Interview with Walter Nichols

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WALTER NICHOLS

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Q: This is Lew Schmidt, on October 10, 1989, interviewing Walt Nichols at his home in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Walt, I'm going to ask you to start by filling us in on your background, which is rather unusual for the kind of people recruited by our Agency, and take that up to the point where you began your Navy service. I may interrupt on occasion to ask a question which your narration suggests to me. So with that, please start with your background.

Biographic Outline

I - Birth And Early Life In Japan

NICHOLS: All right. I assume what you referred to as unusual would be my having been born and brought up in Japan, since it was probably on account of my familiarity with Japan and the Japanese language that all of my overseas assignments were to posts in Japan - a total of 14 out of the 18 years I was employed by USIA.

II - The Long Family Background In Japan

Q: Yes, that's the background I want.

NICHOLS: Well then, perhaps I should say, first, that I was born in Tokyo in 1919 and lived in Japan until I was 15. In fact I represent the third generation of my family in Japan—and all four of my children, all of whom were also born in Tokyo, the fourth generation—because my maternal grandparents went to Japan in the late 1870's with the Protestant Episcopal Church. It was in Tokyo that they met and were married. But they weren't evangelical missionaries. They were both recruited as educators to head schools being established by the Episcopal Mission.

My grandfather, James McDonald Gardiner, served for many years as the first headmaster of a boys' school which eventually became one of the so-called Big Six (a term comparable to our Ivy League) private universities in Tokyo. He stayed on to serve for several additional years as the first President of the university after the school was accredited as a university by the Japanese government, but then opted for somewhat early retirement from the Mission so that he could establish his own architectural firm, architecture having been his original profession. In fact, for all those previous years he had been doubling in brass as an architect for the Episcopal Mission, designing and building churches and housing for the missionaries in various parts of Japan as well as the buildings required for his school as it expanded. And during his second career in Japan, this time as an architect, it seems he specialized in building huge, lavish, Victorian-style residences for wealthy Japanese, including several members of royalty like counts and barons.

As for my grandmother, whose maiden name was Florence Pitman, she became on arrival in Japan the first headmistress of a girls' school which is today one of the most expensive and fashionable girls' schools in Tokyo. Recalling how conservative and devout my grandmother was, I think she would turnover in her grave if she could see what has become of the small school she started in the living room of her dormitory in the Mission compound with only six students and only the Bible available as a text for the study of

English! In any event, after she married my grandfather and they began having children, she had to give up teaching full time and devoted most of her time thereafter to family affairs, though she naturally remained active in Mission concerns and still did some teaching occasionally.

Both of my grandparents, as well as more recently deceased members of the Gardiner-Nichols family, are buried in a family vault in a beautiful stone church my grandfather built in the town of Nikko in the Nikko National Park about 90 miles north of Tokyo, which happens to be a world-famous tourist attraction because of its beautiful mountains, lakes and waterfalls and some of the most famous shrines and temples in Japan. That is where my grandparents had spent all of their summer vacations in Japan since 1880 or so, and later—about 1910—my grandfather built a remarkably accommodating, rambling summer house there, in which I also spent all the summer vacations I had as a child and later during my post-war tours of duty in Japan and residence in Japan after my retirement. Well, I guess that about covers my grandparents and the initiation of my family's long association with Japan.

Q: Would you mind going back a bit to tell me the names of the schools your grandparents founded? Was the university by any chance the Sophia University I remember from my tour of duty in Tokyo?

NICHOLS: No, that happens to be the Catholic university in Tokyo. The Japanese name for the university my grandfather founded is Rikkyo Daigaku and the girls' school my grandmother founded is known as Rikkyo Jogakuin. But they are also known by the English names St. Paul's University and St. Margaret's School for Girls.

Well, to continue with my family history in Japan, my mother —the Gardiners' eldest daughter—was born in Tokyo in 1886. Since there were no English-language schools for the foreign community in Tokyo at that time, she received her early formal education at a school sponsored by a Catholic Convent in which all instruction was in the French

language, after which she received her higher education in Washington, D.C. at the National Cathedral School for Girls during the Russo-Japanese War. Upon returning to Japan she taught English off and on at schools in Tokyo mostly but also for short periods in Sendai and Kyoto, and I might mention that while in Kyoto she gave private English lessons to a princess who was the mother of Emperor Hirohito's Empress Nagako. By all accounts my mother was a very attractive young lady and much in demand at parties and fancy-dress balls and in the very active social life of the international community in Tokyo in the years before World War I, which had a decidedly Continental flavor. She apparently received quite a few intriguing proposals of marriage which in all probability would have guaranteed her a life of ease. But she dumfounded all her friends when she accepted instead the proposal of an impecunious priest—namely my father—who was headed for a first mission assignment way up in the northernmost part of the Japanese mainland, in the heart of the snow country, where living conditions were primitive as compared to Tokyo. But that's what she did.

Incidentally, my grandparents did a very strange thing when it came to naming their first daughter. They gave her a Japanese name—Hasu no Hana, or Lotus Blossom—with no middle name. And since that name was quite a mouthful, she became generally known merely as “Hasu” to her friends. I am certain that no one else in history has ever had or will have such a name, since the Japanese themselves would never give a child such a name because of the association of lotus flowers with death in the Buddhist religion.

Then about my father—Shirley Hall Nichols. He was born in 1884 in Brooklyn, but the Nichols family home was in Upper Montclair, NJ. After graduating from Harvard, Magna Cum Laude, he started out on a very promising banking career in New York in J.P. Morgan's bank, but after a couple of years he quit to enter the Episcopal General Theological Seminary in New York with the intention of becoming a missionary. Apparently J.P. Morgan thought a lot of him because he tried hard to talk him out of that idea, but in the end—when my father was just about to go overseas—he gave him $5,000 to help him get started, and that was a lot of money in those days! In any event, my father really had

hoped to be assigned to China but ended up, in 1911, studying the Japanese language intensively in Tokyo while teaching theology at St. Paul's University. That was where he met and married my mother in 1916, after which they went north to Aomori for two years and then to Hirosaki where they lived when I was born.

I wasn't born there, however, but in Tokyo in St. Luke's Hospital, established by our Episcopal Mission, because in those days very few Japanese hospitals in provincial cities had services and facilities to which most foreigners were accustomed. For example, at that time—and even up to many years after World War II—Japanese hospitals did not provide any meals for their patients. That was the responsibility of families or friends who were expected to bring meals cooked at home or to prepare meals at the bedside with rudimentary cooking equipment!

Q: I am surprised to learn that you lived in northern Japan because I seem to remember something about your having lived in Kyoto.

III - Early Education In Japan

NICHOLS: You're right about that but that came later. When I was six years old—in 1925—my father was elected to serve as the Episcopal Bishop of Kyoto Diocese, so we moved to the ancient capital city of Kyoto—near Osaka and Kobe—in the central part of Japan roughly 300 miles southwest of Tokyo. And that was where I lived for the next nine years until 1934, when my older sister and I were left behind in the U.S. to attend schools there when my family returned to Kyoto from a home leave trip. But I wasn't exactly in Kyoto all of that time because when I was nine years old my older sister and I were sent to boarding school at the Canadian Academy in Kobe, since there wasn't any school in Kyoto where the instruction was in English. So during six of those nine years we lived in Kyoto I was away at school in Kobe from Monday through Friday each week except during vacations.

Well, this much gets me over to the U.S. and into secondary school here, so is there anything else you'd like to know about my upbringing in Japan?

Q: Yes, please tell me a bit more about your education in Japan.

NICHOLS: Surely. Since there weren't any schools taught in English at either Hirosaki or Kyoto, as I've said, my mother had to teach all of us children until we were considered old enough to go to boarding school at the Canadian Academy. And since there were four of us—my older sister, myself, and a younger sister and a younger brother—that meant that my mother was teaching on at least three grade levels at times. But the other side of the coin was that she happened to be a very good teacher and each of us got one-on-one instruction, so that I think it is safe to say we had been well prepared when we got into the Canadian Academy. But in my case I was placed in third grade instead of fourth grade at age nine because I hadn't had any formal, institutionalized education. However, I was later permitted to skip both the fifth and seventh grades.

IV - Secondary School And University Study In America —

The Canadian Academy in Kobe, sponsored by the United Church of Canada, was also a very good school, after which—when I went to the U.S. at age 15—I spent four years at Kent School, an Episcopal prep school in Connecticut. And then I entered Harvard and was halfway through my junior year, majoring in Far Eastern Studies, when I accepted an offer for a commission in the Navy as an Ensign, which the Navy offered on the assumption that I was proficient in the Japanese language and which I accepted on the assumption that we were going to be in the war pretty soon and I could hardly do better than that.

So on the whole I think my parents gave me the advantage of a good education, the only problem being that I never did get my degree from Harvard or any other college. I wanted to go back after the war to get my degree, but Harvard refused to give me any credit

academically for all the additional experience gained in handling the Japanese language during the war. And since I had a good salary as a Lieutenant Commander and couldn't see wasting another year and a half in Japanese language studies, I opted to stay in the Navy for a while and launch some sort of career later that could utilize my professional experience to date. And I hope that summarizes my education sufficiently.

The Acquisition of Spoken Japanese

Q: Well, yes it does, but what I was most interested in was how you learned Japanese. I gather that you must have learned a lot of Japanese as a child just from association with Japanese children and having spent many years in a completely Japanese environment. Did you also have some tutoring in Japanese or study it at the Canadian Academy, or did you just pick it up?

NICHOLS: I was going to go into that because I have a confession to make, so I'm glad you asked that question. A lot of people—Japanese as well as foreigners—think I know a lot more Japanese than I really do because I am really quite fluent in oral Japanese and also happen to have near-perfect pronunciation. But the sad fact is that I'm virtually illiterate when it comes to the written language. And that can be attributed to my never having had any tutoring or other formal instruction in Japanese until I got to Harvard, and for not having taken many courses after that.

So as you may have suspected, judging by your question, my abilities in speaking and understanding oral Japanese can be accounted for by the early years of my childhood in Hirosaki, where there was only one other American family with children located at some distance from us so that it was difficult for us to play together. All of my playmates—aside from my older sister—were Japanese kids in our neighborhood, in addition to which I had a Japanese amah, or nurse. It is from intimate connections like that that children most easily and quickly learn languages, and I understand that up until the time we moved to Kyoto, when I was six, I was more fluent in Japanese than in English, although English

was naturally the language we used within our family. With a start like that it is easy—actually a process of which one is relatively unconscious—to expand one's vocabulary and acquire a much greater command of a language as one grows older, even without formal study, provided one remains within the social environment of the language.

I have often been asked if I think in English or in Japanese when speaking in Japanese, and all I can say is that I really don't know because I'm not aware of having to “think” in either language first before speaking in one or the other—it just seems to come naturally, except when you don't happen to know or can't remember the right word in the other language when interpreting or translating from one into the other.

In any event, whatever proficiency I may have in Japanese has to be attributed, I think, principally to those first six years of almost total immersion in the language in Hirosaki, plus the nine more years of exposure to it before I left Japan at the age of 15, followed by another five years during the Occupation in Japan before I joined USIS in 1952, and finally by a total of more than 29 additional years off and on in Japan until I retired here in Lynchburg in 1987.

Q: But you surely must have learned at least how to read both of the phonetic syllabifies—katakana and hiragana—during your childhood years in Japan.

NICHOLS: Oh, sure, of course. I could also recognize some of the simplest and most common characters [kanji], so that I could read quite a few names of people, stores, banks and railway stations, for example. But, because I hadn't had lessons, I couldn't write any characters—except for a few of the easiest ones—and I couldn't even write all of the simple phonetic symbols properly.

Q: Well, you must have learned to read and write characters when you studied Japanese at Harvard.

NICHOLS: Of course, but not as many as I should have by any means. I naturally learned a great deal about Japan from the many courses in Japanese history, culture and so forth I had to take to pursue a degree in Far Eastern Studies, specializing on Japan, but the language courses literally started with first-grade text books used in the Japanese elementary schools. That is to say, the lessons for the whole first year taught reading and writing phonetically only, with only a few of the simplest characters scattered here and there. So progress was very slow insofar as learning the written language was concerned, and that's the way Japanese was taught in those days at all the other universities which provided Japanese language instruction.

The Director of the Yenching Institute—Dr. Serge Elisseeff—who taught both my language and history courses—agreed with me that I was wasting my time taking the freshman course and tried very hard to persuade the Dean of Freshmen to let me start at the sophomore or even junior level, provided I agreed to spend a lot of time simply memorizing characters, but that was ruled out as simply not conceivable due to Harvard's sacrosanct regulation that any student enrolling in a foreign language course would have to start with the elementary course if he had not already had a year of formal training in that language at some other institution. So that was that and I was stuck, and I doubt that I had mastered more than 350 or 400 characters by the time I left Harvard in my junior year to join the Navy.

V - Naval Career—Including Initially More Language Courses At Harvard

Q: But it's been my understanding that you also took the Navy's special, intensive course in Japanese after you joined the Navy. What about that?

NICHOLS: You're right, the Navy started two such courses in October, 1941, just six months after I got my commission. These were revolutionary in that they had been designed by the Navy's own Japanese-language experts to turn out graduates expected to have as complete mastery of Japanese as the Navy considered necessary for its

purposes by the end of only 14 months of full-time, intensive instruction. These courses were given on the campuses of both the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard. And I was then sent right back to Harvard to start from scratch again, but this time on the payroll of the Navy as an Ensign and with all expenses paid. However, my good luck didn't hold because by early May—with the battle of Midway looming and our Japanese communications intelligence very short-handed—I received telegraphic orders to report for duty by the next morning in Washington, D.C., and that was absolutely the end of any formal training I ever had in Japanese.

I was pulled out of the Navy's Harvard course on an emergency basis because I had already had six months of experience working on translations of decoded Japanese Navy and diplomatic communications, and that made sense, but the sad part of it was that at the time I had to leave the course we had only covered roughly the same amount of Japanese as I had already learned from the two and a half years of Harvard courses I had had earlier! The two Navy courses at Harvard and Berkeley, incidentally, were combined the following year into the Navy Japanese Language School developed by the Navy at Boulder, Colorado, which turned out literally hundreds of well-qualified Japanese-language officers in 14-month courses.

And I hope that's going to be all you'll want to know about my academic background, such as it was.

The Circumstances That Led To Entrance Into Navy And Eventually To Naval Intelligence

Q: All right, then please tell me now what you did in the Navy.

NICHOLS: Well, let me explain to you first how I happened to join the Navy. The Navy, as things turned out, was surprisingly foresighted about the future need for Japanese-language staff because it began putting out feelers all over the country as early as late 1940 to find recruitable talent, that is to say, people who might be interested who either already had some knowledge of the Japanese language or had demonstrated a good ear

for difficult foreign languages in the courses they had taken in college. At any rate I think I may have been their very first recruit because, just before Christmas vacation in 1940, during my junior year at Harvard, I was approached by a Navy Captain associated with the ROTC at Harvard. He told me as much as he could about the Navy's plans to beef up its staff of Japanese-language experts—which wasn't much—and urged me to contact a certain Admiral in Naval Intelligence in Washington, D.C., for further details.

As it happened, I was scheduled to spend Christmas down in Washington visiting some cousins in Chevy Chase, so I did follow up on his suggestion.

I must apologize for going into such detail about my transition from Harvard into the Navy, but I think I should make it clear what sort of totally unexpected developments brought about such a traumatic change in the course of my life at that particular time. You see, the other two biggest changes in my career—my going out to Japan to serve as a civilian in the Occupation in 1947, and then my transfer to USIS in 1952 at the end of the Occupation —were equally unpremeditated or due entirely to fortuitous circumstances. I just always seemed luckily to land on my feet when I reached impasses and didn't know which way to turn, and while I'm naturally grateful for all that, I've been rendered incapable of giving my children any sage advice at all based on personal career development experience!

But to return to how I got into the Navy, and for further evidence of my good luck, when I went to the Navy Department in December, 1940, to see that Admiral, the person he turned me over to for details was an officer who didn't even bother to give me a language test and instead just wanted to know if I would prefer to work for the Navy as a civilian or as a commissioned officer (what a contrast to that Harvard Dean!). I opted for a commission and don't have any idea why, though I suspect it had something to do with the attraction of wearing those Naval uniforms. In any case I ended up on duty in the Navy as an ensign as of April, 1941, eight months before Pearl Harbor.

As for what I did during the war in the Navy, there really isn't much to tell because I never got any sea duty or into any actions. Instead, I sat the whole war out firmly anchored to desk chairs in various Navy Communications Intelligence offices ashore, first for four years, April 1941 to mid-1944 in Washington, D. C. (except for my aborted six months of language training back at Harvard), then six months at Pearl Harbor to the end of 1944, and then eight months in Melbourne, Australia to the end of the war, immediately after which I was transferred from Melbourne direct to Tokyo to serve in the early phases of the Occupation.

Q: Can you tell me in any detail about the kind of work you did in Naval Communications Intelligence, or is most of that still too highly classified?

NICHOLS: There's no problem about discussing it since a great deal of information has been declassified, and quite a few fairly accurate books have been published about how we were able to break the Japanese diplomatic as well as naval codes and so translate many of their secret communications of critical tactical significance. But there is little I could tell you about the code breaking aspects because I was never involved in that at all, so about all I can say is that I was simply one of many people involved in the translation of deciphered messages.

However, there certainly weren't a lot of people involved in the translation aspects when I first went on duty in 1940. On the contrary, when I first reported to the Navy Department for those six months before going to the Navy's language course at Harvard, I was assigned to a small office in Naval Communications Intelligence known as OP-20-GZ but usually referred to as “The Black Hole,” which was supposed to be, and I believe actually was, hyper secret. At any rate that was where all the translation into English of the intercepted Japanese radio traffic was done, and the total staff amounted to only about eight people, as I recall it, headed by a then Lt. Cmdr. (later Captain) Alwin D. Kramer. Kramer was the naval officer who became the key witness as well as the goat of the 1945-46 joint Congressional investigation into why the Army and Navy forces in Hawaii

had not been sufficiently warned in advance of the impending Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, when it was believed that OP-20-GZ had been able to read enough intercepted Japanese coded traffic about the attack early enough to have enabled the Navy Department to alert Admiral Kimmel in Hawaii in ample time.

I happened to have been taking the Navy's language course at Harvard at the time of Pearl Harbor, so I cannot offer any opinion about where the system broke down based on personal involvement. But by the time I was recalled from Cambridge on very short notice in May, 1942, to help the OP-20-GZ staff cope with the high volume of pre-Midway Japanese radio traffic, the whole operation had been moved to much more spacious quarters in anticipation of a big increase in staff when the recruits in language school graduated.

Meanwhile we really were terribly short of translators when the chips were down on Midway, and I remember that, as the most junior officer on the staff, I was assigned the night watches for what I had been assured was to be a weekly rotation system. But whoever was in charge forgot about that rotation of assignments so I ended up standing duty from midnight to 0800 without a single day off for 24 nights in a row! I sometimes think I might still be there doing that if I hadn't finally gotten up the nerve to complain, but what kept me from doing that for such a long time was that my commanding officer didn't go home most of those nights either, and slept instead on the top of a desk next to mine, with orders for me to wake him up if anything needing his attention surfaced in the overnight intercept traffic.

As for exactly what we were doing, I do hope that someday a much larger public can be reached with the full story of the extraordinary contribution that our breaking and reading of the Japanese naval codes made to our ultimate victory in the Pacific. As I said before, that story is out now and has been covered adequately in a number of books which, in turn, have been reviewed adequately by the press, but these publications have tended to be heavily academic, have been so sporadic, and have been about a war fought so long ago

that I doubt any of them have ever really come to the attention of many people. And I wish that could be remedied somehow because the advance information on planned Japanese naval activities we were able to provide to our Naval commanders and combat units in the Pacific played the pivotal role in many of our greatest victories over the Japanese navy. And to prove that I'll give you three examples:

Three Examples Of How Naval Intelligence Was Able To Give Naval Commanders Advance Knowledge Of Japanese Naval Movements And Thus Aid U.S. Victories

- I'll take the Battle of Midway (June 3-5, 1942) as my first case in point. It was certainly the most important naval engagement of World War II—and undoubtedly one of the greatest in all of military history—because, only six months after having barely escaped annihilation at Pearl Harbor, what was left of our battered Pacific fleet inflicted a lopsided defeat on a vastly superior Japanese armada sent to capture and convert Midway into a mid-Pacific base of operations. This victory put an end to the long string of spectacularly successful Japanese naval offensives after Peal Harbor and was a disaster after which the Japanese navy was never able to regain the initiative.

But this was by no means principally a spectacular feat of arms. It is even likely that Admiral Nimitz would never have thrown virtually all of his totally inadequate forces into such a do-or-die gamble against such overwhelming odds if he had not had the advantage of all the advance information our communications intelligence was able to provide him with, from intercepted and translated Japanese fleet message concerning the scheduled movements of various elements of their fleet, to their battle order, and even the identity of most of the warships involved. In other words the battle was really more of an ambush than a battle because Admiral Yamamoto was taken completely by surprise and none of the naval vessels on either side were ever within visual sight of the enemy fleet.

At Midway, Admiral Yamamoto lost four aircraft carriers, a heavy cruiser, 322 aircraft, and 2,500 men, including most of his best carrier-based fighter pilots. At the time our

carriers launched their first strikes against the Japanese fleet from a safe distance, the Japanese had no idea they were within range of attack from any U.S. forces other than the small garrison and few fighter planes defending Midway. In fact the Japanese had no idea where our dive bombers that inflicted so much damage on them came from until after three of their carriers were dead in the water, on fire, and slowly sinking! After that they did manage to damage the Yorktown so badly that we had to scuttle her, but by then it was all over for them and Yamamoto had no choice but to order what was left of his routed vanguard, plus the Second Carrier Striking Force, the battleships and the transports which hadn't yet reached their rendezvous stations, to turn and run for home waters.

- My second illustration will be the shooting down of Admiral Yamamoto himself over Buin on the island of Bougainville in the South Pacific on April 18, 1943, less than a year after Midway. And this, too, was an ambush that would not have been possible without precise data our communications intelligence was able to provide from intercepted enemy radio traffic concerning his flight schedule for visits on that day to several Japanese bases in the Solomon Islands. Buin happened to be the only place on his itinerary where our newest long-range fighters—the P-38s stationed at our most forward base on Guadalcanal—could intercept Yamamoto. And they did, shooting down his whole tour group of two bombers and four Zero escorts just as they were descending for their scheduled landing at Buin. But even though our information had proved correct, luck played a very important role in this coup because the distance between Buin and Guadalcanal was so great that our P-38s had been ordered not to remain in the target area for more than 20 minutes, since if they stayed longer, their fuel supply would be insufficient for the long return flight. So it was lucky for us that Yamamoto approached Buin right on schedule!

- Let me take our submarine war of attrition against Japan's merchant shipping as my third “for instance.” It was not until in early 1943 that we were able to read enough of their merchant shipping “Maru” code to use that source of information effectively, and up to that time our submarines had not been particularly successful in finding targets because the ocean areas to be covered in the Pacific were so great and because their principal

means of hunting for prey was simply to surface and take a look around—a very hit and miss proposition. But once we got into that “Maru” code it was more like shooting fish in a barrel. By the end of 1943 we were able to raise the shipping sunk during that year to 1,5000,000 tons, but by early in 1944 those figures had risen to an average of more than 300,000 per month, a rate of attrition with which Japan's shipbuilding facilities could not even hope to keep pace. We were then able to give our submarine fleet data on almost every convoy before it even put to sea, including precise course to destination and the number of ships in each convoy, including vessel type and cargo, and the number and type of the Navy escort warships. Suffice it to say that by the end of the war in 1945 we had accounted for more than 8,500,000 tons of Japanese shipping.

Q: Well, that was obviously an extremely important aspect of Naval operations you were in. As I recall, you said your last wartime post was Melbourne, so what did you do when the war ended?

1945: End Of War—Ordered To GHQ SCAP, Tokyo:Evaluating Psywar Activities Of Last Days Of War

NICHOLS: Oh, I was ordered to report as soon as possible to GHQ SCAP (the acronym for MacArthur's Supreme Command of the Allied Powers) in Tokyo and managed to get there about two weeks after the actual surrender ceremonies. And when I checked in, I found that I had been designated the personal aide and interpreter to a Major General Orville Anderson, who had been the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Eighth Air Force based in England which had bombed Germany into rubble. At SCAP he was serving as the Deputy Chief of the Strategic Bombing Survey, a.k.a. USBUS, which was supposed to determine from interviews what sort of psychological effects our B29 bombings of Japan had had on the populace. The inquiries were also designed to find actual results of psywar tricks that were tried out during the pounding we gave so many Japanese cities, as for example our having occasionally sent single B29s over target cities a day before the actual raids, dropping leaflets warning that at noon the following day a full-scale raid would demolish

the target cities. The ploy in such instances was obviously to convince the Japanese man in the street that the war was lost if no effective defense against such raids could be mounted by the Japanese military despite the public notices given 24 hours in advance.

Q: Could that possibly have been the Orville Anderson on the staff of USIA I later met in Mexico? That was about thirty years ago and he would have been in his mid-fifties then.

NICHOLS: Gee, that certainly is a coincidence in names, but I'm sure they couldn't have been the same person because working for USIA doesn't fit in with my Anderson's character. In 1935 as an Army captain he had set a world record altitude for flights by balloons at 70,000 feet or so, during WW II he had acquired the title of “Father of the Concept of Three-dimensional Warfare,” and I think I recall that after the war he got himself appointed Director of the Air Force War College but was soon cashiered for publicly advocating that we just go ahead and A-bomb the USSR out of business.

At any rate, at USBUS in Tokyo I didn't have much to do because he had a huge staff doing all the basic interviewing and he wouldn't consider interviewing any but very prominent Japanese himself. So we interviewed people like Prime Minister Suzuki, Grand Chamberlain Hyakutake of the Imperial Household, Class-A war criminals, and a lot of generals and admirals. By early February, 1946, however, we had about run out of people of that caliber so General Anderson went back to Washington and insisted on taking me with him to tidy up a few loose ends in his interview notes.

So there I was back in D.C. with no assignment when I was finished with Anderson's business, and by this time I had been a Lieutenant Commander for more than six months. I mention that simply because at that point the Navy was apparently having trouble finding assignments in Washington suitable for relatively high-ranking landlubbers like myself, and I certainly wasn't about to resign my commission until I had figured where to head career-wise, so I just reported in with only occasional limited assignments or chores to handle for various Navy offices. It was at this time that I thought seriously about returning to Harvard

to get my degree. But Harvard operated on the basis of only academic credits and wouldn't even give me credit for the six months I put in at the Navy's 14-month total-immersion Japanese-language course on its own campus, from which I had been recalled early to Washington because of the Battle of Midway. So as far as I was concerned that was that, and the Navy meanwhile had found something to do with me.

I cannot imagine how in the world I happened to get this assignment, since I had never had any experience with editing or publications work, but I was appointed Editor-in-Chief on the staff of a considerably large publication operation called the Washington Documents Center. This later became part of the CIA but during my time there was a joint American and British operation with the mission of translating and publishing classified documents, maps or any such materials considered of possible future significance which had been captured during or after the war from German, Japanese, Russian and a few other sources.

Q: When was it you were assigned to that sort of work, and what did you do?

1947: Nichols Resigns Navy Commission; Goes To Work In Occupation Organization In Tokyo As Civilian; Ends Up In Religion Division Of Civil Information And Education (CI & E) GHQ, SCAP

NICHOLS: I think it must have been around March, 1946 that I was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the Center and I stuck that out until March, 1947, when I resigned my Navy commission and went back to Japan to work in the Occupation as a civilian.

Q: And how did that come about?

NICHOLS: Well, that editing job wasn't particularly interesting and after a year of doing that I figured I had learned as much as I would ever need to know about editing, and I definitely had no idea at all of staying in the Navy as a career, but then I also hadn't developed any practical ideas of what to do with myself next. Then along came one of those lucky breaks

I think I mentioned earlier. I ran into one of the language officers I had known during the war and he just happened to be leaving the next day for a civilian job in Tokyo he had obtained over at the Pentagon. It paid well and his only qualification for the job was that he knew a little Japanese, and he thought they might have something for me, too.

So I checked that out and filled out some forms but really didn't expect any results because the man who took my application said it could be more than a month or two before there'd be any response one way or the other. But in almost no time at all he called me and said I was wanted for a fairly responsible job with very good pay titled “Advisor in Shinto and Buddhism,” in the Religions Division of SCAP's Civil Information and Education Section. I think you can imagine how I felt when I was told what sort of position they had in mind for me, since I hadn't ever even read a book about either Shinto or Buddhism, though there had of course been a lot about them in my Harvard courses on Japanese culture. I could only assume that someone over there had gotten my application for just any kind of job mixed up with someone else's, but I decided I would go and once there have a chance to find a job I could handle. So I resigned my commission and was off to Tokyo in March, 1947, I think it was.

Incidentally, I don't know where to put this in but perhaps my return to Japan at this time for what turned into a five-year tour of duty would be a good place to mention that in December of that year I married a young lady I had met on my return to Washington for whom I had been able to arrange a librarian's job in SCAP so that she had been able to get to Tokyo by November. By 1957 we had had three children—a girl and two boys—and this marriage lasted 25 years until just after I retired from USIS in 1970. Shortly after that we had a very friendly divorce. Then we remarried again immediately—my wife to a widower to whom she had once been engaged long before she ever met me, and I to a Japanese lady considerably younger than I. So I won't expect to get into much domestic talk hereafter. But I guess I should say I have a teen-age half-Japanese son currently at my old alma mater—Kent School—in Connecticut.

Q: Yes, I knew your first wife and remember that she supported you very well during your career with USIS. And I understand your second wife—whom I've just met—had an interesting career of her own until you married her. Can you tell me a little about that?

NICHOLS: Surely, she was a senior editor on the editorial staff of Japan's leading arts magazine, the Geijutsu Shincho. In addition to her editorial work and writing occasional articles herself, she frequently interviewed famous foreign artists visiting Japan—such as Herbert von Karajan of the Berlin Philharmonic—and also served as her magazine's contact with foreign embassies, which was how I happened to meet her when I was Cultural Attach# at the U.S. Embassy. But I must get on with the story of what I did during the Occupation of Japan.

When I reported in at the Religions Division, which was located in the commandeered National Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) building, I had a very pleasant surprise. The chief of the Division was Ken Bunce, who later joined USIS the same time I did and held a number of very impressive posts during his USIS career both overseas (PAO in Japan and India) and back in Washington. I hadn't previously known Ken but his wife turned out to be a daughter of a well-known missionary in Kyoto before the war named Shively. And she had a much younger brother who was a good friend of mine and also went to the Canadian Academy in Kobe, which Alice [Mrs. Bunce] had attended earlier. And I had met Alice back before the war when she came back to Kyoto from college on vacations. So I fortunately got off to an easy start on what I had thought was going to be a very touch job far beyond my limited talents. I also think I found out why I had been offered such a strange job, though I never had any confirmation for my theory.

The fact is that at that time there were precious few non-Japanese experts on Japanese religions, though quite a few books about them had been published in English, some translated from Japanese. And the foreign authors were all either missionaries or academics, whereas any of the missionary authors still lively enough to return to Japan came back with mission assignments, while the services of the academics were

undoubtedly much in demand at that time back in the U.S. and at probably higher salaries than that offered for my job—though for me it was much more than acceptable.

In any event, when I protested to Ken that I knew next to nothing about Shinto and Buddhism, he told me he was prepared to give me six months to read as much as possible of the pertinent books they had on hand for reference and felt that, considering also my familiarity with Japan and the language, I would then be as qualified as anyone else they might have hoped to land for this particular position. I was also given access to all the past and current material on religions in Japan being turned out for our information purposes by a research staff which we had of about 30 Japanese Shinto, Buddhist and Christian priests or scholars headed by a retired missionary named Woodard.

One of the Religions Division's responsibilities was to turn out a sort of layman's easy guide to the religions of Japan and the current status of religious affairs in Japan for the guidance of U.S. military units scattered everywhere around Japan to make certain that all the Directives issued by SCAP to the Japanese Government concerning the policies of the Occupation in various matters were being complied with. Mr. Woodard wanted very much to head that, but Ken felt he was needed full time supervising the research functions. So he dumped that in my lap after I had gotten fairly well into my reading chore and in due time I was able to present Ken with the material for a GHQ SCAP monograph titled Religions in Japan, which I believe was the first such study ever published, since all the previous publications on religions in Japan were focused on a single sect or group of related sects. I personally wrote the long first chapter which was basically a history of how various religions developed in or were introduced to Japan; Ken Bunce wrote the final chapters on the Occupation's policies and Directives to the Japanese Government concerning religious affairs; and the major, mid-section of the monograph consisted of thumbnail descriptions of every religious body or sect currently active in Japan. I wrote all of those, though they were based on the raw data given me by Woodard's research staff, so I could fairly say I was the principal author of that monograph. But when Charles Tuttle later published the same text as a book, without having to pay royalties because it

was in the public domain, he listed Ken Bunce as author although the origin as above was properly recorded in an introduction by Woodard, which Tuttle included. Incidentally, that book sold very well.

Q: Then what were your duties once you really got on the job? I mean, for example, were you supposed to spend all of your time dealing with Japanese priests, or did you have anything to do with foreign missionaries returning to Japan?

NICHOLS: Well, I wasn't working only on liaison with priests and I'll get to that in a minute. But I was only concerned with Japanese religious developments because we also had on our staff two American priests working full time, one titled “Protestant Advisor,” and the other “Catholic Advisor.” They naturally had considerable contact with Japanese Protestants and Catholics. But their principal function was to serve as the liaison officers for contact between GHQ SCAP and the individuals designated by each Christian denomination as its liaison officer with GHQ for temporary assistance for their missionaries after those missionaries returned following the war. This involved such help as transportation, housing, PX and commissary privileges, etc., until such time as they could get themselves reestablished, to do which they were normally allowed something like six months by GHQ, but more in unusually difficult cases. Then as long as the Occupation lasted there were occasional problems involving the Christian missions, such as restitution or other compensation by the Japanese Government for mission properties confiscated during the war. So the Protestant and Catholic Advisor positions were kept manned throughout the Occupation, though towards the end they had very little to do.

On the other hand I had my hands full and was always kept busy. For one thing, all the letters addressed to General MacArthur raising questions about or demanding that something be done about the Japanese religions—and there were lots like that—were sent to us and landed on my desk for draft replies. Then there seemed to be no end to the national conventions of all the various Shinto and Buddhist sects, not to mention other much larger ecumenical and sometimes even international religious conventions held in

Tokyo, invariably about world peace, at which I was invited to represent the Occupation and had to have a very good excuse if I didn't attend. On top of that there was seldom a day when I didn't have to waste an hour or so explaining to feuding delegations of Shinto or Buddhist priests why it would not be possible for General MacArthur or me, as his representative, to arbitrate their disputes because our principal mission was to establish freedom of religion and separate church and state. There were, however, a number of occasions when we had to inject ourselves into getting some Japanese religious groups off the hook by going to the religions section of the Education Ministry and demanding that it go to the rescue of certain shrines or temples which had somehow been wrongly penalized by legal authorities through misinterpretations of the real intentions of certain Occupation Directives.

Q: I'm afraid I'm getting a little confused about these Directives you've mentioned and the situation regarding the Shinto religion. I know there was a Directive abolishing State Shinto which was issued after the surrender but I don't recall the explanation given me when I returned to Japan with USIS, about the difference between State Shinto and all the Shinto shrines that were still very much in business later on.

NICHOLS: It's not at all surprising that you may be confused because it was a very complex issue and we had to spend a lot of our time explaining to foreigners as well as the Japanese how we could, on the one hand, demand the separation of church and state and freedom of religion, while on the other hand demanding the disestablishment of the state religion, which was Shinto in all its aspects.

The explanation is that there were two completely different types of Shinto. One was the ancient tribal religion from back before any recorded history, essentially animistic in nature and lacking any religious doctrines. The thousands of shrines dotting the Japanese landscape are of this type and represent a form of religion to which no one could take exception. Their objects of worship can range from almost anything someone may have considered awe-inspiring—such as a huge tree or strangely shaped rock or

especially pleasing or frightening hill or mountain—to even an awe-inspiring human. The worship at such shrines is a purely local concern, except for a few cases where there are sufficient almost identical types scattered throughout the country to be considered a loose federation. An example of this would be the ubiquitous shrines having a fox as the object of worship, through which the fox has become the patron saint of whores as well as businessmen and others with money problems.

The government-supported or official kind of Shinto usually called State Shinto was of a totally different character. It had the same architectural and ceremonial trappings as the original Shinto but everything was on a much grander scale, there were doctrines and priests trained and supported as civil servants by the government, and worship at the major shrines was compulsory. In fact this whole ball of wax had been devised in the earliest days of the Meiji restoration in 1868 in an extraordinarily successful program contriving to secure the loyalty of all Japanese to the Emperor. Their loyalty had until then been to clan chiefs in the feudalistic era.

All the major shrines with which the Imperial Household had been associated since antiquity became State Shinto shrines, but the two with the most blatant Emperor worship connotations were built shortly after the Restoration. Those were the great Meiji Shrine in Tokyo built for worship of Emperor Meiji after his death and the Yasukuni Shrine, also in Tokyo, which was dedicated to worship of all citizens who fell in combat for their country. You can imagine what sort of loyalty appeal Yasukuni had for even the simple farm boys who were drafted to become the backbone of the new national armed forces, since it was promised that the Emperor himself would worship at the shrine once each year for the souls of the war dead whose tablets were to be on display there. The concocted doctrines of this new State Shinto had been the origin for the kind of Emperor worship that sustained those famous “banzai” charges and the “Kamikaze” suicide dive bombers.

Q: So what MacArthur ordered abolished was this State Shinto and you didn't interfere at all in the affairs of the other religions, including the older forms of Shinto?

NICHOLS: That's right. But I'm afraid we're spending too much time on all these things prior to my association with USIS and I'm sorry to have gotten so involved in this religious business. In any case this would be a good time to move on to USIS because I have given you some idea of what my Occupation experiences were like, and the rest of the five years I spent in Tokyo until employment for everyone involved in the Occupation was terminated when the peace treaty with Japan was signed were mostly just more of the same. I would like to say, however, that one thing about those years which later served me in good stead in USIS was the freedom I was given to travel in Japan where I pleased, so I had visited just about every one of the prefectures before I reported in to your office in Tokyo in 1952.

Q: But before we leave the subject of Shinto, please explain what you did about those State Shinto shrines. We've been speaking about abolishing them, but did the Occupation forces actually destroy any shrines? I don't recall having ever heard of anything like that, and those big ones you mentioned—Meiji and Yasukuni—are certainly still there and very much in business today.

NICHOLS: They are indeed, and you're right about no destruction of shrines. Our principal objective was to guarantee the Japanese people freedom of religion, and this freedom would apply to any who were prepared to assert that they actually worshiped Emperor Meiji or the particular deities of the shrines that had been converted for use by State Shinto. The only specific requirement of our Directives in this connection was that there must be no financial support for their upkeep from government sources as guaranteed by inclusion in the new Constitution of a prohibition of support for any religious activities by the state. There were, of course, plenty of financial supporters for the former State Shinto shrines, and in most cases the priests at those shrines, who had been disenfranchised by our Directives, managed to stay on as their priests by eliminating the emperor-worship and ultra nationalistic liturgies from their rites and, I suppose, in most cases simply inventing new ones.

Q: So, we come at last to the question of how you happened to decide on a career with USIS. Please fill me in on that.

NICHOLS: Oh—I almost forgot—before moving on to that I should just for the record mention briefly that after I had been at GHQ SCAP for about a year, our office absorbed the Arts and Monuments Division and was renamed the Cultural Resources Division, acquiring the extra responsibility of steering the Education Ministry through the throes of establishing a Cultural Properties Protection Commission. This new Commission worked initially under our guidance on weeding out of the existing, enormous list of National Treasures a mass of spurious items definitely not worthy of financial assistance to their owners from the Government for their upkeep, including—believe it or not—at least one hundred rooms in Japanese inns spotted all around the country and roped off with signs saying, “Emperor Meiji Slept Here,” which were, of course, the best kind of commercial ad an inn could hope to have. Perhaps also I should add parenthetically that such hype for Emperor Meiji didn't fit in well with our purpose of eliminating so-called Emperor worship.

Then, about a year after that our office was additionally assigned GHQ SCAP's responsibility for liaison between the Japanese Government and UNESCO, which was handled exclusively by Ken Bunce, and a year later—say, sometime in late 1949—Ken promoted me to serve as the Deputy Chief of our Division when the incumbent returned to the U.S. So I was in charge of all the functions I've mentioned whenever Ken Bunce wasn't on hand. But that was seldom except for occasional long overseas trips to Europe Ken made shepherding officials of the Education Ministry to UNESCO meetings to prepare them for representing Japan when it could become active again in international affairs. And as things turned out, thanks to Ken, UNESCO was the first international organization to which Japan was given membership after the surrender. And now I think we'd better get moving along to my next metamorphosis which will, after all, bring us for the first time to what we are really supposed to be talking about!

At Conclusion Of The Occupation, Nichols Tentatively Offered Position With USIS

Q: Yes, I guess we should, so please tell me how, where and when you first got involved with USIS.

NICHOLS: When the Occupation ended, all our activities stopped. Nothing continued.

Q: So when that happened, your government involvement, at least at that point, terminated?

NICHOLS: Yes. But I had known that it would. As the Occupation began to wind down in mid-1951, it became obvious that a peace treaty would be signed with Japan soon. I had a wife and two children. I realized we would be heading home soon and I had no idea what I was going to do. I knew I would have to find something else, but what?

At any rate, just before I was to go home, I guess in about March of 1952, a man named Sen Nishiyama showed up in my office. I had never met him before, and of course you know who Sen Nishiyama was—is.

Q: Oh, yes. He was probably the most valuable so-called local employee USIS had.

NICHOLS: Well, Sen said he was approaching me on behalf of a man named Sax Bradford, who was recruiting people with some experience in Japan, and preferably some knowledge of the language, for an organization know as USIA [U.S. Information Service] that he would be setting up in the Embassy in Tokyo as soon as the Occupation ended. When I asked why he had come to see me, he said, “Well, we figured you had the background—born in Japan and so forth—so naturally we've been checking you out, especially with the many Japanese, including government officials, with whom you've been working, and you came off looking very good. So, here I am.” Well, as you don't have to guess, I was very happy to hear that, and said I'd definitely be interested and get a much

fuller briefing on the kind of work I might be doing, since I was concerned about possible specialized qualifications that might be required.

Q: Didn't you get to meet Sax Bradford?

NICHOLS: Oh, of course. Sen arranged a meeting with him for me, and it turned out to be one of the most curious recruiting sessions I've ever experienced. Sax told me they had already decided they wanted me to join his staff, and he asked me to submit an application. But he then promptly warned me of all the downside aspects of working for the State Department, especially in USIS. He mentioned the security clearance problems and delays. He said the pay scale was not very good; advancement possibilities totally unknown yet; promotions might be slow in coming; that the highest rung on the pay scale is the key yet to be probed, and that some foreign posts one might be assigned to could be pretty rough going. I think he went so far as to say I should think seriously of working with USIS especially overseas. Would it be something my family could cope with, etc. But of course I signed up then and there so they could get the security clearance procedures started.

1952: Once In Washington, USIS Offer Becomes Reality; Nichols Returns To Japan Within A Month

That didn't take as long as I thought it would, and about a month after we had returned to Washington, I was signed on at State, given three or four days of general—very general—orientation, and packed off to Tokyo with my family. That was in April, 1952, and all I knew about my first assignment was that I was to be stationed in Kobe at the Consulate General there.

Stationed In Kobe As Regional Supervisor Of Cultural Centers In Consular District

Q: Did they provide you with much orientation as to the nature and mission of USIA?

NICHOLS: Virtually none. It was about 100 percent standard State Department stuff that had very little relation to what I ended up doing.

Q: Well, I hope we were able to brief you sufficiently about USIS, and our plans for the Japan program during your week of orientation with us in Tokyo en route to Kobe.

NICHOLS: Oh, you needn't ever have worried about that! I'd like to say right here for the record that of all the senior officers I served under during all my years, in that Japan program, I owe my greatest thanks to you, Lew, for all your help, particularly in my first year or so in USIS. That was because though I was technically supposed to relate directly to the staff of Pat Van Delden—the Field Operations Supervisor—and of course owed a lot to her, too, for excellent guidance on program development—I quickly discovered when I got to Kobe that we had at first to resolve a mountain of logistic, financial, and purely operational problems before we could hope to develop much in the way of substantive programming. And those were considerations Pat wasn't particularly interested in or capable of handling. So I appreciated her allowing me to go directly to you for help in such matters, which, God knows, would have driven you mad if you didn't happen to be such a knowledgeable, competent and resourceful person.

Q: When the tape ended, you had just arrived in Kobe to take over this new assignment.

NICHOLS: Right. I had learned in Tokyo that the field program outside Tokyo was, as you know, based on the operations of what we call the American Cultural Centers. Formerly the military libraries during the Occupation which in each consular district were handled by a public affairs officer stationed at the consulate general, the consulate. So I was in charge of the Kobe consulate general program for the consular region of the Kobe consulate general, which included all of the prefectures, eleven prefectures, I believe it was, from Wakayama—you want me to give all these?

Q: I think if you say...

NICHOLS: We had seven centers in key cities: Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Hiroshima, Matsuyama and Takamatsu and Okayama.

Q: Didn't you have—you didn't have Kyushu?

NICHOLS: No, from the border of Hiroshima/Yamaguchi south and west was under the jurisdiction of the Fukuoka consulate general. But I had the area with the largest number of centers, and the largest amount of territory. And that was—I spent two interesting years down there, very interesting. I got to like the work very much, I was learning it as I went along. I think probably one of the reasons I got along so well was I had the unbelievably helpful support of a secretary who seemed to know everything about USIS, Charlotte Loris. I'm sure you may remember her.

Q: As a matter of fact, we interviewed Charlotte just a couple of months ago when she was here, when she was in Washington for the annual USIA Alumni Association dinner. And I just turned in her interview to the recipients about a month or so ago.

NICHOLS: That's interesting. Well, believe me, I was sitting down there way down in the southern part of Japan, far away from Tokyo, with only a general orientation that I'd been given, and no previous experience dealing with any of the administrative aspects of the Foreign Service and the State Department or anything. I had the consular staff that could help me out with those things, of course, but any time I was up the creek I'd just turn to Charlotte and say, “Well, how do you do this kind of thing?”. And she'd say, “Let me take care of it,” or she'd take care of it. But I learned that way really from someone with her experience sort of how to handle the administrative aspects, which I'd never had to handle before.

And as for the program, it was a fascinating period in U.S.-Japanese history. The Japanese were on their own now. But even after the peace treaty, they relied very heavily on us for lots of things, especially help and advice in things like education and

development of libraries and things like that. Of course our program was more politically than culturally oriented, but we didn't have any problems in that connection at that time.

Q: Let me ask you, you must have had a lot of contacts in Japan, both by virtue of your having grown up there at least about to the middle of your teens and also by virtue of having lived in the Kobe-Osaka, I mean Kobe-Kyoto-Osaka area—the Kansai. And then you must have had some contacts based also on your work for the religion section of GHQ SCAP. Did those contacts stand you in good stead during the period of your service there in Kobe? Or did you have a chance to utilize them?

NICHOLS: Well, yes and no, Lew. I'd have to say no, they didn't serve me any good stead in respect to the contacts I'd had as a child, because I'd just gone through ninth grade there and had been in the boarding school. So I didn't know many of the parents of the students who were there, and of course they'd all scattered to the four winds and those people were gone, too.

And as for my family's contacts, I think at the age of 15 and having been in boarding school since the age of 9, that I didn't have any personally strong contacts with any of the people they'd known , or even—I couldn't even say I knew a great many of them at all by name. The contacts I had during the Occupation were very useful, but in a limited sense because they had been primarily with religious people. People in this walk of life swing a lot of weight, and in places like Kyoto, particularly, I knew both the abbots of the Nishi Honganji and Higashi Honganji, the largest Buddhist sects in Japan. And they were about as political as you can get. But it was more in the cultural sense that these contacts were useful, because as you know the famous shrines and temples usually are the seat of cultural and artistic matters; that's where you find the great gardens in Kyoto and things like that. So I had access to an awful lot of openings through those contacts.

Q: Through contacts that you'd made during the Occupation with the religious...

NICHOLS: That's right. And these were not contacts that my parents had made because I don't think they ever had much in the way of contacts with Shinto.

Q: I'd like to ask you another question in this regard. You of course had a very useful capability in the Japanese language. Now at one point you told my wife, Kyoko, that your Japanese did not, perhaps, have the kind of depth that would enable you to enter into extensive discussion of deep political or economic subject matter. It was a useful conversational Japanese but not in that kind of depth.

NICHOLS: That's true.

Q: My question is, despite this fact, did you find that your knowledge of Japanese was of great utility to you in carrying out the duties that you were undertaking in the Kobe area?

NICHOLS: That it was useful? Oh, yes. Well, basically, though, Lew, what I think I told Kyoko was absolutely true. Even to this day, I think, my ability in Japanese isn't sufficient to enter into a very serious discussion of things that are philosophical or very difficult political subjects. But as the language—I forgot to say that of course during the period of the Occupation my Japanese language had increased by leaps and bounds as my vocabulary expanded tremendously. Vocabulary expansion also occurred during my war experience in Naval intelligence. Because when I left Japan at the age of 15 I was just a kid and it was a child's language I was speaking, whereas during the Occupation after all that time and during this period in the USIS in Japan, in the early days, I was exposed to an awful lot more adult conversation and picked up a greatly increased vocabulary that enabled me to get along with people and get into subjects I could not have handled earlier, but still, not complex subjects in much depth. But I could understand much more than I could say. This is the real difficulty. I could absorb and understand pretty well what someone else might be saying. The difficulty is in producing it yourself. Because unless you know the language very, very well you have to just use sort of—you skirt around the

subject by trying to explain it in A, B, C terms rather than using the more sophisticated terms that are requisite for a certain level of intelligence. And so it's very difficult.

Q: Of course Japanese is an unusually difficult language because of all the permutations, the nuances, and various levels and of address...

NICHOLS: You know how I solved this problem? It wasn't a solution but I was fortunately in a position to do that. I had a very good assistant, who lived in Kyoto by the way and commuted daily from Kyoto, named Kumagai. He just showed up in my office one day and volunteered. He had been educated in the United States and he was a very wealthy man. He was at loose ends and he was still young and hardy and he was interested in public affairs, interested in politics. He was interested in culture. He was just the perfect assistant for me. But his English was also good enough so that he could understand me and convey it in Japanese, in appropriate Japanese, whatever I wanted to say on a subject. So I found more and more that I was relying on myself for understanding what somebody was saying, but always having him with me or someone like that with me, but preferably him because we worked as a team. Now if someone else were talking about a subject and got into difficult things I could generally follow it pretty well but I'd sometimes say, did I understand this correctly, this, this and this. But then I spoke, I spoke in English and Kumagai would interpret. And even later when I transferred to the embassy to work that is what I did, with Sen Nishiyama as my interpreter most of the time. I could really understand almost everything. There it wasn't quite so difficult. It was mostly talking about administrative things. Sometimes, for example, subjects were a bit too complex, but most of the things I could understand, and most of the things I could explain my position on, but not when it came to something really deep. This is what I'm trying to say.

Discussion Of The Relative Value Of Extensive Japanese Language Training For American Diplomatic Officers

Q: It probably was an additional plus for you because you occasionally spoke in Japanese and so your employees all knew you could speak it quite well. There was clear evidence of your comprehension. So if there ever was any indication or any tendency on their part to say things that they thought they didn't want you to understand, they knew that you understood enough so that they couldn't get by with too much.

NICHOLS: Yes, that's true, Lew. But I tell you, there's another side of the coin, though, and that is that if you speak or understand Japanese as well as I do—and I don't mean that it's fantastic, there are many other people who are much better than I am—but if you have as much ability as I did have, you find Japanese taking advantage of it because they will often say to someone like myself things they wouldn't say to somebody else who doesn't understand Japanese, because they start with the assumption that anybody who speaks Japanese that well must really understand Japanese people. They think they can tell you all kinds of things that they wouldn't say otherwise, if you follow me, but they always say, now don't tell anybody I'm saying this. They sometimes would come in and tell me something God awful about some person, and I'd find myself saying, "Look, I don't want to hear any more about that. You come in here and make a complaint. What are we going to do about this? I don't want to hear anymore about it if you're going to go on, just talking to the air about it." In some ways you get too close to people.

Q: The reason I'm going into this in such detail...

NICHOLS: The Japanese are very funny when they think you understand—they think they understand so much besides the language.

Q: In my own case, I could—I never was very fluent in it but I did get an S-3...

NICHOLS: You were doing pretty good, yes.

Q: But I had the reverse of your problems. I could speak better than I could understand. So I would—I could make a few statements and I could explain what I wanted to do. Then

I'd get this flood of Japanese coming back to me and after about two sentences I was trying to figure out what they had said 30 seconds earlier, while they had gone on a dozen sentences beyond me. The reason I am getting into this is that every time now that an American officer goes out to a USIS post in Japan the Agency almost invariably puts him or her through the nearly two years of Japanese language study at FSI and at the Japanese Language Institute in Yokohama.

NICHOLS: Right.

Q: The question is whether or not that extent of instruction in Japanese is worth the time, money and effort put into it or whether you think that a person without such an extensive knowledge of Japanese can do as well. I have felt that officers probably can if they really know the Japanese language; if they really learn it quite well, but that intensive language instruction is advisable, but Kyoko has some different ideas.

NICHOLS: I agree with her. I think it's a mistake. And I tell you, I found this out the hard way. Nobody can be against the idea of teaching people going to a country that country's language. But the Japanese language is such a—as you know—such a convoluted problem that two years just isn't enough. Now it's amazing how much Japanese these fellows learn in two years. But still, it's the very rare bird who comes out of that really fluent in Japanese. So they come out with this label: two years of Japanese language—a linguist, attached to them. And as long as there's no harm done it's very useful. But if they themselves begin to think that they're pretty good in Japanese and start using it and getting themselves into discussions that are beyond their ability in the language, it can be counterproductive.

Anyone out there I feel should be given the opportunity to develop a useful knowledge of the language for things like getting around, being sociable, shopping, every day common exchanges. I think that's not only desirable, I think it's essential, especially for some of those people who are going out to one-man posts. You can't knock the program; the

program is very good. It's just that it isn't sufficient if you're thinking of it as a tool in communications, serious, complicated communications.

We had a guy. You remember Gunther Rosinus? Now he was a remarkable person up there in Niigata. He picked up the language unusually well, and did a lot of extraordinary things. But Gunther was a philosopher, that was his major as I recall, a political philosopher. And, boy, he really got together with these Japanese and he talked to them and talked to them. But he would get involved in deep subject matter. Then these philosophers would start writing him letters in Japanese, all in Japanese, following up on discussions they had had, you know, and he got himself into a lot of hot water because he was getting beyond his linguistic capability. Now, his Japanese was very good. He rated an A+ in terms of establishing contacts and getting across ideas with these people, but they assumed because he had some ability that he had more than he had. And then he's beyond his depth. So it's in this sense I consider extensive language training counterproductive. I have in mind a couple of other cases where I think it was counterproductive in a somewhat different sense. One concerns people who were damn near bilingual when they got out of the two years of language school.

I don't want to name names, but I recall a specific case where I finally had to go down once and just tell this guy what to do, because he wasn't acting like an American anymore; he had become Japanese in his thinking and conduct. He was acting like a traditionally deferential subordinate Japanese.

Q: This was a USIS officer?

NICHOLS: Yes, in a very key post. And on a very key problem. He just couldn't make himself go see the right Japanese at the right level—the man at the top. He felt he had to start deferentially at lower echelons. I said, “You go see the TOP man.” “No, no, no,” he said. “You don't start there, you start somewhere else. I'm talking to somebody.” I said, “Why can't you get this appointment?” In effect, show your position—deal with this official

as an equal. I mean, this appointment happened to involve a very major matter concerning the Kyoto Seminar program—the whole summer seminars program we were running.

Q: Was this the one we started in 1953 in Nagano—then called the Nagano Seminar—one of which featured the visit of William Faulkner?

NICHOLS: Yes. Nagano. But later we moved it to Kyoto.

Q: I see.

NICHOLS: It was taken over by an Annual Kyoto Summer Seminar—with the faculties.

Q: Oh. I thought the thing died after my years in Japan.

NICHOLS: Oh, no. It was basically much the same, but then it was expanded by Kyoto University and Doshisha University as alternate hosts each time, each summer.

Q: I made a misstatement in my own interview then, because I thought after the big cut-back in our program when we lost a lot of people in 1953 and later under some of the Eisenhower Administration cutbacks, that we had largely had to let the program die. I didn't realize that it had continued in this new guise thereafter.

NICHOLS: Well, it was slightly different but it was based on that and expanded from that. The way it worked out, you remember, those Nagano seminars were on a particular subject with a particular authority like literature.

Q: Yes, English.

NICHOLS: Yes, English literature. What happened, the Kyoto Seminar was expanded. It always included literature, but it was expanded to at least four subjects, including things like some science, political science, and economics. The English, the literature, the political science and the economics were really the four buttresses of the thing.

Q: In the case of...

NICHOLS: We try each year to get top-flight scholars in each of these fields, for the same time.

Q: That's what I was about to ask.

NICHOLS: For the same time.

Q: Exchange specialists from the United States to come.

NICHOLS: Yes, they came out just for that. So it was basically the same idea of getting a real top-flight person out. Well, anyway this problem involved getting these visiting professors, and time was running short. We had the big problem of lead time on clearances for the professors we were trying to get for Kyoto, from the States. As a basis of operation we were accepting nominations from the Japanese sponsors. They'd give us nominations and it would take us some time to find out if we could get the grants. It was a little awkward because those were the days when you had to have (security) clearances and the authorities in Washington sometimes wouldn't clear certain people. But in this case it was a necessity to go to the head of the university.

Q: This was going on at the time that you were back there as cultural attach#.

NICHOLS: That's right. And in charge of this program. Lots of others, too. But, I mean, this was a case where I'm talking about the language where literally this person, not only he was really tremendous in the language—he later resigned and went ahead with the language and became quite an authority, not in the language itself but he's used the language for his academic pursuits, and has done very, very well.

Q: Who is this, you say?

NICHOLS: Well, turn the machine off if you're going to name names.

Q: Walt, I think I understood from some of the things you said when we were off the tape that there is a danger if an American or any Westerner learns the language so well that he feels that in order to get across his point of view he has to act like a Japanese in a cultural fashion that betrays his own Westernization.

NICHOLS: Yeah.

Q: And by doing this his actions become counterproductive. Therefore, there presumably might be a level at which a person ought to cut off his comprehension of Japanese, or at least his utilization of it, in order not to get into a place where he feels he's got to become acculturated and become more Japanese than American. Is that a fair statement?

NICHOLS: Yes, that's what I think is a very fair statement. It's what I was trying to say in many too many words, you put it very concisely and well. I would say this, however, there are exceptions and there are some Americans, people like Seidensticker and others, who have managed to master the language without feeling that they have to be Japanese to do it.

Q: How would you...

NICHOLS: And they're perfectly Western when they deal with Japanese. They bow and observe other Japanese cultural courtesies, but they haven't changed their personalities, they haven't gone through a Japanese metamorphosis.

Q: You knew Glenn Shaw, who was a legend in Japan.

NICHOLS: Sure.

Q: Do you feel that he accomplished that feat?

NICHOLS: Sure. He was, well, he was unique anyway as a personality. I never saw anybody less Japanese. Big gestures, big voice. He was very Western. He's another case. But he certainly mastered Japanese. So there are exceptions. But I think these are rare exceptions and you're talking about a program designed to turn out Foreign Service Officers, for example.

Q: There were two, in fact three, young Political Officers in Japan at the time you were there...

NICHOLS: Yes, yes.

Q: All three of whom, and particularly two of whom, understood and handled Japanese very well. One was Owen Zurhellen and another was Dick Finn. And then to an only slightly lesser extent was Marshall...

NICHOLS: Green.

Q: No, not Marshall Green, he was a young officer—Bill Marshall—no, Bill Sherman.

NICHOLS: Oh, Bill?

Q: Yeah. He later became DCM in Japan.

NICHOLS: Yes, Bill Sherman.

Q: Did you feel that they each had an unusually excellent knowledge of the language and were utilizing it in a proper fashion, as nearly as you could determine?

NICHOLS: Let's see. Sherman, yes. Bill Sherman was very good.

Q: Didn't you have a simultaneous tour with them?

NICHOLS: Well, with Sherman I did, yes. Okay. Sherman. And Zurhellen. Yes. And Finn. I would say all three really were top flight in Japanese. But none of them got...

Q: And they never submerged their Americanism.

NICHOLS: Never. Certainly not Zurhellen. Dick to a certain extent. Not subverting his Americanism, no. Sherman definitely not. In other words, they lived up to all the Japanese might expect in terms of a foreigner being cordial and on a level with them, but without trying at all to impress them with the degree to which they've been Japanized, you know, confusing their status with that of a Japanese.

Q: This leads me to one final question and that is, do you think that people who are studying the Japanese language now under the FSI Institute program are given an adequate amount of grounding in the culture itself because again, going back and quoting Kyoko, she wonders whether they are just getting an overlay of the Japanese language and perhaps getting an insufficient comprehension of the Japanese culture in order to be able to use that language properly when they get on the scene. You may not have any occasion to observe that, but if you do have any, I'd like to get your opinion.

NICHOLS: I just don't know.

Q: I don't know either. Anyway, getting back specifically to the program that you were managing when you were in Kobe, as I recall you were the Kansai region, or even beyond the Kansai, you were the regional officer for Southwestern Honshu.

NICHOLS: Yes. Kansai, it's called the Kinki, Kinki has also got Kobe in it. Kinki and the Chugoku is the central part with Hiroshima, and Shikoku.

Q: I've forgotten—did you have Nagoya?

NICHOLS: No, Nagoya was a separate consular district with a consulate general of its own.

USIS Programs In The Kobe Consular District

Q: Do you have any particular recollections as to any especially effective programs that you've carried out during that period that you were supervising the area of Kobe?

NICHOLS: Well. Let me say, I was only there for two years in the Kobe area, Lew, which is a short time, when you figure that the program was starting from scratch, that nothing was being done till I got there. You may recall, you were already—you had already leased properties for the center in Osaka and things like this, but I mean the program hadn't gotten underway in the sense of coordination of any kind. And we had—every one of our centers was directed by a lady, a woman, you may recall, except for one.

Q: During the Occupation period.

NICHOLS: Because they were the librarians for the CI & E libraries. They were very good librarians and they were very fine people. But for the kind of program that we had in mind, they just obviously weren't going to ultimately be the kind of candidates we were looking for. But it took quite a time to replace them adequately with male officers. And I don't mean that I'm—well...

Q: No, given the Japanese culture, its understandable.

NICHOLS: You have to face it, in Japan—yes. You have to face it, the Japanese are ill at ease, men are ill at ease dealing on an equal level in any sort of administrative or substantive sense with foreign women. Or any women. That's changing a lot now, believe me, but in those days we had a real handicap there. So it was very slow developing in terms of the cultural centers. We were trying to convert them more to information libraries, you may recall. They had thousands and thousands of books that really made them very

good libraries, but we were getting to the point of trying to weed them out so they were less impressive in terms of their size and more useful in terms of the content and the selection of material for public information purposes, let's say.

Value Of The Cultural Centers—

So the development of the libraries was very slow. But I feel that the programs that developed around the centers was the most important thing we did in Japan in those days, except for the key things done in Tokyo, of course, that no field office could ever do.

But Exchange Grant Program Was Most Effective

But in terms of the outreach to the general public, I think those libraries were absolutely effective and extremely useful. But the answer to your question would have to be, I think the most useful thing that I was able to do, I felt that I had accomplished, if you want to put it that way, was the grant program, the exchange grant program. Because my area was rather large, I got a very substantial slice of the grants allocated to the field posts.

Plan Designed By Nichols' Japanese Assistant, Kumagai, For Maximizing Effectiveness Of Exchange Grants

There was a big question of how to go about utilizing these grants. This is not really my idea at all, it originated with Mr. Kumagai, so I'm going to give him all the credit. But we discussed and discussed and discussed how to use these relatively small number of grants intelligently in such a large area. I think he came up with a brilliant idea and it worked out very well in the long run. He said, well, of course we should give some grants, say, to maybe a journalist and maybe to some promising young politician or somebody, well, things like that, but basically he felt the most effective way to use a limited number of grants would be to establish a long-term program in the academic field, operating out of Kyoto University.

Now, he, you may recall, lived in Kyoto and had a lot of very important contacts there, including the heads of all the universities in the area. And his point was that all of the academic positions, you might say, of importance in that general region were subject to Kyoto University in the sense that all the deans and professors who held those academic positions had been Kyoto University students and had been nominated by their professors from Kyoto University. In other words, just as Tokyo University has heavy influence on all the other Japanese universities, Kyoto University had the greatest impetus, you might say, or influence through the universities in that whole Kinki area, so whatever happened at Kyoto University was going to affect them in the long run.

And so to give one or two grants maybe outside, maybe to a professor at Hiroshima University, or so forth, but to concentrate over a period of years by allocating, say, at least one grant a year or two grants a year to Kyoto University on a highly selective basis. And the problem was how to select these people. I agreed in principle that—this involved a plan for about four or five years, each year selecting somebody, at least one, from Kyoto University. We said we ought to start at the level of promising professors who were highly recommended by the senior faculty. Well, the serious question that then came up was how we could go to the faculty and ask for nominations when we couldn't guarantee a visa, because of the security clearances. This was the McCarthy era, you may recall.

So we discussed that and he finally said, well, I can get us around that. I said, well, what's that? He said, we'll go to the president of the University, and I want you to come with me and we'll level with him, tell him what our plan is and I'm sure he'll be very pleased and think it's a good idea and be very much for it. And you're going to have to tell him that what you want him to do is to nominate from his own faculty each year someone he really considers a real comer for the future in Kyoto University, but not to tell him he's nominating him until we find out if we can get a visa for him.

I thought, boy, if there's anything verboten, that's it. But I said okay and I went along with him. So we went over and called on the president of the University and, by God, he said,

I quite understand, after all, he reads the newspapers. And we explained. He understood what we were trying to do and he said he approved and appreciated it very much. So he said, I will do that, and I don't tell anybody about this discussion, I won't tell anybody that he's been nominated until you come and tell me you can give him a grant. So that's what we did. I put in an advance on his nominations, his names, and got this thing started. It ran right through Cliff Forster's tenure as Branch PAO in Kobe. But, my God, you know, by about the fifth year he nominated young people who weren't deans yet, you know, but every single one of these from Kyoto University ended up as deans, every single one, and none of them ever knew about this program until we could give them a visa.

They learned a hell of a lot from this kind of exchange exposure to America, and we had a very good thing going for us in the academic field down there by approaching it this way, which was really not “according to Hoyle.” I was terrified that this would leak out at some point and the next thing you know you'd be reading a newspaper about some big arrangement. But it never leaked. Never did. And Cliff Forster, if you ever talk to him about this, will agree that he was the beneficiary, because when he got there, the dean of economics, the dean of history, all these guys had been on this grant program.

As I say, that wasn't my idea, but my feeling was that the decision I made to go along with Kumagai was right, and I take credit because I don't know that anyone else would have made that decision—it was really risky. The president could have kicked us out, just said no, but Kumagai said, no, I know him very well and I'm sure he won't. But, boy, what a gamble. What do you think would happen today?

Q: In the pre-war period of course there were a great many of the professors who were pretty far to the left...

NICHOLS: Yes.

Q: ...and there was still a large number of them in that category, even in the immediate post-war period who managed to shut up about their views and listen.

NICHOLS: Yes.

Q: And I would guess that that same situation existed even at the time you started this program.

NICHOLS: Oh, very definitely.

Q: So it would be understandable that there might be a number of them who wouldn't pass muster, particularly in the McCarthy and immediate post-McCarthy era. As far as you knew...

NICHOLS: I think we had one case, I think we did. I think we had to go back to him and say, very sorry. And he said—well. I think there was one case.

Q: As far as you know, these people who finally got the grants to the United States, if they weren't necessarily pro-American after their Stateside exposure at least they were understanding and were probably a great plus for us in the...

NICHOLS: Oh, yes. They weren't blatantly pro-American at all. The president picked them on the basis of merit. We had asked him to find people that he thought genuinely could benefit from such an exposure and that was one point, this was essential. If he didn't think they could benefit from it, there's no point in our admitting them. The second point was that there were no strings attached. If the person could get a visa, we were not concerned about his politics, because we'd take it for granted that he'd been a member of the Communist Party or something that the fact would show up somewhere during his security check. We weren't concerned whether he was oriented left, right or what, but we wanted the president's assurance that in his opinion this was a man who had all the

capability of rising to the top in the structure of the university. And he said, okay. And they—every single one of them ended up as deans.

Q: I wonder—the assumption must be that since the deans of Kyoto University spread out their appointments of their prize students and their prize underlings to other universities, at least some of this influence then penetrated the other universities to which they were ultimately assigned.

NICHOLS: This was exactly Kumagai's theory, that instead of, say, giving a grant to Okayama University, somebody we picked out of a hat, just because the center director knows him and says he's a great guy, I'd like to have him... If we approached it this way in the academic field—allowing for maybe one wildcard grant somewhere else—if we approached it this way as a plan, we would be influencing ultimately these other universities and the kind of people coming out of that program ultimately to be in senior positions. Because that's the way it goes. They all get their jobs, through their deans. So we've always had, as far as I know, very good relations with Kyoto University since that time. But that struck me, when you started asking me what I might have been able to contribute, was a negative kind of contribution of going along with Kumagai. It was his idea.

Q: No, I don't think...

NICHOLS: When I heard it I thought it was a damn good idea, but I never told anybody in Tokyo anything about this. I just was so afraid that if—and I've seen this happen before—you mention something like this to somebody, the next thing you know somebody comes up and says, hey, you can't do that.

Q: Somebody is bound to say, gee whiz, we've worked out a really excellent program and...

NICHOLS: Next thing you know ...

Q: ...Nichols down there with Kumagai worked it out, the president of the University did this, that... No, I think you're absolutely right.

NICHOLS: My experience in the security during the war with this communications intelligence experience stood me in good stead. You just don't trust anybody. You know, you weren't allowed to tell anybody where you worked or what you did. Someone would say, “Oh, I checked in over there. What are you in?” Well, I'm in the gunnery or research, or some other obscure area.

Other Grants

Q: Did you establish any other kinds of grants and get any production out of them, say with the media in Kobe?

NICHOLS: Oh, yeah. Sure. We sent press people. We sent governors. We sent people who became governors. The best one we had was—we had very good relations that I helped work out with Governor Kaneko of Kagawa Prefecture, in Takamatsu.

Q: He remained, by the way, a governor for years and years.

NICHOLS: Oh, yes, he's still going strong, but he's been very ill. I think he may be dead now.

Q: No, he's not.

NICHOLS: He isn't? He's still living? Kaneko.

Q: I interviewed Harry Kendall last winter...

NICHOLS: Yeah, well Kendall was down there.

Q: And Kendall says he's no longer governor but...

NICHOLS: Oh, no, he's been out of office, he's been very ill, too.

Q: Harry sees him every once in a while, because Harry made a great name for himself in Takamatsu. And when they opened that bridge across the Inland Sea, a year or so ago, they invited Harry and his wife over there.

NICHOLS: Good, I'm glad.

Q: To participate in the ceremonies.

NICHOLS: That's Kaneko. He was just crazy about Harry. But Cliff Forster was the one who, when he was there as my successor—there was somebody between me and him. There was another guy. Jerry, I can't remember his name.

Q: You mean as the supervisor in that area?

NICHOLS: As the Regional PAO.

Q: Well, Jerry Novick was there.

NICHOLS: Novick, yes.

Q: He's dead now.

NICHOLS: Yes, well, he followed me didn't he?

Q: Yes, he followed you.

NICHOLS: He followed me and then Cliff followed him, I think.

Q: I think so, yes.

NICHOLS: So Cliff was the one who nominated Kaneko for a leader grant.

Q: Yes.

NICHOLS: And he went. So in other words, this was by no means—I didn't mean to give the impression we flooded this program with academics.

Q: No, I didn't mean to imply that you did.

NICHOLS: Oh, sure. We got people in public affairs. I can tell you the funniest story about Hiroshima and an academic in Hiroshima, though, that's—you ever hear this story? You want to turn that off?

Q: Why? Is this something you don't want on tape?

NICHOLS: I don't know.

Q: Why don't you go ahead with it. If you decide later it ought to be cut out of the interview we can cut it.

NICHOLS: You know, we were always being asked for evidence of effectiveness. Well, you know what that's like, it's always a problem. I think this story is one of the best I've ever heard in terms of communications, anyway.

Fazl Fotouhi, when he was down there wanted very much to send a dean of the Hiroshima university—I've forgotten what dean he was, literature or something, I guess—to the States on a grant, so I gave him a grant. Now this fellow didn't speak any English at all, but anyway, he went, and of course his group was escorted with interpreters when they were in the States. So when he came back he came to call on Fazl in the office. So Fazl had his interpreter there and the dean had his interpreter there and everything. When they went in, the dean came in and sat down and started to say something. The interpreter reacted but was hushed. “I talk, I talk,” the dean says, in English. So he looks at Fazl and says, “Mr. Fotouhi, I, eh, uh, Mr. Fotouhi. Uh. Umm. Mr. Fotouhi. Oh, shit.” That's literally what he

said. He learned something over there. It's just a side joke but I've never forgotten it. Fazl, the interpreters and everybody laughed. He just wanted to try to speak a little English, he couldn't get beyond “Mr. Fotouhi.”

Q: At least he learned a couple of words.

NICHOLS: Yes, that was the point. Anyway. I don't know. Could I have a break just a second?

Q: While we were off tape, you mentioned another story.

Ambassador Murphy's Trip To Shikoku

NICHOLS: Yes. You ought to hear this story.

Q: You mentioned that on one occasion you got Ambassador Murphy down there to visit Takamatsu and the governor and he had a meeting. You said there was quite a story connected with that trip. Would you mind going ahead and putting that on tape?

NICHOLS: Well, okay. This was quite a traumatic experience for me because as I said I had had very little experience in the State Department in public affairs, for that matter. When Ambassador Murphy decided to take a trip to Takamatsu and Matsuyama and see Shikoku, I was told by the people in Tokyo to go down there to set up all the arrangements and give them the dates and what not. It was going to be a very grand schedule. I won't go into all those details. But Kumagai and I went down there and talked to the governors, mayors and arranged for the Ambassador's party to spend a night and a place on the train up to Takamatsu, from Matsuyama to Takamatsu. He was going to fly into Matsuyama...

Q: When the other tape ran out you were just saying that when Ambassador Murphy came down he had flown into Matsuyama and then was taken by train I guess up to Takamatsu, so will you pick it up from there?

NICHOLS: Okay. Well, he flew into Matsuyama, spent the evening, after giving a speech, then he went on to Takamatsu for the next night and gave a speech to the United Nations Association of Kagawa Prefecture that night, and then flew back to Tokyo. So flying into Matsuyama, flying back from Takamatsu with a train ride in between, six hour train ride. Well, this was quite a three days for him, and for me, because we had set everything up and it all ended up going as scheduled. But with many a slip between the cup and the lip.

Kumagai and I went on down with the consul general and stood at the airport and waited and waited. The plane from Tokyo was very much delayed. Finally it flew in. But in the meantime, after he had left Tokyo, but before the party had arrived, the news had broken that Stalin had died. There were a lot of reporters and people, there were radio stations and newspapers. They had picked up on the radio the news that Stalin had died, which was quite an event, of course. So all these reporters were having a fit because here comes the American ambassador who had been up in the air during all of this and they'd be the first people to have a chance to get him.

And so as the Ambassador left the plane they started storming him. We warned him this was what they had in mind. He says, “I don't want to talk to them, I don't want to talk to them.” He says, “I have nothing to say, nothing to say, get in the cars and get off.” So he got away with no comment. But later when it came to his speech at the dinner, there was no way of avoiding it because there they all were and they had a chance to ask questions so one of them got up and said, Mr. Ambassador—and they had it all translated in English, of course. In effect what he said is, we know of course that surely you must know that Stalin died earlier today and we would like to know if you have anything to say on the subject. And the Ambassador said, “Well, I have not personally been advised of this yet, officially, but you know I've heard lots of rumors about Stalin being dead from time to time and so far I haven't believed them. It could be true this time but I wonder if it is. But in any case, the only thing I have to say is if he is ill, I hope it's nothing trivial.”

Well, they all wanted to know, what did it mean, “I hope it's nothing trivial?” The interpreter had a terrible time. So we finally had to just explain that, well, it's just a joke, that he doesn't take it seriously. We flubbed the whole thing, but got over that because they would have had a fit if they thought the American ambassador was saying something like that. Because they came back when they understood, they said they sort of thought that he hadn't said anything. So they said, do you know that Mr. Dulles had wired condolences and the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of England and the Prime Minister of Japan and everybody, everyone has been sending telegrams of condolence, and you have nothing more to say. He said, “I'm sorry, I told you what I had to say. Nobody asked me to send a telegram.”

But that was about the way he brushed that off.

Otherwise everything went all right that night, but the next day was the train trip to Takamatsu. Governor Kaneko of Kagawa, where Takamatsu is, the capital of the prefecture, had come down to get on the train and ride the last three hours back with us because he had something very important to say. So we got on the train, and halfway up there the governor got on the train and we had a three-hour session with Ambassador Murphy. It soon became very clear that the governor had a real problem on his hands. And I had to do all the interpreting for this because he didn't want anyone else, he didn't want any other Japanese involved in this at that point, not even Kumagai.

So we sat and discussed this thing and his problem was that they had a little airfield in Takamatsu.

Q: They had what?

NICHOLS: A little airfield, you know, an airport. Of course there were no commercial planes flying in and out of it, in fact no planes flying in and out of it at all, just the strip that had been left by the military. But this strip was built on land that had been confiscated

from the farmers of the area during the war to build an airstrip for military planes to land for emergency purposes. And there was great agitation now that the war was over to give the land back to the farmers and let them have it to turn it into farm land again. This had come to a head recently and now that the American ambassador was coming, there was really going to be a problem because he said, “I must confess that we have been holding out and refusing to accept their petitions for return of the land by telling them that we have been told that the American air force will need this for the similar purposes of emergency landings and things like that so that we have no control over the land at all, it's being held at the request of the United States government, which of course is not true.” The Ambassador said, “This is the first I've heard of this.” The Governor said, “Well, I'm just trying to be very honest with you. I just have to tell you this because they're all going to be demonstrating tomorrow and they are going to be asking you to turn them back the airport and you wouldn't understand what it's all about.” So he said, “Can you possibly agree to get me off the hook in other words, by simply listening to their petitions and protests and if you're asked for comment simply saying, 'Well, I really don't know the details of this matter but I will certainly look into it when I get back to Tokyo' and then just go. Because, you see, your plane is going to come and land on that strip tomorrow. So this sounds like a good excuse, you see, for your saying something about this but you don't have to do anything other than say you'll look into it and not promise anything, but at least accept their petition. I wanted to let you know why they're petitioning and I am to blame.”

So Murphy laughed and said, “Well, I've never heard anything like this. Okay, all right, all right. We'll see what happens. I'll just say, 'I haven't heard of it before and I'm going to look into it when I get back to Tokyo' and I won't be surprised.” So Governor Kaneko said, “Ah, thank goodness.”

So sure enough we got off the train and went to the banquet hall after going to the hotel, and he gave a very good speech. This was the United Nations Association of Takamatsu. While he was giving the speech another message came in from Tokyo and believe it or not this one was more shattering than the one about Stalin. The message was that they just

received word that Murphy had been assigned to be Ambassador to the United Nations, so he would be leaving Tokyo very shortly. So at the end of his speech to the UN Association he said, I just got this telegram during this dinner, the coincidence is really fantastic, what a three days.

But anyway, that night he got back to the hotel and there was a mob scene out in front of the hotel, all these farmers and everything with all kinds of signs. What the signs said was, things like this, Dear Mr. Ambassador. Please arrange to give us back our farmland. Please abolish the airport. And things like this. And it turned out that, guess where they'd been? They'd been to our center all afternoon, asking how to write these things in English. So they were all written in very good English, very polite English. Dear Sir.

The center director had told them all what to write. But he said what they wanted the signs to say and very politely. Without knowing anything about this, anything about the airport, but just as a courtesy. So our center was involved.

But anyway, they came and the head man wanted to see the ambassador and somebody came out and said, no, no, he won't see anybody. But, by God, Murphy appeared. He said he had heard something out here, what was this all about? And we told him it was the people about the airport. He said, “Oh, all right, I'll be happy to see them.” And so the head man came in with about 10 other people and waited at the front of the hotel. All he wanted to do was hand him this written petition and explain it's about the airport. So Murphy said, “Thank you very much, I'll accept the petition. I haven't read it yet, should I read it now?” And they said, “Oh, no, you can read it later.” So he said, “Thank you very much, I will do so.” And then he went back into the house and they all left very happy because the important thing was to have left some piece of paper, whether he read it or not, the gesture of having called on him and left this protest. And of course the protest was very mild, whatever it was. Basically they believed that he could be instrumental in getting them back their airport.

So the next morning the plane came in from Tokyo, they were all at the airport, and all the way to the airport were all these former demonstrators lined up with their signs. And at the airport was the chief of the local agricultural group, whatever it was, union or something, all the important guys that were on the protest side standing around there with their signs. The same man in front, you know, who'd given him the pitch the night before. Well, several senior officers and their wives had gotten on the airplane and Murphy was still shaking hands with the governor, when he suddenly said, “Hi, I saw you last night at the hotel.” He says to the governor, “Listen, I have an idea. Ask them how they'd like to have an airplane ride.” Governor Kaneko was having a fit. He said, “You don't have to do anything like that.” But Murphy persisted, “No, no, these people might enjoy seeing Takamatsu from the air and it might give them some idea of how important air connections are.” So Governor Kaneko said, “Oh, yes, by all means.”

So Murphy ordered everybody off the plane—the staff officers and their wives who had already gotten on—and said to the Japanese dignitaries, “Be my guests. Why don't we take about 10 of you?” So about 10 of the key people in this demonstration group got on the plane and Murphy got on the plane and I got on the plane and he told the pilot to take off. We flew all around, looked at Takamatsu from the air, the castle and the bay and the mountains and everything. And these people were just bowled over because they'd never been up in a plane. They came down safely and Murphy had made some friends out of these people.

And then, the Ambassador and his party flew off for Tokyo. But this performance really struck me. I had a great deal of admiration for Murphy. He didn't know a thing about Japan but I think he was one of the best ambassadors we have ever had there, simply because of the kind of person he was. This happening was a good illustration of his tolerance and resourcefulness but it's another illustration of the kind of adaptability Murphy displayed. I don't know how anyone could have anticipated this sequence of problem events: like Stalin dying or Murphy being transferred, and then to have this demonstration. I learned pretty

fast through things like this all kinds of tricks of the diplomatic trade. But I'll never forget Governor Kaneko for his business of coming down to meet Murphy and having the nerve to ask Murphy to put up with this fraudulent business of saying he would look into it. Which of course he told them he would. The airport now is a very big airport there and it's really brought Takamatsu right into the mainstream.

Q: So they never got...

NICHOLS: But it wouldn't have been given back—it's the same land. And the farmers are very glad of it now I guess.

Q: They never got their land back.

NICHOLS: They never got their land back, but they did get compensation and there were no more petitions, and Kaneko's neck was saved. But I'll tell you, there was a man who made a lifetime friend out of Kaneko for the United States.

Q: I'm sure he did.

NICHOLS: Well, that's been a long story, but it was a baptism of fire for me to have this kind of experience and to sort of learn by leaps and bounds. Suddenly, you know, well, gee, these kinds of things can be involved.

Q: I can't imagine somebody like Allison having done that.

NICHOLS: Oh, no. This man, Murphy, was just fantastic.

Q: He was really upset by his appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the UN He had gone out to Japan with the understanding that he'd be spending a three to five year period there. That news just really knocked him off his feet.

NICHOLS: Oh, he was upset when he got this telegram. And the sheer coincidence of it coming just as he had addressed the UN Society of Takamatsu.

Media Contacts On Matters Other Than Cultural Stories Was Limited

Q: One of the things I meant earlier when I asked you what kind of contact you had with the media was did you have any occasion during the period that you were there, or did the people in the center, operating out of the center, have any occasion to talk to journalists whenever necessary to try to get any American points of view or policy points of view across to the media? With the hope that U.S. policies could, perhaps, be better explained by the Japanese press, so that the Japanese public would then be informed of exactly what the true situations were?

NICHOLS: Well, naturally it was part of our standing instructions operationally to do that. And I think that all the center directors did to a certain extent, in all those centers in my area. I did to some extent. But the local media for some reason weren't all that interested in national politics. I mean, the kind of people we related with. You know, the people down there in the Kansai don't feel any great interest in this kind of—the international matters are all the concern of Tokyo. The Kansai people felt very much out of it. So there weren't many people you could pick out as outstanding in terms of ability to influence the country through anything they wrote in the press sense. We worked very closely with media in all kinds of public relations operations, knew a lot of them and knew the presidents of the newspapers and everything of course because they were invited to everything like the opening of the new centers, etc. We had good contacts with them, but I must confess that I never ran into a press man with whom I thought it would be worthwhile sitting down and trying to engage in discussion of some kind of international problem, because they hardly ever wrote about it. Most of that sort of material came directly from Tokyo or Osaka—you know, canned stories on international affairs and similar matters.

Q: I thought there might have been in such papers in Osaka.

NICHOLS: Asahi and Mainichi?

Q: Uh-huh.

NICHOLS: Of course their headquarters were both theoretically there, I mean originally. But by that time, everything was happening in Tokyo. You know, to Japan, that's the window of the outside world. I just don't think many stories of that kind were generated locally. They relied always for information from the people at the “source.” They were interested in carrying cultural things and things like that and not so much about politics. But frankly, no, I don't think we did very well. I think maybe we did much better when Cliff was there some years later. I don't know about Jerry Novick. When Cliff was there he worked very closely with the press, but to what extent on political things I don't know.

Q: Well, of course later on the regional newspapers became much more sophisticated.

NICHOLS: Sure, oh, yes.

Q: The times we are discussing were those fairly close to the end of the Occupation and they hadn't fully recovered from being heavily under the guidance, under the oversight of the Tokyo papers.

NICHOLS: Right. Censorship, too.

Q: And also of the Occupational Forces.

NICHOLS: Yes, that's right. I don't think I ever felt that there was much mileage to be gotten out of trying to cultivate the press down there because if it got published at all it'd be in some little column in some back page somewhere. Magazines, we had a lot to do with magazines. Now they were somewhat different, but then, of course, the major magazines, the influential magazines, are all in Tokyo.

Q: Even some years later, too.

NICHOLS: Yes.

Q: I think they may have had local editions of national papers back in operation at that time but I'm not sure.

Pressures From USIS Tokyo To Get Hard Core Anti-Communist Material On Kansai Press

NICHOLS: No, that's for press releases. Now, I hesitate to say this because I want to talk about Pat van Delden, who was a very fine person whom I admired a great deal and to whom I owe a lot, because she was the person who finally picked me to go to Tokyo to take her place, which, by the way, dumbfounded me. She was, as you may recall, very much into the business of working on and with the media. She was very strong on getting to and influencing the press. I used to argue with her a lot about the limitations on what we could accomplish by getting too heavily involved in passing out tracts like, for example, “Bloody Footsteps in Korea.” We were getting all kinds of stuff like that out of our Publications Branch in Tokyo.

But most importantly, we were operating under the guise of cultural centers, and, as you may recall, I have always felt very strongly that it was very important to maintain, not a neutral but certainly an apolitical facade for the cultural centers, because it was the fact that they were indeed cultural centers that gave us our in with a significant and influential segment of the Kansai people.

Q: The centers were acceptable to...

NICHOLS: Acceptable to the community, so I was always against anything that would jeopardize that tie by being too political.

This had nothing to do with personal contacts center personnel might have had with local people of influence. But for the centers as U.S. institutions to pass out heavy anti-communist tracts would have been disastrous at that time. The one I can remember in particular was something about “Bloody Footsteps in Korea.” Anti-communist stuff. We had a real go-round about that with Pat. But...

Q: Pat had just come out of the European background.

NICHOLS: Yes.

Q: Where the U.S. was completely remaking the German society...

NICHOLS: That's right.

Q: I think that was her introduction to media “propaganda” but she was highly influential in inaugurating a lot of those programs in Germany. You could do things in Germany you couldn't do, given the Japanese culture.

NICHOLS: Yeah. Well, I'm a great admirer of Pat van Delden's, really, believe me, but you asked me a question about this business of the press. That was always a big problem for us and I think all the people in the field, because there's no question in my mind that the place to operate with the press was out of the embassy in Tokyo. There you have backup, you have everything. Out in the prefectures all we could do was go with something that we were given as an instruction sheet, or some text or something to work with, and you're sort of flying blind if you get any real questions in depth.

The Case Of The Secret Package

But Pat was rather insistent because she was so imbued with this sort of secretive aspects of media manipulation. One time she actually told me to call her back from a pay phone, not from the consulate pay phone, even, not from the consulate general phone which is

supposed to be secure, but to go to a regular pay phone down in the dock area and call her at a certain time like at 10:00 at night and she had a very important message for me. So I said to myself, wow, what's happening.

Anyway, I went down there and the message was in effect that she had arranged for delivery to all of us in the region some, I don't know, thousand copies of some tract like “Footsteps in Korea,” a very anti-communist thing. She herself realized from some of the things we had been saying that we wanted to be very discreet about how we got involved in this sort of activity. So she was being very discreet. But she wanted to let me know that she was sending this screed. She was calling all the RPAOs the same way, and these tracts would soon be arriving in an unmarked, big bale of stuff. “Don't let your staff open it if you feel that way about it, but we want you to figure out some way of getting this stuff into distribution.”

Sure enough—I thought it was funny to have to go to a pay phone someplace, as if nobody would ever guess someone was making an important call from a public telephone. But anyway, that was all, that was the message. And so sure enough the packages arrived and sat there with ours and all the centers got them. She was mailing them to all the centers and I began getting frantic calls from all the center directors. I had called all of them in advance and said, “There's a package coming down and I really don't know what to tell you to do with it, but there's just no way you could sensibly dispose of, say, 100 or 200 copies of this kind of thing. I just really don't know what to tell you what to do with it, I haven't seen it myself yet, but I know it's coming in any time so be on the alert. Make sure you tell your staff you're expecting a package and you want it brought to you immediately so that nobody opens it, or something like that. Then you look at it and decide what you want to do locally.”

Well, everybody handled it a different way. Some of them just looked at it and said, “Geez, I'm not going to have anything to do with this”. Others did other things. The center director in Nagasaki felt he didn't want to have anything to do with it, however, he felt he was under

obligation to do something with it. So he took the little station wagon we had, in the dead of night, midnight, put the package in the back of it and drove around town dropping 10 or 15 copies off at each street corner so the next morning he had this treatise distributed all over town, all in Japanese, of course. But he said he didn't think—he called me and said he'd done it. I said, “What?” He said, “I've got them all over town.” I said, “My God, how did you do that?” He explained it. I laughed. But he did it.

This gives you some idea of some of the difficulties of executing an ordered action of that kind when you're basically a cultural enterprise on the front end and trying to find other ways of doing hard propaganda things without jeopardizing your reputation and status. I don't think we ever succeeded in finding a good way to balance these competing functions in that area, or anywhere through the centers. The centers just were too vulnerable. They were not for propagandistic lectures. You could if you had a visiting speaker who was a well-known authority in his field and he was well known to be violently anti-communist. In that case, it made no difference, because he was an authority. That's what they were coming to hear, no matter what he said. But to have a center director or we bureaucrats, you might say, running around with any such message was, I think, just counterproductive.

Q: Well, if the ambassador had been willing to say it, that could be something else again. They might have...

NICHOLS: Yes.

Q: ...Perhaps given it some degree of acceptance, even if they didn't agree with what was said. But I agree with you, I think the degree of acceptability—the official position of the individual who is saying it for the American side is the key point in Japan.

NICHOLS: And these articles were absolutely unattributed.

Q: When you moved the Nagano Seminar down to Kyoto and had these people from many different disciplines coming over to lecture, I suppose they were also accepted as authorities.

NICHOLS: Yes. And also, as time went by the local press became more and more influential because with experience they wanted to get into international subjects. Nowadays the local papers compete. So times change.

Q: Now may be a good time to take a break because the next thing we want to cover is your period as the field supervisor in Tokyo.

NICHOLS: I'll tell you a funny story about that before you cut off, if you want.

Q: Okay.

NICHOLS: I really didn't want to go. I was beginning to like it down there, I had a very nice house. Did you ever come down?

Q: Yes, I was down there once while you were Regional PAO. And I was there a couple of times after Jerry Novick took over, too.

NICHOLS: Yes, it was a nice house and I had gotten used to the place. I liked the job, I finally felt I was doing comfortably in it and getting enthusiastic about it. We had finally gotten some men in as center directors, including extraordinary people like Gregg Henderson in Kyoto. Gee, that was another story.

Q: You know he died.

NICHOLS: Gregg is dead?

Q: He's dead.

NICHOLS: When? It must be recent. I mean, last three or four years?

Q: He was trying to make some repairs on the roof of his house and fell off.

NICHOLS: I was just going to ask you...

Q: He didn't survive more than about 24 to 36 hours after his fall.

NICHOLS: How tall was the roof? I mean, two stories?

Q: I don't know. All I know is that he fell off the roof, injured himself and didn't recover. This was just about eight or ten months ago.

NICHOLS: Was he in a coma? Was he conscious at all, do you think?

Q: I don't even know that.

NICHOLS: I'm sorry to hear that. I suppose his wife, who was German, must be an American citizen by now.

Q: I imagine so. I saw very little of Gregg after I left Tokyo.

NICHOLS: Oh, he was a character!

Q: He was that all right, but a knowledgeable one.

NICHOLS: He got thrown out of Korea.

Q: Don Ranard, who was by that time the Embassy's Political Counselor, was partly responsible for that, but that's another story.

1954: Nichols Transferred To Tokyo To Replace Pat Van Delden As Field Supervisor

NICHOLS: Yes. Well—what was I going to say? Oh, yes. I was getting very comfortable and looking forward to staying on because I thought I was going to be there for a long time. But when Pat called me up and said she wanted me to come to Tokyo and take her place, my first thought was, who, me? I don't have a clue what she's doing there. You know, I had been to Tokyo to conferences and things, and I was terribly impressed with what she was doing. I didn't see how I could possibly replace her; it was out of the question that I could do what she was doing. At first I was terribly worried about it. I didn't have enough experience I had only been exposed to her during conferences. I really told her I wanted to think it over. She said, “Well, of course, but it's a great opportunity.” I said, “I'm sure it is.” It just sort of bowled me over. So I went to Dave Osborn who by that time was a political officer in the embassy.

Q: Dave, who had come down from Hokkaido?

NICHOLS: Yes, he had been consul and Principal Officer in Hokkaido. Yes, that's right. I went to Dave, who was a good friend of mine by that time and I said, “You're an FSO and you've had experience in USIS.” (He had, I think in Taiwan. I don't know where for certain.) But, anyway, I said, “This is the proposition I've been given and my inclination is to turn it down because I have some doubts about my ability to handle it.” He said, “I don't know what kind of advice you want, but I can give you some advice based on my own observations and experience, if that's what you want.” I said, “That is what I want.” He said, “Well, I would take it if for no other reason than the fact that if you don't you're going to find yourself sitting there for some time and not being considered again for a long time for some much better more exciting or interesting position. That's just the way it works.” This hadn't occurred to me. I thought about it and I finally said, “Well, I'll go up to Tokyo and talk to Pat and see what the story is.” So I went up and talked to her, and she talked me into it. But what really persuaded me was what Dave said. I always felt I went under protest, but I'm very glad I did. I was getting to feel real comfortable with the kind of contacts we had set up, like Kyoto University, and Kumagai was a fabulous guy to

work with. I tried to—I asked if I could bring him up and she said, “Sure”. But he wouldn't come. He said, “No, I don't want to get involved with those people in Tokyo. Kyoto's where I belong.”

Q: He remained down there. He died didn't he?

NICHOLS: Yes. He died some years ago. Both Cliff and I were able to get down to his funeral. I was by that time retired myself. Cliff was PAO and he called me right away so we caught the same train down that afternoon and attended the funeral, then turned around and came back.

Q: I don't think you had yet mentioned the name of—you had said it was the first big exhibit that we put on under the Commerce Department's aegis, so would you go on from there?

NICHOLS: All right. What I mean by that was it was not what you'd call an information exhibit. As I recall, it consisted primarily of machinery or equipment loaned for this purpose by various American companies in hope that it would help promote sale of their products in Japan. It was really a product show. And they hadn't had many of that nature before that. This was one of the very first and it was on a big scale. So it was, totally under the jurisdiction of the Commerce Department, but they expected our exhibits branch, Mrs. Baker, Frances Baker, to arrange the layout and arrange the exhibition itself. Well, she, being a trained propagandist, you might say, having been in PsyWar all during the war, and working for USIS, she thought totally in terms of thematic exhibits. She in the first place didn't want to work on something, just designing booths with no cohesive thematic continuity. She felt that a program could be designed around this material that could be thematic and to which the Japanese would be more receptive. That was the big catch. She felt they'd be more receptive to a thematic approach than just a display of goods —and it could have a wider impact, in the press and everywhere else. I think I recall that she planned to have it involve the incorporation of some Japanese items, too, that

related to some of the non-Japanese things being shown.To make a long story short, this thing developed into a tremendous battle for decision one way or the other between a gentleman whose name I can't recall [Richard “Dick” Ericson], in the Commerce Section and Fran Blakemore and my staff, and all of us in USIS who got involved eventually and went down on her side. We agreed that to be effective, such an exhibit should to the extent possible have a theme, and be presented in a totality which an audience could appreciate, rather than just looking at certain machines that might be of interest to them and not others.We went around and around and around, but we finally won the argument, a very bitter argument that went on for weeks. The exhibit was finally launched under the title “Partners in Progress”. It was a very good title for that period because we were of course the senior partner at that time. It might be a little different today. The Japanese might put one on in the U.S. called “Partners in Progress” reversing the formula.That exhibit was the forerunner of another, much larger, more spectacular, and more influential once called “Atoms For Peace”. I think you mentioned it a few minutes ago when we were off tape.

Q: Yes, I definitely want to go into that at some length.

NICHOLS: This one was completely organized and run by Fran Blakemore on a thematic basis. It developed from an initially rather modest project into a tremendous thing. A year or so earlier, President Eisenhower had given a landmark speech on the concept of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Following up on the Eisenhower theme, the Agency had staged an enormous exhibit—the first of its kind—on “Atoms For Peace” in Geneva. Never expecting to be able to replicate the Geneva show, we started out on a far less pretentious scale. Actually, we had absolutely nothing to start with, and I guess as our requests for assistance from Washington grew, the Agency must have decided to support us on a bigger scale with both advisory and materiel help. At what stage they decided to go all out, I don't know. At any rate, our ability to stage the blockbuster event became dependent entirely on whether we were able to get from the U.S. major actual or authentically simulated component parts of a real atomic reactor. To reach its objective, the exhibit had to be sufficient to present a clear, thematic picture of what an atomically operated

generating plant was like, and what it would mean, to an audience of Japanese viewers which was conditioned to fear rather than understand the potential of atomic energy from A to Z, at least on a basic level. It became clear that if the exhibit was to be mounted at all, it should make the audience come out of the show feeling that atomic energy was going to be extremely important and could be used for highly productive and peaceful purposes, not just for bombs.So, from a program priority point of view, it served many purposes. And it became a tremendous undertaking. A startling number of things began turning up not only from Washington, but from various other quarters of the U.S. that we were able to fit into the exhibit plan: valuable full scale models provided by major U.S. corporations, especially Westinghouse, which had built what I think was the first actual working atomic reactor at Shippingport, the pincers that handle radioactive material between shields, and many other important items. It soon reached large proportions. In fact, it got to the point where we had enough material, and Fran was working on the thematic approach. You could walk in at the beginning and come out at the tail end, having had the whole exposure step by step so you would understand it. But now it was clear that the staging space requirements were going to be horrendous. So you want me to go on with this, or am I supposed to...?

Q: Yes. Go ahead.

NICHOLS: This is where I got into the picture, because, as I have said, it was all being done by our Exhibits Branch, but when it got to be the problem of how to stage the thing, we had to have a sponsor, preferably a big newspaper to give it adequate publicity. USIS wasn't in a position to purchase either advertising or staging space. The cost would have been prohibitive. So I decided to go to the Yomiuri newspaper, simply because it was an adventurous newspaper, and—it was the third largest newspaper in Japan [In later years it became the largest from the standpoint of circulation.] at the time behind Asahi and Mainichi, maybe 10 million circulation a day in the morning edition. But also I went to them because it was headed by a man named Shoriki who had been the founder of the newspaper and liked to do innovative things. He was a one-man show. He ran that

newspaper with an iron fist; he owned it, and everybody said yes, sir when he spoke. He wasn't the typical Japanese president of a newspaper who bows to the wishes of consensus. Or wouldn't think of violating the dictates of a consensus of the staff. He made all the decisions.So I went down to see him with Ken Bunce in tow to sort of back me up because I thought he could help me to do more than I could do alone. I didn't understand atomic energy myself at all and he, I thought, could help me out. However, it didn't turn out to be necessary. We were invited and sat through a board meeting that Shoriki had called for the occasion because we were coming to discuss this whole exhibit as a possible thing for his staff to do. The interesting thing to me was that we were in luck because at that time the whole tone of all Japanese newspaper coverage of atomic energy was very negative in Japan. Discussions of nuclear powered generating plants and things like that were violently opposed by all the newspapers, including the Yomiuri up to that point. Anything to do with atomic energy of course was immediately associated with the atomic bombings and so it was virtually a taboo subject, at least certainly not one in which you'd expect to get any favorable support. But Shoriki had obviously thought about this for a while and, it seems certain he suddenly climbed onto the idea that if he could catch the other two major papers out in left field still promoting this bugaboo view of atomic energy, while he could bring the public around to a dramatic comprehension of both the commercial and peaceful potential for this powerful new genie, he would have scored a real coup and carved out a place in history for himself. Which he did because he ended up riding this thing all the way into being the first Atomic Energy Commissioner in the Japanese Cabinet.

Q: At what point for this support for the “Atoms for Peace” exhibit do you think he realized a potential of riding it into the Cabinet as the first Commissioner of Atomic Energy?

NICHOLS: I don't think he thought of that at first. Well, maybe he did. I don't know, he was a remarkable person. He was also the person who introduced baseball to Japan by bringing the Yankees out here with Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth. I can remember seeing them when I was a kid in Kobe, play at the stadium. He was the first with television both

black and white and color. Imaginative things like that. He had his own television network and radio network, besides the newspaper. He was a real media mogul. But I believe he was thinking in terms of the circulation and the competition with his two big rivals. Besides, it gave him a chance to twist the knife into them or something like that: to upset them. I believe it was only later on, when the idea really caught on and I think to a large extent due to this exhibit, that there was possibility for safe nuclear power development in Japan, that he began to get the idea that maybe he could ride this even further, and take credit for it. And he got the credit, actually. But of course he had a lot of political clout. I don't know when he really thought of it. I don't think he thought of it at first. Pretty inconceivable to assume there would be an atomic energy commission when you're still battling your own staff to write favorable articles in the paper on atomic energy.But that was an extraordinary meeting because it was an example of something I had never seen anywhere else in Japan, a one man decision against the whole arrayed opposition of his staff. Then came the question of where it could be held. There were no spaces large enough. And the only thing to do would be to build a building for it somewhere and the question was where could you rent the space. Where could you even find suitable space in Tokyo to construct a building for it. And in the middle of all this, like a bomb, he said, “Well, why don't we build it in Hibiya Park?” That's the park, you know, right across from the Palace grounds and right across from the Imperial Hotel.

Q: Yes, I know.

NICHOLS: As sacrosanct as it can be, and owned by the city. His staff, to a man, didn't laugh. They wouldn't dare laugh in front of him, but I mean, it was pretty clear they thought it was a nutty idea. So they said, “Well, we could never get permission.” He said, “Well, I'll see to that.” He went right ahead and discussed the location; he kept getting back to “wouldn't that be an ideal place?” Well, sure, there couldn't be a better place, what can they say. So he said, “Well, that settles it, we'll do it in Hibiya Park.” Nobody volunteered to undertake to see the city government about this so he said, “I'll do it myself, I'll take care of that.” The cost was certainly a factor. His finance man said, “Gee, we can't afford this!” He

said, “Give me an estimate.” His finance man said, “Oh, I don't know, billions of yen.” “We'll do it,” Shoriki said. And that was the end of the meeting.

Q: Yomiuri paid for the whole building?

NICHOLS: They paid for the building. They paid all the costs. And later they paid for sending that exhibit to 14 other cities. Fifteen other cities.

Q: I had left Japan by that time and I didn't realize it was continuing to be displayed all around the country.

NICHOLS: Oh, we spent years on that thing. It was still in circulation years later, virtually unchanged. A few things were added later as atomic energy techniques advanced, but millions of people lined up for blocks in every city to see it. It really had an impact, and finally it brought everyone else around to it, even other newspapers. You know, they sent their own reporters around to go through it and I think they came out—well, maybe they weren't for it, but they were convinced that, well, you know it probably will work, and they wouldn't want to knock the peaceful use aspect, they began to knock off on that.

Q: I don't know how lasting the effect was over the years, but I imagine that it really turned Japanese public opinion around to a large extent. Because they were so loudly anti-everything atomic whatsoever.

NICHOLS: It certainly did. It was a very timely thing, Lew, because it had happened right after, I think, just about the time the Lucky Dragon incident was prominent in the public mind, when these fishermen got dusted with the fall out from the U.S. Bikini test.

Q: It came right in the middle of the summer of 1954, less than a year before we began preparing that exhibit and was still a hot issue in 1955 as the exhibit was a building in 1955.

NICHOLS: Yeah. So the timing was just about perfect. As I say, Fran Blakemore deserves credit for organizing that show. But it's an example of one of the things I was going to say about my own embarrassment about what I did there during the exhibit preparation. People say, well, what were you doing? Basically I never really did anything. I was involved in negotiating, which is doing something. I was involved definitely in getting Shoriki to do it. That was my idea, and I arranged it. But aside from that, all the doing was by somebody else.

Q: I realize that.

NICHOLS: I left—I always felt that, I could never say, “Well, gee, what have I really done?” In terms of putting my hands on it, saying, “Look, I made this”.

Q: I understand that, but I think the idea of approaching Shoriki and getting him to agree to do it was a coup in itself, and although I'm not sure, I don't think that another paper would have done it. In fact, I don't know for certain, but I think there was a real chance that Shoriki would simply sniff at it and turn it down. Instead he bit it with all dentures.I also remember that Tom Tuch, who at that time was a very young officer (Hans is his real first name) was sent out from Washington that summer to help with the exhibit and spent two or three weeks with us. Tom had just been one of the principal parties planning the initial Geneva exhibit, and had a significant part in its staging. His past experience and knowledge were vital to us in the final stages of preparation. He worked with Fran Blakemore, or was she still Fran Baker? I don't remember whether she had yet married Tom Blakemore at that time.

NICHOLS: Yes. She had already married Tom Blakemore by that time. But anyway, I remember Tom Tuch very well.

Q: Do you have anything else that you think you'd like to speak about with reference to that period of your career?

NICHOLS: No, except to say that—I felt by the time that I left in '58 and turned it over that we had a fairly good working relationship between the field posts and the headquarters in the embassy which never was disrupted until 1970, after I left.

Q: Who succeeded you?

NICHOLS: I'm trying to remember. Maybe it will come to me later.

1958: To VOA Creation Of “The Forum” Program

Q: I guess you went from there to Washington.

NICHOLS: Right.

Q: Was that the time that you went to the Voice? You might pick that up and talk about it.

NICHOLS: Yes, all right. I went to Washington for home leave on mandatory, or statutory, what is it? Mandatory leave after so many years in Japan. And didn't have an assignment until I got there. When I got there I was told I was going to Voice of America. So I went down and reported to them. When I got there they said Henry Loomis wanted to see me. I didn't know why, he was the Director of the Voice. But anyway, I was ushered into his office and he said, “Well, we have a very good job for you, hope you're going to like it.” I thought that was really weird. But for whatever it was, they'd been looking for somebody to do a certain job that had been suggested and for some reason, and looking over, they didn't see any particular prospects in their own staff at the moment, either that or everybody qualified was busy doing something else, so here was an incoming Foreign Service Officer ready for assignment on some kind of quota assigned to VOA. And Henry told me he just took my records over and thought I might be the kind of person who could do this. I said, “What is it?”

It turns out that someone whose name I can't remember right now but I'll try to think of it later, in the policy planning staff had come up with an idea and sold it to the Agency on a policy basis and to Henry as the Director of VOA. It was essentially an effort to work up a program designed to offset some of the criticism in the American academic community and among listeners abroad about the Voice of America being a propaganda organization. They didn't know too much about USIA but they sure knew about VOA, and especially abroad. You're always getting rapped on that score—people trust the BBC but don't really believe what VOA says because it's a propaganda organization. This program was to be an effort, a sort of small step in the direction of trying to equate what the BBC was doing in its third program, particularly. It was essentially the idea of getting an academic program going that could be of a level and quality sufficient to persuade people abroad that we weren't just broadcasting news, and twisted news [as they believed] at that, but trying to communicate with them in this sort of medium through the academic community, and in a way that would be absolutely clear and would demonstrate to the overseas listeners that in no way could it be labeled a propaganda effort, because of the quality of the speakers. That was about it.

VOA had no particular format for the program, or concept of it or anything, but that was it. We ought to do something along those lines.

Q: So this was left to you entirely to develop on your own from that initial "orientation."

NICHOLS: Well, it had been left to Henry to do something about it, let's put it that way. So we talked about it and I said, "Good Lord, I have to think that over because I don't know anything about radio." He said, "You don't have to know anything about radio, we'll take care of all the technical stuff." But he described it to me, showed me the policy paper, we had about one sheet of paper—basically that was it. The effort was to try to produce a program of real quality that would impress people—convince them because of its content alone that this was no propaganda effort, at least this program wasn't, it was to be an effort to communicate at a very high level with articulate, intelligent people abroad. And leave it

at that. Just something that would elevate the tone, give VOA something to point out as product of true quality, unassailable quality and interest content.

Q: Was this to be a weekly program?

NICHOLS: Well, it didn't really say. It was seen as an elastic program. You know, nothing was specific, just something ought to be done.

Q: Well, when it finally developed, was it weekly or monthly or biweekly or what?

NICHOLS: It was—by the time we got through it was every other day, I think.

Q: Every other day!

NICHOLS: Yes, by the time we got through. But initially it was once a week. No, wait a minute. Yes, initially it was once a week but then it got, we got to programming more and more as we went along. It's hard to explain, but the thing was to get this project launched.

Q: How long was each program?

NICHOLS: Half an hour. So here's what happened. I said to Henry, “I'll have to think about it.” He said, “Well, you think all you want, just let me know if you will or will not do it. Sit down and start doodling.” So I sat down for awhile and I finally went back to him and said, “Gee, I don't think, Henry, I could tackle this job unless there are certain things I could do —that I hope you'd let me do. First, I want six months to think it over. I'll tell you why six months. I think I need to get to know a little bit more about the broadcasting business. I don't mean the technical part, just a little bit more about what goes on here. But in addition to that, I'd like to get around and talk to some people and get advice on this from outside sources, especially in the academic community, and see how I could even approach this thing. Because at the moment I don't have any ideas. I'm sure I could develop some, but

I really think I should be able to get around and visit some places, Cambridge and New York, maybe even the West Coast.”

He said, “Fine, you do that; we'll give you six months.” And indeed he did. He gave me six months to think it over. But he said, “At the end of six months I want you to come in with a project.”

So what I did first was to go to a lawyer that I knew and—no, first I went to Conant, who had been president of Harvard when I was there. He was now with the Carnegie Foundation in New York. He didn't know me from Adam, but anyway, I called him up and told him that I remembered him from when I was at Harvard; that I hoped I wasn't taking up too much of his time but I had a proposition. I explained right away that I was from Voice of America and he sort of said, “Oh?”. I said, “I'd like very much to have the benefit of your advice about a new program we're thinking of doing and I think you could give me some very good advice. As a matter of fact, you're the first person I'm looking to for help. I plan to go to many others. I hope you'll give me some suggestions on some of the others with whom I could discuss this problem.” He said, “Sure, come on up,” so I went.

I explained this whole program to him. I said, “This is what I am up against. What I want to know from you, Dr. Conant, is first do you think it's conceivable that the Voice of America could recruit really top-flight American academicians or experts in various fields to cooperate with the Voice of America in a program of this kind?”

“Well,” he said, “it'll be difficult. It will be difficult. You can certainly get some, but if you're talking about very wide cooperation, I rather doubt it.” So I said, “Well, all right, I'm not discouraged. I expected that's what you'd say, but have you any suggestions on how we could overcome this probable reluctance on the part of the people in the academic community to allow themselves to be broadcast by VOA?” And he gave me a whole list with sort of, well, yes, in the first place, what do you have in mind? I said, “Well, academically I suppose we could do some lectures in various fields.” He said, “Well, that

makes sense. You know, a series of literature, or literature and medicine, or philosophy, or law.” I said, “That's right, something like that.”

And he said, “How many lectures?” I said, “Well, it depends on what the traffic will bear.” And he said, “Well, the first think I can assure you is that you're going to have to guarantee absolutely no censorship. If you're going to ask them to contribute something, you've got to agree to let it stand. You can refuse to broadcast it, but you had better not go back and say we want you to change this. They will understand if you won't broadcast it, but you had better not go back and say we want you to change this. They will understand if you won't broadcast it, they'll say, 'okay, well'. That won't help you much, but that's not going to be a real problem. You may run into cases like that, but basically you're going to have to go with what they give you, to establish our credentials.”

Then he said, “Another thing is I think you'd better have a third party between you and these people, because every time you go around and say I'm from Voice of America, you're going to get a reaction.” I said, “Well, I realized that when I first talked to you, and I supposed that would be the case and that's exactly why I'm here.” He said, “What you might want to do, then, is to find somebody in each of the fields you're interested in, ask around, I can't help you offhand. I can recommend somebody in the field of education. Somebody that you can talk to about being perhaps the organizer and coordinator of each series, a person that's well enough known in the field that he can stand on his own credentials. Ask him to select his colleagues and go to them and say, 'I've been asked to organize a series of lectures and I want you to participate, this is what it's all about.' Because they're much more likely to agree to something like that coming from one of their 'own' then they would if you made the proposal. And it would save you the difficulty of persuading each person and trying to explain the concept each time as well as trying to explain why you want this particular person to participate in what way, especially since you won't know the field.”

All these were very good points. And he said, “Law would be a good subject. You might try that, but I'll tell you what you ought to do in that case is to go and see Chief Justice Warren. He has a lot of thoughts on this kind of thing and he might be of some help to you.”

So I said, “Thank you very much.” I went back to Washington and I called Chief Justice Warren, and to my amazement, I got an appointment with him. I made it clear I was from the Voice of America. I don't know whether he thought I was going to come in with a microphone or something, but anyway, I had a very nice session with him. He said it was a very interesting idea and suggested I talk to a very well-known lawyer in Washington that he thought might be a good coordinator, he didn't know for sure, but he thought maybe so. But he was all for the idea. “Sounds like a great idea if you can pull it off. And I like the approach.” I said, “Well, this is Conant's suggestion.” He said, “Well that's great.” I finally said, “Would you participate in such a program if we got one on law?” “Well,” he said, “It all depends on how it's done, but why not?” He said, “Maybe.” I'd asked Conant the same thing and he said, “Well, it depends on what—you see what you can do with some series first and show me. And if you can show me that you can do it, then I will.” And he did.

So then I decided to start with the field of medicine. I don't know why, but I decided on medicine because I thought it was non-controversial. So I looked up a fairly young, but well-known doctor at Walter Reed Hospital who was doing some broadcasting of his own and developing some broadcasting programs.

Q: Was he an Army man?

NICHOLS: Army. He was a major. I can't think of his name, but all these names may come back to me. There were so many of them. I got him to be my first coordinator and he was very enthusiastic. He organized one hell of a good series in medicine with Paul Dudley White, he got them all. This is the interesting thing about what Conant had suggested. He came up with names I had never heard of. This is the point. The way this thing worked

was that, as Conant suggested, I always worked on each series through a coordinator, after a very careful process of trying to select somebody suitable, and persuading him to do it, because it was a professional business. That person was responsible for contacting these other people explaining what was wanted of them, what he wanted out of them for the series, and giving them guarantees which I backed up by letters. But he came up with the selection of people, then the VOA staff members would go out to interview the people he had selected—very famous people, like the Paul Dudley Whites. This Walter Reed doctor came up with people I had never heard of. One of whom was—oh, I am forgetting the names again—the famous heart by-pass surgeon.

Q: DeBakey?

NICHOLS: Yes! DeBakey, Michael DeBakey. And you know, I'd never heard of this person. This is 1962, mind you. 1958, excuse me. I had never heard of him. And he said, “By God, this man is a real comer, you are going to hear about him.” And he called up DeBakey and he said sure, he'd be happy to do it. DeBakey was quite a character in those days. He happened to be in Washington, he came to Washington, he was driving a Jaguar around, a sporty convertible Jaguar. I got to know him quite well because I took him over to be interviewed and make the recording.

Anyway, within about three weeks DeBakey was on the cover of Time magazine. And then everybody wanted to interview him. But we already had him for our program. He said, “No thanks, I'm doing a program for VOA.” And you know, Henry heard about that and he said, “Geez, what the hell is going on?”

This is the kind of thing that was going on. But that is the way I worked, Lew. We worked on a series of topics. We went into biology, we went into law. I did go to the lawyer that Chief Justice Warren had suggested, and he begged off. He said, “No, look, I'm just a practicing lawyer. What you ought to do is go to the Harvard Law School and get the whole Harvard Law School to do it.” I said, “What?” He said, “Sure, you could do it. I'll give you

an introduction to a fellow named Harold Berman, who was the dean of the law school, one of the deans.”

Q: Do you know how that last name was spelled?

NICHOLS: Berman. B-e-r-m-a-n. Harold Berman. He was a specialist in Russian law. And, I'll be damned, he got the whole Harvard Law School faculty, not all of them, but he picked I think it was a total of 13. He mapped the series out to cover this, we cover this, we cover this and this. And then to each one he assigned one of the topics. And so we taped and broadcast a series of 13 lectures in an American law series all given by the Harvard Law School professors.

This is why I ran into a big problem with Barry Zorthian. Geez! Because one of these was on free speech.

Q: Free speech?

NICHOLS: One of the topics was free speech, the right to free speech. You know, freedom of speech.

Well, anyway this was about the way this thing worked, Lew. But to go back again to the beginning, when I went back to Henry after kicking it around for six months, I decided we ought to pay fees. I said, “We can't just go and ask these people to do this for nothing, but they won't accept big fees. I talked to people about it and they suggested $200. It's worth much more than that.”

Q: You paid their transportation down to Washington?

NICHOLS: No. Well, we recorded them wherever they were.

Q: Oh, I see.

NICHOLS: VOA had arrangements, you know. They'd tie up with any radio station anywhere in the neighborhood.

Q: Carrying around those tremendous tape recorders of that time would have been a rough act.

NICHOLS: No, no. They'd have the speakers come into studios.

Q: Oh, I see.

NICHOLS: They'd rent studio space. Almost anywhere in the United States there's a radio station. They'd have the VOA interviewers go there. And they'd get the local people to record, under contract. So it wasn't until the tape came in that VOA had much to do with it. I had the script first, I reviewed the script. But we never, ever, ever asked someone to change a single word, except Barry wanted to make changes.

Q: Like keeping them within the time frame?

NICHOLS: Yes and no. But by and large—oh, I forgot to say of course this was all in their own voices. That was the key point. It had to be Harold Berman talking or it had to be this doctor talking, Dr. DeBakey. And there was an argument about that at first because some of the VOA people insisted that you've got to have a good radio voice. I said, to hell with it, this has to be these people live.

So then we went into publication. We said at the end of each program that if you were interested in this talk or this series, please write to the “Forum” editor in VOA and ask for a copy and we will send you either that one lecture or the whole series if you ask for it. Which we did. And you know, by God, I got mail from 80 countries. From inside the Soviet Union, from Moscow, from Czechoslovakia, places like that. A lot from behind the Iron Curtain. But all over. South America. Amazing. Worldwide. Japan, even. And it was all in English.

Q: It must have been rather dangerous for people in the Soviet Union who weren't even supposed to listen to the Voice of America to write.

NICHOLS: Well, the ones who wrote from the Soviet weren't Soviets. They were foreign students studying there and we found out why they could write. They could write and say anything they wanted, and ask for whatever they wanted. And so it wasn't a request directly from Russians to here.

Q: Probably some of them were doing it for Russians. But...

NICHOLS: Yes, I'm sure. That was the point. I mean, I think they asked them to write. But anyway, it was a very successful program in its outreach. And indeed Conant did, he gave one in the series on education. So this is how this program worked. And my role, having got this thing started again, was really simply just to go through these coordinators get the scripts that they had approved finally. VOA people would go back sometimes and get these guys to change a few things, but usually just in terms of format.

Q: Perhaps technical matters, too.

NICHOLS: Right. So that by the time I got the papers, the scripts, they were ready to be taped. Then we'd go back and arrange the taping. And then it was a question of just deciding the beginning and the end. And this was where Groce—I got to know Groce well —he did a lot of these introductions, saying this is “Forum” program, we feed this from ...

Q: Who gave it the name “Forum”?

NICHOLS: I did. Kicked it around and kicked it around trying to figure out. I discussed it with a lot of people. Maybe somebody came up with the idea of “Forum,” but it was called, it was titled, “The Forum Lectures—The Arts and Sciences of Mid-Century America.” I think something like 12 or more pocketbooks, paperback books were published on the

series. We got no rights. Of course it was in the public domain because we broadcast it. Everything, you know.

Q: Were all of them published or just some of them?

NICHOLS: No, no. Only selected ones. But 12 of them. American literature. And then this is why; I was running out of steam after four years of this. But there were maybe up to—one series I think had 20 lectures. That's 20 weeks. The reason it became two a week was because we could double up, for if you had, you know, a Monday and a Thursday, different series could run simultaneously in the same week.

But that's basically what the “Forum” lectures were. And the Agency, I guess, I think Henry gave me a meritorious service award for it. But basically that was my role, my role essentially was again the catalyst. And again anything I did, I never spoke a word on the air, but I handled all the details of planning, organizing, correspondence, etc. I had just one secretary, just myself and a secretary in an office. And we handled all the incoming mail and the arrangement to mail out the scripts. I handled most of the things by phone with the coordinators, sometimes one coordinator at Stanford, the other one at Harvard. I got to travel a lot.

The reason that I thought I was through with it was I was running out of subject matter. It's pretty obvious, at first you can pick things like medicine, law, science, the United States, American literature, and so forth. Biology was great.

Q: Are these books still in existence, do you know?

NICHOLS: I guess so, yes. I don't think they're in print, no, I doubt it. That was 30 years ago. Somebody must have a collection. I never had, I don't have any. And it was four years of really, from my point of view, production effort and fun. Gee, it was fun.

Q: You mentioned that you had mail from over 80 countries. Did you have a large volume of mail?

NICHOLS: Yes. Well, quite a bit. Not anything we couldn't handle because we never had to write letters. We never wrote letters, we never promised to write letters or do anything. It was just receiving the letter, opening it, seeing the address and what the person said was always useful, we could use some of these quotes. The VOA claimed the good quotes from the mail, but we also had to see if the writer asked for something. If so, we sent him what he asked for by mail. That was it.

Q: What was the...

NICHOLS: I got all the stamps. I shouldn't have done that, I suppose they were government property, but I got all the stamps.

Q: What was the objection from Barry Zorthian to the Harvard Law School group's lectures on free speech?

NICHOLS: He said, in the question of free speech, after discussing concepts and everything and what's provided in the Constitution and all, it was a really good speech. But, he said, “Now let me give you an example of how this works in our country. I'm guaranteed free speech. I'm speaking to you over a government radio.” He went right into it. “I'm speaking to you over a government supported radio network called Voice of America, subsidized by the United States government. Now my government's policies at this particular time regarding our relations with China are as follows: and it's this and this and this.” He said, “Now I personally am diametrically opposed to this policy. And I think it's wrong for these reasons and these reasons.” Then he said, “Now, that's irrelevant. I'm not trying to persuade you to my view, but I am trying to prove to you that I have the right to say this. And VOA are willing to give me the time to say it even on a government-sponsored radio program.”

Well. At first I avoided Barry. I carefully steered clear of him, but he is a lawyer, you know. That was his field and he wanted to know, he wanted to read every one of those transcripts. And I hesitated about every one of them, but sure enough, before it went on the air he wanted to get this off the air and go back to this guy and say, “Geez, we just can't do that”. Which was precisely what would have disproved the speaker's point.

If any of the participants hear about this it will get everybody in trouble. Jesus Christ, take this cross away from me, will you. This happened when Henry was out of the country and I refused to budge. I just said absolutely no. I won't do it. I said, if you want to take it off the air—this discussion went on about three hours, until about 8:00 at night, he called me about 5:00. I liked Barry very much, but gee this is enough. I wasn't about to do it. I knew that if Henry was there he would back me up. But Barry also knew Henry wasn't there. Barry is a pretty overwhelming sort of a character at times. But he was really asking me to take it out and I said I wouldn't. I said, “If you want to, that's up to you, but by God you're going to be responsible, you're going to take the heat.” And I said, “I can assure you what's going to happen. If you go back to this man and ask him to change it, the instant you've hung up the phone or whatever it is, he's going to be on the phone to the New York Times and everywhere and tell them the whole story, and say look what happened. I don't know how you balance that against having the State Department or somebody come down on us, or Congress, but one way or the other you're going to lose, and I'd rather just let it go and see what happens.”

And nothing happened. I think he was disappointed, in a way. Nothing at all happened. But, by God, that was one of the programs we got the most comment about. Tremendous comment about how wonderful it was.

Q: Do you think there's anything else you want to say about the “Forum” program or have you pretty well covered the subject, what you wanted to discuss in that connection?

NICHOLS: I've probably said too much already. I guess I...[break in tape]

May, 1962: Nichols Returns To Japan As Cultural Affairs Officer

Q: I guess after the “Forum” enterprise you went back out to Tokyo, I think as CAO, so when was that and let's talk about your period as CAO under Burton Fahs and then Ed Nickel.

NICHOLS: Actually it was in about May of 1962 that I went out to Japan again. Oddly enough, I had been assigned much earlier to Kabul in Afghanistan. I had protested that I didn't see what qualifications I had for that because, I, among other things, couldn't speak the language. I was assured that there was nobody in the Agency who could speak the language, so that wasn't a factor at all, and they were sure I'd like the ambassador very much, he was a nice guy and all that sort of thing. So I had finally said, fine, I'll go, and finished reading up on it. I think I had about a week to go before we were scheduled to depart when all of a sudden I was called in and told, no, you're going to Japan as the Cultural Attach#. Apparently what had happened, as I understand it, was that shortly before that time, Reischauer had arrived in Japan as ambassador. I understand that he got a commitment out of Kennedy when he accepted the appointment that he would have a right to try to get as many Japanese speaking people from the Foreign Service as he could get. So he had asked for all the data on all the Foreign Service Officers, what their rankings were, their language ability and so forth. He'd been looking all this over and he had picked certain people to come out because he wanted to reach, he thought originally, something like a 75 percent proficiency in the staff, which of course was absurd and impossible. But he had gradually been latching onto people from this list. I don't know why he picked me, particularly. He didn't pick me for any particular assignment, of course, it was just to get people out here. I wasn't on any FSO list at all but he had jurisdiction in this sense I suppose over the USIS operation, too, as part of his promise, as well as on embassy staff.

Organization And Changes In USIS Programming Which Had Occurred Between 1958 and 1962

So I suddenly got on his list, I suppose for the lack of other people, and found myself going out to Japan again. There was a very big change when I got there, as we have spoken about earlier. The Nagano seminars had disappeared and they were just now beginning to conduct trial runs with the American Studies summer seminars in Kyoto; I think they had been conducting them for only one or two years at the very most. And a lot of other changes had taken place in the program itself. In USIS Tokyo everything had been divided finally into two divisions.

Q: That was George Hellyer's idea.

NICHOLS: I guess it was Hellyer's idea. But it was all in place when I got there. There was the Information Division which was headed by Hank Gosho and then there was the Cultural Division which I headed up. So my function in the USIS staff was as chief of the Cultural Division, which included educational exchange, the field program, the books program and the exhibits program. But everything else, press, magazines and everything else, and radio and motion pictures and everything, was in the information program. So for the first time we had a very clear division. Between Hank and myself we could bat things around on both sides of this sort of net.

Q: Was Leon Picon still there at that time?

NICHOLS: Leon Picon was there. He was at the time the head of the book programs.

Q: He had been...

NICHOLS: He had been the center director earlier.

Q: He had been the book program officer when I was there, too. And he had instituted not only this translation program but also had established the Beisho Daiori magazine (the idea for which had been developed originally by Carl Bartz).

NICHOLS: Right. And he did a superb job. No question about his abilities. I was just going to say, it was shortly after that however that we—I can't remember exactly when it was, we transferred him down to the Tokyo center to become the director because we were trying to build that up, and we moved it into new quarters. We needed somebody really strong with lots of good contacts. I don't think he—at first he didn't like the idea at all, he was really wedded to the books program and he had really done a superb job there. Eventually, however, he ended up liking the center job very much, I think.

But basically those were the two divisions and my function was administratively to run the Cultural Division. And now the Field Supervisor, which formerly I had been, was now one of the section chiefs in my division. In other words, this division's units were all out in the field, his troops were all out in the field, but he was there in Tokyo. So that was my functional responsibility. I also had the title of Cultural Attach#. I was Cultural Attach# and chief of the Cultural Division.

A Surfeit Of Cultural Officers In Tokyo

Let me make a few comments about being Cultural Attach#. It's a fine title and usually I suppose in most posts it would be something rather interesting. In my case I had a rather curious situation to deal with, so that I can't say that as Cultural Attach# I really functioned in any normal sense. That is to say, first we had Reischauer as the ambassador, and Reischauer being a famous scholar, very well-known in Japan and very culturally oriented, naturally in a way was as much cultural ambassador as he was a political ambassador. So you might say we had a cultural...

Q: When the other tape ran out, you said that first of all you had Reischauer as ambassador, who in effect was a high level cultural officer in himself, and then I think we can go on from there.

NICHOLS: Right. So you might say that he as the ambassador skimmed the cream off the top of whatever a cultural attach# normally handles in the way of contacts with the international community, at least insofar as the academic community was concerned, just by virtue of his title. And next to him was a DCM, Emerson...

Q: Oh, John Emerson.

NICHOLS: John Emerson was there as the DCM. And of course he was, he couldn't compete with Reischauer in language ability but he had certainly had a lot of training in Japanese and a great interest in culture. So he, too, was very anxious to get himself very much involved in cultural affairs. He of course was several levels above my rank so he skimmed off some of the rest. But in addition to that, our PAO at the time, Burton Fahs, was you might say exclusively a man of culture, former Rockefeller Foundation vice president and a person that had been immersed for years in funding and programming for the Japanese intellectual community, especially the academic community. So there were three very senior officers above my rank in the embassy who were front and center in all sorts of cultural pursuits. So when it came to just strictly cultural representation, I was only required, if you want to put it that way, I was only required to handle the normal chores like going to cut ribbons at department store openings or shows or make speeches at farewell parties or something or attend more low-level affairs. So I was kept very busy in this capacity doing things like that, but none of them really amounted to a great deal. My functions were divided, as I said, between running administratively and programmatically the cultural division of the embassy and the field operation and serving on the other side as sort of the person to appear when required to make speeches on behalf of the

embassy, I mean minor things, not major speeches but just congratulatory messages and things like that.

Nichols Concentrates On Cultural PresentationsAnd International Cultural Conferences

So I was very busy and I was very happy to be kept busy in these ways. But I did not have any major functions to pursue regularly that I myself really participated in except for two areas. One in which I was almost exclusively the activist, let's say, one was the State Department's cultural presentations program, which had in the past been handled by the educational exchange section but now was handled by the cultural attach#, myself. And this involved me in many, many projects like visiting orchestras, visiting ballet companies, visiting modern dance companies, stage attractions and things like that. I even had a lot of fun and a lot of headaches being involved with the first appearance in Japan of a bona fide Broadway musical, “Hello Dolly” starring Mary Martin.

Q: What was that?

NICHOLS: “Hello Dolly” starring Mary Martin.

Q: It was not...

NICHOLS: It wasn't Carol Channing from the Broadway cast, but everything else was the Broadway cast after they closed on Broadway, but with Mary Martin taking the Carol Channing role. And that was the kind of thing I had enjoyed doing. I'm more of a project sort, as you may have guessed from what went on before, I like to be involved with projects. But each of these things that came along had a time frame. I mean, you could plunge into it, get it organized, get the thing functioning and then it would be over and that would be that. This is the kind of thing I like to do and I thought I was reasonably good at, and so I spent a lot of my time on cultural exchange programs of that nature.

But on the more substantive side, I was the one in the embassy who worked on more significant projects in the international conference or discussion field, the seminar field, where we're not talking about groups from the United States coming out and touring around and meeting people and giving lectures and things like that, but where you have an event staged as a conference on some particular topic with experts from various countries. I worked on this most closely with the Asahi newspaper, because I had very good contacts over there from my activities in the cultural affairs area that I have just mentioned. Because Asahi—at the time, there was no cultural ministry in Japan, the Ministry of Education was not involved in international cultural affairs—so the Asahi newspaper had more or less taken over the role of sponsorship to bring things like French treasures from the Louvre, the Mona Lisa and the Venus de Milo, the Egyptian King Tut exhibit, exhibitions from the Museum of Modern Art in New York and American Museums, so that the chief of their cultural section you might say was my opposite number at the Asahi newspaper. He used to joke and call himself really the cultural minister for the Japanese government, because they were putting up all the money and the Japanese government wasn't putting any money into it.

But because of my connections in the performing arts field, with them, they took on a lot of these things from the State Department. I had a very good in with them and got them to sponsor several big symposia for me. Symposia was the word I was looking for earlier, conferences and everything. The one I think I recall most vividly was a tremendous symposium they had on the economics of Asia, which...

Q: Where would you stage these?

NICHOLS: Well, actually the Asahi Shimbun undertook all the financial sponsorship of this whole thing and they staged it in the premises of the, what is it called? The Economic Federation building, which had adequate facilities for this kind of thing.

Q: Oh, yeah. Keidanren (The Economic Federation).

NICHOLS: Yes. Keidanren. Right, the Keidanren building. The new building up there north of where the old Tokyo station was. You remember?

Q: Tokyo Eki (station) down there.

NICHOLS: North of that, in that area. This new big building, beautiful building.

Well, I went to them to start with about this idea of having a big symposium on a subject that we thought would be of interest to a lot of people in Japan as well as abroad. The idea was to have distinguished international scholars whom they would invite to participate and we would expect them to invite some American scholars. We would be willing to help in any way we could, for example with grants for the scholars from the United States. We weren't going to subsidize the whole thing, but would help.

They bought this idea. The man who was the director of this cultural section in Asahi at that point fortunately had formerly been for seven years a reporter way back earlier in his career in San Francisco so he was absolutely bilingual, a very intelligent, active person with his feet on the ground, if you know what I mean. Because a lot of people in the cultural field often have rather vague views of lofty things, but he'd been a reporter for seven years in San Francisco and he knew his way around in business and everything else. So, he was a very functional person with a good background, and he picked this idea up and ran with it.

So we were able to get a tremendous thing organized by them underway. We brought out from the United States the people they wanted. We had one case where rather belatedly we ran into a security question. Can you stop this just one second?

Well, for example, we did have a problem with one of their proposed grantees and believe it or not this was John Kenneth Galbraith. They were adamant about having him come out so they had invited him and then turned around and told us they had invited him so please give him the grant. I had the unfortunate job of sending it in for confirmation and getting a

message back saying please tell them no, for security reasons. I absolutely leveled with this man, Mr. Kaji at Asahi, as I always...

Q: You always did?

NICHOLS: Yes. His name was Kaji. K-a-j-i. Director of cultural affairs and planning at Asahi newspaper.

Because I had always found it in the past to have been the best thing to do, I did it this time, too. I was very honest. I went to see Kaji and I said, “Mr. Kaji, you know, you and I understand each other very well and I'm sure you've been around a lot and you understand what I'm going to say when I say it, but I regret very much that I have to say we're not going to be able to finance Mr. Galbraith's participation.” And he said, “That's okay, we will.” So I said, “Well, I'm delighted to hear that he's going to participate and I hope that this doesn't go beyond this room.” He said, “It won't,” and as far as I know, it never did. He didn't bat an eye.

Q: I'm surprised that Galbraith would have been turned down by a Kennedy Administration, or was this after Kennedy's death?

NICHOLS: Well, it's very strange. I don't know—I'll never forget this as long as I live. Of all people, John Kenneth Galbraith.

Q: I know he was a bit controversial, but I didn't think he was that controversial. He had been ambassador to India, appointed by Kennedy.

NICHOLS: Yes, I know, it was just unbelievable. You know, who would imagine this? And Kaji sort of looked at me and said, “Really?” I said, “Well, that's what I'm telling you.” I couldn't believe it either. And I think I told Reischauer and he couldn't believe it either.

Well, anyway, this all worked out very well and Galbraith did come. As a matter of fact, when he was there, during one of the intermissions he collared me and he said, “Well, Mr.

Nichols, I hope you don't mind if I make an inquiry about something quite different than what we're discussing here. Tell me honestly, do you think that Ambassador Reischauer would make a good Secretary of State, in the new Kennedy Administration?" Well, I won't go into all of what I said, but I did say, "Well, maybe yes, maybe no. But I'd come down on the no side simply because while he's a very fine man and a great scholar, I don't think he's really much of an administrator. Not that he'd have to be an administrator in that role necessarily, but I think he's more academic than functional." He said, "Well, you should know, I just was asking because we are thinking of running him, we're thinking of putting him in as Secretary of State and we're just trying to get different opinions. I hope that doesn't get around anywhere."

But in general, Lew, in those years between 1962 when I got there and 1969 when I finally left and then resigned when I got home, it was just one project like this after another. This series of lectures with—this symposium with Asahi was so successful that they undertook to do about three or four others with us, some of them not only in Tokyo but down in Kyoto for example. "Man In the City" was one, which was about city planning. We had the mayor of Boston who was very prominent in that field at the time and several American experts that we'd brought out, and experts from Europe and England and Southeast Asia, people like that. It was a big symposium on where were we going in planning for man in the city, environmental problems and so forth.

Q: I suppose that with Asahi sponsoring it, you got all sorts of publicity on these things.

NICHOLS: Oh yes. There's a plus and a minus in a case like this. When a newspaper like Asahi sponsors something like this, the other papers don't touch it. They try to get interviews with the people on the side, but never mention the symposium. And if they succeed in getting interviews on the side with these people, they publish them because they're famous people. But what you do gain is guaranteed front page and full page coverage. Every one of these things, because of the stature of the people who showed up from other places, like the man from the Philippines was the cultural man at the United

Nations and then the cultural—what was his name? He died recently. At the UN. He was at the UN for many years. The education Minister for the Philippines at the time of the symposium. Well, anyway. Romulo, it wasn't Romulo. Well, anyway. Whatever it was. It was people of that level, and from Australia and other places.

So that what you do get is front page coverage of this symposium because of its sponsorship. And then also coverage in depth. And even printing of the speeches in sheet after sheet of the newspapers and the inside sections of the newspaper that has the largest circulation. It's like putting all your eggs in one basket, but it's a pretty big basket, and it was the one basket that carries the most intellectual weight. I don't know if you know, but the newspapers are sort of tagged. Asahi is considered the intellectuals' newspaper, or the academicians' newspaper; the Mainichi is considered sort of more on the business side and the down-to-earth news side; and Yomiuri is more sort of like sports and activities side.

Q: Then you've got the Nihon Keizai.

NICHOLS: Nihon Keizai of course is like the Wall Street Journal, so that's a special paper with a very small circulation, compared to millions. You know, the morning edition of the Asahi alone is something like 12 million. Then they have the evening edition, and then other editions and the specialties, too. So you hit a tremendous audience with just that one sponsorship. But you can't have them all. That's the way it works. We did do some with the other papers, too, but none that were as prestigious. Once you start a series like this with a paper, they like to carry it on. And in every case it's like pulling teeth to get it going with a new sponsor because they haven't been through the drill.

We even had one on, I've forgotten what it was on, the subject matter, but we initiated this thing that's now very common in Japan, we got a very famous Harvard man—at the time, he was at Yale, then he went to Harvard—sociologist. I'm trying to think. But anyway, he was supposed to come to the symposium sponsored by Asahi in Tokyo and he was

the key man, he was the most famous of the participants who were going to attend, and he couldn't attend at the last minute because of some physical ailment. At the very last minute. And they were horrified. But he was living in New York at the time. We arranged for him to go to the Voice of America studios in New York—this was the middle of the night New York time—and during the symposium in Tokyo he appeared three times, first giving his own talk simultaneously translated locally by the interpreter. So he spoke initially with his set presentation; then twice, two other times to answer questions, in the question and answer series where the people there could ask him about his presentation and other things that had been said by other speakers. So he was participating in absentia.

Q: Was this on radio or on television?

NICHOLS: This was in the conference call.

Q: No, but I mean he was in New York.

NICHOLS: He was in New York.

Q: I mean, was this transmission to Tokyo just a radio transmission?

NICHOLS: I think it was by phone, by telephone line.

Q: They hadn't reached the point of projecting a television...

NICHOLS: I'm trying... No, no, it wasn't visual. But it was very clear, and this was the first time that this had ever been tried so of course they wrote that up as a “first”. You know what I mean, big news. Anyway, I'll think of that, too, later.

But this kind of thing was famous. Every time we did something like this there were new wrinkles, very intriguing things. Also we in these symposia really were the first people with Asahi to subsidize simultaneous interpretation at these conferences. The International Cultural Conference got its start really working for these symposia. The very first one they

ever did was sponsored by Asahi with us. Of course, now they cover all sorts of things, tremendous.

That was the kind of thing I was doing. But again, there's nothing you can put your finger on like this is what I was doing consistently. It was administrative in the sense of division chief, and all the speech writing, reports and budget.

Q: But the idea, you were the one who approached Asahi with this concept.

NICHOLS: Oh, yes. Yes, that's right, yes, that's right. I found that I had—and this is very interesting, because Ed Nickel was PAO at the time there, and Ed I've known quite well for a long time and he knew my track record, you might say, the family man and so forth. So he was going to give me absolutely Carte blanche. If I'd say, Ed, I'd like to go and talk to these people about this, I'm going to take this kind of risk, he'd say, go ahead. You've got my okay for that, no problem. So I never had anybody, sniffing around saying, what the hell are you doing, and trying to pull the rug out from under me. I took some risks sometimes as I did like going back and talking to this Asahi guy about Galbraith. My conviction was that if you got to know these people well enough, you could really level with them and they were pretty good about observing mutual agreements about what should be said and shouldn't be said. Nobody ever pulled a trap on me, anyway.

1969: A Combination Of The Probable Appointment Of Alan Carter As PAO And The Strain Of Trying To Justify Vietnam To The Wildly Anti-U.S. Japanese Left (Including Newspapers) Persuaded Nichols To Retire

So I enjoyed it but it wasn't, these years weren't really terribly productive as far as I'm concerned, and of course the thing that I perhaps I should say is my real reason for quitting when I did was that I was sure it was time for me to be disassociated from Japan. I would have had to have been anyway because of Alan Carter. He was down on everybody who has anything to do with Japan.

Q: Had he come before you left?

NICHOLS: No, he hadn't. But I mean, had I wished to continue and had he been assigned, I'm sure I would have been one of the first people to go because he was always running around saying the first thing we've got to do is get rid of all this deadwood around here, all these people who have been here too long and think they know all about Japan, because his idea was you don't have to know anything about Japan, their technique, their cultural uniqueness, etc.

Q: I know. He didn't want anybody who knew anything about Japan.

NICHOLS: He really didn't. This is what most of the local employees were up in arms about. So I'm sure I would have had to leave Japan, I thought I had had enough of that, I couldn't stay there forever. And I really didn't feel like going to some other country at my age. I was only 50, but... And I was really disillusioned by the Vietnam War, in terms of our work, because if you've been sitting in Japan with all those student demonstrations going on, all the anti-Americanism that was stirred up—and I might say, all these things I'm talking about, these symposia and stuff, were all going on during this atmosphere, from the time the Japanese demonstrators prevented the Eisenhower visit, you remember? From then on, it was the left wing, the student protests, all the riots. Everything was anti-American, really, in that sense. And I just couldn't stomach it much anymore. I thought we were getting drawn up the primrose path because we were putting out all this stuff about Vietnam. Our role was to explain this Vietnam War to the Japanese. We kept explaining it and we were always wrong. The information we got was too rosy. We were always seeing “the light at the end of the tunnel.” Everything's going to be different next spring. By that time this will have happened, that will have happened. This isn't true; that wasn't true, and then something would turn out to be true. And of course the Japanese newspapers like Mainichi, they were awful. They were filled with horror stories about how we bombed hospitals in Saigon, and in the north there, and what not. And Reischauer had taken them to task, publicly, you know, trying to knock them down. And of course we couldn't prove we

hadn't done what the papers claimed, but we denied that we had. I don't know. It just got to the point where this thing seemed to be going on forever and ever and ever. We were in a big mire, and it was a big mistake to begin with and it was something you just couldn't explain away. It was very hard to be effective, I think, in terms of good public relations and the image of the United States and all that, under those circumstances. It was like trying to paddle upstream in a heavy rain.

Q: Was Reischauer still there when you left?

NICHOLS: Oh, he had gone long before.

Q: That's right. MacArthur was there?

NICHOLS: No, no, MacArthur was before Reischauer.

Q: Oh, that's right.

NICHOLS: Then Reischauer came in to replace him. Then after Reischauer we had—God, somebody from—he had been—I can't think of the ambassador's name either.

Q: Was he a political appointee?

NICHOLS: No, he was a career officer. He'd been in Saudi Arabia, I think. He knew all about the Arabs. In his first staff meeting he came out and told us I'm not going to tell any of you anything about what I want you to do now because I don't know anything about Japan. But in a few weeks I'm going to start telling you a few things because by that time I will have found out. This was the first staff meeting he had with everybody—the senior officers.

And then after that we had another ambassador. I can't think of what his name was either. These names absolutely escape me. They'll come back [U. Alexis Johnson was ambassador from 1966-69; Armin H. Meyer was ambassador from 1969-72]. I don't know

what else I can add, Lew. As you can see, it's not as if I've been doing any one thing all the time or something, or in a particular specialization. Rather unspecialized, you might call me.

Q: I think we might as well bring the interview to a conclusion at this point because you came back to Washington and retired from the Agency, and while you went back to Japan it was in an unofficial position.

NICHOLS: To tell you the truth, I steered clear of the embassy for a long time because of Carter. And then Cliff Forster of course came back as PAO later, after Carter was gone. By the time I left, several of the people who had been on my staff when I had been there earlier had become PAOs and Deputies.

Q: Yes, I have had similar experiences.

NICHOLS: So it was—towards the end of my stay there, I was back in touch with the embassy quite a bit. But I never wanted to, or tried to use the embassy the way some people do, as sort of a basis for contacts or something like that. I didn't want to and particularly I didn't want to go near it when Carter was there.

Q: Well, then let's consider the interview closed.

End of interview