situation." But such good fortune was not to be. I think I had just one meeting with Vandenberg before he took sick, and then it was only a matter of two or three months after that until the McCarthy charges, the card-carrying-Communist-in-the State Department charges, broke, and from then on it was problems, problems, problems.

HESS: Was it usually very difficult to get Senator Vandenberg's approval of a program?

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MCFALL: Let's see, as I remember I came in to this position in November of 1949. I can't recall just exactly when Vandenberg went to the hospital. Do you recall?

HESS: No.

MCFALL: Well, in any case, it was a relatively short period after I came in, because as I say, I only had the one talk with him and then the McCarthy foray developed -- as I remember in February or March of 1950 -- so you see it was only about four months between the time I arrived and the beginning of the McCarthy charges. Actually my anticipation of working with Vandenberg turned out to be nothing but an unrealized hope. It just went up in smoke.

HESS: All right, now another thought about Greece. At the time that you left, were the conditions

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there between the Ambassador and the ECA running smoother?

MCFALL: Oh yes, definitely so. I told you the background. They did begin talking and working together. I wouldn't say it was with enthusiasm, but they were working together.

HESS: And just how did you carry out your duties as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations?

MCFALL: Well, in order not to labor this point at length, because that is a rather all-embracing question, I might just cite to you the oral history program that I conducted with Cornell University some little time back, in which I dilated on that very point and gave rather extensive comments on practically every phase of the activities of my work during that period

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of time, so should anyone be interested in this particular phase of how I carried out my duties, how I worked, who I worked with, the various phases of legislative activity, and servicing activity etc., it could be found in this account that I just mentioned which reposes at Cornell University.

HESS: All right, fine. Could you tell me about working with the White House staff on matters of congressional liaison and let's use the memo of July the 6th, 1950 from George Elsey to Charles Murphy regarding Point 4, as a basis for our discussion.*

All right now that you have looked at the memo, just how often did you work with the White House staff, as must have been done in this case?

MCFALL: Well, in respect to my relations with the White House staff, we did have meetings of this

*See Appendix

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kind from time to time when we would have a community of interest. I couldn't give you any idea as to the number of meetings we had, but obviously they took place whenever the White House itself would specifically ask for a conference of one type or another. So, while we had this type of relationship with the White House in meetings of this kind, and in planning the type of strategy we would use, as far as my activities with the Congress itself were concerned; in the actual day-to-day operations of talking with members of Congress, and in working on individual pieces of legislation to get their support and votes, there was practically never any contact with the legislative liaison men from the White House.

HESS: Now in 1949, two men were brought in and given that title of Legislative Assistant to the President. They were Joseph Feeney and Charles

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Maylon. Did you ever run across those two gentlemen in your work?

MCFALL: I met Joe Feeney. I met Joe Feeney and talked with him a few times. The other gentleman I don't honestly remember at all. But as I explained in my statement to the Cornell group, I believed that in working on these matters there was probably more to be lost than to be gained if we proceeded with a divided authority. I believed with my background of some twenty years on the Hill, and my long and vast acquaintance across the board among the membership of both the Senate and the House, it would be more fruitful for me to handle my responsibility with my own staff, with my Senate liaison officer, and with my House liaison officer, than to bring in other parties in a cooperative effort. It had been my experience in

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observing legislative efforts on the Hill, that diffused authority sometimes tends to muddy waters. The result was that I made no forward move to court, if you will, the assistance of the White House staff and as far as I recall they never made any effort to pull me in on the matters in which they were particularly interested.

HESS: Were there any times when some member of the White House staff may have muddied the waters as you say? Do you recall?

MCFALL: I have no recollection of any such occasion taking place. No, it was just that we had very little contact. We went our way working on the State Department legislation and the White House had its hands pretty full too because their legislative interests ran across the board, naturally. These gentlemen weren't concerned only with the State Department

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legislation, as they had the interests of the President and all Cabinet offices across the board to represent. And I imagine they found: plenty to do in that connection.

HESS: Now the memo is from George Elsey to Charles Murphy.

MCFALL: Yes.

HESS: Now what do you recall about those two gentlemen? Anything in particular?

MCFALL: Well, always very pleasant relationships, and particularly with George Elsey with whom I had many meetings. I always found him most responsive, most helpful. If I had to call him for anything he would respond, we never had any problem at all.

As for Charlie Murphy, my relations with him were less numerous and I think by the same token, less close. He likewise was always

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affable. The most important meeting that I had with Murphy was in connection with the recommendation that I had made after the McCarthy bombast had developed, for the appointment of a "blue ribbon" investigative group, as best I can remember, of five members who would be put on the State Department payroll as consultants so they would have access to the raw files of the FBI. They would be given offices in the State Department or some Government building, and their instruction would be to go to the heart of the McCarthy charges. They could take as long as they desired to sift it all out, and then they would make their report and let the chips fall where they may. I believed that the appointment of a high-powered group such as this which had the confidence of the American people because of the background of each member, was the only way, with the McCarthy tirade developing as it was, this was the only way that we were going to be able to reinstall

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public confidence in the State Department.

And I covered that matter thoroughly in my oral history account with Cornell University. I dilated on it quite at length. So any persons interested in this phase of my activities will find it in that report.

HESS: All right. Do you recall the names of the five men that were selected?

MCFALL: They were never selected and this is what I was mentioning in connection with Charles Murphy. I had put this proposition to Secretary Acheson at one of his staff meetings, after the McCarthy development had gone on for a period of time. I had been trying to figure out what we could do, what forward moves we could make. So I concluded that some such commission of this type should be named. I didn't suggest, as I recall, any names. Again, if my memory doesn't fail me, I suggested to Secretary

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Acheson, however, a type of individual to compose the group such as an Admiral [Chester W.] Nimitz, as a Barney [Bernard M.] Baruch; people of such public recognition and trust that when their decision was announced there would be no question about it being accepted by the American people. And the idea was that they were to be given absolute plenary authority to investigate all of the McCarthy charges. Well, I remember Acheson first was inclined to demur. No, he really didn't demur to the idea, but he said he wanted to carry the thought home and think

it over at night. He said it was "quite a recommendation" that I had made. And he came back, as I recall, the next morning and indicated that he had thought it over and decided that he was going to endorse it; he was going to take it to the president. And he did take it to the president, because he told me the next day about his discussion with

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President Truman. The President had indicated that he would turn the proposal over to his staff for consideration and that while he understood that some approach of some kind looking to a resolution of the McCarthy charges had to be made, he wanted to have it thoroughly considered as to whether this proposal was the course that should be taken.

Time went on and nothing happened. The situation was getting worse and worse, and the emotional content was getting greater, and greater. So I went to the Secretary again and said that I felt that with each passing day of making no forward move to check McCarthy, we were losing ground and, therefore, I believed it of urgent priority that the White House take some affirmative action. The Secretary told me he agreed with my view and he went the second time to discuss the point with the President. It was shortly after

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this second discussion between the Secretary and the President that I received a call from Charlie Murphy saying that he wanted to come over and talk with me.

So he came over, and we had a conversation for an hour or so about this matter and I told him that at this point, in my view, the only consideration that should govern in making a decision, which admittedly would result in the laying open of a Department of Government, if you will, for outsiders to investigate, was whether the public interest dictated that such action should be forthcoming. It was a very serious decision to make, of course, but I believed that the situation had deteriorated to such a serious degree that the one consideration of recapturing the faith of the American people in the State Department and its personnel was paramount to all other considerations, and whatever was necessary to be done to

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achieve this recapture of faith should be carried out immediately without regard to problems of lesser concern that might arise out of this contemplated action. And I remember Charlie Murphy told me that he understood the strength and depth of my feeling on the matter and that while they were in the course of considering it, he wanted to get my views on the subject.

Well, nothing ever did happen on this proposal of mine and I've always believed that this really was a major mistake, because the situation just kept getting worse and worse from there on. And then at a later date when some efforts were made by the White House to try to get a committee, not quite of the type that I suggested nor caliber of membership, but nonetheless a very responsible group of names, it was too late then. The whole issue had moved so far into the political arena that there was just no possible way to

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do anything about it. As I recall, Senator [Pat] McCarran was in charge of the committee that had to confirm these committee members named by the President, so, given the rapport between McCarran and McCarthy, confirmation of the group by the Senate was never to be realized.

HESS: The memo of July the 6th has several interesting names. Let's just hit a few of them.

MCFALL: All-right.

HESS: It says, "Averill (sic) Harriman will exert his own good offices wherever he can." Were there times when Averell Harriman assisted you in your work?

MCFALL: Well, there was one -- there were one or two occasions when Harriman assisted. I can't remember now just exactly which ones they were, but I remember a conference we had at

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his office one time about some one of the legislative bills in which we asked him to intercede with a particular person in connection with it, because we considered that individual a crucial turning point on the legislation. I can't tell you what legislation it was now or what it was, but I know he responded with an emphatic, "Certainly."

Again I recall he offered and we accepted the use of his home for some congressional briefing function, the nature of which my memory doesn't serve. You see, if we had knowledge of individuals in the Department who had special relationships with Senators or Congressmen, naturally when we believed that such members of Congress were key people, we would ask our colleagues to get those members of Congress in on the action. Jim Webb had a close relationship with certain individuals in the Congress who were influential in connection

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with legislation we were working on. I had a very pleasant and successful relationship in working with Jim Webb on getting the things done we wanted to get done.

HESS: Do you recall what people he was particularly...

MCFALL: Well, of course, one of his most effective friends was the Senator from Oklahoma...

HESS: Kerr?

MCFALL: Yes, Kerr. Robert Kerr. They were very, very close and I did not have a close relationship with Kerr. It was rather just a casual relationship, so Webb's contact worked very well indeed. Kerr was quite a power in the Senate at that time, and he had a group of Senators that were disposed to "go along with Bob". So, Jim Webb was very helpful on many occasions in connection both with the Senator

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and with the Senator's particular senatorial friends.

HESS: One question about Mr. Webb. Now, we've also mentioned this morning the question of cutting back the armed services when we were discussing Mr. Forrestal. What do you recall about Jim Webb's part in this -- in that question?

MCFALL: You mean in that earlier comment I made?

HESS: Yes. Cutting back the armed forces.

MCFALL: I don't know. I didn't know -- where was Webb at that time? This was back in 1946.

HESS: Bureau of the Budget.

MCFALL: Oh, of course he was. He was Director of the Bureau of the Budget. Honestly, I can't tell you now -- I know the Budget made a very substantial cut in the naval estimates, but my recollection is that the committee cut it

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considerably more than the Budget reduction. Of course the actual figures can easily be checked through the public records. That's my recollection now that the Budget made a very substantial reduction, but I think naturally the Navy was hoping the Appropriations Committee would restore a lot of the Budget Bureau cuts which the Committee not only didn't do, but instead, as I recall, made even deeper reductions on its own initiative. I'm sure the Navy took its financial setback from both the administrative side and from the congressional side.

HESS: And a couple of names also further on in the memo: Senator [Walter] George, and Senator Lister Hill.

MCFALL: Yes.

HESS: What do you recall about that?

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MCFALL: Well, Senator George I covered also in my statement to Cornell University. My relations with Senator George were particularly close. And this probably was all to the good because the relations between Senator George and Acheson were not close. And my relations with Senator George came about from a personal relationship that developed many years before when I was a young man and working in the office of Senator Robison of Indiana. I struck up a friendship with Senator George's son. And then I was invited to come and live in the George home. They invited me to move into the house with them and I lived there for a short period of time, and over the years, of course, I kept up my friendly relationship with his son, with the Senator, and with Mrs. George. So, when I took over this work with George then being one of the leaders in the Senator, I found him to be

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extremely helpful to me in so many ways where his leadership -- his particular type of leadership was so extremely effective, when you needed the swings that his kind of leadership could give

on legislation. And he was, of course, a man of great honor and integrity as well as ability, and he would never, of course, support anything if he didn't believe in it himself. But the main thing about it was that he did help me so many times in contact with certain other Senators with whom I did not have a close relationship. He would call these Senators and discuss the matters involved with them. Or on occasion, he would offer to take the floor and make a speech about a matter in which we were interested. So, that, I believe, explains the nature of my relation with Senator George.

With Senator Hill I had many discussions. We had a very good relationship. He was

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extremely helpful whenever I would call on him. He never failed me on anything. I didn't go to him nearly as much as I did to Senator George, but whenever I did he always responded.

HESS: Who were your assistants? You said you had one assistant for the Senate and one for the House.

MCFALL: Yes, my chief deputy was Ben Brown, Jr., who ultimately went into the Foreign Service. His last post was as Ambassador to Liberia. Then another assistant was Horace Smith who was my Senate Liaison Officer and a career Foreign Service officer. He went on to become Ambassador to Laos before he retired. And my House of Representatives Liaison Officer was Allan Moreland who also went into the Foreign Service and is now, and has been for the last two or three years, Consul-General in Toronto. These were the people whose principal work was directly with the Congress.

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HESS: In your dealings we mentioned several of the people in the White House, but did you ever have any dealings with a few of the others? Clark Clifford?

MCFALL: No, never dealings. I had met Clark Clifford and that's it. Yes, just met him. No dealings, no. Nor did I have many contacts with Donald Dawson. Don Dawson I have come to know better since I have been out of the Service. He goes down to the Virgin Islands where I live in the wintertime so I see Don and his charming wife from time to time. But during those days I had only very occasional contacts with him, but not really any working relationship.

HESS: Any of the others? Matthew Connelly, and David Bell?

MCFALL: No. No.

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HESS: How about General Harry Vaughan?

MCFALL: No. I never even met Vaughan.

HESS: All right. How influential was Leslie Biffle in matters pertaining to congressional liaison?

MCFALL: Leslie Biffle was a longtime friend of mine. We were brought up in the Senate about the same time when I went to work there in 1925. Biffle was, I think, the chief aide to the Democratic Senators at that time, which was some time before he became Secretary of the Senate. I very seldom called on him for help. We were very good friends and any time if I would have some particular question he could answer or some chore I thought he could do, I would present my problem and he would always respond immediately. But I just really didn't have many occasions to ask him for anything.

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HESS: I understand he had a rather close relationship with Alben Barkley, Senator Barkley.

MCFALL: He did, a very close relationship, and I had a good relationship with Barkley, too. So, in dealing with the Senators with whom I did not enjoy a particularly close relationship, rather than asking Biffle to approach them on a matter, I generally asked other Senators with whom I did enjoy a close relationship to offer an assist by phoning or talking with their colleagues.

HESS: That's a good point. Who would fall in that category?

MCFALL: Well, I mentioned Senator George right now. He would say, "I'll talk to so and so if you think it would be helpful."

HESS: Yes, that's a man with whom you had a good entree.

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MCFALL: Yes. But I had a "good entree" with nearly all the Senators. The question would turn, rather upon how much "good" one could do after he had the "entree." I emphasized my relationship with Senator George not only because it was very close but because his counsel and word were held in such high respect by his colleagues. But I enjoyed many other close working relationships. Senator Brien McMahon was a warm personal friend and was a tower of strength on many occasions; Senator John Sparkman put in his welcome oar innumerable times; Senator Fulbright was always open to discussion and helpful counsel; Senator Wiley gave us many an assist; Senator Hickenlooper while "in the camp of the enemy" so to speak, always kept his door open to us, was candid in his discussions and was forthright in his position of support, or opposition as the case might be; Senator Alexander Smith was always most

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cordial and receptive to canvassing matters of interest to us, and even unpredictable Senator Langer pulled a chestnut or two out of the fire for us. But to name some, as I have done, is at the cost of neglecting others. For example, Senators Guy Gillette and Theodore Green come to mind -- both of whom I contacted frequently. They consistently contributed active support to our legislative cause. Also, it should be pointed out that the Chiefs of Staff of both the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs Committees played a very important role in the measure of success we enjoyed and both of them were extremely helpful to me and the effort I was making.

HESS: With what men on the Hill did you not have a good entree?

MCFALL: Well, as I recall, I had met every one of the then ninety-six Senators except Senator

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McCarthy (I explained all of this in detail in my account for Cornell University). I had gone from door to door in the Senate Office Building to meet them in the beginning of my duty tour. On the House side I would estimate that I had met about 70 percent of the four hundred and thirty-five members. Naturally, my working relationship was the closest with the members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, because it was through those committees that we had to get the great bulk of our legislation. Not all legislation, however, as other committees of the Congress handled many bills in which the State Department was interested. As I recall, the State Department had an interest of some kind running from highly remote to pressing urgency, in something like 50 percent of all the legislative bills that were introduced. And considering the

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thousands of bills that go through the legislative hopper each Congress, you can see the magnitude of our job. We had to keep our fingers on a lot of legislation and some of that legislation did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Foreign Affairs or the Foreign Relations Committees, so, we had to maintain our contacts with all the committees that were giving consideration to any bills holding interest for us. The Ways and Means Committees, the Judiciary Committees, the Commerce Committees and so on. So, I think one could say that my contacts, my working contacts, were the closest with practically every member of the Senate Foreign Relations and the House Foreign Affairs Committees; and then, with several exceptions, they were less close with members of other committees. They tapered off, not because of lack of importance, but because I simply couldn't spread myself so thin as to try and

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maintain close contacts with all the committees. It was about all I could do to keep up with the committees that were in charge of the bulk of our important legislation, treaties and so forth. In general, my staff assistants took over the chore of furthering our legislative interests in committees other than the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs Committees. However, in cases when pending legislation to which we gave a high priority was under the jurisdiction of one of these other committees, then I then made it a point to give it a like priority of my attention and time.

HESS: Did you assist in the drafting of any of the bills?

MCFALL: Well, what would generally happen would be this: I had a specialist on my staff for each of the functional and geographic areas in the

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Department, and those staff assistants, working in conjunction with officers in the various areas of State Department operations, would prepare the drafts of legislation we desired. Sometimes

they would come back to me and present drafts of legislation at staff meetings; they might say, for instance, "I think we'd be getting into trouble if we agree to the incorporation of this particular language in the proposed legislation." Much as we might desire to have the language included, the question frequently turned on whether it was worth the kind of a fight and bitter aftermath it might provoke in the Congress if we were to press the issue. So, it was by this method that our voice was heard. We might tell the proposing State Department area, "No, we don't want you to put that language in there, because we believe from the congressional standpoint we would be inviting trouble. If we have an

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all-out fight in the Congress over this provision which our soundings indicate would happen, then we might endanger the passage of the bill itself. The benefits of the provision are disproportioned to the risks involved." This is the kind of an operation that went on constantly in the drafting of legislation.

Or it might be the other way around and we may decide to insist on some particular provision to be incorporated in the draft legislation because we knew Congress would take kindly to such a provision and it would enhance the possibility of favorable congressional action on the bill itself. The drafting officers of the State Department area promoting the legislative request might not have wanted the language we proposed to be included in the legislation, but then we would present our case by saying, "Now look, if you agree to sweeten this up a little bit the way my

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office suggests, we're going to be able to gain a lot more on our overall legislative effort than if we don't incorporate the language." So that was a type of balancing act that went on from time to time.

HESS: And I understand that there were consultative subcommittees between the Department of State and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Could you tell me how that operated and did you receive any benefits from those particular committees?

MCFALL: Well, again, I went into great length in my report to the Cornell people on the organization of these consultative subcommittees and how they came into being in both the Senate and the House. In fact, I was responsible for creation of these subcommittees. I dreamed up the idea. I awakened one night and a thought came to me that what

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we must have is some kind of a segmentation of each of these committees (the House Foreign Affairs and the Senate Foreign Relations Committees), that would be responsive to the various geographical and functional operating areas in our State Department so we could get a working relationship going back and forth on each particular phase of State Department responsibility. But the effort of working out the establishment of the subcommittees was a long and laborious one in each of the two committees. The plan was finally sold to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by letting Senator [Tom] Connally call it "The Connally Plan." So it became "The Connally Plan for Consultation" which set up these various consultative subcommittees. I really

am very happy about this development because it was successful -- this whole procedure stuck -- and, I understand, is still operating today quite

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fruitfully for both the Congress and the State Department.

Now the House of Representatives already had at that time a series of subcommittees, but they were legislative in character, not consultative in character, and they did not correspond -- and this was most important -- they did not all correspond, in their jurisdiction, exactly with the regional and functional operating areas in the State Department. This need to have the jurisdiction of each subcommittee to be identical with the jurisdiction of the State Department area with which they were to consult, was of vital importance. In this way we would have particular members of Congress being fully briefed on what a particular area of the State Department was doing, and they could become both authoritative and helpful to us as a result of their greater knowledge of our problems.

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In any case, it was finally worked out with the House Committee. They finally adopted the same procedure, but they gave names to the consultative committees which were different than the names given by the Senate Committee. Through long experience, one learns that when one legislative body does something it is a safe bet that the other body is not going to duplicate the action in the exact fashion!

HESS: They are going to change the name a bit.

MCFALL: Yes. Each body must show its independence of the other. But, the consultative procedure growing out of the creation of those subcommittees is still going on and it is a contribution which I'm proud of in terms of my work in this field.

HESS: And you mentioned Senator Connally.

MCFALL: Yes.

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HESS: Was he difficult to work with?

MCFALL: Oh yes, indeed! I would say difficult was the word! Endlessly difficult!

HESS: Can you remember a -- or can you pick out a specific incident and use that as an illustration of some time that he may have been particularly difficult?

MCFALL: I could cite any number of them if I could call the details back to memory.

HESS: No difficulty?

MCFALL: No. It would be just a matter of memory. Well, one of them I recall was when the President had named an Ambassador to -- I don't know -- Ecuador or Bolivia, I believe it was. He was a manufacturer of some kind, he manufactured some kind of trinket -- I can't remember what it was now -- which he had patented and made a lot of money on.

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I remember Connally sent for me to come to his office. He started belaboring me, oh, he "let me have it!" He said, "McFall, what kind of Ambassador are you going to have? You mean this qualifies him for the Foreign Service? You know he's not qualified for the Foreign Service. Is this what you need in the Foreign Service? Yes, he makes a pin machine or something, that certainly should qualify him for the august Foreign Service!" I've forgotten what it was he manufactured, but I remember I just sat there as the Senator poured out sarcasm, an art at which he was a master.

I said, "I'm sorry Mr. Chairman, but this has been sent up by the White House, and I would suggest that you get in touch with the White House about it."

My recollection is that the individual in question finally was confirmed but didn't

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last a very long time in his post. Then we would get into constant flaps with Connally about legislation. He'd just "eat you right out" with his sarcasm.

In the beginning I had quite a bit of difficulty with him and I didn't believe that I was getting the results that I should get from our legislative efforts because of my lack of rapport with him, but as the years rolled by either he became more malleable, or I became more knowledgeable of how to deal with him; one of the two, because about a year after I had been working with him, our relationship improved considerably. He became quite friendly. Again I learned to kid him -- to, give as well as take. I used to chide him about things, lightheartedly, without being sat upon by him, so that obviously displayed that our relationship was on a better plane.

HESS: Did you feel that there was a spirit of

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rivalry or competition between the Department of State and Defense during the years of the Truman administration as to which would be the President's principal adviser on matters of foreign policy?

MCFALL: No, I did not. I did not have any such reaction at any time. You see we had to work very closely with the ECA -- the foreign aid agency -- and particularly with legislation; I mean in connection with all of the foreign economic and military aid and in all matters where our interests overlapped. The foreign aid bills generally were the number one problem and priority and Ty [C. Tyler] Woods was the principal individual who worked with me and my staff on the legislation. We worked hand in glove. We never crossed paths. I don't think anything could have worked out any smoother than our relationships with ECA and

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Defense in terms of getting the legislation through the Congress. And I never felt, at any time, any sense of rivalry, of undercutting or anything of that nature. Now whether such problems existed in the field or whether it existed at higher levels in the Government is another question that I do not believe I am qualified to answer, but certainly it did not exist in any way, shape, or form in terms of us working together on the legislation and getting the results that each of us needed to implement our respective responsibilities.

HESS: You mentioned Secretary Forrestal, when did you first meet Secretary Forrestal?

MCFALL: I first met him at the time of the hearing on that naval appropriations bill that I told you about earlier in this interview.

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HESS: At that time?

MCFALL: Yes. This is my recollection. It was in 1946, in the spring. Another thing, I don't know that it holds any interest, but I mentioned to you that I had gone to the naval hospital for four months for hepatitis before I was given my first foreign assignment in the Foreign Service. And I recall, I was just about ready to be dismissed from the hospital -- I was still very weak -- when the nurse called me at the hospital and said that Secretary Forrestal was on the phone and wanted to talk to me. He told me that he had heard about my being in the hospital and that he was concerned and wanted to know how I was getting along. I told him that at one time I was concerned whether I would "make the grade," but that now I was shortly to be discharged although I was still quite weak.

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He replied, "Well, I'm wondering if you could come in and see me before you go back to report to the State Department?"

That came to me as a very strange request as I hadn't seen him or had any communication with him for quite a period of time.

HESS: Now when was this that he made the phone call? Was this in early '49?

MCFALL: No, this was about mid-1947, so it was about a year after I met him the first time. I think we first met in 1946 when that hearing on the naval appropriations was held at the Capitol and my hospital confinement was in '47 which was just about a year later. So he asked me to come to his office. I went in to see him and I was indeed surprised when he said, "You recall when you were in Canada as Assistant Naval Attaché, you wrote a series of reports -- voluntary reports -- on the organization

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of the Canadian armed forces, and you sent them in to Naval Intelligence?"

And I replied, "Oh yes, Mr. Secretary, indeed I remember doing it, but I didn't know that anybody ever paid particular heed to them, I had assumed that they just went into the limbo of forgotten things."

"To the contrary," he said, "I've read every one of them and found them of extreme interest."

As the Canadians had been ahead of us on this move of partially combining the armed forces, I thought some study of how they had gone about this partial consolidation of the three armed services might hold some interest for us.

HESS: Unification?

McFALL: Yes, unification. Not complete unification, but unification or consolidation in part. Well,

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it turned out that those reports were apparently of great interest to the Secretary. Next he said, "Now what I've called you in for is to ask a favor of you that will be of real help to me. I would like to ask Secretary of State Marshall to permit your loan to me for a period of two or three months and I would like for you to go back to Canada and see if you can bring those original reports that you made a few years ago up to date." And he added, "I'd like to give you a letter to the Minister of Defense of Canada, stating that you are proceeding as my personal representative and asking if he will open the doors for you so that you can get the necessary information to bring those reports current, because now that our government is proposing to move into a like field of organization of our armed forces, I would find it most helpful to be knowledgeable of their experience over these past few years since

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you prepared your reports."

So, the Secretary of State gave the permission and I went up to Canada with this letter and I remember it was a most interesting meeting I had with the Canadian Defense Minister. It produced a human interest side. Brooke Claxton was the name of the Minister of National Defense of Canada, but Forrestal and Claxton had never met. Well, Forrestal wrote this very nice letter saying that he was sending McFall as his personal representative and explaining the purpose of my visit. I well remember Claxton reading this letter. He put the letter down on his desk, stood up behind his desk and said, "Well, I've been in public life for some twenty-five or thirty years and I consider this as perhaps the most flattering letter that I have ever received in my entire public life. To think that the great big powerful United States would be

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sending an emissary to Canada to find out about how we might be doing things here!"

I remember I was taken aback at this comment and I wasn't quite sure what to say. In any case, I, guess I pulled out of it all right as I cleared my throat and replied, "Well, Mr. Secretary, I would think that one of the benchmarks of greatness of a nation certainly must be a willingness on the

part of its leadership to admit that other countries which might not have as many financial resources or might not have as great a population, can still do things just as well if not better in some matters."

So, he said, "Well, you will get everything you need from us."

And with that, he reached for the telephone and called the Chiefs of Staff of each of the three armed services and sesame was opened to me. I was up there for several weeks and I wrote

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a forty or fifty page report, brought it back to Secretary Forrestal and then I went back to the State Department to take up my Foreign Service assignment. That was the last time I saw him. He was very grateful for the report and called me afterwards and told me that he had read it thoroughly and it was going to be extremely helpful to him. So, that was that.

HESS: Do you think that your report was instrumental in unification when it came?

MCFALL: We had started on the unification. At this point Forrestal was Secretary of Defense, not Secretary of the Navy. This move of creating a Secretary of Defense in the Cabinet had just taken place. So, this was the point, now that we made this consolidating move, he wanted to get the Canadian experience factors on all of the things that had happened to

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them over a period of the three or four years they had been working on the reorganization of their armed forces. As a result of my visit to Canada, was able to incorporate in my report to Forrestal the changes and the new developments that had taken place since I had written the original reports back in 1944 or '45.

HESS: Okay. And he was made Secretary of Defense in September of '47.

MCFALL: Yes, I believe that's right. That's when I came out of the hospital, in September of '47, and he had just recently taken over.

HESS: Did you at times have consultations with President Truman on your duties?

MCFALL: No, never. No, I had no personal relations with the President except an occasional handshake when he was present at the little Cabinet meetings which they used to have from time to

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time. I did have two personal situations develop. One of them was a small incidental one, but it was amusing. It was really more in regards to Bess than to himself.

It was at a cocktail party at either the Carlton or the Statler, one of those two hotels. I can't remember who gave it, but there were, oh, maybe seventy or eighty people present, when all of a sudden the President walked in with Mrs. Truman. They were very jovial and I remember I had a

few words with the President and then I moved on and at this particular moment in the story I was talking to Mrs. Truman. Mrs. McFall was standing there with me and there was still another lady present. At this point one of the White House aides came up to Mrs. Truman and said, "Mrs. Truman the President is going to leave now."

With that, she turned to the aide and said, "Tell him to go on home, I'm having a

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good time and have no intention of leaving."

I thought the episode just showed Mrs. Truman's total humanness. Now, the other story which I think you might enjoy hearing was the story of the pipe. Here is the pipe in question.

HESS: Oh, well, how about that, a pipe with Mr. Truman's image on it.

MCFALL: Yes, a pipe with his image on it.

HESS: I've never seen one like that.

MCFALL: I prize this very highly. The pipe came to me in the following way: After I had been designated by the President to go as U.S. Minister to Finland, on Secretary Acheson's recommendation, I called up the White House to make an appointment to see the President and to thank him for the designation and ask for whatever instructions he wanted to

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give me. So, I went over to the White House where the President received me most cordially. He motioned me to a chair alongside his desk. The President opened the conversation and paraphrasing his words as best I can recall, he said, "Well, now you're going to Finland. That's going to be a very interesting tour of duty." He then said, "You know I'm very much interested in Scandinavian history and while, of course, American history is my favorite, Scandinavian history has always interested me very much."

And with that he started to talk about the history of Scandinavia, and I sat there entranced. I think he must have talked for fifteen minutes or so telling the highlights of historical development of the Scandinavian group of countries. And when he had finished, I remember I said, "Well, Mr. President, I don't know why I spent so much time in being briefed over in the

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State Department when I could have come over here and been given an expert indoctrination right from the head of Government!"

He replied, "I want to wish you well and I know you're going to have a rewarding assignment and," he added, "now I want to tell you something. You know Margaret came back from her European trip not long ago, and we've been trying to get together to talk about her trip for some time but," he said, "she's been busy and I've been busy and we hadn't been able to arrange a meeting until the night before last. We sat down and she told me the whole story of her trip and

about the various countries she visited; what had happened to her and so forth. I was delighted to hear it all and after she had finished her account I said to her, 'Now, Margaret, you have had some interesting experiences. Which country did you like the best of all that you visited?' She said, "Well,

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Daddy, that's a little difficult to say because some things I liked in a country, but I didn't like other things, so,' she said, 'it would be a question of keeping them in balance when making such a decision. But,' she said, 'I think perhaps, on balance, I would say that I liked Finland the best.'"

And the President said, "Well, I thought that was a very interesting observation." He continued, "Of course you know there was a situation which developed in Sweden that wasn't a very happy one, and her visit to Finland was next on her schedule." So he said, "I asked her why she picked Finland as her choice and she said, 'Well, because I liked the people, they were so friendly, they were so nice to me. I liked the countryside; its openness and its beautiful lakes. In fact,' she said, 'I was entranced with the country itself.'"

The President continued, "At this point she

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said, 'Oh, yes, and that reminds me Daddy, I have something for you.' So she got up and went into the other room and came back with a curved stem pipe, and she said, 'Daddy, there is a woodcarver up in Central Finland that carved this likeness of you on the outer bowl of the pipe, and he presented it to me and asked me to give it to you. So, I thanked him for it, took it, and here it is.' "Well," the President said, "what I didn't tell Margaret was that this same woodcarver had made three or four of these pipes and had sent them to me several months prior to her visit. I put them in my desk drawer here. But," he said, "over the past months people would be in my office and, if I thought it was appropriate, I would dig in the drawer and get one of these pipes and give it to them. So," he continued, "this pipe that Margaret gave me is the only one I have left." Now he said, "I think if

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you're going over to Finland as my representative, and it is a Finnish woodcarver who carved this, you should have this pipe. So," he concluded, "I'm going to make a present of it to you."

Well of course, I was deeply touched, and I managed to follow up with some such a comment as, "Mr. President, I don't know, words just fail me as a means of trying to tell you how indebted I am for such a generous and thoughtful gift. I am deeply touched and will prize your gift for the rest of my days."

The President said, "Well, you go ahead and take it, but let me tell you something. I don't want Margaret to know that I've given this pipe away. And," he added, "if I ever hear that this story gets out that I gave you a pipe and that it was the one that Margaret gave me," he said, "there's going to be one less man by the name of McFall as United States Minister

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in Finland."

I said, "Yes sir. You may be sure I'll be careful."

Then the astonishing part of the episode followed. As we finished the conversation, the President stood and we shook hands and he walked with me to the door and opened it. I walked into the outer office still holding the pipe and there is where I made my mistake, because, spotting the pipe in my hand, Connelly as well as all the girl secretaries descended on me and shouted, "Where did you get that pipe? Where did you get that pipe?"

And I stuttered, "Well, the -- the -- the President -- the President just -- just gave it to me."

I can see them now as in unison of dejection they said, "Oh, that's the last one. It's the last one."

Well, of course, I'm confident they didn't

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know that Margaret had given him a pipe, much less that that was the one I was holding. They thought that this was the last one of the other three pipes and apparently all of the staff were dedicated in hope that they would become the recipient of one of those pipes.

HESS: They thought they saw the last one going.

MCFALL: They thought they saw the last one going, and in their concern they were, of course, right. So, that was the story I thought might prove interesting in illustrating the President's human qualities. Needless to say, I never told the story until I had been retired from the Foreign Service which was a few years after President Truman retired.

HESS: Very good. Well, just to ask you a few questions about some of the people who were in the State Department when you were there. Now

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John Foster Dulles was there as Consultant to the Secretary.

MCFALL: Yes he was.

HESS: Did you have any dealings with him?

MCFALL: Yes I did. Of course his primary, almost exclusive responsibility was working on the Japanese Peace Treaty and getting it ratified by the Senate. That was "his baby" and he confined himself to that. I must say that my relations with Dulles were very good. In order not to cross paths with me in connection with his Japanese Treaty operations he made it a point to draw me in. So, while I wasn't in on all of his discussions on the treaty, for sure, I did attend several meetings with him and he did keep me well posted on the senatorial developments in connection with the treaty. Whenever, for instance, he

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would want to see Connally to talk about the treaty he would pull me in -- take me with him. So, I had no complaints whatsoever. There were never any problems which came out of my relationship with him and his relationship with the Congress on the treaty matter.

HESS: And Lucius D. Battle was Special Assistant to the Secretary.

MCFALL: He was -- I just saw him a couple of days ago.

HESS: Did you have any particular dealings with him?

MCFALL: Oh yes, many, many, many of them. He was extremely helpful to me. Anytime I needed access to the Secretary, Battle would arrange it. Matters coming down to me from the Secretary would usually channel through Battle. His assistance left nothing to be desired. We had so many problems during that

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era and Luke was always totally, completely dependable. He was right there in the key spot and always -- always responded.

HESS: And James E. Webb, Under Secretary of State, we mentioned. Were there any particular bills, any particular projects that you worked on with Mr. Webb that come to mind?

MCFALL: Well, not really any particular one comes to mind. It was more a question of particular occasions. When I would ask him say, "Jim, I'd like to have you take this matter up with Senator Kerr. Have a talk with him about this. See if Senator Kerr might be able to get Senator so and so to help us on it." After I had made my headcount of how we stood or thought we stood on our legislative proposals, and if I then found out that there were some of the Senators I wasn't sure about, I would go to Jim and say, "Look, can you move

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into this picture and help me on it?" And he always responded most willingly. He, too, was always very, very helpful.

This excellent cooperation I enjoyed from "all hands" was the one thing I think was amazing during this period of time we were working on the McCarthy developments, with all of the problems that it presented. If we had not been able to present a united, cohesive front in those anxious years, the price we would have had to pay for McCarthyism would have been much higher. It must be recalled that my office handled every bit of the legislation, but none of the appropriation matters which were in the hands of [John E.] Peurifoy first and then of his successor [Carlisle H.] Humelsine. And it was my suggestion to the Secretary that this responsibility be divided in this way because I believed that it would be just impossible with the amount of work that was

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involved in the handling of this Congressional Relations job for one person to take care of the needs of both of the Appropriations Committees and of the many other committees as well. From my own personal standpoint the arrangement was extremely desirable too, because I had worked on the staff of the Appropriations Committee for so long (over fifteen years), and I was concerned that there might be individuals who would try to take advantage of my long service on the staff of the House Appropriations Committee by trying to conjure up pictures of undue influence. By dividing the responsibility in the manner I described, all possibility of any such development was avoided.

We worked closely with the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs as well as with Adrian S. "Butch" Fisher who was handling this special section in the Department that was

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working on the McCarthy matter. Then there was the working relationship with Webb which I described previously. We never had any internal difficulty of any kind in working on our complicated responsibilities.

HESS: All right. Concerning the events around the Korean invasion, sir, what do you recall?

MCFALL: Well, I recall that I was dispatched to inform Senator Connally, Chairman Richards of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and other key members of Congress just as soon as the word came through. And then the most memorable occasion that sticks in my mind was when the Secretary was called to the White House by the President to attend the session when the members of Congress were called in, both the House and Senate members, to be informed of the action that I should go along. So he took me to the White House meeting and while, of course, I made

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no contribution whatever at the meeting -- I was merely present -- it was indeed a very memorable event in which to have been included. There were several questions that were asked by the House and Senate leaders following their briefing. It was a solemn occasion -- a historical development of considerable importance and magnitude. As I say, I made no contribution. I was seen and not heard.

HESS: Do you recall anything particular about the events leading up to the dismissal of General MacArthur and did this touch your particular duties?

MCFALL: No. No, it did not touch my duties in any way that impaired my carrying them out. This question was also brought up in connection with the interview I gave Cornell University. They asked me whether the MacArthur development had any effect on my activities in working

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on the legislation and carrying out of my other responsibilities. I told him that if it did, it was so peripheral that I am sure it didn't have any substantial effect. While the whole question evoked a great deal of emotional discussion, it still had no direct relationship to the matter of what we were trying to do, namely -- getting our foreign policy legislation approved by the Congress.

This was involved more with an individual than it was with policy and the things that I was working on. Although, of course, certain policy considerations were in the background of the issue involving the individual. And I, again, made it a point to keep myself as much as possible out of these matters that did not directly concern my legislative responsibilities because it was essential that I preserve the bipartisan approach which I believe I was successful in achieving right to the end of my

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tenure. And so on these matters which involved White House action that were outside the immediate purview of anything that my office was doing -- such as the MacArthur episode -- if such issues were brought up in a conference with a member of Congress, I would simply say, "Well, that is action that has been taken by the President. That's between the President and General MacArthur. What I came in here to talk to you about is something totally distinct from that question." In other words I made a purposeful point to try to put to the side, items of emotional controversy that did not run to my direct responsibilities. To pursue them could only have been at the cost of impairing the fulfillment of our legislative efforts.

HESS: All right, sir, I'm coming down fairly near the end of my questions. Do you have anything

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else that you want to add about your duties as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations?

MCFALL: No, I don't believe I want to add anything. I could go on and on, adding and adding thoughts, but as I suggested before to you, I discoursed on the entire field of my responsibilities at considerable length in the interview I had with the Cornell University, and if anyone is interested in the details of my duties and how I tried to carry them out; who I worked with and how, well, it's all there in quite considerable detail.

HESS: All right, fine. Just one obvious question. Since you worked for Dean Acheson for such a long period of time, just what is your general evaluation of the man. What kind of man is Dean Acheson?

MCFALL: I have a tremendous admiration, esteem, and

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respect for Dean Acheson. I think it probably goes without saying that a person couldn't have gone through the three years that I went through, under the pressures and under the difficulties that were experienced during those years, without having a sense of dedicated feeling toward your boss. He's a man that commands admiration. He's quite different from his public image when he's meeting with his confreres and his subordinates. He's very human and extremely warmhearted, accounts to the contrary, notwithstanding. He's very understanding of the personal situation of individuals and he has a high sense of probity and a dedicated sense of the responsibility of the individual to his public trust. All in all he is, in my mind, one of the great public servants to emerge in this turn of the century.

HESS: In your opinion what were Mr. Truman's major accomplishments during his administration?

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MCFALL: I think his major accomplishments are found in the tremendous fortitude and courage that he displayed in the matter of making decisions; in having the courage to make hard decisions, and making them in areas of Government operations where decisions are the most difficult to make -- mainly in our relations with other countries. And where the actions that have to be taken are frequently unpopular, but nonetheless are taken because the public weal demands it. I think President Truman showed that trait time and time again and I believe he did a tremendous job in this particular -- when he was in the White House.

HESS: Okay. How do you believe he will be regarded by historians and members of the general public, one or two hundred years from now?

MCFALL: There is not the slightest question in my mind that he will be, put down in history as one

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of the truly great Presidents because of these very considerations that I mention. I think the courageous actions he repeatedly took in the foreign field were so overshadowing in terms of the domestic issues confronting him that it is for these things that history will hold him for major account, and for the kind of account from which he will emerge with flying colors. And it will be on the contribution that he did make in his forthrightness and purposeful moving in the foreign field, in making those "awesome and lonely" decisions and making them stick and in selling them to the American people as actions of necessity in their interest, that the future historians will write in praise. I think they are the all-encompassing "feathers in his cap" and will be so recognized as the historical accounts of that era unfold.

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HESS: As I understand it President Truman appointed you as Minister to Finland. When were you appointed Ambassador to Finland?

MCFALL: I was continued in my position of Minister by President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower when he came in some six months after I had started my tour of duty in Finland. At that time Finland was one of the few countries remaining where we maintained Legations rather than Embassies, so the Chief of Mission was designated as a Minister. Some two years later we raised the status of our representation to an Embassy and I was then designated by President Eisenhower as the first American Ambassador to Finland.

And thereby hangs a tale that I believe holds a touch of uniqueness in the annals of diplomacy. Would you want me to relate it?

HESS: Go ahead.

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MCFALL: I had been having an extremely busy time in Finland during my tour there -- busy and very demanding on both time and energy. As I was beginning to develop some chest pains which I foolishly took to be indigestion, I finally went to a heart specialist in Helsinki whose findings were not happy ones. He said my heart was showing some unfavorable signs and that I should at once arrange a vacation "at some remote place where you are not to be contacted except in a real emergency." To carry out such an order was not an easy accomplishment but within a few days, by a stroke of good fortune, one of my Finnish friends came up with the answer. He owned a cabin on a remote island in the most remote section of Finland -- in the far northeast only twenty-five miles from the Soviet border. There was no other habitation existing within twenty-five miles of the cabin. The materials

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to build the cozy lodge had been flown in to the island by a hydroplane with two Finnish artisans to put it together. My host, wife and son, and my wife composed the party of five that took off in an early dawn to get to our "Shangri-la" in the far arctic by nightfall. Airplanes, private cars, jeeps winding through bumpy forest roads and finally a long ride through the length of a beautiful Lapland lake in our host's outboard boat brought us, just at nightfall, to our isolated destination.

We had two days of outdoor joy consisting of bird shooting -- ptarmigan and capercaillie; and fishing for salmon and trout with outstanding success, enjoyed each day. It was at dusk on our second night that "the roof fell in." At this point, the three males in our group were luxuriating in the Finnish sauna which is as ever present as the outhouse in the compound of all rural habitations in Finland.

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Suddenly my host signaled for silence. Punctuating the otherwise dead quiet was the faint sound of a "put-put-put." In the response to my host's statement that, "This must be something of serious concern -- we have never heard the sound of a motor, other than my own, at this remote spot," we dashed from the sauna, all in nature's own, and ran to the small boat dock on the lake shore. In the dusk we could barely discern a small boat on the horizon approaching our little island.

The Lapland type of small boat, hollowed out of a single log, with outboard motor attached, approached the shore where our greeting committee of three stood, in the altogether, oblivious to the nip in the evening September air. From the boat three little Laps -- that I guess is redundant as all Laps are little -- attired in their colorful native costumes, disgorged themselves from their boat. The first thing

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we noticed was an empty "yellow vino" bottle -- yellow vino is a native alcoholic drink -- reposing in the boat. It was quite obvious that the purpose behind the consuming of its contents had been attained. One of the Laps, shakier on his feet than the other two, was "propped up" between them as our naked reception committee of three faced, vis-a-vis, the three almost inebriated visitors on the small dock. I have often thought that if a snapshot had ever been made of that "line-up" at that moment, it would probably have gone down in diplomatic history as the

most unusual setting ever for the delivery of official State Department orders. So there we were with one Lap in the middle of his confreres, directly facing my host and, as I said, being held up by his "comrades in arms," He was clutching a small piece of paper. He endeavored to bow and hand the paper to my host, but, instead,

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he fell forward, slipped off the side of my host and landed flat on his face on the dock. My host leaned over the prostrate form, extracted from his fingers the paper he was still clutching and tore open the envelope. After one glance, he passed the paper to me saying, "It is for you -- it is in English."

The telegram, in essence, read "You are ordered to report soonest to United Nations where you will be a Senior Adviser to American Delegation to the U.N. General Assembly which opens September 22nd. If possible return a few days prior U.N. opening date for your briefing on 104 items on General Assembly agenda. Most important you have rank of Ambassador when you arrive, so present Ambassadorial credentials to President of Finland before departure if at all possible."

Here was the situation: I was in this remote area of Lapland. The day was September 16th.

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All I had to do was to get back to Helsinki, arrange for the formal presentation of my Ambassadorial credentials to the President of Finland at a Palace ceremony and then get to U.N. headquarters in New York, "a few days prior to the opening of the U.N. General Assembly" which was just six days in the future from that, shall I say, "naked moment of truth."

I perhaps should mention, at this point, how the telegram reached me. It was sent, of course, by the State Department to Helsinki. It was then sent by the Embassy to the remote telegraphic outpost in Artic Finland which I had left at the Embassy as an emergency address. But nobody at the telegraph station knew the location of the lodge where I was "vacationing." So, the three Laps had started out in the early morning in their crude boat fortified with their bottle of John Barleycorn. They would probably still be looking for

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me had it not been for the sauna that we were enjoying that evening. The smoke from the sauna fire moving high in the heavens was spotted by the "Message to Garcia" trio and after an all day search they finally managed to wend their way to us with the smoke acting as their beacon.

Next came the beginning of a three day ordeal. Rising at the crack of dawn we retraced our route in my host's boat plus a variety of other hired conveyances and reached Helsinki that same night. My first question to my deputy on arrival was, "Do you have my Ambassadorial credentials?"

My heart sank as she replied, "What credentials?"

So there were no credentials and until there were, there could be no Ambassador. A priority cable to the State Department pointed up my dilemma. The reply came through four

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hours later -- at 3:00 a.m. and it succeeded in adding confusion on confusion. The cable advised that there had been a snafu in the State Department and that President Eisenhower had not yet even signed the credentials. However it added that he would sign them "shortly" and then came the little tidbit that was just the spice needed to cap a twenty-two hour sleepless period. It asked: "Query -- will President of Finland accept telegraphic credentials?" With that soporific thought I took to my bed for four hours repose.

My telephone call was awaiting the Finnish Foreign Minister when he arrived at his office that same morning and I proceeded to put the query to him as to whether the President of Finland would accept "telegraphic" credentials. Yes, he was taken aback. Small wonder. He asked me if that had ever been done before in

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diplomatic history and I wasted no time in assuring him that I had no idea what the answer was to that question but for sure, I had never heard of it being done before. The Foreign Minister then pointed out to me that the President, who was in his eighties, was in the Summer Palace, over one hundred miles from Helsinki and that it would be a demanding trip for him to come to Helsinki the next day solely for the occasion of the presenting of my credentials, but that, nonetheless, he would call him and present the matter to him.

An hour later the results came through.

Yes, the President would come to Helsinki to accommodate me for a ceremony in the Palace at noon, but only on one condition -- that I would return to Finland after my spate of duty at the United Nations. It happened that the original telegram sent to me by the State Department had contained a sentence informing me that I

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would be returning to Finland after the U.N. assignment, but in the hustle and bustle of the development I had forgotten to tell the Foreign Minister this fact when I had first talked with him on the phone. In any case, I then told the Foreign Minister that I was deeply touched by the President's desire to have me return to Finland and arrangements were set in motion for the ceremony at the Presidential Palace the following day.

At 11:45 a.m. the motor cavalcade of all the Embassy officers started on the one-half mile drive to the Palace. The morning newspapers had been posted on the development and as a result of their front page announcements, there were large crowds of cheering Finns standing on the curbs along the route as we drove to the Palace. The Finnish army band was gathered in the patio of the Palace, the American and Finnish National

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Anthems were played and then I was escorted by the Foreign Minister into the presidential office. In the meantime the "telegraphic" credentials had come in from the State Department and had been transcribed on ten pages of the customary crude pink paper which had been placed in a

large impressive white envelope, upon which we placed sealing wax, the official seal and the imposing ribbons. I was clutching this portentous document when I walked into the President's office. The President greeted me most cordially as, bowing, I handed him my beautiful envelope. After motioning to the Foreign Minister and me to be seated the President, with a twinkle in his eye, turned to me and, in his halting English, said, "My Foreign Minister tells me that there is something inside this envelope that is not just as it should be."

I replied, "Mr. President, it is always

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a delight when I find myself in full agreement with your Foreign Minister."

And with that the President turned to an adjoining table, placed the envelope thereon, and said, "In that case, I think we will not open the envelope."

Breathing a sigh of relief I said to the President, "Your Excellency, if anyone in your country has doubts about why you should be President I only wish they could have been here during this past minute." This was greeted by a chuckle. I then took my leave and the cavalcade returned to the Embassy.

At the Embassy my wife had brought my suitcase and a change of clothes down to the first floor lavatory. I made a feverish change into a business suit, dashed into the living room to drink a champagne toast with my staff, rushed to the waiting car and proceeded to the airport at a seventy mile per hour clip. The

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Pan Am flight to New York delayed the departure time fifteen minutes and at 1:15 p.m. -- one hour and fifteen minutes after the Palace ceremony, I was winging my way to New York leaving that wonderful country of Finland after having been Ambassador there for a little more than an hour!

There were several more incredible incidents that took place in New York just before the heart attack struck me on the opening day of the United Nations General Assembly session, three days after my arrival, but I've already talked much too long. So I'll just conclude by saying that following my heart attack and the six weeks hospitalization and one month recuperation in Florida I did return to Finland much against the wishes of the State Department doctors. But I felt I owed it to that wonderful old man, President Paasikivi, to honor the promise I had made to

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him to return. I lasted about eight months in Finland going downhill constantly. It definitely established that the State Department doctors were right in their view that I should not have returned. So, I finally had to "throw in the sponge" and, upon my return to Washington, I was given a medical retirement. And that's enough on that for sure!

HESS: Would you care to comment on some of the highlights of your tour as Ambassador in Finland?

MCFALL: Certainly my three years in Finland were the most personally satisfying three years of my life. The country itself was, to me, a sheer delight with its endless woods, its captivating 100,000 or more lakes -- its wild game -- its superb fishing -- the cleanliness of its cities -- the absence of any trace of a slum or ghetto anywhere. But in the list of all

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its assets, its people must unquestionably have the number one rating. I came out of Finland with a tremendous admiration for the Finnish people. Their high sense of probity, their courage, their candor, their dependability, their sense of honor and of duty -- their patriotism -- their sincerity -- all these traits go into the making of the Finnish character. Hence, in spite of the fact that our respective governments had some knotty differences to try and compose during my time there, the process of working with the Finns to resolve those differences never ceased to be, for me, a stimulating and happy chore.

The years I spent in Finland were vital ones in the progressive development of the nation -- the youngest independent country in Europe dating from 1917. The vast reparations obligation that had been imposed on the Finns by the Soviets following Finland's defeat in

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the Second World War left a very tenuous economic situation in the country with a large measure of Finland's world trade, which had formerly been with the Western bloc, being then oriented by factors over which the Soviets and not the Finns had major control, toward the Eastern bloc. The Finns tried desperately to get the Soviets to agree to accept liquidation of the five year reparations obligation in wood products which was the natural export commodity for the Finns, but the Soviets gave an emphatic "nyet" and instead insisted that the Finns compensate them by establishing heavy metal industries in Finland such as shipbuilding, heavy machinery, etc., and sending the products of these new industries to Russia as reparation payments. When the reparations payments were over (in keeping with the Finnish reputation for honoring its obligations, the last reparations shipments was

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right at the termination of the fifth year of the agreement), the Finns were confronted with a situation where they could not sell these metal products to the West because the high costs of production made them non-competitive among competitors in other Western countries. Not daring to hazard the mass unemployment that would have taken place if outlets were not found for the products of these new industries, Finland had no alternative other than to start on what later developed to be a series of trade agreements with the Soviets which resulted in the Eastward reorientation of their historical Western trade patterns. My period in Finland coincided with the negotiation and signing of the second of these trade agreements and I must say the picture was anything but encouraging. There was a serious lack of dollar earnings and holdings by the

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Finnish government and it was just not possible to visualize, at that time, how they could ever "dig themselves out" of what appeared to be an ever increasingly sized hole. So, my three years in Finland were dedicated, in the main, to evolving ways and means hopefully to ameliorate this

economic drift toward the East, which, if remaining unchecked, could result in Finland's economic bondage to the Soviets with all the undesirable political possibilities that might flow from such an event.

By way of an epilogue comment on this economic challenge to the Finns, I might point out that in the true tradition of finding a way to overcome what appeared to be an insuperable problem, the Finns, over the past several years, by astute organization and management, hard work, and an indomitable will, have set their economic house in full

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order, and are selling those same metal and shipbuilding products to Western accounts! Thus, they were, over the past several years, and are now, enabled to earn the dollars needed to keep a respectable and safe balance between their trade with the two blocs.

Another problem item that involved a good measure of my time was to try and keep the Finns in line with our policy, at that period, of trying to prevent strategic items from reaching the Communist Chinese. The Chinese were in desperate need of petroleum products and the Finns were under continuous pressure by Eastern interests to let their tankers be used to carry petroleum products to China. As the "bait" for such arrangements was payment in dollars, the Finns were placed in a most difficult position to refuse such opportunities. Until the diplomatic papers are released on this era some three years hence, I will not be

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free to disclose the details of how more than one of these Finnish tankers started out to carry "oil for the lamps of China" but didn't quite reach their destination. But I can assure you that the deviations from the planned route didn't happen accidentally. I relinquished considerable sweat and sometimes a tear in this activity, but happily blood never flowed.

I have oft times thought that if the authors of that book *The Ugly American* had come to Finland during my era, which incidentally, was some years before the book's publication, that they might have had some second thoughts on some of the impressions they conveyed in the book.

When I arrived in Finland, I determined to map out a program that would take me, in a series of continuing stages, throughout the width and breadth of Finland, on the farms, in the homes, and into the small communities

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as well as all the sizable cities. I can't recall now whether there were forty-four or thirty-four communities in Finland of over five thousand people, but whatever the figure was I visited all but four of them and was frustrated in my desire to make the grand sweep only by my health problem which worsened during my latter days in Finland. And these trips to the communities were very demanding on one's energy, I can assure you. It was a two day stint in each community, with luncheons, dinners, receptions, meeting hundreds of people, speeches, question and answer periods, visits to schools, churches, jails, fire houses, etc. But what delightful rewards flowed from the effort! In many of these towns no diplomat from any country had ever

visited them. One pleasant memory comes to my mind of my visit to a small town in northwest Finland -- the name now escapes me --

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where, at a populous luncheon in my honor, at the Town Hall featuring five courses and fifty year old wine, which they told they had been saving for just some such an event, the toastmaster, in introducing me said, in his hesitant but well rehearsed English, "We are truly honored today with the visit of the American Ambassador to our little community. We have searched our town records to determine when last we were honored by a visit from a foreign diplomat and we find that it was on the occasion of the visit of Prince Henry from Sweden in 1218!"

The farm visits were of equal satisfaction. On one occasion Mrs. McFall and I took a five day trip visiting nothing but forest operations and farms -- small, medium and large. In each farm, the wife had spread a table groaning with food in spite of our pleas not to prepare food for us. One day we ate nine meals, or

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perhaps better said tried to make it appear that we ate. I also visited every University in the country, as well as a major segment of the principal industrial plants. The newspapers carried a variety of cartoons of me running the gamut from milking a cow to entering an iron mine.

Well, I could go on indefinitely reminiscing about Finland but I've rambled along far too much already. So, I think it is about time to hang up the sign "Finis".

It was a memorable experience and I think the most touchingly emotional event of my life grew out of those three years. In September of 1965, ten years after I had left Finland, I became sixty years old. In the early morning hours of my birthday my sleep was disturbed in my Washington apartment by a call from Western Union saying they had a birthday cable for me. Within the next twenty-four

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hours I received eighteen cablegrams conveying birthday messages from Finnish friends including a long cable from the now Head of State of Finland, President Kekkonen, the same man, who, as Foreign Minister in 1955, had accompanied me to the Presidential Palace when I presented my credentials as the first American Ambassador to Finland.

So while it could probably be argued that the heart attack and premature retirement from the Foreign Service was perhaps too high a price to pay for my strenuous exertions, I have not an iota of regret for the doing. Any other course would, I am sure, have never afforded me the wealth of my cherished memories that will always surround Finland and the Finns.

HESS: Do you have anything else to add on Mr. Truman or the State Department or on your job?

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MCFALL: I might just put in this one little aside. I believe that one of the major weaknesses that we have in our system of government is the fact that when we have a change in administration, we generally make a complete house-cleaning at the top of the ladder and the new people that are appointed to take over their new responsibilities so many times are without experience of any description in working in government. They don't know anything about the problems that are going to beset them in their new task. And so, who pays the penalty for this? The American people pay the penalty. When the new incumbent comes in to a position of heavy responsibility with all the wide ramifications that are involved today in government operations, he has to have a "settling-in" period where he is substantially, if not totally, non-productive for a period of time until he is able to get the grasp of

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things himself. Having recognized this situation for many, many years, during the time when I was working with the Congress, I thought that anyone believing as strongly as I did on the subject, ought to do something about it, so when I departed by assignment as Assistant Secretary of State in 1952, I left in the State Department what I called "a Report of Stewardship." It was addressed "To my Successor in Office." I wrote it myself on the typewriter when I was on a short vacation at my home before departing for Finland. I think it was something in the nature of a forty-page report in which I tried to "lay my heart bare" in terms of my activities during the three years that I had been Assistant Secretary. The things I'd tried, what I had done that I felt would persist, the mistakes that I'd made, things that we did and then turned right around and undid them because we found

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that they wouldn't work. I felt that I wanted to leave this to my successor so that he, when he would come into office, probably as I had without any background in the actual internal workings of the State Department, would have this report of at least one man's experience in the job. He could do what he wanted to do with it. He could regard it well or he could disregard it, but it was there for him to read. Apparently it turned out to be of considerable help to several of my successors. After I arrived in Finland I received a letter from Thruston Morton, who first succeeded me as Assistant Secretary. He wrote that he had just finished reading the report and wanted me to know how much it had meant to him to have this kind of an analysis with guidance, direction, and so forth. And when Bill [William B., Jr.] Macomber who is now, as you know, the Under Secretary for Administration,

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came in to the position I had occupied as Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations he phoned me. I had never met him but he asked me to come over to his swearing-in and have lunch with him in the Department. I remember he told me that he believed this report was of such tremendous value to his operation that they referred to it as "The Bible," because it was used as a reference point for everybody on his staff in terms of the efforts that had been tried during my tenure and either abandoned or continued, failed in or succeeded in and the reasons therefore.

So, I mention this only because I believe that this is a field in which we might profitably follow, in other departments of Government, the example I set in the State Department. It is unfortunate

that we don't have under our system, the one big advantage of the British parliamentary system of government where

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you have one top civil service individual who remains in office to preserve continuity in each government agency whenever there is a change of administration. We have a real void in productivity when our administration changes and the appointees of the incoming administration spend days and weeks in "learning the ropes." If we could get the thought over to more of the people who are vacating their offices to prepare a similar type "Report of Stewardship" to leave for their successors, I believe it should be a measurable contribution to the public good.

HESS: Anything else?

MCFALL: I think that's it.

HESS: Fine, thank you very much.

MCFALL: You're welcome.

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