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RALPH S. SMITH

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Postscript

INTERVIEW

Q: This is Lew Schmidt interviewing Ralph Smith at his home in Bethesda, Maryland. This is April 29, 1992. Ralph, I am going to ask you to start off by giving us a biographical background on yourself, your education, what you did if you had employment before you entered the Agency, what that was, and what it was that finally brought you into the Agency. I notice, incidentally, that you have been in and out of the State Department and back and forth with USIA. I think there was a period of three or four, maybe even five years, when you seem, according to your biosketch, to have been out of the government, but perhaps that was an aberration. Anyway, will you take it from there?

Biosketch

SMITH: I was born in Yonkers, New York in 1921. I grew up partly in that area and partly in New England, where I went to school. I finally went to Yale University, and graduated in a wartime-accelerated class, in December 1942--we were actually the class of '43. I then spent four years in the Navy, on sea duty.

The Road To Foreign Service

After the War, I studied for the Foreign Service, passed the written exam, and while waiting for the oral exam I served as a diplomatic courier for about a year. Then I passed the oral, but since there was a long waiting list for appointment to FSO, I got a staff vice consul appointment. I was going to be sent to Vienna as a visa officer when a friend of mine, Maurice Rice, persuaded me to apply for the Information program instead. There was an opening in that program, in provincial Greece--at Patras, on the west coast. So that was my first post.

1948: Patras, Greece--Vice Consul and Branch Public Affairs Officer

Q: What year was that?

SMITH: That was in 1948, during the Greek civil war. The assignment lasted three years.

Q: So you were on the Information side when you were in Patras?

SMITH: Yes, I was public affairs officer as well as vice consul. In fact it turned into a one-man post. There had been a consulate in Patras when I first arrived; but there wasn't enough shipping going through there any more, so the Department closed down the consulate and just left me there, with a Greek staff. It was basically a Cold War operation.

The Greek civil war was still going on--you had to use a military convoy to go from Patras to Athens, for example. But as the military situation improved, we tried to make contact with a Greek population, in the western part of the country, which had been substantially brain-washed by the Andartes, the Communists.

Q: In your attempt to get information out to a population that had been subjected to a good deal of Communist brain-washing, did you find considerable opposition to what you were trying to do? What was your experience? Did you have much success?

SMITH: It worked so well that it was really quite surprising. Of course, the Greek population had been through all of the Second World War and then through the civil war, and so I think they were really starved for contact with the outside world. In any case, as the situation gradually opened up we were able to get amazingly extensive use of our materials by the provincial press--mostly minuscule newspapers that were set by hand. And our mobile film unit was able to get into mountain areas...the first outsiders, really, to come in for some time. You have to remember, of course, that a great many people in the rural areas had never seen a moving picture before. We were repeatedly told that the Andartes had promised moving pictures, and people seemed to find it hugely amusing that finally it was the Americans who actually provided them. So, altogether, I would say there was great receptivity to our information programs.

[Moment off tape]

Q: You were telling me, off tape a moment ago, how interested the State Department was in what was going on in the boondocks, and I think you ought to speak to that. One thing I would like to comment on is that in those days the State Department still pretty much went through the old diplomatic channels regarding what a consul was supposed to do and what a political officer was to do. They didn't get out into the countryside as much as some of the people who were on the information side of the program. I suppose, therefore, they were very interested in what you were finding out when you were going out to these various rural spots. Could you speak a little about that, and also about what the situation was on the border during this civil war time?

SMITH: Well, there weren't any other regular sources of information about my area at that time. So in any case, I was very pleased indeed to receive a Commendation from the Secretary of State for my reporting on that area. Naturally I still have the document--Instruction No. 51, dated April 25, 1950. It begins with that felicitous bygone formulation, "The Secretary of State has the honor to refer to..." But now about the border...The Greek civil war finally came to an end when the Yugoslav border was closed and the Andartes could no longer use Yugoslavia as a sanctuary. The reason it was closed, as you remember, was that Tito had a falling-out with Stalin.

Q: Were there any other incidents in the course of your three years there that you might like to highlight, or have you talked enough about that assignment?

SMITH: Two very agreeable recollections. One was a visit to Patras by Ambassador Peurifoy, whom I very much admired. He was traveling together with the British ambassador and with the King and Queen of Greece, no less. The other was a visit by a most amiable Foreign Service inspector, Walton C. Ferris. They both seemed to enjoy their visits, but what strikes me now is that they commended both me and my wife Lilian, both verbally and later in writing. For at that time it was considered quite normal for husband and wife to operate as a team in the Foreign Service.

Q: All right; so now, what was your next assignment, after Greece?

1951: Brussels As A Political Officer

SMITH: From there I went to Brussels, the Embassy in Brussels.

Q: In what capacity?

SMITH: I was Third Secretary, later Second Secretary, in the political section. During my tour in Patras the FSO appointment had finally come through--hence this new assignment. Of course, the way the Foreign Service was set up at that time it was a perfectly normal transition from an information assignment to a diplomatic one; and I've always felt it should have remained that way. It was while I was in Brussels that USIA became a separate agency; and I felt that by putting information people in a different tribe, it placed them at a considerable psychological disadvantage. I remember that our DCM in Brussels--a perfectly kind and decent man, but traditional--privately referred to the USIS staff as "those poor dears," and didn't seem particularly surprised or concerned if they didn't understand Embassy policies.

Incidentally, I might mention that as a junior officer in the political section at Brussels I also served as protocol officer--which had a kind of interesting sequel a few years later.

Q: Was there anything else significant that you would like to talk about regarding your Brussels assignment?

SMITH: Well, besides covering Belgian internal affairs, I would say the main subject we dealt with was the project for a European Defense Community--which of course was eventually vetoed by France.

1953: Departure From Foreign Service To Enter The World Of Journalism

But if I can turn to the personal side of things... Because my FSO appointment had taken so long to come through, I had an accumulated salary shortfall, so to speak, of about five and a half years. Also, our first child was born at this time--in 1953. My wife and I felt we were headed for financial difficulties. So I accepted a long-standing offer from my father-in-law, a French publisher, to come and work for him in Paris. My father-in-law, Paul Winkler, had been a Gaullist during the war, and had in fact written a weekly column for

The Washington Post. He continued to be keenly interested in international politics; in fact we had so many views in common that in a way I felt I would be doing the same things as in the Foreign Service--but at a living wage. At that time he ran a weekly newspaper, Samedi-Soir, which was devoted to European unification, besides running the newspaper feature syndicate Opera Mundo ("Works of the World"), which he had founded and which was the largest French agence de presse in the private sector. After working for a time in each section of it, I eventually became assistant general manager of Opera Mundo; it was to a considerable extent an administrative job, and I think I was able to make life somewhat easier for my father-in-law by carrying out a re-organization of the firm. But I also did editorial work. I particularly enjoyed one assignment which stemmed from my job as protocol officer in Brussels. I got authorization to write a story about the Belgian royal family, which was much in the news at the time. This involved visiting the palace at Laeken--a rare privilege--where I was introduced to King Baudouin (he was riding a bicycle at the time); and where I was able to interview his father, King Leopold, and step-mother, Princess Liliane. Opera Mundo found a ready market for the series. I remember that in France it was published by the magazine Elle.

1959: Return To Foreign Service--This Time With USIA

After my wife and I had lived in France for nearly six years, however--from 1953 to 1958--we felt an increasing nostalgia for the U.S. and for the Foreign Service; and while remaining on the best of terms with my father-in-law, we decided we should try to re-join the Foreign Service while we were still young enough to do so.

Q: You were in France at a very interesting time. It included the high point of the Marshall Plan and also the establishment of the NATO operation. So you were there in the early days of both of these programs. In any case, your Paris experience must have pretty much stamped you with a journalist background when you came back into the Service.

SMITH: Yes. In those days it was not possible to re-join the State Department laterally from the outside, in any case, but I was able to join USIA; and that is how I came to do so.

Initial Assignment With USIA: Lyon

Q: What was your first assignment with USIA? And what year was that?

SMITH: That was in 1959, as Branch Public Affairs Officer (BPAO) in Lyon. I was there for about a year before being transferred to Paris.

Q: What were your accomplishments as BPAO in Lyon?

SMITH: Well, we had an across-the-board sort of program: a press operation, films program, library, visiting American performers, cultural exchanges, and so on. And once

a year we put on a really big show at Vichy--the foremost watering place, where French people went to relax while taking the waters for real or imagined liver conditions. During the Franco-American Journée we put on while I was there we had a lecture on Franco-American relations by André Maurois--no mean achievement, since he was really the pre-eminent French man-of-letters! We also had the U.S. Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra, over from Germany--at that time, better than any French orchestra outside of Paris!

Q: I would like to ask you a couple of questions in that connection. The period when you were serving in the private sector and also still in the period when you went back to the government with USIA, was a period when the communist influence in French was really at its peak. The French always, of course, have been very concerned about the intrusion of American cultural techniques and philosophy and therefore the denigration, in their estimation, of French culture. How much of that kind of French snobbery or critical attitude did you run into in the course of your informational efforts?

SMITH: It was there all the time, a constant concern. I remember trying to meet this problem head-on with a book exhibit we put together for Vichy, and which was later shown elsewhere in France. At that time many French people considered there had been a veritable invasion of France by American books--which were marked "Traduit de l'américain" ("Translated from the American"). So we put together an exhibit we called "Traduit du français"--a display of paperback books published in the U.S. which had originally been translated from French. I must say we did not have to wait long for an impact. At the inauguration of Traduit du français I overheard the Mayor of Vichy, a man who was friendly to us, saying to another high official who was not so friendly, "Look, here's proof that the Americans aren't barbarians!"

When it was possible to appeal to the French in a cultural vein, we found it was definitely worth the effort. Another example, this time in Lyon: For some reason, Lyon was the capital of French humorists--including even some who did cartoons for Paris papers. There was a humorists' organization there which I got to be acquainted with because they wanted to hear some American jokes on their radio program. Fortunately, my wife Lilian and I were able to assemble quite a number of translatable items from contemporary jokes which had been provided, on an urgent basis, by our nieces and nephews in the U.S. I recall that shaggy-dogs and ghastlies were big at that time. Anyway, when I delivered them over the airwaves they were well received by the Lyonnais radio audience--to the point where we felt encouraged to take a next step and go graphic: Together with our local sponsors, we put on a big exhibit of photo-enlarged cartoons--half from The New Yorker and half by Lyonnais artists. Naturally, we called it L'HUMOUR DE NEW YORK A LYON. It enjoyed considerable local acclaim, and later we felt doubly rewarded when my colleague Jack Stewart, PAO in nearby Geneva, came by with a van and carted off L'HUMOUR to be shown over there.

1960: Transfer To Paris, Initially As Assistant Press Attaché-Later As Assistant To The Ambassador For Public Affairs

Q: How long were you in Lyon?

SMITH: For a year.

Q: Where did you go from there?

SMITH: To Paris.

Q: This was what year now?

SMITH: 1960. I stayed in Paris from 1960 to 1964. First I was assistant press attaché, handling mostly economic matters. Later I was special assistant to the Ambassador for public affairs.

Q: Who was the Ambassador at that time?

SMITH: James Gavin, an Army general who had played a prominent role in the Normandy landings. He started his career as American Ambassador to France with that great advantage. However, he didn't speak much French; his hearing was slightly impaired, which made it difficult for him to learn French. So for that reason and various others, I was assigned to him full-time as a public affairs special assistant. We traveled around France a good deal. We made many trips to different parts of the country. I would write short speeches for him to read, and help out generally with relations.

Q: Did he try to read them in French?

SMITH: Yes, and he succeeded in doing that. Also, he had a very attractive wife, Jean Gavin. I would say that he was very successful as a well-liked public figure in France. In fact we had such a degree of PR success that it sometimes made people smile. I remember one occasion when we went to visit an orphanage. Gavin was photographed holding a baby, and it appeared next day--a very large photo--on the front page of France-Soir, which was the largest-circulation paper in the country.

Gavin also was on friendly terms with de Gaulle. His attitude toward de Gaulle was different, I would say, from that of the average American official at the time.

Q: He was more at ease with him?

SMITH: He was more at ease with him; I think he understood de Gaulle a little bit better in view of his own military background. He made it a very deliberate policy to try to get on with him. And I would say he was fairly successful, to the extent that anybody could be.

Q: That in itself is a public relations plus. So you stayed there through to '64. What was your position in Paris in early 1963?

SMITH: I'm not certain of the dates, but after Gavin left there really was no need for the special assistant position, which had been set up to take care of his particular needs. When he left he was replaced by Chip Bohlen. Of course, Bohlen was the consummate skilled, experienced diplomat, fluent in French, and didn't need a special assistant to help him out with public relations. So I was given a different assignment: I became Dick Monsen's deputy, on the Information side, in USIS. [Years later, in the 1970's, I served with Dick again on the editorial board of the Foreign Service Journal.] This was very enjoyable; what I did was to maintain constant liaison with the other sections of the Embassy--Political, Economic, and Political/Military--so as to produce a stream of short written and verbal bits of policy guidance. The idea was that each member of USIS would then be able to discuss, supposedly in a knowledgeable way, the main issues between the United States and France.

Q: You indicated earlier that you were rather disturbed about the separation of USIA from the State Department; so why don't you go ahead and say more about that right now?

SMITH: I think the USIS staff had at least as much talent as any other section of the Embassy--maybe more. They certainly knew better French than most people in the Embassy. And yet, I would say that by belonging to a different organization they remained a breed apart--almost but not quite the equals of the line officers, and with not quite the same degree of entree. I remember, in this connection, when our colleague the British press attaché was transferred away from Paris. His next assignment was as head of the political section in Moscow--and I know that at least some of us in USIS thought, "Wow! I wish we could do that."

All the same, we had a really interesting time in Paris, and I don't mean to detract from that in the slightest. One particularly interesting experience for me, I remember--though sadly, it was in the aftermath of President Kennedy's assassination. Arthur Schlesinger was writing a book about the Kennedy Administration. He came to Paris in this connection, and I was assigned to him as interpreter when he interviewed André Malraux. Malraux was certainly the most prestigious intellectual figure in Gaullist France, and naturally I hung on every word he said--mostly personal recollections about Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy. But I confess that what I particularly remembered afterward was his mannerisms. Malraux moved about compulsively as he spoke, and it seemed to me there were moments, as he sat on the couch, when his feet were actually at a higher level than his head.

1964: Smith Developed Interest In Arms Control, But Effort To Be Assigned To ACDA--The Arms Control And Disarmament Agency--Initially Aborted, Assigned To Zaire

But to get back to the main thread...While working on information policy in Paris, I got to be very much interested in nuclear strategy and political/military matters, so for my next assignment I applied for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency--ACDA.

Q: And that was your next assignment?

SMITH: No. I fell afoul of one of those factions which seemed to characterize USIA. This one, led by Tom Sorensen, favored turning the rascals out of Europe and replacing them with rascals from the Middle East. So in the shuffle I ended up in central Africa--as Branch PAO in Elisabethville, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (now Zaire). This was four years after independence, and there was a considerable amount of upheaval in the country. The U.S. Government was still very much in its anti-colonial period then: African was good, European was bad. But after being there a while I came to feel that a European presence was absolutely essential, so I did what I could to encourage it. As it seemed to me, there was nothing wrong with central African tribal society as such: every man is his brother's keeper, and in some ways it's a more admirable and humane society than our own. But it offers no possibility for development, because any sign of initiative--unless it comes from a paramount chief--is stifled. Add to this that there were no written languages--hence virtually no history--until the Europeans came along; and that even the most basic ideas of cause and effect were different. (This was documented by a remarkable Belgian priest, Father Placide Tempels, who lived with one of the major tribes, the Baluba, for a number of years and wrote a book called La Philosophie Bantoue (Bantu Philosophy)). In other words, for development--which is what all the Africans said they wanted--a European-type education was indispensable. So I spent quite a lot of time trying to arrange for the creation and endowment of a library of the humanities at the University of Elisabethville. And as the Cold War was in the forefront of everybody's thinking--including my own--I found apparent receptivity to this idea in AID, since a library of the humanities obviously would be a vehicle for the propagation of Western political philosophy. The rector of the university, a Belgian historian from Bruges, similarly was all in favor of the idea. But he was also a man of worldly wisdom, who said that frankly he didn't see this kind of thing actually getting carried out by a bureaucracy. And I fear he was right. Anyway, I was transferred from Elisabethville after only a year and a half, before the plan came to fruition; and since my successor apparently had other priorities, that was the end of it.

1966: Detailed to ACDA As Public Affairs Officer

Q: So then you went into the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency--ACDA ?

SMITH: Yes, on loan from USIA. That was early in 1966. I was assigned to the staff of ACDA's greatly-liked Public Affairs Adviser, Ned Nordness, a former AP correspondent and senior official of USIA. The man we both worked for, the Director of ACDA, was William C. Foster. I've always felt that Foster did more than anyone else in the world, before or since, to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, since he was the principal negotiator of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But Bill Foster--whose back- ground of

distinguished government jobs included that of Deputy Secretary of Defense--was also a terrific human being; and I felt really privileged as I came to work more closely with him--on speeches, articles, and so on. I remember one slightly different kind of job I did which he liked--and found amusing. Foster had knocked himself out traveling around the world to build support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but as the time for U.N. General Assembly action approached, some Third-World governments started back-tracking, complaining that the treaty was one-sided (which of course it had to be). So, together with colleagues I put together a press kit quoting the remarks which statesmen of many nationalities had made over a period of years in support of non-proliferation; and though it was ostensibly for the American press, we saw to it that all delegations got copies--thus helping treaty supporters to needle recalcitrant colleagues.

Though he is remembered mainly for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Foster also did a lot to prepare the way for bilateral U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations. In fact the last article we worked on together while he was still head of ACDA -- it was called "Prospects for Arms Control," and was carried in the April 1969 issue of Foreign Affairs--was an attempt to bring together all the arguments in favor of what came to be known as SALT--the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

One of the qualities I especially admired in Bill Foster was his natural gift for public relations. He had an easy way of combining substantive ideas with concerns about how to put them across. Admiring both his ideas and his approach, I found it easy to hold fruitful discussions with him, and so I was particularly elated when, in 1968, he offered me a new job as Special Assistant for Long-Range Planning. Besides being a significant promotion, it was the most interesting job I could have imagined having!

Unfortunately, it did not last very long. Bill Foster was already over 70 (then considered an advanced age for government service); his wife Beulah, I understood, was anxious for him to slow down; there was a new Administration coming in, and he felt that if he stayed at all he should be ready to stay the course--four years. So he resigned from the government, after suggesting a successor--Gerard C. Smith, a personal friend of his who also had a distinguished background in political/military affairs. And in due time Gerard Smith was approved by the new President and the Senate. Of course, the new Director scarcely knew me from Adam, however; and naturally had his own ideas about what kind of staff set-up he wanted. So I considered myself fortunate in being able to rejoin Ned Nordness, this time as his deputy; and during most of the ensuing SALT negotiations I backstopped Ned in Washington while he served on the delegation.

The Reluctance Of State Department FSO's To Consider USIA Officers As Equals

In this connection, I might mention again, if you will permit, that I don't think public affairs officers should be in a different tribe from those handling the substance of things. Once when serving on a delegation myself, I remember having a rather alcoholic discussion about inter-communication with a "substantive" FSO who was a real snob on the subject: he just didn't think that non-FSO's were full citizens. Others were less

extreme, to be sure; but I think there was often a certain reluctance to confide in these "outsiders" who spent so much time with the press. I remember one occasion when Ned--on the SALT delegation at Helsinki--felt so cut off from the substance of the negotiations that he threatened to go home. I understood that Gerard Smith, an eminently decent man, felt very badly when he learned about this, and that he then spent several hours talking to Ned, trying to fill him in. So of course Ned stayed on.

Q: After Ned's conversation, did it make any difference in your relationships with political people on the delegations?

SMITH: Not a great deal. The relations were perfectly friendly, you understand; but deep down, I think there was this feeling that we were different, and that maybe, because we lived so much with the press, it was a bit risky...

Q: I think that feeling was very evident for a number of years until the older generation of the diplomatic corps began to retire or meet their demise. You have a younger group in now and although there probably is still some of that feeling today, I don't think it is nearly as bad as it was 25 to 30 years ago.

SMITH: I think you're undoubtedly right. But I guess my point is that there needn't be any such problem at all. If the British and the French can move back and forth from one kind of job to another, why can't we?

The Conception--And Ultimately The Establishment Of The Arms Control Association

Anyway, let me refer back now to the year 1971, while the SALT negotiations were still going on. I still saw Bill Foster from time to time after his retirement, and on one such occasion I told him about a book I had just read called Militarism-USA, by Colonel James A. Donovan, a retired Marine Corps officer. The thrust of the book, as I recall, was that with the vast numbers of Americans who were serving or had served in the armed forces or worked in military-related industries, there was a huge military constituency in the country; and in this connection it described the functioning of the main service associations: the Association of the U.S. Army, the Air Force Association, and the Navy League. As a counterpoise to this excessive militarization, I wondered, why couldn't there be an Arms Control Association? Foster agreed immediately that there should be one; moreover, he lost no time in taking steps to set it up.

I remember that these included a roundtable meeting in a private dining room of the Metropolitan Club, where Adrian Fisher, former Deputy Director of ACDA, and other legal experts joined in. As the Arms Control Association began to take shape, I thought I should tell Phil Farley, the then Deputy Director of ACDA, about it. Phil advised me to keep my own role in this a secret. For, as even I was vaguely aware, relations between ACDA and Henry Kissinger in the White House were strained, and it could be awkward for Gerard Smith if it became known that a member of his staff was engaged in such "subversive" activity. I must have taken this admonition very seriously, for when I

chanced to meet Smith a few days later at the Metropolitan Club, the fact that I was with Bill Foster made me feel uncomfortably conspiratorial! I actually imagined for a moment that Smith knew everything and that his casual remark to me, "I see you're in good company," was a kind of veiled reproach! (This doubtless proves once again that "The wicked flee where no man pursueth .")

But now let me return to the main thread of SALT. When President Nixon signed the SALT agreements at the Moscow summit of 1972 and then came home to tell a joint session of Congress about it, you may recall that it was a national triumph. It undoubtedly contributed substantially to his reelection.

The Unfortunate Purge Of The Arms Control Team That Negotiated The SALT Agreement

So what was the reward for the arms control team that had made this triumph possible? They were fired. Let me quote from Smith's book Doubletalk - The Story of SALT I (Doubleday, 1980, p.444): "A number of my SALT associates left the government as part of the purge that ushered in the second Nixon administration ...Of the seventeen people in ACDA's top positions in 1972, only three were left by 1974. In 1973 the ACDA budget was cut by a third and it lost 50 of its 230 employees."

Needless to say, people in ACDA were flabbergasted. And even in retrospect, one may wonder that all this mayhem did not cause a public outcry. I can only explain that in those days we worked in concentric circles of secrecy; and while those on the innermost circles knew what was going on, they were so committed to a kind of gentlemanly team-play toward the White House that they kept silent. The rest of us were told to keep quiet, and didn't really know what was happening anyway. It was as if we were all gagged. Much of the story didn't come out until Gerard Smith's book appeared, several years later. And I for one learned about some of the events of that period only a dozen years later, from a book called Deadly Gambits, by Time correspondent Strobe Talbott (Knopf, 1984).

Nixon And Kissinger Undercut The US SALT Delegation

What was the underlying story? It appears that the trust which President Nixon placed in his fellow men did not include "arms controllers"--not even the conservative, hard-nosed members of the U.S. SALT delegation; and that he encouraged his Special Assistant for national security affairs, Henry Kissinger, to involve himself deeply in the SALT negotiations--sometimes behind the back of the U.S. delegation and along lines at variance with the delegation's instructions. Smith's book reproaches Kissinger for this and for what amounted to sloppy diplomacy, carried out without benefit of sufficient military or other expertise and without keeping proper records. (Examples: Kissinger at one point told the Soviets that the U.S. was willing to exclude submarine missile launchers from limitations [pp. 228, 276], and that there need be no limitations on modernization [p. 332]. According to Smith, the delegation was able to redress these lapses only after much time and effort.) By the same token, there was a difference in the quality of workmanship

of the two agreements which finally emerged. The defensive weapons treaty--negotiated almost entirely by the delegation--came to be widely regarded as a sound and well-drafted instrument. The SALT agreement on offensive weapons--the final version of which was negotiated largely by Kissinger and his staff at the hectic 1972 Moscow summit--proved to be considerably more controversial.

Since White House staff members do not appear formally before congressional committees, however, it was Gerard Smith and the delegation who were called on to defend both of these agreements before Congress. And as Smith recounts [p. 442], Senator Henry Jackson of Washington "went right for the jugular--the Moscow negotiations about which the SALT delegation had not even seen memoranda of conversation--if they existed."

The congressional vote in favor of the agreements was nevertheless overwhelmingly favorable. Even Henry Jackson voted affirmatively, though only "after engineering an amendment the thrust of which was criticism of the freeze as unequal." [p. 442] But, Smith continues: "Jackson apparently believed that the unequal freeze arrangement was the result of undue influence of 'arms controllers' in ACDA and the State Department--against whom he believed the military representative on the delegation had not stood firmly enough." And as Strobe Talbott was to report later on, "Jackson demanded that Nixon purge the SALT delegation and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency" [p. 16]. Under enormous pressure, Smith, himself, felt obliged to resign though--gentleman that he is--he offered to stay on long enough to get the first session of SALT II started.

I have mentioned some of the other "punishments" that were handed out. The fact is that ACDA officers down to the middle level--which then included me--were obliged to hand in resignations. Mine was finally given back to me after nine months. (Having left the USIA personnel system in order to accept a super-grade in ACDA, I had no kind of tenure.) Ned Nordness never got his resignation back. It was a terrible blow to him. After five more months--during which my deputy Adalyn Davis and I put in long hours to keep our remaining shoestring operation going--I was appointed Public Affairs Adviser by the New Director of ACDA, Fred Iklé. This proved to be an interesting experience. For a time we seemed to get on well enough. He liked the speechwriting I did for him--nearly all, it is true, on the subject of nuclear non-proliferation, about which almost everyone could agree. He also liked my handling of the press. (Part of my usefulness, undoubtedly, was that I made excuses for his frequent bad manners in dealing with the press." Six months after appointing me to the Adviser job, in any case, he told a colleague that he was very glad to have done so.

1972 Misunderstanding Between Smith And New ACDA Head, Fred Iklé, Lead To Smith's Departure From ACDA

But then something started to go wrong. I recall having a disagreement with him one day on the subject of a Comprehensive Test Ban (cessation of nuclear testing), which I was very much in favor of. He may have decided then that I was a bit too true-blue arms

control; I frankly don't know. Anyway, he began faultfinding, and as I shot down each complaint, a new one appeared. Finally he wanted to assign someone over me--apparently for policy matters--though, strangely, he wanted me to continue handling press relations, which I thought were the most important part of the job! Very much troubled, and wondering if perhaps I was somehow at fault after all, I finally decided that Fred Iklé and I had not been made for each other, and that I must leave ACDA.

Q: I retired in 1972, and it is amazing how you lose track of the inside of what is going on when you don't have access to cable traffic. I am very vague about Iklé. Why was he so different in his viewpoint from the people he succeeded?

SMITH: Well, I was a bit mystified too. I knew he was from the Rand Corporation, of course, and that he was "conservative." But I had witnessed "conversions" to arms control by military officers, for example, and I believed, perhaps innocently, that whoever was in charge of arms control would ultimately rise to the responsibility. After all, we weren't playing games; we were trying to avert nuclear war. Anyway, it was only several years later, when I read Strobe Talbott's book, that I learned very much more about Iklé. Let me backtrack for a moment to 1972-73 and the SALT agreements.

Senator Jackson's And Iklé's Reported RoleIn The Purge Of SALT Delegation And Later Iklé's Role In Failure Of SALT II

We were told at the time that the real driving force behind Henry Jackson's antagonism was his administrative assistant, a zealous young man named Richard Perle. Well, Talbott says that Perle "played an important part in picking Iklé..." And in an ironical twist, he adds that as Director of ACDA Iklé "was instrumental in preventing Kissinger from reaching a SALT II breakthrough with the Soviets early in 1976." Needless to say, I had no idea at the time that Iklé might actually be trying to obstruct arms control, or I would have left ACDA much sooner.

One more point I might mention about Fred Iklé's tenure at ACDA: Those of us who had become "alumni," voluntarily or otherwise, were appalled to learn somewhat later that the agency's files had been decentralized--which is to say that its memory had been partially destroyed.

Smith's Post ACDA Work In The Department of State

When I did leave ACDA, in any case, I was fortunate in being able to get a job as Special Adviser to the Bureau of Public Affairs in the State Department. There I wrote a series of publications, called "Discussion Papers," on global foreign policy issues. Finally, I did one more brief stint at ACDA -- working on publications--after Paul Warnke had become its Director; then, having about 30 years' government service, I retired at the end of 1978.

What did I do in arms control that was useful? I guess I would include the following:

- Helping with passage of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- My role in creation of the Arms Control Association, which has proven to be a useful organization, especially in informing the press.

- Keeping the line open for a Comprehensive Test Ban. (With the cooperation of State Department spokesmen, I blocked various attempts by military-industrial interests to reformulate the officially-stated policy.)

Postscript

In retirement I have done many interesting and enjoyable things, and have long since recovered from the depressing effects of the arms control events related above. I might mention one activity as being relevant here: I have been involved in organizing conferences on global issues for DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired); and these are a constant reminder that if some of those old Cold War problems now seem rather tiresome, there are lots of nice new problems out there, just waiting for us.

End of interview