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SWEDEN

Hubert de Besche (duh-Besh)

1. Biographic Data

Ambassador de Besche presented his credentials as Swedish Ambassador to the United States on February 11, 1964. This is his first assignment as Ambassador. He is a career diplomat who entered the Swedish foreign service in 1936. He has had long-term assignments abroad only in London (1937-40) and in Washington (as Economic Counselor from 1949 through 1953).

The Ambassador is an economic and commercial specialist and has served many years in the Foreign Ministry in such positions. He negotiated trade agreements, participated in GATT deliberations and OEEC affairs, and played an active role in the formation of the European Free Trade Area and Sweden's attempts in 1960-61 to gain associate membership in the European Economic Community.

Ambassador de Besche is married and has two nearly grown daughters. He is very energetic and successful in cultivating contacts in all branches of the US Government and in private circles. He is an affable host and appears to be well disposed toward the United States.

2. US-Swedish Relations

We have no bilateral problems with Sweden and it is doubtful that the Ambassador will raise substantive issues.

Some current Swedish preoccupations are:

a. Viet Nam - The Swedish Government believes that United States-Viet Nam policy will fail because there can be no military solution -- that only through negotiations can a political solution be achieved. In the Swedish view it is a matter of great urgency that the US stop bombing the North to see if that will lead to negotiations. Sweden believes there is a good chance it will. The Swedish Government believes that as "the most powerful figure" in the conflict, the US should take the first step in de-escalation, even without any assurance of a quid pro quo. It is

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likely that the Government will feel constrained to be ever more critical of US-Viet Nam policy as the September 1968 parliamentary elections approach, in order to retain the support of the voters of the left-wing of the Social Democratic party.

b. Middle East - Sweden has been a strong supporter of UN peacekeeping operations in the area and now stands ready to supply troops to a new UN force there or more observers, if needed to watch truce lines. They have just made Swedish Ambassador Gunnar Jarring available as the UN Secretary General's special representative to the Middle East.

c. Disarmament and Nuclear Non-Proliferation - Sweden is a firm supporter of measures in this area and has participated actively in the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference at Geneva. It hopes that the Conference will soon be able to submit a unanimous recommendation for a non-proliferation treaty to the UN General Assembly. Although Sweden has hoped for a linking of disarmament measures to the non-proliferation treaty, it is expected to sign the latter even in the absence of such a link.

3. Suggested Conversational Topics

Although Ambassador de Besche was a champion fencer, he appears now to have little time for sports or hobbies.

His principal conversational interests are related to his work. However, like most Swedes he is interested in US civil rights problems and solutions and US social welfare programs such as that administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Ambassador de Besche is always interested in discussing such topics as Viet Nam, the Middle East and Cyprus situations, the state of east-west relations, and the prospects for UK and Swedish membership in the European Economic Community. He will doubtless be interested in the impending McNamara departure and the identity of his successor.

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