

Angier Biddle Duke, Oral History Interview—JFK#2, 5/1/1964
Administrative Information

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Interviewer: Frank Sieverts
Date of Interview: May 1, 1964
Length: 28 pages

Biographical Note

Duke, Chief of Protocol for the White House and State Department (1961-1965), discusses informal and state visits to the White House during John F. Kennedy's (JFK) presidency, including those of Apollo Milton Obote, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Marshal Tito, and others; visits by ceremonial monarchs; and JFK's meetings with Latin American political leaders, among other issues.

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Angier Biddle Duke, recorded interview by Frank Sieverts, May 1, 1964, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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Second of Four Oral History Interviews

with

Angier Biddle Duke

May 1, 1964

By Frank Sieverts

For the John F. Kennedy Library

SIEVERTS: This is Frank Sieverts and we're continuing with the recording that was made May 1st, 1964, and I'm talking to Ambassador Duke, the State Department Chief of Protocol during the Administration of President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]. I was just asking the Ambassador if he had any recollection about some of the visitors who came to see the President and perhaps we might turn to one of them.

DUKE: Who is that?

SIEVERTS: I was thinking, recalling Ambassador Kiernan [Thomas J. Kiernan] of Ireland, because that developed into a pattern which I think is quite interesting.

DUKE: Ambassador Kiernan, in 1961, went to see the President on St. Patrick's Day or the eve of St. Patrick's Day, accompanied by Congressman Rooney [John James Rooney], I believe Congressman Keogh [Eugene James Keogh], and perhaps one or two others. And after that interview, he told me that he hoped he wouldn't have to go in with Irish-American congressmen ever again. Perhaps he didn't put it quite that strongly, but when the next year came around, he called me up and said, "I want to make sure that I go in to see the President alone." So that was the first year he did go in alone, and he also went in alone in 1963. Each time I had a chance to talk it over with him. Briefly it goes like this—he felt that at last Ireland had developed its own foreign policy and its status as a nation, to the point where it no longer needed the congressional support that it enjoyed in

Congress, in its relationship with the executive branch. Specifically, he meant that he had recommended to his government that there be a foreign office to State Department relationship rather than any kind of a detour through the Congress. He wanted to emphasize this in the ceremonial visits to the President each year on St. Patrick's Day. I think that's quite an interesting point.

SIEVERTS: Did that point get brought to the attention of President Kennedy?

DUKE: Finally, yes. But I think it spoke for itself, in the fact that he was quite specific in not wanting anybody else in his meetings with the President.

SIEVERTS: And that's the way the meetings were?

DUKE: And that's the way they were. He would take up matters with the President on the St. Patrick's Day call, which dealt with matters like the Irish brigade in the Congo, or the peacekeeping machinery on Cyprus—nothing ceremonial.

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SIEVERTS: It's interesting that it should be with the first Irish president that this new departure should occur.

DUKE: Yes. It will be interesting to see how it goes in the future.

SIEVERTS: Yes, that's right. Well, there was quite a schedule of visitors during that first year. Do you recall anything about, let's say, the country across from Ireland, Great Britain? Macmillan [M. Harold Macmillan] was here with quite an assortment of staff.

DUKE: Well, now the Macmillan visits—the British visits are always handled on a White House level, and I played a marginal role. I don't believe I can contribute anything original on these, but something may occur to me as we go along. I'd like to look back over my diary if I may.

SIEVERTS: Sure.

DUKE: Let me jump over many of the visitors whom I could describe with somewhat of a broad brush and go into some of the specifics of the unsolicited visits of Dr. Sukarno, President of Indonesia and Modibo Keita, President of Mali. Now the background of this unique visit originated at the Belgrade conference of the non-allied nations, which took place in August and the first part of September of that year. The results of the conference called for a visit of picked conference leaders to Chairman Khrushchev [Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev] and President Kennedy in order to present them with the Declaration, the results of the conference, and to enlist the support of these two world leaders for the objectives of the Belgrade meeting. We were informed that President

Keita and President Sukarno were coming on such-and-such a date. It turned out to be the 12th of September. There was very little option—there was very little we could do about it—but President Kennedy said, “Well, let us receive them with all appropriate courtesy. Give them a fair hearing—see what they have to say.” So they did alight by helicopter on the White House lawn and the President did meet them, and the press gave them the proper attention. They were escorted into the office and in a certain declamatory tone, as they settled down in the President’s office, first one and then the other harangued the President of the United States with, I would say, a certain degree of arrogance. The President of Indonesia is a very volatile and articulate man. The President of Mali looks about 7 feet tall, a magnificent human being—very impressive in physical appearance, and is a man of very keen and lively mind and very well educated too. He took great pains to impress upon the President that he was a Marxist-Leninist and represented in his person the impoverished people of the earth. He said this with pride, touching upon arrogance. With a certain forcefulness, first one and then the other presented their views of the Belgrade results as if it were a world-shaking event. But to anyone who has read through the conclusions of that conference, would find them, in spite of the language, quite harmless. It calls for, in effect, disarmament, the non-use of nuclear armament; it calls for peace and goodwill among men, and so on and so forth. And after they’d

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gotten through with this harangue, the President who had heard them out patiently, quite simply asked them if they were finished. Then he said, “Well, let me tell you that I, on behalf of the people of the United States subscribe 100% to the objectives of the conference in spite of the tone of the language. We support your platform and your program, and I’d say that you gentlemen have a job to do.” This was extremely disarming and almost disconcerting to his visitors. He said, “I believe in what you are saying. I support your views. Now, you have a much harder job—you go and sell this to Chairman Khrushchev in Moscow. Is there anything further you want to say?”

SIEVERTS: That’s very interesting. It took the wind out of their sails.

DUKE: It took the wind out of their sails and left them absolutely flatfooted. They were hard-put to think of anything else to say—except that Modibo Keita was so impressed that he asked to see the President alone the next day. He came back the following day, a chastened man, I think. A far more realistic man. A man who sized up President Kennedy and had taken his measure and decided that there was another way to approach the situation. During the second call, he talked about Mali-U.S. relations, African-U.S. relations, in a far more down to earth and realistic way, and I think he went back to his country with a much more valid assessment of this country and its leadership.

SIEVERTS: Did Sukarno come back and see the President alone too?

DUKE: No, he didn’t. He had been here before informally and seen the President several months before, and there wasn’t much for them to talk about. But the

President did see him off. He saw Sukarno and Keita off in a helicopter that went out to Andrews from the White House.

Now, let me look over and see who else we had along the line.

We had a very interesting meeting in New York with President Frondizi [Arturo Frondizi] of Argentina—they met in the President's suite in the Carlyle Hotel in New York. It had been planned for the two Presidents to have breakfast there and talk for about an hour. Frondizi turned out to be a most eloquent man. The President took a liking to him evidently at once, and what was supposed to be a short breakfast meeting lasted almost until noon.

SIEVERTS: Did Frondizi speak English?

DUKE: No, he didn't, but he had a very bright staff officer, who almost did simultaneous translation. It got to be so constructive and Frondizi

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got to be so persuasive—may I say so interesting, that the President kept canceling appointments that morning and stayed on and on. Sitting there, I became very optimistic about the future of Argentina and U.S. relations at the presidential level. Naturally we were very unhappy when we saw Frondizi swept out of power not long afterwards.

SIEVERTS: On this very point, you just made, did the President ever give any thoughts or feelings on leaders who had been to see him and who then were swept away by the tides of political or other forces?

DUKE: No, I never had time or occasion with him to reflect. We were always looking ahead.

SIEVERTS: He didn't indicate to you—of course, I was speaking of Goulart [João Goulart] at this point, but that happened after his death.

DUKE: I know he shook his head about Goulart. He knew that that one hadn't come off. It hadn't turned out to be a success, but that's a different point. You're saying that those who have been swept away—and there were several—for instance, Manuel Prado [Manuel Prado Ugarteche] of Peru...

SIEVERTS: And Bosch [Juan Emilio Bosch Gavino].

DUKE: Bosch, yes. He always seemed to have a premonition about Bosch. I can tell you how I got to know what he felt about Bosch—it was when President Betancourt [Rómulo Betancourt] was here. He talked to President Betancourt very freely about President-elect Bosch. He asked the Venezuelan his opinion about the Dominican. Betancourt, who liked Bosch very much, considered his colleague as a theoretician; said he had never had practical experience—no practical application in the art of government and that he, Betancourt, did shake his head about the possibility of Bosch

surviving. I did feel that our President, both during and after his meetings with Bosch, always was worried about and concerned about his ability to be practical—to get things done. Bosch confided in him that he was very concerned about his chief of police, and he told the President he felt that he was the major figure that he'd have to worry about. So the President said, "Well, why do you sit around worrying—why don't you do something about it?" The President was worried about Bosch—and about Bosch being able to maintain himself, and I'd say his worries were certainly justified.

Goulart of Brazil took advantage of President Kennedy in many ways. I don't think the President and he really hit it off. The Goulart visit was a mixed success here, I would say. It was billed by the press as

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being a success, but it was inconclusive in tone as well as in substance.

When we got to Rome last July—July a year ago—the Brazilian Ambassador to Rome, who was a friend of mine, Hugo Gouthier, called me on the phone at the American embassy, and said that the President of Brazil was there too. He said it would be very peculiar, very rare, very odd, if the two Presidents didn't get together, and what did I suggest? He felt that a short courtesy call might well be paid by the President of Brazil on the President of the United States. I said we were on a bilateral, bi-national visit; I didn't think we could turn it into a multilateral one, but because of the ties in the hemisphere, I'd see what could be done. So I went to see President Kennedy in the morning about breakfast time. He thought about it for a minute and he said, "Well, if we turn him down, it might make matters worse. If he really means it, and it's just a courtesy call, why don't we set it at a time just before I go and have dinner with the President of Italy [Antonio Segni]?" The dinner with the President of Italy was set for 8:30 that night. So I called Ambassador Gouthier back and told him the President would receive President Goulart at 8:15. We thought that was a pretty good idea but at about—and I'm not exaggerating—at about a quarter of eight—perhaps ten minutes of eight, Goulart turned up at Villa Taberna, Ambassador Reinhardt's [G. Frederick Reinhardt] residence in Rome, which was really dirty pool.

SIEVERTS: In other words, a half-hour early?

DUKE: A full half-hour early! The President was having a bath and perhaps a massage—at least he was getting some rest at the time—he hadn't even started to dress—when the President of Brazil presented himself downstairs. Well, I had to go to President Kennedy's room, and he knew at once he'd been crossed up. He knew that this was premeditated, but he pulled himself together with a sigh and hurried into his clothes. I guess he got downstairs about five minutes past eight. Instead of it being a courtesy call, President Goulart brought up the subject of credits and loans, almost indecently early in the conversation. He was particularly interested in and concerned about details of German credits—an extension of credit on German manufactured goods which they were having some barter arrangement about (our desk people will know the details of it) for something like \$30,000,000. He wanted President Kennedy to take up with Chancellor Adenauer [Konrad Adenauer] some American guarantee of—or some good word on behalf

of Brazilian credit, which would assure this deal going through. Well, of course, it was a subject about which our President was not at that time informed; couldn't comment on; hadn't been briefed on; nor did he have any of his Latin American specialists with him. It was an exasperating subject to bring up at that particular moment when he had his white tie on, prepared to dine with the President of Italy. But the

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President handled it with courtesy and said he'd look into it. At the conclusion of that, President Goulart gave a signal and the whole rag, tag, and bobtail horde of Brazilian press descended upon us. We were sitting in the garden of the American Embassy residence, and he had radio men, photographers, and newsreel people swarm in to surround the table where they were sitting. This is without our American press or Italian, and there must have been—I'd say—perhaps 20 of them. While the two Presidents were talking, a microphone was shoved in front of President Kennedy's mouth, and they said, "make a statement." Now this was making an unplanned statement for the Brazilian press, radio and television; this was the rudest thing I've almost ever seen. The President said, "Wait a minute. I'll do it at the door." They just wouldn't move away, and so they listened and recorded the rest of the conversation between the two Presidents. Well, it was embarrassing and rude and a remarkable thing to do, and at the earliest possible moment I broke in to tell President Kennedy that he had his engagement with the President of Italy. At this, we walked to the door and the press people kept taking photographs and poking the microphone in his face, and before putting him in his car, he shook President Goulart's hand and made a very gracious, courteous and awfully nice statement, which I doubt I would have been able to do under the circumstances—and that was that. President Kennedy had to move on and get to his car—we had to go to the President of Italy's—nobody had a chance, at least I didn't, to get President Kennedy's offhand personal reactions to this extraordinary incident.

SIEVERTS: You didn't get it afterwards?

DUKE: No, it just was all very fast-paced.

SIEVERTS: Obviously the sort of thing that did cause some annoyance. It must have caused some annoyance, because usually these meetings, when they get substance, they have to be so well prepared on all sides—briefing papers and all that.

DUKE: Well, now, looking over this list—how are we doing on that reel?

SIEVERTS: It's fine.

DUKE: Let's talk about the President of Sudan [Ibrahim Abboud]. That was a state visit. One nice thing about the President of Sudan, he spoke English, and that's always helpful because the President could communicate and they really did have a good and pleasant and an effective relationship. The President of Finland [Urho

Kekkonen] also speaks English. I didn't sit in on all those meetings—they got onto Soviet affairs, which were substantive and interesting.

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Then we got President Léopold Senghor [Léopold Sédardar Senghor], the poet of Senegal. Prime Minister Nehru [Jawaharlal Nehru]; I'm sure there are many others who could size up the relationship between President Kennedy and Nehru, probably more than I can. I think that Nehru is a man who is self-oriented and probably less interested in President Kennedy than many of the other world leaders. He was more self-contained and more turned into himself. This drew President Kennedy to him quite a lot, because the President was very interested in Nehru. He met with him and talked with him before, and perhaps that's why there wasn't so much electricity in the air as there was in other visits. This was a far slower paced relationship, than at other times.

SIEVERTS: He'd met him before he was President?

DUKE: That's right. They knew each other, and it was rather calm and less hurried. President Nehru seemed to be more interested in his effect on the American people than he was on President Kennedy. He was keenly interested in his press relations—his "Meet the Press"—his speeches around the country. His conversations with the President, to my mind, had a certain desultory quality. He didn't have anything of real urgency to discuss with the President, at least at the White House end. They also met, I believe, up in Newport, but I didn't sit in on those conversations there; so perhaps more of the urgent matters were covered at that time than at the rather routine White House meeting, which concluded the visit.

I didn't sit in on the President of Korea's [Park Chung Hee] visit; nor many of the Adenauer meetings—there were many of them, and I don't feel that I could comment on them. I know there are a lot of things I could say about the King of Saudi Arabia's [Saud] visit but perhaps we'll wait until we get another reel.

SIEVERTS: This has another ten minutes, I'm sure—no problem.

DUKE: Well, the King of Saudi Arabia came to Boston for an eye operation. The oil companies, among other interested parties, were very, very insistent and very pressing that President Kennedy see the King. Suggestions kept coming to the White House, coming to him from various sources that he ought to see him. So, as I recall, he asked the Department to prepare a position paper on this, and the Bureau concerned got a paper out which expressed the hope that he would receive the King. So I called in the Saudi Arabian Ambassador and told him that when the King was convalescing and feeling better, the President would like to see him. Then began a long song and dance about how this thing should be worked out. Our negotiations stretched out over several months. I found, from the Saudi Arabian Ambassador, that it would be essential for the President to call on the King before the King called on the President—that this would mean a great deal, and if it were

done any other way, all the good work that we had done would be undone—that it would have serious repercussions on policy. He was so insistent that

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I did talk it over with President Kennedy. He had a good idea. He said, “Why don’t you send him down to Palm Beach to get well? If it’s all that important, I’ll do what I can to be helpful. If you get him to Palm Beach, I’ll go over and pay a call on him one day—some weekend when I am there.” Well, that saved the situation. The King rented a house on Ocean Boulevard in Palm Beach, which we helped his Ambassador find. We figured out a time when the President would be there one weekend, and I went down to Palm Beach a day ahead. At the appointed time I went to call for the President at his father’s [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] house. He was annoyed about the whole idea by then but willing to do it. He felt it was a lot of foolishness which, indeed, it was, and he enjoyed complaining about it, but at the same time willing. The meeting itself was really quite interesting, because it was the most boring performance you could possibly go through. The two men sat in the front hall of this rented house and they sat in silence. The King, in effect, said nothing, and the President was so annoyed—he was going to wait for the King to welcome him and say something. So he just waited for the King to speak. The King waited for the President to speak. They sat there for, what seemed to me, an agonizingly long time, until finally...

SIEVERTS: Who broke first?

DUKE: Well, there was an elderly courtier of some sort, who was, I think, a brother or a cousin of the King whom they used as a court chamberlain, and he spoke English. He finally broke and said that His Majesty welcomed the President, and a certain desultory conversation ensued which, I think, was remarkable for its brevity, because we were out of that house in approximately eight minutes.

SIEVERTS: You say the visit was rather brief...

DUKE: Yes, I think that that was one of the shortest on record. I think we were out of there in less than ten minutes, including the translations back and forth.

SIEVERTS: Did the King then pay the return visit to President Kennedy?

DUKE: Well, then began the pressing negotiations for the real visit—the visit to Washington, and this was quite interesting, too, because the President had quite graciously asked the King to come to Washington for a meeting and invited him for luncheon. The Ambassador came in with a long face, Ambassador Al-Khayal, and he said, “Did I realize it was Ramadan?” And I said, “Yes.” Actually I did know it was Ramadan. And he said, “Of course, you realize His Majesty will be unable to eat in the middle of the day; therefore he cannot come for luncheon.” I said, “Oh, I’m so sorry.

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That's too bad. Sorry, well, we'll see you at the White House for the meeting." He said, "Oh, no, that isn't the case at all. This would mean that His Majesty would have to come for dinner." I said, "But the King hasn't been invited for dinner." He said, "No, but he's been invited to the White House for a meal. He can't come for lunch, but he can come for dinner." I said, "But he hasn't been invited to dinner." He said, "Well, of course, you would wish to invite him to dinner, if he can't come to lunch." I said, "I'm afraid there's a misunderstanding here. We extended the invitation for lunch and you have refused. I express the President's regrets that His Majesty cannot come." This went back and forth for a long, long time, and the upshot of it was, that I said I would see if the President would change his invitation. Well, the President annoyed by this, again felt that it was the substance that mattered, and not the form. In other words, if our relationship and our position in Saudi Arabia was at stake on such a minor point, and if this were going to jeopardize the whole thing, and if the Chief of State of this Arabian nation was going to go away mad, why, of course, he'd give up an evening and ask him for dinner. So I went back to the Ambassador and told him that the President indeed would invite the King for dinner, and the Ambassador then said, "Well, we want to make absolutely certain, because of the strictness of our laws, that nothing would occur at the dinner which would offend His Majesty." I, frankly, was getting awfully annoyed myself by this time, and I quite firmly told him that the laws of hospitality in my own country were pretty well fixed. We would certainly never do anything to offend a guest, but if His Majesty were to be our guest, he would just have to pay courteous attention to our laws of hospitality. The Ambassador was quite persistent, and said, "Will alcoholic beverages be served?" I said, "I will guarantee, Your Excellency, that no one of your party ever will be offered an alcoholic beverage, but you certainly are not going to deny any American the right of following his own native habits. We have our own customs in this country, and we intend to follow them."

The dinner came off! We put a glass of orange juice at every Arab's plate, so that the waiter would know not to pour wine at that particular plate. Before dinner it was arranged to pass two separate trays, one for each nationality. They were all in Arab dress, and there was no particular problem. The dinner went off very well, particularly well from the point of view of the President, because it was over by 9:30. He was delighted about that, because at 10 o'clock, Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] went on an NBC one-hour show, showing the White House. He wanted to see it, and he had asked me previously if I could guarantee that the King would be out of the White House by 10 o'clock. He was very keen to see that TV show. Somewhat with my heart in my mouth, I guaranteed that the King would be gone by then, and I was very relieved because we managed it. I had a little private signal with the Ambassador—when we put down our coffee, this was the signal for the Ambassador to suggest to His Majesty that it was time to go. Nine-thirty came, we got him out alright.

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SIEVERTS: Did it seem afterwards that the King was satisfied with the treatment he got?

DUKE: Yes, I think he was. He was very satisfied, but there's an example of wasted effort, because he was not long afterwards displaced by Prince Faisal [Faisal

ibn Abd al Aziz ibn Saud]. All that work—well, the one thing you can say about it is, it might have been a lot worse if we didn't go to all that trouble. It could have soured...

SIEVERTS: Did the President understand this always?

DUKE: He understood it very well. There was a very particular, touchy point that came up in the conversations at the White House meeting between him and the King—the question of forbidding American Jews transit rights through Saudi Arabia. You may remember—there was a case of a congressman, I believe, who couldn't get a transit visa because he was Jewish. We also, supposedly, had an informal agreement with the Saudi Arabian government that we would not station American Jewish servicemen there. President Kennedy pushed the King very hard on this—was quite insistent and explained to him that this kind of thing just couldn't go on—that we could send whomever we wanted—that an American passport covered everybody. The King was inclined to compromise and retreat on this issue. The one thing he didn't want was any kind of public announcement or any public coverage of it. If we would just start doing it, without talking about it on either side, then it could be done. I haven't heard, frankly, what the results of this were, but President Kennedy was very firm on it, and I don't believe there are now any restrictions as a result.

SIEVERTS: But by this time, it was probably painfully clear to him that he had a lot of people to entertain and he had to do these things all the time. Did you find him a willing client, or a willing actor in his role to which he had assigned himself, of entertaining state visitors? I just realized I should have opened this tape by just making it clear who we are again. I'm Frank Sieverts, and I'm interviewing Ambassador Duke for the Oral History Project. This is May 1, 1964.

DUKE: I think that there was never any doubt in his mind, ever, that he was taking the leading role in the conversations between this country and world leaders. I'd like to say that no one else participated in these conversations unless they were called in by the President [John F. Kennedy]. The Secretary of Defense [Robert S. McNamara], the Secretary of State [Dean Rusk], the head of our AID [Agency for International Development] program [Teodoro Moscoso], might on occasion be present in the room, but they never spoke—and I've seen other techniques used by other presidents in other countries, and I've heard about General Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower]—how he did it. It was always President Kennedy

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who carried on, not just the burden of the conversation, but I would say, the entire conversation, from beginning to end—always, without exception.

SIEVERTS: Did the leaders who were visiting him—did they respond in the same way, or did some of them have to lean heavily on their aides?

DUKE: Some of them could hardly speak at all. They'd ask the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Finance, to answer for them. Our President would then deal with the experts himself. The President also never permitted himself to be interrupted in any of these meetings. There would be notes passed to him, usually by Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln], but he never answered a phone call, nor did he leave the room during the vast majority of these meetings. To me it was a very marvelous thing to see the totality of his attention to each of these world leaders.

SIEVERTS: Were these marks of courtesy and respect to the visitor?

DUKE: I will give you the classic example, which occurred during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I had come back with the Crown Prince of Libya [Hasan al-Rida al-Sanusi] on the plane, returning from the inauguration of Prime Minister Obote [Apollo Milton Obote] of Uganda. The President had sent his delegation with Senator Ben Smith [Benjamin A. Smith, II] as chairman, and other members of an official party to represent him at the independence of Uganda. On the way back, this plane picked up the Crown Prince of Libya in Tripoli and we all returned together to the United States. I tell you that, because sometime later in the year—this was 1962 wasn't it?—the Cuban crisis erupted right in the middle of Prime Minister Obote's visit to Washington.

SIEVERTS: That's right. It's October, 1962.

DUKE: October, '62. If I remember, October 29 is the day the Prime Minister called on the President—(it would be interesting to see if I'm right, by looking at this list.).

SIEVERTS: The crisis was October 22, he spoke to—was Obote here during the week?

DUKE: It was during that week. It was the afternoon the President went on the air, nationwide.

SIEVERTS: You're off by just a week.

DUKE: Am I?

SIEVERTS: It was October 22.

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DUKE: ...October 22—you're right. Well that evening, of October 22, at 6 o'clock, the President went on the air, nationwide, to give the public the first real intimation of what was going on. This was the President's announcement, briefing, background talk on the Cuban subject. Our appointment with the President, if I recall it, was 4 o'clock that afternoon. I had been in on the briefing with some of the

ambassadors at the State Department that morning, and I was conscious of the growing urgency and the growing sense of crisis, but at the same time I had my own particular responsibility to the visiting Prime Minister, who was staying at Blair House. No matter what else was going on, I had to worry about him get him to the State Department for lunch—take him to Arlington—get him back to Blair House—and get him to the White House for his appointment with the President. When we got over there, I saw what looked like the entire National Security Council walking in the Rose Garden.

I saw General Maxwell Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor]; I saw General Lemnitzer [Lyman L. Lemnitzer]; I saw Dean Rusk, Secretary McNamara; I saw the key members of the Cabinet and so forth—all in an atmosphere of gravity and tension. I didn't bring the Prime Minister and his other Ministers up to date on what was going on. It was not for me to tell him what it was all about, but I was worried—very worried—if the President would be able to see him. The appointment was at 4 o'clock, and we went into the Fish Room, and we sat there—it got to be 4 o'clock and it got to be 5 and perhaps 10 minutes past 4 o'clock, but then the President came in, greeted him warmly, brought him into the Cabinet Room. We sat down in almost leisurely style. Again I saw the Security Council members going past the French windows of the Cabinet Room in the Rose Garden.

The President settled down into a discussion with Obote of Uganda-U.S. relations, specifically, and African-American relations in general—that took almost an hour. It took, well, right up to 5 o'clock, in the most relaxed, pleasant, friendly, charming atmosphere. You would have thought, sitting there, that the only things that mattered were the subjects under discussion. On my part, I was nervous, worried—really not knowing who was going to come in—rush in with the latest on what, and terribly anxious and concerned at the same time, that this tone be continued. The President concentrated on his guest, asked him questions and let him talk, yet he never mentioned a word of his own problems or preoccupations. They say there expansively telling stories, seemingly completely oblivious of what was going on in the turmoil of the crisis atmosphere outside.

SIEVERTS: The Prime Minister didn't recognize these figures outside?

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DUKE: No, he probably thought this was the normal atmosphere of the White House.

SIEVERTS: White House aides, or something like that?

DUKE: That's right, and completely unconscious of our national crisis. He talked about the inauguration of his country's independence—how kind it was to send Senator Ben Smith, the President's former Harvard roommate out there—and in all it was a highly successful meeting. I took him out of the White House shortly after 5 o'clock and brought him back to the Blair House and, at that point, I turned to Mr. Obote and I said, "We're having what amounts to a crisis going on, and I wonder, Sir, if you'd like to see the President discussing it on television? He's coming on in a few minutes." He was very surprised to hear it, and said, "Well, certainly, I'd be delighted. I haven't seen television since I've been in the country anyway. I'd be most interested to see it." And so that

was my way of getting to that television set, because I wanted to hear what the President was going to say, too. So the Prime Minister and I sat down at Blair House in front of the TV and that was the way that he was initiated into our problems over the Russian missiles in Cuba.

SIEVERTS: Like most of the rest of the world...

DUKE: Yes, exactly.

SIEVERTS: What was his reaction? Did he—did it occur to him what an extraordinary experience he had?

DUKE: No, it didn't seem to, and I didn't want to spell it out for him. He took it quite naturally. But he was terribly self-centered. After all, it was a big thing for him to have been in the U.S. as his country's first leader and to have been on such terms with the President of the United States. He was thinking entirely of himself, Uganda and African-U.S. relations. That illustrates the compartmentalization that the President was capable of and his ability to concentrate upon the problem at hand.

SIEVERTS: Was there anyone else during that week? I was just wondering about that particular week of the Cuban crisis. Was there anyone else that had been to see the President? No, that's prior to it.

DUKE: No, no one else that week. Well anyway, going on in somewhat more chronological order, we go to—let's see—this is '62 still—Prime Minister Adoula [Cyrille Adoula] of the Congo, Another person I think that really impressed the President very much; he was a different type of African leader—and that was Sylvanus Olympio [Sylvanus E. Olympio], the President of Togo, who was a remarkable man. The President understood his unique quality. He was the only African leader who had ever been a businessman. This was exceptional

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in itself. Before Togo's independence, he had served as vice president of Lever Brothers for West Africa, and the President was curious about that, because he was used to academicians, lawyers, politicians, labor leaders, and so forth. To find a successful businessman as an African leader was a curiosity and most interesting and, of course, Olympio was so articulate. They got along terribly well, and that was interesting too.

The Shah of Iran [Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi] was very interested in the President, for particular reasons. The Shah had no doubt whatsoever about the power of the United States, but I got to learning about the Shah's other concerns in my talks with him after meeting President Kennedy. He had an idea, a preconception of President Kennedy as if he were a European-style liberal leader of the 1920s or '30s. He thought liberal meant appeaser. While he knew that the U.S. was powerful, he was very doubtful that the U.S. leadership was willing to commit its power against the Soviet Union on behalf of a country like Iran. He just, in effect, did not believe it. He obviously did not know the President. He had evidently

very serious doubts about him, and these doubts were expressed in many ways, and they were also expressed to Chester Bowles [Chester B. Bowles] in a rather famous conversation, which Chester Bowles had had not long before with the Shah out in Tehran. The Shah arrived in this country, highly alarmed about our purpose and our decisiveness and our ability to make up our minds to commit ourselves. He was very impressed by the Eisenhower decision to land troops in Lebanon, Beirut, during the crisis there several years ago. He didn't think that we were capable of this type of action during a Democratic administration under the leadership of President Kennedy. So he had come to size him up personally.

SIEVERTS: It sounds like some foreign leaders are impressed by Republican propaganda. It amounts to that.

DUKE: Amounts to that, yes. So it was with the consciousness of that point of view that I look back on the meetings.

SIEVERTS: Was the President aware of this?

DUKE: I believe the President became aware of this. He was made aware of it, I'm sure.

SIEVERTS: Did you sit in on the meetings?

DUKE: I sat in on some of the meetings, and there was one thing that the President did in an impromptu and spontaneous way. He was going to attend joint military maneuvers at Cherry Point, North Carolina and, on the spur of the moment, he asked the Shah if he'd like to come along with him. It seemed to be spontaneous—an unexpected gesture—and, of course, the Shah accepted with great pleasure. I came down on a plane with the Shah, and we joined the President for the maneuvers and they were very impressive maneuvers indeed. The point was not lost upon the Shah. I think it has to be said that the President, by this and by the conversations, dissolved the

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last reservoir of reserve that the Shah had, and I think he truly went away feeling that we were in pretty good hands. Then let's see—the André Malraux visit we didn't handle here in this office. I know the President put a great deal of emphasis and a lot of interest in that one, and I'm sure you ought to get details and background on it from somebody in the Department, like Battle [Lucius D. Battle], for instance.

SIEVERTS: On France, in general, we really haven't said a word about any French visitors, and the de Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle] question is always fascinating. He went to see de Gaulle.

DUKE: Yes, I was in on that but didn't sit in on the substantive meetings between de Gaulle and the President. I sat behind them at the ballet at Versailles, and I

traveled around and so forth, and saw them together a lot, but I didn't sit in on the actual substantive conversations. Certainly they had a great respect for each other—a great courtesy—but one wonders just how well General de Gaulle was able to size up President Kennedy through his language barrier. I just wonder how much he himself was able to get of the President—I wonder how much was lost in translations.

SIEVERTS: Why was the Malraux visit taken so seriously? Was it a way to reach de Gaulle, do you feel?

DUKE: Well, part of it, I think, was Mrs. Kennedy's interest. De Gaulle's Cultural Minister was so charming and delightful to her when we were in France for the State visit. He took her to the Jeu de Pomme Museum, for example, and was, in effect, an extra host part of the time that she was in Paris. I am sure she wanted to return that courtesy, and I feel also, that the President realized how close Malraux had always been to de Gaulle, and that obviously this would be a useful thing to do. But technically, we don't handle ministers in my office.

SIEVERTS: No, I understand that.

DUKE: So, this didn't come into my province, although to tell you the truth, we paid for the dinner...

SIEVERTS: Well, I think your office winds up paying for almost everything around here.

DUKE: Makarios [Makarios, III] of Cyprus—one wonders just how much we reached him; how much of our purpose and our attitude, and how much the President reached Makarios himself, even though he could speak English. I don't think that the Archbishop really wanted to come to terms with President Kennedy and talk to him frankly. I think he wanted to avoid commitments, and I think he just

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wanted to make the point back home and in Greece and Turkey that he was on good speaking terms with the President of the United States. This was a prestige visit for him. Everything we did in connection with the visit was to the end that we build up his standing. When President Kennedy got into the serious conversations, my impression was that the Cypriote wasn't anxious to be very revealing about his problems or to make much progress, and I don't think we really accomplished much during that visit. President Kennedy seemed to recognize the Byzantine nature of his guest and tacitly refrained from pushing him into definable positions.

SIEVERTS: That was one in which they both spoke English, I imagine.

DUKE: Yes, it was. They did, but somehow or another Makarios gave the impression of avoiding any depth in the conversations. So I don't think we got far. I see

that the next visit is President Chiari [Roberto F. Chiari] of Panama. Here's one that I think was an opportunity lost, because the President and Chiari truly got along very well, and they were very frank with one another. There must be fascinating minutes to that meeting which I haven't read. They must make for extraordinary reading, because the President was very frank and very open, and he affirmed the need for a reevaluation of the usefulness of the Panama Canal, both to the United States, to Panama, to the world. I mean—is it a horse and buggy operation in this space age? Is it defensible in an atomic age? If so, where should the sovereign over it reside in these times? Is sovereignty in itself worth anything there anyway? It was a very interesting and useful conversation, because it was unreserved and not conducted from positions of prejudice. I think the spirit and tone were breathtaking to President Chiari, and he became very anxious to pin things down. Our President wasn't interested in being pinned down, but he was interested in a completely open-minded attitude on everything, including the question of sovereignty, flags, and everything else. It came out, if you will remember, that both sides agreed to submit all these questions to a committee, which was to be appointed by both sides, where all these questions would be reviewed and examined. Then after the last meeting, the President walked President Chiari out of his office down the drive over to the Blair House. It was a lovely day as they walked down Pennsylvania Avenue, tailed by Secret Service and photographers. He took him to the door of Blair House and the press made a great deal of this, because it had been the first time it had been done, and it was an awfully nice gesture, which was particularly appreciated by the President of Panama. My impression was that he left, really feeling very warm and hopeful for the future. I often wondered why here, in the State Department, there was such a time lag between this very successful series of meetings and the terrible events in Panama last fall, because I certainly don't see why that team wasn't appointed from our side—and why each side didn't get to work. So I think it would be

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useful to do a little digging here and find out why we didn't appoint our team and why we didn't follow up on what had been a most constructive, pleasant and reassuring atmosphere. It was too bad that this seemed to drop, because if it hadn't, I am sure the dialogue could at least have continued, and I don't think we'd have had these riots and we might not have been in the spot we're in today.

SIEVERTS: Yes. It was the situation during and after the riots when communications did break down, and that was the problem. We've been trying to open them ever since between ourselves and Panama. And here a basis had been made, as you point out.

DUKE: Yes. Something could have come out of it. Next we get to Prime Minister Menzies [Robert Gordon Menzies] of Australia, who is a delightful working politician. I remember going to a luncheon that Sir Howard Beale gave at the Australian Embassy for him, which was attended by the Attorney General. In his remarks at the luncheon, the Prime Minister alluded to the fact that we appointed such venerable figures in American life as Robert F. Kennedy, and he pointed out that he was the Attorney General

of Australia at the age of 32. So he referred to Bob Kennedy as his senior, in that spot. Of course, he and the President got on terribly well. Nothing of substance that I recall there though.

SIEVERTS: Another figure that reminds me just in looks of Menzies was the man who was the Prime Minister of the Central African Federation, Welensky [Roy Welensky]. He visited here once.

DUKE: Yes, he did. His was not a sovereign state, and I didn't go in with him.

SIEVERTS: He was a colony.

DUKE: That's right. So I didn't meet him. Dr. Ramon Villeda Morales of Honduras, who was swept out of office since then—a very fine man—sorry about his going. The President-elect of Colombia, Dr. Guillermo León Valencia, came up here before he was inaugurated. It was useful; it was setting the stage for his taking over. Bustamante [William Alexander Bustamante] of Jamaica came to the meeting in the Cabinet Room with a very large box of cigars in a beautifully carved mahogany box and presented it to the President. The President started smoking his cigar, and he said, "Now, Mr. Prime Minister, can you give me assurances that there's no Cuban tobacco in this cigar?" The Prime Minister had to back down a bit, and said that the cigar had been made in Jamaica but he wasn't absolutely certain where all the tobacco came from.

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Now, let's see what else we've got here.

Well, poor old Arosemena [Carlos Julio Arosemena Monroy] of Ecuador. I'm sorry if I'm telling too many funny stories—I apologize if I do. Arosemena was the first drunken Chief of State that the President ever received. The story goes like this. The President of Ecuador, who was really quite an intelligent man and came here very keen, was very nervous. The first meeting with the President was very successful and the tone of the meeting was good. The whole first day was a great success, and so President Kennedy went to the Ecuadorian embassy luncheon the next day. The moment we walked in the door of the Ecuadorian embassy the atmosphere was one of relief, and in effect the feeling was, "the visit is over—it's been a great success—have a martini." So all during lunch there was plenty of wine. I don't know how much had been consumed before we got there. It was a very expansive and pleasant and happy atmosphere. I wished it could have remained that way, but what happened was that this atmosphere continued until the 4 o'clock meeting. I left with President Kennedy shortly before 3 o'clock and went back for the President of Ecuador. By the time I got back to the Ecuadorian embassy, he had gone right on, evidently with brandy, cordial and so forth. So we rode down to the White House in an atmosphere of really high good humor. I didn't quite realize how high, until I brought him into the President's office, and when I got him in there, I found that he was almost incoherent. The President took a good hard look at him and said, "Mr. President, you've had a hard day. Let's go and have a little walk in the Rose Garden." It was a marvelous face-saving device. The ministers and the

Ambassador in the Cabinet Room were absolutely scandalized and were worried about what was happening in the office. They watched through the French windows there—saw the two Presidents walking around the lawn. I think that really truly saved the situation. They talked about nothing, I'm sure, of any consequence. When he'd been out there for an appropriate length of time, the President walked his guest back to the Cabinet Room where poor President Arosemena, who was still incoherent, sat silently, while President Kennedy did the amenities and said goodbye to the ministers. We got him out the door and there was no real incident. The people who leaked it to the press were the Ecuadorians.

SIEVERTS: In the end, they got to him in Ecuador, didn't they?

DUKE: Yes, they did.

SIEVERTS: Did Arosemena speak English?

DUKE: Yes, he spoke English.

The President did see Crown Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia in a much different type of meeting than he had with his brother, the King. It was a much more pointed and a much more substantive visit. It was just a meeting in his office. All I remember is—I remember being impressed by Prince Faisal, and since then I have wished him well. I hope he works it

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out.

The President of Guinea, Sékou Touré—I'm trying to think if that's the first or the second visit. I think that's the first visit, and then the second visit is the one I want to discuss later. I wasn't here for Ben Bella's [Ahmed Ben Bella] visit. One thing might be said about the Algerian visit—we had always had great difficulty in persuading any Chief of State to land by helicopter on the White House lawn—that would have been considered inadequate because it was considered essential to be greeted at the airport. Nobody would accept our invitation to try it out. Cyprus was the one I tried to make do it, saying that it would go down in history, if they were the first to land their president at the White House, but Ambassador Rossides [Zenon Rossides] said he didn't want his to be the first country to be downgraded in the eyes of the world. Well, Algeria had just become independent—didn't have an ambassador here—didn't have much choice in the matter—so I scheduled a helicopter to pick Ben Bella up at Andrews and bring him to the White House lawn for landing there. Having established that precedent, all future states were...

SIEVERTS: And Ben Bella took it in good spirits?

DUKE: Took it in good spirits.

SIEVERTS: I would think, from my own point of view, it would be upgrading.

DUKE: It was, in our point of view. It was a great show, and it worked out fine. So I look with gratitude on Ben Bella for this device. His neighbor's visit, the Crown Prince of Libya, I don't regard as being a great success, because of the personality of the individual. He hardly spoke the whole time he was here. Funny thing about other Africans who have suffered under colonization, they seem to take on the attributes of the metropolitan power, and that's perhaps why the Somalis are so attractive. They're bright, intelligent, alert—almost Italian in their conversation and in their presentation—just delightful and attractive—very much like the Italians.

Then it's a big switch to the President of the Republic of Chile. There was one curious conversation I remember with President Jorge Alessandri Rodriguez. Our President was very interested in his relationship with the Chilean press.

SIEVERTS: This was Alessandri, wasn't it?

DUKE: Yes. President Kennedy amazed me because he had evidently done some research on the Chilean press. He said, "How is it that the Chilean press is owned by the so-called oligarchy and yet is so terribly left-wing in tone? How do you account for it, and how do you get along with the

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Chilean press?" He said, "Well, first of all, yes, it is owned by the oligarchy, but they are only interested in making money, and as the left-wing tone of the press is popular, that sells the papers." He said that was the reason why they permit it and secondly, that he didn't get on too well with his own Chilean press. He was very anxious and interested in how President Kennedy handled his press—the President asked, "Would you like to go to my press conference?" So President Alessandri became the first visiting Chief of State to attend a presidential press conference and, of course, the performance that President Kennedy put on made a deep impression on the Chilean.

SIEVERTS: He had never tried that himself, I imagine.

DUKE: No. He was always very reserved with our press, and I can't help but wonder what he did when he got back to Chile. Again, you never have time to follow up on these things.

We go on to Juan Bosch. I think I've touched on him. The fact that he had great hopes for him, the President was charming to him but worried about him, and expressed his worry to him and about him afterwards. Betancourt and the President, of course, hit it off terribly well. They spoke the same language. The President always had an idea of forming a closer relationship. He talked this over—one of the few things he talked over with me at any length. He talked over the idea of forming a closer association of the democratically-elected presidents of the Western hemisphere. He wanted to find a formula for meeting them more—if it would help the Alliance for Progress. But he particularly wanted to meet with the President of Costa Rica, the President of Venezuela, Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic—he liked Frondizi of Argentina, too. He was seeking for some way that the

democratic Chief of State—the constitutionally elected presidents could form an association. They should be able to meet each other without formality and more frequently. We discussed the possibility of meetings in Palm Beach in the winter, having them fly in for a weekend. We also discussed the possibility of the President going down from Palm Beach to Caracas, where he could meet with some of the others, but nothing came of it. It was after meetings with Bosch and Betancourt that he wanted to do it.

SIEVERTS: How would he have selected which ones would have fitted into this?

DUKE: Well, it was rather arbitrary. I think out of this—and I'd like to hear Ed Martin's view—out of it came the idea for his meeting with the Central American presidents, in March of 1963. But the Bureau was rather cool on this idea of his meeting with the democratic presidents.

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They felt that you couldn't establish the criteria. It was also felt that it was useful for each president to come to Washington. You see, there is more to bilateral relationships than just meeting with the president and the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs did not encourage the idea of limiting meetings to the presidential level. It was interesting that he thought about it.

SIEVERTS: His heart really was in the idea of having the Alliance do things for and with the democratically elected governments and presidents of Latin America.

DUKE: Yes, that's right. He wanted to get it off the level of officialdom. He groped around for some formula, as I say, such as frequent meetings in Florida.

SIEVERTS: Joe Kraft [Joseph Kraft] wrote in *Harper's* some time ago—I guess it was in his eulogy or obituary of President Kennedy—that he was the first president to really understand that the conduct of foreign leaders is motivated by their domestic politics. Did the President show an awareness of this when you were with him? He would understand that someone was saying something because he had a large left-wing back home?

DUKE: Of course.

SIEVERTS: Did he show this in any way?

DUKE: Yes. Because, you see, conversations take place on so many different planes. There's the private conversation, when the two of them level; there's the kind of conversation that takes place in the Cabinet Room, where the visitor is talking in front of his ministers; there's also the press conference that the visitor gives when he tells about his conversations with the President; and there's also conversation with journalists of his own country—so there's the American press, the foreign press, the

ministers, and then there's the private conversations. Each one of them can be totally different.

SIEVERTS: The President understood that each of these men had the several audiences they were trying to deal with.

DUKE: Of course, the President had it too. He had it with Congress. Yes, I go back to Archbishop Makarios, who appeared to be going through an act as if he were doing this whole charade for home consumption. When the President saw that he wasn't really interested in talking to him straight, well he lost interest—but he played along.

SIEVERTS: He'd let him play out the scene?

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DUKE: Right. He'd play out the act—he wasn't going to bring up the treatment of the Turkish minority, for instance. And so Makarios didn't want to talk to him about it—we might as well go out and have a photograph taken.

There were certain things that our poor President had to go through—like the visit of the King of Laos. This was pretty hard to take, in that it reminds me a little of Sukarno and the President of Mali, because the King of Laos [Savang Vatthana] announced to us that he was coming. There was very little we could do about it because he was coming, supposedly to thank us for U.S. participation in the international agreement on Laos. He was visiting all the countries that had signed the agreement, telling us when he was coming, whether or not it was convenient for us. Well, of course, it wasn't convenient at all. But the President was a good sport and, as the King of Laos cannot speak for his government, cannot make any decisions, as he is purely a ceremonial figure, it was a pure waste of time. But that's one of the penalties of being a Chief of State and Chief of Government at the same time. President Kennedy went through this one as best he could, including going to the embassy of Laos for the King's reception, which was a completely pointless, empty performance.

On the other hand, the King of Morocco's [Hassan II] visit, which followed that, in March of '63, was a far more substantive one. I think you could compare the King of Morocco's visit somewhat with the Shah of Iran's, in that the King of Morocco wanted to size up the President too. He wanted to understand him as a person, a human being, and size him up in terms of American policy in North Africa. While very little seemed to be accomplished in the meetings, there were some plus factors. King Hassan tried to explain his insistence on our getting our bases out of Morocco. The President was very understanding about that and offered all our assistance in making these bases useful to Morocco after we withdrew our personnel—a most understanding type of conversation—very useful for the King of Morocco to see what the President was made of. It was a useful visit.

The one visit that the President was very annoyed about from the very beginning, was the visit of the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg [Charlotte]...

SIEVERTS: The longest reigning monarch in the world, isn't she?

DUKE: Yes. I think she has, as Chief of State, more seniority than anybody including Haile Selassie and the Emperor of Japan [Hirohito]—even more than Franco [Francisco Franco] of Spain and all the rest of them—or Salazar [António de Oliveira Salazar] of Portugal. Well, anyway, he just couldn't understand that. He felt that there should

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be better use of his time. The European Bureau had written a paper on this, and Mac Bundy [McGeorge Bundy] had passed, and the President had approved it; but in conversations with me, he said that he wanted me to go back and write him in my own words why I thought it would be a good idea for him to receive her. So I did. I went back and I told him that we had to pay attention to the small, weak and poor nations, just like we would to the rich and powerful ones like the Soviet Union. Luxembourg was tiny and weak and had been overrun by the Nazis. The Grand Duchess had received refuge from Franklin Delano Roosevelt. That he had sent a destroyer to Lisbon for her—that he had extended hospitality to her at Hyde Park and at the White House, I think that this meant something to President Kennedy.

SIEVERTS: About Roosevelt?

DUKE: Yes, and the Nazi persecution which had driven her out of her homeland. Why, I think that meant more to him than perhaps some of the other more political arguments!

SIEVERTS: Hadn't her visit been postponed?

DUKE: It had. It had been postponed from the previous fall, really because of the Cuban crisis. Also, the Grand Duchess' husband [Felix, Prince of Bourbon-Parma] wasn't feeling well. He had arthritis or something—the combination of the two. It really would have been tough to postpone it again. It did come off—he did go through it bravely and nobly—but he certainly didn't enjoy it much.

On the Prime Minister Pearson [Lester B. Pearson] visit, I didn't participate. That was up in Hyannis.

SIEVERTS: This was just after he was elected?

DUKE: Yes. I understand that that was a great success. Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] was in on that one. He'd have some comment. The President of India, even though he was entirely a ceremonial figure without any political or governmental responsibilities the President was terribly interested in talking to him, and it was highly successful from the point of view of the dialogue exchanged.

SIEVERTS: This is Radhakrishnan [Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan]?

DUKE: Yes. Now, let's see what we've got after that. Tanganyika—well, that was in July. That was after our European trip. I think the subjects of the President's trips abroad we ought to cover separately.

SIEVERTS: Fine, I think that would be a better idea.

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DUKE: I won't do it chronologically. So Nyerere [Julius K. Nyerere] was an attractive and articulate figure with whom he got along terribly well. They liked each other immensely—a charming, graceful person Julius Nyerere is. I wish I could point out to you something. It was the time, in preparation for our long, hot summer of civil rights here, and we were very conscious of it. Martin Luther King [Martin Luther King, Jr.] was in town.

SIEVERTS: Summer of 1963?

DUKE: Yes, that's right—culminating in the Freedom March in August. It was just a month before that in July that the President of Tanganyika came at the moment when it was very much on everybody's mind, including the President, and the President did discuss it with him. Martin Luther King was invited to the reception for Mr. Nyerere who, by the way, stayed at my house on Foxhall Road because Blair House was shut for repairs. So we turned our house over to the Tanganyikians. My wife [Robin Chandler Lynn Duke] and I moved into a hotel.

Well, then we go on to Haile Selassie, which was the next big state visit.

SIEVERTS: Which has since been made the subject of television broadcast.

DUKE: Yes, David Brinkley did a documentary on that. The Ethiopians and Haile Selassie were terribly concerned about the Somali border dispute and the possibility of Chinese support to the Somali. We were concerned on our side about a tracking station which was being built in Asmara, which was going to be the largest single architectural landmark, I think, in that Eritrea city. One of the ways to get around this, particularly this last point about the tracking station, was for the President to congratulate the Emperor on his interest in the space age and in science, to thank him very much for participating in the development of space projects in his country, such as the tracking station we were building in Asmara. It was thought by the African Bureau of State that this was the first time the Emperor had ever heard of it, so I think that the point was made, and I never heard any Ethiopian objection to our building the tracking station.

SIEVERTS: Very well handled!

DUKE: I think we got through on that particular point.

SIEVERTS: Did the President cooperate happily with Dave Brinkley and NBC or was

that...

DUKE: Well, we cleared this with Pierre Salinger.

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SIEVERTS: There's always some television coverage and you get so used to it that public occasions of these kinds...

DUKE: Well, our problem was more with the Ethiopians than with the White House. What we did was—we had Dave Brinkley go to Pierre Salinger, and he gave them every cooperation from the White House end. I had Bob Manning [Robert J. Manning] clear it over here, and we worked with the public affairs people at the White House and here. We had to get the Ethiopians' cooperation. But as far as the President and Mrs. Kennedy were concerned, I doubt if they were conscious of it.

SIEVERTS: Just another camera.

DUKE: Just another camera, yes. The only difference was, in this visit I wore one of those invisible microphones taped under my necktie, and in making the introductions, and in going through the visit, I had this portable mike on. This brought the President's and Mrs. Kennedy's replies into range, which was the only difference from recording any other visit. I can't really recall anything between the President and the Emperor that would be noteworthy at this particular moment.

Prime Minister Lemass [Sean Lemass] of Ireland was a pleasure and a delight.

We did have some worries about Tito [Marshal Tito], and I did confer with the President quite a lot on the arrangements for the Tito visit. He was concerned—he was concerned about several things. He knew that Pat Brown [Edmund G. Brown] in California had made a commitment—had extended an invitation to Tito, and he was worried about the effect of Tito in California. His worry was right, because when the time came, as it neared for Tito to go to California, Governor Brown got colder and colder feet on the subject and tried to cut down on his commitment to play host to Tito. He shifted his own dinner that he was going to give for the President of Yugoslavia to the Council on World Affairs, for example. There was the problem of getting the Governor to meet the plane, which he became more and more reluctant to do. The whole thing was solved by Tito getting sick and not going to California. But I bring it up to explain that the President realized that Brown was going to be in trouble and talked to me about it. In fact, he was in touch with me on every step of the planning. For instance, he had the idea of sending George Kennan [George Frost Kennan] down to meet him upon arrival at Williamsburg. He wanted Tito to come to the White House without being subjected to any picketing around Washington. He worked it out that he would fly in to the South Lawn, have lunch, and, if necessary, be helicoptered out to Williamsburg that same day. It all came off as planned, except that, actually we were able to send President Tito out after luncheon in unmarked cars without flags to his embassy and nothing happened.

SIEVERTS: There was nothing?

DUKE: There was nothing.

SIEVERTS: Wasn't the entire visit sort of done with an eye to make sure that there were no incidents of this kind?

DUKE: That's right. It was. And the President really checked on every single detail, all the way through.

SIEVERTS: The California part was the only part where he might have...

DUKE: Run into trouble? He actually ran into trouble in New York.

SIEVERTS: Did he?

DUKE: But, let me just think. I want to say one thing about the meeting. There are probably many notes, memoranda, and so forth on that meeting. But one of the things that amused me and impressed me it was the fact that Tito wanted to be treated as a world leader above partisan politics, as a man of peace and a respectable, venerable world statesman. That was the way he presented himself in the meeting with President Kennedy, but our President, I think, was a little anxious to go beyond that. He started to ask him about his trip to Latin America. And as a matter of fact, I'd love to see the notes on what was said back and forth on their discussions about Latin America, because it was a very interesting discussion. Tito's estimate of development in Latin America, political development, and economic development—there was a very interesting exchange and quite unorthodox in some ways. The President said, "Who do you think is winning the race within the Communist Party, the Chinese or the Russians in the Marxist-Leninist Parties of Latin America?" And Tito looked almost like he'd been slapped in the face. He said, "Mr. President, you know I would never interfere in the internal politics of a host nation. I know nothing of the Communist Parties' structure. I had nothing to do with politics or political life or partisan politics in any country I visited." He made this as a rather pompous statement. The President said, in effect, "Oh come off it—look, I asked for your opinion, I didn't ask you for a report. Now come on and tell me, who's winning in the Communist Party apparatus in Latin America, the Chinese or the Russians?" So somewhat mollified, Tito said, "Well, if you're really going to put it that way, I will tell you." And he said, "the Soviet blocs in the Communist Party are cautious and trying to be careful and conservative." And he said, "It is the Chinese element, which is in a minority, that is creating the most difficulty and, frankly, is probably thrusting its way to the leadership. They're the ones that are probably going to emerge in the long run

as the leaders in Latin America of the Communist Party apparatus.”—which was an interesting assessment to hear from Tito, as he is now on the Soviet side.

SIEVERTS: Yes, that is interesting, and also the way the President had to pump him.

DUKE: Yes, pump him and rephrase the question and go around, and everything else. It was. One more incident that I think I should mention. When we got to New York, I stayed with him for the first few days, and then I had to come back to Washington. I left a protocol officer in charge. The security arrangements were extraordinary. I’ve never seen anything similar before or since.

SIEVERTS: For Tito?

DUKE: Yes, but the hotel employees themselves were evidently penetrated by Ustashi refugees or Croatian refugees, or ex-employees of the hotel, who knew how the elevators worked, and how they could go up two floors, cross over, and go up several more, walk four flights—details like that.

One night I was sitting in Constitution Hall in Washington at a United Nation's Day concert, and the Secretary of State was called out of the concert. I saw him leave the room, and five minutes later I was called out, as the Secretary had just received a call from the Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia in New York. He said that two demonstrators, rioters, agents or two whatever he called them—saboteurs—had penetrated security and reached the floor on which the President was staying. The security of President Tito was thus threatened, and what were we going to do about it? I called the White House and got Pierre Salinger and told him the situation, leaving it up to him as to whether or not to get through to the President on it. On the other hand, I was concerned that it might get to the President some other way. I waited there by the phone booth in Constitution Hall with General Clifton [Chester V. Clifton, Jr.], whom I also conferred with as to what to do. Secretary Rusk told me to stay and then report to him what happened. Soon the President called back, and we talked over the situation—he liked the idea of having Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] handle it. It was then—let’s say an hour later—about 11:30. By the way, the President had been asleep, which was rather extraordinary, Pierre told me. I suggested that Adlai Stevenson go and call on Tito, right then and there—that evening.

SIEVERTS: Was that the same hotel?

DUKE: Adlai lived at the Waldorf.

SIEVERTS: In other words, Tito was at the Waldorf, too?

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DUKE: Yes. So, the President said, “Yes, for gosh sakes, get hold of Stevenson. Get him up there to Tito’s room, and then we’ll take another look at what can be

done tomorrow morning.” I told this to Secretary Rusk, who thought it was a good idea, whereupon he went back to the concert. Then General Clifton and I tried to reach Ambassador Stevenson, who was out. I waited until the security people found him at about 12:30, when he came home—and he agreed to go up at once. So Adlai went up—I think it must have been nearly 1 o’clock by the time he got up to see the Foreign Minister who wouldn’t let him see Tito. But his gesture was reassuring of President Kennedy’s concern, and the Yugoslavs calmed down for the night. The Chief of Police, Commissioner Murphy [Michael J. Murphy], moved into the Waldorf that night too and slept there; and the next day I went back to New York. Everything was calm, and President Kennedy telegraphed him a message that was also connected with his departure.

There is another aspect of this incident which even ties in with Dallas, and it is that I was always in the position of having to explain the role of security and the right of protest in a free society to President Tito. Looking back now, I must have been quite glib about it—quite sure of my ground—possibly a bit superior in tone. Two or three days later, when I took Tito down to the boat, the “Rotterdam,” about 10 o’clock one morning, the Herald Tribune carried a three-column, front page, picture of Adlai Stevenson in Dallas, in which he was being spit upon and buffeted on the head by the placards of picketers. With a sort of, “I told you so” air, I spread the paper across our knees and said, “Mr. President, you think you’re the only target. This shows you what we are free to do to each other in this country, Sir. So there’s nothing special or personal in this treatment to you. This is what we do to our own distinguished national leaders. This is what we’re doing to Adlai Stevenson in Dallas.” I don’t think I persuaded the President much—I think President Tito thought it was just as disgraceful to do it to Stevenson as it was to him.

SIEVERTS: I’ve had those talks with people from abroad, too, and they generally come out with that point of view.

DUKE: Right—but the terrible thing about it was, when the Foreign Minister came back to the funeral, I was standing next to Mrs. Kennedy and when he came through the line, in effect he said, “Who was right, you or I?”

SIEVERTS: About security?

DUKE: Yes.

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SIEVERTS: He said this to you?

DUKE: Yes, he said that to me, standing next to Mrs. Kennedy. So that was quite a postscript to the Tito visit. Well, I’m afraid I’ve got a White House appointment at 5 o’clock and we’ll have to continue this another time. We’ve gotten to Tito.

SIEVERTS: Then we’ve got a couple more things we want to talk about.

DUKE: Yes, particularly the trips abroad.

SIEVERTS: The trips abroad and then perhaps a few more words about the funeral, itself.

DUKE: Yes, fine.

SIEVERTS: Well, thank you very much. This has been a conversation with Ambassador Duke, the Chief of Protocol in the State Department, on the 1st of May, 1964, and this is Frank Sieverts.

DUKE: Thanks an awful lot.

SIEVERTS: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW #2]

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