Roger W. Tubby Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 01/16/67
Administrative Information

Creator: Roger W. Tubby
Interviewer: Joseph E. O'Connor
Date of Interview: January 16, 1967
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 73 pages

Biographical Note
Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs (1961 - 1962); Ambassador to the European office of the United Nations and other international organizations, Geneva, Switzerland (1962 - 1969). In this interview, Tubby discusses his involvement in John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign and his work in Geneva, Switzerland, among other issues.

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Suggested Citation
Roger W. Tubby, recorded interview by Joseph E. O'Connor, January 16, 1967, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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Roger W. Tubby – JFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

ROGER TUBBY

January 16, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By Joseph E. O'Connor

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'CONNOR: You can start in any way you like.

TUBBY: Start in right now?

O'CONNOR: Right.

TUBBY: Early in 1960 I was publisher and editor or a small newspaper in upstate New York, the *Adirondack Daily Enterprise*. And, as a Democrat and a man who'd been Press Secretary to President Truman [Harry S. Truman] and who had worked

for Adlai Stevenson in two campaigns, I was understandably interested in who would be the Deocratic nominee for President in 1960. It had seemed to me that there were several good candidates in the Democratic Party and that John Kennedy was one whom I personally, early on, preferred. I was concerned about the strong anti-Catholic bias that existed in the country and in my own community which is two-thirds Catholic; French-Canadian and Irish.

One day I wrote a short editorial, along with two or three others, but the gist of that editorial--I don't have the date of it--was that I felt that Senator Kennedy should be considered as a presidential candidate on the basis of his character and his intelligence and

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his ability to be a good president and that the fact that he was a Catholic should have little or no bearing on the decision of the American people. I noted in my editorial that on occasion I had had differences locally with the Catholic Church on certain matters, movie censorship, for instance, or parochial school problems, and so it couldn't be said that I was writing in this way because I was inherently pro-Catholic; that I was neither pro-Catholic, pro-Methodist, pro-Quaker or anything else. It's just that I felt that John Kennedy was a good man and should be judged on his qualifications and his merits.

Not long after the editorial appeared (and I'd quite forgotten even that I'd written it because as a country editor, if it's a daily paper, you write

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two or three editorials a day, and as soon as one day is finished, you're thinking ahead to the next day, and so on; you're writing news stories, and you're on different boards and things) Pierre Salinger called up my office--I was not in it--and asked my secretary whether or not they could use this editorial, have it reprinted and use it, as I understand, in the West Virginia primary. Of course, West Virginia was predominantly Protestant, and such an editorial down there from a Protestant editor in the North might be of some use. My gal, without checking with me, said of course; it was in the public domain, and no problem. I heard that they reprinted many copies of this editorial. I don't know to what extent.

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Senator Kennedy had been shown the editorial by Bruce Biossat, head of NEA, who, unknown to me, had long been taking, and reading, *The Enterprise*.

Then a month or so later there was a group of former Adlai Stevenson people who had worked with the Governor in one or both of the earlier campaigns who came out publicly for Senator Kennedy. I was phoned from Cambridge by one member of this committee and asked if I would lend my name in support of President Kennedy, and I said I would be delighted to do so.

Then in June--I think it was early June or late May--Pierre Salinger called and asked if he could come see me, that he'd like to have me help out in Los Angeles during the Convention. Well,

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I agreed with pleasure. I was able to get away from my little paper. You know, an old war horse, when you hear the siren, or whatever, you can hardly resist. I did go out and helped in

that interesting Convention. In fact--and this is a little…. I hadn't thought of it in writing these notes. But as I arrived at the Biltmore, a whole passel of reporters came boiling down one of the corridors, having just watched and heard former President Truman on TV attack Senator Kennedy as being far too young and inexperienced to be given serious consideration as Democratic nominee. They stopped me, knowing that I had worked for President Truman, and asked me what I thought. I said well, I hadn't seen or heard

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what he said, but if that was the gist of what he said, I regretted it because it seemed to me that Senator Kennedy was a man of experience and courage--courage of the same type as that shown by President Truman on many occasions--and that I felt that Senator Kennedy, if nominated, would show President Truman that he, Kennedy, was a Truman kind of man.

I said this, in part, then and there because I was aware as a newspaperman and old press secretary that the Truman statement, if there were not some kind of Kennedy parentheses or a Kennedy sentence of two right up near the lead, the papers would run the Truman thing straight down, and there ought to be a little interjected quickly for use by

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editors up near the lead, and radio and TV broadcasters, a comment from the Kennedy side that cast some doubt on these allegations. This is, in fact, the way it turned out. However, I continued on my way and saw Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy], told him what I had done, and he was very much upset. He said, "Damn it, before you talked to the press, you should have at least talked to me and to the Senator…"

O'CONNOR: I'm surprised he wouldn't be delighted at this.

TUBBY: Well, as it turned out, he was. Because as soon as the papers hit the street, in a matter of half an hour or an hour, he saw "Roger Tubby, former White House Press Secretary under President Truman, said so and so and so and so."

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He called me up and said, "Roger, you were right; I was wrong. That was great work." Or something to that effect. That was, really, probably my one principal contribution at Los Angeles, but, nevertheless, I think it helped.

O'CONNOR: Let me ask you something about Los Angeles.

TUBBY: Yes.

O'CONNOR: You being an old compatriot, in a sense, of Adlai Stevenson, did you have fluctuations of the heart while you were at Los Angeles, because there was, of course, a….

TUBBY: Well, of course, Bill Blair [William McC. Blair, Jr.] and Bill Wirtz [W. Willard Wirtz], Newton Minow, all of whom had been with Adlai Stevenson in his law office, had counseled against his running at Los Angeles.

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And I felt it was a mistake, I felt, to try to go around a third time, would be too much. I'd traveled many thousands of miles with him in the primaries against Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] and then in the general election in '56 and remembered how weary he was of spirit. Of course, going against Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] was really a rough deal, and going against Nixon [Richard M. Nixon], he would have done so with delight, but, nevertheless, I had a feeling also that Nixon would carve him up in a ruthless, tough way that would get under Adlai's skin--and, you know, I didn't think it would go. And I thought it would be almost a personal tragedy for him if he got into a third round. Besides, when I earlier on had agreed to sign this statement, I had been

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told by friends of mine who knew Adlai that he wasn't going to get into the race and didn't want to. But I also knew him well enough to know that he was a man of pride and of courage, and once you get this bug, it's apt to be always with you. I think he, perhaps, as time went on, thought there was greater support for him than in fact existed--partly because in Los Angeles there was such a strong Stevenson support. And I might parenthetically explain why there was, in my judgment, because it was a factor during that Convention.

O'CONNOR: Oh yes.

TUBBY: In the '56 campaign none of the Los Angeles papers gave Stevenson much coverage, in fact hardly any. And the *Los Angeles Times*, Stevenson would be

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operating for two or three days in California, southern California, and you wouldn't even know he was there as far as the *Los Angeles Times* coverage was concerned. So the California Democrats, always short of funds, but anyway got up enough money to put Adlai on TV several times in Los Angeles. And he won a great deal of support, I think, as a result. People actually heard him, saw him. It was much more than the street corner campaign business. He got into their homes and got a lot of very loyal followers. And then there were

these other loyal people to Adlai around the country who, in spite of his reluctance, were active and came out there, whipping up support for him.

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The Convention demonstration for Stevenson, I think, was greatly magnified on television because it gave a picture of a swirling excited mass when actually part of the mass was made up of cameramen and reporters trying to accompany him as he went down the aisle--you noticed this swirling picture. Had the cameras focused on the delegates more you would have seen that hardly any of the delegates were applauding, or demonstrating, for him. There was a very noisy group up in the gallery, and I was concerned for Adlai because I had heard that some very left-wing people had gotten into this Stevenson operation and actually wanted to make it sort of a divisive thing. They weren't necessarily for Stevenson; they just wanted to make trouble in and

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around the convention hall, almost in a riotous way. I was so concerned about it that I talked to the Los Angeles Chief of Police about it and suggested that he might want to have some of his plainclothes people or somebody in amongst the group just to watch and see how it developed--not to discourage a genuine demonstration at all. And there were one or two that seemed to be the ringleaders and who were not, as far as I knew, genuine Stevensonians. They were operators in to make trouble, and they were using Stevenson as a cover.

Well, anyway, after the Convention Pierre asked me if I'd stay on during the pre-campaign period and so join him in the Esso Building in Washington, the Kennedy headquarters. and then during

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the campaign, I was in charge of the Democratic National Committee public relations. During that period there were two or three things that I think are worth noting. One was the origin, as far as I know it, of the Peace Corps statement by Kennedy out of San Francisco. One day a Philadelphia businessman--here I don't have my notes and I don't remember his name--came into my little cluttered office and said he'd had an idea that he thought was a good one, and he would like to see Senator Kennedy push it. He said he'd frankly been over to the Republican National Committee, and they'd said well, it was too far out and they weren't interested. His idea was that young people could be appealed to and that there was a great reservoir

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of young people in our country, he felt sure, who would like to get out and in some way help developing peoples in other lands. I said, "Well, just a minute." I said, "You stay right here." It was one of the relatively rare days when Bobby Kennedy was in the office, and I went in

and said, “Bobby, I think we’ve got an idea that sounds good.” And he said, “What is it?’ You know, with his shirt sleeves rolled up and tie down and so on. And I told him. He said, “Is the fellow still around?” I said, “Yes.” “Bring him in.” So we brought him in, and Bobby talked to him some, and the man left. Bobby got on the phone and called JFK, who was then in San Francisco, and said, “Look, Jack, we’ve got an idea here that sounds

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to me like it’s pretty good. Can you put in a paragraph or so along these lines?” And that was done. I think the response was a surprise to all of us; it was almost instantaneous from all around the country. This guy from Philadelphia was right. It was perhaps one of the major fresh initiatives of that campaign, and one that has now been implemented and is carried on and is highly successful.

Another sort of contribution in a way was that when Martin Luther King was in jail in Georgia…

O’CONNOR: Oh yes, I remember that very well.

TUBBY: I said one day to Harris Wofford, who was dealing with the Negro civil rights issues, that I felt that it might be a good idea if President, Senator Kennedy…

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O’CONNOR: You can call him President Kennedy.

TUBBY: ...called down and expressed concern, called his wife, and expressed his personal concern about this.

O’CONNOR: Had anyone said anything to you about this?

TUBBY: No. This was genuinely my idea.

O’CONNOR: Because this was a very significant idea, of great significance in the campaign.

TUBBY: Of course, in things like this it may be that others had it. But I think that I was the first to propose it, and Harris, afterwards…

O’CONNOR: Well, it’s very difficult to trace down…

TUBBY: Well, Harris, afterwards, reminded me that I was the guy who suggested it to him in Caruso’s Restaurant just the corner above the

Democratic National Committee headquarters. And, of course, he talked to Bobby Kennedy.

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Bobby Kennedy called and talked to JFK, and this was done.

O'CONNOR: Was there any reluctance to this idea at first on the part of Bobby Kennedy or anybody else?

TUBBY: Yes. Well, there was a little, there was a little. You know, they weren't quite sure how it would kick back, whether it would seem too sort of gimmicky or something. There was a little initial reluctance, and we talked about it, and Bobby said, "What do you think? Do you think this really makes sense? Is it a wise thing to do?' I said I thought it was. So that was done.

Then another sort of critical period during the campaign--now I don't think it's ever been reported; or maybe you've got it already, but I'd be surprised

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if you have it. Scoop Jackson, Henry Jackson, was the Democratic National Chairman during the campaign, and he felt increasingly frustrated by what he considered his figurehead role because, after all, Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and the others close to the Senator were, in fact, doing the major job of organizing and keeping in touch with leaders all around the country. One day--I think seven days or ten days before the election--Scoop said to me, "Well, I've had it. I've had it right up to here. I'm quitting." And I said, "Well, you can do it, but I hope you don't, Scoop. This would be a great mistake." He said, "Well, damn it. I go out into my own territory in the Northwest, and this is one part

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of the country that I feel that I know. For me to go out as Democratic National Chairman and to be told that this and that is being done, and nobody here has told me what's being done in my own area. I don't like it; I don't like it a damn bit." He said, "I'm finished."

And again it was one of the rare days when Bobby happened to be around. Well, he was in and out, but, you know, he was often out. I went in to see him and said, "Bobby, we've got a problem." "What is it?" I told him, and he was pretty peremptory, pretty short and he said, in effect, "Well, goddammit, if that's the way he feels, okay, let him go." I said, "Well, this would be terrible because he's a liberal Democrat, he has a lot of following.

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A lot of these Stevensonian people would feel very badly. Some of them are already sort of wavering, have reservations about, say, LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson]. Then Scoop Jackson

comes out with a blast at this critical time of the campaign; and I just think it would be disastrous." And it would have been. I mean in a close election it…

O'CONNOR: Sure, it wouldn't have taken very much.

TUBBY: It wouldn't have taken much, and that would have made a great difference. So he said, "Well, bring him in." Well, I went back to Scoop, and I said, "For God's sakes, just be calm and be forthright and explain to Bobby why you're unhappy." I had said to Bobby, "I think Scoop ought to be clued in." We had regular breakfast sessions

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on strategy.

O'CONNOR: And he wasn't in on this?

TUBBY: Neither he nor his number one assistant, Salter, John Salter, were in on any of these. I said, "Why, bring him in to these. He ought to be in, or his man ought to be in. And I think we ought to lean over backwards to keep him informed and to make him feel that he's not just a figurehead Democrat National Chairman." So I brought Scoop in, and he couldn't have been…. Bobby said, "How are things, Scoop?"

O'CONNOR: You mean he wasn't as peremptory as he had been earlier?

TUBBY: No, he said, "How are things, Scoop? You're doing a great job fella." Or words to this effect. "And I want you to know how much we appreciate

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everything you're doing. Just keep it up." Scoop didn't say a word about his unhappiness. So I thought, "Well, we'd better get this on the table." And I said, "Well, I hope, Bobby and Scoop, that it's important that we all work more closely together. Sometimes, I know, for my part, on the press side I get caught up in the rush and tear of things, and maybe I don't check in with everybody all the way around as carefully as I should, and we just ought to bear that in mind." Anyway, the upshot of it was that John Salter began to sit in more, and I think a real effort was made to keep Senator Jackson more fully informed and to ask for his advice and counsel on things.

Well, that was about it in my

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recollections. There were so many little things that went on that at the moment seemed to be important, but I don't…. Dorothy Schiff of the *New York Post*, whether or not she'd really get behind the Senator, and trying to get her lined up and so on.

Then came election day, and I'd set up the Mayflower Hotel operations. Of course, the center of attention was up at Cape Cod, but still there were an awful lot of Democratic hooplas around Washington. So we had, really, a big operation there with the boards and the returns and the TV and so on.

During the campaign there was a Japanese who was an officer of the destroyer that cut the Kennedy PT boat in two. He came, and I took him out to

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see the Senator in Georgetown. I thought, as a newspaperman, that this story of the PT boat was extremely--of course, it had been reported--but it seemed to me an extremely great human interest story. I then suggested to Bob Donovan [Robert J. Donovan] that he write it--in fact, I'd tried it out on one or two other reporters, who didn't bite. But Bob was one of those, I mentioned it to him, said, "Well, damn it, I think there's a real big story here." He then went on to write the book, *PT 109*, which became a best seller. And then--I don't know. How are we doing on time?

O'CONNOR: Well, the time is entirely up to you. When's your next appointment?

TUBBY: Well, I'm alright. I knocked off a couple of things here because I've been

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stalling on this for so long.

Then after the election the question was the formation of the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet and so on. I heard that there was a possibility I might be named Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. Wally Carroll [Wallace Carroll], who was then the Bureau Chief of the *New York Times*, was pushing it, Pete Lisagor [Peter Lisagor] of the *Chicago News*, Maggie Higgins [Marguerite Higgins] of the *Herald Tribune*, Dean Acheson, and others; but I also heard that Ben Bradlee [Benjamin C. Bradlee] and Doug Cater [S. Douglass Cater, Jr.]--Bradlee is now, I think, isn't he managing editor of the *Washington Post* and Doug Cater is now in the White House, who was the editor of *Reporter*--and Elie Abel, who is very able, of the *Detroit News*,

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were all in the running; and that Secretary Rusk [Dean Rusk], or Secretary-to-be Rusk, had expressed reluctance about taking me, understandable reluctance because I'd been away from Washington for eight years and, therefore, had not been close at all to foreign policy developments, whereas the other candidates, Bradlee, Cater, and Abel, had been in

Washington all through that period and following developments very closely indeed. I'm going into this a little bit because Pierre Salinger, in his book…

O'CONNOR: Yes, I read that.

TUBBY: ... had talked about this period. And from my own point of view--perhaps it's a bit egotistical--the record was, really, that the press corps here urged

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my appointment. To be sure, the President had to say yes, and the President did, but from my view…. Maybe it was only paying off a political debt, as Salinger said. That was part of it. But I naturally would like to think that part of it was that I was considered professionally competent. The people who were pushing me were none of them on the Democratic Committee. They were newsmen.

O'CONNOR: Newspapermen themselves.

TUBBY: Yes, newspapermen themselves. And I say this because when I went to the White House with President Truman…. He had asked a committee of the president of the National Press Club and two others to make a nomination for a successor of Charlie Ross [Charles G. Ross]

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as Press Secretary, and I was chosen by that committee to go over there. So I do have a little sense of pique, I might say, when I read that statement of Pierre's, which seemed to me only part of it. And I do understand Secretary Rusk's reluctance, and I think Pierre is right in saying that it was a mistake, my being named, because I started out without having the…. Well, the Secretary really wanted somebody else, and made it awkward. It was a very tough period because the Secretary himself was working into his new job and his relationship with the President and had inherited the Cuban business and other pending problems.

When I came in, I told him, Secretary Rusk, that I would hope that I could be

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closely involved in policy developments, not merely in a passive way but on occasion weighing in with views that I might think ought to be taken into consideration as a person with some knowledge, in theory at least, of public relations; that I did not want to be caught in another situation like that of the U-2 where the State Department spokesman lied two or three times, not to his own knowledge, but he was given a line that turned out to be false, and his credibility from that moment on became seriously, well, it was seriously in question on all

other things. Because if the spokesman will lie on one thing, will mislead on one thing, he's likely to do it on others.

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And one of the great strengths of Mike McDermott [Michael J. McDermott], who brought me into the State Department in 1946 and who had served from Wilson's [Woodrow Wilson] Administration on over here, was that he had a reputation for tough, incorrigible honesty. There were times when he would say, "Gentlemen, I can't tell you anything about this." But there was one administration after another, one Democrat after another, one Republican after another--Republicans in the twenties and Democrats in the thirties--where Mike continued on because the press corps believed he was an honest man. He had their confidence, and he had the confidence of a succession of Secretaries of State.

Well, naturally it was felt that I

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should work closely upstairs and be clued in in advance, and I did become involved in a number of things that were developing, the Berlin Crisis of that period. But on the Bay of Pigs I had absolutely no guidance at all. I raised it a couple of times in the Secretary's staff meetings. There were reports in the press about a Guatemalan training ground, about something peculiar going on around Miami, and *Miami News* had stories and so on. And I'd raise these questions--did we have anything on it? was there any guidance? was the U.S. government connected with it any way?--and got a completely negative response. Then, of course, there were the landings and the disaster that followed. There,

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right away, within a very short time of my coming on board, my own credibility was in question. It was clear to the press corps here--I was talking to John Hightower about it a few minutes ago--that I was not in the innermost circles, that, therefore I was not a man…. Well, that I did not really have the confidence of the Secretary of State. This was a serious, serious problem for me and my operation. I might say, though, that I can understand the Secretary's and the President's point of view on this and their concern about it and their wanting to be most careful in the spreading around of any information about it. But I still feel today, and I think one of our problems--I won't go into it today;

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it isn't the purpose of this interview--but I still think one of our problems is the need to have the maximum amount of candor possible in dealing both with the press, speaking generically, and with the American public.

During that year that I was Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, I did set up, initiate the regional briefings, which are still going on around the country and have been

very successful, because I felt, as a country newspaperman myself, that we rarely could come to Washington to get…. We were so totally dependent on the AP [Associated Press] and the UPI [United Press International] that if I could go from Saranac Lake to Albany or to Syracuse from time to time

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and have a chance to talk to Chip Bohlen [Charles E. Bohlen] or whoever, a team of State Department people, or Defense--State and Defense, whatever--that this would be of great value to me in understanding more fully and directly things about our foreign policy that I didn't get out of the AP or UPI, and that, hopefully, the touring visitors would get something out of our observations as people close to the grassroots.

O'CONNOR: Well, this was your idea then…

TUBBY: This was my idea, this was my idea. At first there was resistance in the Department, partly a question of staff time, and money. Well, it took a steady bit of work to sell it, and then it was sold and has been going great ever since. My idea, also, was the two day Washington

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briefings; we just had one not long ago, where the press come at their own expense to Washington. And the President and Secretary of State, of Defense, the top people in the Administration meet with those who can afford to, have time to, come to Washington to get their background views. The local, I say local, the Washington press corps, those who cover the State Department, at first--well, Doris Fleeson, for instance, wrote a scoffing column about it and "How ridiculous can you get? This won't wash; it's a waste of time." And others were also skeptical about it. But I noted, in the first one, there weren't many Washington correspondents at it. There were some who felt obliged to cover it. But increasingly the Washington

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press corps was there. Then we'd have panels, and we'd have receptions upstairs, and I think this, too, was a great, well, innovation; it was an innovation.

O'CONNOR: Was the President very enthusiastic about this?

TUBBY: Not at the beginning. And after…. You see, it was the very first one where this Polish reporter came into the press booth--have I touched on this? I haven't touched on this yet.

O'CONNOR: No, you haven't.

TUBBY: I was just talking to John Hightower about this. Well, the very first one of these President Kennedy came over, and the idea was, and has been ever since, that they be background. With four hundred or seven hundred or nine hundred or

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whatever it is now, you can't really expect to have and hold anything like an off-the-record session. Therefore, any of the participating speakers have to have some areas of reserve. I mean things that are truly sensitive from the security or military point of view, let us say, ought not to be said there. But in any case, at this first one the President did a magnificent job, and as he was leaving, one of the newspapermen down in the pit of the auditorium came up to Pierre Salinger and said, "Pierre, did you know that up in one of the radio booths so-and-so, a Polish communist reporter, was sitting and listening in on everything?" We'd worked out, I thought, a foolproof

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security setup for this with the State Department guards all apprised as to who was to be passed and so on, special tags. So Pierre told the President on the way back to the White House about the Polish Communist reporter up in the phone booth, and the President called me on the line, and I had to hold the phone off about a foot and a half. And he really gave me hell. "What kind of an operation is this? I mean I thought you knew what you were doing, and you let a goddamn Commie in there. This is the end of these. We'll not have any more of them. That's the end of it!" I was about to leave the next day or so for a conference of CENTO [Central Treaty Organization] in Ankara, and I sent him a telegram in

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which I said that I would not gladly submit my resignation, but if he wanted it, of course he could have it. But more important to me, really, than my own career was my feeling that these briefings were essential and would be useful and that, therefore, they ought to be continued whatever happened to me. Well, the upshot of it was that, of course, they were and have been continued.

O'CONNOR: There were never any repercussions from the Polish newsman being there?

TUBBY: Well, there were news stories about it, but I don't really think that anything the President said or anyone else said was damaging to our security.

Oh, well, how did he get in there? He had come in; he didn't have a special

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badge; he had simply flashed his White House Press card, which he had, to a guard upstairs and talked his way in. You know, the guard said, "Well, you don't have this other thing." And the Pole said, "My God, I forgot it!" or something, and he was let in. So it was a breakdown of security, which was unfortunate. The President once at breakfast turned to me and--I was rather taken aback by this--said, " Well, you know, Roger, my greatest mistake was the Bay of Pigs. And your greatest mistake was letting that goddamn Commie up in that radio booth." You know, the equation of these two things. I mention it only because it showed the depths of his strong feeling that we hadn't handled the admission strictly enough for… It was

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at that breakfast that he asked me if I thought the American people would support a program of trying to land men on the moon. I said, yes.

O'CONNOR: But he did continue these, though, right?

TUBBY: Oh, but he continued and spoke several more times.

O'CONNOR: I'm surprised he didn't make a fuss afterwards when the second one came up.

TUBBY: No, he continued them. I don't remember how many more time he spoke. We had an average of two a year, and we had another one that year. Well, he probably spoke six time or so.

Then, in addition to that, I was surprised when I came into the job that the foreign press, which is now very numerous--there were no special background briefings for them. So I

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set up these special background briefings, which I think are still going on. I haven't been back here long enough to check it out this trip, but I think they are. Well, we've always had background briefings for the American press, and the foreign press has had to get along as best it could through the on-the-record press conferences with the Secretary and other officers or through individual briefings with the press officer of others in the State Department. But it seemed to me that they ought to have an opportunity to meet with top officers and ask whatever questions they'd like and get special attention. So that was done. And then we set up State TV programs on various aspects of the Foreign Service, and the

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first pocket book ever put out on foreign affairs was written by an officer at my shop, Temple Wanamaker.

Then, finally, I recommended that a community advisory service be set up, which has been very successful, because it seemed to me, again based on my country experience, that it would be very useful if there were centers where both State Department material--written material on, let's say, Latin America or specific countries or foreign aid--was available it could be easily and quickly shipped out to universities, to colleges, to Rotary clubs, and a center where arrangements could be made for getting State Department speakers, Foreign Service

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officers on home leave in the area, or getting people up from the U.N. [United Nations] in New York--I mean from the U.S. delegation in the U.N. or from other delegations for that matter. So these things that Pierre mentioned briefly, and did give me credit on the regional briefings and the two day Washington sessions, but these things, I think, were pluses in an otherwise sometimes rather difficult and, frankly, very unhappy time for me personally because of the often tense or strained relations with the Secretary, for whom, nevertheless, I've always had the highest regard.

O'CONNOR: Did the problem with the Secretary of State ever resolve itself? Did you ever achieve the Secretary's confidence or

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was this…

TUBBY: Well, I think I must have gotten his confidence in some measure or I wouldn't have gotten the…

O'CONNOR: Appointment to Geneva.

TUBBY: ...appointment to Geneva. He might say and feel that there never was a problem of confidence as such with me. There have now been three other Assistant Secretaries for Public Affairs, and I think that part of the difficulty is inherent in the nature of the job, whoever happens to be in it. And part of it may be due to the Secretary's own temperament. He does not, or did not certainly, to put it mildly, enjoy press conferences. He was always very much concerned about a misstep, and

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aware that there could be hookers, curve balls that could make real trouble, not only for him personally but for the country. So this is, I think, sort of a built-in problem. But you're going

to have to ask him whether he had confidence later or ever in me. I just don't know. I hope that he did, and I hope that he does.

I did go out with him to SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] conference in Bangkok, CENTO in Ankara, and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] twice, once in Oslo and once in Paris, and worked closely with Pierre on the once a week White House pre-Presidential briefing sessions, using a system that I had initiated under President Truman of briefing books, and which I'd passed

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on to Jim Hagerty [James C. Hagerty] and he used--a fairly simple and logical thing, but it had not been done before. Before, earlier Presidents, Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt] and Truman, up until the time I went over there, the press conferences were prepared for with top members of the staff sitting around half an hour, forty minutes before each press conference and just orally kicking ideas around, "Well, you may be asked about this, boss. If you are, I suggest you say so and so and so and so." So that there was a good deal of knowledge and expertise around that table, or desk, but it was not as carefully checked out and double checked as it seemed to me it ought to be. So that when I went over in December of '50

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and early '51, I started the system of asking the State Department and Defense, Commerce, as the case might be, making up a list of possible questions, and then asking them to come in with recommended answers and background, either confidential or otherwise, for the President--briefly put--so the President could go through it and get the feel of it. Much of it he already knew, but this would be sort of an insurance, then bringing it up to date just before the press conference and still having the group around the desk for a sort of cross-fertilization and preparation.

Well, during that first year I was up on the Hill testifying before

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Senator Thurmond [Strom Thurmond] on the so-called censorship of military speakers, especially of Admiral Burke [Arleigh A. Burke]. This was really putting the heat on my operation because under it we had the responsibility of reading military and other speeches that had to do with foreign affairs.

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TUBBY: I think we did all right on that, although I was rather taken aback because Senator Thurmond, at the end of the hearings, said, "Well, listen Tubby, I want to compliment you. I believe you are giving us an honest report on the way in which this operation has been carried out." And I think I did. I didn't try to cover up or equivocate. I said,

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"Well, maybe we made a mistake on this, but on the whole I think the record will show that it made sense to take out some of these things in view of our national interest."

Well, then along about in January when I was about to give a speech in Oklahoma City, having given two or three others in the South, I was told that there was a Washington call for me. It was George Ball, and he said that there was going to be a change, and Bob Manning [Robert J. Manning] would be coming in, how would I like to go to Geneva? And I said, "Why the hell Geneva? What do you want me to do in Geneva?" He said, "Well, we want to strengthen the mission out there. That's

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really a very interesting post, nation-building, and so and so on." I said, "Well, let me think it over overnight." The next day I had lunch with him and so went to Geneva. There, I'd say briefly for the record, this does tie into President Kennedy some, and I want to end up very much on the reaction in Geneva to his death. Of course, you have many, many reports on that from all over the world, but this is...

O'CONNOR: We'd still be interested in that.

TUBBY: This is interesting there with the Swiss, who supposedly are so undemonstrative and so neutral.

But in Geneva we have a great many agencies, over a hundred, some of them very well known and some of them hardly known at all. World Health

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Organization, for instance, and the ILO, International Labor Organization, we have the disarmament conferences, the other summit conferences--on an average about four thousand meetings a year. We have the Atoms for Peace, the science and technology conferences, and so on, the Kennedy Round on trade negotiations, which are now going on and may be concluded, we hope, in June. When I got there, I found, to my surprise, that the mission had no personnel to cover the major agencies. Subsequently, we now do have, I think, generally competent men--medical men covering the WHO, two telecommunications men covering the International Telecommunications Union, Weather Bureau man

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on the World Meteorological Organization and so on.

O'CONNOR: How could the mission function without these men?

TUBBY: Well, the mission, when I went over there, was largely an administrative support mission. That is, arranging for hotels, for typewriters, for office space, for cars. The Ambassador, Graham Martin, who is now the Ambassador in Thailand, was my predecessor, and he simply had very limited resources, both of men and money. And the concept of the mission was basically a narrow one. He did get involved himself in political and economic and social matters, but he did not have a staff that could help him carry the ball. Indeed, usually

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we sent over--our delegations were larger than they needed to be simply because Geneva didn't have competent people following these things through the year. Now we do have such a staff. We follow closely, as closely as possible, the development of programs in the agencies and budgets. We deal with the inevitable political problems--the Chi rep business, South Africa, Rhodesia, East German admission, the attacks on the U.S. in Vietnam--and also keep an eye on the staffing situation in the agencies, looking for openings whenever possible.

O'CONNOR: Excuse me.

TUBBY: Yes. Looking for openings where Americans might be placed.

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O'CONNOR: You said Chi rep and I thought my transcriber was going to have a hard time with that. You were talking about the Chinese representation.

TUBBY: Chinese representation problem where the Chinese have been trying--or not the Chinese so much themselves, the Red Chinese, but the Communist bloc countries in every meeting, practically, every annual meeting have moved for the admission of the Chinese Communist government. This we've had to battle there as well as in the General Assembly in New York.

The staffing situation, we put up 30 or 40 percent of the money for Geneva agency programs, and yet have as little as 2 or 3-7 percent of the

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staff made up of Americans. We think it's very important to have Americans in certain key areas where they're knowledgeable and can have some influence on the way programs are developed and carried out. Part of the difficulty, frankly, is it's hard to get Americans to serve in international organizations because the pay is not as good as that in many a university or in industry or in government back home. The problem of seniority; they're losing ground. If they go to Geneva for three years, five years then come back, what do they come back to? Well, anyway, this is a problem that we're working on and trying to do better with.

When I went there, I found that we were scattered in four buildings

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in very inadequate quarters, and now we've rented an eight story building, we're all in that. We have gone on, with John Rooney's concurrence, which is essential for these things, to buy a very wonderful piece of land up near the Palais des Nations--within practically, well, it is within walking distance of the Palais--on which we will eventually have our own U.S. Mission building and save on all this rent.

Basically, my own primary concern, in addition to programs, budgets, political problems, staffing, has been the feeling that we need some evaluation of U.N. agency work in the field. I've been appalled, frankly, by the lack of information coming to me from any quarter about, let's say, a WHO program up in

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Lima, Peru, or any of the other agency programs. We're making some progress on this now, but it's been slow work. ECOSOC [Economic and Social Council] has passed a resolution, which we proposed, calling for a U.N. evaluation. But I think, in addition to that, we ought to have U.S. double checks, partly to show Congress and the American people that we are keeping an eye on the end result of all this input. The U.N. evaluations may be useful, but after all, we ought to have some reading ourselves. Then I've been concerned about coordination of policy with respect to U.N. agencies--the problem that you have in Washington of interagency differences, difficulty in getting

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clearance, getting position papers early enough--and more needs to be done, still, on this. Last March 15 President Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson] sent a memo to the Secretary of State which was in response to my appeal to the President himself calling for a whole series of steps that would lead to more effective interdepartmental coordination over here in support of us and other people at the other end of the line in Rome, where the FAO [Food and Agricultural Organization] is, or Paris where the UNESCO [U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization] is.

O'CONNOR: You said that George Ball, when he mentioned this to you initially, said that the United States was upgrading or strengthening the mission in Geneva.

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TUBBY: Yes.

O'CONNOR: Did this show recognition on the Kennedy Administration's part that this needed to be done?

TUBBY: Yes, I think so.

O'CONNOR: Were they actually doing this or did this only come about after you got there?

TUBBY: Well, to me it showed recognition by the Kennedy Administration that Geneva was increasingly important as a center of, you might say, nation building activities. I think they chose me, I don't know, but I think they chose me maybe because I'd shown some initiatives in the public relations field here as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. I'm not kidding myself; I think maybe a still greater factor

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in it was that they wanted me out of that job and Bob Manning in. But, after all, they could have simply retired me or sent me to Ouagadougou. So maybe it was a little of both, I don't know.

Well, then, in Geneva, of course, we have a lot of cold war operations in almost all the agencies, even though you get educators in the International Bureau of Education and telecommunications people coming in. The bloc--we're not supposed to call it the bloc now, but it, nevertheless, does exist as a bloc; they all speak pretty much one after the other in the same way, vote the same way. The bloc uses the most specialized forums for attacks on the U.S. and on the capitalist system, but basically on the U.S. We try to

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cut this off, when we can, on points of order, say, "This sort of stuff belongs in the General Assembly or the Security Council. This kind of discussion does not belong in a forum where doctors have come from all over the world to talk about malaria or bilharziasis or yaws or something like that. It's wasting time." And when we can't cut it off with a motion of that kind, a point of order of that kind--and sometimes we can't because the man in the chair happens to be a bloc guy, and he won't cut it off--then we have to state our case in as forthright a way as possible as to why we're doing what we are in Vietnam, what we've done in our country in regard to civil rights, why our position is such and

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such in South Africa, whatever it may be.

I do think I might make two points that since I've been there now nearly five years, there's been a markedly greater sophistication amongst the African representatives who, even when I first went there, some listened almost spellbound to the round of vehement

attacks and mendacious attacks on the U.S. And, after all, they were a receptive audience because we were, we had been a colonial power; we were closely allied with the British and the French and the Belgians and so on, who either had been or were colonial powers in Africa. So all these attacks fell on very receptive ears and still do, but as time has gone on more and more

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of these fledging new countries of Africa have encountered Russian and Chinese Communist operations, as they've heard this repetitive record, meeting after meeting after meeting, they say well, come on, you know, to hell with it. They'll take coffee breaks; they'll ostentatiously, almost, read their newspapers until this round is finished. I think this kind of business, frankly, from the bloc point of view is becoming counterproductive. This is a change that I've noted which I think is good and healthy.

Another is that there's been there in Geneva, as elsewhere, some loosening of satellite ties to Moscow. They still do, mostly on every issue, vote as a bloc, speak as a bloc; but

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now, unlike three, four, or five years ago, my own personal contacts with my colleagues from the East are easier, and they seem to talk more frankly and sometimes quite critically of Moscow. For instance, my Rumanian colleague…

O'CONNOR: I was just going to say the Rumanian man must be quite outspoken.

TUBBY: Yes. He is very outspoken about the seizure of Bessarabia, for instance, about efforts by Moscow to dismember, in effect, Rumania through Comecon, economically attaching part of Rumania to Hungary, another part to Russia, another part to Bulgaria for economic planning purposes. This you get more of and a little more freedom of expression than I noted when I first

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went there in social gatherings or when you see them privately. And this is good although, as I say, it isn't much yet. You still are very much aware that they're exceedingly cautious and you don't have anything like the situation we have where El Salvador, for instance, may not only vote against the U.S. on any number of issues, but speak with a good deal of passion against the U.S. The El Salvadorean will not for a moment think that he's going to either lose his job or his life by disagreeing with us, whereas I think the Bulgarian would think twice before he either voted or spoke against a position put forth by Moscow. And he'd think twice both about his loss of a job and maybe even of his life,

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or his livelihood, anyway.

Well, then finally I thought I might say something about the death of the President and the reaction in Geneva that terrible night--because it was night there when we heard about it, just after 7 o'clock. I was at a dinner. My security man called and told me that there had been an attack on the President from a railroad bridge and he'd been wounded, and that's all he had. I went back and reported this to people who were standing near me. But I didn't think that it could be fatal; it didn't occur to me that it could be fatal. John Kennedy had gone through those harrowing experiences on the PT boat. It somehow seemed to me that with his youth and his vigor and, well, he was just…. It seemed to me

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that he must lead a charmed life, and that he could not be killed, would not be killed.

And then a few minutes later--fifteen or twenty minutes later--another call and the news that he was dead. My driver had left us there at the reception and gone away, and I didn't know where he was. He wasn't due back for, you know, for awhile, and I didn't want to discombobulate anybody else so I just walked into the office--or started to walk towards the office and had walked, oh, maybe three-quarters of a mile, and along came my driver. He had been in a bar or having coffee or something and had heard this on the radio and knew that I wanted at once to get down to the office. All that night phone calls came in--we kept everybody,

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not everybody, but several on the switchboard--from Swiss and others, Americans, others expressing shock and dismay at the news.

O'CONNOR: Did you get any reaction from the delegations there?

TUBBY: Oh, yes.

O'CONNOR: Bloc delegations, I mean.

TUBBY: Oh, yes. Then the next morning, of course, we had a usual diplomatic practice of having a book which people can come and sign, and the bloc all came in except Rumania. The Rumanians were the only ones who didn't come in and sign. But all the others did and many, many, many just ordinary people. Then we had a service at Saint Pierre, which is the great Calvin cathedral on the hill in the old city of Geneva

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and for the first time in history a Protestant, Catholic, and Jew participated in the religious part of the exercise of the ceremony. That is, a Catholic cleric, a Jewish rabbi, and a Protestant minister.

O'CONNOR: That's the first time in history in that…

TUBBY: In history in that cathedral. And the cathedral was jammed. I also participated, naturally, as the American Ambassador. The streets all around were jammed, a great outpouring. And that night in the rain in the Catholic cathedral the same thing, Catholic, Protestant, and Jew participating in a ceremony, packed again, people in the rain. Well, it was just something. I mean, well,

you know, we were all, the whole city seemed to be deeply shaken. And as I said earlier, for the Swiss who pride themselves on their neutrality, who have a reputation of being somewhat aloof and unemotional, this was, I think, perhaps even more significant and more moving than the demonstrations in Italy where people are…

O'CONNOR: Much more emotional.

TUBBY: ...quickly emotional. It meant more than our own reaction, almost, in our own country. So that was, and that is, I should say, the end of my story.

[END OF INTERVIEW]