

Interview with John N. Hutchison

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JOHN N. HUTCHISON

Interviewed by: G. Lewis Schmidt

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Biosketch: John N. Hutchison

Q: John, I'm going to ask you to start out by giving us a rather brief background on your origins, what you did and where you got your education, your work before you came to USIA, and that will involve your period in the Army as well.

HUTCHISON: I was born in Iowa, and when I was 12, I moved with my family to northern Arkansas, and went to high school there. As a teenager, I became a printer on a little four-page country weekly that was entirely set by hand. Then eventually on several occasions, I worked there for varying periods, and finally became the editor of the paper, which wasn't a very demanding job for journalists as we see them today, but it taught me the fundamentals of type and space and a little bit of writing.

I went to the University of Arkansas, having graduated from high school in 1928. We were a poor family, and I couldn't go for two years, but I finally went down to the University at Fayetteville, and attended for one year. I had to stay out another three years while I saved

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my money and worked at all kinds of jobs locally. Finally I went back for another three years and got my degree in journalism.

I went immediately, because of an instructor-professor who interceded for me, to Cincinnati as a cub reporter on the Post, a Scripps-Howard to go down to Memphis to the Commercial Teal, where I was a reporter and assistant city editor.

World War II: Army Service

Having had a commission through ROTC in the Army, I was called to active duty and went to Fort Benning, Georgia, in February of 1941, for a short, intensive course in the armored division, with all the weapons and vehicles of an armored division. And shortly thereafter, I was named the public relations officer for the Second Armored Division, which was commanded by George Patton. Patton, at the time I went there, was a brigadier general. He got his second Star while at Benning.

In the summer of 1942, we were sent out to the district training center near Indio, California, ostensibly training to go assist the British in the Libyan desert. But in the meantime, that campaign had pretty well come to an end. We were put on a troop train and sent off to Washington, where we began to plan for the invasion of North Africa.

On November 8, 1942, we landed in Morocco, after a brisk battle with the French Navy. I was on board a cruiser, which was the command ship for the operation on which Patton and his staff went to Morocco.

After that, I went up to Algeria from Morocco, to a town called Mostaganem where our headquarters had become an armored corps, and was destined to become Seventh Army, organized for the operation against Sicily. I was in the landings on Sicily and was there through that campaign. Then I was transferred to General Eisenhower's headquarters back in Algiers, and was a member of Eisenhower's staff. Subsequently, after he went to London, I became a member of his successor's staff, the staff of General Jacob Devers'

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Army group and was in the invasion of South France. We went up through France and over into Germany, and when V-E Day came — and, as a matter of fact, when V-J Day came — I was in Europe.

The three years in North Africa and Europe acquainted me with hundreds of war correspondents and war photographers from the United States, Britain, and some other countries, many of whom were to become famous — Walter Cronkite, Hal Boyle, Drew Middleton, John Charles Daly, Merrill Mueller, Ernie Pyle, David Brown, Alex Clifford, Maggie Higgins, Bob Capa, Carl Mydans, Margaret Bourke-White, George Silk, and John Phillips. In France and Germany I operated a “press camp” which followed the war front closely. It provided as many as 50 or 60 correspondents at a time with transportation food, lodging and communications (including a large mobile transmitter system sending press copy direct to New York). I entered active duty with the Army in 1941. By 1944 I was a Lieutenant Colonel.

Recruitment Into Marshall Plan 1948-1952

I came home after three years in Europe and Africa, having spent five years in the Army. I joined the Scripps-Howard paper in San Francisco as a reporter. I then was recruited for the new staffing of the Marshall Plan, which Averell Harriman and Paul Hoffman were organizing, with Harriman in Paris running the European headquarters, and Hoffman in Washington.

My assignment was as Deputy Director of Labor Information. I was in Paris in this job and a subsequent job as Deputy Director of Information for four years. The Marshall Plan itself began to wind down and become more military and to change its character. Since it had a massive information program, by the standards of those days, throughout 17 countries in Europe and clear to Turkey, this operation had been quite independent of the State Department's information program, the predecessor of USIA. We had a very innovative and inventive program, with many people who had come in from private life, not from other

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government jobs. It had developed in many directions that were quite new and strange to the State Department's information program.

1952: Marshall Plan Phases Down; Many Of Its Information Team Goes To IIA

People in Washington realized that since this program was coming to an end, it should somehow be folded in, or dovetailed with, the State Department's information program. These were the days when Charlie Hulten was General Manager of what was then called the International Information Agency (IIA) — Department's information operation under Ed Barrett, who was the Assistant Secretary of State for public affairs. One of the early people in that organization was Bill Cody. Charlie Hulten and Bill Cody came to Paris and began to work with us on how to wrap these two operations together, presumably to get the best out of each, and to find some way to adapt a rather stodgy State Department program with a rather unorthodox Marshall Plan information operation, which had been very free-wheeling, and had lots of so-called counterpart funds (money that the European countries put up to match various grants or loans from the United States). We had been really free-spenders, and this was now slowing down.

I was recruited by Charlie Hulten to come back to Washington. He asked me to join what is now USIA. The Press Service of IIA (IPS) had a vacancy, and I was put in charge of the European branch.

Q: This was at IPS?

HUTCHISON: This was at IPS. At that time, this was still part of the State Department. It hadn't yet become USIA, but that was about to take place.

Q: So you became head of the European branch of IPS.

McCarthy Strikes

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HUTCHISON: I served in that job only a few months, five or six months. I should have said that even before I got back from Europe, Senator Joe McCarthy had begun his very vicious campaign and had directed a great deal of it against the information operation and the State Department and, in particular, against the military government operation in Germany. By the time I had been in my new job, I guess five or six months, McCarthy was really savaging what is now USIA, blackmailing people right and left, and directing most of his attacks at the Voice of America and at the cultural programs, but also going after much of the leadership of IPS.

One day, Wolf von Eckert was fired, or was forced to leave, is what it amounted to, principally because he had been accused by McCarthy of leftist leanings. Wolf left summarily one morning after he came to work, bounced out, and I was asked to take over his job. He was the head of the division — at the moment I forget what it was called — that produced the wireless file and various other news and features services of IPS, a major division with some 220 employees.

That morning I started out with 22 employees in my branch. At about 10:00 in the morning, I had become the head of a division with 220 people, and by 11:00 in the morning, I was called up to the head offices of the agency to talk with a group of people in the Eisenhower Administration who had been sent in on a temporary consultancy basis, presumably to reform the organization. I was asked to take over the directorship of IPS itself, because Charlie Arnold, who had been the director, had been blackmailed out by McCarthy, and so had his deputy, Charlie Miller. They had both been given the axe for reasons no more justified than that for which McCarthy's group went after Wolf von Eckert.

So I sat there in an office that, as I recall, used to be on the fourth floor, talking to this group who were asking me to take over this new job, and I hadn't even had time to move my files to Wolf von Eckert's desk. I said, "Well, I'll take it, but I think you should clearly understand that I'm a Democrat and that you obviously want Republicans in these jobs. That's already been made apparent. Consequently, I would ask if I take it, you make

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it quite clear that I'm in there temporarily as Acting Director. Don't name me director, because I don't want it to look as if I've been unsuccessful and sacked. Then I would ask that you give me complete authority to run IPS as I see fit, and if you don't like it, fire me." And to my astonishment, they all readily agreed. They apparently were eager to have somebody move into it.

I went out to lunch by myself, sat down at a lunch counter around the corner there, where the old passport office [was], thinking this whole thing over, this astonishing morning. I went back and sat down as Director of IPS and as the deputy director. (laughs) I stayed in the job for, I guess, about two years, something like that.

At the end of 1954, for a combination of reasons, I resigned and went out to California and went to work as the PR director for a United Fund operation.

Q: When we were discussing some of this same subject matter off the tape before lunch, you indicated some of the reasons for your resignation, one of them being your unhappiness with the gentleman who had been named the director of the IPS operation and whom you didn't think was doing anything. Would you care to comment on that?

How Arthur Compton Became Director of IIA

HUTCHISON: When I went to the agency, it was under the State Department. Then it went through a reorganization under the Eisenhower Administration, and became USIA, an independent agency. It had been directed late in the Truman Administration by a man named Arthur Compton.

The story, as I heard it — and it's probably true — is that in the Truman Administration, some people in the White House were sitting around speculating on whom to appoint to run the then-State Department's information operation abroad. Someone said, "Why not ask Dr. Compton?" Well, there were three Compton brothers. One was the president of a university in St. Louis who had a Nobel Prize. He was an eminent scientist. One I do

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not remember at all in terms of his qualifications. The third was a West Coast lumberman, and he also had a title. He must have had a Ph.D. and was referred to as Dr. Compton. Somebody said, "Why don't we get Dr. Compton?"

Truman is said to have told someone, "Go to the phone and ask him if he'll do it."

The story is that whoever went to the phone called the wrong Dr. Compton. Instead of calling the man at St. Louis University or Washington University, I forget which, he called Arthur Compton, the lumberman, who cheerfully accepted the job. At that point, nobody knew how to undo this act, although he was the wrong brother. And that's how, supposedly, Dr. Arthur Compton became head of the information operation, for which he had no talent, background, grasp, whatever. He was the head of this operation when McCarthy was savaging it, and when McCarthy called him to come up and testify before his committee, Compton refused to go, went off to his home somewhere in Virginia and was never seen in the office again, leaving Reed Harris, his deputy, to bear the brunt of this and take a terrible beating from McCarthy, because Reed had written a book in the 1930s which McCarthy thought was communist in its intent. Harris was driven out of the agency by McCarthy.

I remember Jack O'Brien, who was the Far East Branch chief in those days in IPS, telling that his wife was watching McCarthy on television, wrecking Reed Harris' life, and at the end of the day, she got on the phone to Reed Harris at home, and all she could say was, "Mr. Harris, I think you're a peach." Harris was widely admired in the agency and, of course, he was brought back into it by Ed Murrow.

The Interim Directorship Of Dr. Robert Johnson

Then in came Dr. Johnson. He arrived during a period when Congress had slashed the budget, McCarthy had driven out dozens of honest, talented people, and the Agency was going through a devastating reduction in force. Demoralization was almost total.

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Q: Which Dr. Johnson was that?

HUTCHISON: Robert Johnson. He had been the president of Temple University in Philadelphia. He was not a scholar by any stretch of the imagination, but he apparently had been a successful fund raiser for Temple and made it into a much more prosperous and presumably effective institution than it had been before he came in there. I think he had also been associated with Henry Luce in the establishment of Time magazine, which gave anybody a cachet, regardless of talent. Johnson was an utter fool, a genial, good-natured man, but without the faintest grasp of the job he had accepted, and he never seemed to develop any. He would listen and accept advice from anybody, and from the next person he listened to, he would accept diametrically different advice. He was a complete joke in the agency. He had come there surrounded by a little coterie of people, many of them quite expert in their own fields, but largely in commercial advertising and public relations. They surrounded him as a kind of protective cocoon, attempting to get this new, independent USIA [Editor's Note: Johnson's short term actually preceded the formal establishment of USIA, which was created by Eisenhower's Executive Order of August 1, 1983, when Streibert was named Director.] going and get some structure and some direction for it and some policy. I think many of them were pretty skilled, and I think almost all of them finally went back to wherever they came from, mostly from Madison Avenue. They were unable to manage this man at all. He was an unmanageable lump! (Laughs) And gave rise to endless jokes.

He brought in a new religious advisor. We had had a fine retired Presbyterian minister, with very broad religious training and experience, who had been our advisor for the agency on religious attitudes of our audiences abroad. He was a real scholar, knowledgeable on all religion. Johnson replaced him with a man whose name, I recall was Trueblood, who promptly, upon his appointment, made a speech somewhere in Maryland stating that the objective of the agency was to make every person in the world a card-carrying Christian. (Laughs) He used to come in and lecture us various practical operators on

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religious subjects, and he soon became known as Dr. Bloodshot. He, too, became the butt of many jokes.

It was a violent, demoralizing, terrible period in USIA. The destructive attacks by McCarthy, his aides, Cohn and Schine who harassed and humiliated many USIS officers abroad, and my McCarthyite supporters in Congress, ripped innocent personnel from the agency and exposed it to near-catastrophic budget slashing. A Congressman Taber set a goal for USIA's budget which he had carefully calculated would compel the separation of enough employees so that the cost of their retirement would wipe out the remaining funds. He failed of this objective, but not by much. There were senators — Ellender of Louisiana and McClellan of Arkansas come readily to mind — whose hostility toward USIA and ignorance of its purpose were unrelenting. A timid White House stood nervously away from this indecent spectacle through most of it, until public opinion finally overwhelmed McCarthy.

Although IPS was not pilloried to the extent suffered by VOA and ICS, some of its most talented and dedicated people were blackmailed and hounded out, or so battered by accusations of incompetence or anti-Americanism that they quit in disgust.

The second shock to hit the agency was a deep cut in budget which resulted in a drastic reduction in force. I was ordered to reduce IPS at once by about 20 percent, and similar cuts were imposed on most of the agency. We selected out and fired almost 100 competent, loyal, IPS people, under a law expressly passed by Congress permitting USIA to “weed out” personnel without regard to civil service protection. I personally and privately, in my office, told each individual being fired. It was the most painful executive experience of my life.

With such a radical RIF, we had to completely reorganize IPS.

This is a good point in the discussion for me to pay tribute to those people whose names I can remember after 35 years who made it possible for IPS to come through that

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tumultuous period and continue to produce. Jim Thomas, Tom Cannon, Bill deMeza, Mort Levin, Gene Clark and Elva Deal were the management group that guided me through my first appropriations hearings and the rebuilding of the service. I could fill a page with the names of others down through IPS who met the challenges expertly and with good spirit. I still think of IPS with pride and affection.

1953: USIA Formally Established: Ted Streibert Named Director

I don't remember exactly when Johnson left, but he was succeeded, as I recall by Ted Streibert. I can't even remember the ostensible reason that Johnson left, but he was eased out. Streibert had been, I think, head of Mutual Broadcasting, and was presumably a very successful man in that field. He probably was good for the agency at the time. He was an incredibly abrasive man, who seemed to offend people deliberately, and yet he shook the agency out of the terrible panic it had been going through with all the reorganizations, all the attacks by McCarthy, the indirection and confusion. Streibert moved in as a very vigorous man, and sort of shook it out of all this situation, and in that sense was probably good for it. But he wasn't very intelligent about what we were doing.

He used to come back after a trip overseas full of opinions on how USIA ought to operate. For example, he came back from a Tokyo trip, and came in and bounced me around because the wireless file didn't get there at the right time of day in Tokyo. You know, it comes in a day late. (Laughs) I tried to tell him, "Mr. Streibert, we cover the news here when there's news happening, and most of our news happens in Washington, in the daytime. We send it out as soon as we can. We don't wait for another day so it'll get to Tokyo in daylight." He never understood this. He seemed to think we either had to get it there before it happened, or to keep it until it would be the right time of day for the Tokyo newspapers. This was illustrative of his misunderstanding of the practicalities of our agency.

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It seemed to me that on many occasions, almost every time he held a staff meeting, he deliberately insulted the people around the table one at a time. It was a part of his technique of management. Apparently he felt this was the way to stimulate people to do better, and so he would really be outright offensive to people.

In the meantime, I had been replaced as Director of IPS by an ideologically pure successor. (Laughs) He was Harlan Logan, a remarkably fine man with no particular background for what we were doing, but a quick study. I was demoted to deputy.

He came from Corning Glass, where he was their head of public relations. He was a highly intelligent man who got a quick grasp of what we were doing. He learned very rapidly what we were all about, and I got on extremely well with him. He finally left, though, after, as I recall, only six months or certainly less than a year, because his wife had developed incurable cancer. She was in New York, and he was going back and forth between Sloan-Kettering and his job in Washington, and finally in despair, he said, "I just can't keep this up. I've just got to go were her through to the end of this, and we're going to take a world cruise or something or other and made the best of it." And he resigned. I was very sorry to see him go.

As I recall it, I was once again made Director, or Acting Director, of IPS, and I ran it again for quite a long time. Then finally they brought in Leland Stanford Briggs, a retired McCann-Erickson advertising man, who was independently well off, hadn't really done anything significant in McCann-Erickson for some time, and showed little interest in what USIA was doing. He had no particular talent for it, and no idea of doing any work. I think he had been brought in somehow have been assured by political friends that all he had to do was just come and accept the job, and that it wouldn't be very demanding.

Hutchison Resigns From USIA: 1955

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So I stayed a while, and finally, with this rather discouraging man for a superior, with Streibert's very abrasive personality in the front office, with an aging father on the California coast, and with considerable disaffection with the administration running Washington, for all these various reasons, I came out to San Francisco and got a job, went back to Washington and resigned. I was so irritated with Streibert that I submitted my resignation to his deputy, Abbott Washburn, not to Streibert. Abbott and I always got on very well.

I came out to San Francisco and organized the public relations for a new five-county United Fund, which had just itself been organized a year before. I held the job for about four and a half years. Of the scores of social and charitable agencies we were raising funds for, one was Red Cross, which had seven chapters in our United Fund area. I was recruited to go back to be the National Director of Information for the Red Cross because of the recommendation from the major chapter in San Francisco.

So I went back to Washington. The job didn't turn out particularly well for me. The Red Cross had spent quite a bit of money to move me and my family back there, and I was being paid well, but I decided, after a year, I had to resign. So I went over to USIA and sounded out USIA.

Hutchison Returns To USIA As Director Of Press Service: 1960

The year, as I recall, was 1960. I quite the Red Cross on a Friday and went to work literally at the same desk I had left in IPS, as Director of IPS, on the following Monday, having taken both the oral and written Foreign Service examination and going in this time not in civil service, but in a Foreign Service status. I stayed about a year and a half as Director of IPS, having succeeded Bill Copeland. This is at the time when George Allen was head of the Agency, having replaced Arthur Larson, who had for a short time succeeded Ted Streibert.

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Just as a comment, I think George Allen was a very good selection. He was an old State Department bureaucrat, he knew his way around Congress, he had, I believe, been Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, so that he knew what the agency was doing. He didn't create a lot of waves, but he knew how to guide this agency through a period which was still pretty unsettled. He had lots of diplomatic experience. As a matter of fact, it was George Allen whom Bill Cody and I went to see in Belgrade when Allen was ambassador there. Bill Cody and I went down there at somebody's request to help with a study of how to interlock, or dovetail, the remnants of the Marshall Plan information program with the State Department's program. That had been my first contact with Allen.

Allen was then succeeded, I guess, by Murrow (After several months. John Kennedy had just been elected (Nov. 1960). Allen knew he would be replaced after the inauguration. He left for a lucrative job in private business. Murrow came on deck in early March, 1961.). Was there anybody in between there?

Q: No, there was not. But there was quite a hiatus.

HUTCHISON: Allen left and went to the Tobacco Institute.

Q: He went to the Tobacco Institute. A lot of people didn't know how he could possibly bring himself morally to do that and criticized him for doing it, but he did go there. It was a very well-paying job which he held for three or four years. I think it made him a wealthy man.

HUTCHISON: He resigned from it.

Q: But Allen had not necessarily wanted to be director of the agency. He was Ambassador to Greece at the time, and came to USIA at the express request of President Eisenhower.

HUTCHISON: I had forgotten that.

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Q: President Eisenhower persuaded him to come back and take the job, because in between Streibert and Allen, had been Arthur Larson, who was an utter disaster. So when Eisenhower asked Larson to resign, he then went after Allen. That's how he became the director.

HUTCHISON: I think Allen was probably a good man for the time. I don't know that he was particularly inventive or innovative, but I think he was a very stabilizing and, I think, pretty shrewd, knowledgeable man, and probably was good for it.

Q: He was well thought of on the Hill, whereas Larson was not.

HUTCHISON: Yes, his liaison with Congress was good, and he was articulate. He seemed to be a very calm man. He didn't get rattled. He had a good personality.

Then came Ed Murrow, and with Ed Murrow came Tom Sorensen and Don Wilson. Wilson and Sorensen were sometimes referred around the agency as “Boy Scouts with Tommy guns.” I didn't hit it off at all well with Wilson. You never knew whether you were hitting it off with Sorensen or not.

But Wilson recruited some people from his Time magazine background, and one of them was the cause of a really serious falling out between Wilson and me. This man is currently quite a successful author, and I've watched some of his television programs — David McCullough. I guess he's best known right now for his book on the Panama Canal, which I've read. McCullough was off the staff of Time, where he did little pieces for the back of the book. Wilson ordered me to employ him in IPS, and virtually picked out the job for him. McCullough came to work for one of the IPS magazines.

A man named Clint Green was McCullough's supervisor. I forget how Clint came to the agency. He had been an INS correspondent and he'd been a war correspondent during World War II. He had also been a USIS officer abroad.

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Q: He was assigned to be the information officer in Tokyo. He came about ten months after I had been there, and he left about a year before I left. He was the information officer from sometime early in 1953 until 1955.

HUTCHISON: Clint was in charge of the publications division of IPS. It concerned any magazines, including Amerika, the Russian-language magazine, Problems of Communism, which was a scholarly journal, and an Arabic magazine. Clint, as supervisor, wound up with David McCullough on his staff, without having invited him. McCullough couldn't accommodate himself to bureaucracy. He made commitments for magazine articles, as I recall, that didn't follow the approved methods of contracting that we were required to do. So Clint Green had to, first, explain to him, and eventually order him to do these things in accordance with our legal procedures.

Their personalities clashed almost immediately, and McCullough was absolutely unable to accommodate himself to any orders from a superior. Finally it got to be such an open row that I had to call both of them in and tell McCullough to do what his supervisors asked him, as long as the supervisor was within his legal authority. And McCullough defied me right on the spot. So I said, "Well, you know, if you aren't going to take orders from us, I'll prefer charges and do my best to get you out of here. We're all responsible in the government hierarchy, and we have to follow procedures."

He went promptly to Don Wilson. Don Wilson, within an hour, was in my office, giving me hell for ordering McCullough around, because McCullough was his protégé. We had a real row in my office there. I said to Wilson, "I should think you would recognize that all I'm asking of McCullough to do is to follow legitimate instructions, just as I must follow yours. I have to do what my superiors say, and my subordinates have to do what I say."

Well, it really tore things between me and Wilson. Within a fairly short time, he, in effect, sacked me from IPS. It wasn't done quite that way; I was told that I was going to be sent overseas (which I had had in mind anyway when I entered through Foreign Service). The

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fact of going overseas didn't bother me so much; it was because I was, in effect, being fired for acting the way a supervisor is supposed to act, by my standards.

One little background to this was that there had been some bad blood between Wilson and Green in Japan, and I never knew quite what it was (This argument could not have been in Japan unless it was much earlier when Wilson was a young correspondent in the Tokyo Time office. Green left USIS Tokyo in 1955. Wilson became Deputy Director of USIA only in 1961. Wilson and Green did see each other often in Tokyo at the Overseas Press Club.). I'm not clear.

Q: I'm not clear what it was, but they may have had an argument of some type there, but there was also another argument between Wilson and Green in Washington since Clint also had overall supervision for the magazine Problems of Communism. Abe Brumberg was then the editor. Well, you know Abe and his irascible personality. Wilson tended to side with Brumberg.

HUTCHISON: Brumberg went over my head to Wilson, too.

Q: Brumberg was a terribly peculiar guy — extremely difficult to get along with. A brilliant man, but impossible to control.

HUTCHISON: He was utterly undisciplined about contracting. It was a constant problem.

Q: Wilson felt that Clint was being too bureaucratic with Brumberg, but I felt that he should have knocked him over the head.

1962: Hutchison Leaves IPS To Be DPAO In London

HUTCHISON: Yes. Brumberg caused me a lot of trouble.

Anyway, the upshot of this was that I was offered the choice of going to Tokyo, Paris, or London. I believe in each case as deputy PAO, subject to acceptance by the current PAO.

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I picked London. I knew Bill, not well, but I knew him and had worked with him some. Joe Phillips was area director for Europe, and Joe and I knew each other well. (I should have explained earlier that back during World War II, I was Joe Phillip's executive office when Joe was public relations officer for Eisenhower in Algiers. I didn't see him again until we both wound up in USIA at some later period.)

So I went off to London as deputy to Bill Clark. I had four years in London without home leave, not that that's a privation; but it's a little unusual. And wound up as acting PAO when Bill Clark was brought back to Washington and became the deputy commissioner for that Canadian, Montreal World's Fair.

I was in London in an interesting time. There was, of course, tremendous agitation in Britain from the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament. We had big demonstrations in front of the embassy periodically and some quite serious ones. I remember one time four ranks of British bobbies, clear across the steps of the embassy there in Grosvenor Square, with their arms locked together as a barrier to several thousands of really violent demonstrators trying to break through. They had to use horses to break them up.

I was there when John Glenn came over to London, ostensibly on a private tour. We had already had the capsule over there on exhibition, had a tremendous success with parading it through London and exhibiting it at the embassy, the capsule in which Glenn rode. Glenn came over some time later, and I remember introducing him to an audience of scientists in our little embassy auditorium. I think it was the British Astronomical Society or something like that. Glenn had brought along his model of the upcoming moon shot, and he took it apart. He showed how the booster would fall off the rocket and then the whole thing would go on to the moon, other pieces would fall away, it would land, then they would take off again, and the booster would drop off. He took these pieces apart as a demonstration as he was lecturing, and I remember I was supposed to make some kind of remarks at the end of the thing, thank the people for coming or whatever. I remember doing it by just saying to John Glenn, "I don't believe a word you say." (Laughs) Which got a good hand.

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1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis and London Reactions

I was there during the Cuban Missile Crisis, which was probably the most interesting diplomatic event of the time, as nearly as I can recall. Intelligence officers brought over the pictures that had been taken of the missile sites in Cuba, these big enlargements of aerial photos, to show to the British, to the prime minister, who was then MacMillan, as I recall, to Lord Hume, who was foreign minister, later became prime minister, and all the intelligence community in Britain. When Bill Clark and Jim Pettis, the press attach# there, and I saw these pictures, they were all very highly classified, of course, absolutely top classification. Bill said immediately, "We're got to get these unclassified and get them published here in Britain right as fast as we can." There was a terrible uproar about this.

Finally, the senior officer, who had brought them over — I don't remember at the moment who he was — he was undoubtedly CIA, but I don't know who he was or what his position was, but a very senior officer had brought them over with some other members of his staff. Finally, he took it upon himself to authorize a declassification of these pictures.

Q: On the spot?

HUTCHISON: On the spot. We turned them loose, and, of course, they were a sensation in the British press, and they did exactly what the United States wanted to have happen. It gave them unmistakable evidence that the Russians really were in Cuba, which there had been a great deal of suspicion that we were exaggerating this up until that time. Very hard to sell this idea to the British, but that did it. Hume himself came on television with blow-ups of these pictures and a pointer. (Laughs) And went on BBC with these things. So we had absolute saturation coverage of the evidence of these missiles.

We got a rocket out of Washington almost within minutes of the publication of these things. (Laughs) Woke our press attach# up in the middle of the night, said, "Who the hell gave

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you permission to turn those pictures loose?” Jim just said, “The guy that brought 'em.” “Oh.” And that was the end of that. (Laughs)

Q: I wonder if he had cleared it back with his people?

HUTCHISON: I don't think he did. He gave them the authority right there on the spot. Maybe he didn't even let them know afterwards. I don't know the background on that, but it was a great little hour for Jim Pettis, because he was feeling like he was kind of on the hot seat. He had actually delivered the pictures to the press, to television, to everybody.

After Bill Clark left and I was acting PAO, Bernie Anderson came over with the news that President Johnson was raising the ante in Vietnam, and gave us the figures. I think the final troop total reached something like 485,000. But Bernie was informing the intelligence people on the information side of the foreign office of what was going to happen. Bernie and I went there and met with them. That was kind of the peak, of course, of our participation in troop strength, at least, in Vietnam.

Q: What year was that? It must have been about '65 or '66.

HUTCHISON: Must have been.

The job in London was interesting. Bill Clark was very skilled in dealing with the British press, and we had a good information staff. I think probably Bill's major contribution in London was in briefing the diplomatic and defense correspondents with tremendous assistance from Jim Pettis, the press attach#.

My job was essentially to keep the office operating. I was more the operating person, but I did have some interesting assignments. If you're a deputy PAO, as you know, it's pretty hard for you to get into the program substance in the country you're in because there are other people on the staff who are expressly assigned for that purpose. So your function is

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auxiliary. Important as it may be, it tends to be auxiliary. It's to assist the other members of the staff, your PAO and the people under him, to get the job done.

But one of the interesting jobs I had was liaison with the British-American Parliamentary Group. This was essentially an organization intended to give hospitality and substantive assistance and information to visiting U. S. congressmen and senators in Parliament. I was the embassy's liaison with the organization that handled it for Parliament. It gave me many opportunities to meet Parliamentarians, to tour the Parliament over and over again, and to attend various functions held for visiting American politicians.

Occasionally some funny things would happen. Jesse Unruh, who was at that time the speaker in the California State Assembly, and George Miller, president pro-tem of the California Senate, came over and they were given the same courtesies as if they had been members of Congress. I was helping them. I took them up to the House, and they were met by Lord Henderson, a salty old boy who was liked very much, who undertook to guide them through the House of Lords himself. So I went tagging along. They're standing around admiring this extremely handsome room and all its beautiful red and gold, and I heard Jesse Unruh say to George Miller, "We ought to fix our joint up like this." (Laughs)

And a couple of years ago, I was in Sacramento, where they have in recent years restored the fine old capital building and re-done all the rooms. And sure enough, the Senate (the Upper House) was in red and gold! (Laughs) Jesse Unruh, by that time, was state treasurer. He was still a powerful man behind the scenes. I'm certain that when they started to refurbish that chamber, that Jesse had a hand in "fixing up the joint."

I was also the USIS and, in several bodies, the ambassador's representative to various organizations. Anyone who has been a DPAO knows how such assignments are acquired; USIS officers with more specific duties dodge them on the grounds that the job description doesn't prescribe them, and the DPAO's perceived generalist function makes him vulnerable.

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There were three quasi-governmental and private NATO-support organizations, a Foreign Office American Section, the English Speaking Union, a semi-official British-American teachers exchange project, a private student exchange organization, and numerous other societies, groups and boards in which I either represented USIS or Ambassador Bruce. I was also probably the most called-upon USIS officer for public speaking, usually to school, college or educator groups, sometimes to civic or foreign study groups.

Clark studiously avoided USIS administration, handing that entire responsibility to me. This is a proper function for a DPAO; the PAO should not have to tussle with budget, personnel and office management. I was fortunate to have excellent British staff in this area. All in all, the London job was both demanding and rewarding.

Q: Before we leave your assignment to London, I'd like to ask a couple of questions, because this was one of the two times when all the rage was to create a country plan with specific objectives, and you were supposed to report your accomplishment with regard to your advance toward the accomplishment of objectives. I'd like to know whether you even attempted to handle your program in that way, or whether you were mainly reacting to the principal problems that came up, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, and things of that nature.

HUTCHISON: Maybe the country plan method had its uses. I suppose everybody ought to be compelled to sit down and examine what they're doing.

Q: I agree.

HUTCHISON: I had to write the country plan in London. Bill Clark had no interest in it; thought it unnecessary. I must have rewritten it four or five times, trying to satisfy Bob Lincoln, who would then reiterate what he thought the country plan ought to be, although he'd never served in Britain. You finally get to the point that all you're trying to do is satisfy Washington, and get on with what you see as really important. The country plan gets to be

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a terrible nuisance, it's a very time-consuming thing, you spend hours, days, months, trying to satisfy preconceptions of Washington. Now, this may not be true in many instances, but it seems to me that's the way it affected me in London, where, as they do in any important post, politics and international affairs are changing constantly. It seems to me that the country plan system is therefore often a failure, not for any particular inabilities of the people who are trying to devise it, but because it just becomes an attempt to produce the right string of words to satisfy somebody else.

Certainly every USIS post should address assiduously to what it should be doing to maintain and advance the interests of the United States, hopefully under the guidance of intelligent and informed Washington leadership. But I was never comfortable with country planning which went beyond thoughtful examination of the host country's basic attitudes toward the U.S. and the structural application of USIA's resources to nudge those attitudes toward favor for long-range American objectives. We too often pursued short-range objectives with pushy, campaign-like efforts.

Two notable characteristics have flawed the leadership of the agency and contributed to this penchant. Hardly any agency director, from Compton to Wick, (Ed Murrow excepted.) came in to the job after having spent significant time abroad. It is unlikely that anyone who has not had extended residence in a foreign country can head USIA with understanding of its mission and its capabilities and limitations. Secondly, it is virtually impossible to plan, and to measure dependably, the enduring success, if any, of USIS programs. Only with the greatest sense of reality should any USIS practitioner set out to alter host country attitudes with the expectation of being, at best, more than a small element in the tangle of influences.

Some proclamations of goals have been ludicrous: the announcement of Doctor "Bloodshot" that the agency should make every human being on earth a card-carrying Christian was a nutty extension of such nonsense.

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Often a false fervor has been encouraged by USIA leaders, cranking up spurious activity by executives who felt pressed to show progress toward solving the insoluble and convincing the unconvincible. Country plans have tended in some instances to be documents prepared mainly to satisfy the need in Washington to demonstrate that USIA was shrewdly identifying our objectives, and, with equal shrewdness, moving to achieve them. Too often, that was eyewash.

I don't know whether country plans are still used, but there must be some process that would do this better. One of the problems with satisfying the overall objectives of an agency like USIA is the constant change of country circumstances. Situations change more rapidly and more frequently than in almost any other civilian agency of government, except for the State Department itself. I think this makes it very difficult to try to set down in concrete some kind of plan that's supposed to last you a year or two years or something.

Later I spent two and a half years in Manila as head of RSC, and I've left out that portion of this thing, which probably is worth examining. There I was not a part of USIS Manila. I was reporting directly to Washington, and I wasn't concerned with country plans. I was welcome; I always attended the USIS and the ambassador's staff meetings every week in the embassy, and got on well. We had quite an integrated operation, I guess, with Manila, but I was no more responsible to them than I was to the embassy in Bangkok or Rangoon or Singapore, wherever.

In New Zealand, I don't recall that we were pressed to wrestle with the country plan the way we were in London.

Enforced Cut-Back In London (and European) Operations

Q: I think part of the problem in London, as it was not only with London, but with all of Western Europe, was the fact that your time in London happened to coincide with a time when Tom Sorensen felt that Western Europe was greatly over-funded, it was headed by

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a bunch of effete thinkers who had previously been riding a gravy train left over from the days of OMGUS, HICOG, and the Marshall Plan. All European types, in his estimation, should be transferred elsewhere, and Washington should virtually dismantle the European Program.

HUTCHISON: They almost did.

Q: He felt it was just superfluous, and that USIA was just feeding the ego's of a bunch of people who had been exchanging posts in Europe. I had headed a team in early 1963, which was sent over to try to reduce the European program. It was made very clear to me by Tom that they wanted to practically dismantle it. I went over, and we made a very intensive study, and we came back with a program which all four of us who were members of that party agreed was a fairly substantial reduction in the European program, but one that would not cripple the program. Sorensen was completely unsatisfied with that, and told me that we didn't do half the job. Later he made Bob Lincoln head of the European area, with the express purpose of cutting down to the point where he thought it ought to be. I think that's why you had so much trouble with the country plan, more than anything else, in all probability.

HUTCHISON: As a matter of fact, Bill Clark had left, gone back to Washington. I was acting PAO when suddenly, with very little — we knew the philosophy that was going on, and we knew the attitude that was pressing on Europe. That had been clear for a long time. But suddenly in August, I was given a sharply reduced budget right then. Bang! We weren't waiting for next year. Funds were cut off. I had to call the local staff together and tell them that a lot of them were going to lose their jobs. I told them what the pressure was on this thing, and I said, "If any of you have been contemplating retirement or any shifts of position, please do it now and save somebody else who's going to get the sack if you hang on just a short time more." I talked this over very candidly with the whole staff, exactly what we were up against, how much we had to cut, and I think I had to fire something like 14 people out of a total staff of 38. I'm not sure those figures are right. It was in that range.

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They had to be off the payroll almost immediately, because my budget year was coming to an end. If they didn't get off, it would start kind of an automatic triggering, you see. It would liquidate us.

There were two other factors involved in this operation. Bob Lincoln was one, who seemed utterly unsympathetic on this score. The ambassador contributed to it — David Bruce — because the ambassador had the old-fashioned idea, although he and Bill Clark always got on very well, that there were a lot of unnecessary functions, you know. He had the old idea of kind of a Jeffersonian attitude toward diplomacy. He supported the idea of cutting USIA, without consulting us.

He went off on leave down in the south of France somewhere, just on a holiday for a week or something or other, when this word came through to cut. Phil Kaiser, who was then deputy chief of mission, acceded to the thing in a message back to Washington, without consulting me. I was roaring mad about it. I had know Phil from an earlier day when he was Assistant Secretary of Labor, way back under Maurice Tobin. I was in a rage about it because he had made the decision in Bruce's absence, and without consulting me. I didn't even see the incoming message. I turned around and wrote my own roaring mad message back to Washington, saying how outrageous this thing was, at least in the way it was being handled, and that we hadn't been consulted on it at all, it had just been done summarily between Lincoln's office and the ambassador's office. That was a hell of a way to operate. But we had to do it, and we had to cut the staff. We had to fire some of the best people, locals, in USIS London. It was really savage. But we did it.

I learned later on — well, forget that, because people are still around. But I learned some interesting background in that thing that concerned the attitudes before and after this happened. I think there were some regrets on it, probably.

I guess we ought to say something about RSC Manila, because it's an important thing.

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Assignment As Director, Regional Service Center Manila 1966-68

Q: What were the years that you were in Manila?

HUTCHISON: I went to Manila in early 1966. I came back from London, and there was no job for me. I'm sure this happens lots of times to people coming back from overseas. But here I'd been in a responsible job, I'd been acting PAO London, which is not peanuts in the agency, and had been asked to stay on in London while there was this transition from Bill Clark to somebody else. It turned out to be Bill King, who arrived sick and left sick. A bad appointment. Alienated himself from everybody in the embassy, I guess, but he was not well and didn't do anything.

When I came back, nobody had any suggestions on what I was to do. This is one of the great faults in the agency, I think, its inability to consult with and plan ahead for returning personnel you sometimes get terribly disconnected, as you know, from your own country, let alone your own agency, when you're serving abroad. So I'd been over there four years without leave, four long years away from the United States, quite happy with it, but you get really badly out of communication with everything. I'd lost all touch with the levers of power in Washington and so on. There ought to be a better way to handle this thing. Maybe there is now. With all the talk about career planning, it never seemed to me that it really got very far.

So I had to go around, trying to find a job. I went back to Jim Thomas, who worked for me for years and years, and who was very shrewd and experienced in bureaucracy. Jim said, "We're going to need somebody in RSC Manila. Would you like to go there?" The Philippines didn't particularly appeal to me, but I finally realized I had to do something, and I took the job. I went to Manila. It was a satisfying job in many ways. My wife was unhappy in that climate. It was very hard on her. It wasn't so hard on me, but it's not the greatest place to be, and it's probably far worse now than it was then. But the job at RSC itself was

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a satisfying job. There was lots to do there, I thought, in terms of straightening out things that had gotten kind of slack before I got there.

Q: Who had preceded you?

HUTCHISON: I can't think of his name. Nice guy. I suppose everybody thinks that he can move into a new job and do it better than any guy that was ahead of him. But this was during the tremendous build-up of propaganda for Vietnam. Although we were publishing and printing enormous quantities of what you might think of as the usual material for USIS posts all over Southeast Asia and, to some extent, to other parts of the world, the program was essentially for the military or for that combined operation that Barry Zorthian had, over there in Vietnam, built up to huge proportions. We were printing textbooks in Vietnamese, Laos and all kinds of exotic languages. We didn't handle the languages ourselves; the copy came in for our camera, all ready to go. But we were reproducing, for a while, in maybe 20 languages. We were turning out the largest magazine in Asia at one time, *Free World*, and later changed to another name, I forget, *Horizons*? I don't know. I forget. Anyway, a really handsome, four-color magazine with special editions for, I think, 11 different countries, enormous quantities of posters and pamphlets and whatnot.

But for Vietnam, it became a leaflet operation, essentially, in addition to these huge quantities of school books. Finally, we were shipping two 707 plane loads every three days of printed material to Vietnam, right out of Clark Air Base. We were running three shifts 24 hours a day, while having terrible problems with salt water invading our wells and affecting our photo developing, our air-conditioning breaking down at a time when using printing paper has to have stable humidity, all kinds of problems, running day and night. We used, in the last year I was there, 14 million pounds of paper. We met our obligations on it. It was a hell of an operation. I think I had 350-450 employees, almost all Filipinos, some American staff.

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One of the stalwarts of that operation was Al Roland, who came back to run the publications division at IPS, a really fine magazine editor. The printing side was Werner Sauer and later Norbert Marcian. We were turning out quite high-quality printing in just tremendous quantities.

Hutchison Goes To New Zealand As PAO: 1968

I left there when the PAO Wellington died of a heart attack. I can't remember his name at the moment, Jerry somebody. He was somebody I hadn't known personally.

Q: Somebody I knew, too, and I can't think now.

HUTCHISON: I never actually knew him. I met him once at a PAO meeting somewhere. When I heard that post was open, I wrote back to Dan Oleksiw, who was then head of East Asia and Pacific Area, and told him I would like to go down there, and I wrote back to Jim Thomas. I'd been his supervisor for years, and at this point he was my supervisor when I was at RSC Manila. I wrote to Jim. So Jim and Dan worked it out, and I went down to New Zealand for two tours, four years in all.

Some curious things happened in the agency that I think are worth mentioning. They are negative, but I think they belong in something like this. You may recall that the agency produced a film called "The Silent Majority."

Q: Yes.

HUTCHISON: This was sent to us in New Zealand, and we were under instructions to get the widest possible distribution and so on. I had to look at it in our little viewing room with a couple of my local employees. It was a patchwork of old documentary stuff designed to show that the American people really did support the Vietnam War, in spite of everything you've heard. It was so patently fake, that after we ran it, I said to this gal who handled broadcasting (we were supposed to get this on NZBC), "Do not under any circumstances

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take that up there. We'll just be ridiculed out of town. Don't do anything with it. Put it on a shelf." And we didn't do anything with it. We never let it see the light of day. I thought it would be a disaster.

Q: I think Bruce Herschensohn was the producer.

HUTCHISON: I'm getting to him. Yes, he was. I went to a PAO meeting in Manila. Were you there?

Q: If that was the one that was held in April of 1970, I was there.

HUTCHISON: You might remember this. Jack Zeller, who lives over here in Santa Rosa, reminded me.

Q: He was my executive officer in Thailand when I first went out.

HUTCHISON: Jack was at the meeting, because he remembers the meeting that I'm talking about, and I don't remember the year. It seems to me it might have been later than '70. I think so. (It was. Either in 1971 or '72.) It had to be later, because that picture hadn't been made in '70. I think it must have been '72.

At one of the alumni luncheons here recently, like the one at which you spoke, Jack Zeller, whom I never knew, introduced himself. He reminded me of the incident at the PAO meeting in Manila. I didn't know Herschensohn from Adam's house cat. He initiated a discussion around the room, asking each country, each PAO, how he had used the film. When it came to my turn, I said, "I took a spade and buried it in the alley."

I don't remember how long later, some time later, I got a letter from Henry Loomis, when he was deputy to Shakespeare, telling me that I was going to be separated from the agency unless I shaped up. I forget what the language was, but that's what it amounted to. It really jolted me, because I had an absolutely unblemished record with USIA, and plenty of commendations to vouch for it. I really was shaken and furious. I didn't connect it with

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the Manila meeting. I didn't know what had happened. I hadn't the foggiest idea what could have triggered this.

I had been through a State Department inspection, in which they also inspected USIA as a kind of corollary, got a glowing report, I'd had a fine report on my last USIS inspection in Manila, a glowing report. So I had nothing in the record that I knew about that could have caused this, and I didn't connect it with Manila at all. I didn't know what the inside was at Washington at the time.

Kent Crane was, had for a while, replaced Oleksiw as Director for East Asia and the Pacific Area, including New Zealand and Australia. Kent Crane came in to Wellington. I remember we were kind of joggled when he was appointed, because he had no apparent qualifications for this, and he came out of the Spiro Agnew organization. So we were all really kind of disturbed when we heard he'd been appointed. I'm still not sure that he had any great qualifications for the job. But he came through, he was very nice. We got on fine.

Q: A very intelligent fellow.

HUTCHISON: Seemed to be.

Q: Extremely right wing.

HUTCHISON: I suppose so. Crane was on a kind of inspection tour of his own, and I set up some meetings for him in Wellington. In fact, I set up a big party for him, at which he met every important person in New Zealand, because my contacts were very good. I took him down to Christ Church to meet editors and so on, on the south island. I thought, "Well, I can't fight this thing from here. I don't know what to do. Here Crane is my superior in this hierarchy. I'll just take my file along."

On the plane I handed him the file with that letter from Loomis on top of it. I handed him my file of commendations, which was really good, solid documentation. And in the hour or

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so it took us to fly down, he read through this whole thing very carefully, and he said to me, "I don't understand this at all. I don't see how it could happen on the basis of your record as you've got it right here." He didn't promise anything, but he gave me the impression he would look into it when he got back to Washington. This must have been in 1972.

About six months later, I was given a superior award, a silver medal, the usual diploma from Shakespeare. (Laughs) Now, how do you...

Q: He never ordered you separated after that.

HUTCHISON: No! No. I can't attribute this to anybody but Kent Crane. He's the only person I took it up with. I can only guess or assume that he did take this back to Washington and said, "Let's do some justice here." (Laughs) I don't see any other answer.

Q: The reason that I thought it might have been 1970 is because at that time, Henry Loomis had apparently been told by Shakespeare that the agency was overstaffed, and I don't know whether Henry was the originator of the project, or whether he was doing it on the orders of Frank Shakespeare, but they set out to separate about 150 people from the agency. A committee was established on which were sitting Ken Bunce, Barbara White and I've forgotten who the other members of the committee were. They were asked to review every file of every senior officer in the agency, and they came up, finally, with a list of about 80 people that they thought might be separated because their records weren't quite as good as others, although they still were good records, but the committee had to find a certain number of people. They submitted it to Henry, and I'm advised by someone that they were told this was not enough, and to go back to the drawing board.

This happened a second time, and the ultimate result was that about 150 people were selected out on the basis of this review, many of them with very excellent records. A few of them appealed, without success. Finally, one of them, Fred Dickens, spent six years preparing his case, presenting it, appealing it, and finally the agency was forced to reinstate him. He got all his back pay! He got his annuity increased as if he had been

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employed all through those years, and they had to pay him everything back from the time of his separation to the date of his restoration. But he's the only person who ever won a case like that. I remember that I testified on his behalf when he was bringing the case. Since I knew about this enforced "selection out" process going on in 1970, I thought your problem might have occurred at that time.

HUTCHISON: I don't think so. This was later. This had to be later. It had to be. I must say I had known Henry when he was in the Voice, when I was heading IPS and so on, and although we never were close in operation or personally, we always got on well. This was a very legalistic letter, which said, in effect, "Either shape up or ship out," as if I had to correct things I was doing wrong, and yet I had excellent relations with — I had no supervisor in Wellington who could have complained about me. I was on good relations with the embassy itself, we got on well. And I'm quite confident that there was nobody operating against my interests in the embassy. I have no suspicion whatever.

Here's this very involved language that seemed to have been devised carefully by the agency lawyers or something, you know. On the bottom of it, in a little handwritten note, Henry wrote, "I'm sorry about this, Hutch." The inference I took from that was that this was a perfunctory document which he had to sign just because he was the signing officer, and it certainly suggested that he regretted it and that he hadn't has a part in it himself. It wasn't a personal letter; it was a very legalistic letter.

Q: It's very possible that Herschensohn brought this up with Shakespeare.

HUTCHISON: By now, having learned later on what kind of a guy he is, I'm quite confident that's what happened.

Q: You remember that he ran for senator two years ago.

HUTCHISON: Yes. Didn't get anywhere.

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Q: Was Wellington your last post?

HUTCHISON: Yes. I retired in 1973. You see, I was a reserve officer, and I had qualified for career. You will recall that along about 1967, I suppose it was, when I was in Manila, I got one of those formal invitations to accept a career appointment, but with the option to continue as a reserve officer and thereby be able to stay until age 62, instead of retiring at age 60. At that point, as much as I would have enjoyed the career status, it served my personal interests much better to continue my reserve appointment and to get the extra two years, because I was approaching retirement.

Q: What were your main program thrusts in New Zealand?

HUTCHISON: New Zealand is a country that is very responsive to the American culture and American objectives. Forget this nuclear hassle that's going on now. To put it in simplest terms, so friendly, that it didn't seem to me that a contrived country plan was suitable to the job in New Zealand. It seemed to me the thing to do in New Zealand — this is what I acted upon all the time I was there — was to introduce New Zealanders as much as possible to what's going on in the United States and what Americans are like, and if you accomplished that, that in itself was a country plan. I traveled that country from hell to breakfast. I made hundreds of speeches, I showed films, I developed all kinds of homemade programs which had as their real purpose, not the program itself, but the introduction of Americans and American thought to New Zealanders. So my principal interest was in devices which would establish more and more of this contact. I think I succeeded in it.

Dean Koch succeeded me. I think he really was astonished. He came down to take over while I was still there. (I think that's something the agency ought to strive to do as often as they possibly can. It doesn't always happen, but it should any time it's possible at all, assuming that the incoming guy and the outgoing guy are compatible or reasonably polite.) So when Dean arrived, I put on, in effect, a reception for him that really, I think, kind of

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knocked him out, because he met every important person in Wellington at that thing. I think I had developed relationships with them that were almost on a family basis. It's that kind of a country. People like to say New Zealand is a country built on a human scale, and that's a very good description of it. Everybody knows everybody else.

I said, "There are three gentlemen over here I want you to meet," all elderly men sitting against the wall, not the kind of people that feel like getting up and circulating, nor did they have to. I can't remember their names at this point, but one was a former air marshal of the New Zealand Air Force; one was the head of their scientific establishment and world renowned scholar; and one was a retired high court judge. And every one was a knight. They were all "Sir this" and "Sir that," you know. So I took Dean over and said, "These are three people you must meet." They were really topnotch gentlemen as personalities and really distinguished New Zealanders. So I introduced him to all these people.

Later on in the evening, one of these men, with whom I was especially good friends, a very dignified old boy, he said, "I'll bet your friend never had three knights stand up for him before." (Laughs)

It was a very satisfying post, and I think in that kind country, there's an attitude that doesn't fit anywhere else that I can think of.

Q: It might in Australia.

HUTCHISON: Possibly Australia, yes. Australia's still a big, scattered country, you know, whereas New Zealand's quite compact. My method for New Zealand certainly is not a policy, if it deserves the word policy, it's not a policy that you can pursue at all in a country of a different language. It certainly is not one that you can pursue in a country which has lots of hostilities or opposition to the American policy.

Q: Where you have factions that are either pro-communist or anti-U.S.

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HUTCHISON: Yes. So I wouldn't recommend that way to operate anywhere else I can think of, but I think that was the way to do it there. It's a homey country. At the same time, they are sensitive to any feeling that they're being propagandized, and quick to recognize it. It's a highly literate country.

Q: What would you say about your total career in the agency? Would you say it, on the whole, was a very satisfying one?

HUTCHISON: Oh, yes. It was relatively short, much shorter than yours. I guess I spent two and a half years after I came from Paris, from a different agency, in the agency, and resigned. Then went back and spent another four years in London, two and a half in Manila, four years — another 11 years, which isn't very long in comparison with lots of career people. But of course, I went in through so-called lateral entry. I think it was very satisfying. I think it's an agency that has been exasperating to almost anybody who's ever served in it, and I think it's an agency which is absolutely unique in its objectives. I think it's an agency which has, given some exceptions, I think, has had a remarkable number of dedicated, energetic, intelligent, hard working people.

It has seemed to me that USIA has had a remarkable proportion of talented, effective, very hardworking operators in spite of the too many occasions on which it has had very poor leadership at the top — people imposed on it by new administrations which either used the agency as a handy place to take care of political cronies, or to send in “new brooms” to carry out ideological house cleanings. Such appointees have usually arrived with preconceptions of the agency that were prejudiced or even contemptuous, believing USIA to be a nest of impractical, inefficient bureaucrats who need guidance from hard-headed experts from the field of public relations or advertising or the media. The reality however is that the appropriate training for a director of USIA would be to have learned its policies and techniques in years of service in USIA. Its mission, and the methods and attitudes which it must have if it is to succeed are unique, in or out of government.

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I can count on one hand, with fingers left over, the few USIA directors whom I can call genuinely qualified, unselfish and dedicated. Almost all others have been either fools, ideologues, political choices, or figureheads manipulated by scheming underlings. I have often marveled at the capacity of the career staff to keep USIA operating as well as it has done, given the quality of its directors.

I'll be specific: Compton and Johnson certainly were fools. Larson, Shakespeare and Wick qualify as ideologues. I have little basis to judge Marks or Rowan, although they were named for political reasons. Murrow's appointment was the product of the mutual fascination between him and John Kennedy, and he was a manipulated symbol, not a hands-on director. Sorensen and Wilson, men of immense ego and meager expertise, abused USIA and used Murrow. Said Sorensen to Bill Clark during a visit to London, "Ed and Don and I are the Troika."

I think back over the people I've known in it, and it was especially painful, it seemed to me, to see it go through the occasional ideological upheavals — especially the McCarthy thing was the worse — because it was so full of patriots. Really, one of the characteristics, it seems to me at the agency, is that in the true sense, it was full of patriots, and not the kind of patriots that McCarthy was hollering about or that Dan Quayle or a lot of people might today, certainly not the kind of patriots Reagan defines at all. Real patriots, many of them very innovative.

Q: Some of them are tremendously innovative.

HUTCHISON: Yes. When you think that a public affairs officer and his staff in almost any country is operating a program pretty much on his own to represent the United States abroad, to that country, it's an enormous responsibility, and I never met anybody in the agency who wasn't trying hard to do that. I might have disagreed with how they were going about it or whether they were really competent themselves or not, but in most cases, really fine people.

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Q: I don't know what the situation is in the agency today, but I think that everybody in our time believed so thoroughly in what it was trying to do, and was so convinced that there was a role for it to play, that there was a great dedication and feeling of camaraderie in the organization.

HUTCHISON: Oh, yes!

Q: Which I think has diminished very substantially over the last few years. There was a period in the earlier years when there was much more possibility of free-wheeling than there is today.

HUTCHISON: Yes.

Q: Communications have placed Washington so close to the field, that both the ambassador and the head of any of the programs under the embassy have to look over their shoulders at Washington much more carefully than they did then. So I think we've lost some of that free-wheeling, enterprising spirit that we had, and with it, I think we have lost some of the esprit de corps. But maybe I'm wrong.

HUTCHISON: I think you're right. I remember in Wellington, we got this instruction, this must have been about 1971, '72, we got an administrative instruction which required us to keep these elaborate records on all of our budgeting and programs, big long tables that you filled out and so on. I sent a message back to the agency, pointing out that we were only two Americans. We only had seven people. And that this was a tremendous burden in terms of our time, to maintain this kind of record and attempt to allocate budget when all seven of us knew exactly where every nickel went, and that this kind of programming for a post of that size didn't seem to me to be efficient or useful. I said in these words, "I would request that a post like ours be allowed to continue to fly by the seat of its pants."

I got back a very cold instruction which said, in effect, "Get on with it. Do it like we told you." So we had to. But I think in an earlier day, there would have been a little better

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tolerance. Of course, it's a part of bureaucracy. It's often difficult for bureaucrats to depart from their regulations.

Q: It has become much more bureaucratic.

HUTCHISON: I'm sure it has. The enormous advances with technology, in terms of sending information and live televisions interchange between, say, news correspondents in one country and politicians in this one, these must have an enormous effect on the operation of posts now, and probably has little relation to what I remember.

Q: The programs as we used to run them are changed almost unrecognizably.

HUTCHISON: I'm sure they are.

Q: There are at least 40 posts, now with which the agency has an instantaneous television interchange or computer inter change of information.

HUTCHISON: And facsimile and all the new...

Q: Yes, that you never had before. The wireless file is practically passe now.

HUTCHISON: I'd like to talk a little bit about the wireless file, by the way. When I joined the agency in 1952, the wireless file was still sent by Morse code to human operators, Americans, who were sent around the world to sit in these cubbyholes and receive Morse code, sent to them dot and dash.

Q: That's right.

HUTCHISON: Something that a lot of people nowadays never even heard of.

Q: That's right.

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HUTCHISON: These operators were getting scarce. It was hard to find telegraphers who would take these jobs overseas. It was hard to find telegraphers who didn't have proclivities that weren't really compatible with life abroad. Sometime when I was in the agency — when was Andy Beding the deputy director? He was for a while.

Q: That was back about 1954 and/or 1955. He then went over to the State Department.

HUTCHISON: Yes, for John Foster Dulles. It had to be '54, because I left at the end of '54. Jim Thomas and I had been trying for a long time to get the budget to include a substantial amount of money, hundreds of thousands of dollars, which would have been millions today, to change over from Morse code to radio teletype. Radio teletype, modern then, is outdated and outmoded today; that's now an old-fashioned way to send it. But I had been fighting for this because I could see it had to come. After all, lots of people were using radio teletype overseas in those days commercially, and still the agency was pounding iron, as they say, a slow laborious, expensive way to do it, and full of all kinds of errors and whatnot.

At a budget meeting, you may have even been there at the time. I can't remember if you were head of administration then or not.

Q: I was head of administration from 1960 to '64. I came in in July of '60 after I got out of the National War College.

HUTCHISON: This was considerably earlier. Andy Beding was conducting the weekly staff meeting.

Q: I was still in Japan then.

HUTCHISON: Everybody was fighting for chunks of the budget, and I made a last desperate pitch to get started on radio teletype transmission of the wireless file. I had the figures for it. I had worked out exactly what it would cost and so on. Jim Thomas had done

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a good job on all that. I said, "At least let's start for Europe." And Andy finally said, "Okay, let's start it for Europe." And that's how the wireless file moved from dot and dash to radio teletype.

Q: Yesterday I was interviewing Harry Kendall, and he was an assistant information officer. He had learned the Morse code when he was in the military. Therefore, part of his duty at his post was to receive the wireless file in Morse code.

HUTCHISON: He used to be in Kuala Lumpur, but that [his use of Morse code for the wireless file] must have been before that at an earlier post.

Q: I do thank you very much, John. It has been a very useful interview.

HUTCHISON: Glad to do it.

End of interview