

RS#07: Source 6 – Iran-Contra Hearing Testimony, Fawn Hall, 1987

This testimony was given to the joint Congressional committee during the investigation of the Iran-Contra affair. Fawn Hall, the former secretary to Oliver North, provided a detailed account of the events that occurred shortly after the scandal broke in the newspapers.

Examine this historical source and summarize the information it provides. Does the source support a view of Oliver North as a patriot, a pawn, or an outlaw?

Fawn Hall Testimony, June 8-9, 1987

Mr. BELNICK: Now, sometime during the afternoon on Friday, November 21, 1986, did Colonel North hand you several documents and ask you to make changes?

Ms. HALL: Yes, sir....

Mr. BELNICK: Did you recognize the handwriting on the original, System 4 documents that Colonel North gave you?

Ms. HALL: Yes, sir.

Mr. BELNICK: Whose handwriting was it?

Ms. HALL: Colonel North's....

Mr. BELNICK: And did you destroy the marked-up originals that Colonel North gave you with the changes written in?

Ms. HALL: Yes, I did.

Mr. BELNICK: Did Colonel North ask you to destroy those marked-up originals?

Ms. HALL: I don't know if he told me to destroy them or if I destroyed them on my own initiative...

Mr. BELNICK: Sometime in the afternoon [after North attempted to resign] did you receive a tele- phone call from the White House operator?

Ms. HALL: Yes, sir....

Mr. BELNICK: Did you subsequently learn from Colonel North whether he had spoken to the President?

Ms. HALL: Yes, sir.

Mr. BELNICK: And what did Colonel North tell you about his phone call with the President?

Ms. HALL: He said the President called him an American hero ...

Mr. BOREN: You testified that during the day on November 21 when you were working on altering the documents and later when you were shredding some of the documents or assisting Colonel North in doing so, that you became increasingly uneasy during this period of time....

Ms. HALL: ...I initially had a moment of uneasiness when he asked me to alter the documents But again, I had that moment of uneasiness, it passed because, as I said before, I believed strongly in Colonel North, I believe him to be an honest, fair and good person with good motives....

Mr. BOREN: ... Were you at all concerned at that point, since at that point in time you knew the President had dismissed Colonel North, you knew they were attempting to seal the office, obviously to secure the documents—were you at all concerned yourself about placing yourself in any jeopardy to be taking the documents out at that point?

Ms. HALL: Sir, I was emotionally distraught at the time. I was with a positive mind...and I believed in the Iran initiative and the Contra initiative and I thought that exposure of it would have bad ramifications....

Mr. BOREN: When you got into the car, you handed the documents over to Colonel North?

Ms. HALL: Correct...

Mr. FOLEY: May I take you back to the events of November 25...Without any reference to possible obstruction of justice, which is not the purpose of this committee to determine, did you not know that alteration of existing documents in a major, fundamental way was a violation of the responsibility of those who possess those documents?

Ms. HALL: I agree with you, sir, and at the time, as I stated before, I felt uneasy but sometimes, like I said before, I believed in Colonel North and there was a very solid and very valid reason he must have been doing this and sometimes you have to go above the written law, I believe. I don't know, I felt—I believed in Colonel North...

Source: Understanding the Iran-Contra Affair. "Fawn Hall." Brown University. Available from http://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_Iran_Contra_Affair/h-fh-gallery.php.