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SOME NOTES ON THE MAKING OF A U.N. AMBASSADOR

12-11-70

On Wednesday, the 9th of December, Bob Haldeman called me to come to the White House. I had previously talked to him and I had previously talked to Secretary of State Rogers. In both these discussions, the subject of the U.N. came up. Rogers seemed very much interested in my doing it, but he pointed out that there were a lot of pitfalls and a lot of problems involved with the U.N. that I really needed to know about before getting thoroughly involved. He said he would like to have me at the U.N.

Haldeman seemed, during that first talk, less convinced about the U.N., but said that it was under active consideration. We talked, too, about the White House staff and I reiterated that I would not be interested in any agencies like NASA, SBA, SEC, etc.

On the 9th, then, I went back to Haldeman's office and he told me they'd decided they wanted me on the White House staff as an Assistant to the President---not an Assistant "for", but a general assistant whose duties would be defined later on. He indicated he felt the President thought this would be better for me than the U.N. job or certainly the National Committee job which was under active consideration.

We chatted for awhile and he started to define the duties of the job of one of the President's assistants when the President called for Haldeman to go into his office. He returned in five minutes and took me into the oval office where he and I and the

President chatted for some forty minutes. During the course of the conversation, the President began to outline the staff job, saying that it would give us real flexibility. He told me that he understood that I did not want the National Committee job, and I told him that I didn't want it under the existing circumstances. We didn't go into the details of it. He pointed out that he knew that people around there were somewhat abrasive and that he felt I could do a good job for him in the White House presenting the positive side of the issues.

He told me that he'd have some wonderful new programs and they needed some good spokesmen and that there'd be plenty to do.

We then started talking about the U.N. and I told him that I thought the U.N. would have some real appeal because I could spell out his programs with some style and we could preempt that mass news media area---that he was operating almost in a vacuum, John Lindsay, Goldberg and others being critics and not supporters; that perhaps the U.N. job was not the greatest for getting something done, but that I felt I could really put forward an image there that would be very helpful to the Administration. The President stopped and told Haldeman something like this, "Wait a minute, Bob, this makes some sense. George would be in the Cabinet, and I'm not putting much emphasis on that, but given that, he'd be coming down here every couple of weeks, getting briefed and having an input on domestic policy and all of this makes a good deal of sense to me."

He also discussed the possibility of my switching my residence and the idea that I might run for office up there--- for the Senate from either New York or Connecticut. We did not dwell on this subject. He then came up with this idea---"Let's announce tomorrow that Bush will be Assistant to the President, with general duties, and that he will start right after the Congress reconvenes. Tell Rogers to put a "hold" on the U.N. job. In this way, if Yost anytime wants out, we can still have the option open on the U.N., but go ahead with the staff position.

He told Haldeman to give me an office and get the thing underway. He said, "You don't need to finish out all these last votes. Come one down, spend some time and get the feel of what we're doing. All in all it was a very encouraging talk. I remember being tremendously flattered that the President wanted me.

I told him that I'd be willing to do any job that he wanted, and that I was not necessarily pushing for the U.N. job because this one sounded like it had a lot of merit to it.

We then went into Haldeman's office and started talking about how it would all work. I gave him Aleene Smith's name for clearance by the F.B.I. He mentioned I could bring a staff man with me.

The President called for him again and so I went back to the Hill.

Haldeman called me 15 minutes later and told me they'd decided to go with the U.N. job. He said, "George, you're a hell of a salesman." I said "Wait a minute, you're the guy who's the salesman. I'm beginning to get all enthused over this staff job."

But he said, "No, you've sold the President, and he wants to move with it now. He's talked to Rogers and they're ready to go."

I, of course, was pledged to secrecy on all of this.

I was also told that Rogers planned to go up to talk to Yost on the 10th and that Yost would come down on the 11th. We tentatively agreed that Ziegler would call me to finalize details. Ziegler called, I believe on the 10th, and said that it was all set for 11 o'clock on Friday, the 11th, barring any last-minute chance and to get a biographical sketch down, etc.

I pointed out there was not much in the way of foreign credentials, but we did emphasize the Committee on Earth Resources and Population, Phi Beta Kappa at Yale, my father in Brown Brothers, Harriman, International, and I listed the places I'd traveled abroad. Nothing more all that day. I remember being kinda "coy" with Jimmy Allison and Peter O'Donnell which troubled me a little bit.

That night, we turned on the TV for the President's news conference and the President announced that George Bush would take an important post with the Administration. The minute that happened, the phones started ringing and at the conclusion of the press conference, the "anchor man" started speculating about the National Committee. But, this morning, the 11th, the NEW YORK TIMES had the U.N. speculation and so did the WASHINGTON POST.

Haldeman called at 10:30 to finalize the plans and Yost apparently seen the President and that's how it worked.

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COLLECTION George Bush Personal Papers United Nations File				
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 P-5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
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A sidelight is that both times Haldeman called me, I was sitting in the bathroom.

My feelings now are kinda mixed. I'll miss the Congress, but it's going to be a tremendously exciting challenging.

The only people who knew ahead of time--I talked to John Sherman Cooper, Potter Stewart who was tremendously excited about it. I mentioned it to Rog Morton and Bill Stieger (who were the only Congressmen).

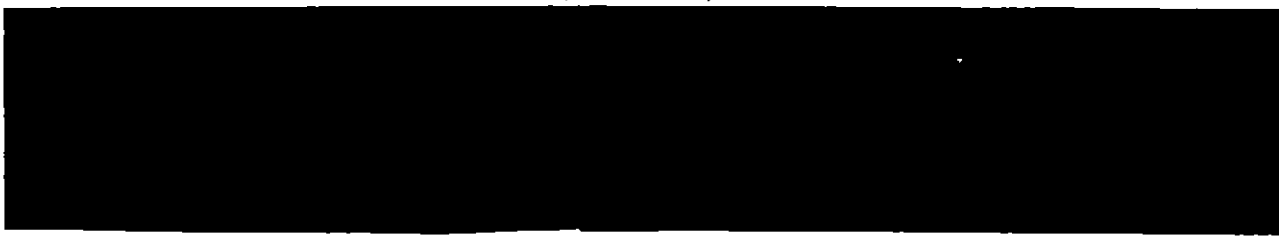
I remember looking first in the WORLD BOOK, reading the details of the organization of the U.N. and then getting Bill Macomber to send over a booklet on the U.N. to me which I'm now reading like mad.

It will be interesting to see what the Texas reaction is.

We called a lot of our friends after the President's statement at the press conference---Will Farish, Fred Chambers, and others. All these fellow felt it was really great. A couple of them said, "Well, if this is really what you want".....meaning that I guess they were somewhat disappointed.

At this early stage, the more I think about it, the more I'm inclined to think it's just ideal.

I'm trying to do this to keep a biography of some sort---the appointment, the people I meet and impressions of them. I think it will be a kind of interesting thing to do.





This idea originally was the idea of Charles Bartlett, a great friend of mine. He called me right after the election when I was in the depths of despair about the election and Charlie Bartlett said you'd be amazed what this campaign did for your image up here. A lot of people are thinking of you in national terms. I thought he was just going overboard as polite, decent, warm guy trying to cheer me up, but he said, "I think out of this will come some real opportunity," and he said I want to talk

to you about one. I went over and talked to him when I got back to Washington and he talked about the U.N. as the greatest thing. I talked to him just before I went over to the White House and he told me it was marvelous for Nixon and I was the one guy who could bring it together and have new ideas and all this kind of thing. He was very excited and he's got a lot of ideas that might help. Nobody's ever been able to sell the country on the U.N., he says, and he thinks I might be able to do that, and he's very pleased and, of course, I'm very much indebted to him.

Potter Stewart, as a judge, of course, never got on the political side of it but just as a close friend and confidant, he, too, seemed to grasp the potential of it.



Johnny Byrnes---I called him (minority leader on Ways and Means) and he was very nice. He immediately captured the thought of it. Tom Kleppe, on the other hand, had some reservations about it, I thought, but good friend that he is, he didn't say anything bad about it. I think it's kind of foreign to him that I would want to do this.