

**Outerbridge Horsey Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 04/15/1971**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Outerbridge Horsey  
**Interviewer:** William W. Moss  
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**Biographical Note**

Outerbridge Horsey (1910-1983) was the Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission to the United States Embassy in Rome from 1959 to 1962 and the United States Ambassador to Czechoslovakia from 1963 to 1966. This interview focuses on the political situation in Czechoslovakia and the United States' negotiations with the Czechoslovakian government, among other topics.

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Outerbridge Horsey

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Oral History Interview

with

OUTERBRIDGE HORSEY

April 15, 1971  
Washington, D.C.

By William W. Moss

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Mr. Ambassador, let me begin by asking you about the story in the Kennedy administration of the opening to the left in Italian politics. We have available to us at the moment at least three accounts that bear upon this: we have the (Arthur M., Jr.) Schlesinger account in his book, A Thousand Days; we have two open oral history interviews, those of the ambassador, Mr. (G. Frederick) Reinhardt, and that of Mr. (William N.) Fraleigh, who was the Political Counselor at the time, I believe. Now, these are somewhat opposed accounts, and I wonder if you would comment on what should be done in the future by historians to get the story in good perspective and tell it properly.

HORSEY: First, to summarize my role in the affair, I was in charge of the embassy at Rome for four or five months in 1963 before the arrival of Ambassador Reinhardt at the time, I should say 1961. And it was during this time that the opening to the left was a very active issue in Italian politics. And to a lesser extent, it was an active issue within the United States government, specifically around the question of what role, if any, the United States government should play.

After the arrival of Ambassador Reinhardt, I was Minister, and Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy, and because of that position and because of my long familiarity with Italian politics and American interests in Italy, I continued to have an active role. So the question is properly directed to me.

Without a careful study of the record of government reporting and a study of the intelligence papers on the issue, and without refreshing my mind on the proximate and remote

history of the Italian political parties and the Italian political context, I don't feel that I can contribute substantially to the historical record. There are, as you say, several accounts of this affair on the record: there's Professor Schlesinger's, there's Ambassador Reinhardt's, and Mr. Fraleigh's. I have read those. I think Professor Schlesinger's bears very close examination in the light of this historical record of which I've spoken. I take issue with a good many questions of fact and of opinion and of judgment in it, but I don't believe it is profitable to go into this in detail at the present time. I share the views and the judgments of Ambassador Reinhardt and of Bill Fraleigh in their contributions to the present project.

MOSS: Is it fair to say that, to properly tell the full story of the Italian developments and the American participation in them requires not only a thorough background in Italian politics but also a very careful reading of the records of the State Department during the period--records which will not be open yet for some time?

HORSEY: Yes, I think that's a correct statement. I might summarize the crux of the differences of opinion, because they were not only between the three sources you've mentioned, but there were differences of opinion in the American press, in the periodical literature; there were differences of opinion in Italy; there were differences of opinion within the United States government. The central question was whether the influence of the United States government, overt or private, should be used to favor or oppose a development in internal Italian politics. It was my view, and that of most of the officials of the United States government in Washington and in Rome with whom I dealt and of which I had knowledge, that the United States government should not intervene in this process. The process involved very considerable risks, and the United States government was not in a position to repair damage or the consequences which might be caused by its action.

MOSS: Let me ask your opinion on a general subject. The Kennedy administration came in with some very strong ideas about reshaping, redirecting the federal bureaucracy among the various bureaus and so on--of course of the State Department and the Foreign Service. The attitude was that the bureaucracy was hidebound, not very innovative, and that good ideas very quickly got lost because of the generally conservative--in the generic sense--positions taken by people in the bureaucracy. How do you, as a career Foreign Service Officer, react to this? What do you think really happened? Was the effort made by the Kennedy

administration, first, justified? And secondly, how successful was it? I think you can approach this any way you like.

HORSEY: Yes. I think, generally speaking, this criticism of the federal services, and specifically the Foreign Service and the Department of State as an institution, is much exaggerated. I think it has some merit. I think any organization tends to develop lines of opinion and tends occasionally to perhaps distort judgments in favor of the going opinion or of longstanding policy. I think it's much exaggerated in relation to the State Department. I think often--both under the Kennedy administration I felt this and under other administrations I have felt it--that the criticism is to a considerable extent self-serving; that is to say, it's originated by political appointees in the White House seeking to make an effective role for themselves. You can't make a case for an active and substantial White House machine in the realm of foreign policy without predicating incompetence in the State Department. I think it's a simple operation of human nature to run down your competitors, so to speak, thus to justify your own activities. I think that's a substantial factor. I think it always has been.

MOSS: Right. Now, let me ask you this. Let me move on to the . . .

HORSEY: You asked about the role of President Kennedy in the administration of foreign policy, that is to say, specifically about the role of the ambassadors under President Kennedy's administration. There was a letter which was given a good deal of publicity, but in effect it said nothing new. It codified the going practice.

MOSS: The letter that you're referring to is the one that stated that the ambassador was indeed chief of mission, and all U.S. activities in the country were under his direction.

HORSEY: Yes. And where that doctrine was not effective, there were either less than able ambassadors or his recommendations were not followed in Washington.

MOSS: Let me move on away from the Italy experience to the Czech experience. Let me begin by asking you how it came about that you were appointed Ambassador to Czechoslovakia. This occurred in late 1961.

HORSEY: Yes, my name . . .

MOSS: I'm sorry, 1962. My mistake.

HORSEY: In 1962.

MOSS: Yes.

HORSEY: President Kennedy was elected in '60.

MOSS: Yes. And you were appointed 14 November, 1962, and sworn in on the 29th.

HORSEY: I suppose that it came about in the normal process of selecting chiefs of diplomatic missions. One phase of that process is that the State Department gives to the White House a list of senior officers who are believed, by their records and personal attributes, to be suitable for such appointments. I know that my name was on such a list. How long it had been on such a list I don't know. Because of the occasionally controversial role which I had in the embassy in Rome, it might be assumed that I was being promoted upstairs, so to speak, to remove my influence from the embassy in Rome. I never had any evidence that that was it, and that it entered into the appointment to Prague.

MOSS: Of course, most of your experience had been in European affairs, with the exception of a tour in Tokyo, is that correct?

HORSEY: Correct. Entirely so.

MOSS: Right. Now, how did you, in effect, prepare yourself for the Czech experience? What sort of briefings were given you? What seemed to be the problems that were brought to your attention that you realized would have to be dealt with as you appeared on the scene?

HORSEY: Before going to Prague, I returned to Washington for several weeks of discussions and reading on the contemporary scene in Czechoslovakia and specifically American problems and interests there.

MOSS: How did you find Prague when you arrived? Would you describe your arrival?

HORSEY: Yes, I can describe--I recall it very vividly--arriving in the middle of a snowstorm in the dead of winter a day or two before Christmas, in one of the worst winters that Czechoslovakia had had for a great many years with power and coal and food shortages. It might possibly have been the low point of their experience, in terms of standards of living.

The problems that the United States government had



then. . . . In terms of immediacy, the most important, I think, was the fact that several American citizens were unjustly, as we believed, held in jail, serving prison sentences on trumped-up charges. Another . . .

MOSS: Excuse me. Let me go on to the problems in a moment and get you to continue your description of your arrival. In what manner did you present your credentials and to whom? Could you describe that scene for us?

HORSEY: Yes. The presentation of credentials to most governments by newly arrived ambassadors follows a similar pattern in most capitals with considerable formality attached to the ceremony. In this case there was formality, of course, and courtesy at every stage of the process. The Chief of Protocol came to the American Embassy residence and accompanied our group--that is to say, myself and five or six of the principal members of the staff--to the presidential palace. I reviewed the President's guard of honor, stepped back and greeted them with the historic phrase, "Zdar," which, if my recollection is correct, means welcome. The guard of honor responded with a roar, "Nazdar," if I remember correctly. I then was accompanied up the grand ceremonial staircase to a waitingroom. President (Antonin) Novotny came into the room from the opposite end as soon as I was in place. Given the signal, so to speak, from the Chief of Protocol, I read a prepared statement setting forth the desire of our government for improved relations and some of our sentiments, and this was met by a response in similar terms from the President of Czechoslovakia. We then withdrew to a corner of the room and, with the help of an interpreter, and an agreeable conversation on general personal subjects--on personal matters and on the general state of our relationships. As I recall, we did not enter into substantive matters at that time.

MOSS: This sort of formality, this almost liturgical exercise, is often mocked by our practical view. We pride ourselves on being practical people and have a lack of formality as a habit almost. How do you view the necessity for this kind of formality? Is it really necessary? Could something else replace it?

HORSEY: I think, in the first place, a meeting with the chief of state is important and essential for an ambassador, who represents his own chief of state. So that the ambassador must meet fairly soon with the chief of state of the country or the government to which he's accredited.

Well, once that elementary operation is embarked on, some arrangements must be made. In the first place, it must be agreed that they're both going to be in the same building at the same time. So that a few elementary arrangements have to be made. In past centuries, there was a great addition of ceremonial to this simple and necessary operation. A great deal of that has been dispensed with. I think what remains of it is not excessive in most capitals.

MOSS: How did it feel to you personally to be the United States representative to an iron curtain country?

HORSEY: I think one has a sense of responsibility which is magnified by the adversary nature of United States relationships with the Communist governments.

MOSS: Is this the kind of thing you would contemplate as you go through this ceremony or . . .

HORSEY: No. No.

MOSS: What might be your thoughts?

HORSEY: In going through the ceremony, one is absorbing what one can of the personality and intellect of the other person.

MOSS: And how did you find him? What did you discover?

HORSEY: President Novotny was also First Secretary of the Communist party in Czechoslovakia and therefore the effective head of the Government and the governing process. He had a reputation for being dour and severe and humorless. In this encounter, I found him, on the contrary, agreeable. Naturally, he made it his business to be agreeable, it would have been out of (form for anything else) order to do otherwise.

MOSS: Was there anything particularly valuable in the way of insight into this man that you carried away?

HORSEY: No. If anything, I only carried away the sensation that at least he was a reality to me and not a name on paper.

MOSS: Did any insights develop in later meetings that would give you something to ponder?

HORSEY: No. I can't say I have anything to contribute to this.

MOSS: Fine. Well, let's move on to the problems. You mentioned the problem of Americans being incarcerated in Czechoslovakia. Let me ask you to develop that a little bit and ask what sort of things you were doing in order to remedy this situation? How did you approach it? What problems did you run into?

HORSEY: The problems were approached on two planes: on the formal plane of the judicial procedures for appeals from convictions, and this phase involved consultations with the defense attorneys appointed by the Czech judicial system. While on another plane, the problem was attacked by all American representatives at all levels in Prague and in Washington, too, implying that there might be sanctions if the individuals were not released within a reasonable time, and of holding out hope that relations in other fields might improve.

This is delicate ground because of the need for integrity. One can't either convincingly threaten sanctions if they're not going to be in fact imposed, without sacrificing a large measure of integrity; and by the same token, one can't and one shouldn't hold out the hope of changes in directions desired by the other side in the event one is not going to be able to deliver. Now, the exact terms in which these conversations, these suggestions were made, I don't recall.

MOSS: No, of course, and they are largely on the record too, are they not?

HORSEY: They're on the record, yes. The significant conversations would have been on the record, which would be supported by more informal conversations at social occasions at the much-despised receptions and cocktail parties and so forth.

MOSS: And what measure of success do you feel you had?

HORSEY: I think institutionally the State Department and the Embassy had considerable success. This may have been coincidence in the sense that the time was ripe for such success--success, because it was a success to get the Americans out of jail and back into the United States when we felt that they had been unjustly convicted.

MOSS: What do you believe made the time ripe?

HORSEY: I don't claim that it was my presence in Czechoslovakia at that particular time. I do think the problems were well handled in Washington and in Prague, and about four or five, as I recall, individuals were

released, repatriated.

MOSS: Right. What do you think contributed to the success? What made the time ripe for this development?

HORSEY: I think the manifest failure of the Czech economy and the desire of the Czech government to broaden their trading relationships with the United States and ultimately to get dollar credits.

MOSS: Right. They were particularly interested, I understand, in dollar credits for agricultural purchases, and that this was broached fairly early in the game by a lower-level foreign ministry chap. One of the obstructions to an easy development of this were the U.S. claims against Czechoslovakia for property that had been nationalized and delays in gold transfers to satisfy these claims. Would you talk briefly about the difficulty in ironing this situation out?

HORSEY: Yes. This was the second of three principal problems which primarily occupied our time in the embassy. All outstanding commercial, financial, and claims matters between the two governments had, over a period of years, been brought together into one negotiation, with the intention of settling the issues or making progress on them in one series of documents. This was done deliberately by the United States government--by the Department of State, I judge--because it was felt that by giving our consent to measures desired by the Czech government, we had a better chance of getting a settlement for United States claims against Czechoslovakia for property they confiscated in earlier years than we would otherwise. This made the negotiation extremely difficult. Again, this negotiation is fully covered in the record, and it was the main item in the transactions between the two governments and between the embassy and the Department of State.

MOSS: Yes. Would you single out any one development as a turning point in those negotiations?

HORSEY: No, except that . . .

MOSS: It was just an evolution?

HORSEY: No, except that I had a clear conviction, after getting into the detail of the negotiation soon after my arrival, that the Czech government was prepared to make significant concessions on points of interest to us in order to get the agreement. They wanted

the agreement, partly in order to get back the gold to which they were entitled, which was theirs--upwards of twenty million dollars in gold--and secondly, they wanted us to make the statement which we proposed to make at the conclusion of the agreement on the expansion of trade, and they wanted the authority which we proposed to give them to open a trade office in New York, a government trade office.

MOSS: You said that the Czechs were entitled to the gold. It was my impression that the gold was to go the other way. What. . . .

HORSEY: No, this was Czech gold looted by the Germans and found by the Allies at the end of World War II.

MOSS: Ah, yes. I see.

HORSEY: And it was adjudicated. . . . Their claim, the Czechoslovak government's claim to a certain amount of gold was adjudicated in their favor by a commission.

MOSS: Yes. Yes. Now I understand. Now, why is it that I have the idea that there was to be also a gold transfer from Czechoslovakia to the United States in settlement of U.S. claims against Czechoslovakia? Do you recall? Perhaps my reading of the record in State.

HORSEY: I think some of its gold was to be used in settlement of . . .

MOSS: An offsetting.

HORSEY: As an offset to claims of private Americans.

MOSS: Well, I'll leave this for someone who is. . . .

HORSEY: Leave that it's within the record, yes.

MOSS: Fine. Okay. You mentioned that these were two problems that you had. What was the third one that stands out in your mind?

HORSEY: The third one, to which we devoted a good deal of care, time, was the exchange of persons, the exchange of people between the two countries; that is to say, in the various professional fields and in the arts. It was an object of American policy in all of these Communist countries to encourage and develop the exchange of professional leaders in both directions. It was felt that this

would encourage a development of the society in the Communist countries in a direction which would correspond to our national interest--and incidentally, the interest of the inhabitants of the countries, although that's not the prime motive.

MOSS: Yes. Do any incidents in this development stand out in your mind? Any particular exchanges that were developed that you found particularly useful to the purpose?

HORSEY: The exchanges which were most easily arranged were in, you might say, the noncontroversial fields such as the exact sciences (medicine, for example). Where the field verged on their conception of strategic economic intelligence, the exchanges were much more difficult. In general, my personal observation was to be astonished at how long the good effects, in the sense of respect for American society, lasted in the individuals who returned to Czechoslovakia after visits to the United States for periods ranging from one month to an academic year. I think the program was enormously successful, not only in allowing the professional men (and women, too) to bring their professional expertise up to date by study with their colleagues in the United States, but also in developing a respect for our society and our institutions, and by extension, of course, their experience couldn't help but reflect adversely on their judgments of their own society.

MOSS: Let me ask you this. In our preliminary interview last week, you mentioned briefly your own opinion of the beginnings of the opening of East-West trade. If I remember correctly, and if I characterize your position correctly, you felt that we did not act quite enough in our tradition of hard-headed Yankee traders, that we did not insist on the kind of quid pro quo that we perhaps could have gotten in this kind of situation, in this kind of development. Is that fair?

HORSEY: Well, I would put it somewhat differently. I think we did tend to require, in our own minds at least, this somewhat inhibiting consequence: we tended to require a quid pro quo in unrelated fields, so that the giving of most-favored-nation treatment to Czechoslovakia imports into the United States was conditional upon internal political liberalization. We felt, or said we felt as a government, that we couldn't ask the Congress for most-favored-nation treatment for Czechoslovakia unless we could point to developing personal freedoms in Czechoslovakia as the quid pro quo.

I felt that that policy was mistaken. I felt it was based on a mistake in judgment of both congressional opinion and of public opinion in the United States. I felt that trade, that the extension of most-favored-nation treatment and the expansion of trade which would have resulted, was good in itself, and that the issue should have been isolated, and that we shouldn't have attempted to sell the horse twice, so to speak. I saw benefits both to our economy and to the economy and to the society of Czechoslovakia. I thought that developments in Czechoslovakia in terms of personal freedoms, of a more open, liberal, political process generally might well follow, and probably would follow, but that they ought not to be made a condition precedent.

MOSS: Two questions here. As much as you may disagree with the congressional and public opinion on this, you do have to live with it as a representative of the United States.

HORSEY: Of course. And this factor arises constantly in the practice of foreign affairs. But please note that I said that I disagreed with the judgment of what that opinion would be. I think the judgment of the probable reaction was wrong. I did not say that I thought that opinion should be ignored.

MOSS: Yes, yes. Let me ask you this then. The following question, I think, is: To what extent did the Czechs appreciate that this was the situation, the reality?

HORSEY: Oh, I think they knew it, though they weren't formally tied together.

MOSS: Right. Then let me go on and ask you about your role as Chief of Mission. We touched on this a moment ago, and you gave some general comments. Let me ask about your particular situation in Prague. Here is an iron curtain country that is particularly sensitive to espionage. Things that we would not call espionage, the iron curtain countries do. Mere observation by a military attaché is a dangerous thing in their view. How much difficulty did you have in controlling the political intelligence activities, political and military intelligence activities of your mission so that they did not get out of line and rub the Czechs the wrong way.

HORSEY: I suspect that my experience is similar to the experience of other ambassadors in iron curtain countries, and, in point of fact, in any capital where the atmosphere is hostile or unfriendly. The morale

was high, the morale of the staff of our embassy was high. I had absolutely no difficulty with any branch at the embassy; that is to say, they were all responsive to the ambassador's leadership and to the Ambassador's judgment. This was partly the result of tradition at posts of this kind, partly the result of the leadership which I gave; that is to say, I had interest and competence in the subjects dealt with by all of the members of the staff so that they grew to respect me and my judgment, competence in their subjects, constant raising of all the issues with them, and the creation of an atmosphere in which possibly controversial or delicate subjects were raised in advance. And I don't recall any difficulties with individual members of the staff or individual programs or agencies.

MOSS: Right. Now, beginning in about May of 1963, you have a shakeup in the Czech political governmental hierarchy. You have a reaction, in effect, to the difficult economic times that Czechoslovakia was going through, and you have the Premier--(Viliam) Siroky? Is that the way you pronounce his name? S-I-R-O-K-Y.

HORSEY: Probably Siroky, yes.

MOSS: . . .Siroky being removed as the . . .

HORSEY: Yes. A young man took his place.

MOSS: (Jozef) Lenart--L-E-N-A-R-T--replacing him.

HORSEY: Lenart. Jozef Lenart.

MOSS: That's in September. Back in 15 May you have the beginnings of it in which two chaps, (Drahomir) Kolder and (Karel) Bacilek--B-A-C-I-L-E-K--were ousted from the Politbureau. (Alexander) Dubcek comes in at that point. There's a question of rehabilitating (Rudolf) Slansky, who had been tried years before as an enemy. How did you, as the American representative on the scene, view this change that was developing? Let me add one point, just to get it in context here. We'll get to it in a moment or two. Luther Hodges went to the Brno Trade Fair in September of '63, and shortly after--as a matter of fact, the day after that fair was over--you have the exchange of premiers, Lenart for Siroky. I just wanted to put that in because I'll come back to it later. But let me go back and ask you how you viewed this development.

HORSEY: The visit of Secretary Hodges.

MOSS: No.



HORSEY: No, the general development in Czechoslovakia.

MOSS: The shakeup of the hierarchy, first of all, and then we'll come to the visit of Hodges.

HORSEY: Again, without consulting the historical record carefully, it'd be hard to say what process, what stage had been reached in '65, but I do recall. . . .

MOSS: '63.

HORSEY: Oh, we're back in '63.

MOSS: Right. Siroky out, Lenart in, Bacilek out, Dubcek in, Deputy Premiers (Jaromir) Dolansky and (Ludmila) Jankovcova--J-A-N-K-O-V-C-O-V-A. . . .

HORSEY: That must be a lady. Jankovcova. Must be a lady.

MOSS: And (Oldrich) Cernik comes in as deputy premier.

HORSEY: Ah, Cernik comes on the scene, yes. Well, I think the record would show that in 1962 there was a critical Congress for this purpose of the Czech Communist party which decided to adopt very belatedly, and accelerate, the process of destalinization, so to speak. Part of that process was the review of political trials, to which you've referred. That's to say, you referred to the case of Slansky, and there were, of course, thousands of others. This process of destalinization and relative liberalization started in Czechoslovakia much later than in the Soviet Union, of course, or in Poland or. . . .

MOSS: And with much less confidence than, say, in Rumania, on the part of. . . .

HORSEY: Well, it didn't really. . . . Yes, much less. Well, in Rumania there wasn't much. It didn't go very far. The essence of the Rumanian development was in gradually increasing independence of Rumanian foreign actions from Soviet control, not so much in the field of internal liberalization.

MOSS: Right.

HORSEY: In any case, this process. . . .

MOSS: I'm thinking of it in. . . .

HORSEY: . . . was evident in small ways in 1963 and

progressively more and more so. In very small ways it began to be evident--in the nonappearance, for example, of certain slogans which had been carried by the crowds on the Czech national day. The slogans are always watched in China and in the Soviet Union for their political significance. Well, suddenly we realized that there weren't any slogans to see. Well, that was very interesting to the close student of the Communist society.

Now, in 1963 they had part of the process. The impulse to change in the internal field in Czechoslovakia was due primarily to the failure of the economy. It wasn't due to any abstract preference at the top for the development of political personal freedoms. It was felt to be necessary to change the internal systems in certain respects in order to give motivation and spirit to a flagging economy. And this was why there was particular interest on the part of the Czech government, in the visit of Secretary Hodges.

MOSS: Right. Could you recount that visit for us? Do you know what led up to it?

HORSEY: My recollection is that Secretary Hodges was making a tour of a number of European countries and that probably his staff suggested that, from a review of the calendar, a stop at the Brno Trade Fair would be appropriate.

MOSS: Could you recount the way he came in and what he did? What was his. . . .

HORSEY: My recollection is that he arrived in a personal plane. Whether it was a Coast Guard aircraft or an Air Force aircraft, I don't remember. But he arrived at Brno and was met by the Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr. (Fratisek) Hamouz and, naturally, by me. He came with his wife. He's an extremely gregarious person, and he and his wife were charming. There was nothing but good will expressed on all sides during the entire visit. He did review the American exhibit at the Brno Trade Fair and the rest of the fair. He went to Prague, as I recall, at the suggestion of the Czech Government, who indicated that President Novotny would be glad to receive him. My recollection is that that initiative came from the Czech side.

MOSS: He met with President Novotny at Prague Castle. Could you describe that meeting?

HORSEY: Yes. I accompanied him to that meeting. It took place in the office which had been that of Thomas Mazaryk. It was of particular interest to me and

doubtless, I dare say, to Secretary Hodges too.

MOSS: Was the meeting perfunctory or long or what?

HORSEY: No, the meeting was far from perfunctory, but I don't recall the topics of conversation. They must. . . .

MOSS: Oh. They are in a memorandum of conversations.

HORSEY: They are in a memorandum of conversation in the record. They must have dealt with trade. I don't think they dealt in detail with this negotiation of which I spoke earlier. I think probably President Novotny made a pitch for most-favored-nation treatment being given to Czechoslovakia.

MOSS: Was it formal and stiff or relaxed or. . . .

HORSEY: No, it was rather relaxed. It was rather agreeable. President Novotny was almost joking, but serious in pointing out the Czech case.

MOSS: Did you feel that Secretary Hodges was fully on top of the situation, or was he. . . . Did you sense that he was simply going through the motions as the result of a briefing on the prospects?

HORSEY: Well, that's a difficult question because I think anybody in his position, a member of the Cabinet, would not normally deal with the minutiae of the relationships with a given country, particularly a country such as Czechoslovakia, and he would have to rely on information obtained either on the spot from me or from his staff in terms of a briefing.

MOSS: Let me ask you this. Go ahead.

HORSEY: I think the general role. . . . I think his visit gave a practical effect to the general desire of the administration--President (Lyndon B.) Johnson's administration, which was the same as President Kennedy's--to expand our relations with these countries. And he gave tangible. . . . I think the effect on them--it probably gave more significance to his visit than it merited. . . . I think the significance of the visit was that it gave tangible expression to our desire for expanded trade relationships. But I don't think the visit had any particular consequence.

MOSS: Let me change to another topic entirely. Many

ambassadors that I have interviewed have expressed the idea that it is very important for them to have an actual face-to-face meeting with their President, with their principal. I see from the record that you did not. Is this correct? Either before you went out or when you were back on consultation?

HORSEY: No. I must have asked for an interview with the President, a meeting with President Kennedy before I went, and--I forget the circumstances--presumably, it was not possible to arrange it in that time.

MOSS: Did you feel very much disadvantaged by this?

HORSEY: Not particularly. If an Ambassador says, in dealing with a foreign government, that he is speaking for his government, that's that. They're not going to be inclined to question it, and they don't particularly care whether you met the President six months previously or not. What stands behind you is the good faith and the power of the United States government. You asked very early on what one's sensations are. That might be answered now--expand on what I said, at least. One never ceases to take pride in the fact that one does represent a government of this kind. One represents the government. In addition, represents the President. That's--I don't want to downgrade Presidents, but I think it's exaggerated.

MOSS: I get the idea sometimes that a President likes to think of his ambassadors not only as the representatives of the Government in general, but as his personal representative up on the scene. Did you ever get this feeling?

HORSEY: No, because it wouldn't really apply to Czechoslovakia. I can see that Ambassador (J. Kenneth) Galbraith, for example, would like to feel that he was the personal representative of President Kennedy to (Jawaharlal) Nehru, and I think Nehru probably took satisfaction in it and gave his work there an additional measure of great ability and authority. That would be true in some cases but, in general, not.

MOSS: Let me ask you about the reaction, both in the Embassy and in Prague, to the news of the assassination.

HORSEY: Well, the reaction within the Embassy--you can imagine the typical group of Americans. I think the reaction was the same as that of any other

group of Americans, shock and dismay and intense personal regret. The reaction of the Czech Government was rather formal. I think the Foreign Minister called on me at the embassy to express the regrets of his government, and that seemed to be that, until news came over the radio that (Nikita S.) Khrushchev had called in person--if my recollection is correct--at the American embassy in Moscow. A half an hour later, a representative of President Novotny called, but he didn't go so far as to call himself.

The Czech government at our request arranged a funeral Mass at the Church of the Infant of Prague and the Mass was celebrated by the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Prague and was attended by the Chief of Protocol and by a renegade priest who was the Minister of Health. I say renegade in terms of his status within the Catholic church.

The reaction of the people of Prague was similar to that of people everywhere in the world. They came in thousands. Upwards of fifteen thousand came to the embassy to sign what is called a condolence book--in fact, sheets of paper which were subsequently sent to the Kennedy Library--and then they walked slowly through the very large and historic gardens of the Embassy, which are not normally open to the public, so that there was a stream of thousands all day, a stream of thousands of grief-stricken people filing through the Embassy and through its courtyards and around the gardens and back out again--an extraordinary expression. We sensed that the Czech Government sought, in the first hours, to control and prohibit this. It was relaxed very quickly. They sensed the magnitude of the reaction.

MOSS: Did you, in the period of transition from the Kennedy administration to the Johnson, sense any doubt as to what the future might be on the part of the Czech officials? Were they feeling out to see what was going to happen? What was their response to this?

HORSEY: I don't recall any indications of concern over change between the previous administration and President Johnson's administration.

MOSS: Is there anything, now, that you think we have left out that might be worthy of comment?

HORSEY: No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

MOSS: Okay, fine. Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Ambassador.