

INTERVIEW WITH

Leo A. Hoegh

on

March 19, 1976

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
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Leo A. Hoegh  
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This interview is being taped on March 19, 1976 with Leo Hoegh in his home near Colorado Springs, Colorado. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes of the Eisenhower Library. Present for the interview are Mr. Hoegh and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: First of all, sir, would you tell me where and when you were born and about your early education.

MR. HOEGH: I can do that. I was born on March 30, 1908 on a farm four miles west of Brighton, Iowa, and I was educated in a small town of Elk Horn, Iowa which is in western Iowa. I received my high school diploma there, and then I attended the University of Iowa at Iowa City where I received my B.A. degree in 1929 and my Juris Doctor's degree in 1932. At the university I was quite interested in politics and I remember campaigning and organizing the students for our U.S. Senator [Lester J.] Dickinson. He ultimately was defeated because back in the '30s he once advocated that it was all right for the people to eat dog food, and that was the end of his political career.

DR. SOAPES: His Marie Antoinette statement.

MR. HOEGH: That's right. But at least we did that. And then I was active in politics within the university and within the fraternity and so forth. At the university I earned my major "I" in swimming and also I became captain of the water polo team. That took me up to 1932.

Then I started the practice of law. And the first four years when I practiced law, which was at Chariton, Iowa, I received very little cash for serving people in a legal way, but I had bundles of eggs and chickens and vegetables and so forth. And for a \$500



fee, early in life after I was married, which was on June 29, 1936 to a Mary Louise Foster, and we lived in Chariton, Iowa, and I practiced law there. And I remember one farmer, he owed me \$500 because I had saved his 320 acre farm which was being foreclosed. And he came in one day and he said, "Leo, I owe you money."

And I said, "That's right."

"How much?"

"Well," I said, "what do you think it's worth?"

He said, "It's worth two or three thousand, but I haven't got any money." And he said, "I'd love to pay you five hundred cash. However I do have a silver fox and I'll give you a silver fox fur for it." And so I accepted that silver fox fur as a \$500 fee. And I still have that fur because--and my wife has been wanting me to throw it away now, I'd say at least, for thirty years. But I have it, and I'll always keep it. Beautiful.

But back in those days I was the youngest lawyer in that town, so I represented all the farmers who were in foreclosure. And one time I was representing seventy-six of them in foreclosure. Out of the seventy-six, I saved sixty-three of them. And all I was paid was eggs, chickens, ham, and I'll never forget one of my clients came in and said, "Leo, I'm going to pay you tomorrow."

I said, "Fine. Woody, how are you gong to do it?"

He said, "I'm going to bring in a heifer."

I said, "Great." and I said, "No doubt it'd be worth about \$50."



He said, "Yes." So that night my wife and I, Mary Louise, we sat down and we fixed out our budget, how we were going to expend that \$50. Back in the thirties I got to my office early in the morning, and I was there at seven o'clock and John came and honked his horn. I was up over the First State Bank, and he honked his horn, yelled up at me, "Leo, where do you want your heifer?"

I said, "Take it over to George." George Stinbaugh was a meat purchaser.

So I ran down my stairs through the alley and got down to George and I said, "George, I have a beautiful heifer out here I want to sell you." And by that time John had driven up with the heifer. We both go out and look at it. Just skin and bones and I said, "I have to have \$50, George."

George said, "Well, no, I'll give you \$15."

"Oh," I said, "Gee, I've fixed my budget on \$50."

He said, "\$15."

I said, "The hooves and the hide are worth that much."

He said, "That's about all there is."

And I finally got \$17.50--quite upsetting. But that gave you an idea what went on back in the thirties when you're practicing law.

As a young man, Chariton was a new town, and a young lawyer needed to get acquainted with people, so I ran for the state legislature in 1936. In the primary there was another businessman and a farmer. So I campaigned vigorously. I saw 760 farm families



out of 1,100, and I won the nomination. Got married right afterwards. And then I was elected that fall and I served three terms in the state legislature. And back in those days they paid us \$1,000 for a session and--

SOAPES: Didn't make too many expenses on that.

HOEGH: No. Well, I remember though we had a nice hotel room, very nice one--\$90 a month, and we could each have a steak dinner for 85¢, so maybe we were paid adequately, I don't know. I was in the legislature then in 1941, that was my third term, and in December of that year I received a red-bordered letter from the U.S. Department of Defense. I think it was the War Department then, or something like that. I had taken ROTC at the University of Iowa. Back in those days it was required that you take two years basic training.

SOAPES: I faced that same thing.

HOEGH: Did you really?

SOAPES: Yes, in '63.

HOEGH: And then if you'd take the advanced, you'd get \$9 a month. I needed the money; so I took it and became a second lieutenant. And by the way I was named, in 1929 as we graduated, as the best platoon leader of the ROTC and a Governor Hammil of Iowa presented it to me. Well then later when I became governor, I gave that trophy to the state of Iowa to be placed in the governor's mansion. I



thought it was nice to have a trophy from a governor and then have the governor give that back to the state. But I received that red-bordered letter--I was a second lieutenant and they said they needed me.

So in January my wife and I packed up and we went to Camp Roberts, California, and after I'd been there about two weeks they they shipped me to a combat division, the 90th Division, down in Abilene, Texas. Trained there for three or four months and then I went to Oregon and helped organize the 104th Timber Wolf Division, with which I served then the rest of World War II. I served there as a platoon leader, company commander, battalion commander, and then I became the G-3 operations officer of the 104th Infantry Division. And in 1944 we went overseas and we fought in Holland, Belgium, and Germany.

And I recall my first meeting with President Eisenhower was in October of 1944 at Brian, [?] Germany. I'd seen generals before, but I'd never seen a five-star general. And I was, of course, tremendously impressed. But being a G-3, I was of course the officer who had to brief and orient General Eisenhower. And I recall that after I'd briefed him and gone over it in great detail as to what our operation was going to be and how we were going to make our attack, why General Eisenhower asked me, "What did you consider when you prepared your plan?"

I said, "Well, I considered the capability of our division, the terrain and the location and the disposition of the enemy."



And he turned to me, he said, "Young man, there's another element, in war there's another element. Can you seize your objective with a minimum cost to your men?" *civilians*

Now that impressed me. I was a civilian and when the overall general said, "Keep in mind the loss of your men, keep it to the minimum," that made me say to myself, "Well, boy this war is all right. We've got leaders that are human."

And I then responded to him, I said, "Well they didn't teach me that at Leavenworth."

He said, "Yes, but this is war."

And so from then on he became my candidate for President. This is 1944. And of course the war ended later and I went back and I started practicing law again in Iowa.

SOAPES: Did you get back into politics, too, in Iowa?



HOEGH: Back in Iowa after I got back, I became the county chairman and became a district treasurer of the Republican party.

SOAPES: You went back to Chariton?

HOEGH: Yes, yes. And I was active in politics. And then--I'll take you very quickly up to 1951--now we're thinking about our President for 1952. There were three other veterans of World War II and myself; we organized an Eisenhower for President committee in Iowa.

SOAPES: This was '51?

HOEGH: 1951. We organized it in the fall of 1951 because our national committeeman was a Taft man and he had already pledged twenty-six votes for Taft.

SOAPES: Who was that?

HOEGH: Spangler.

SOAPES: Harrison Spangler?



HOEGH: Harrison Spangler. And of course that really upset us and we really went to work. And we didn't talk about it in the newspapers; we were grass-roots. I, for instance, spent most of my time from October on up until after the county conventions, and those county conventions were, or the precinct caucuses were in January or February I can't recall which, or maybe March. But anyway, I not only organized my own county and the fourteen other counties in my congressional district; I went out and picked key young men and women to head up the campaign and told them exactly what they had to do--that was to get Eisenhower supporters to the precinct caucus and then send only Eisenhower supporters to the county convention and then from the county conventions, pick a slate that will go to the state convention. And they had to be for Eisenhower.

SOAPES: What was the background of these people that you selected?

HOEGH: They were primarily veterans or young farmers and housewives, people that I had known through the American Legion and through

politics as a county chairman. But young people. I didn't go to the old professionals. This was really a grass-roots movement. So I had my district in good shape, and when we went to the state convention, my district was 490 against 67, so you know, that's a lot. We lost four districts, two of which were on the eastern border that faced Chicago and the Chicago Tribune, and two districts on the western coast, along the Missouri that faced the Omaha World-Herald, and yet we had good leadership there. But they just couldn't make it. So when the district caucuses were over, why we stood eight and eight, that's sixteen. Now at the state convention, then you picked the other ten. It's always been the policy that the committee names all the professionals to go and so forth. I was named chairman of the nominating committee at that convention. I don't think they knew what they were doing, but anyway I was. We had four Eisenhower people against four Taft people, a committee of eight. As soon as the meeting was called to order, and understand the state convention is going on, resolutions and platitudes--

SOAPES: This is about March or April?



HOEGH: This would be in April, the state convention. So we went to the hotel away from the convention hall to make our decision as to who would get the ten. As soon as the committee sat down, we ordered lunch, and I said, "Now gentlemen we know exactly why we're here; four of you are for Taft and four for Eisenhower. And I want to announce right now that we're going to take a minimum of eight, and we'll give you Taft people two." The national committee-man was not on the committee, but he had his henchmen there. He

and Ingalls were always out in the hallway--

SOAPES: This is David Ingalls, the cousin of Taft?

HOEGH: Yes. And they were always, the Taft people would run out in the hall for their instructions. We wore them down. By about three o'clock we definitely had six to their four. And then we finally got them down to seven to their three. And then, noticing that they were giving ground, why I finally said, "Well, let's quit." I said, "We'll take our ten in and let you Taft people take in ten. And let the convention determine it." Now that was a real bluff because the newspapermen the night before had taken a poll of the delegates, and Taft led us really by 76. However, our committee met--we enlarged our committee--now we had fifteen. And we met at one o'clock in the morning, that's prior to this meeting that day, and we decided then that the thing to do is get no sleep tonight, we hit every bar in town and every convention hotel, and all we do is say that Eisenhower's got it by 94 votes. And you know by breakfast time people were coming up and saying, "Boy, isn't that great that Eisenhower's got the majority." And that impressed these four Taft people sitting around in this nominating committee. And finally about three o'clock I said, "Okay, take your ten in and we'll take ten."

"Oh, we'd never have done that before."

I said, "This is a good year to start."

"No."

I said, "If you're not going to go that way, then you only get one and we take nine." I said, "I've changed my mind." And



the other fellows agreed; they all said, "That's right. That's right."

And we had to give up the hall, the convention hall at five. At a quarter of five we finally got an agreement--nine to one, and named them. And you know who the one was? Harrison Spangler.

Being chairman of the committee I had to get a cab and race back--the whole committee didn't get there in time because they had to get out by five o'clock and when I came to the microphone and said, "Your nominating committee places the following ten delegates at large in nomination." And I named Spangler first. And gee, you know my friends just booed me. I thought I was going to be blown off the--and I said, "Wait a minute. Here's the good news." And then I name the Eisenhower's. So we went to the convention with 17 to 9, really upset them. Why don't we stop for a minute--

[Interruption]



SOAPES: Can you give me some idea of differences between Eisenhower and Taft supporters in Iowa, say like age, income levels, that sort of thing?

HOEGH: Yes. In the Taft group, that was primarily the professional politician. They were the people that had control of the Republican party at the precinct level. As a matter of fact, I might have been a part of them because it was organization people. Now with reference to the Eisenhower people, we were--well the basic group was made up of veterans. And then it was enlarged to young

farmers, young businessmen, young women, but also we hit the older group that were not the pros but who definitely wanted a voice. And they were given a voice. But we conducted a democratic process; it wasn't arm twisting. It was selling--selling a great leader, Eisenhower. It was easy. We knew, first of all, he was a man of great ability. We knew that he was of good moral character. We knew he was just an outstanding soldier, but also an outstanding citizen.

SOAPES: So that was the major theme that you emphasized, the personality.

HOEGH: Yes sir, yes it was. As a matter of fact, the man out of politics versus a man in politics. And once in a while we got the answer, "Well why would you want to put an amateur in?"

I said, "Be good for the country. He'll think straight. Doesn't have these previous commitments." And I think that's true.

SOAPES: You mentioned earlier the fact that the Omaha paper, the Chicago paper, and I think I did see a map--I think it was a newspaper clipping--of where the delegates were--down the east side and the west side; Eisenhower was right down the middle.

HOEGH: Right.



SOAPES: Did you have the Des Moines paper for Eisenhower?

HOEGH: Yes, yes.

SOAPES: So it was three newspapers that were--

HOEGH: Yes, but not that I want to give the Tribune or the World-Herald that much credit. Those are the most conservative districts of Iowa. They were in '51, the most conservative ones. And they always elected Republican congressmen back in those days. It's changed today.

SOAPES: Yes, there are a few more Democrats in Iowa now.

HOEGH: Oh, oh, it's horrible! [Laughter]

SOAPES: And the senators that they have elected.

HOEGH: Oh, yes, we have two Democrat senators.

SOAPES: Was Bourke Hickenlooper involved in this?

HOEGH: Hickenlooper was on our slate. I had served as a young man with him in the state legislature. As a matter of fact, I sat right back of him. And I admired him greatly and he was a good help. And we were real close, real close. As a matter of fact, he and a man by the name of Robert [D.] Blue, who later became governor, and Hickenlooper had been governor, and I had been on the Republican steering committee of the House of Representatives back in Iowa in 1937 when we had a Democrat governor. And we bled him to death--I mean we were mean to him. We were so mean to that governor that when I stood for re-election the next year, he came down and purged me, and that helped me. I never won the county by a bigger majority in my life. But Hickenlooper was a close



friend. He had talked to me before and said, "Now, Leo, don't fight over me." He said, "You can put me on as an Eisenhower man and you'll be safe." And then I saw him at the national convention. He said, "Don't worry about it."



SOAPES: But basically you did your organization work through the non-professional.

HOEGH: Yes. He didn't participate, but he was really on our side.

SOAPES: Now you went to the convention; you were not a delegate, were you?

HOEGH: No, sir. No. I was too busy. You shouldn't be a delegate if you've got work to do, and our mission was to keep our delegates in line, and we did that. We didn't lose any.

SOAPES: What kind of pressures were put on them from the Taft people?

HOEGH: Oh, great pressure. Great pressure. As a matter of fact, Spangler then withdrew or resigned, and we elected a new national committeeman. And he promised to go with us--now he'd been picked and so had the national committeewoman, they'd been picked in their districts, and they were shifty. I mean they had promised, the lady had promised me that she'd go with the majority. And we had it. And the national committeeman promised he'd go with the majority, and we had it. And we had a big potato farmer from northeast Iowa, I can't place his name right now, but he cornered the national committeeman, and I thought he was going to knock him from one end

of the coliseum to the other. Oh, he was mean. He said, "If you double-cross us," he said, "you're in real physical trouble." And he meant it. Now you'd say that's wrong. I don't say that's wrong, because when you have a promise you should perform that promise.

SOAPES: What was the name of the national committeeman, the new one, and the committeewoman?

HOEGH: No, he became state chairman--Bob Goodwin.

SOAPES: Bob Goodwin.

HOEGH: Yes. I beg your pardon, that was wrong.

SOAPES: And the woman's name?

HOEGH: Anna--you know when you've been away from, see that must be twenty-five years ago.

SOAPES: Perhaps you can insert that in the editorial process.

HOEGH: But she was from Red Oak, Iowa. She promised me on the train. I got on the train at Chariton and I saw her then. I said, "Now you've got to go with us." She did, with great reluctance. But, you know, a promise is a promise.

SOAPES: After the convention was over and Eisenhower was nominated, was there any trouble in Iowa in getting the Taft people to close ranks?



HOEGH: Well they were a little sticky for awhile. And they held a lot of this against me personally. The national committeeman read me out of the party. He said, "You're no longer a Republican."

I said, "Well, I'm not going to take your word for it. I'll prove that I am."

And then we had a lady who was the district committeewoman from my district that lived in a different county from mine and I had these young people so fired up, they didn't even let her go to the state convention as a delegate. And she always held that against me, and her husband had a newspaper in that town and he never supported me. And I couldn't help it. They called me, the chairman of that county called me and said, "They're trying to outmaneuver us."

And I said, "Well, just stick in there and whip 'em on votes." I said, "You've got the delegates." This is at the county convention.

"Oh," he said, "we've got the county; we've got the votes."

"Well," I said, "be sure now that you elect Mrs. so-and-so go on," I can't place her name either.

He said, "No, she's not going to go on."

I said, "Why?"

"Well, she and her husband are trying to outmaneuver us. And we're not going to let her go."

I said, "Please let her go. We can tolerate one." They wouldn't let her go.

Then I had a call from Newton, Iowa, Jasper County, and the young chairman up there. Now when I say young I mean thirty to



thirty-five, about my age or maybe a little--about the same or maybe a little older. And they called and said, "You told us to put on Fred Maytag and one or two others and they're trying to beat us down; we're not going to let them do it!"

"Oh," I said, "please let them go."

And they finally, out of thirty-five, did send three Taft people. That was how well we had it organized. So you can see we had a lot of scars there unfortunately, and a lot of them held it against me because I was vociferous. But we didn't do anything unfair. It was all within the democratic process. Salesmanship.  
[Laughter]

SOAPES: As politicians understand that term.

HOEGH: That's right!

SOAPES: So you had some scars afterwards.

HOEGH: Yes.

SOAPES: Did you have to make, then, some overtures to these people to try to salve the wounds?

HOEGH: Well we--no, I don't think so. We were never demanding of Eisenhower, I mean the Eisenhower group. We had our reward. He was elected. So we felt--actually when roll call was taken and there was 18 to 8, Iowa.

SOAPES: Iowa, of course, did vote for Eisenhower--



HOEGH: Oh, yes.

SOAPES: --I mean in the general election. I've seen some correspondence in the papers of Leonard Hall, which are now open for research use at the Library, from the general public saying, "We voted for a change in '52 and now in this field or this field, we're not getting it." Did the Republicans in Iowa feel that they got what they wanted?

HOEGH: I think so. I don't recall of anything that we didn't get. Now I never made a demand for anything. One of our committee of four became a U.S. district judge and the other two became two U.S. district attorneys. And both capable. Both were endorsed by the Iowa Bar Association--

[Interruption]



SOAPES: You became governor when?

HOEGH: 1954. Prior to that time our governor was William Beardsley, who was an Eisenhower supporter. And he asked me in 1953 to be his attorney general so I served as the attorney general in 1953 and 1954. And I was busy at that time enforcing the laws of Iowa. We, at that time, had an unusual law--one I think that Kansas still has--and that is that you couldn't serve liquor by the drink.

SOAPES: Right. We, unfortunately, still have that one.

HOEGH: And I enforced it. But you could imagine my problem.

Illinois had it; Nebraska had it. So we had raids and we prosecuted people and it was a mess.

Then in 1954, five Republicans, no, four Republicans came out for governor. I didn't like any of the four. All four of them were Taft supporters. And I thought, well maybe we ought to have an Eisenhower governor. So I went in to talk to Governor Beardsley and I said, "What do you think about me running for governor?"

He said, "I think it's a good idea." But he said, "You know you're going to have a hard time." He said, "You may win one term, but you'll never win two because you've got deficit spending to overcome." He said, "I've been deficit spending and somebody's going to have to pick up the tab."

I said, "Well, I don't care about that so much, but, I don't particularly like any of the four running." He agreed with me. Now this is unusual. I didn't have anyone come to me and ask me to be governor. No one. And I went and asked the governor if he thought it would be all right. He said, "I think it would be fine." And he said he would support me. But, you know, a lot of candidates, the public demands that they become a candidate. Well I didn't have that, but I decided to run.

Now there are five of us running for the primary. So the other four then got another person to come out of my congressional district to cut me down. So now there's six, and we campaigned all over the state, had TV debates and all the rest. You had to have thirty-five percent of the vote to be nominated out of six. Oh, everybody said it's impossible--and two of the Taft people who were working for the delegates. I spent no time on delegates. I knew that they'd probably



get me in a convention, because we weren't now organized like we were in '52. So I made up my mind to win the primary and I came out of there with 40.8 percent. So I was nominated. And then I was elected. I served one term as the governor had predicted.

SOAPES: You had trouble with that deficit spending.



HOEGH: Well I increased taxes, and you know if you increase taxes on a two-year term you're not going to make it the second time. But I had an enriching experience there. Cost me money to be governor, about six thousand dollars. I was honest and, you know, they paid me fifteen thousand dollars a year. And when you have a family--you see I have two daughters, one Kristin, and another one Janis. And it's pretty difficult for four even back in those days, and be governor and have your wife serve coffee and tea once a week to about six hundred ladies. You can't make it. So I was retired in January of 1957.

When I was governor I organized the mid-western governors, particularly in agriculture. We were suffering. I think hogs were then 8¢ and a dozen eggs cost 13¢. And Iowa's a great hog state and boy if you haven't got a decent price for hogs, you're going down the drain. So I was constantly against [Ezra Taft] Benson because his policies didn't fit with the Mid-West. And finally the Congress had passed an agricultural bill and I wanted it signed by the President, President Eisenhower, and I heard rumors that he was going to veto it. So I called the mid-west governors--they were all Republican--and organized them to go. Then Sherm Adams got on the telephone and frightened four of our fellows to not come and the only ones that

came were the Governor [Fred] Hall of Kansas, Joe Foss of South Dakota and myself. So we go to Washington, DC. Well we're having a nine o'clock appointment with President Eisenhower. At eight-thirty we were there, all farm state governors. You get there thirty minutes early. Sherm Adams came in and said, "Leo, I've got to talk to you." So he called me back in the back room and said, "You shouldn't take up the old man's time. Leo, you shouldn't do that."

I said, "I'm down here representing the farmers of Iowa and Joe Foss the farmers of South Dakota and Hall the farmers of Kansas. We're here, we have an appointment, and we're going to see him."

"Damn you, Hoegh, you're too stubborn."

I said, "I'm not any more stubborn than you are. I'm going to see him."

Well nine o'clock President Eisenhower let us in, and he was really nice to us. He had Sherm Adams and Benson sitting there. So he said, "Well, Leo what can I do for you?"

I said, "Well Joe Foss is going to open up, Governor Hall second and I'll conclude."

He said, "You can have thirty minutes."

Sherm said, "Tell them to take ten."

So we had thirty minutes, and then he questioned us for about twenty. And Sherm was just squirming, and Benson I thought was going to get ill. Then Eisenhower turned to me and he said, "Now Governor, what you really want is a floor under corn for a dollar and a half, and a floor under wheat for two dollars."

I said, "That's right."



"Well," he said, "I'll go ahead like I told Benson. I'll veto the farm bill, but I'll give you the floor by executive order."

I said, "That's great." [Laughter] Sherm grabbed me when we got out of the room. Oh, he just gave me hell. He said, "You got him to do something he didn't want to do."

I said, "Wait a second. He wanted to do it. He'd never have done it if he didn't want to."

Well after I was defeated in '57, Bourke Hickenlooper called me and said, "Leo, how would you like to be the federal civil defense administrator under Eisenhower?"

I said, "Oh, gee, I'm right back in the practice of law and I'm making good money again." I said, "How much can you pay?"

And he said, "Twenty thousand."

"Well," I said, "that's five thousand better than what I've been making." And I said, "I'll consider it, but I just can't give you an answer."

Sherm Adams then called me about two days later and said, "The old man would like to have you be the administrator of federal civil defense."

I said, "I appreciate that and I'm seriously thinking about it."

"Did Hick call you."

I said, "Yes." Well I said, I'd like to do it, but you're going to have to give me two weeks."

"What the hell you mean by that?"

I said, "I've got to see if I can get my house in order."



He said, "Two weeks?"

I said, "Two weeks. I'll call you and it'll either be yes or it'll be no."

Well he said, "Come down here in two weeks."

"Oh," I said, "I don't want to spend money."

He said, "I'll send you a ticket."

So in two weeks I went down and I agreed. I wasn't sworn in or anything. And then I went home. I had a summer home out here at Green Mountain Falls, and we lived in Iowa. So I loaded up my family, I said, "Let's go out and spend a couple of weeks before I take over." Oh, about seventy-five miles out of Chariton here a highway patrolman runs me down. "Long distance wants you."

I said, "Well it can wait till I get to Colorado."

"No, it's the White House calling."

I said, "The White House?"

"Yes, they said for you to call them immediately."

So when I got to Red Oak, another twenty-five miles, I called. It was Sherm Adams and he said, "Leo, where are you?"

I said, "I'm in Red Oak, Iowa."

"How far are you out of Offut Air Base?" That's Omaha.

"Oh," I said, "I'm about an hour out."

"Well I have a plane waiting for you; the old man wants you to go down to New Orleans and Lake Charles. There has been a horrible hurricane."

I said, "Sherm, I'm on vacation."

"Did you hear what I said?"



I said, "Yes."

He said, "You can be there in an hour?"

I said, "No, two. I've got to eat." I said, "That storm is gone." I said, "it's a matter of going down there and seeing what Val Peterson's going to do." He was the person in office. So we finished and I drove to Omaha, the family let me out and they went to Colorado and I flew down to New Orleans. That was worthwhile and you have to give the Prez and Sherm Adams a great deal of credit because it gave me a real experience in seeing the hazards and the suffering of a hurricane. Good thinking.

So in July, why, my family and I moved to Washington and I became the federal civil defense administrator. And Eisenhower was very cooperative. He had this opinion--he said, "Military defense in itself is inadequate for total deterrence." And he also said this, that military defense with civil defense, an effective civil defense, was the total deterrence. I enjoyed working with him and I was fortunate, having had the experience of a legislator and a governor that--well then he invited me to sit with the Cabinet, even as a civil defense administrator, and even on the National Security Council, which by statute I was not a member of at that time. But as a governor I'd had two federal agencies come to me: one was Defense Mobilization, the other was Civil Defense. And the one would be talking about something and the other one would talk about something, and they weren't coordinated. So after I'd been in this office six months, I was determined that we'd tie those two together and immediately went to work on it. And the President named



a committee, made up of [Nelson] Rockefeller, his brother--  
Eisenhower's--

SOAPES: Milton?

HOEGH: Milton. And Arthur Flemming. Those three. Because Arthur had been the head of Defense Mobilization. And so I presented my views with reference to that and stated that I didn't care who was going to be the director, but someone should have the two tied together. And in June of that year, the President made an executive order tying the two. Then I became a statutory member of the National Security Council, and he always considered me as a member of the Cabinet, not by statute, but by his election. As a matter of fact I was number thirteen on the totem pole. Every state dinner I was the last. My wife and I, we were the last in line on the executive branch and then of course Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird was the first in the legislative. So we'd always be standing next to them. And in '56, why I wanted to try to get as much division within the Democratic party as I could. Not '56--

SOAPES: 1958?

HOEGH: I'm thinking of '60--

SOAPES: 1960.

HOEGH: Yes, '59 at the dinner parties, '58 and so forth, because Lyndon was thinking about being President and [John F.] Kennedy was thinking about it. And I'd always say, "Well Lyndon's the man that ought to be the Democrat nominee." And Lady Bird would be my dinner



quest about oh, fifty percent of the time and I'd tell her, "Iowa looks real good for him." [Laughter]

But I never have worked for any person that was better to work with and for than President Eisenhower. Actually, he ran the Cabinet and the National Security Council. He had complete control over it and he made the decisions. But as a military man he always permitted his staff, secretary of state, secretary of defense, Director of the Office of Civil Defense Mobilization, to make our policy statements that he had made and had concurred in. I spoke once to the Republican Women's Conference down in Washington, DC, and in it I said, "It's a shame that the American people can't via television see President Eisenhower conduct a Cabinet meeting and a National Security Council meeting to let them know that he has complete control and he directs the government." I said, "Too many people have a false impression that he's leading by default." I said, "That's an error." Well they quoted me quite well that night in the [Washington] Star and the next morning why we had a meeting of the Cabinet. And Eisenhower turned to me and said, "Leo, he said, " you believe in the open door policy don't you?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I do, because the American people need to know how good you are."

Under him we prepared the first overall national plan for civil defense and defense mobilization. The first. And that was hard work. And it was copied by many foreign countries. People came along and we gave them copies of it. Now that took us three years to develop.

SOPAES: From '57 to '60.



HOEGH: To '60. And a lot of people don't realize this that is, was under Eisenhower that the first national plan was developed. Secondly, the first fallout shelter plan was then determined, and third, the first matching of funds with state and local governments to strengthen the civil defense effort. There were many other things that we did first. Well, for instance on continuity of government, we had, during that period of time, thirty-eight states adopt the laws that we recommended, and over twenty-five hundred counties and cities had done the same. So we accomplished a great deal.

SOAPES: Could you tell me something about the organization that put this plan together? What your procedure was? What type of a staff?

HOEGH: Well I had quite a large staff. I think the two agencies when they were together, I think they were running around sixteen hundred--that's regional offices. And then we had a college and also a substation from the national headquarters out at Battle Creek, Michigan. And then we had an underground control center in the mountains in Maryland. In that we had staff that were coordinating all the other agencies.

But you mentioned the staff. When I first got in, see in July, well they had a budget ready. And they brought it to me after I'd been there about thirty days and the administrative officer said, "You just sign right here, Governor."

And I said, "I don't sign anything. I look it over." Then I said, "I want to see your last year's budget and this year's budget. I want to see what's going on." He was asking for a hundred and eighty more people. So I did a lot of redlining for about five



nights at home. And then I called him in and I said, "Well, the budget's going to be cut ten percent and the number of employees are going to be cut five."

"Oh, you mean from the budget that we're preparing for next year?"

I said, "No, that's with reference to last year's budget."

"Oh," he said, "the agency will go to hell; the agency will be destroyed."

I said, "No, no, I think it'll be strengthened. Everbody'll know they have to work now." And that was their first lesson. Because the bureaucrats will run you if you give them a chance, and this was the first time they found a fellow, you know, was going to examine. But I did it because I felt we could do a better job if everybody worked.

SOAPES: Eisenhower was very cost-conscious, budget-conscious man--

HOEGH: Oh, yes. I knew that. And the Bureau of the Budget, Maurice Stans real good. And he always found me cooperative. You know, he'd call me in and he said, "Leo, do you know the old man wants a five percent reduction?"

I said, "I've given you a six."

"You have?"

I said, "Yes, six."

Well he said, "Then I'm not----- . Good-bye." [Laughter]

But I remember at one Cabinet meeting Arthur Flemming wasn't satisfied with his, and he started making noises about how he had



to have another two and a half billion.

And Eisenhower said, "Arthur, sit down." He said, "I don't want to hear anymore from you. This is the figure you're going to get." And Arthur kept talking. And Eisenhower cracked his--well he hurt his hand, I thought he was going to break his fist. "Stop it. Sit down Arthur. I don't want to hear another damned word out of you." [Laughter] And he didn't, because he knew he meant it.

Well, we had that underground shelter up there. It's no good unless you have it manned by staff of the agencies that have to play a role in it. Well I had a little static from all the Cabinet officers. They didn't want to have to do that. But I brought it up with Eisenhower and he said, "That's it. It's no good without it."

So one day--no this is in '60--I said, "You know, Mr. President, I think it would be good to have a CPX [Command post exercise] problem like in the old days of the military. Get all the principle officers, that means all the Cabinet and key federal agencies, to go up and spend two nights and three days at our underground shelter." Oh you should have heard them object. [Laughter] And Benson led it off. Started the attack. Said, "Mr. President, I have to be in Europe that week."

President Eisenhower returned and said, "Change it, or send your deputy, but you're going to be up there." That didn't make friends for me either. But you see how much cooperation you had?

Let me give you one more example. When we were preparing this national plan, annexes had to be prepared and then submitted to all



the federal agencies, including the Department of Defense. Well, the Department of Defense objected because I only gave them thirty days. If they didn't have a comment in thirty days, it was approved, the annex. So I think it was Tom Gates that brought it up. He said, "Hoegh is unreasonable. He gets these annexes out and he only gives us thirty days to examine the annex. It doesn't get to a proper party by that time."

And Eisenhower turned to me and said, "You want to give them thirty days?"

I said, "Yes, sir, thirty days is okay."

He said, "That's it." He said, "If you can't get it through your mill in thirty days, it's got to be approved." He said, "Tom, you're wrong." [Laughter] But that's what he thought. Now you see he made the decision.

And I remember that three or four of us on the Cabinet decided that we'd try and get him to change his views on a certain agricultural bill. And so we brought it up. I think--what was his name, Interior, from Hastings, Nebraska?

SOAPES: Fred Seaton.



HOEGH: Fred Seaton. He started it. I went second and I think Fritz [Frederick H.] Mueller went third and then Eisenhower just leaned back. He said, "You know I've enjoyed these political speeches by you fellows." But he said, "You know I make my decisions based on what I think is good for America and not what's good politically." Pretty sound. He didn't think politically. His decisions were

based on what he actually thought were best for the country. And you know you admire a person like that. You don't shift around, you know, like [Richard] Nixon's done. I threw that one in, didn't I? [Laughter]

SOAPES: Helps us establish perspective in the interview.

HOEGH: Yes. [Laughter]



SOAPES: We've talked about having an exercise. You did have a series of them under the title of Operation Alert. What were your priorities and objectives in Operation Alert?

HOEGH: Well the first thing was to make certain that the government could function. And by that I mean that, if Washington, DC were knocked out, that we had adequate staff and personnel that could then carry on. Control, communications, are so essential in case of a crisis, and that's why we put so much emphasis on the federal government. For instance, we could, by helicopter, get the President up underground within twelve seconds. I could be there, too, and quite a few. Most of the key executives could be underground within twelve seconds. I mean twelve minutes! Oh, I withdraw the seconds. But that's good. And then you can see the advantage of having this continuity of government program nation-wide so that states, cities, counties, could also have direction through regular, normal government. You can't meet a catastrophe unless you have control by those who are duly elected to serve the people.

SOAPES: What was your level of cooperation?

HOEGH: I thought it was excellent. It would not have been, because it was questioned by Cabinet people--they knew that I was sitting there all the time, but I really didn't have statutory authority. But so many items of my program were presented, for instance the national planning, for instance the fallout shelter plan, the matching of federal funds with state and local government, all these items had to go to Cabinet and/or National Security Council for decisions, and you'd get a lot of static. But when you had a President who was defense oriented, I had no problems. And they'd talk to me afterwards--"Why do you make us go up and do that?" I said, "I want you capable."

SOAPES: So as you've told me earlier, Eisenhower viewed your program as part and parcel with the whole defense operation.



HOEGH: That's right. That's right. And I think lately it's been sort of pushed under the rug and that's wrong. I'll tell you the reason it's wrong. Russia now is getting the capability of evacuating its cities if there is an international crisis, not if there's going to be an attack. You don't have time to make evacuation if there's an attack. But if there are tensions where you're starting to blackmail each other, Russia now has a program by which they can move their citizens out of these industrial and large cities. We need that same capability. But they've left it alone. It's in bad shape. [Pause]

Of course when I was governor, the President came out to Iowa.

We had a big plowing match, and you know that's how Harry Truman defeated Tom Dewey.

SOAPES: Right. That famous plowing speech he made.

HOEGH: Right. And so we insisted that he come out for this plowing match and he came. And then we went to Boone, Iowa, that was Mamie Eisenhower's home town, and the people just loved him. I remember riding in the car behind him from Des Moines to Boone, and the President, he'd stand up at every road junction, or every crossroad, there'd be all the way from twenty-five to five hundred people just to see the President drive by. He was loved by Iowans and of course by the whole country.

SOAPES: The fallout shelter program--did that come out of the Gaither study?

HOEGH: Yes, yes.



SOAPES: Were you involved in the Gaither study?

HOEGH: No, because you see I was the head of the agency and they kept that separate from us. We fed them information, don't misunderstand. And I remember when we took it up to the National Security Council, Eisenhower always had the chairman of the AEC sitting in. But John McCone was not, he didn't understand civil defense. So I talked to Willard Libby and I said, "Get him out of town for next Thursday's meeting and you come." Because he was dedicated.

SOAPES: How do you spell his name, please? L-i-b-b-y?

HOEGH: Yes. Yes, Libby. He's now head of the chemistry department at UCLA. He's a Nobel Prize winner. And he knew, you know, the effects of weapons; he understood it. And so I had him there at that meeting, and there was a lot of static. You know, secretary of treasury, he could see millions of dollars being spent, but we put it through. At least the President said, "I adopt the policy." Now see again, he made the decision, but he made me announce it, which minimized it. But no, I had one hundred percent cooperation from the President --.

[Interruption]

[Editor's Note: At this point a few minutes of this interview were lost because of technical difficulties at the time of the interview.]

SOAPES: In case we missed this on the tape, I was asking about the stockpiling program, and Mr. Hoegh was telling me that he was involved with setting up the stockpiling program and the major concerns that you had.

HOEGH: Well the main reason was we had to keep an adequate supply of critical materials. Then we based that on what type of war might occur, and we had to be certain that we had an adequate supply of these critical materials for a nuclear war or just a general war. So based on that, then we would advocate that certain surpluses would be sold. And I recall that we had a surplus of natural rubber



in that synthetic rubber was in. We called a conference in London of the rubber producing countries and we got their okay, but first I got the okay of the rubber industry. And they said, "That's fine if you'll just sell five thousand tons a month." And that's adequate. So that's what we recommended over there in London at this meeting and they agreed to it, and so we immediately started selling five thousand tons a month. And I think we had to hold up after twenty-five thousand tons; that's all we got permission for initially. I did that in '60 I believe it was. Then I remember I was in London in 1961 or '62 and all of a sudden the person who had taken over my job announced that we were going to sell all the rest of the natural rubber. Well the rubber market fell to pieces. And over in London you should have read the newspapers how they were castigating Kennedy and his OCBM director, because they hadn't coordinated it and hadn't gotten, hadn't met these three prerequisites. And they had to call it off. But all of ours were well coordinated.

Some of the items we had to take to Congress. Coconut oil, we didn't need that any more; we had millions of gallons and I wanted to sell it. They'd had a drouth in Hawaii. I could have made the government about three times what they paid for it, but Congress dillydallied around and never gave me permission until the next year, and then the crop was good and we sold it for just about what we paid for it.

SOAPES: Anybody in government service dealing as you were in such a sensitive area that does affect, as we've noted here, the economy of various industries I'm sure gets a lot of attention from various



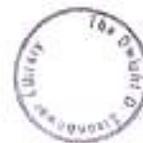
pressure groups, special interest groups.

HOEGH: Yes, oh yes.

SOAPES: Was this pressure on you intense from these groups?

HOEGH: Never fazed me. I can see a person that hadn't been a governor or been attorney general or a state representative, never had public experience, he might succumb. But I had no problems with them. There is a law on the books that if you buy a certain type of machinery, you still give the United States, I think it's either ten or fifteen percent advantage over any foreign country, and we needed some hydraulic equipment down in, oh, some place there down in Tennessee or Tennessee Valley.

SOAPES: TVA?



HOEGH: Yes. And it was bid on by a company in England and bid on by a company in Philadelphia. And the Philadelphia company was going to go broke and we were going to lose about 180 jobs if they didn't get this contract. The British wined and dined me quite a bit. I drank their booze and ate some of their good food, all the time knowing that I was going to rule against them. [Laughter] And then it came to the time for a decision. Of course the President had to announce it, but I had to staff it. And we had to go eight percent over the fifteen. And Eisenhower said, "Well, how are you going to do that?"

And I said, "Well, I've got to consider the industry. It's a vital defense industry and it's got to have this contract." He

agreed; it went through. But I had a fellow from, I think it was Inland Steel. He was an adviser to the President, Clarence Randall.

SOAPES: Oh, yes.

HOEGH: And he objected to it. When he found out that the President was going to make that decision, why he called me and said, "Leo," he said, "boy, you're misleading the President."

I said, "I don't know why I am."

He said, "Will you go with me over and see the President."

I said, "Yes,"

"About this matter?"

I said, "Right."

So we went over. The President heard out Clarence Randall and then he heard me out. He said, "Well, Hoegh's right. The decision's right."

I had a little conflict with Clarence Randall. He thought that it didn't matter whether our industry got it, or you know. I think he sort of favored the foreign industries.

SOAPES: Hmm, why would he--

HOEGH: Of course that's a horrible charge to make. I once was at one of his conferences. He was taking me to task so I took him to task. I said, "One of these days the steel industry is going to need this same protection that I'm giving to the electrical industries."



"Oh," he said, "never come to that."

I think it was two years later they ask for the same thing.

[Laughter]

SOAPES: We have quite a collection of Clarence Randall's material at the Library and I was wondering if you could give me a little more of a character sketch of the man.

HOEGH: A fine citizen, durable, tough, knowledgeable. But he was more of an internationalist than I was. See the Wall Street Journal, after I made that recommendation to the President, came out and accused me of being a nationalist, and a high tariff man. And I imagine basically I fit closer to that category. Now Clarence Randall was just the opposite. So it was good to have two people like that, you know; one where I was advocating nationalism and he's international. And he could speak well. I had my hands full with him.

SOAPES: He was forceful and--

HOEGH: Forceful.

SOAPES: --energetic man.

HOEGH: Yes. Honest.

SOAPES: Let me turn to one other area in civil defense. Did you have special programs for the rural areas?

HOEGH: Yes, sir.

SOAPES: Could you describe some of those to me?



HOEGH: Yes. Actually I got ahold of a farmer from Iowa to come in and run that program, and they took it through the farm agents. You know that's a part of these farm colleges and they have--

SOAPES: The extension program.



HOEGH: --state agents and state extension agents, yes. And we did it with them, with their full cooperation. We took it right to the rural schools and the rural communities. And it was effective.

SOAPES: Can you tell me a little bit more about what the substance of the program was?

HOEGH: The substance was what their role would be and what they should do in the case of a nuclear attack. We were then aimed primarily at fallout. For instance we had to tell the farmer that if his wheat is covered and that none of the fallout gets on it, it's edible; and that the potatoes that might be in the ground, if you pull them out and vegetables pull them out and keep them under cover, the radiation doesn't affect it any, you see. But if you ate it with the radiation on, with the fallout on, then it's non-edible; so that he would know that he had a tremendous responsibility in keeping that grain so it would be edible. Then other things as to how they can protect themselves--most farmers in old homesteads have a wine cellar or potato cellar.

SOAPES: Oh, yes, sure.

HOEGH: I said, "Make that into a fallout shelter." So it's that

basic type of instruction.

SOAPES: Did you get cooperation from Agriculture, Benson in this?

HOEGH: I did through True Morse who was his deputy. I had good cooperation. Gave us a little static initially, but that was overcome. True Morse, the deputy, actually handled it. He was on my Defense Mobilization Board, and a very dependable person. Now he had a little static with Ezra Benson.

SOAPES: Oh?

HOEGH: Well, you know, sometimes you'd have a hard time selling Ezra that things should be done. I think Ezra became angry at me a lot; when I was governor and came down--

SOAPES: And got the--

HOEGH: And got the floor.

SOAPES: --got the floor in.

HOEGH: But I had good cooperation through True.

SOAPES: I'd like to go back to one thing we were discussing a little bit earlier. I think what we said might not be clear to some people who'll be using the transcript, talking about protection of national industries. Could you explain to me a little bit about what you mean when you call yourself a protectionist?

HOEGH: Oh, well, by that I meant that if we had to purchase equipment that was produced in the United States and produced in foreign



countries, that we would favor the U.S. industries by law by fifteen percent, but by an order we could go beyond that, particularly in this one instance that I recall. There are other instances, many of them. But in this one I was really wined and dined by the British because they wanted it for an industry in England. This industry was getting nip-and-tuck as to whether it could continue, and yet it was a vital defense industry. And we gave the business to them so that they could continue. And we got all our money back, the extra money, within two months, the extra payroll and the taxes and so on. That's what I meant.

SOAPES: Okay, fine. When you had to deal with the White House, did you deal directly with Eisenhower or was there a staff man?

HOEGH: No, I dealt initially with Sherm Adams considerably and with Bob, from Chicago--he ran for mayor years ago, [Robert E.] Merriam.

SOAPES: Right.

HOEGH: Bob Merriam. I dealt quite a bit with those two. And then, when Sherm left [Wilton B.] Persons. I would see the President, oh, most of the time at Security Council and Cabinet, and if somebody objects to what I was recommending why then we might go over and see him. I didn't want to bother him. I felt that if I needed something and I couldn't get it through his number one man, his chief of staff, why then I'd go to him, but I could get what I wanted.

SOAPES: Sherm Adams, of course, has a reputation as a gruff man.



HOEGH: A fine administrator. An excellent--

[Interruption]

SOAPES: We were talking about Sherm Adams.

HOEGH: Yes. An excellent administrator, an excellent executive. And I thought an excellent chief of staff. I could go to him and get my answers without bothering the President. Now if he objected, I'd sell him and I'd say, "Well if you're not going to let me do that, then I've got to see the President." And he was very cooperative. And I remember when the question came up after we tied the two agencies together then he called me in and he said, "The old man is going to name you as the director of the combined agency."

And I said, "Fine." And I said, "I appreciate it."

"Well," he said, "it's a big job."

I said, "I know that. I can handle it."

"Oh," he said, "you're damned sure."

I said, "Don't worry about it. Don't let him name me if you have any doubts."

He said, "I don't have any doubts."

I said, "Okay."

Then he said, "I'd like to have you retain one fellow."

I said, "I don't know anything about this guy. Is he any good?"

"No he isn't, but we've got to take care of him."

And I said, "Well I'll try to be his guardian ." That was a mistake; I should never have taken him. [Laughter] But I controlled him, so it didn't matter.



I had many, of course, pleasant experiences with Congress and the Senate and the House of Representatives.

SOAPES: Who were the principle people in the Congress that you dealt with?

HOEGH: Well, [Wright] Patman on Money and Banking; [Warren] Magnuson and [Carl] Hayden on Appropriations in the Senate. You see we had copper so I had all the mining state senators and congressmen on top of me. Well we had a sound policy, and they agreed with it. But once they didn't want us making pennies out of the copper and I said, "Well, we're short of copper and we don't need as much copper as we got in the stockpile." So they agreed to it, but it took a session. Oh there are many--Lyndon Johnson and Dirksen.

SOAPES: Were any of these people in the Congress particularly difficult



HOEGH: Yes. Yes. And I've been trying to name him--he's deceased. He even had his cancer removed at the University of Iowa hospital, and I thought that would help me. It didn't. [Laughter] And once he became ill--he was the chairman of their sub-committee, the Appropriations sub-committee. And even if I went over there with a reduced budget, he'd want to reduce it some more. And he was ill once and I thought, "Boy, he's going to be easy." Even when he was sick he was redlining all of my appropriations. And he was knowledgeable. And I thought I was knowledgeable, but this fellow was studious and I can't name him. You know I try to forget the people that I dislike.

[Laughter] But he was a congressman from the Houston area. I'll think of it later. [Albert Thomas?]

SOAPES: Perhaps we can figure it out from knowing he's from Houston, then. How about the Republican leadership--Ev Dirksen, Charley Halleck?

HOEGH: They were fine. I sat in, oh, a few of the Republican congressmen at, you know, meetings with Eisenhower, participating. Hickenlooper was, I thought, exceptionally good. I'll never forget, once we had a budget request right toward the end of the session of Congress--call it sort of the, not an addendum, but anyway as an emergency appropriation, extra.

SOAPES: Supplemental.

HOEGH: Supplemental. About 365 million. At one Cabinet meeting, we hadn't any more than sat down and Eisenhower turned to me and said, "Leo, you know H.R. Gross well don't you?"

I said, "Oh, he's a personal friend of mine. Why?"

And he said, "Well, could you get him to not object to our supplemental appropriation?"

I said, "Mr. President, if I call it to his attention he'll have a flag on it; he'll be there; and he'll object."

And Eisenhower just roared and he said, "You know I just finished talking to Hick and he told me the same thing." [Laughter] And H.R. Gross, you know, he--

SOAPES: Yes, I remember him.



HOEGH: --he kept his hand right in there.

SOAPES: How about Bob Merriam? Can you tell me something about him?

HOEGH: Yes, I like him. I think he was good in the White House. His personality was good. See Sherm is a little abrupt. But if you understand him, and being a cross between a Dane and a German, I kind of like abrupt people, so Sherm, I got along fine with him. But a lot of people didn't, you know. He was just a little bit too abrupt. Merriam was just the opposite. Gentle, listener, cooperative, and I thought capable.

SOAPES: One other thing I'd like to get into just a bit if you don't mind. It's a little bit off the subject of the civil defense.

HOEGH: Right.

SOAPES: You sat in Cabinet; you sat in NSC. There's been a lot of investigation recently and publicity concerning some things that happened there in the field of foreign affairs--of assassinations, CIA dirty tricks and that sort of thing. Do you ever recall that sort of thing being discussed?

HOEGH: None. There was none that I knew of. None discussed in the Cabinet or in National Security Council. None. And you know, I become very angry when I read this liberal press and when I read this punk [Frank] Church's committee's report--and I call him a punk and I still think he's a punk. Actually I think he ought to be tried for treason. This assassination plot came under the Kennedys and yet



you don't see it there. They tried to cast a little inference that Eisenhower might have been involved. I know absolutely nothing about it. And I would say that it was not.

Now I do know this--that we were for the overthrow of Cuba and we were initially for Castro going in. No question about it. We felt that that was going to be the democratic way, instead of the czarism and mafia that we had in Cuba. And then when we did find out, we never had it explicitly explained to us that Castro was communist. He never dared say that under Eisenhower. This from now on off the record--I think this is too early for it. But it was in the fall, I think, September or October, 1960, I talked to Tom Gates at that time and I said, "Tom, I'm going to advocate that we take over Cuba. I feel that Castro is a communist and that it's a communist controlled country, and that, therefore, the Monroe Doctrine is violated."

And he said, "You're going to do that tomorrow?"

I said, "Yes. And I need your support."

He said, "Well, I'll give it to you."

I said, "We can do it now, we can't do it later."

So at the Security Council we finally get down to open discussion. Well we always discussed Cuba, for several months. So I said, "Well, Mr. President, I advocate that we take over Cuba." I gave the reasons that if we don't do it, it's going to become a strong communist country, and every indication is that he leans toward communism. I said, "By inference we can conclude that he violates

the Monroe Doctrine." And Eisenhower--oh gee, Nixon and Bill--the attorney general--boy they jumped all over me.

SOAPES: Bill Rogers.

HOEGH: Bill Rogers. Jumped all over me. Of course I could see Nixon doing that because he thought that would lose the election. I didn't think about the election. I was thinking about getting rid of that thorn down there. And we discussed that for about twenty minutes and I said, "Mr. President, before you make a decision," I said, "I'd like to hear from Secretary Gates."

And Tom turned to the President and said, "I have no further comment." God I could have kicked him then; anyway I did outside.

Then Eisenhower turned to me and he said, "Now, Leo, give me some solid proof that that is a communist stronghold."

I said, "I have none. It's by inference."

He said, "If you had solid proof that it's a communist stronghold, we would go in." And I had none.

I said, "You have to do it on the basis of inference." Now I'm back on the record, but that I wouldn't want to get out now.

SOAPES: Okay. We'll treat it that way. Did you know Gordon Gray well?

HOEGH: Yes.

SOAPES: What can you tell me about him?

HOEGH: Well I liked him. He has a hard time making a decision. Now he's thorough, but that's about it. He's honest, dependable, he's

qualified, but some people have a hard time making a decision. I don't. [Laughter] He left Defense Mobilization and became then the secretary of the National Security Council.

SOAPES: Right.

HOEGH: And he was good in that capacity.

SOAPES: You felt he knew the material?

HOEGH: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

SOAPES: But when it came to the point of its this way or that way--

HOEGH: Yes. Well, of course, I'm judging--he didn't have to make decisions in the Security Council. I'm talking about--see I sat on his Defense Mobilization Board before I came. He didn't run it.

SOAPES: Well is there anything else about your career with the administration that you particularly would like to get on the record?

HOEGH: I probably will think of something five minutes after you leave. [Laughter]

SOAPES: I probably will too. But for now, we'll end this and thank you.

