

Interview with Peter B. Swiers

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

PETER B. SWIERS

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[Note: This interview has not been edited by Mr. Swiers]

Q: Today is May 27, 1994 and this is an interview with Peter B. Swiers. This is being done on the behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Peter, we'll start things off asking about your background. If you could, tell me about your family and your early education.

SWIERS: I was born in Brooklyn, New York in the Callatonian Hospital. My mother and father married late. They had tried twice to have children and lost both of them; she almost lost me. It took my mother and father seven years to marry. My mother was a fourth generation Irish Roman Catholic and my father, as he liked to say, was a Lithuanian Jew - the first generation in the United States. His family came from a little town called Svere. My mother's family came from both Roman Catholics from Northern Ireland and from Dublin. They came over in 1840.

Q: Going back to that time, the Roman Catholic Church was not particularly tolerant. Having a Jewish/Irish marriage, I would think, might have caused real problems.

SWIERS: It did indeed. Not just the Roman Catholics, let's face it. It was a much less tolerant world in those days and so you not only had opposition from both families - you were sort of isolated from both families and then you're a Catholic and a Jew making

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your way in what was then a very strong Protestant world which was not too friendly to Catholics and Jews. It was rather interesting. I think it took a lot of courage on their part. I think it also exhausted them in a way.

Q: Did you feel this conflict not particularly within the family, but outside?

SWIERS: I think that my birth helped resolved all of the problems which I think had been disappearing in any case by then on both sides of the family. One of my father's eldest sisters really helped bring him up when she was 12 years old. We saw her many years later when she was in her 90s (the last time we saw her, she was in nursing home) when she came to the 50th wedding anniversary of one of my father's young sister. At that stage her mind had gone, although she was functioning physically. The only person she recognized was my mother. It was absolutely fascinating. It was an interesting time.

Q: What was your father doing?

SWIERS: Both my mother and father were people who were very "bookish". My father had been with the American News Company for years, until the war. When they thought they might resettle in Baltimore he was sent there, but my mother couldn't leave Brooklyn. She had worked for a small company and had actually been sort of semi-independent at the time. They ended up coming back to Brooklyn and never left it until 1968 when I finally persuaded them to move to New York. The neighborhood was getting unhealthy for people of their age.

Q: How about your education?

SWIERS: My education begun in a public school in Brooklyn. In those days it was a excellent public school. I did not go to a Catholic school. My church - A Lady of Refuge Parish - didn't have a Catholic school. It was a very pretty church that was built I think sometime in the late 1920s. I wouldn't call it stark, but it had a certain blandness to it that was quite beautiful and it had a lovely organ. I was alter boy from six years old on

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and at one time the man who became the Governor of New York, Hugh Carrey, ran the alter boys. He was a great fellow, one of the great figures of New York state. We had a traditional public school and in 1951, when I was in the seventh grade they decided to go with the progressive system of education. We had eight classes within each grade in that school and everybody was assigned according to ability. They created a junior high school which we were sent to called Andreas Hutty; there the classes were all mixed up. As anybody might have guessed, the class moved at the pace of the slowest student. I never had any regard for that type of system of education. It became quite clear to my parents that they would have to send me to a private high school. You probably heard a lot of this in those days particularly if you were not wealthy Catholics or at least upper middle class Catholics. If you were ordinary middle class you did go to Catholic schools; it was encouraged and it was uncomfortable to go elsewhere. I ended up going to Xavier High School in New York City which is the great Jesuit military school. I had actually received a scholarship to Regis High School in New York which is the school associated with St. Ignatius Loyola Church where Jackie Kennedy was just buried. I had been accepted there, but at that time I wanted to go to West Point. I was hoping to be admitted there. So my parents, at considerable expense, enrolled me in Xavier instead. Unfortunately I had measles when I was about 10 years old and you know that sometimes your eyes are affected; mine unfortunately were. My eyes continued to deteriorate. Even though ultimately I did receive an appointment to West Point for the class of 1960, I think in fact in would not have been accepted had there not been some spaces open when I went to the Academy for my physical examination. My sponsoring congressman was an interesting person - Francis Dorn. He was one of the few Republican congressman who has ever been in Brooklyn. That came because one of the censuses required redistricting. The assembly, which was always Republican, managed finally to create a district in Brooklyn. Francis Dorn, a liberal Republican, became congressman for two terms or perhaps three. He's dead now; he was a wonderful person. I'm an old, blind, New York Democrat and he's probably the only Republican I ever voted for. But he nominated me and I managed to pass all the tests, but sadly they finally caught me when I had to read an eye chart.

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I had to pass the New York Regency exam and in retrospect, unfortunately got a very high grade on the science side and was therefore offered an extra scholarship for college if I would take biology, chemistry, mathematics or physics. Why I say “in retrospect” is because I really was a much more a history, political science type and perhaps if we had had the money - which we didn't - and I might have applied to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. As you know in those days, more often than not, people at Georgetown if they weren't from the Washington area, were from Catholic families that could afford to send their children there. For my parents that was a little beyond their means and I went to NYU as a chemistry major. I suffered through four years, but passed the Foreign Service exam in December of 1959. I decided to take it particularly when I realized that chemistry and I were not a good match. I will tell you, if there is anything I believe in now, it's a careful counseling of young people when they apply for college. Counseling in those days was primitive. I had a teacher at Xavier who was very good, but I think if he had had more experience, he would have said, “Look, I know you're not into chemistry, you should study social sciences.”

Q: What attracted you toward the Foreign Service?

SWIERS: I had been reading history all of my life. As I mentioned to you, both of my parents were “bookish.” In fact, my mother went back to work in 1952 and built up the children's section of B. Altman's and Co. book departments into an almost independent entity and a profit making center. Altman's was the great department store in New York on 34th and 5th streets. It didn't go bankrupt, but the usual corporate raid took over Altman's and a number of other stores, milked it and the whole enterprise collapsed. It was called the store for the carriage trade. People from the upper east side would come in their cars down Madison Avenue and enter on the Madison Avenue side. It was a wonderful store. My mother worked there for years. The family which owned it was a prominent Irish Catholic New York family. Altman's was not unionized. Later on, when I finished college, they had wanted to assign my mother to a different shift where she could not be home on weekends with her husband. She refused and then basically had no choice but to resign. If

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there had been a union, she would have been protected. She had had a good salary and they were both ready to retire. My father by then was with NYU, dental college book store and he retired from there. He worked part time for a number of years at the NYU Library on Washington Square and that was neat. They had a happy time until 1974 when they moved to Washington and my mother died two or three years later.

But I'm getting off of the subject; you had asked me why the Foreign Service. As you can see from my family's history, we were always talking of history and the world; I was very much interested in what was going on in the world around me. In those days there was New York and then everything else - west of the Hudson - as far as we were concerned. It was a very interesting and sophisticated city to grow up in. Just the other day I was with some British friends and they were talking about having seen "The Winter's Tale" at the Kennedy Center. We got to talking about the Shakespeare Festival in New York City (which was started in the late 1940s or early 1950s by Joseph Papp) which we would attend and then have dinner. My parents always had favorite Italian and French restaurants that we would go to regularly. Both of them are gone now. The Italian one they had known from the 1920s when it was a speakeasy. Then it was converted to a regular restaurant; it was a three hour event to eat there. New York was a very worldly place right after the war; it really became the capital of the world. That was all factored in my career choice. I always remember in 1953, when Queen Elizabeth was to be crowned, I sought to have every British colony send me a first day cover from them; I have that collection still to this day.

Q: You're talking about stamps?

SWIERS: Stamps. I was going back and forth to the post office at Church Street because I'd send my requests registered; the people were at the Church Street Station were very helpful. That venture also made me think about the foreign service. Of course, when I was in high school, I thought about it. As I said, I really did want to go to West Point first, but when that fell through, I looked at the Foreign Service as a career.

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Q: Did you know anybody in the Foreign Service? Any professor or something who said "Why don't you try this"?

SWIERS: This was a decision entirely on my own. My mother had two years of college at Brooklyn College; she was the best educated person in her family. My father had graduated a year ahead of schedule from Hillhouse high school in New Haven which again, when you think of the public school system today, was a superb school. Most of its graduates went on to Yale - even those who were not able to afford it. My father was very anxious to get into the war - a first generation American to be part of it, but he was too young. He then decided to go work for one of the arms manufactures around New Haven - I forget if it was Remington or Winchester. Probably what that did was to destroy his academic instinct as so often happens. Instead he was earning money and he went off to New York sometime in 1919 or 1920. He went to Columbia Law School - remember that in those days you could go right to law school. He remained "bookish" for the rest of his life. We have his library - it wasn't a big one, but it was a solid one and he never could get the academic impulse to go back again to college. But there was nobody who directed me towards the foreign service except myself. I was making a lot of hard decisions.

Q: You took the exam, but the Army caught you, didn't it?

SWIERS: Let me talk about that a little bit. You're absolutely right. I was still thinking of making the Army a career. Because of my eyes, I had to get a waiver even to join the ROTC in college but they did give me a waiver and actually assigned me to combat support ordinance. In retrospect, it's interesting because it's the combat support unit that was sent first to Vietnam. As I said, I took the Foreign Service test in December of 1959. I passed it and then got in touch with the Army - my ROTC people. Strange as it may seem today, in 1960, they had too many officers coming in and they were very happy if one found another career. I was slated to do the minimum duty of two years and then to extend after that. If you were in the Naval ROTC you had a three-year obligation instead of two. They had another program which was called "six months active duty for training" and the

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only way I can describe that is they were absolutely delighted when they found somebody who preferred just to do that. They just didn't have enough slots for longer tours. So I went to Aberdeen Proving Grounds and took the six months training after I passed the Foreign Service exam. As you can see, I still do wear my airborne pin. Every once in a while they would ask for volunteers and I did go airborne. I suppose if I would have ever been called up, I would have been put in an airborne unit. But I went into the Foreign Service and they put me in the standby reserve. I suspect that somewhere in St. Louis there's still a file of Second Lieutenant Swiers, because they've never discharged me. I'm still there. That is how it was. If they had called me up I certainly would have gone whether I had been in the Foreign Service or not. I think our generation was much more like that.

Q: Absolutely.

SWIERS: I do want to tell you a story about the Foreign Service exam, not so much the written part which was pretty difficult for me because, as you can imagine, since I had not had the usual academic training.

Q: Yes, coming from a chemistry background.

SWIERS: It was awful. But I did pass the written. I didn't have a very high grade, but I did pass it and I went to take the oral part at the old Federal Building in downtown New York. That was in December of 1959. I can't remember the names of all of the panel but I do remember the Chairman was Cyril Thiel.

My mother told me later that she held her breath when I went to take it because she said that I was just totally confident that I was going to pass it; she was very worried about me. I can tell you that I knew the moment in the oral exam when I had passed. The reason was that the "bad guy" (every board has one), thought he had a question that would trap me and he threw it out right in the middle of another conversation. The question was whethel knew where the Merrimac river was. I replied : "I honestly can't remember, I know it's somewhere up in New England because it's an Indian name, but for me the more

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important thing to remember about the Merrimac is of course is that is was the name of the union frigate that was scuddled in Norfolk and then later raised and made into an iron clad of Virginia by the confederates". I could see their faces of the board members and at that moment I knew that I had passed.

Q: This is a wonderful way to strut your stuff.

SWIERS: I'm not sure that I thought of that, but it was sort of funny. Then we had the rest of the discussion. I remember that at the end, a candidate would leave the room and wait outside. He or she would sit for awhile and then someone come out of the hearing and call you back in. I had a suit on and a very short military crew cut; it was really funny.

Q: When did you come down to Washington to take your training?

SWIERS: I came down May 17, 1961, which is also a comment on things that one learns. I had finished my military training on February 28th. The Army released me to the reserves on February 28, 1961. I called the Department of State on a couple of times and the best they could tell me was "We'll be in touch" - the usual things that you hear. I finally got fed up and I called Hugh Carey who by then had become a congressman. He went out when the Kennedys came in. To make it short, as you might guess, Carey's office called the Department and within a few days I had the call telling me to come down to join the May 17 class. I think that was an interesting lesson there.

Q: This is a problem; sometimes the system needs prodding and sometimes the nice guys don't make it if they sit back and wait. I think all of us have learned that.

SWIERS: I was without a job and I really unable to take a job while waiting for the Department.. It was strange in a way. I remember that while in the Army I had bought a little black Volkswagen "beetle." I would drive over once a week to Manhattan to the unemployment office. That is almost unimaginable when you think of New York today. I would park the car right across the street, walk into the unemployment office and get my

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magnificent sum of \$44.00 a week tax free. They would check with me each time to see if I had heard anything from the Department. I'd say, "No" and they'd say "When you come again we'll have to start thinking." They didn't want to continue to give me unemployment compensation when I could not accept a job. I was obviously highly qualified.

That is another thing. I see commencement is this weekend at Georgetown; you see these Doonesbury cartoons about commencement and everybody singing the Gap song or the McDonald's song or whatever it is at graduation. The latest one I saw was instead of handing diplomas, they handed spatulas. When I graduated in 1961, it wasn't a question of getting a job; it was a question of getting the job you wanted. It's very sad for these young people today. We see it at the Atlantic Council where our unpaid interns are increasingly college graduates whereas in the past they were juniors going into their senior year. But I'm diverting you.

Q: You entered oMay 17, 1961, that was at the beginning of thKennedy administration. In a way you were pre Kennedy because you had already set your goal prior to this, but there was a tremendous enthusiasm. Could you discuss the feeling at the time and talk about your early training?

SWIERS: I'm interested to hear you say that because it makes me think about this in a way that I haven't really thought about it before. I would say "Yes, I was very enthusiastic." I think quite a few in my class were, but I'm not sure we would have attributed that to Kennedy. I do remember when I was in the Army, sitting up on election night and listening for the returns. I didn't vote that year. I was in Aberdeen, still in class there and I certainly could not have been back in New York to vote. There was all of this enthusiasm and the feeling that something fresh was happening and that you were part of it. You felt that when you came in. Interestingly enough, I really did not get that feeling at FSI. I have to say that; I don't want to disparage that institution, but I think we have to realize that the Foreign Service was not overjoyed by Kennedy's victory. It was the old guys like George Allen and the president of the Foreign Service Institute Sandy Peaslee, one of the China hands

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who had been in the Service in the old days as I remember. I think his wife had a run in with an ambassador's wife somewhere and unfortunately in those days that mattered and Sandy was, in practice, finished and ended up as consul general in Halifax. But while everything was professionally done at FSI and I think the class was professionally trained, I don't think it was caught up in that type of enthusiasm. If you ever interview Warren Zimmerman, you might ask him. Warren Zimmerman and I were in the same class. Warren was a little older than we were; he was about five or ten years older than I am.

Q: I've talked to him and I plan to interview him.

SWIERS: Warren was part of that class as was David Fisher who's now a director of an institute out in California. I could give you the names at some point if you would like. But I have to say that I did not sense while in the class that we were caught up in something new and fresh. I think there was more of the sense that foreign policy is something which is consistent regardless. I think in retrospect that maybe there could have been a little more enthusiasm, but that was not transferred to us.

Q: You came in and you had never really been exposed to the foreign affairs apparatus or even the central government of the United States, except for the military contacts. What was your impression of the training, the State Department and the people? What did you see as the role of the United States and where the Foreign Service was going to fit in?

SWIERS: First of all, I have to go back to fact that I was born and raised in New York City which was very, very much the world's capital in those days. One lived world affairs; the newspapers were full of it - The Times, the Tribune, the World Telegram and Sun and I think even the Brooklyn Eagle which was a great newspaper. I went into classes in a very steady way, recognizing that foreign policy had been going on for 100 years and would be going to go on for another 100 years. Coming from New York, you're constantly engaged in foreign affairs; everything is involved. Lord knows how many times I was at the U.N.

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as a child. Personally, I was not excited at all by coming to Washington. In fact I found Washington somewhat provincial.

Q: Which it was.

SWIERS: Which it was in those days. Think about how it began to be changed under the Kennedys. I remember a big restaurant that I went to was Martin's Tavern and of course if you really wanted to throw some money away you went to Rive Gauche, an atrocious French restaurant. One little place that wasn't too bad actually was Chez Odette. I thought about it walking over here today.

Q: I went there one time. I was taking Serbian at the time and I went with our class including Larry Eagleburger. The waiters counted in Serbian. They were Serbs.

SWIERS: I think what was important in 1961 is that we simply assumed that the United States was the world leader.

Q: I think this is very important. There was no question and it was true.

SWIERS: If you talk about how the British were being trained, there was a certain element of that. It wasn't as though we had to be trained for leadership; we came in with that confidence. We were Americans and we would go out and be the top dog. Fortunately, and when we can get to this in later stages, when we might talk particularly about INF in 1981, in effect the younger Europeans learned how lucky they were that the United States was what I would call an enlightened and reluctant superpower. We never applied our power in a way it was applied by a classic European great powers. We made mistakes; there's no question about that, but we did try to apply our power for a common good. So we had a sense of what we were doing, what we were about to go into. The dilemma which we go back and forth on all the time is that United States foreign policy must have a moral component. It must have some type of moral basis and whenever we deviate from

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that we feel very uncomfortable. Frankly, we often screw up. Bay of Pigs for example, it was a blip on my screen.

Q: Is there anywhere that you wanted to go? How did your assignment work out?

SWIERS: My first interest was Germany, because that was the language that I had studied. Unfortunately I did not speak it well and that was the reason I didn't go. The second area that I was interested in was GTI - Greece, Turkey and Iran. Then it was part of NEA, Turkey and Iran were part of NEA and Greece was under EUR. Those were the two areas that I was really interested in. I'd say certainly first was Germany. Unfortunately for me, in those days a first tour officer was assigned to a position; you weren't assigned in the system that came in later.

Q: Rotational.

SWIERS: Yes; so you had to fit into a specific job. There were only about three or four jobs in Germany at the time and there were three people in my class who spoke German much better than I did - David Fisher, Carl Poker and Jim Morris. Jim Morris left the service not too long after his first tour. They were assigned in Germany and there was nothing in GTI at the time, so the Department wanted to assign me to Tijuana, Mexico. I had learned my lesson early on, coming in and I simply said "No. I'm not interested, I have no experience in the area and no knowledge and there are other opportunities." As one learned, everybody knew it was ridiculous to send a young officer who had been abroad only once in his life - to Canada. They said: "Fine; would you consider going to Vietnam?" and I said I certainly would. It was interesting that one year later, we began to focus on Vietnam. They said I would have to have Vietnamese language training, which I was glad to do. Now again, this was the old system and the personnel people said: "You need a world language before you can study Vietnamese." On top of that did not only did you need a world language, but you needed a world language which was had designated as the second language to your country of assignment; so that was French. I had not had

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French, so I was put in French language training and that's where I was until sometime in the fall of 1961 when Norman Anderson who is now the CSC representative in Macedonia called me up and said that there was suddenly an opening for a vice consul in Athens. As I mentioned, I had expressed an interest in GTI. I was studying French. It is very interesting how your careers and your life can be affected by unforeseen things. Frank Kreigler, who later became a very good African hand, had a daughter who became very ill; he was supposed to go to Athens. I guess he was in the class ahead of me. He and his wife asked to remain in Washington for their first tour. You remember they used to use a formula which called for two thirds of new recruits to go out and one third to stay in Washington.. So suddenly a position came open. And there I was on my way to Athens on December 4, 1961.

So I was told that I was going to be assigned to Athens; I had been paneled and I was finishing up the consular course. I had to give up my room in the house that three of us had rented. There had been three Foreign Service officers; one had already left, Jim Morris, and he was replaced by a Naval Officer. I wanted out by November 30th and I took an unusual step for a junior officer. I called Carey's office again and I said: "Would you mind calling the Department and saying how delighted Congressman Carey was to hear that his constituent has been assigned to Athens and by the way when is he leaving?" The orders showed up within a couple of days.

Q: What was the situation like in Athens at the time?

SWIERS: This is very interesting. I would like to get into that in some detail. I think a number of us remember in the A-100 course when one gentleman came to talk to us (he was the dean of the Language School) about the importance of languages. His name was Lionel Summer. I have to say that it was sort of funny and it was sad in a way because he was acting Japanese. All of his characteristics and mannerisms were Japanese. I thought he was putting us on at first; then we realized he wasn't. I have to say that at that moment (and a lot of us felt that way) that while we wanted to learn foreign languages, we wanted

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to be careful that in the process of learning them we would not acquired the characteristics of another culture because as a Foreign Service officer you still should be seen as and look like an American. I had to throw that in - those little memories that come back. I still can see him to this day.

Q: I think this is true for many of us, particularly coming in in the post World War II period when many of our superiors seemed to speak a language which was what one might now describe as mid-Atlantic, but it was a different accent. It was sort of an upper class Boston or New York accent but it seemed a too little precious to many of us. We didn't come from that society.

SWIERS: I remember the first time I met Wells Stabler, I didn't realize he was an American.

Q: *I know it.*

SWIERS: My mother was very fussy. Coming from Brooklyn we were always being kidded about it. Well, I'm a New Yorker and you can hear it, but I don't think that I have anything of what people tend to call a Brooklyn accent and neither did she and my father spoke well too. She used to say to people that was just because of Leo Durocher and he's not even from Brooklyn.

Q: *What was the situation in Greece? You got there in 1961 and how long were you there?*

SWIERS: I was there from December 1961 to December 1963. I arrived just after the October 1961 election when Karamanlis had been reelected with a solid majority and I left just after Karamanlis 's party first loss, October or November of 1963. Karamanlis had already left the country - in July 1963. The Queen had defied his ruling that she shouldn't go there. You may remember the humiliating scene of Queen Fredericka and Princess Irene being chased by the Greek opposition and having to run into somebody's house to get away. Karamanlis resigned and went to Paris. We want to talk about that a bit too. While I wasn't there at that period, I might have some insight that might be of interest. I

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arrived on December 4, 1961 just after the elections and I would say in a sense it was very interesting. I don't think we realized it at the time but the Greek/American relationship had reached it's height with that election and in retrospect, was already beginning to decline in retrospect. I arrived on a Monday and the following Friday evening and an embassy officer took me along to a dinner in Ecoli which is a suburb of Athens, to the house of an American professor and his wife. The other guests were Andreas Papandreou and his wife Margaret. Papandreou at that time had just returned. He was teaching; he was still very much an American citizen and to this day I would say that his image that evening is exactly the one he portrays even today. A slightly intellectually arrogant man - not very confident frankly. He had served in the Navy in the war and had been naturalized; his wife Margaret was from a famous American socialist family who lived in Minnesota for years. The Papandreous came back and he was obviously already thinking of staying on. Later on he tried to renounce his American citizenship and that's part of the problem with Papandreou. In part because of the colonels who led the government at various times, the Greeks are very conspiratorial people. So Papandreou always had to prove himself to be more Greek than the Greeks and certainly less American than the Americans.

The early 1960s were really a high point in our relationship, when you think of what an assignment to Athens means today in terms of security requirements. The chancery had just been built; it was a symbol of the new era. In retrospect, it probably wasn't the right building for Athens. It was earthquake proof and that was good because we had a few earthquakes when I was in the consulate. I was first assigned for six months to the visa section and then I spent the rest of the time on the passports matters. That's the way it was; we were not rotated out of the consular section; I was never upstairs. I think that was rather important because by a stroke of luck, the apartment that I found was on the top floor at the rear; I had an absolutely spectacular view of the Parthenon.

By the way, I should note that by the time I left Washington I did get a 2+ in French; I did not get a 3. If you had French already, you were okay. But I got in the same class with an older couple who were with AID and some others; their language ability was extremely

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limited and so it was a very frustrating class. Fortunately about the last three weeks of the class I was alone or with somebody else who knew French and I could really feel the difference. At least I ended up with 2+. But because I had only a 2+, when I got to Athens, all they would give me was 100 hours of Greek. It was actually an excellent course; they used 440 words over 100 hours of training. I had training every night after the embassy closed for an hour and a half each night. It worked well. It would not give you enough to get beyond the S-2 level and certainly you couldn't really read the language. You could read signs and basic things; it was rather frustrating. I then paid on my own for about two or three months more to try and bring my language skill up more - two or three times a week - but I finally had to give it up because the salaries then were quite low - we were all brought in at step 4 of grade 7 which was \$5625.00 a year. We all thought that that was great, although it was only \$100.00 a week. The salary from the class before ours had been only \$5225.00 or something like that. If you think about what people are paid today, it was tight. We lived okay but we really had to watch our pennies. As I mentioned to you, the apartment that I ended in was one that I could afford with my allowance; it was on the second floor (American counting or European first floor). It was occupied by Puniotis Canalopis who at that time was still Karamanlis's uncle by marriage. He was one of the great figures of Greek right of center politics and I guess he was the last prime minister before the colonels staged their coup, if I recall correctly.

Q: I can't remember, I think it was Karamanlis.

SWIERS: My wife and I went back to Greece for our 25th wedding anniversary in 1988. We went past the building we had been in and it was still there. The little restaurant that we used to go to was still there. There was a monument there to Canalopolis. On the fourth floor were the offices of a Greek deputy from the Artili Peninsula. His district ran from Arhos to Nathlean and down to Crinediaon and finally to a little town called Potu Kelley which has a very tragic history from World War II.

Q: This is in the Peloponnesus?

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SWIERS: Yes, but it's a peninsula that sticks out - the Epidaurus. He was on the fourth floor with two daughters and I remember that they were very sweet young ladies who went to the American women's high school called Pierce College. On the fifth floor was a family named Sumerose; they had two sons. The oldest son had just gone into the Army when I was there and the youngest son was about 12 years old at that time. His name was Antonio and he became very briefly the foreign minister of Greece. I was on the sixth floor. The reason I say this is because I was really very much immersed in things. On the first or second night that I was there, Contabroches who spoke French (bad French) came up with another man named John Beltsos who was a Greek working for the Dutch Embassy under a peculiar arrangement which allowed the Dutch and the Greeks to have diplomatic immunity in his own country. Or at least diplomatic privileges if not immunity. There was a Dutch working for the Greek Embassy in Hague who had similar privileges. He was a friend of Contabroches, as was another man whose brother, Fanni Feltsos, was a famous veterinarian in Athens; he was a veterinarian who liked dogs. The Greeks were like many Middle Easterners; I think it's even true today - dogs are not a favorite animal. That's left over from the Turks.

There was a whole little community that revolved around the Americans. Contabroches came up and invited me to his house for the evening. Contabroches was entertained friends, about twice a week. I became part of this group. I was a young American vice consul, unmarried; I don't know whether he hoped ultimately that I might be interested in one of his daughters who were in their teens and very bright girls. I would go out with him regularly to visit his district. I knew that district cold in a way that you can only do when you are with a politician. One time, we were sitting together in Argos where he was being visited by his constituents. It was fascinating. In those days, it was quite something for him to have with him on a visit a young American vice consul. We traveled all over.

Then we would continue from Epidaurus over a rather wild range of mountains to get to Carnedian, which is where Cartenbraches was born. Cartenbraches means "short pants."

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He was slightly amused by it; he was known by that name, but since he only had girls who would get married and change their names, he decided not to change the name. Then he went on to Porto Kelly right on the water; that was this beautiful town around a bottle shaped harbor. When I was there, it did not have electricity yet. It has a tragic history in that it was from there that once the Germans left the Pelopanneus, the Greek communists entered one night from Spetsa, which was also part on Cartenbraches district, just as dawn was breaking. They focused on certain houses and went up and knocked on the door. When the owner of house, who was usually a leader in the town, answered the door, they shot him. They massacred the people. The reason I mention this is because I has visited Spetsa with Cartenbraches. So I had heard the history. It couldn't have been more than a few months later when I was requested to issue a visa. You may remember that one did post checks of the U.S. visas and we had to report back. We still had a superb liaison with the Greek police and other Greeks. I don't know if Nick Demegos was still at the embassy when you were there or a fellow nameGregory. Nick had an incredible history, too. He was in school when some German soldiers were killed. The Germans came to the school and lined the boys up and picked every fifth boy up to a certain number and then took them out and shot them. Nick was fortunate. When I was in Greece, both the war memories and the civil war memories were very, very fresh and they played a major role in the Greek politics and also in the close relationship with the United States.

Let me tell you just one more anecdote because it's so funny. When I was on my way to Greece on a TWA flight, I ran into a very delightful old Greek American, Mrs. Angelo and we had a lovely time on the plane. She said that she was coming back to visit her brother and her sister and her husband had been staying with him. Not too long after I met Cartenbraches, he said one night that he wanted to take me over to his family's home. We went over there for a lovely evening and dinner and who was there but the woman that I had met on the plane. That man Angelo was Cartenbraches, brother, but since he had sons, he had changed his name to Angelo from Cartenbraches. By 1963, we were beginning to see the changes in Greece. A certain attitude, it was difficult to describe, but

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the relationship wasn't quite as easy. It was masked I would say in part because for us by the effectiveness of our embassy. We had Henry Labouisse as the Ambassador with his wife Eve Clarie. We had Tap Lee Bennett as the DCM, we had Dan Brewster. I was a consular officer and I don't think anyone thought of asking about what I might or might not have observed.

Q: A major problem, I think, within a lot of places.

SWIERS: I know that Cartenbraches was in trouble. I could see it. I remember vividly one day visiting a town just outside of Epidaurus - when you go to Epidaurus the road becomes straight and you go through a little village and then you're into the Epidaurus area. It began with an L, it wasn't Lamedian but the name escapes me. He was really getting a hard time from these villagers; Veltzos was there and I asked what's going on and he said "They are really mad at him." I think that he had finally gotten electricity them, but they hadn't had their water and they were furious that the water hadn't come in because they knew that other people were getting the water. So he lost. But, if I remember correctly, Zachary was the one who predicted that Papandreou would win. By that time, George Papandreou had formed a center union and had sort of shifted from the left.

I think that most people thought of George as a bit of a fool. A good speaker. He had a rather good role in the war and right after it became prime minister. You could feel that the momentum was shifting in the direction of the center union in a very brief two years after this splendor October victory. He had formed that center coalition. Andreas came in, in fact to renounce his American citizenship so he could become his father's minister of coordination. He didn't last very long; even his father had to admit that Andreas was not a great coordinator. Then the center union came in and it was just about that time that I left.

Q: We want to concentrate on the time that you were there and your impressions there. Did you have anything to do with Henry Labouisse?

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SWIERS: It was a nice embassy in the sense that it included young people. On the other hand, since we were the largest embassy all officers were given diplomatic status, but not everyone was put on the diplomatic list. They cut it off at usually the third secretary's level. Of course if you were not in the political or economics section, then you weren't on the list. So I didn't get invited to a lot of the things that the other officers were. On the other hand, I had my own friends in Greece. There was another friend I had who was an Italian-Greek, Jacques Costelli. One of my colleagues in my Foreign Service class had known of him and had given me his name. The Costelli actually were a very friendly couple. They were subsequently at our wedding in Athens. Young officers like myself felt quite isolated in some ways, although the embassy made sure that we were included in many activities.

But in terms of work, no. My boss was Bob Cartwright. Cartwright was a very special figure because he had been the inspector general of the FBI. He was brought into the State Department by Scott McLeod. After McLeod left, Bob Hill went to Mexico and took Cartwright with him. Cartwright had by then integrated and after Mexico he was assigned to Athens which was his last post. Cartwright was politically quite right wing; he was very well connected. His brother was the pastor of St. Matthews.

Q: Could you tell me a bit about the consular work that you were doing and did the fact that you had one of the original right wingers in the security thing have any effect on how you operated?

SWIERS: No. It was a normal consular operation. Cartwright wanted the laws applied strictly, but fairly. I recall that we had about 30 non-immigrant visa cases a day. I remember that I started on immigrant visa cases which were fairly easy and many of them were inspiring. I remember one man who had gone to the U.S. and worked in some "greasy spoon" for years. He saved up enough money to bring his wife and children over and they came into our office quite proudly. I will tell you that if there is anything that the Foreign Service should do, it is that the first tour officer must do consular work. There is no question about it. You don't know what real life was like and what people really put

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up with until you have worked in a consular section. What was interesting in my day was that there were still had a lot of people who had been affected by the war, with rickets and tuberculosis. We had a lot of tuberculosis and the public health service still had an office in Athens with a Greek contract doctor. I remember the x-ray technician who became a close friend, Titi Andrapulu, who has since retired. Or left there when they closed the whole thing. The doctor was the man who also ran the psychiatric hospital and I really can't remember his name. I do remember tuberculosis and the rickets and you would see children, who were just pre teen or in their teens and they had these pigeon chests. There was a lot of illness, but there were a lot of inspiring cases. Those went quite smoothly. Arlena Taxu was the great interpreter; she was a Greek who had grown up in Istanbul and had gone to Roberts College and then she and her family fled Turkey. We had a number of those in the embassy. Steven Collegas was still there; he had been imprisoned and tortured by the Italians for having worked for the Americans before the war.

I think it is worthwhile to mention that on the non immigrant side we issued about 30 visas a day. My boss was a woman, Nora Austilan - there were a few women who obviously made it on the political-economics side - Kay Bracken being one of the most famous ones. Marion Mitchell who was probably the one political person that I did see a lot of, although I was friendly with the others. I would say that the way we judged an applicant was to look at the person and ask yourself if that person could make a good immigrant if they applied for permanent resident status when they got to the States. The other thing was that the forms still had a place for the designation of race and ethnic origin; if the applicant filled that it in, we would cross it out. We were very proud when that question was eliminated. I remember striking through race and ethnic origin.

Q: I was there when we had to do this and we were told that whatever they wanted to put, let them put in, but don't pay any attention to it.

SWIERS: We'd cross it out and we would explain to them that we don't have that sort of thing in the United States anymore. A lot of times, the Greek, like good bureaucrats,

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wanted to keep these records. Later on, with affirmative action, we put race and ethnic origin back in and I think that was a mistake in American domestic politics. I think we should have affirmative action, but not on the basis that one had to stay in his or her racial group or your ethnic group to move forward. It's a terrible mistake. One very good illustration of that was a tall handsome ex-Ebson (elite troops who wore those kilts; they guarded the royal palace). He came in and he started to give me the story that he was going to visit his aunt and that he would stay for a few months and then come back. I cut him off before he got to the point where I would have to apply to 12, 18, and 19; I knew the reason why he was going to the United States. I had lived on Alton Place near Tenley Circle. When you walk up Alton Place to the corner of Wisconsin Avenue, there had been a very good restaurant run by a Greek family. Not more than a week or two weeks before I left, suddenly there was a sign in the door that said "Closed for several days because of death of owner." The uncle who had died and the aunts had obviously called Crete to where the owner had come from and had said: "Send over whatever his name was, (I can't remember now) to take over". He was the applicant. These are prosperous Greek Americans; it was very, very rare that we saw a failure of a Greek immigrant. I think that's important.

In those days the country was still poor and the villagers were particularly poor. The girls would come to town in search of work; they wouldn't get work so they would end up being prostitutes. There was a good community of prostitutes because of the large American community at our air base outside of Athens. We would regularly have marriages because of that. I have to say that maybe I was a little too charitable, or we were. I don't think we all felt that way. We would look at the application and try to make a judgement whether this was a prostitute because she wanted to be a prostitute or was she somebody that got trapped and finally the American came along who could rescue her - knowing how Greeks related in families that hopefully that very brief period of her past would disappear. They came in to get the visas; sadly some of them did get caught in a raid or perhaps their pimp

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hadn't paid enough and then you have to get the waivers. I remember we had some very tearful things at that time.

Q: Very, very difficult. Often a waiver had to be through Congress which wasn't delighted to do so.

SWIERS: I remember one woman who arrived from a village; it was probably the first time that she had no means of support and she finally had to sell herself; she was caught (we had the police record and therefore could get the information) Somewhere along the line she met this American; he was a very nice air force private and I think it could have been a very happy marriage. We were able to get the waiver, under hardship reasoning and coercion and things of that sort.

Q: How about on the passport side; any problems there?

SWIERS: Very rarely. The big thing was that old Greeks returned to the village from the U.S. and lived very comfortably on their social security. They were the big men in the villages usually. One of my colleagues (one of my best friends to this day) who has since left the Foreign Service, married a British Foreign Service secretary; they both left their services and now they live in a little village in England. His name is Ralph Esley. He was the first one sent back when the Social Security Administration insisted on finally getting control of the benefit payments. In the early 1960s, we began to have more and more social security payments in Greece. Ralph had to receive special training in that and he actually ended up staying in Athens for another year or two to be the social security person there. I remember very few cases of what I would call fraud when I moved over to the other side of passport. It worked quite smoothly. The major problem was the citizenship status of those who had come back; i.e., whether they were going to lose their citizenship. Usually one could work it out. One problem was the young Greek American men, boys really, who would come to Greece not realizing the Greek rule on military service; they would get snapped up and sometimes their passports would be taken away from them. I

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think that we would simply issue them a new passport so that they could get to the airport and get out. Greece began to get wise to this when they noticed suddenly one kid after another with a fresh passport; they knew he hadn't lost his passport. I think we had a few of those cases where these young men got caught.

Then we came into the business of the expatriation. We had to go through that whole process. We tried to avoid that. The passport operation worked smoothly. I really don't recall too many problems. In retrospect, when I think of other places I've been, it seems that we didn't have that many lost passports in Greece. I'm not quite sure why; one would expect that to have been the case. We had close coordination with other agencies and a range of issues related to passports.

Q: You left there in December of 1963, this is right after the election?

SWIERS: Right after the election.

Q: Was the Embassy in shock? Did you get any feel for that?

SWIERS: I have to be careful to answer that because, as I told you, we were isolated from the substantive side of the embassy. We weren't really involved and they didn't really want us involved. As I mentioned, I was never once asked about my impressions from traveling over a whole district with a Greek politician. I don't believe that anybody else in the embassy had that type of relationship. What I do remember was that Dan Zachary had gone to Thessalonika and had predicted Papandreou victory. I believe that the embassy on balance (and there you would have to look at the archives) felt that Karamanlis was going to win. I knew that my man was going to lose. I wondered if that was going to be typical.

Q: Were you picking up any emanations from the political section about how they felt about Papandreou at that time?

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SWIERS: Oh yes; everybody thought he was a fool. Everybody was dreading his arrival. We had all known Andreas quite well and we knew things would change as they did. I doubt anybody could have imagined how far the change would go and that the country would sort of unravel.

Q: Today is June 10, 1994 and we are continuing an interview with Peter Swiers. Peter, we wanted to go back to deal more with some things while you were in Athens. Could you mention the things you wanted to talk about?

SWIERS: Yes, the four things are: the Jackie Kennedy visit to Greece in 1963 just before the president was assassinated, Richard Nixon's visit in early 1963 which was part of his around-the-world trip, Lyndon Johnson's visit in the fall of 1962, and Mike Mansfield's visit in 1963, I believe it was the late summer or early fall.

Q: *Well, let's start with Jackie Kennedy.*

SWIERS: Jackie Kennedy was already in Greece when I arrived in 1961. She had visited there sometime during that summer and in the spring of 1962 a good friend of mine, John Beltzos took me to Mekonos which was his family's home on his mother's side. His uncle was then the mayor. Jackie was still very, very visible - on the island his uncle proudly had a picture of Jackie. Then two years later in 1963, as we know after the death of Patrick Kennedy of what is now known as crib syndrome, she came to Greece to get away from things. It couldn't have been more than a few days before she left when we got a call in the consulate section that her sister needed a new passport. I remember the episode very vividly; in fact I just wrote about it in a letter to Senator Kennedy upon Jackie's death. I went out to a villa that they had rented - this would have been Mrs. Kennedy, her sister Lee Radziwil and her husband, Prince Radziwil of Poland. They were out sailing when I arrived and I sat for about 15 minutes talking with Clint Hill who was the secret service agent that we saw weeping on the back of the car (during the Kennedy assassination) and suffered tragically because he always felt guilty. He was clearly devoted to Mrs. Kennedy.

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The reason why I wanted to mention this is because I remember her when they came up from the boat landing and she was so happy and so cheerful and she nodded very graciously as she went past and then I did the consular business with the sister which was have her sign her passport application for the new passport and then I left. But it comes back later on in 1968 after Bobby was killed; in a sense you could almost say that she fled to the arms of the man for that security that she desperately needed who was back to Greece. I thought it would be worthwhile mentioning it.

Richard Nixon came through Athens in April or May of 1963, with Mrs. Nixon, the two daughters and a former FBI agent, Jack Pryor, and his wife. Nixon had sent out instructions to all of the posts where he was going that he did not wish any high level treatment from the embassies. He was still bitter at the time - quite bitter - and you could see that. On the other hand, having Jack Pryor with him meant that Jack would contact the FBI representative or former FBI representative in the different posts. In Athens' case it was Bob Cartwright whom I mentioned earlier. So Cartwright was the person who was in charge of the visit and I was made the action officer for the visit. I mention this because of what of we saw later on. I had first met Richard Nixon in 1958 when he spoke at my university; after he spoke, a small group of us were invited to a little reception with him. I remember how insecure he was in a one-on-one relationship; when you shook his hand. He just felt uncomfortable. He did it, but he was always uncomfortable. In 1962 he was in particularly bad spirits. Cartwright gave a dinner for him, and Ambassador Henry Labouisse came to the dinner at Cartwright's house. I periodically would pick up the Nixons at different occasions. I can't remember if we provided them an embassy car or not; somehow I think when I was along I brought an embassy car with me, but otherwise he almost didn't want a car. Mrs. Nixon and the girls had been out all day and they were going to meet Nixon at the Grand Burton Hotel. I picked up Nixon from the hotel earlier and as we coming down from the lobby, we met a group of visiting Greek- Americans there who recognized him instantly and called out "Mr. Vice President!" He rushed past them in a desperate effort to get out of the door. I suppose some of my friends who are Democrats

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would say that that wasn't very good for the Democrats at the time, but I remember that I took him by the arm and said "Mr. Vice President, you can't do that; you have got to go back and talk to them." He went back and I could tell that he was most uncomfortable, but he went and shook hands and said all of the proper things. It was really striking that this gifted man in so many ways had that insecurity that ultimately led to the tragedies that we witnessed - I mean the dirty politics that were played. I might also mention that when we went out and with seeing Mrs. Nixon, you knew who was the strength of family and who held it together and in the final analysis, she was the only person he probably ever trusted. I had enormous admiration for her; she was a very, very nice person. Very little politics were discussed throughout the whole time. He was doing an around the world trip and it was to sort of get away and perhaps that was what refreshed him.

In September of 1962, Lyndon Johnson came through as vice president. I think that he was also on an around-the-world trip. That was when he had stopped in Vietnam. He had gone to Iran, reached Athens and was going to go on to Rome and I frankly can't remember where he was going beyond there. What struck me at the time, immediately when you met him was how he filled whatever area he was in. Yes, he was big; he then used to wear midnight blue tuxedos and he had that very powerful Texan way of doing things. He was a frustrated man; you could sense that right away, in the sense that here he had been Senate majority leader; he was picked to be vice-president because the Kennedys knew that they needed that side of the part. One sensed that he was constantly searching for a role. As a result, he could be very difficult.

The reason that I was involved was the embassy went all out on this and we fortunately put on a very good show for him; the arrangements were quite good. Bill Crockett who was his friend and the Department's under secretary for management was along as the controller of the trip. I was assigned to Crockett as his staff agent for the duration of the trip. Johnson was sort of demanding in a petulant way. One time, late at night, he came around; he saw that the halls were full of people and he said that he wanted everybody off of the halls. I remember that because Crockett had sent me across to my room to pick

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up some paper that I had; suddenly (this was late at night) here comes Johnson walking down the hall. I just sort of held myself to the doorway wondering whether I was going to get a blast or not. He just sort of looked at me and then marched on to Crockett's room. The reason for his meandering was that he had nothing to do in his room and he wanted to come down to Bill's room where all of the action was. There were people in there and he went in. There was Rufus Youngblood who was the secret service man who was in the car with Johnson just behind Kennedy. Youngblood was a pretty tough customer himself; at the time of the assassination he just hurled Johnson to the floor of the car and threw himself on top of Johnson. I would say that in that circumstance there were not too many people who would challenge Lyndon Johnson, but that happened later on. I was just talking to somebody about this yesterday and the Vietnam period - the fact that you had to summon up too much courage to challenge Johnson and when he was fixed on Vietnam, how hard it was to change his view. We can discuss that later on. The visit went smoothly. It affected my career rather interestingly, probably redirected it once again. I think Crockett liked the work that I did for him and I remember that I had been telling him how Johnson had been very well received. He asked me to prepare a memo, which he slipped into Johnson's morning meeting.

In fact, let me tell one anecdote for the record which occurred on that evening when Johnson came into Crockett's room. He asked for a glass of water and Youngblood poured him a glass from the tap and Johnson looked at the water. Athens' water was good water, but it had a highly mineral content. Johnson held the glass up and he said "Youngblood, are you trying to poison me?" We actually had no bottled water left, so Youngblood went into Crockett's bathroom and we filled up an empty bottle of mineral water with water from the tap and Youngblood came up with a new glass and LBJ took it and drank it. It was an interesting visit which went quite smoothly. At that time Karamanlis was still in power. Frankly as I felt that the Kennedys were just trying to find something for Johnson to do.

There was a terrible earthquake in Iran and Johnson wanted to turn around and go back. He was persuaded away from that with enormous difficulty, but ultimately understood. I

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forget what the details were. Actually it had to be Washington that told him no. The last thing that one needed was to have a vice president arrive with all of the entourage in what were the aftermath of a terrible earthquake. The reason that it affected my career was because a friend of Crockett's and for that matter a friend of Johnson's was Henry Ford who was one of the old administrative officers, although in those days he was probably younger than I was I think, in his early 50s. He came out the following year with Mike Mansfield and he asked that I be assigned to them as the control officer. Another person who was with Mansfield and Ford was Frank Meloy who was later killed in Lebanon along with the economic counselor. Meloy was a life long bachelor; on the other hand the economic counselor had a wife and a large family and it was a real tragedy. Frank and I and my wife remained very good friends until he was killed. I was probably one of the last people who spoke to him. Again, it was more just one of these trips that Mansfield wanted to go on. Frank Valeo was with them as well, the secretary of the Senate at the time. It was a very easy trip to handle. There's nothing really of great substance. Then we still had fairly decent relations with the Greeks, but it was flag visit. Ford was sufficiently impressed by my performance, that when he was assigned as consul general in Frankfurt, which of course was a major post,(small politically but they used to argue whether Frankfurt or Hong Kong was the largest Foreign Service post in the world), he asked for me to be assigned to Frankfurt. I found out later after I arrived that the reason he asked for me was because he thought that I could be a young bachelor staff aide and do all the sort of things that had to be done. After I had already been assigned, he discovered that I was married and had been married. But he had me come anyway and I was rotated around. Those were the four visits that I wanted to mention as sort of the thing that a young officer could be involved in.

Q: I think it's important to get these stories.

SWIERS: You know what is was for a young officer to have the opportunity to actually have a little memo that you wrote slip directly to the vice president? It was quite exciting

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and frankly I think it was a useful memo because it demonstrated the popularity he had even in the leftish areas of town.

I might note as well that at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, believe every post was instructed to set up a crisis center.

Q: I was just north of you in Yugoslavia at the time and I am certain we were following this.

SWIERS: We had the embassy conference room on the third floor which was converted into a "war room" - with maps and other exhibits; it was manned around the clock by officers of the political and economics sections. Consular officers and administrative officers were not invited to join. That is an interesting point of view; we were at least permitted to go up and check periodically to see what had happened. Every embassy did follow crises; even with the crisis being that far away, I think we all understood that something quite serious was going on.

Q: So you went to Frankfurt where I've got you serving from 1964 to 1966. What were you doing then?

SWIERS: I was actually call that an almost normal Foreign Service assignment. The junior officer rotation system had come in by that time, in contrast to my assignment to Athens. I guess the class after me, which would have been 1961, was one of the last classes whose graduates had to be assigned to a job. The new system - the rotation of junior officers on their first tour - had begun by the time I went to Frankfurt. Since I had gotten married and wasn't going to be Ford's permanent aide, I ended up in the junior officer rotational program which meant that started with 2-3 months in the consular doing immigrant visa work.

I might mention briefly that the man who had been in the job before me was a Foreign Service Officer by the name of Steve Miller and frankly his career was not going too well and a few years later he had himself assigned to Vietnam. He was caught in the provinces

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and was executed by the VC; they found his body in a shallow grave after we retook the area. It was very sad; he was a man with a large family. After the consular section, I think I was then assigned to the trade section. We had a trade center in Frankfurt and I'd like to talk about that. I think it was a real mistake that trade centers were reduced later. This one was located in downtown Frankfurt and I was there for about 5 months. I think after that I was finally rotated into being a staff aide to Ford and I was there at the time that Ford was killed.

Q: In an automobile accident.

SWIERS: My last nine months were spent as the assistant GSO - in fact, as acting GSO in Frankfurt which meant that I was located in the complex itself and was responsible for about 70 Germans most of whom didn't speak English. It was one of the most interesting sagas I think a junior officer could have. I really got into German culture and German psychology. I said "acting" because the GSO at that time, Frank Jackson, contracted pneumonia and was actually out of work for several months. He came back a few weeks before it was time for me to leave.

So I had a normal rotational assignment. I don't have many tales to tell from my perspective. Interestingly enough, one of the people I met in Frankfurt was General George Segnesious whom I met again with at the Paris Peace Talks in 1968. He was the president of the Atlantic Council - he recruited me later to join the Council

It was an interesting period. It was the very height of the Cold War. The dollar had not yet started its decline; we were still a force with the dollar. We lived in the Carl Schwartz compound which was also referred to as the "Golden Ghetto". We had Germans living next to us. We lived there, my wife and I; we felt much more comfortable going out on the economy than a lot of the colleagues who liked to remain in the American compound. Most of the personnel of the consulate general were act GAO and FAA employees. Their

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regional headquarters were in Frankfurt. Their families lived in the compound while they traveled; they had very little interchange with the Germans.

I can remember one thing in the consular section at the time. I was in the immigrant visa section. A colleague of mine, Andy Thoms, who has just retired as consul general in Munich, was also working in the section. We had just lifted the rules on Nazi travel to the United States; in other words, people who had been Nazis during the war could enter the U.S. unless it could be proven that they had actually committed a crime. I remember that Andy, who was from New Jersey, was fairly conservative in his politics. He came to me one day, terribly upset because two ex-SS officers had applied for visas and had in effect demanded the visas so that they could visit the United States and he couldn't do anything but issue them. There was nothing on them and they knew it; they were smiling; they had us. It was an interesting comment on how things were beginning to change. The reason I mention that is because my wife is Danish and her father had to go into hiding for eight months during the war. One of her uncle's was a Jew and they had to smuggle him to Sweden; his wife and the children followed as quickly as possible thereafter.

We actually did feel comfortable living on the economy. There was an excellent German butcher just outside of the compound. My wife was a blond, green-eyed Dane, very obviously Danish and pregnant at the time. The first time we went, the butcher looked at her and in German asked "Are you by chance Danish?" My wife answered "yes" and he said, "What a wonderful time I had in Denmark during the war. I remember all of the breads, and the wonderful cream and pastries." I looked at my wife and I knew there was going to be an explosion. I quickly said "How very, very interesting and how much do we owe you?" We cleared out of there and she calmed down once we got outside.

Q: You don't want to get a butcher upset.

SWIERS: Right. Actually the next time we went in, I think, he realized that it had been clumsy and he was polite; we obviously went back.

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We were in Frankfurt at the time when the Dutch Princess Beatrix was to marry the German Count Claus VonBand - he changed it to VanAnsberg. We were all told that if anybody visited Holland who did not have U.S. forces plates, that they had to have an American flag because the Dutch were slashing the tires of the Germans as they came in. It was quite violent. It was also the time that the Germans were invited to Denmark for maneuvers. The Dutch arranged it very carefully so that the Germans would bypass towns and villages to the maximum extent possible. We saw a famous picture of two young Germans on one of those German motorcycles with sidecars. It brought back images of World War II. It's one of those images that one always thinks of: the Germans in the motorcycles with a sidecar. These Germans got lost and drove into a Danish town. I frankly don't know whether it was the part of town that had been occupied by the Germans until 1944, but it was awful. The two boys weren't any older than 19 or 20; they were spit upon and had stones thrown at them. The two boys started to cry; they broke down and cried and the Danes suddenly took pity on them. There was a change in attitude, to the extent possible. After that, things went much more smoothly.

The trade center, when I went there, it was quite experimental. Trade centers are really best for small and medium size businessmen who need an evaluation of the market. I really thought that the trade centers would change the attitude of the American business community towards government assistance. Unfortunately, a few years later the trade centers were dramatically cut back. I don't even know if the Frankfurt trade center is still in existence. We could hold exhibits there quite inexpensively. It was a good training ground for me. I think it is really important for young Foreign Service officers to have training in other than in theoretical political and economic issue. They should have experience of the real world. It was a very useful learning assignment. After that, as I have said, I was assigned to act as staff aide to Ford and his deputy principal officer, Everett Melby. A wonderful man - he was the brother of John Melby.

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Q: John Melby who was one of the China hands. Even more importantly, he had a world known affair with Lillian Helman. He's now dead, not very long ago, but I have an interview with him.

SWIERS: His brother was equally gifted. Everett Melby is still alive and he lives in Canada. His wife just died.

Q: *John Melby lived in Canada also.*

SWIERS: Yes, somewhere near Quebec. His last post was as consul general in Quebec. He was terribly cynical. It affected him to that extent.

Q: Did this have an effect on you? Looking at the Foreign Service particularly in the aftermath of the McCarthy period, did you have any feel for the support system of the Foreign Service?

SWIERS: I have to say that I was a little concerned because my father's family had come from the Soviet Union and my father was always worried about that. A sister, who has since died, had in fact gone back to Leningrad and my father always considered that she was responsible for his mother's death. His mother just broke down after that and she died in the early 1930s. So I did have those concerns; there was no question about it. Of course, I was in a totally different environment but one had to be effected by it. Interestingly, as I have said, my first boss indeed should be Bob Cartwright who was Scott McLeod's top aide and very conservative. I remember in a picture somewhere of him wearing a Japanese helmet and holding a Samurai sword that he had found in one of the Japanese houses that he and the FBI had entered to move the people to the concentration camps in the U.S. I wouldn't say that it effected anyone in any great sense. My mother's family very avidly watched the McCarthy hearings. My mother was the liberal in the group. She was repelled by it and the rest of the family saw it as the country subjected to

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subversion. When you saw people like Everett Melby who was so cynical, you understood the tragedy of wrongly accusing people - people who had done well.

Q: Just to get the spirit of the times, how did we view the Soviethreat?

SWIERS: That's a very good question. It had become part of life. It is interesting in retrospect to think that our generation sort of lived with the bomb and the threat of war. Life went on normally, even though we were conscious of it. There was no question that we had the military around, but there was a certain security with the military around. I remember that as one of my responsibilities in Frankfurt was to redraft the emergency evacuation plan. The one that they had for Frankfurt was somewhere in the neighborhood of at least four inches thick with appendices. By the time we figured out what to do, the post would have been overrun. On the other hand, the ENE office was located in Frankfurt and we had to have a pal remember that I rewrote the thing shortening it to maybe a half inch thick. The original plan called for a massive evacuation plan which would begin by bringing everybody to the consulate general, putting American flags on the cars and then we would all go west on the autobahn in a convoy. My view was that this was ridiculous. The Fulda Gap was about 65 miles from Frankfurt; if the war started we would be to reach that. My view was that we should attempt to evacuate as many people by aircraft as we could and the rest would move on by land as best they could - or could stay in place. The problem was - which is a contradiction in Frankfurt - that you had State Department people who understood the risk to be part of their careers, but the GAO and the FAA people and their families were not at all happy about that. But I thought that it would dangerous to put our people out on highways when we were 65 miles from the Fulda Gap where they could be strayed. First of all, the highways would probably be jammed anyway with Germans going one way and troops going to other with total confusion reigning. We somehow envisioned these great convoys that would sail away. I had been the ENE Officer for Crete when I was in Greece and I was supposed to go out and try to help the Americans on the island evacuate, but what were you going to do on an island that was completely

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surrounded by water? Maybe we could find a ship and put them on that, which would be promptly sunk. There was a certain romance, I think, in looking at this.

Q: I was the Vice Counsel in Frankfurt in 1955- 1958 and I remember that I was supposed to put a card table up out in the parking lot and check people. All of us knew that it wasn't going to happen; in fact in those days they even had signs on the Autobahn "This way for evacuation". The feeling was if there is any line that's going to be drawn, it's not going to be drawn in front of Frankfurt; it's going to be drawn way back and you're not going to make it. There certainly was the feeling that the Soviet Union was a threat.

SWIERS: There was a feeling of threat, but I think there was a confidence also in Frankfurt because we were totally surrounded by American forces. You didn't have that same sense of isolation that you would perhaps have elsewhere. Life went on. Frankfurt was still being reconstructed - lots of ditches and holes, buildings were still damaged. I think this is a compliment to the Americans; the deterrence was there and the rebuilding in Europe went on behind that American shield. You did not have a sense of the Soviets coming across the border at any given moment. Perhaps it was a threat, but it was a threat that had been effectively contained.

Q: Before we leave here, you might just mention about Consul General Ford.

SWIERS: I should mention that it was a tragedy. I was in the office when it happened; I remember the secretary thought that I was somehow too young to get involved in this, but ultimately Melby involved me. Ford had gone to a principal officers' conference in Bonn. I remember people asking him why he didn't take the train or fly; he said that he wanted his driver along with him. His driver was Heinrich Gold, and frankly I think Ford worked him too hard. He wanted him there all of the time. You have the problem of how you tell the consul general that Gold was not substituted for enough. I mention this because I think he was probably quite tired. On the way back from Bonn - they were about midway back - Gold pulled out to pass a red car just as that red car pulled out to pass a truck and there was a

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crash. Ford was hurled from the car on one side and killed. His wife was hurled from the car on the other side and survived. The reason was that the car spun around and faced the other direction, so I guess Ford also hit the guardrail. But he was already dead, as we know now. His wife survived and was taken to a hospital. Gold survived, but was no longer a driver; he actually became the top gardener at the consulate general. When I moved over to the GSO, he was there; the grounds of the compound were beautifully maintained and I still to this day remember the rose bushes which had grown terribly scraggly over the years which Gold, to the shock of many people, cut them right down to the base and they grew up again. He was a gifted gardener and this was his hobby. He was a very nice man. I hope he somehow recovered, because of the responsibility of being the consul general's driver when Ford was killed. I should mention, (since you asked how one felt about things in terms of cynicism) that somebody in the State Department decided that the Department was no longer responsible for Mrs. Ford's medical care because she had private insurance. You have to remember that Henry Ford one of the old administrative officers. His wife was in a hospital somewhere north of Frankfurt, and in the consul general's residence was her mother who was in her late 70s and was living with them and their adopted daughter. Beyond that, when we entered the Service, all of your medical needs were taken care of. Clearly Mrs. Ford had suffered her injuries after Ford had been killed so that the Department might have been technically correct - he was killed instantly and she was thrown from the car. I can tell you that I have never forgotten this and what I have never forgotten was George McGhee who was our ambassador, sent a zinger to Washington and needless to say that decision was reversed. I found it absolutely insulting that somebody in the State Department could think that they could save some money on this tragedy. For several years afterward, the Ford car was maintained in the motor pool of the embassy in Bonn. I saw it several months later when I went up to Bonn as the assistant GSO. I think it was kept that way just to remind everybody about driving. It is amazing to me that Heinrich or Mrs. Ford ever looked at it. It was a terrible thing that happened. What happened later was there was a funeral and the Fords went home.

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So Ford passed from the scene and Jimmy Johnstone came in. Another old administrative officer. The Frankfurt political and economic sections were quite small. Angela Clay who was the political officer. Most of the analysis was done in Bonn; we were primarily a consular post and an administrative servicing post. Frank Meloy, who I mentioned previously came through sometime toward the end of my tour. It turned out that Frank had recommend me for the Operations Center after the Frankfurt assignment and that's where I ended up going after Frankfurt.

Q: When you went to the Operations Center in 1966, how did thOperations Center operate in those days?

SWIERS: Actually, before we get into this, I would like to briefly mention something about the GSO side because I think it's worthwhile. As I mentioned earlier, most of the Americans stayed within the Frankfurt compounds, including unfortunately the people attached to the consulate general. I say unfortunately, yet I almost correct myself because what was striking about Frankfurt was that in spite of the enormous military presence around it, one saw very little military presence in the city itself. In retrospect I think this was a wise policy, although sometimes this is criticized. If all our troops in effect had been unleashed on Frankfurt, I think the goodwill would have disappeared very quickly. Basically the troops', except on various occasions, needs were all provided for in their compounds and around their compounds and that was in fact a good idea.

Q: Oh absolutely.

SWIERS: You hear so many people criticizing it; I think it waactually a wise policy.

Q: Now let's go to the Operations Center. How did the OperationCenter work when you were there?

SWIERS: When I came back in the summer of 1966 the Operations Center had been functioning for about five years. The man who really had the idea of the Atlantic Council,

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Ted Achilles, was the one who helped put it together. I believe that he was also the first director but he was gone by the time I came. It served simply as a early warning tool for the policy makers in the Department and their staffs. The cables came in; we got them around; we alerted people quickly. You had a director of the Operations Center and a deputy director. The Op Center was composed of five teams who rotated on a two day basis between shifts of day, night and evening so an officer worked for six days on usually two days of night shift, two days of day shift and two days of evening shift; then he or she were off for about a day and a half and then they would start again. The team was composed of a senior watch officer, the watch officer and an editor. The Junior Officers were rotated between six months of watch Officer and six months as editor. I think the editor was one of the best jobs for a Junior Officer to understand priority and how you get to the heart of the matter. The Op Center published a daily report, a morning summary and an evening summary of traffic that came through. You had to decide what were the most important pieces that came across your desk and sometimes we would even add a wireless ticker.. You would take a cable and reduce it to about three sentences and say this is what it is; then the cables were either attached or were sent to the different piles for the staffers. Every principal read that summary.

Q: For people who might not be familiar with the State Department, what do you mean by a principal?

SWIERS: The principals were the seventh floor of the Department, which meant the secretary, the deputy secretary, the under secretary for political affairs, the under secretary's for economic affairs, the counselor of the Department, the five regional assistant secretaries and the assistant secretary or directors of functional bureaus. They considered the summaries to be one of the more important tools and I think practically everybody read them. I can put it this way: what usually happened was you spent a year in the Op Center as a Junior Officer and then you became a staff assistant to one of the principals or you became a member of the Secretariat - the ones who used to go on trips to keep the paper flowing. After the Op Center, I was assigned to Averill Harriman, the

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under secretary for political affairs, and I could clearly see how valuable my training was. The summary was certainly the first thing that I looked at in the morning, and it was the thing that I put on top of Harriman's in-box. The evening report summary was handled in the same manner.

Q: During 1966-1967, were there any particular crises that came up that you became involved in?

SWIERS: No, I can't say so. There were some crises, but they were handled by a task force, as they do today, which met in another room.

Q: I would imagine the Arab Israeli 1967 War in June of 1967...

SWIERS: I had left by that time. I was left in April. I came in in July of 1966 and I was pulled out early in April of 1967 to be Harriman's aide. I don't recall any crises of that magnitude during my tour. What was more significant was the increasing effect of Vietnam on U.S. policy as a whole. In a sense, U.S. policy became more and more an instrument of Vietnam. I can tell you that by this time I had been in the Foreign Service for five years and had special clearances to work in the Operations Center, so I literally could see everything. There were some restrictions, but basically you saw all of the so-called special intelligence. It's a rather responsible position in retrospect. I will tell you that I began to feel uncomfortable about the Vietnam situation. Something told me that things weren't going exactly the way we wanted and also that the objectives with which we went into Vietnam weren't quite what the cable traffic was showing. It certainly had an effect on me in terms of our Vietnam policy. As you can guess, I was quite happy to be assigned to Harriman since he's the one placed in charge of the negotiations.

The executive secretary of the Department was Ben Reed - he was there throughout the Kennedy and Johnson Administration. He probably had an influence that no other executive secretary has had. The executive secretary is technically both a special assistant to the secretary and executive secretary of the Department. Ben clearly had

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a major influence on Rusk. The other two people who were there when I was there who were the special assistants were Harry Shlaudeman and Andrew Steigman. It was complicated situation because - this is relevant to later on as well - while you had major disagreements on Vietnam policy, I think they were largely united in the view on Soviet policy. Yet even the Vietnam differences were handled in a gentlemanly and rational fashion. You would have Rusk on one side and Ben Reed who was obviously very much against the war in Vietnam on the other, but he still could have been one of Rusk's principal assistants.

Q: So it was not a collection of true believers?

SWIERS: It was not a collection of true believers in the Vietnam policy, but they all agreed on the issue of stopping the Communists and supporting democratic governments. It was already gelling in that you would have Rusk, Walt Rostow and President Johnson on one side and pretty much everybody else on the other. Then at the lower levels you had adherence to one side or the other. I think the Foreign Service was somewhat more ambivalent on it; probably the Foreign Service was more hawkish than dovish on Vietnam.

Q: I would have to say that I was in Vietnam in 1969 - 1970 as consul general in Saigon. Political analysis was not my field, but I thought that things seemed to be going pretty well and I thought that it was not the greatest government in the world, but that it would survive.

SWIERS: The Operations Center was a very good experience. It changes you because you really understand, after an Operations Center assignment, what is really important to policy makers and what is not. You can have real difficulty if you're assigned to a "normal" job or a "normal" post. There people are indeed worrying about something which is very small so that you can have difficulty readjusting to a normal Foreign Service assignment. I think that once you have been in that level you are better off trying to stay in the so called executive track and not return to the traditional.

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Q: Maybe this is not the time to ask this question, but one thing that interests me is whether you ever found that in a way when you get a major policy problem that really catches the attention of the principals, that somehow the experts get shucked off. In other words, the people who were on the ground and kind of know the country and know the area, get almost left behind because it turns into a policy thing?

SWIERS: No, not at that time. I think that is a very good question and brings up a very important point, but no. They may have it, but I do remember the experts were called in every time and their advice was sought. This was a different group; we're reminded again of the Normandy Commemorations.

Q: Right now, this is the week of the 50th anniversary of the Normandy Invasion.

SWIERS: Exactly. Remember that the people who were at the top level had been involved in the world war II in one way or another. They had been involved in Korea. They respected the advice; they didn't always agree with it, but they respected it and they wanted it. I remember when Harriman was flying to someplace in the Middle East, I got a call in the middle of the night because he wanted advice from somebody and I had to call Dick Murphy. Dick got up in the middle of the night and came in and put together some information which Harriman used. They had confidence in the judgements of the lower echelons.. There was different from now, when the secretary ties himself or herself down to a small group of cronies.

Q: Shall we move on to the Harriman times? When were you with Harriman? SWIERS: I was Harriman's last staff assistant and in many ways his last assistant because we went off to Paris and there was a special assistant there named Monty Stearns. I'm sure you know Monty well. I was becoming available just at the time when my predecessor was leaving and my name was there. Monty knew me; he called me in to make sure that I was still there he remembered me from Greece, and he recommended me to Harriman and I was brought in to see the great man briefly. The great man looked at me and that was it. I

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was from New York, and I suspect that somehow helped a bit. It was interesting because my first memory of Harriman was back when he was running for governor. I remember him in my neighborhood. We heard the loudspeaker saying "Come see Averill Harriman" and there was a truck with him in it. When I was in Fordham in my last year - probably in the same time frame when Nixon came in and Harriman came in - Harriman had just returned from his trip to the Soviet Union - that first trip he made. That was the famous 10-hour talk that he had with Khrushchev; he came to Fordham to talk about it.

While I was in the Op Center I ran into him a number of times on the elevator. What really struck me about him and why I was obviously delighted to work for him was that, one day we were both standing waiting for the elevator; he was going up to the eighth floor for lunch and I was going downstairs. For some reason, the elevator didn't come, so he turned to me and started a conversation. Throughout the whole period that I worked for him, he was very senior, but he treated me as an equal. It was quite striking; I was very much taken by that throughout the tour. He respected your judgement; he may have disagreed with it but he always wanted to hear younger judgements. He was very concerned that he not get locked into a view that he had 30 or 40 years ago. I think that was one of the reason's that he very early on was one of the people that felt that our involvement in Vietnam was wrong.

Q: To begin with, what was Harriman's position and what were you doing?

SWIERS: This is very interesting because it's relevant to the whole period. As you know, Harriman came in in 1961 and by then he was about to turn 70. He was the defeated Governor of New York. The Kennedys had some vague memories of his war time service which was notable. In fact he had been a candidate twice for the presidency, but this was a new generation and a new crowd. But enough of the people that were coming with the Kennedys knew him well and he finally did get to meet Jack Kennedy at some point. As you know he was hired first as an ambassador-at-large. They felt that they had to have him in government, so they brought him into government.

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Two things happened. He was the Soviet expert and when he insisted on seeing Kennedy before Kennedy went to meet Khrushchev, Kennedy had to see him. So there was that famous five minutes that he had with Kennedy during which he gave Kennedy a piece of advice on dealing with Khrushchev by not to get involved in ideology: stick to what you have to talk about, he's going to try to bully you; Harriman gave a primer on how to deal with a Soviet. The advice was right on the mark. My sense is that Kennedy did not follow that advice exactly and if you remember Khrushchev really tried to humiliate him. Kennedy was not young in the sense of young today; he was a war veteran and a hero. He was a tough customer. Secondly they had to do something about Laos. They were trying to prevent that country from exploding prematurely. If you recall, Harriman was sent out and successfully negotiated an agreement which called for Laos to be neutral. That gave us several more years and even then Laos was never a full party in the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese used them, but there was nothing much that we could do about that.

Harriman formed a permanent friendship with Prince Souvana Phouma whose daughter is married to Perry Culley. They live here in Washington. I remember that because of the visits they made. Perry was assigned to Paris as the cultural attache when we went there about a year later. I should mention by the way as an anecdote that Bill Sullivan was then was an O-3 or an O-2 He was assigned to the delegation. Harriman felt very uncomfortable with all of the senior officers in the delegation who were pretty hard lin- "you were either with us or against us". He couldn't have Sullivan as his deputy because there were people who outranked him; so he sent the others home and made Sullivan his deputy and that was when Sullivan's career took off to where he became "Field Marshall". People used to joke about "Field Marshall Sullivan of the NC Army".

There's another question that I think should be examined in detail about the Vietnam period. Whether you're in Vietnam or not, the civilian micro-management of the war is something that needs to be questioned. Harriman then became assistant secretary of State foFar Eastern Affairs. There is a famous anecdote about that, and I believe it came

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from Paul Nitze who I understand was present at the conversation. Nitze was visiting Harriman in Geneva when a call came from Kennedy. Harriman for some reason didn't have his hearing aid; Kennedy was calling to ask him to become assistant secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. The story was that Harriman said "By all means Mr. President" and then he hung up and turned to Nitze and said "What does the President want me to do?" Nitze said: "To become assistant secretary for Far Eastern Affairs" and Harriman said: "Damn, I really wanted European Affairs." But he said that on the other hand, one does what the president asks one to do. That I think is a singular comment on that generation; it's in part the reason why it took so many of them so long to break with Johnson on Vietnam. Harriman did it early, but that sense of duty to the elected president was very strong. It was bipartisan and I think it was one of the great strengths of our foreign policy. That to me is one of the great tragedies of Vietnam; it broke that sense of duty.

Harriman did very well as we know. When Kennedy got rid of Chester Bowles, who was a little too liberal for the administration, he went to Harriman and made him under secretary of State for political affairs. George Ball became under secretary of State. There has been some speculation that if Kennedy had lived, he planned to replace Rusk in the second term with Harriman. There are other people who argue against it because Harriman was involved in the decision to allow the assassination of Nguyen and his brother. His participation will never been clear until all relevant documents are made public. Nevertheless, whatever the situation was, Harriman had a very, very close relationship to the Kennedys and I think was getting increasing responsibilities.

You've heard the famous story about him in what is now the East Asian Bureau, looking around and saying "We need some young men in this group." He probably did that. As I mentioned at the beginning, one of his great strengths was that he would surround himself with young people, not a "yes men," but quite the opposite, to challenge him. If you were not challenging him he would let you know that he was unhappy. You can imagine the pleasure that it was for a young officer like myself to work for him.

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Q: What did you do?

SWIERS: I basically did the standard staff assistant work, keeping track of what cable traffic he was reading. I started to have an influence on his thinking because I changed the way his traffic was presented to him. It was one of the lessons I learned in the Operations Center. Instead of simply handing him his traffic as it came in, I would give it to him with two or three sentence summary. Let's face it, what I highlighted, he saw first - that is what I thought was important. You begin to have an influence and I think he began to respect that after awhile. He would ask me questions about a range of issues. So I was the staff assistant really, until we went to Paris. The reason I say that is because I don't want to exaggerate my role. Monty was there as his special assistant; he left shortly afterwards. His tour was coming to the end and also he had a heart attack. So he moved on and was replaced by Newberry. Then there was had another special assistant - Frank Siebert - who looked after POW matters. Frank is now the press spokesman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. That was a major responsibility and let's face it, it was an issue that the administration didn't want to have to deal with; so they unloaded it on Harriman because it was a "no win" situation. Siebert had many of the POW spouses coming to him. I remember Mrs. Stockdale came to him; they felt comfortable when they knew that somebody of Harriman's stature looking after those issues.

There was also the Vietnam assistant for the first year; that was Chet Cooper who had been a CIA station chief in London. He was an old OSS officer during the war and he was supposed to help Harriman prepare the various negotiation attempts. I think Johnson gave that to Harriman because at that time they were still trying to fight the war, but you don't give something to an activist like Averill Harriman and have nothing happen. He began to explore all of the different opportunities of where could we negotiate; those were all outlined in the Pentagon papers. Henry Kissinger by the way was one of the eight people that Harriman used. Chet left after about a year. Chet got frustrated and Harriman said: "Look, you just have to move along" and Chet went on. He was replaced by Dan Davidson,

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a lawyer who had been working for Bill Bundy in East Asian Affairs. Dan was the one then shaking the papers. By that time a group - called the Non-Group - had been established under Nick Katzenback who had replaced George Ball. It was a group of the people who were questioning our Vietnam policy; included were Ben Read and Clark Clifford and Paul Warnke after they came on board. I must say that it is a tribute to Rusk that he tolerated that group and allowed it to do its work while he and the administration were going into a different direction. But he recognized that one of the reasons that all of worked was that it was that it all took place inside the government and there were no leaks. People weren't trying to make their points outside; they were trying to influence the president.

Q: During your time with Harriman how did you see Harriman working with both Rusk and Johnson? Or did you see any of it?

SWIERS: Yes, I saw it and it was difficult. As I mentioned at the beginning, this was a different generation. These people did not try to subvert each other; they talked to each other. In the final analysis, Rusk was the secretary of State and Harriman just kept working to change the policy. I disagree with the way Rudy Abrams expresses it in the biography of Harriman where he talks about Harriman ingratiating himself. These people could relate one to another. They had common experiences; they may have disagreed, but they kept the disagreements within the government and talked them through. Slowly, but steadily, it began to be realized that we could not "win" in Vietnam. I think also there was some vague understanding that the concept of this monolithic communist movement was not correct. Rusk however, was locked on Korea. Rusk could not see Vietnam except through the eyes of his Korean experience. Harriman, who also had been involved in the Korea issue, did see a difference. Johnson frankly, was a foreign policy neophyte; on the other hand he had this sense that it was important to be viewed as strong. He was very concerned about the U.S. looking weak.

Q: Again, this is very much the ethos of many Americans who were not either Texan or playing games. This was sort of the view of the you might say the "reason establishment".

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SWIERS: We were also in transition at that time. It was really a period of transition from “you're either with us or against us”. That was really a transition. You asked me what my role was and as I said, that my formal role was that of a staff assistant. I did not have any direct responsibilities or line responsibilities for Vietnam and POW's. But, as I said, Harriman was the type of person who encouraged you to give views. I must say that it was striking to me, having just come out of the Foreign Service hierarchy where you were expected to do things in certain levels at certain times about certain things; he encouraged you to go beyond your assigned duties. So I began to have an influence on him which went beyond my formal assignment. I can't tell you when or how, but when something would come up or I would bring in a document, I guess because we related very easy, he would ask for my opinion which I think he came to respect. I would feel comfortable making a comment if something came up. Sometimes he would perform his “crocodile” act.

Q: One gets these stories where he would “snap” at people or flip off his hearing aid.

SWIERS: He did not “suffer fools gladly”; that was very true. Kennedy told us this - that Harriman looked as though he was half asleep and finally when the discussion got dumb, he would come up with a comment that would just cut off the talk. I guess it was due to part of his wartime experience - the way he dealt with things. One forgets that he was an enormously successful business man; he had been chairman of Union Pacific and chairman of his own bank. We forget that whole period before; he had that uncanny ability. I will mention that when we reach 1969 and the first birthday party after he had finished what would turn out to be his final formal position in the government. He had a real talent, and I think they began to realize how valuable he was. In the same way he would encourage me; I guess that more often than not, even if he didn't agree with me, he would still think about what I said. I know I had influence with him in a way that my position description would not demonstrate. One thing that I think is important to mention was that my predecessor, man by the name of Dufor, would take him somewhat literally. Some

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cables would say "To only be opened by addressee" and Dufor would do exactly that. The very first day I arrived, I looked at this and ignored the instruction. I slit the envelope open. I gave him the cables but they were marked with comments on them. I was his person and that was it. If I was his staff assistant, then I was an extension of him. He liked it and I carried it on. Of course what that meant naturally was that I knew everything; in fact I even moved myself back (Dufor had been located in an office, Harriman was in a double suite at that time and Dufor was in the office next door) into the main area across from the two secretaries. There was a small office across from that where all of the safes were and there was a desk in there. I moved because then I could see everybody coming in and out and I knew everything that was going on. If there is any advice to give staff assistants, remember that. You want to be of use to your boss and have him also take account of you, you make sure that you're in a place where you can be seen and heard and where you can see and hear. That's very, very important.

Q: You say that you were passing on your comment; give a little feel of this. Were you getting anything? Were you having contact with officers of your own rank who were also dealing with Vietnam or other things? At that level were you getting any of that, or were you pretty well removed?

SWIERS: I was pretty well removed. I related to Dan Davidson; I saw a lot of Dick Holbrooke - Dick and I are friends to this day. To the extent that I related to the officers of my own rank, they were the seventh floor assistants, the people in the Operations Center and people in the secretary's staff offices. I related much more to the others - Ben Read for example and John Walsh who was one of the deputy executive directors. I'll talk more about John later on.

Q: *Vietnam was the main absorption of our time. What were yogetting from Dick Holbrooke and Andy Steigman and others?*

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SWIERS: There was division; opinions were totally divided on how to pursue it. A lot of them still saw this as a struggle of good versus evil: communism versus capitalism. Some views were very simplistic. As I mentioned, this was a transitional period to understanding that things weren't quite as clear cut as they seemed. At that time we were really just beginning to perceive that there were differences between the Chinese and the Russians. One of the great tragedies we would argue about was that we did not have an embassy in the PRC.

Q: There really wasn't much going on there because the Chinese were going through their own...

SWIERS: I can tell you that I never formally read about it until after I finished with Harriman. I was at the Armed Forces Staff College and I got myself a copy of Adam Ulombs "History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1967." He was one of the first, (the book had just come out) which noted that there was an inescapable rivalry between China and the Soviet Union. I think that we misunderstood that because of Korea. The Chinese didn't only enter Korea because the Soviets wanted them to; they came in for other reasons. We were getting too close to them. People were just beginning to grasp this. It's a lot easier now if you think about it, but to look at it in those times there were some very clear differences. People weren't considered soft on communism; Harriman wasn't soft, nor Katzenback or Clark. There was a real question whether the reasons we were in Vietnam were valid. It was very shortly after the Marines were put into Da Nang that we began to worry. You began to see it. But we really supported a democratic government? I think we began then to understand that the Vietnamese government that we supported did not truly have the support of the population. A lot of people disagreed with that. There was enormous disagreement and what really brought things to a head was Tet.

Q: Which was in 1968?

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SWIERS: Yes; January or February of 1968. As we know today Tet was a victory in the military sense. It finally forced the Pentagon to understand not to try to adapt its advice to fit what a president wanted to do. We saw this later with Colin Powell. You've got to come out and tell the president straight that we're over there to win this war. The famous Westmoreland cable about what are we going to do to win, calling for another several hundred thousand troops. He was probably right; clearly the South Vietnamese themselves were not going to win on their own. Things began to become a little bit clearer. We realized that the North was a much more formidable force than anticipated. There were, I think, the beginnings of reflections which Harriman himself had remembering back to the immediate post-war policy when we were not supporting the French's return. Yet, because of the real concern over metropolitan France going communist, we dropped our opposition and then allowed ourselves to be sucked into the support of the South Vietnamese government. I want to be careful, because in retrospect we can talk about that era much more clearly.

Q: We're trying to recreate the time.

SWIERS: When Harriman finally wrote his memoirs of the war, he didn't want to do it because he was concerned that writing with 30 years hindsight, even being honest he could still not be thinking the way he thought then. What he did was to use the same model that Henry Stimson had used by having Bundy write the book with him commented on it. It was in the third person. Ellie Abel did that for him and I think that it's very important to history. Everybody should understand that the way I'm saying it now, I am doing my best to put my mind back to the way my mind was then. No matter how much I do it, I'm still doing with 30 years experience. It's very, very difficult to try and analyze. The one thing as I say over and over again is there was debate over Vietnam then. There was concern on the part of probably even Harriman that were they 100% right. Sadly I think Dean Rusk felt himself 100% right. That really is a tragedy. The same with Walt Rostow; I think that's what led to Johnson's ultimate fall because he so relied on him. He felt comfortable with

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them both socially and ideologically since they were both outsiders from the establishment themselves - even though Rostow had become a professor and Rusk had been president of the Ford Foundation. But they were still from the same background. They reinforced Johnson's predilections; that I think is one of the great tragedies of Vietnam and one of the great tragedies of a man who I think might have gone down as one of our great presidents for his domestic achievements and the things that he started that were never carried out.

Q: Why don't we stop here and pick up when Harriman was involved in the peace talks. You went with him, correct?

SWIERS: I went with him to the talks, where I was assistant not just to Harriman but also to Vance. Talk about a job that can kill somebody, even at the age of 29 - being an assistant to the two of them at the same time.

When Harriman left the under secretary for political affairs job, Walt Rostow took over and Harriman became ambassador-at-large - they obviously still wanted him in the administration. I don't think Harriman was as much in sync with President Johnson as he had been with Kennedy. He was given the responsibility for the Vietnam peace effort which I don't think anybody thought was going to come to much of anything at that time. After all, we were really just getting engaged in Vietnam. Henry Kissinger was involved and I think "Pennsylvania" was the code word for Kissinger. All of this is in the Pentagon papers, so I won't go into much detail. I remember Harriman making major efforts with and through the Romanians. He stopped in Romania in late 1967, while on his way home from leading a U.S. delegation to the dedication of the Mangloid Dam in Pakistan. I arrived in April of 1967; there came the 1967 war in the Middle East and Harriman was promptly sent up to New York to talk and work things out together with a number of the Israelis and others. I went along with him to New York on that trip where I performed the traditional staff aide role of making sure that he had all of the papers that he needed. I obviously acquired more and more knowledge of what was going on as we went along. But the prime focus was still the Vietnam negotiations; that's where Harriman's his heart was -

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how to try to bring our involvement to an end. We also were responsible for the POWs. We related very closely to Barbara Watson who was then director of security and consular affairs. I remember vividly a worthwhile story. We went up to New York when (to show the difference of attitude in those days) CBS had just received the first tape from a French TV team which had just visited the "Hanoi Hilton."

Q: That's where the American prisoners were kept; it was derogatory term for a jail

SWIERS: Yes. I use the term figuratively. When you saw them, I must say that one was very much impressed by our prisoners who were clearly being filmed unwillingly and were trying to demonstrate that they had been coerced into what they were doing; in effect they giving "the finger" to the cameramen in various surreptitious ways. There was one prisoner who had his hand up against the wall and of course he just had one finger up. There was another one who did it in different ways. On the other hand I remember myself mentioning to CBS that it was good that we got that film so that we knew that their spirits were still sound and on the other hand could they delete it. Obviously if the Vietnamese saw that, it would be commented on and those prisoners could indeed be badly tortured for trying to disobey their captors. They deleted it; if you look at the news clippings that were shown, there wasn't a finger in sight. Those were different times. I'm trying to remember how we exactly started to link into the Vietnamese and somehow I think it may have been through the French ultimately; I'm not sure but this is in the records. What I think was important was the issue of the bombing halts. Both sides wanted the talks to be unconditional; neither side had made a concession. We worked out some formula where in effect we did a partial bombing halt and the Vietnamese did something to compensate for that. I guess it was a partial cease fire or something of that nature. Then the issue was: where should we meet? We went through all sort of permutations including an Indonesian offer of a battleship that the Soviets had given them. One of the wits among us, perhaps it was Chet Cooper, commented "Well, those would be very quick talks because the battleship had no air conditioning".

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Q: It was probably almost in sinking condition.

SWIERS: I suspect that we would have been singularly disadvantaged there. But we came down to three sites and they were Warsaw, Geneva and Paris. I think we leaned toward Geneva and the Vietnamese leaned toward Warsaw; there actually was some sympathy on our side for Warsaw because the Poles themselves had been involved in one of the communication efforts but we didn't really want to go to Warsaw. Symbolically it was not good to go to a communist country. I remember that Johnson was very much against it; the Vietnamese did not want Geneva because of their memories of Geneva.

Q: We're talking about 1955 and the Geneva Summit that essentially divided Vietnam.

SWIERS: Correct. Their image was that once again they would end up compromising. So we ended up in Paris, which actually I think was the best solution of all. The French were superb in organization. The talks were set for May 1968; it was to be held at the Hotel Majestic which was just off of the Champs Elysees. I emphasize that dissent from the Vietnam policy took place within the government. There were no discussions outside or leaks. Johnson insisted that there be dual negotiators, so Cy Vance was appointed with Harriman. Johnson remembered him from the Detroit riots and the Cyprus negotiations. Harriman and Vance had never worked together before and I would note that they turned out to be an incredible team. If there ever was an interlocking team of negotiators it was Harriman and Vance. Phil Habib who had been the political counselor in Saigon was appointed as the delegation's coordinator. We had an executive secretary team with us.

As I mentioned, I was made Assistant to both Harriman and Vance. There was real concern about dissent within the delegation. For example throughout the pre-negotiation efforts the code word for all of this had been "crocodile" after Harriman. There was real concern; it reached such triviality as worrying that the Vietnamese would try some of the same tricks as the Koreans - e.g., smaller tables and higher flags. Dean Rusk was particularly worried about that. I must note that Rusk throughout this whole period of

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leading up to the negotiations, looked at things strictly in terms of communist versus non-communist. I would say that we were beginning to see evidence of it, but didn't quite understand that there had always been a split between the PRC and the Soviet Union. We saw them as monolithic; it was a difficult concept for us to grasp at that time. I think it really wasn't until Nixon went to China that one understood that it never had been that way.

Frankly, I first grasped it in Adam Ulombs "History of the Soviet Foreign Policy." I think he was one of the most deductive articulators of the concept that there never had been a monolithic communist system. In many ways, I think what you're hearing from me are the differences translated into small things. Johnson would not allow us to have a White House plane to take the delegation out. When I found this out, I called Bob Peaslee who at time was Clark Clifford's assistant; it turned out that Clifford was going out to the NATO defense ministers' meeting and he said that he would take us. He not only took us; he took the whole delegation. They removed the beds from the plane and put in seats and we literally had the whole delegation on the plane. You might say that Harriman and Vance had a final eight hours to consult with Clifford and Warnke who were the leading people in the government who felt that the negotiations must move forward.

Q: For the record, Clifford was Secretary of Defense at the time.

SWIERS: Yes, and Paul Warnke was the assistant secretary for international security affairs. We were under a close leash, but not a tight leash. If there was anything that we perceived might be a major breakthrough or could change the current direction of U.S. policy, then we had to report back before you could move on it. We did have to send in a thorough report at the end of each negotiating session. The sessions initially began as formal sessions at the Majestic hotel which if I remember correctly had been the Gestapo headquarters during the war - that's why it never became a hotel again; instead it became a French government center. We were all put up at the Creole hotel. Idar Rimstead, who had been counselor for administration in the Paris embassy, had returned to Washington to become under secretary of State for administration, he succeeded Bill Crockett and he

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made the decision that everybody would be put up in the Creole. This wasn't as bad then as it sounds today. In fact the Americans still got a very good rate at the Creole. However Paris itself was expensive and what we wanted to do was to have the government pay for the hotel and then also pay a percentage of the per diem for expenses - enough so that people could survive on it.

At that time when we went out, we thought that the negotiations would end very quickly. All three networks were there; the satellites had just begun to be used and we literally had the anchormen Cronkite, Brinkley and John Chancellor there as well as all of the other great names. Charles Collingwood was brought back to cover it personally since he was a close friend of Harriman's. General Vernon Walter was the defense attache; he had been Harriman's assistant in the Marshall Plan days and was located on the floor right above us. We had a very good delegation and I think it's worthwhile mentioning some of the people. As I mentioned before, Dick Holbrooke came along; I came along as the assistant to Harriman and Vance. I'll mention that there was some question as to whether I could come in light of our financial resources, but it was Holbrooke who told Harriman that he needed to have me. I think I can say with some modesty that he proved to be 100% correct. Bill Jordan was assigned to us by the White House and he was a fine fellow. He was there primarily as the press man, but we all understood that he was Johnson's and Rostow's man and was there to make sure that we wouldn't stray too far from the straight and narrow. The others who were there were, General Andrew Goodpastor who is now the co-chair of the Atlantic Council; he was assigned as the military representative. Harriman had known him for years and was absolutely delighted with that assignment, though they had some strong differences. Goodpastor was only there for about six weeks and was then assigned as deputy MACV. He was followed by George Seignious who had done a large amount of work on Pentagon papers and Pentagon policy on Vietnam. I may have missed some others - Dan Davidson who is now a lawyer here in Washington, Dickson Davis was our CIA briefer and I should mention of course Colonel Andy Anderson was my counterpart with Goodpastor. He later retired as a lieutenant general. A very important

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figure was Colonel Paul Goreman who arrived with us; he was a much decorated hero from Vietnam. In fact he was still recovering from his wounds; nevertheless he proved to be a very important substantive part of the military representative's office.

The talks began with each side enunciating its policy. We agreed that French would be the medium language. The Vietnamese translated into French and then our interpreter translated into English. We spoke English; it was translated into French and then the Vietnamese interpreter translated into Vietnamese. Clearly both sides had people who could speak English. Zan Twi of the central committee was the first negotiator; Colonel Harmanlau was the deputy and Le Ductor was the press spokesman. I should have mentioned back when I was talking about Paris that we were wondered whether the Vietnamese would accept Paris. One day I was sitting in Harriman's office and there was a note delivered from LeDuctor out of London; in effect he said "Paris;" so we knew that would be acceptable and we very quickly picked up on it.

For several weeks, nothing happened. The records are full of these long speeches made by each side; we took breaks. Each side made a statement, then we would take a break, then we would have a discussion. The breaks were the most important part because we broke down into small groups. I was responsible for making sure that these breaks were organized. Each one of them had a group that would match off, the Vietnamese military with Goodpastor, Seignious with others, and so on. I remember that Dan Davison and Dick were with another group. In Dick's group, the Vietnamese started asking about "miracle rice." We were already looking beyond the talks, even though the discussions hadn't progressed at all.

I must say that it was a very important thing to understand at that time. The war had been going on with U.S. involvement for three horrible years; we did inflict a military defeat on the Vietcong at Tet. Politically, we never and probably would never would gain the support of the South Vietnamese people. Nevertheless there were at times amicable exchanges as the Vietnamese would harken back to World War II and to the U.S. support of what

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became the Vietnam war against the Japanese. They were obviously disappointed that the U.S. had decided then to reverse itself by backing the French. The Vietnamese man who was the liaison officer would visit us. He very proudly would note how their constitution was modeled on the American constitution. I didn't think of them as being communists, to be quite honest. There was clearly a bit of flexibility there. I think we were all just beginning to understand this.

Q: There's one thing that you're not mentioning and that is the South Vietnamese?

SWIERS: You're absolutely right and I'm delinquent in not mentioning that. The initial talks were between the North Vietnamese and the United States because we would not recognize the VC and they would not recognize the South Vietnam government. In effect, the talks were not formal talks; they were really discussions. We had a special language we used since we were not recognizing North Vietnam yet. They were more than happy to recognize us obviously.

Then there was a breakthrough and again I would have to check the records as to who proposed this. It may have been a signal from the Vietnamese - Harvanloug to Vance. Obviously we were getting nowhere in the formal sessions; that was very public since there were press statements each day. Both sides would talk as we came out of the Majestic; and we would go back to the Creole or the embassy and hold a press conference. They would go back to Lutisha hotel on the left bank where they were staying. That was very important to them; they made a big point of that - they would not be on the right bank. You have to understand in the context of all of this; this was through the end of June when the Auvanmon was going on in Paris. The students were rioting. In fact I should backtrack and mention that. The very night we arrived was one of the first nights of the riots and we had been asked to circle Paris. We were going to land at 8:00; we were asked to circle Paris for ten minutes and come down at 8:10, so that it could be carried live on French TV. As I mentioned, all of our networks were there. Harriman had prepared a statement, noting that it wasn't for practical purposes 20 years to the day since he had previously arrived on a mission of peace. He had arrived in Paris on May 10, 1948 with the Marshall Plan and

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we were coming in the night of May 9, for the Vietnam talks. We were circling Paris and we could see the fires burning.

Q: This was a student revolt more or less.

SWIERS: It was a student revolt which had something to do with student fees.

Q: In effect it caused De Gaulle to resign didn't it? In the long term?

SWIERS: He never resigned, he withdrew.

Q: Okay, excuse me.

SWIERS: He withdrew - very smartly. He was quite skilled. The figure for the riots became Daniel ComVandit. I remember there was an exchange that he had with some French minister about his sex life and the French minister would say: "In my day I went and took a cold shower." It was the European equivalent of what was beginning in the United States.

Q: The 1960s.

SWIERS: The 1960s. Our's really began in 1969, when Bobby Kennedy was killed.

Q: Woodstock; it was the 1968 Chicago thing.

SWIERS: Yes, but the rationale were different.. Once again, it was the issue of the "perpetual" student that you so often have in Europe. It's amazing when I think that it was 26 years ago and I'm trying to remember. We circled Paris and we could see the fires and when we landed, Harriman made his speech. I remember I was standing toward the door of the VIP lounge, watching Harriman talk and I happened to turn around and saw that Clark Clifford had gotten off the plane. I guess they were refueling it in Paris and here was Clark Clifford with his face against the window looking as Harriman was speaking. If

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some photographer had turned around at that moment they would have had one of those Pulitzer Prize photos of Clark. He was a great figure; he was most supportive of us.

At one point we had query from Washington on whether we needed to move the talks from Paris because of the student riots. We were ensconced on the right bank; the students got nowhere near the Place de la Concorde which is where the embassy is; we were surrounded by the CRS, the Company Republican de Security, which was a rather vicious outfit. One night a few of the students made the mistake of entering Concorde after a big demonstration which they had held at the Bastille. I woke up literally hearing the sounds of the students being pounded by the CRS. I went out on my balcony and I could see them being beat up by the CRS and being thrown into the trucks. It was a stir but the students did not have the support of the population.

Q: As I recall, they didn't go after the workers; they tried to make common cause with the workers.

SWIERS: They tried to, but it was the old issue that these were bourgeoisie students, with some interspersing of workers, had the great causes, but saw themselves as superior to the workers. As we now know, the communist unions were conservative. The communists dominated the unions in Paris. I remember one Sunday when we had finished at the embassy around lunch time, I decided to walk down to Brasserie Lip to have lunch. I had crossed over to the south side of the boulevard and as I was walking I noticed on the other side a group of students who carrying not a red flag, but a black flag. The anarchists had started to take over, and they were stopping both pedestrians and cars and demanding contributions before they would let them continue. I was always happy that I was on the other side because as an American I don't like to be coerced. I probably would have gotten into a fight and gotten myself hurt. The students never picked up on the role of the anarchists. De Gaulle timed it right. What we know now is that he went to Germany to talk to General Massou who commanded the French forces there. When he was certain of their allegiance, he made a statement (and we knew that he was out of the country

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because the statement was carried on French television but it was just the voice) - that magnificent appeal to Francois Frances that things now had to be brought back to order. I might note that throughout this I was disappointed with the embassy reporting. At the time I don't think Bob Blake who was the DCM had arrived yet and Bob Anderson hadn't arrived. The people who were there were the people who were there when De Gaulle told us to get out and they were real bitter about De Gaulle. There was no way you could have said or done anything right. I think the embassy lost a little bit of its objectivity. It was looking for signs that De Gaulle would fall.

Dick Walters on the other hand was doing his reporting for DIA. This is the man of 1,000 languages, including French. He learned French as a child and he could go out and he would become a Frenchman. He disappeared into the streets regularly. Because of his connection with Harriman, he would give us copies of his reports to DIA. In those days you didn't have the electronic system and the DIA reports didn't necessarily reach the State Department. So I called Ben Read who was then executive secretary to tell him that in terms of their judgement of the French situation, the Department should get a hold of Walter's reports. I remember Ben was out, but Jeanne Davis was on duty and I hope my call had some effect on the Department. Walter's reporting was balanced; he saw the pluses and minuses. He also was the one who saw the clear signal that De Gaulle was going to come back. One evening (I'm not sure of the time, late May or June - my wife had just arrived and stayed for three weeks and then went back to Denmark to pick up our son and then came back to France at the end of June) but Dick Walters invited my wife and myself and Hilde Shisken, Harriman's great personal assistant to drive around Paris with him in his little Renault because he sensed that something was changing. He was absolutely right; we drove over toward Bastille where the students were usually gathering and they had disappeared. Then we came back down one of the boulevards that runs near the Place de la Concorde and there was a young lady handing out leaflets to people asking them to come to a rally for the Republic at the Place de la Concorde the following day. The following day the Concorde was filled with people. De Gaulle through Pompidou

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had organized this rally. De Gaulle again did not appear; he was off in the distance. Pompidou led the rally and then the whole crowd marched up the Champs Elysees to lay the traditional wreath and that was the end. The uprising just totally collapsed and the students left. There is an inherent conservatism in France and this is an interesting sidelight to our talks because it had a little effect initially on the Vietnamese. I think they began to grasp too that the political situation in France was not going to move to the left. In fact it swung dramatically to the right in reaction to the students. A year or two later, De Gaulle left.

Let me return to the talks themselves. The so-called "secret talks" were started and I was sent out with a CIA Representative to a safe house in another part of Paris. I'd better not identify it because I don't know if that's public information yet. It was very effectively done. I looked at it and I said it was fine and the arrangements then were made to meet out there. I guess Vance actually had met with Hau VanLaugh a couple of times before. But I do remember Vance trying to sneak out one day from the building so he wouldn't be seen. He actually got out without the media or anyone else seeing him. It was very effective. We would arrive at the "safe house" about 15 minutes before the Vietnamese; then the Vietnamese would come in and we would have the talks in this house around a table. It was a very small group; effectively it was Harriman, Vance, one or both of our interpreters, John Negroponte and David Angle, Dick was there a few times, Habib was there. The formula varied of who came. I was always there because I was the assistant responsible for making sure that the thing went smoothly.

Q: Excuse me, what does "being the assistant to make things smoothly" mean?

SWIERS: I don't know; just to keep an eye out for the papers that they needed. Like a staff assistant. I was kept very well briefed on what was happening, so that I would be able to identify a problem if something was going off into the wrong direction. I was not at the table as one of the negotiators. I filled the role in many ways of a secretary or a staff officer.

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Q: If somebody wanted something, did you call somebody?

SWIERS: That or I would make sure that the papers went around. I would keep track of what was going on and what direction we were going in. I was responsible for reports going back for the final review. It was a peculiar role; it was a very personal role to Harriman and Vance. As time went on I became a “sounding” board - more for Harriman than for Vance. Vance and Habib were very close; they really worked very closely together. I in many ways started to fill that role more and more for Harriman as time went on.

Q: You said that they made a wonderful team. How did they work together?

SWIERS: You don't want to carry it too far but Harriman was the “thinker” and Vance was the “doer.” Harriman set the tone for the delegation, set the direction and Vance implemented it. A lot of times they went back and forth. They were two negotiators who complimented each other. I think that the White House thought Vance was going to be its person. When I say the White House, I mean Johnson, Rusk and Rostow. They were sorely mistaken. What I think was clear almost from the first day was that Vance and Harriman were both on the same wave length regarding the need for the U.S. to extricate itself from Vietnam in a dignified and honorable fashion.

Q: How did you see the North Vietnamese delegation?

SWIERS: Damn good. They were highly professional; very tough. It was in striking contrast both with the VC who appeared toward the end and the GVN. There were VC in Paris, as we know now.

Q: VC being the Vietcong. This was supposedly the indigenous South Vietnamese organization opposed to the GVN which is the government of Vietnam i.e. South Vietnam's government.

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SWIERS: As we know now in light of Tet, the VC had disappeared as an effective military machine; it was all North Vietnamese after that. On the other hand, the government of Vietnam was still an ongoing organization. Still one really had to see the contrast between the quality of the South Vietnamese representatives and those of the North. One was impressed by the North; they were very, very tough. You got down to business quickly; we didn't have to beat around the bush on issues. We both knew where we stood and the question was how to move together. The move together was based on the unconditional bombing halt and a cease fire. This is what we worked on throughout the long period from July, when we got the secret talks underway - where the real work was done. But we still had the weekly meeting at the Majestic, which became more and more formalized and I suspect that anyone who is a historian, looking at the statements that were made by either side probably could see a change in the statements, but I don't think it was evident to anyone at that time. The networks, after the first three or four weeks, realized that this thing was going to drag on; so they all packed up and went home. We used to have daily sessions with all of those great figures of the media. The media was skeptical; the media was listening but at the same time these were people who had all gone through the war together.

Q: I was just rereading an interview that I did with Ben Read about three years ago and he said that he started to insert in the daily reading for the president a little balance by showing how the North Vietnamese might look at what we're doing. In other words, saying that we were conducting military actions and diplomatic actions, but that the two often didn't seem to be on the same wave length. He said that by doing this, which Rusk allowed him to do, some actions were stopped and there was a little more coordination because without this initiative there was no way of tying the two together. I don't know, but that's what he was said.

SWIERS: He was correct. I was in Paris at the time, but I can tell you that we would have a daily briefing which was held in Vance's office; we had a very small delegation so all of

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us were all there at the time. We all had the high clearances; Dickson Davis would give the briefing which had been sent to him from Washington which included the various reports coming out of Vietnam. Paul Gorman had literally come back to poke holes in them and critiqued them. I think this is something that one has to think about, in a broader spectrum. There was this business with Westmoreland and Mike Wallace and CBS. I don't think that anybody really lied but it is true I think that whenever you're reporting and you're in charge of something, you always try to put the best face on. What you needed was somebody like Paul Gorman who would tell you that wasn't so. I think that it is an enormous tribute to both Goodpastor and Seignious that they let Gorman make those presentations - counterpresentations you might say. It was invaluable and it gave us a better picture of just what was happening in the war. One was having trouble getting a sense of whether we were succeeding militarily or not.

Q: I was there in 1969 and 1970. I was consul general in Saigon and you would watch these military briefings and obviously these were done to impress your superiors. You had to show progress. Unlike the Foreign Service where you try to present the situation, but we're just reporting. You're an action person and if things aren't going well then it's your fault.

SWIERS: I have to say that I'm a little skeptical of that because I do think even the embassy reporting showed a bit of progress. In other words, part of the progress was to demonstrate that the GVN with our assistance was emerging as a viable institution.

Q: I'm really talking about the normal mind-set of the Foreign Service as opposed to the military. Vietnam was unique, in that everybody got caught in the process. But the normal Foreign Service officer basically reports that this is how I see the things, because he's usually not responsible. Whereas a military officer, if things aren't going well, that's his responsibility.

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SWIERS: Except that at that stage the embassy was becoming responsible. It's interesting when we switched the tape that you started to talk about the mission rather than the embassy. We had an embassy but we also used the word "mission" because there were a large number of non-State groups under it. The embassy had a mission which was to make sure that South Vietnam became viable. It took a long time before we realized that wasn't the case. That was number one, but then you had the double aspect which was that the North Vietnamese were communists and we saw this in a larger context. In retrospect I think that if we had not switched (I think we had to switch in 1946 or at least abandon the opposition to the French return because there was a larger need for us to ensure that NATO France did not go communist) that Vietnam would have turned out to be a sort of Yugoslavia. We also did not understand - and I think it took the negotiations to bring that out clearly - that there was real enmity between the Vietnamese and the Chinese. In many ways one could say that's quite remarkable but I can tell you that it was only during the period of the talks that we began to fully understand that.

Q: Was this coming out when you would all sat together? Was somebody saying "Hey, what's going on here?" How did it happen?

SWIERS: That's when it was; it was during the sessions at the Majestic during the so-called breaks that we had. We sat around and started to have conversations. They got a different sense of the United States; maybe they also got a sense of the real opposition to the war in the United States. Of course they saw it on television, but nevertheless they had to talk about it. They may have perceived that we did feel some discomfort with this. At the same time, what we began to understand was the enmity between them and the Chinese. As I said, I don't think we really fully understood that before. We also began to see that it was the Soviets that they had to rely on. That actually gave us a heck of a lot more leverage because of Harriman's connection. This came out a few times during the talks, when he would in effect call in the Soviets and tell them to get this thing going. It played an important role later on, I'll get into that later. Several times in fact, throughout

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the peace talks, we had exchanges with the Soviets. Their ambassador was the man who had been in the U.N. during the Korean War, Zoren; then there was the DCM whose name I have forgotten and a younger person, Bogamolov, who was the son of the interpreter whom Harriman knew. It was an interesting relationship.

I mind as well tell it now that later on, at the time when we halted the bombing, we really got tied up because we did not wish to recognize the VC and it was North's did not want to recognize the GVN. Finally Harriman got fed up and he called in the Soviets. I remember the Soviet DCM coming in, laughing and saying "The Russians are coming!" We asked them to talk to the North Vietnamese; that the situation was getting silly. Let's work something out. We finally agreed on the shape of the table; fortunately that was just before we all went home. I have said many times that it was a great distress to me. I don't fault the Nixon Administration - well, in some ways I do because they had encouraged Madame Chennault to tell the GVN to hang tough because when they joined the negotiations we would take care of them. I feel that the way the momentum was growing, and once we got over that one hurdle, we probably would have had an agreement if not summer of 1969, then certainly by the fall of 1969.

We understood each other's body language. You knew when they were saying something in a certain way what they meant and vice versa. I genuinely believe they wanted to see the discussions over; they wanted us out of Vietnam and we wanted out. The question is if we had gotten out in 1969 would the GVN had a better chance of survival? I think that is the key question. I don't know. Clearly when they were in Warsaw finally in 1973, the GVN had less credibility then it had in 1969 and the North, if anything, was stronger in 1973 than it was in 1969 and more determined to finish the debate by force. The end result may have been the same but it would have been with a lot fewer American and Vietnamese deaths.

Q: As you were going through this, were you watching the elections of 1968?

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SWIERS: No, I will say that and I must say that that is a tribute to President Johnson in a way. There was a certain degree of sincerity, I think. He knew when he made his famous speech in March of 1968 that he would not be able to be reelected. At the same time, I must give the man credit. I do think there was some sincerity there. We did not pursue the discussions on the basis of the elections by any means. We had two tough negotiators and what we wanted was a way to both remove ourselves from Vietnam and to give the GVN a fighting chance. Whether the GVN would have achieved that I really don't know. I think the longer the war dragged on, you could not help but notice the toughness of the North versus the real corruption in the South. Reports came in which were more and more distressing. We were not backing a government which had popular democratic support. Maybe we learned from that for the future.

By the way, you asked about the elections; Bobby Kennedy was killed in June, I had the terrible task of informing Harriman. We had gone home that evening when it was still quite early in California. There were already signs that Bobby was going to win and everybody in Paris assumed that if Bobby took California, he was going to be the Democratic presidential nominee. You could really sense this momentum that was gathering. For Harriman, it was a very important moment because he is the one who had coached Bobby and helped him. I always felt that he had become a sort of surrogate father. They communicated regularly, sometimes even daily when I was working for Harriman in Washington. I think Harriman may have even been brought back to be secretary of State even at his advanced age, in 1968 - he was 76 or 77, if Bobby had won. He was still a man of vigor and he was not any older than somebody in his 60s at that time. It would have been quite a change for the department. I mention that because in the morning when I arrived the tickers were just coming in that Bobby had been critically injured and was probably dead. I don't think Vance had even arrived yet that morning. I called the Harriman house and I told the maid in effect to "seal the place off" - no calls were to be given to Harriman when he woke up, no calls were to go through and he was to call me immediately. No more than ten minutes later I had a call from Harriman who did not take

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lightly to me ordering his household staff around; he ordered his own household staff around. I said I had to and the reason was Bobby has been killed. By then I think we knew that he was dead. It was awful; to this day I think about it. For our generation we had sensed hope again; we had that experience of Jack Kennedy being killed and then Bobby who I really hadn't thought much of. But he matured and there was that whole period during which he and Harriman became close and Bobby grew in many ways under Harriman's tutelage. They were very, very close. I related the bad news to Harriman and there was total silence. It seemed to go on; it was probably only about 30 seconds to a minute, but it seemed endless. Then one could hear that he recovered himself and he became Harriman once again. He asked me to read the tickers and everything that had come in. Then he and Vance went back to the States for the funeral. The riots and the strikes were still going on in France; both Paris airports were closed and we had to drive out to a military field considerably south of Paris, where TWA managed to bring in about a flight a day; we put them on the plane there. By the time Harriman returned this situation in France had changed and the airports were open again.

It was a terrible event, but the negotiations went on. In September of 1968, Humphrey had become the Democratic nominee. I remember George Ball who had left the government much earlier sent out one of his young assistants whose name I sadly don't remember, to talk to Harriman and Vance. He wanted to enlist their support for Humphrey coming out against the war. I met with the young man that Ball sent when he came to the embassy and I took him upstairs and there Harriman and Vance talked with him. I did not sit in on the conversation. This young man was helping Ball who was functioning as the foreign policy advisor to Humphrey. What they were trying to do was get Humphrey to come out against the war. But Humphrey would not come out because he was afraid that Johnson would turn on him; there was no question of that. There was a real concern that Johnson could be vindictive; that is well recorded. The fear was that Johnson at best would split the party or at worst he could even bring back Nixon. You weren't really sure where he was because Johnson was at a very low point at that time. The second aspect, and this is

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hard to describe to the current generation, was that in their generation one did not oppose a president in public. Even as presidential candidate. There was a loyalty that you had at that time if you were in government. If you wanted to leave government that was fine. Humphrey did not do it until sometime in October - in fact just before the bombing halt. It was always felt that if Humphrey had come out about two weeks earlier - by the end of September or the beginning of October rather than the middle of October - he might have won the election.

Q: It was a very close election.

SWIERS: It was very close. When he came out, the polls began to turn. It was a real break. Johnson just froze, and that was the end of him doing anything. Humphrey was on his own. It was very sad really. But it did not effect the negotiations themselves; we just continued. When did effect them later was the real difficulties that the GVN making about the shape of the table. With the bombing halt, the GVN was sensing that the Democrats might lose, even by October. We had reached all of the different formulas for every side. I remember the evening of the bombing halt, which was October 31, everyone went home with the exception of Vance and me. Vance and I were to stay in case a message came in, because Van Thieu had balked at the last minute. He was trying to block the deal; he understood precisely what this meant. Bunker had sent in some cables asking in effect that Thieu be given another chance; it was clear that what he was doing was trying to slow the thing down. I remember sitting with Vance, just the two of us alone; I had sort of become a sounding board for him as well because I was not one of the people actually in the negotiations; he could talk frankly to me. Vance said to me: "If we go along with Saigon, I will resign because my integrity as a negotiator has been ruined." In other words, all of the agreements had been set by Vance and Harriman speaking on behalf of the United States to the North Vietnamese. Of course it didn't happen.

I forgot to mention another one of my responsibilities was the so-called K-fund. The secretary of State has this discretionary fund for emergencies and we were given an

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allocation of that in Paris and I was the person responsible for it. I had all of this money. I might also mention this which is a tribute to Nick Katzenbach. In June, one of the reasons my wife came and other wives as well was that Katzenbach felt that it was wrong that we could not see our spouses since these negotiations were going to drag on and on. So he ordered that a spouse visit be allowed every six months and that would be paid for out of the K-fund. Needless to say most of us did use that money to bring our families over and then switched from the hotel into an apartment. This saved the government money in the long run because then we switched back to the other type of per diem and I remember that's how my wife came out as well. But we had this K-fund and I was responsible for it. That evening Vance and I were going to be there until the bombing halt which was to be at midnight Paris time. We had to have dinner and really the only place near the embassy was the Creole. So we called the hotel and asked them to bring over some food. Vance, who was a honest man, got the idea that it wasn't quite proper to use the K-fund money for dinner. He could afford it to pay it from his own funds; I couldn't. I just had this God awful feeling that I was going to have to bankrupt myself to have dinner. I spent five or ten minutes explaining that this fund had been set up for situations like this. They were obviously doing this pro bono, and it was perfectly alright. He finally agreed to it and then we called over to the Creole and got something to eat. Today we would almost laugh at it because the prices in Paris hadn't sky rocketed and while the Creole was expensive it was no more expensive than a moderate priced restaurant in Washington today. So we had our meal; we sat down together and ate together.

I might note by the way in terms of personnel, when we realized the talks were going to go on indefinitely the secretary of staff team went home. They set up a new system and Jim Dobbins who was then a young Foreign Service officer who had been an OECD' was been assigned to us and he in effect became an in-house's delegation staff secretary and he was very, very good. He was a top notch officer. A bit of an iconoclast. I remember drafting his efficiency report for Harriman to sign when we were leaving. He was quite different from others. I thought he was a brilliant writer; somebody during his career had

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talked about Dobbins not being a good drafter, but it was just he didn't draft in Foreign Service language. I always wonder if that started his career off in another direction; he has done extremely well in the service. Another person I should mention is John Gunther Dean who was the Far East officer in the embassy who really provided an enormous amount of support for us and was heavily involved in many things.

I remember that I suddenly became "CheDe Cabinet" of the delegation. In fact that's what I ended up as a sort of "Chef De Cabinet" in the delegation. You can't quite translate that. I sort of kept my eye on everything and noted this and noted that or commented on this or that.

Q: To go back, when you were there the VC and the South Vietnamese delegations arrived is that right?

SWIERS: They were there all of the time. They were not in the negotiations until after the bombing halt. We really had a pre-negotiation to work out the non-conditions for the negotiations.

Q: Was this the major focus of the pre-negotiations?

SWIERS: The Vietnamese wanted a unconditional bombing halt and we wanted a conditional bombing halt. So we had to work out something so that we could say that we would undertake a bombing halt unconditionally and they would undertake a cease fire unconditionally. That's what in effect happened.

Q: How did it work? The North Vietnamese and the VC had their own method of communication, and we had this group, how did we deal with them?

SWIERS: I'm trying to think. I think Phil Habib was the person designated to brief the GVN ambassador. I think we just briefed the GVN ambassador to Paris, if I recall correctly.

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Later on, perhaps when the talks were becoming full there was a GVN ambassador who was assigned as the GVN representative.

Q: This is while you were there?

SWIERS: Yes, while I was there. We arrived in May 1968; sometime in July we began the secret talks during which we actually began to have real discussions. We still had the others dialogue which was quite useful because there each side put forward their formal positions. We had these breaks during which we began to develop confidence in each other and began to understand what each party meant and what they were really looking for and what they were not. Then in October of 1968, there was the bombing halt. We then were to go into the talks themselves, but we got tied up in this question of whether we would be going without the GVN. The North Vietnamese certainly weren't going to do it without the VC. After all, the Vietnam talks boiled down to so often to symbols. The symbol which ended up being accepted was the round table with two unattached side tables for the staff. On one side of the round table were to be the North Vietnamese and the VC and the other side would be the GVN and ourselves. I think the GVN wanted a table with two sides, but we didn't want that. It was quite ridiculous frankly, and it was at the point where Harriman called in the Soviets and asked them to get the North Vietnamese to agree.

Q: How did you and the people that you were talking about view thGVN delegation?

SWIERS: It was not impressive at all. I think that we felt that they were just trying to stymie the talks. They obviously wanted us to hang on and continue to bear the largest military burden in Vietnam. Maybe they realized that they couldn't make it without us. There was a real problem. They had the signals from the incoming Nixon. What is interesting and what I would like emphasize throughout is that Henry Kissinger and Harriman were very close. Kissinger was one of the people who worked in 1967 to try to help the negotiations get under way.

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I still remember that on a Sunday I was in the office. Dan Davidson had gone back to Washington; he called me. Davidson had succeeded Chet Cooper in late 1967, or early 1968, as the assistant for managing the various communication efforts. He knew Kissinger who had called him to say that he had just been to see Nixon and that Nixon had asked him to be the national security advisor and had asked Davidson to please let Harriman know. Dan got me; Harriman wasn't there at the moment and I took the message. When Harriman appeared, I told him that Kissinger was about to become Nixon's national security advisor. Harriman went back - with or without Vance I can't remember - to see Nixon. Rudy Abramson book in his book asserts that Harriman was trying to "ingratiate" himself with Nixon, so that he could stay on. That was not the case. Harriman told me a long time before that there would be a new negotiator for Nixon; he couldn't work for Nixon. He did go back to Washington because Nixon was going to be the president after all and Harriman thought he should have a briefing. It was clear that we would leave in January. We finally got agreement on the shape of the table and had the whole thing set up in late December or early January.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the South Vietnamese obviously didn't want this to come. We were trying to get out and they didn't want us to get out . Would they do the equivalent of what Sigmund Rhee used to do all of the time like trying to throw "bombs" at us. Did you have the feeling that things were happening, like bomb throwers or something like that?

SWIERS: The real difficult time of the bombing halt came when Thieu really mounted a major effort to stop it. That failed. If my memory serves me correctly, on the table shape, there was complications to that, but we largely ran the show. By then the South Vietnamese knew we were leaving. We got it all set up, would return to Washington and the GVN assumed that Nixon would pursue the war further. As we know, Nixon also was determined to get out. There was a saying that he didn't want to do it too fast because it would hurt his reelection; it was January 1973 before the thing ended. There was a long hiatus after we left. We all went back to Washington on January 19th and I remember

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again trying to get a White House plane and couldn't. Again I called Bob Pearsley and this time Clifford just sent out his plane. It brought home Harriman and his wife, me and my wife Hilde, and a couple of the servants and whatever effects we had. We all came home. Ben Read had organized this wonderful reception out at Andrews Air Force Base. We left Paris at 12:00 noon on January 19th and arrived in Washington that evening. Humphrey was out there and Rusk was out there, because everybody knew that this was Harriman's last great effort. It was disappointing for him; he obviously didn't finish the task, but that's politics and he had to go home. I always thought it was sad that Johnson could not bring himself to come to the airport the way that Truman had so often done with his people. When we got to Andrews, there was a message for Harriman asking him to please come to the White House. So he stayed at this little reception at Andrews and then went to the White House. I guess Johnson gave him an award or something. But that was the end of it.

It is interesting to study the backwards and forwards of the discussions, but what we were always working for that single objective which was to create the condition for negotiations. As I said there was the bombing halt and a cease fire and that was on October 31. The Paris process included both of the secret talks and the public talks; then there were discussions in Saigon and that's one of the reasons that the delegation worked largely around the clock. It was quite difficult. I remember Vance and I sometimes did not go home for three or more days in a row. There was no way we could leave because as the situation became particularly heated as we were approached the bombing halt and as we were trying to finish up the negotiations on the shape of the table, Saigon would be waking up as Washington went to bed and then Washington would be waking up as Paris went to bed. We had in effect a 24-hour cycle of communications and you had to be ready to respond to various messages from one place or another. It was my job to take a look at what came in and make sure that it got to Vance right away. I actually devised a little system. As I said it is great training for a Foreign Service officer to serve in the Operations Center or the staff secretariat and perhaps even the Operations Center because much

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of the work was urgent. You felt much more involved in the Department's work. The seventh floor itself was much more involved with the Department then it is today. I think that is due in part the security requirements of today which seals off the seventh floor. It adds a dimension of isolation from the working level to the decision makers of the State Department. It increases what is a tendency anyway. But it trained me to know how to prioritize and to know what was important. That in a sense is why I think I became so useful not just to Harriman and Vance, but to the whole delegation because I could sense what was important.

Q: Where did the delegation want to actually the negotiations to come out? Not the preliminary talks, but where did they want to get to? Did they say "This is where we want to be, or within this particular ballpark of what we want when the negotiations are all over"?

SWIERS: I think Harriman and Vance knew what they wanted which was for the United States to terminate its presence in Vietnam and while we were doing that, out of loyalty to the GVN, to try and see that they would have some chance for viability. I'm not sure that was Washington's view at the time, particularly the president's. I think the president, Rusk or Rostow really ever knew what they specifically wanted other than they knew that they had to go along with negotiations. The public opposition to the war was increasing dramatically. The Democrats were losing their traditional constituencies or at least they were being neutral. I remember that I described that division within the government. There was Katzenbach, there was Clifford. I never knew where Bill Bundy stood as assistant secretary for Far Eastern affairs. I think Bill was somewhere in between; he wasn't quite sure. Maybe I'm wrong, but I sensed that. That again is where an assistant plays a role because you have these perceptions and you sense them and you sort of assist your superiors accordingly to what you sense and try to direct them. I mentioned earlier that I knew what Harriman wanted to do. By keeping my eyes and ears open I found out that we had not been informed of the "Wise Men" meeting that Johnson was having. That was the famous meeting where Acheson suddenly, much to Johnson's surprise, announced that it was time for us to leave Vietnam. Acheson had been a real hard liner on Vietnam.

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Many others were and I suspect that Harriman initially had been. We learned a lot of things in tragic ways from Vietnam. The trouble is that it damaged us as a super power in the process.

I forget who it was that I called in Washington about what the hell was going on with the "Wise Men." I got back this real lame excuse that Harriman was in the government. I said that was not the case and that the people that were invited were all wise men and should include Harriman. Whoever it was that I was talking to me caved. I have to say that I may have heard about it and informed Harriman and he said he would check on it and I did. I then informed Harriman that he was invited to the meeting. Harriman who is no "shrinking violet" got over there. Rudy Abramson muffed that one in his book, as he muffed many other things. Harriman got there and discovered that not only was there a meeting but Johnson was having them for lunch afterwards to which Harriman was not invited. So when time for lunch came, Harriman just marched in and sat down and the minions had to scramble around and set up another place. I don't know whether Johnson had excluded him or whether it had been Rostow who didn't want him in there, but he was there. It was important because he got the signal that his friends were changing their views too, including Acheson whom he had taught how to row at Yale. They were close in their respective lives. So there was one group including the negotiators who knew where they wanted to go; and then there were others who were being reluctantly pulled along because they could see the political handwriting on the wall. The process worked; the unconditional bombing halt and the unconditional cease fire were worked out. The next step then was to actually negotiate how we would terminate the war. There's were a lot of "ifs;" I would acknowledge that. I don't know if the North had made up its mind where it wanted the negotiations to come out - that it was not going to have happen to it in 1968 what happened in 1955. On the other hand, they did accept the split of the country in 1973, although within two years they finished off the rest of the GVN. Maybe they would have done it in 1968; it's hard to say what they or we would have done under those circumstances.

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Q: Let's now talk a bit about the Arms Forces Staff College. Where were you there?

SWIERS: I was there from late January 1969, and if I remember correctly the class ended either in May or June of 1970. I wasn't slated to go on to Russian training until late in the summer; so we actually managed to stay on and have a nice vacation in Norfolk. The commander was Major General Norris; the State Department representative there I believe was called the deputy commandant of the College and that was John Barrow. He had been the Consul General in Aleppo. In fact, if it isn't on the record, why don't we put it on because I think there was quite a bit of heroism. He was a very calm man. Sadly, he had some type of head infection which prevented him from driving. I remember he and his wife and their two children. As I said, his last post was Aleppo where he went through a really quite heroic event. A mob came and over-ran the Consulate General and burned it. Barrow and whatever staff was left had no choice but to go out the back door where they spotted a Syrian Army or police unit setting up a machine gun post and decided that they had to run to it. They either might have been killed quickly or they would have been saved. As it turned out, they were saved. I assume this was Barrow's final overseas post although I'm not certain; he was then assigned to the Armed Forces Staff College. I thought he was one of the better State Department representatives in bringing a balance to it. The Armed Forces Staff College was more a short course than the War College. It was actually answerable to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I'm talking about 1969; I don't know if things have changed.

The War College was where what we would call "our closest War World II" allies - the British, the Canadians, the Australians, New Zealanders and the French - sent their officers as students; we formed some friendships with some of them. I haven't seen some of them in years. The War College was designed to provide training to military officers at the Major-Lieutenant Colonel level - or I guess in the Navy that would be Lieutenant Commander and Commander - with their first exposure to joint planning and to planning in itself. There were several cases that we studied and I want to describe one in particular.

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At that time the military officers were people who had just come home from their tours in Vietnam; some may have been going back to Vietnam; so there was some considerable interest in me as having just returned from the Paris talks. At one point I remember I did a lengthy interview for the "Norfolk Virginian Pilot" and I still have the newspaper clipping of it. I think I was quoted as saying the "Vietnamese want to talk" or something as profound as that. It was very interesting because they as relatively young officers had been in Vietnam doing their duty; a lot didn't understand the rationale of why we had gone in there; at least I did try to analyze that for them. I also analyzed for them why I thought we should get out in an orderly fashion. The other side of it though and I think this is very important, was that for the first time they had really been exposed to being on the other side of giving orders. In other words, planning and developing the orders. You could see for many of them that it was quite wrenching; they were asked to think about orders which they might receive or they themselves might have to draft or give to their troops. It was quite a change for them and I thought the College did very well in handling that.

In many ways we served as a catalyst for the State Department. I can remember distinctly that in my particular class I was asked to explain how the State Department command structure worked. I explained that the Department would be looking at the various reports coming in from the field, looking at our own domestic scene which played a role and then would draft certain instructions to an embassy after getting interagency clearance. Then the ambassador would come back if he felt that there was something wrong with the instructions to say that he thought it should be adjusted this or that way. I had a very, very strong reaction from the Majors and Lieutenant Colonels; they initially thought that I was putting them on. They thought that when an order was sent, that the field officers would act accordingly. I told them that was not the way it was. I told them that if the Department disagreed with the post, then the post would carry out its instructions, but it was very difficult. This must have been very interesting for them and I think you could see how important this type of school was a medium level grade officer. On the other hand, our military entry into Vietnam was incremental. If we put in some forces and the

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Vietnamese didn't increase their contribution, then we would up the ante a little until finally we conducted all the major bombings and had a massive entry of troops. When Westmoreland was finally asked how many resources he needed, he sent his famous message back. It was then that Johnson realized that it was time to end our participation as best he could, but he came to that conclusion very reluctantly feeling something was wrong. Johnson never felt comfortable with that decision; there's no question about it.

I'll give you a very interesting illustration of a planning exercise in which we were supposed to develop a process which would allow us to come into mythical country to support the "good" guys and get rid of the "bad" guys. That's put in very simple terms but an elaborate plan was developed. The country in fact was Albania - sort of turned around, a mirror image of Albania if you want to put that way. We came up with the classic three options of how to go about this. With the State Department people being there, we could provide the political input and the rationale behind our action. In other words, we had a political objective which was to restore a democratic government friendly to the United States after a period of dictatorship. Without dwelling on it too long, the option that was chosen was the one that was least favorable politically but most favorably militarily. I don't know whether that's a reality that we have to deal with or not. I thought there could have been a better way of going about it. The second thing was that the volume of resources that was used to be used to overwhelm the dictatorship was as one of the officers noted afterwards, larger than that which had been used at Normandy. I leave that open for judgement, but that in a sense has been the view of our military since Vietnam.

Q: Well it's the fire engine thing; you always send more than yoneed.

SWIERS: This was way more. It's the same as we saw in Desert Storm and as we have seen in every application since the military officers who are now at the command level are Vietnam veterans. Basically, they will refuse to say that a course of action which an administration takes is viable unless all of the personnel resources and material that they have requested are granted. They are the military people and they are giving their best

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judgement. They are never going to be caught again by the pressures of the Vietnam era when in effect they were asked what were the minimum resources they needed and then perhaps had to go along with even less for various political reasons. I think it was very interesting.

Q: Yes, it shows the thought process. Did you spend six months there?

SWIERS: I was there about six months.

Q: Then what happened?

SWIERS: Then I went into Russian language training.

Q: Where did you go for your Russian language training?

SWIERS: I went to FSI. The teachers at that time were Nina De LaCruz and Mrs. Bouchet. Nina De LaCruz was from a minor aristocratic family, if I remember correctly. She had been born in Estonia where her father had fled from the Soviet regime and she ended up in Brazil with her family. She married somebody of Spanish origin and came to the United States, divorced and then became a teacher. She was there for years and years. She had a very elegant, old-fashioned way of speaking Russian, but she was an excellent teacher; there was no question about that. She had a native ability for it.

Q: Had you volunteered to go to the Soviet Union?

SWIERS: Yes, I volunteered even before my Harriman days. It resulted really when I was in the Op's Center in 1966. Frank Meehan was the senior watch officer. He had been in Moscow in the late 1950s through 1961. Then came the famous part of his career. Frank was the man who did the prisoner exchanges in Berlin and became a friend of Wolfgang Vogel, the infamous lawyer.

Q: He exchanged Soviet spies for American spies.

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SWIERS: Abell was one of the cases that Frank handled. Frank was the one who had the major role in all in the Cheroniski affair though he wasn't quite as visible because he was then ambassador to East Germany. I have his address if you would like it.

Q: Yes, please.

SWIERS: He is somebody that would really be fascinating to interview. Frank urged me to consider Moscow even if I did not plan to make Soviet affairs a career. He said that one really needed to have a tour there to understand things. I had put in from the Op's Center for the language training which was scheduled for 1969. Naturally if Harriman had stayed on and the Democrats had not lost in 1968, I guess that would have been postponed. So I went into the language training. The other teacher was Mrs. Bouchet; she was not quite as cultured as Nina De LaCruz. The tension between the two classes was very visible throughout and at times quite amusing. Then there was another lady whose name I can't remember; she was from Leningrad. The training was good.

Q: How long was the training?

SWIERS: The training started in August with the three week area course and then you were supposed to be in language until June of the following year. In my case, that was until June 1970. Unfortunately, Bill Farrand, if I remember this correctly, had to leave Moscow for personal reasons about a month early; so I was pulled out of the course early. In addition, and this is one of those interesting choices that you make in your Foreign Service career, I had been promoted at the time and I was then told that since I outranked the other two that were going out that I would be chief of the consular section. That was a political officer's job in the old days and a very interesting one. However, that meant that I had to leave in June. I had the option of going to Garmisch for another year, but I didn't do it. I had the Vietnam business with Harriman and I really thought that it was time to get on with a normal job. In retrospect, it meant that I never acquired Russian fluency at a full level and today my Russian is really quite rusty. I haven't used it in many years. I went out

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then to Moscow. We entered the Soviet Union on June 22, 1970, and in retrospect I really think it's funny, as June 22 is Barbarossa Day.

Q: That's when the German's in 1941 launched their attack.

SWIERS: My wife and I had visited her family in Denmark. We had picked up a car; in those days, the two cars that were the highest rated by "Consumer Reports" for being trouble free were the American Motors Javelin which was sort of a sporty car and the Dodge Dart. Prior to leaving I met Tom Buchanan who was to be the political counselor - he was one of the real old Soviet hands. Q: Where is he now?

SWIERS: Tom is here in Maryland. He lives just out on MacArthur Boulevard in one of those houses overlooking Little Falls Dam. He would be very fascinating to talk to. Tom got the Dart and I got the Javelin. We drove and arrived in Helsinki on St. Pance evening. The weekend was coming; so we decided to drive in the general direction of the border and we were about to reach the town of Paulbu which is this beautiful old Finnish town. It was the first Finnish capital. Just before reaching town, we had seen a sign for a hotel; so we turned and we came upon a place called Hikon Katano, which is a manor house that had been changed to a very lovely hotel overlooking the gulf of Finland. Why I mention this at all is because what its great claim to fame was it was where the Czar came to visit. This was Nicholas II. The whole family had been there and they still had the menu autographed by them. When drove to the border in those days you drove on this beautiful Finnish road. Then you began to know that you were in an almost "no man's land" or a zone which the Finns controlled very carefully because of the tremendous increase in the number of Finnish troops that you would begin to see on the Finnish side at the border. Basically you went through the town of Hameenlinna and continue on to the border and there was a small, very neatly done, Finnish border station where you would turn in your passport and then drive on a bit. This beautiful Finnish road would dead end at a barrier and on the other side was a young Soviet soldier. You could see fence all the way up and down on either side. The soldier would then first scrutinize your passports - not friendly at

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all, not welcoming you to the Soviet Union. When he saw that we were diplomats he gave us a little bit faster treatment, but I wouldn't say too much faster. They opened the gate and then you drive for another two or three miles along a winding, terribly maintained road. It was worse than roads normally were in the old Soviet Union. Eventually you got to this very large station. There you would park and go in with your passports and stand and wait. They knew I was a diplomat, but always the customs tried to get me to open the trunk. That was your first lesson; say "No." You refused; they knew you were diplomats and that was the end of it. Then we drove on through the beautiful Birch forests of Karelian, to Leningrad arriving fairly late in the evening. It was the high point of summer; it was quite nice. Beautiful as you came in even though it was slightly run down. We were put up in something called the Baltiskia Hotel which is where the embassy always put people up. It was a totally run down place and you had to pay to make the reservation. They had a little scheme there; they were pretty good businessmen in a certain way. If you were staying for two days, you paid for three; if you staying for four then you paid for five - there was a day for reservation. That was our first introduction to the Soviet Union. We had to park the car back at the Astoria parking lot; it was the only protected place and we didn't lose our mirrors - yet. Side mirrors went very fast in the Soviet Union in the old days. I remember going into the hotel to verify that everything was okay and came out to see my wife and son looking not frightened, but somewhat concerned. This rather unusual American car was surrounded by Soviets three to four deep, looking at it curiously. They were fairly polite. We took our bags in and went back and parked the car and then walked back again. The restaurant was closed, but then we had one of the positive experiences in the Soviet Union. We had a small, blond child, (he looked very much like his mother) and obviously we needed food and there was no food. We went down to the kitchen and explained it and instantly they agreed, because of the child. It seemed to take ages; there was nothing pre-prepared there; it was all freshly done and finally up came the best chicken soup you could ever have, plus chicken that was a bit bony but there was enough meat in it and some saulk - that strange fruit drink that they have - and potatoes and cold cooked cabbage and

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carrot salad. They came in beaming, because there was the little boy that was going to get fed, along with his parents, thank God. It was quite charming.

The next day we drove on to Novgorod, the beautiful old town with the Kremlin and stayed at a place called the Satko, just downtown. It was equally run down, but it worked. I think that's when we quickly began to realize that things worked. With the embassy, you had to file a note permitting you to travel and it was very clear that every point along where there was a State automobile inspection Police - the GUYE. They would have a post overlooking the road and as we passed, somebody would run out to note our license plate which had been given to us by the embassy. Sometimes they would see it from the tower and they would notify the next place that we were coming. This was a cycle that you had - literally from the Finnish border until we reached the embassy in Moscow. It sometimes had its value. Tom drove out later that year and there was some snow and he slid off of the road into a ditch. After a period of time one of the GUYEs came past and slowed down very slightly and then continued on. Within a short period of time, a truck showed up and pulled them out of the ditch, so that they could continue on their way. It was interesting that the truck came from the direction in which they were going, not the direction from which they were coming. One assumes that the GUYE from the one before was checking on them reports to the next one and it's the next one that is responsible for sending out the truck. So it had its advantages, one could say.

Q: You arrived in June of 1970. What was the political situation othe Soviet Union with the United States?

SWIERS: Very cold. It warmed up considerably within the two yearthat we were there. Vietnam was still going on.

Q: Nixon had been in power for little more that a year.

SWIERS: It didn't have anything to do with Nixon. Things started downhill again with the Sinyovski Danielle trials - that must have been sometime in 1966. We had that

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brief moment in 1968 when Kosygin came to Washington; then things went up a little. But then came the invasion of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968 and relations really deteriorated. Our relations became very cold and very formal. For other reasons, harassment surveillance had not yet started; that came later on. To travel around the country was very difficult. Even more difficult than usual. 90% of the country was permanently closed. Even the areas that were temporarily open would be closed at the time when somebody wanted to travel.

When I first arrived, as I mentioned, we relationships were very cold in political terms and for that matter economic terms - to the extent that there were any economics. We had very little contact with the Soviets other than "official" and that consisted of going to whatever ministry it was necessary to go to. Most of the time, we were required to do things through the foreign ministry. I recall one incident after another related to military attaches in particular going out and doing their work.

Shortly after I arrived, Bill Farrand took me to Donetsk where an naturalized American woman of Ukranian origin had been arrested ostensibly for speculation - i.e. sending things into the country for sale to her husband's family and herself trying to smuggle gold into the country. A typical case because as it turned out and I think there was truth to it, she and her husband had been sending things back to his family in Mariopool from which both had come. I don't think they were married until after the war. The only member of her family left was her sister who was living in Lvov. The case was being dragged out and we were having quite a bit of difficulty getting to the bottom of it. It turned out that there were two elements to it: one of which we found about in the course of getting the woman out and the second in effect afterwards. Dick Combs, who is now working for Senator Nunn as his foreign policy advisor was with me during this time. The consular section was composed of three offices - the chief of the section and two others, Robin Porter and Larry Sumakes, both of whom are retired now as well. But when you normally went on a trip you took somebody from the political or economic Section with you. You always traveled in pairs. We generally got access, but we were not allowed to see Ishdonof until the actual

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trial took place. We were only allowed to go to Donetsk. We could then meet with the woman. She was allowed to come up to Donetsk in the presence of the KGB investigator. Because it was a smuggling case, it came under the jurisdiction of the KGB rather under the police which was part of the ministry of the interior..

It was very much like the FBI and the CIA together versus the local police. As you know they dropped the word "police" and called them "militia". I think they have gone back to calling them "police" again, but I'm not sure. The word "police" was close to being abolished with the revolution. As it turned out, the case was began when her husband's family had some type of break up and the people to whom all of these "care packages" had been sent, instead of using them for themselves, were selling them on the black market and then rather stupidly putting all of the money in the bank. They began to develop this huge bank account. Another branch of the family was in some type of political struggle at some lower level in the town of Ishdonof and was on the outs with the local party chief or the local government chief or both. She in many ways was the unwitting vixen in all of this, because when she arrived on a visit to the family, they had somebody to stick it to. Then began the investigation. In fact, they confiscated all of the money that these people had acquired as a result of their operations. We finally began to piece the story together. The reason they got her - she claimed that this was true and I would see no reason to lie because the amount involved was so small - was because she was a dental technician and had in her pocketbook a small package, no more than 1/8 of an inch thick of these little sheets of gold that dentists use. She claimed that she had forgotten that she had them in her purse. Whether she was carrying it as a little insurance in case she needed it we don't know, but it was enough to hold her in jail. It was only when this "investigation" was concluded after a period of several months, that she was then able to have a defense lawyer. Or rather the defense lawyer was then able to have access to the investigative materials. How much of the file he saw is unclear. The defense lawyer was Jewish and as one began to see that the only real positions that Jews were allowed to have in the judiciary system was as defense lawyers. So you had defense lawyers

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who were largely Jewish and the investigators who were largely Slavic. I thought that was interesting as to the structure of the society even then. He built a case, and basically all the defense lawyer could say was that she had to plead ignorance of the law. That was her best bet. Finally, we were allowed to go to Ishdonof. I believe we were there twice - once to talk to her and secondly for the trial. The first time, Dick and I stayed in a hotel and I remember that it was interesting because it was the first time that I had ever been under surveillance. It was very clear that people were following us around. The location was lovely, overlooking the sea, but you could already see the beginnings of the terrible pollution which built at an accelerated pace over the next twenty years. Today in the Soviet Union, many areas are an ecological nightmare. I remember this very large factory, presumably a chemical factory in Ishdonof, which was had about four stacks from which were spewing different colors acidic smoke from each stack.

The woman was staying with her family and needless to say the tension between her and her husband's family by this time was quite strong. They lived in a rather primitive house without any amenities, in the upper part of town with this view overlooking the water. Really primitive conditions, but they were not poor in that sense. The food was adequate; it was like a peasant's house except that it happened to be in the city. The case went to trial. The other relative's were there; they were all criticized for it. There were the usual three judges and she was convicted. They said that although her defense might have had some validity, the law was the law and so she was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison. But we were going to appeal it. It was interesting that as one of the judges came out of the court (she had looked sort of sympathetic throughout) she said to the woman in Russian: "By all means, appeal." That signaled something and sure enough a few months later we were up in Kiev in the court of appeals. By this time she was in contact with her sister who was furious with her that she had not been in touch with her before. She hadn't told us about the sister. Needless to say, she was still a little suspicious of us. It was very difficult getting her confidence. We went to the appeals court and within a few minutes there was the decision that while she had technically committed a crime, it was clear that

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it was unwittingly and since she had already been under detention for several months, she was released and she was not expelled from the Soviet Union. If there was no further incident within the period of the sentence of two years, the case would be waived. We then went to the airport with her and the sister and got them on a plane to Moscow.

I remember that they stayed at the Metropal for the night, (they had money) so that we could get her out on the very next plane the next day. We took her to the airport as we did in those days to make sure that she got on. Somewhere along the way we got the other side of the story, or maybe it came out actually during the appeal case. She had been working in the labor office in Ishdonof during the war and when the Germans left, she went with them. She successfully convinced them or they began to realize that she had not been a collaborator and that she in fact had saved several Russians or Ukrainians who were being put into forced labor. She managed to frustrate that process a little and she did not leave with the Germans, but she was taken by the Germans. In any case, she got on a plane and went home and we never heard from her again.

Q: To follow-up on this, as a consular officer at that time this type of case was rather unusual because there weren't many American citizens in the Soviet Union and also the consular officers felt that by their presence it would help the case and it would also make sure that she would get out of the country.

SWIERS: Absolutely. The rule of thumb was "get them out of the country as quickly as you can". The rule of thumb was in terms of dealing with the Soviets was to get it over with and get them out.

Q: *What about the presence of the court?*

SWIERS: Basically our position was that this case better go smoothly. Needless to say, we were all in frequent contact with the foreign ministry. This was not a matter of presenting our side of the case, forcing it. Our question to them was "do you really want

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this,” recognizing that this was a very low period. It was only later on in 1971 that one could see something changing. They were working on SALT I at the time.

Q: Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

SWIERS: The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty - SALT I - which was signed during the first Nixon summit.

I just described a good example of a case that we would have. Other cases involved Americans losing passports. They were much more complicated than usual because when they lost their passport they also lost the Soviet visa. Then we had to get the visa replaced and the travelers had to go through an agonizing process of determining for the Soviets when they entered and how long had they been in the country. Of course, if they had overstayed, there would be a problem. If an American ever got sick, which unfortunately a number of them did (they would make the mistake of arriving after a long trip and having stomach trouble en route or as a result of something they ate upon arrival, they would be put into Bubkin Hospital, which was an interesting place, for ten days for observation and by then their visa had expired), we had to go through that process of helping them to regain their entry visa and their exit visa. It was constant drama and a huge relief as one reached the airport and watched the PANAM plane land. These people looked at it as if it were heaven and get on it and on their way.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

SWIERS: The ambassador at the time was Jake Beam.

Q: Could you talk about his method of operation?

SWIERS: Yes, indeed. Jake Beam was not a gifted speaker. He was, on the other hand, a gifted writer. He was a very shy man with very good political sense. He was a classic old line foreign service officer. His wife Peggy who is still alive - Jake died last year - was

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an absolute character. I think she may have been a foreign service secretary. She was very funny and a total contrast to Jake Beam. He gave his staff quite a bit of flexibility. He judged us accordingly. I remember when I arrived that there was a lot of nervousness about me because I had just been promoted and according to the rules I had to be chief of the section. I was only 32 and I looked terribly young. It seems the best way to get ahead in the foreign service is to look as though you're going to die the next day. I remember that Boris Clausen, who was the DCM, was particularly nervous; he thought that I was too young. This issue was highlighted because of the two fellows that I ended up supervising, one was five years older than I was and the other was four years older than I was. Both of them looked much older. Robin was absolute first class. I must compliment them; they were very good consular officers. There was never any tension because of the age differential. Robin had been in the Navy for a lengthy period of time; he was from an old Navy family in fact. It was an interesting period. Jake had confidence in me right from the beginning. On the other hand I really had to work on Boris. My age really worried him. Boris was a dear, but I guess he forgot that he had been that age once.

Q: I've heard stories that for the chief of the consular section, they wanted somebody tough there. Why was that? In other words it was not a traditional thing.

SWIERS: You had to be tough; there was no question of that. That's one thing they got with me; I was somebody who was very tough. Because you dealt with the Soviets, they would always try to intimidate the American official. In a real nasty period, they would just be nasty and would throw up bureaucratic obstacles. Their method of operations would be that if they could find a regulation to stop something, they would. So you had to constantly go after them. You could never take "no" for an answer. You would just have to go back and be quite forceful. I fortunately had the experience with Harriman and the Vietnam negotiations, which was quite a bit of help. I do want to mention something else because I probably share a view closer to George Kennan's on this than I think many others do. I think quite often we tended to look at the Soviet Union simply in terms of the Soviet Union as a communist country. I felt that you should also look at it in terms of its history

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and Russia. Many of the systems that you saw, the ways of doing things, had been in existence under the Czar; it was very, very Russian. The double headed eagle had been replaced by the star and now the double headed eagle is back again. Interestingly enough, the fact that my first post had been Greece was enormously helpful as well - the Byzantine culture and Russia as the third Rome. One could apply a lot of the psychology that one had learned in Athens for example in terms of dealing with the Soviets and the Russians. I use the word Russian a lot and perhaps it's just because we're getting used to saying that again. I found it quite effective to deal with them in those terms. I think too often we tended to look at them strictly in Western terms and in Marxist terms, almost as though they were German. After all, Marx was a German but the Soviets aren't. They thought differently in many ways from how we did in the west. They had missed the Renaissance. There was that Oriental side to it as well. I often felt that Soviet Union was a schizophrenic society, constantly struggling between east and west. These were all factors that came to play and exacerbated the problem of a totalitarian society.

I learned from Harriman to was push them, to push them very hard. Be very hard, be very firm, be very tough, but at the same time make sure you always leave an escape, or loophole - something that would help them get out. When you've really backed a Russian into a corner and he felt that there was no way out, he would really come out fighting. I don't mean literally, I mean figuratively although sometimes it could have turned the other way. I think that was very important in dealing with them. Particularly in cases where you had consular matters, because after all we were dealing with human beings. We were either dealing with Americans who were in trouble for one reason or another or you were dealing with Soviet citizens who had come to the embassy for one reason or another. I never believed that you could sacrifice those people for whatever particular principles you wanted to establish.

Q: I think you're making a very important point. Our system is that the individual in the long run is more important than the principle. Whereas on the other side - am I overstating it?

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- the principle sometimes got to be more important than the individual. It's two different approaches.

SWIERS: Yes, two totally different approaches. We had that throughout and it was important that we dealt with them in those terms. I might talk about another incident involving Jim Peipert of AP. I don't know where Jim is now; I lost touch with him when he left Moscow. He had been summoned to an interrogation at La Bianca as a witness in a case that was being built. In retrospect, we know now they were building a case against Vladimir Vucovski, a dissident; he was eventually expelled from the Soviet Union and I believe he lives in Britain now. Jim wisely came to the embassy to talk to me about it. He sought embassy support before going to the Soviet interrogation. He agreed that I could demand of the foreign ministry that I accompany him; he would refuse to attend unless a consular officer could be with him. I think in that particular case I was paid what I consider to be one of the biggest compliments a Soviet ever paid me. It was an old consular officer type named Posnekov who was either GRU or KGB; I don't know. His English was excellent and of course he spoke Russian formally. I looked at the consular convention and decided that we could try to invoke article seven. Under the normal consular convention, the Soviets had either 24 or 48 hours before they had to notify us of the arrest of an American, or detention of an American. This situation did not fit under that category; in fact there was no real specific reference to this situation, but I found that under article seven, there was a phrase concerning "protection" or something like that. I demanded it under that I be allowed to accompany Peipert; Posnekov looked at me and said in Russian, a word that meant sly and clever and it's usually derogatory, or it sounds derogatory. I was paid that compliment and I was also able to accompany Jim and we did go to La Bianca. I guess I was one of the few Americans who have had the dubious pleasure of seeing the inside of a La Bianca interrogation room. The interrogator was a short, stock man - very Slavic in his appearance with what I would call "fish blue" eyes. They were dead. He was cold and he was formal and you realized that this person, if the system had changed again and allowed torture to be used or whatever else was necessary to produce

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a confession, he was quite capable of it. However, he was under restraint at this time. He was under even more restraint because he was interrogating an American witness to a case who had the American consul with him. So he was a little bit more careful. His room was basically bare except for a desk, a table with chairs and one portrait of Duzinski who had been the first chief of the Checa. Duzinski was Polish. I asked him where Brezhnev was and he said something to the effect of we only have him, meaning we only answered to him. From the manuals we found later, the KGB's description was the KGB only had to answer to itself. We saw that this was one of the things under Khrushchev, where what had been a ministry or separate organization became a committee of the council of ministers and that the subsequent chiefs of the KGB were members of the Politburo. That I think was quite significant in itself. Perhaps it goes back to an earlier discussion we had of the changes in 1953. One forgets that there was really a change in the Soviet Union with Stalin's death. If you were an ordinary citizen you didn't have to be concerned any longer if there was a knock on your door. If they knocked on your door there was a reason for it. Also the extreme methods which I learned about in greater detail in another case, which I will describe, were stopped. The KGB interrogator had some questions which turned out not to be anything particularly special in terms of how Jim. He knew the person and clearly what the KGB was trying to do was build a case against Vocovski as having betrayed something of the State to Americans. He also wanted Jim to sign the document. I had with me a copy of the criminal code of the Russian Federation and the criminal procedural code. It's a very interesting document if you read it because on paper they were quite similar to the codes you would find in any Western European country that used the Napoleonic code system. It was very clear that you didn't have to sign a document and you didn't have to admit things. There's a whole series of protections built into it. I counseled Jim not to sign and I understand Jim did not sign it. He did not have to do it. Needless to say the KGB guy was quite sour, but he realized there wasn't much he could do about it. On the other hand, I did develop a great admiration for the courage of a Soviet dissident who even though he might have been familiar with these documents, would be alone in a room with the investigator and perhaps others who would be harassing him, and threatening

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to harass his family and saying to him if you don't go along with what we put down here and sign it, we'll find something else to get you on. Of course in that system there were bound to find something on somebody. You began to get a real appreciation of it, but it was an eerie experience; I can tell you that. Going in there you felt totally what it means to be in a totalitarian society in terms of the police, the control they had as you came in, the uniformed KGB who were around. If I recall correctly, they wore a lavender band around their hat at the time.

There was another case. It was most interesting and concerned Alexander Doldent who was an American citizen, born in Buffalo, New York of Polish parents. He and his sister were born there. In the 1930s, the parents "returned" to the Soviet Union. I assume they had been born there before Poland became independent. They took their two children with them; they were one of those couples who had been attracted by the socialism. The Doldent children for some reason or another never accepted this philosophy and never became part of the system. I never explored the psychology of this in depth with Alexander. During the war, the parents were alive; the father became a chauffeur to some very high official, but there was something complicated in the life. The sister got a job with the British military mission during the war and Alexander was employed by our embassy. At the end of the war, the British got the sister out by putting her on a train to Helsinki sitting between two British military liaison officers. The sister was willing to leave. I believe their father had died by then. When I later met the sister, she had married an Austrian working for the IAEA and was living in Vienna.

Alexander, on the other hand, foolishly decided to stay on and take care of his mother. He had good job at the embassy. He even had an apartment in the embassy complex. He was in this "never-never" status - he was an American citizen and he had an American passport, but lived permanently in the Soviet Union. He had refused to accept Soviet citizenship. In 1958 he was, in the classic fashion, grabbed on what used to be Gorki Street (today is called Tavaya Street - named for the town Tavaya) and disappeared. What had happened to him was that he was first taken to La Bianca and then to Sukenofka

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which is even a worse prison, interrogated by the commander of the prison, who was a sadist. He nearly died and eventually was sent to the Gulag. Because of his illness, he was put into a hospital where he learned to be a practical nurse and developed a skill with medical books. Finally, in 1956, he was pardoned, not released, and forced to accept a Soviet passport. Then he made a living as a translator at a Western medical publications office until his sister managed to visit Russia in 1968 and relocate him. Then began the process of getting them out. I arrived in 1970 and we through a very difficult process trying to convince the sister and the ambassador in Austria that this was not a case to go public with. Something about the case bothered me and I felt that if we went public we might lose harm both of them. We kept putting pressure on the Soviets to release him as an American citizen. The Nixon visit was coming up and finally in September of 1971, we were informed that Doldent would be allowed to visit the embassy. I will be leaving quite a bit of this story out because there are some sad parts to it. I have some reservations about how our government originally handled the case; there are some participants who are still alive and I don't want to talk about them at this stage. But there was something about the case that disturbed me. There had been no real effort by the embassy to contact Doldent between 1948 and 1956. When he resurfaced in 1956, there was a decision to not contact him. When he came in to get what was left of his effects from the embassy, it was a surprise visit and there was no further contact with him until his sister arrived. That decision for those 12 years may have been correct; maybe be not. But certainly I disagree with the decisions that were made.

I remember Doldent coming to the embassy. I went outside to the police who were always in front of our embassy to "protect" us and I said to one of the officers: "I don't want to get into a debate with you, but there is a man by the name of Alexander Doldent arriving at 11:00 in the morning and he has full permission to enter and I don't want a hard time about it. Would you please go to your superior and tell him that?" and he said: "Oh we never stop anybody from coming in; we're here to protect you." I said: "Look, let's skip it today and just do what I tell you." I phrased a little bit more politely than that, but he got the message.

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As I walked back, I could see him signaling to a fellow officer and had him come in while he ran to the phone. At the appointed time, when I came out again (our embassy had two archways) I could see Doldent walking and I knew him instantly, even though I had never seen the man before because he looked like an American. It's something I confess that still gives me a certain emotion today. He had his head up high while a Soviet would come past the embassy slightly hunched over. There was something in him that made you realize that he was an American in spite of the fact that he had lived in the Soviet Union since he was a teenager. The clothing he was wearing was Russian, but he was an American. It was the most extraordinary feeling. I went out and put myself between him and the militia and brought him into the embassy. He started to tell me a story of what had happened. It was sort of an opening of things and I just pointed and told him that we would have plenty of time in the future to talk about this.

Q: You knew that the place was bugged?

SWIERS: Yes; there was no way that we could carry on a conversation, particularly if he wanted to say anything sensitive because I'm sure all of the bugs were on unless we had cleared them out. We simply assumed, that even though there had been a major effort to clean out back in the 1960s, that there were still bugs. It still took another three months to get Doldent out. They kept throwing up obstacles at the visa registration office. We couldn't quite figure it out. In particular, his new wife's mother had refused to give permission for him to get out. Your parents had to provide permission to emigrate if you were a Soviet (if you can imagine this) even though you were an adult. Finally in December 1971, we got Doldent out, but even at the airport they were still giving him a hard time at customs. I intervened and he wrote in his book later that I had leaped over the scales to come to him. I didn't quite leap, but I did come pretty fast and I flashed my pass and we went right in. I literally walked him to the plane and we got him out to Vienna and to his sister. It's interesting now that he can finally tell the full story. First of all, his wife's father was a KGB Officer. He and his wife were divorced but nevertheless it really upset the KGB that this was happening since they had a little son. More importantly though, as

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we learned a few months later, there was a report that a woman in Leningrad who had been one of the messengers for Solzhenitsyn's Gulag who had hung herself. A Norwegian correspondent named Paragel Hager, whom we knew, was PNGed after that. He had gone up to Leningrad to see this woman. She had been one of his contacts and I assume Paragel Hager was one of the couriers that helped to get Solzhenitsyn's book draft out of the country.

Q: We're talking about the booSolzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago.

SWIERS: The last time that Paragel Hager got to Leningrad he was accosted by “hoodlums” who beat him up and more specifically smashed his eyeglasses. He was quite myopic and he had no choice but to go back to Moscow and then he was subsequently PNGed. In fact my wife and I were at lunch at his house when he was late coming home; he had been called to the ministry. We were having lunch with his wife who was Danish, when he showed up to announce that he was PNGed. He laughed and said that he had completed his work, which I assume was being the courier for the “Gulag Archipelago.” When you read the “Gulag” you'll notice that one of the principal sources for Solzhenitsyn's description of La Bianca and Sukanofka interrogations were a “AD” or “Alexander D;” that was golden. I think the KGB had a sense that there was something there, but they didn't have the facts. Doldent literally got out in the nick of time because when the book was published, they would have noticed the reference and I'm not sure we would have ever seen Doldent again. It was a very close one.

Q: We mentioned some of the things you'd like to talk about, such as the dissidents. Could you explain what dissident meant in the context of what is was at that time?

SWIERS: Even at that time one had to distinguish between a dissident; that is somebody who was objecting to the Soviet government in one form or another, but who was not planning to emigrate from the country and those who wanted to be emigrants. Most of the people that I dealt with were in that latter category. The first person who was more a

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dissident than an emigrant was Anatoly Sharansky. He was expelled; they accused him of making efforts to undermined the state - the usual charges - and then they added some spying things. We ended up exchanging of Sharansky for a few others - an arrangement who Frank Meehan helped to arrange. I often think he may have been not given him enough credit because he went public with Burt and all of the other people. But it was really Frank and his contact with Wolfgang Vogel in Berlin which resulted in the success of so many of these exchanges.

Let's start with Leonid Rigerman. We had a list of people in whom we were interested that we gave the Soviets every year. A specialist prepared that list for Nixon's visit near the end of my stay in Moscow. Leonid Rigerman was the son of an American woman and a Soviet father. I'm saying Soviet but I'm not really sure if he was Russian or Ukranian; they were Jewish. The mother was an American citizen; the father was not and I'm not sure if the woman met him in the United States and if they married there. There was a large group of people who returned to the Soviet Union in the 1930s at the time of the depression. They were attracted by the "brave new world" they thought they saw in the Soviet Union. Some of them were disillusioned and some were not. Rigerman's mother whom I eventually met, left the United States; she was not disillusioned with communism. Maybe she was disillusioned with the way the Soviets implemented the theory and by the bigotry which the Soviets showed against the Jewish. Rigerman was conscious of being an American through his mother although he was born in the Soviet Union but had a claim to American citizenship. Once Stalin died and even during the periods of ups and downs since then, more and more information began to get through to the Soviet Union because of the such institutions as the "Voice of America," "Radio Free Europe" and newspapers. I think at some point Riegerman realized that he had a claim to American citizenship. One day when I was in my office I was told that there was a man outside my office who claimed to be an American. He spoke perfect English. I walked out and there was this fellow that looked like an American tourist. He was wearing a very nice jacket and tie and he had a camera over his shoulder. Once he entered my office, he announced who he was and that

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he was trying to get out. What he had done was to fool the militia in front of the embassy door into thinking that he was an American. That did not happen again, I can tell you! They knew about it because we were located in a secure area which was access-limited. We also had local employees who reported to the KGB and we were “bugged” as well. So the police realized that this guy had fooled them. I took down all of his information. I have always felt that if somebody came in and claimed American citizenship, you had to consider the case favorably. The object was to get the person out of the Soviet Union; we would worry about the technicalities afterwards. Needless to say the passport division did not always share that view. I was very distressed because this was the early Nixon Administration and these guys pretended to be high patriots. I remember when I went back I saw all these people with all of their Halderman-like crew cuts and their little American flags on their lapels. But at the same time they were still willing to keep the people out of the U.S. even if they had some claim. I asked Rigerman to return at another time.

Q: How do you spell his name?

SWIERS: R I G E R M A N. His story was written up in the newspapers when he finally got to the States; an aunt of mine actually sent me the article. He ended up in the Bronx where his family originally came from. I believe his mother and father had died by that time. In any case, the next time Rigerman tried to come in to see me, he called me; I knew there was going to be trouble and I met him at the gate of the embassy. At that time there were these big double gates for each archway of the embassy. We made a very strong principle of access, which was canceled sometime in the 1970s by Ambassador Malcom Toon after an incident when somebody set himself on fire or managed somehow to get to the consular section. I personally felt that it was a mistake; you had these incidents once in awhile, but it was important to maintain the principle of the right of access; what we did was simplify the militiamen's work. The north entrance was sealed off except for a door which was kept closed which made it easier to block people from getting in. On the other entrance, they put in one of those gates that went up and down. The second time

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Rigerman tried to get in, it was something to see because he was a little fellow and the militiamen usually resembled the Olofon caricature of the police.

Q: Olofon being a cartoonist showing rather beefy types.

SWIERS: I remember that I was protesting saying that they couldn't block access to the embassy. The militiaman said the usual thing about "We don't know who he is and he's a threat." You had to be very careful about how you handled things; you always had to remember that it was Rigerman that was going to suffer, not me. The worse they could do to me would be to PNG me. You have to draw that line. The militiaman finally got disgusted with arguing and picked Rigerman up under his arm. I can still remember Rigerman's eyes as he was being carried away. He was desperately trying to maintain his dignity but he had that look of a deer that was about to be killed. You could see his fear in his eyes. In many ways, this gave us a crisis that we needed and we made a massive protest to the foreign ministry. This was 1970; they wanted to minimize the number of incidents they had and we were eventually able to get Rigerman out of the country. I gave that story to the press. I thought that was a useful one to give.

In the Dulgan case which we discussed earlier, something bothered me about it and as we found out later on, he not only knew the details of La Biana and Sukonofka, an even worse prison than where a sadist was the commander and he actually personally tortured Doldent. Naturally he gave all of this information to Soschonika's for the "Gulag Archipelago." There were a number of other cases back and forth that got out with varying degrees of difficulty. It was interesting because we were building up to detente and occasionally we would have to stop.

One of the more difficult cases involved a woman by the name Dora Gashonawitz who had also worked in our embassy at the same time as Doldent did back in the 1940s. That was a case that we worked on for some time. I have to apologize, but the details have escaped me over the years. She was living somewhere in the Ukraine. I finally was able

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to get through to her on the telephone not too long before the Nixon visit and just before I left. We finally broke her out so that she could also leave. She likewise had a claim to American citizenship as did Dolgen and the others. Similarly to Dolgen, she had either been denounced or the police had been able to build up their case probably through Valinko. We've never been able to prove this, but it was generally felt that they brought her in and she cracked.

Q: What was her position?

SWIERS: She was the senior local employee. She was very efficient and was very good. I confess that I never looked up in detail when I got back what her background was, but it was always felt that she was another one of the Americans or partial Americans who had remained a communist. She was caring for her mother. She's dead now, I understand that she died of cancer. It was a very complicated story. As you know, we have many locals working in an embassy, particularly in the consular section. The ones in Moscow were terribly efficient. They did their work well, but you always knew that whatever they did would be reported to the Soviet government.

Q: We had an old woman who was our receptionist in Belgrade, just about this time and we were sure that she had to be reporting. But she would come and say "Somebody is seeking asylum;" she was trying to make the waiting room clear.

SWIERS: Mary would notify us if somebody managed to get into the waiting room in the embassy if we hadn't noticed. Sometimes that happened; somebody would get in. It was a strange relationship.

Q: They had a very difficult time and I think that all of us realizethat, but you could work around it.

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SWIERS: You could work around it; the question was how much were they doing because it was the only way to survive and how much was because they wanted to, which is a question that usually goes to the grave with most of them.

Q: Did you run across Pentecostals or Jews?

SWIERS: Pentecostals. There was a case but I can't remember the name. Her maiden name was a German name; she was an American who had gone to Czechoslovakia and lived there. She and her husband had been Pentecostal missionaries. Her husband was Ukrainian and she had a Ukrainian name. She had a substantial family in the United States who kept trying to make contact with her. They did periodically get through and they were desperate to have her come home for a final visit. They thought maybe she wanted to immigrate and she really just wanted to visit. It was one of those more ambiguous cases because again when I was finally able to get through to her, she actually complained to me that the embassy and her family had been making trouble for her because the local administration was very upset with her for seeking an exit visa. I think that case finally ended after I left. There were a number of them that were finished and I think that was partly because of the Nixon visit. I believe she did in fact manage to get over for a final visit with her family and made it very clear that at that stage in her life she had no intention of returning to the United States. So often these people had "acquired" Soviet citizenship - usually forced upon them. We had a strange process for these kinds of cases. We would issue the American passport, quite often limited just for travel to the United States; they would have to get a Soviet passport with a Soviet exit visa and then we would put a phoney visa in the Soviet passport. That seemed to satisfy the socialist legality which started to evolve after Stalin's death. Mary Lidvininko and her crew had the little stamp that they would use to do this; then we'd issue the parallel American passport. They used the Soviet passport to get out of the country and then used the American passport for travel once they were beyond the Soviet Union - e.g., if their flight had to put down somewhere, or they were stopping somewhere. Usually this didn't happen because they just barely

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had enough money to get out of the Soviet Union. The visa cost a huge sum of money, the tickets cost them and then they were only allowed to take out a certain amount of cash with them. That meant that they had to abandon all of their property and possessions. I can tell you that it was a regular process all of the time. The consular section was busy with these exits on one side and with protection of the American citizens on the other.

Q: What about American citizens who got in trouble there?

SWIERS: That was a hard one because you had many combinations of that. We would have people coming in to make trouble, or doing something that would get them in trouble - not necessarily political. Then there would be people who were totally innocent, and then there were people that the Soviet system wanted to go after when they came back. Let me start with the case of an old woman who had come the Soviet Union; I had Robin Porter take care of that one. When she arrived they found a disassembled pistol in her luggage; she was arrested and we went through a long process. She was quite elderly and finally we discovered, as did the Soviets, that she was bringing the pistol to shoot a member of a local government in the district in Ukraine where she had come from. He had betrayed her to the Nazis. She was sent out to a concentration camp or something like that and she was coming back for a final piece of revenge on this man who had done some terrible things to her and her family. Once this was determined and verified by the Soviets themselves, they gave her the technical penalty for bringing a concealed weapon into the country and then expelled her rather than put her in jail. Needless to say, the Soviets were delighted with get this information about the Ukranian which they were going to use against him. I think he may have died.

Q: It sounds like in a way despite difficult relations the same thing goes on in almost every country. The greatest weapon of the consular officer is that you usually are working on the same side of the street as the authorities; they usually want to get rid of foreigners for the most part in their jails. They want to make sure their laws are observed, but foreigners are just a problem an if they can expel them after making their point, it's all to the best.

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SWIERS: I would say that unless there's a reason - e.g., if she had been proven to have collaborated with the Germans, that would have been the end of it. The same went with this older woman; if there had been another reason I think that would have been the end of it. It varied from case to case, but I think there were three things I realized: one, there really was a change in the country with the death of Stalin. We have to understand that the ordinary person was no longer had to be afraid of a knock on the door and a "final" solution. If you basically just lived a normal life, while it may not have been a pleasant life, in fact it was a difficult life, you would not get in trouble on the political side.

Secondly came the emergence of a socialist legality. This development is also related to the Stalin period when people were simply shot. Afterwards the Soviets did ostensibly want to follow the laws; they could bring pressure to bear (I'll get into this in the third case which is probably pretty relevant to where we're going) on the way they wanted the law interpreted. You could use the law against the government if you knew it. One of the things I made sure I acquainted myself with was the code of the different republics in the Soviet Union. So we if we used the Soviet code of criminal procedure, we had the two things we used for example in signing a document. One did not have to sign a confession under the procedural code, but naturally in very few cases, did the people not sign because their interrogator would remind them, unless they had the protection of somebody like us, that "Fine, we'll find another way of getting you." And they could, as we well know, the way the system worked.

The third thing was the bureaucracy. This was a massive bureaucracy, and in dealing with it one needed to realize you were dealing with a bureaucracy which was like most bureaucracies. It was simply accustomed to saying "No," trying to block, putting obstacles, and one had to overcome that all the time. The important thing was to keep your cool.

I guess there is a fourth aspect which was the psychology of a society that was essentially Eastern Orthodox - Byzantine in nature. I think too often people from the West started to deal with the Soviets as if they were dealing with Westerners. In fact that they were not;

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they had been split off from the West at the time of our Renaissance, and had adopted a highly mystical religion.

It turned out oddly enough that my experience in Greece was quite relevant. Some of the things I remembered in terms of dealing with the Greeks became quite relevant in dealing with the Soviets. The Soviets had a similar psychology in that they had both totalitarian and ideological components. Kennan has actually written considerably about that. Kennan I think gives more weight to what we were seeing to the view that the Soviet system was an extension of the czars under another system. I would say: "Yes, that was true," but you also had a schizophrenia which was brought on by the imposition of what was in effect a Western ideology - i.e. Marxism. It enabled them to be totalitarian in a way the czars never were. Nevertheless they never approached the efficiency of the totalitarian state that you found, for example, in the GDR.

Q: German Democratic Republic being eastern Germany.

SWIERS: I found that in many ways the only saving grace for the East Germans was that that government never completely achieved a "legitimacy" as you found had in the Soviet Union. Even in the eastern European countries where a regime was imposed, people somehow still reflected an element of their society. The East Germans regime remained in power simply because Soviet power was there, and then we saw this thing collapse.

Q: There was nothing to hold it. When you were there, did you get involved in the Nixon visit?

SWIERS: Yes, very much so. That was in May in '72.

Q: That was shortly before you left, wasn't it.

SWIERS: Exactly. We divided up all the responsibilities. I had one of the escort responsibilities, and also the handling all of the passports and documentation. It was quite

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a visit. Very dramatic visit. Let's see if I can go through it. Would you like me to go through it?

Q: Yes, please. Was he the first American president to go there?

SWIERS: Yes, he was. I just thought of that the other day when the issue of whether Clinton should go arose. I frankly recommended to the White House that this was commemoration for the Russian people and their suffering. That it meant no approval of Yeltsin was really necessary; the Russian people would understand that - i.e., that the American president was coming to honor the Russian people; they know exactly what that meant; he was not coming for the government business or to argue that the Soviets facilitated a war by the Hitler-Stalin pact. That may be true, but the fact is that the Soviets ultimately lost 20 to 27 million people in that horrible conflict.

I remember that Harriman told me at one time that he always regretted that Eisenhower was not able to make it to the Soviet Union in 1960. In fact, and I want to be careful of my memory (I believe he said this as well; I certainly heard it elsewhere), that Khrushchev really used the Francis Gary Powers shooting down as an excuse not to have Eisenhower come.

Q: Because this was one of the main effects of the U2 incident.

SWIERS: It was, but Harriman felt, and I certainly did, that it was more an excuse not to have Eisenhower to come. They could have obviously very easily had the shoot-down and handled things quietly, but they decided to make an issue out of it. I think that the reason was because the Soviets understood (remember it was only 15 years after the end of the war), that there would be an outpouring of emotion and positive attitude toward Eisenhower that probably would have exceeded that shown during his 1945 visit to Moscow..

Q: He actually stood in Lenin's tomb with Stalin.

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SWIERS: With Stalin and Harriman. Stalin did control the visit; Eisenhower planned to travel around the country; there was no question that the Soviet people knew who Eisenhower was. Another Eisenhower visit would have reminded them once again that Americans were their great helpers. Remember that Stalin tried to limit Soviet understanding of what lend-lease meant to the Soviet ability to sustain the war. He was unwilling to acknowledge Normandy. The Soviet Union was a continental power, but very few people understood the magnitude of effort required to make an amphibious invasion - far beyond that for mounting a land invasion. Nevertheless even Stalin finally and reluctantly acknowledged the Normandy operation.

So Nixon's visit was the first presidential, but naturally he could not convey the emotion that an Eisenhower visit would have generated. It was difficult to control, and I remember, almost to the end, going on one of the last buses with the remains of the delegation which included Marty Hillenbrand who was an assistant secretary of State, to Minukover. Nixon was leaving from Minukover to go to Kiev first and then to Leningrad or the other way around. Literally as the last bus was going they were taking the flags down in the streets and on the buildings; in other words, they did what they had to, but they did not want that to get too far.

I think the visit was overwhelming for the Soviets. An American president's visit is not simply Air Force One. Since he was going to three places that meant a steady stream of staff going from Moscow to Minukover to Kiev to Leningrad bringing in all their equipment. For a couple of weeks before Nixon's arrival and after, we were in seventh heaven because in those days the Soviet telephone system was distinctly primitive; even if you could place the call it would take several hours before you could get through to anyone, in part presumably because they were hooking up the listening devices.

While Nixon was there, we had the White House communications office which installed instant communications between the three cities which we were allowed to use. All we had to do was dial an embassy extension and you get on the phone this obvious military voice

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saying "Kiev, Sir." You would tell the number you wanted in Kiev and get right through. It is difficult to describe to the average American what that means when you could just take care of anything of that nature.

I remember very much the final signing and the announcement of the SALT treaty. Jerry Smith, our principal disarmament negotiator, and a number of others hit some final snags which were being negotiated in Helsinki; therefore they were delayed in Helsinki. Kissinger, though, went ahead with his press conference at the embassy cafeteria. To this day, I remember Jerry Smith coming into the press conference, furious, because Kissinger had, as Kissinger was wont, stolen the limelight on the announcement of the details and the briefing of the press on SALT which was obviously the crowning point of the visit.

Politically it really did represent an opening. I was there from '70 to '72 and you could feel things sort of loosening, remembering always what we were dealing with. But the key thing was, just before Nixon arrived, he made the decision to bomb Haiphong harbor and that was...

Q: This was in North Vietnam.

SWIERS: That was interesting on two counts: number one, the Russians went ahead with the visit anyway despite - I can't remember, was Kosygin actually in Haiphong at that time?

Q: He was there during one of the bombings, I can't remember exactlwhen.

SWIERS: The fact was that in spite of a real humiliation for the Soviets - not just because Kosygin was there but bombing just before the start of the visit - they went forward with the trip. I would say that Kissinger and Nixon correctly judged what the Soviet response to the bombing would be. It signaled hoe overriding to the Soviets was the bilateral relationship with the United States, and their desire to reach these arms control agreements and open up detente.

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The second part of it was that at the time of Haiphong there was a huge coverage of it in the Soviet press, almost building up to the conclusion that they might cancel the visit. All of us, at almost the exact time for everybody, were approached by the locals in our embassy. We should put that, for the readers who don't know it, the Soviet locals in the embassy were not directly hired by the embassy. There was an organization called UPDK, "Administration for Assistance to the Diplomatic Corps," and we in effect contracted with UPDK for the employment of local staff in the embassy. They would be periodically called to UPDK for various conferences. When we bombed Haiphong they were called - that one was actually done quite openly. We were subsequently approached, all of us by our respective locals, really expressing deep concern over this Haiphong thing and the danger for U.S.-Soviet relations.

The visit was important, not just the formal statements which each side had been told to make - they were almost identical, but for the way each phrased their comments. The Soviets looked at us and we saw a real fear on their part on two counts: one was the image they had of the U.S. formulated during and after WWII; we must never underestimate the Russian people's regard for the United States. It was very rare that we ever encountered personal difficulties in the Soviet Union, or let's say at least in the Russian part of the Soviet Union. On a personal basis, the average Russian was very friendly to the United States. Of course, there were officials who were nasty; there was this image of that.

There was also the very real fear of conflict in the mind of the average Soviet which remained from the war. We saw that in Afghanistan when they finally went into that conflict; we're seeing it again today in Chechnya; it has not left them. The effect WWII on them is much stronger than the effect of Vietnam on us. The important thing is that the Soviets went through with the visit and it was an enormously successful one.

I'll tell you another little anecdote of the visit. As Nixon was leaving, we went out to the Minukover; he was on his way to Kiev and Leningrad. Since it was in-country flight, he was

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going to fly on an IL 62 which was fairly new at the time. There were two IL 62s on the runway, but Air Force I was around somewhere. Kosygin accompanied him to the airport. I got up real close to the party; the Soviet officials knew me and I sort of fought my way up. I remember at one point, one of the Soviets finally said to me in Russian, "Mr. Swiers, you know you can't go any further than this." I sort of laughed back.

We were watching. I was right up close to Kosygin who had walked Nixon to the plane and walked back to the steps of the VIP hall at Minukover. He was standing there watching; the plane didn't take off, the engines didn't rev up or anything, and this went on for a good 15 minutes; and you could see Kosygin getting fidgety. Kosygin was noted for his temper; he was much more a technocrat than he was a real hard-line politician; you could see the red beginning to creep up on his face. Suddenly the door opens and out comes a stewardess followed by a crew member; it turns out there was something went wrong and the plane couldn't go.

So all of the Nixon party had to come down and get on the back-up plane. Kosygin was absolutely near purple with rage - the humiliation of that. Of course, he walked back and smiled, but you could tell that underneath he was fuming; I don't know what happened to the ground crew or the crew of that plane, but suspect they never flew a VIP flight Agai; they ended up on some Podunk route out in Siberia. You should have seen the look on his face.

The communique which was issued ended up talking about a Quadripartite agreement had just been signed or was just about to be signed at the time of the trip. Somewhere the Soviets had inserted a reference to what they called the Quadripartite agreement on West Berlin. Marty Hillenbrand, who was in the bus with us, had not been in on the final draft negotiations; this was the major thing Kissinger and Nixon went to do. I remember Marty was really in distress in the back of the bus, but it was too late; the document was had already been agreed upon and included the reference to a Quadripartite agreement on West Berlin. I don't know how familiar you are with that issue, but the Soviets always

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wanted to say it was only referring to West Berlin; we wanted it to say it was referring to all of Berlin; so the final agreement brilliantly done by Ken Rush was that it simply said Quadripartite agreement, and Berlin was called a referenced area or something. In many ways you can trace the unraveling of the Soviet system to that agreement, because it legalized, three years before Helsinki, which confirmed it, a relationship and exchange of information between East Germany and West Germany. In effect it broke an existing theory; there were a number of supplementary agreements to the Quadripartite agreement which finally acknowledged that what in the old days used to be called "interference in internal affairs" was acceptable.

Q: Let's move on to your next assignment.

SWIERS: I left Moscow soon after the Nixon visit. I had for my onward assignment Berlin. John Negroponte - we had been on the Paris peace talks together - had been assigned to the NSC to work on the Vietnam talks. John stayed there until January of 1973 and then went on to Ecuador where you might say he was laundered a bit and he wouldn't be blamed for aid problems. He asked whether I would be interested in coming to the NSC. I must say to my regret today that I turned it down. I went to Berlin.

I just had finished a tour that was in effect a seven-day week. You were constantly on call in that job. It was a political job in that you were basically implementing policies in a very special way. Three years later, in the middle of detente, we decided not to have a political officer as the chief of the consular section in Moscow; by then the position had been elevated to a supervisory consul general because we had opened up a post in Leningrad. After that, we had some serious disasters because some actions were handled in a strictly consular manner. Then the Department went back again for a number of years to having a political officer as the chief of the consular section.

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Q: I've done an interview very recently with Kempton Jenkins who I think came from Berlin to Moscow because they needed somebody who knew the Berlin issues. Was this an effort to put somebody who knew about Moscow into Berlin?

SWIERS: You know to this day, I don't why the assignment was made. Pratt Byrd had this job in Berlin. We had in the Berlin mission an the eastern affairs section, which was a combination of the functions of the historical liaison between ourselves and the Soviets in Berlin, and was also in effect a shadow embassy to East Berlin. By the time I arrived, the Quadripartite agreement had been concluded, and it was only a matter of time before we opened an embassy in East Berlin.

There were all sorts of very interesting formulations about our duties because we were not going to say we were the embassy in the GDR, but that is fact what we were. We wanted to avoid any recognition of East Berlin as the capital of the GDR so that formally we were not located there. It set an interesting precedent, and I hope the people who are working on Arab-Israeli affairs will look back to the Berlin situation and see its similarity with Jerusalem, because we in effect said then "Well, our embassy is located in East Berlin. That does not mean we recognize East Berlin as the capital of the GDR." However, we eventually did recognize the GDR.

Q: But the time you were there, you were there from '72-'73, we dinot, it was still...?

SWIERS: It was still in our mission in West Berlin, but I came just as the process was starting. I think it's useful for the record to show that when I reached Berlin it was very clear that I was not going to the job I was supposed to have which had been called "chief of protocol," which meant that I was the one who went over to protest to the Soviets at the action level. If it was a very serious matter, then the senior State Department person - his formal title was assistant chief of mission - would go see the Soviets.

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The chief of mission was our ambassador in Bonn, even though he would not formally acknowledge that himself. The Soviet ambassador was his counterpart. The Allied Control Council still existed and the British, the French and the Americans ran it like so the their ambassadors to the West Germany were the formal representative on the Control Council as successors to the High Commissioners for Germany. The deputy chief of mission was the commandant in Berlin - a military person. The senior State department person in the mission in Berlin was called formally assistant chief of mission.

In practice, though, the deputy chief of mission - the military person - was de facto subordinate to the State Department person. The ambassador wasn't in Berlin all the time. In theory if the senior State person disagreed with general, he could carry his case to the ambassador in Bonn. It was very rare that you had that case in which the general would try to formally assert his authority over some political questions. In theory though, that possibility was there.

When I got to Berlin, I discovered (I won't deal with names and personalities at least until everybody's dead), very quickly that the assistant chief had wanted somebody else for the job and that I in effect had been imposed on him. Actually he did bring in the person he had wanted who was an old German hand, whom he had known for a long time; he brought him in in another capacity. In any case as my record shows, I left Berlin slightly more than a year later because it was clear that the embassy wasn't opening soon and I would be in an rather an awkward situation.

In retrospect I'm quite disappointed by what happened because I had turned down the NSC possibility where I probably would have ended up working with Hal Sonnenfeldt who was a very dear friend for years and years. Later in my career - in 1974 - he had actually wanted me to work for him but got to the State Department after Win Lord, who had already hired me for the policy planning staff. I ran into Hal one day and he was furious over it. But Berlin was interesting because we were in this transition period. We were trying to open contacts to the embassies that were in East Berlin which was extremely

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difficult. They were reluctant to deal with us. At the same time we were also maintaining the allied control system in terms of the relations with the Soviets. We did the reporting on the situation in the GDR, to the extent you could do any; it was difficult because we could not have any meetings with people in the GDR ministries.

Q: So you were precluded from talking to official East Germans, is that it?

SWIERS: Somehow I have in the back of my mind that we did work out some formula for talking to people in the GDR foreign ministry. I'm not sure I visited the foreign ministry. I'll have to think about it; I really can't remember. We did visit various institutes in the GDR, and it seems to me I was in touch with somebody in the GDR foreign ministry at some point or other. There were all these tasseled lines we drew; the East Germans and the Soviets naturally liked to tease us a bit to try and force in little ways to get us to try and recognize the GDR which we generally refused to do.

In light of today some of our actions are quite amusing, but on the other hand they were also very sad. There was a group of Czech-Americans who were on their way home from a visit to Czechoslovakia. They were a member of one of the sects, perhaps it was an old Hussite type of sect, that lived in upstate New York; they were driving between Dresden and Meissen in their way back to the west in a Volkswagen bus. The roads then were still cobblestoned in the GDR - quite picturesque - but they slipped in the middle of the night in the road; a couple of them were killed and others were seriously injured.

There was one young girl who was totally paralyzed from the waist down. She was in the famous old Sonkahorge Clochen house iLeipzig - I think that's probably the place where Edith Hamilton's sister studied. There was quite a dramatic old building. We talked to the Soviets and worked out on a humanitarian basis the means to go down and visit her, and then ultimately to bring her back. We had get flag orders which were the means by which one traveled by car or by train between Berlin and Helmstead. In theory we could get flag orders and by approaching the Soviets we could go anywhere else. I decided

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to experiment and did up flag orders from Berlin to Leipzig and back for the purpose of visiting this young lady, and to my great surprise, the Soviets simply agreed to it, and we went back and forth twice under flag orders.

When we visited the Leipzig fair, we used to have an arrangement with the Soviets where you went out an entry point and then the East Germans would issue a visa on a separate sheet of paper and thus you traveled back and forth to Leipzig. Actually, one time they stamped my passport and we thought it was a provocation, but it turned out that the guard had just made a mistake. They got all upset with themselves, but of course I had to cancel the passport and use a different one when we returned.

But in this case, we went back and forth and actually brought the young woman back under flag orders in an American military ambulance. So you had this rather unusual scene of an American military ambulance going along the autobahn with the siren on until we reached the Soviet checkpoint and back into Berlin. It was rather interesting and a very sad situation.

Our dealings with the Soviets were, once the Quadripartite agreement was over, largely dedicated to the efforts that the GDR was making, with or without the support of the Soviets (that was never clear) to undermine our free access to and from West Berlin. There was a shooting incident at Checkpoint Charlie. I think they didn't kill the German who was trying to get through, but a bullet went through the famous Checkpoint Charlie booth. If an American had happened to be standing there at that time, we would have had somebody seriously wounded or killed and a major incident. Fortunately, there wasn't, but naturally we used that to great effect in terms of protest, and the brutality of the wall.

Despite incidents such as that, I think we were beginning to see changes. The wall was just such so brutal; it is difficult to describe what is like to see this thing in the middle of the city, tearing a city in half. Guards on the GDR side were rarely from Brandenburg or Berlin. By their accents, we believed that they were mostly Saxon. The GDR was probably were

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worried, since a large percentage of the people who would try to get across the wall were indeed from Berlin. So they were uncertain whether Berliners might be willing to shoot other Berliners, and therefore used Saxons who as you know do have a reputation for being rather nasty in any case.

There's really not too much else to say about Berlin because we were in that transitional period. Toward the end, I began to establish some relations with a few of the embassies in the GDR. The most interesting part of Berlin in retrospect was the fact that Felix Bloch was there.

Q: Would you talk a little bit about Felix Bloch?

SWIERS: Yes, I'll talk about it because it was an interesting...

Q: You might explain who he is and why...

SWIERS: Felix Bloch was the American foreign service officer who has been accused but never convicted, of not formally spying for the Soviet Union, but having turned something over to the Soviets. The case came out when he in his last position in the Foreign Service as director of the office in the Department of State Bureau of European Affairs, responsible for the European union - an office called EUR/RPE.

While the French were carrying out a surveillance on a Soviet in Paris, he was observed with another person who left a briefcase or other document holder. The Soviet took the briefcase. Bloch has maintained to this day that it was stamps or something of that nature. But whatever the situation was, it was clear that while there was not sufficient evidence to bring him to a trial, there was sufficient evidence to allow then Secretary Baker to fire him on national security grounds. Bloch has not challenged that finding nor has he challenged the denial of his pension. He is living in North Carolina where he has been picked up for shoplifting a few times since then.

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When I arrived in Berlin, Felix Bloch had already been in Berlin for a year or two in the economics section of the mission. Just after I arrived, he was transferred to the eastern affairs section as the economic officer in that section. I remember this rather vividly for rather a stupid reason which is again an illustration of how dumb the Foreign Service could be. I had been assigned to what was in effect the second largest State Department office because I was an FSO-04 at the time. Dick Barkley was in another office, the next office after that, and then there was a fourth office which was just maybe a few square feet smaller than the office Dick was in, right next to him.

Suddenly one day, Alex Zakalofski who was the chief of our section and very conscious of protocol (maybe Felix was conscious of it, too), came into me and noted that Bloch, who I had just met, was being moved into our section, and since he outranked me - I think he was a couple of pay grades higher - I would have to vacate my office, and the Dick would have to vacate his office for the fourth one. I told Alex he really didn't have to worry about that; Dick did not have to move out. I would simply move into the fourth office which was empty. I stayed there. I thought that this was absolutely absurd.

Q: It's just not done much in the Foreign Service; I mean this inot that, normally.

SWIERS: It was very interesting because in retrospect the move into this office had not also been consonant with protocol, or whatever you call it - the hierarchy - but it enabled Bloch to observe the comings and goings of all personnel in the section.

Q: One of our concerns of course is was that some of our activities in the mission were not just straight diplomatic activities, and that meant it could compromise some of our programs - Berlin being an extremely sensitive place.

SWIERS: That is an understatement in terms of not only the sensitivity of the place and especially the sensitivity of the eastern affairs section. The personnel of the eastern affairs section possessed top security clearances because of the access to information

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which they had. If in fact Bloch was an agent and was already an agent at the time he was in Berlin, this was a really, in my judgment, a major compromise of American security. It is interesting because after all we basically were assigned to posts even then as old FSO-04s - today I guess they're called FSO-02s - for not more than two to three years. Bloch ended up staying in West Berlin and East Berlin for a combined five years, I believe.

Q: He was Austrian-born.

SWIERS: That is interesting because he always kept a certain aloofness; he was a brilliant tennis player as was his wife. We did not play tennis, so we didn't see much of them. He was quite aloof. Most of us simply laughed at it or attributed it to the fact of his being Austrian. He was like a very old-worldly, stiff Austrian, very stiff in his manner, and you wonder today what that all meant. Did that cover up something?

The one I feel most sorry for is the wife and the daughters. The wife has since divorced him and I sincerely hope the State Department would frankly honor her claim that since she was a spouse under the old personnel system, that even though his pension is denied, she certainly is entitled to some part of it. It's not quite the Spike Dubbs analogy, but nevertheless, this is a woman whose career might have been substantially otherwise if she hadn't been following her husband around. We'll see. Very, very sad.

Bloch was a very active part of the eastern affairs section at the time. I've often wondered whether or at what point it was determined that he became or is believed to have become a security risk.

Q: Yes, it's still one of those things that is very much up in the air. You left Berlin, in 1973, because it just wasn't a good fit, which happens sometimes.

SWIERS: It wasn't a good fit. I left. I probably would have stayed if it appeared that in the near future the embassy in East Berlin would have opened. That did not occur for about another year or two. No, it was not a good fit.

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Q: You were looking towards being kind of the Soviet expert at the embassy in East Germany.

SWIERS: Yes, I was. An interesting comment on the Foreign Service: another reason I went to Berlin rather than take the NSC offer was on the advice from senior people in our embassy in Moscow that my career had been too “seventh-floor like,” and also too consular. I was running the consular section as an operational job, and I really needed an analytic job. Of course, Berlin turned out not to be entirely that. I would say in many ways you should follow your own instincts. The people in Moscow were wrong, and clearly I would have been much better advised to have gone to the NSC rather than to Berlin.

Q: Sometimes the old Foreign Service steered clear of the NSC, bu...

SWIERS: Also, the operational jobs; they always thought one had to write the big think papers and all that. There was an element of that, but the other side of it was looked down upon, and many of us were better at that. I think I was. I could do the reporting, but frankly I was much more interested in the policy execution rather than the policy analysis. I think this is where we've made a mistake in the Foreign Service; we certainly do not have the influence we could or should have because too many of us did not like to do policy execution; we simply wanted to do policy analysis.

Q: One of the greatest accolades in the Foreign Service has been “wonderful drafter” which has always struck me as “Oh, well that’s kind of interesting,” but what does the drafting accomplish? It was an emphasis at least in one part of the Foreign Service, but not on the real movers and shakers. I’ve never heard anybody ever say Larry Eagleburger was a great drafter.

SWIERS: I think he was, but in a different way. I know somebody who has made it to ambassador and deputy assistant secretary, and if the Bush administration had been reelected would probably have gone on further. I helped his career. He had been assigned

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to the Vietnam delegation in Paris and he was not considered a great drafter because he was not one of these brilliant analysis drafters; yet he did absolutely brilliant work for the delegation. I in effect drafted the efficiency report that Harriman that ultimately signed.

He was also quite different in the way he functioned in the Service. I think we might say that his career turned around as a result of that. I don't want to use his name, but I can tell you he has had a very good career. He's not the most popular fellow. He's basically a nice person but with a very strong personality, quite abrupt, and excellent policy judgement, and his career, he did very well.

Q: Then you came back and what you had a rather short stint in...

SWIERS: A short stint in ACDA. What had happened was I had been brought back to ACDA, as I had been told, to be executive secretary of the SALT delegation. In 1973, in response to Scoop Jackson, ACDA was gutted.

Q: Scoop Jackson being Henry Jackson, senator from Washington state.

SWIERS: Right; his assistant was Richard Perle.

Q: Very, really basically anti-Soviet, almost violently anti-Soviet.

SWIERS: Very strongly opposed to the SALT treaty, insisting it did not serve our interests. They attacked it on several grounds: the "throw-away" question, the MIR question, and several other issues which they felt we had left open. Some argue that there's only so much you can get in a treaty. We got a lot in the treaty at that time; the Soviets got a lot, and then you go on to the next step. But Kissinger was under enormous pressure because the Nixon administration, as we realize now, was at that time itself in danger. To quiet Jackson, Jerry Smith and a range of people in ACDA were in effect sacrificed and ACDA was gutted.

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That's exactly when I arrived. What had happened I'm not quite sure because when I got there, there already was an executive secretary for the SALT delegation which by then was in a holding pattern under Alex Johnson. No one was sure what we were going to go next. It really wasn't until Ford came in that you started to move again with the Vladivostok agreements, hopefully moving then toward a real type of SALT, a new SALT. We can talk about that again when we get up to the Carter administration.

The fellow who had somehow ended up as executive secretary, I have to think about this, it was either Harlan Molen, or maybe he was supposed to move on but didn't move on, or David Aaron. I remember meeting both of them; they were on the delegation and I was back in Washington. There wasn't really any backstopping of that delegation. It turned out that I realized most of the work I was doing was really make-work, sadly. There were a number of things one could do - e.g. to try to think up a position paper on something nobody paid any attention to. Ian Kolitsky was in there too for awhile. He has since left the service and as is now counselor at the Department of Commerce. Kissinger had been named secretary of State, and a colleague of mine let me know that Win Lord was looking for a special assistant. I was interested. So he gave my name to Lord and I guess Lord interviewed me as well as other people and we chose each other. Part of the reason may be that at that time my New York accent was even stronger than it is today. Win is from New York and I guess we were two New Yorkers.

Q: Win Lord was the head of policy planning under Kissinger which was at that time a powerful position.

SWIERS: Exactly, Win had himself been a Foreign Service officer who had been assigned to Mike Blumenthal as a young officer during the GATT negotiations. Win came back and in the typical Foreign Service way, it was felt that he had had a big job; the psychology was of not spotting people who are sharp and putting them on an executive track. Rather, almost what I would call the Scandinavian, egalitarian lore, the system wanted to level them out again, and Win was going to be assigned to a rather mediocre job in Singapore

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- an average job in Singapore. I'm sure a lot of Foreign Service people would take considerable umbrage with such an assignment, but Win was a smart fellow and what you do when you have a fellow like that, you assign him to something else to keep his momentum going.

Win was getting married to now Betty Bao. I remember this now from when Win and I were talking about the prejudice that Betty experienced.

Q: She's Chinese.

SWIERS: From a very distinguished Chinese family that had fled...

Q: And is the author of several bestsellers.

SWIERS: Subsequently, yes. But Betty experienced a considerable amount of prejudice during the security clearance process. She still had a Taiwan passport at the time. Win himself was questioned as to why would he, from one of the great establishment families - Win's mother was Mary Pillsbury - he would marry a foreigner. I think for a combination of reasons Win eventually decided to leave the Service.

He then joined, at some point, the Department of Defense under Mort Halperin. He was one of the people Mort Halperin brought to the NSC to work for Kissinger. One forgets that Kissinger had close contacts, which he doesn't talk about, to the liberal Republicans and Democrats. Kissinger was one of the people working with Harriman in the various pre-Paris peace efforts.

I would say Harriman was almost the first person who was informed that Kissinger had been chosen by Nixon to be his national security assistant. Dan Davidson, Harriman's assistant, had been on the transition team for Nixon and Kissinger. He had taken Tony Lake with him. Then Tony Lake succeeded Larry who went to Brussels; then Tony quit over Cambodia and Win succeeded Tony. When Kissinger was became secretary of

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State he brought Win with him as the director of policy planning. I need to say that I'm not familiar whether this was the job Win asked for or the job Kissinger asked him to take. He brought Larry Eagleburger in as executive assistant, and subsequently made him the undersecretary for management.

In the beginning of '74, Hal Sonnenfeldt came over to become counselor for the department; he in effect oversaw Europe for Kissinger; Lord to oversaw China and Asia for Kissinger. Win had worked with Dick Solomon on the China breakthrough in the year or two before that.

Q: So by the time you got there, our relations with the People's Republic of China had more or less opened, I mean they'd opened but we had not recognized them. That came later.

SWIERS: We were just about to open a liaison office in Beijing at that time. I remember HaShu and, what was the other old man, coming in for their first visit. I went down and met them and brought them upstairs; it was very interesting. They weren't yet wearing western clothes. But it was the first time we had had mainland Chinese in the Department; the relations developed from there. As we know, the other thing which was very, very nice, when the China hands were finally...

Q: *John Stuart Service, John Patton Davis...*

SWIERS: John Stuart Service, John Patton Davis and their colleagues were finally restored. I guess they were then given their pensions and all of that. I remember meeting John Patton Davis; it's a tribute to Win Lord for meeting with them. It was a very emotional occasion for Davis as you might guess. Remember, he had gone off to live in Latin America. I don't know whether he's still alive.

Q: *Yes, he is, down in North Carolina or Virginia.*

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Let's talk about the policy planning. You were at policy planning from when to when, now?

SWIERS: I was there from correctly from January 1974 to January 1977. The first two and a half years I spent as Win Lord's special assistant, and then for a half a year I was essentially on my own. I was planning to move on to another job which didn't work out, but then in January I went into NATO affairs (EUR-RPM).

Lord had come to the Department in late October of 1973. As I mentioned earlier, a colleague of mine mentioned to me that Lord was looking for a special assistant to help him reorganize the policy planning staff, and asked whether I would be interested. I said "Yes." So he told Lord who called me for an interview. It turns out that we hit it off together; we were both New Yorkers, our accents were the same, and our outlook probably on the world, in the broader sense of the world, was the same. So I complimented him, in the sense that I was more a European/Soviet hand, and his interests were more in Asia.

As I said, Sonnenfeldt oversaw Europe and political/military affairs for Kissinger; Eagleburger was sort of the jack of all trades and oversaw how the department would run, keeping the department running in the way Kissinger might have wanted, because Kissinger himself, needless to say, was very little interested in the management. Kissinger was quite creative. However much one might disagree with him, he had a very strong belief in what he called conceptual frameworks, which was to look at what are the longer-term goals of the United States and to ask what were our policies for that. He always insisted that if the classic three options were put before him,, that they be real options.

Q: We're talking about the classic three options which is usually surrender, declare war, or something in between - something which was the way the department or any agency would sort of force their higher executive to make the decision the bureaucrats wanted to be made. Kissinger was saying, "Come on, let's be real," and asked that more real thought be given to what one might do.

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SWIERS: That's right. Lord's role, as I discussed it with him, was to remake what had been called the policy and coordination staff - most of its work was simply coordination - which wasn't very important because as we well know, during the period before Kissinger became secretary of State, the foreign policy-making of the government was in the NSC; it was not in the State Department.

When Kissinger became secretary, he wanted a policy planning staff that would go back to the principles which had been founded by Marshall and Kennan: namely to look at the shape of things to come within a mid-term basis; to review policies that may have been overtaken by time; and essentially to, not to get into the operations of the department, but to ensure that in the daily execution of American foreign policy policies and actions remain consistent with our long-term goals or to identify those goals as necessary.

In practice, Win Lord's policy planning staff became about 60% operational and 40% about planning. That seemed to be about the right ratio; otherwise you had the danger of merely becoming ivory tower. When I say operational, I mean that certain basic steps that were going to be taken in foreign policy were coordinated or cleared with SP. One of the first things we did to show the changed nature of the staff was to change the office's symbol back to SP from SPC.

Q: Would you explain what those meant?

SWIERS: SPC was the "policy planning and coordination" staff and SP was "policy planning" staff. We went back to the original name. In fact at one point under Brzezinski I think it was called "policy planning council" - an elevated quality which Brzezinski liked back in the '60s. That we certainly did not want. Frankly I can't remember when I arrived whether it was still called the "council" or the "staff," but the point was that by becoming responsible for coordination, the staff had really lost its policy planning function.

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This is interesting because the functions of the office swing back and forth depending on a secretary. Many secretaries are simply not interested in longer-term planning or trying to ensure the longer-term relationships. I understand, for example, that in the present administration the policy planning staff is much more a coordination staff than it is a policy planning. I personally feel that policy planning is indeed its role.

My role was to ensure that the staff was indeed following Win's goals. I also to helped him to assemble the personnel for it. Some of that was already underway when I joined the staff. I think Mike Armacost had already arrived; some people stayed on from the previous regime - e.g. Tom Thornton, Gathwright. Tom had a great interest in south Asia; Gathwright I think focused mainly on strategic questions. Joe Neubert left after a bit and he was replaced by Sam Lewis. Sam Lewis, Reggie Bartholemew, John Kornblum, Dick Finn, Paul Volcker - all well known people. Abe Sirkin was our information man.

Q: Information?

SWIERS: Because of the informal division of labor between Eagleburger, Sonnenfeldt and Lord, we were less operational in the European area and more operational in the Pacific area. When Win worked on China, he and Art Hummel who was then assistant secretary for the Far East, initially approached each other rather warily. I think Art wondered why he, an old, experienced China hand and the assistant secretary of state, had to make sure he was coordinating whatever he was doing with Win. Actually they had developed a very, very good working relationship which I think was of mutual benefit to both of them.

It was not interference with EA's work, but the policy planning staff had the luxury, you could say, of being able to take a step back from the day-to-day events and look at the longer range implications. As long as it didn't interfere with the daily working of the bureau, it could be quite effective. We made ourselves quite useful.

Q: Can you give any...?

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SWIERS: We could interpret Kissinger to the department and vice-versa, which was quite important. Speech-writing was a major function of the policy planning staff, but not in the sense of just writing speeches. In ensuring that the speeches that were written for Kissinger, or drafted for Kissinger in fact - Lord was a gifted speech-writer - they actually were policy-making instruments, not just ones explaining policy which had already been decided upon.

Q: Of course in a way you were a tool of one of the few secretaries of State who had real concepts; he had strategic plans. Most secretaries of State treat them as the present one does, who's a lawyer. When you've a problem, you deal with that problem now, not necessarily looking forwards.

SWIERS: If I had to look at the secretaries since Kissinger, really the only one that functioned in that fashion was George Shultz. Baker did some of it, but I think actually it was more the people under him than him who worried about the long-range strategy: Dennis Ross, Bob Zoellick and the rest. Cy Vance was much more a lawyer - a person for whom I had the highest imaginable regard - but Cy was much more inclined to dealing with the immediate issues. That said, he performed brilliantly in the Middle East area.

Warren Christopher is, I would say, even more in that school. I'm told that there was a famous open forum meeting where he was asked what his philosophy was, and he very frankly said he didn't have a philosophy; he was a trained lawyer, he believed the issues came before him and he dealt with them at the time. Now this is fine if you have a president who is conceptual. It is a great thing, I think, that we're beginning to see Clinton emerge as a conceptual president in foreign policy. Initially, in the first couple of years, that wasn't clear. But that's current history.

Q: Can you give some examples of how you saw this process working?

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SWIERS: Let me just first finish discussing the staff. The staff was deliberately set up so that it was roughly one-third civil service, one-third foreign service, and one-third outsiders brought in. That was the general format of it, so you had a wide mix. It was very collegial; when we met, it was quite interesting. Sometimes one or more would get very frustrated because we had some brilliant people; they always wanted to go off and do their own thing. We met once a week, if you want to call it for a "show and tell." Everybody had to interrelate with each another; we forced that type of operation. The staff was housed in a suite form. We had suites for the staff, about three or four of them, to try to get the staff to interrelate. We might have grouped them geographically or functionally, but the space assignment was nevertheless a very important management part.

Q: Did you see a difference between the mental approach of the foreign service, the civil service and the outsider - the outsiders I assume coming mostly pretty much from the academic world?

SWIERS: Academic world, yes. Initially the academics would tend to be very academic. The foreign service would tend to be very practical: "We've got a problem. Let's solve it." The civil service, I don't know, maybe they were somewhere in between. I don't want to stretch this and carry it too far. The point is that they all came together, and what we wanted them to do was to be something of both.

We had the energy crisis which began to unfold, and one of our early successes was to fashion U.S. policy on energy largely; it came out largely from the policy planning staff with Volcker working with Tom Enders.

Q: Well tell, when you say the energy crisis, could you explain essentially what the energy crisis was?

SWIERS: In late 1973 came the Yom Kippur war.

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Q: *That was the October war.*

SWIERS: The October war, that was when the Arabs imposed...

Q: *Between Israel and the Arabs.*

SWIERS: There was an Arab oil embargo, and as we discovered, we were then substantially under 50% dependent on foreign oil and more specifically Middle East oil. It is interesting because today we're more than 50% dependent on foreign oil. Then and now we have a real shortage of fossil fuel products in the United States, and we understood our real dependence on that. The decisions on how to deal with the Arab world came home to us.

We had to deal with Europe because the embargo dealt a blow that could have been near fatal for European integration since Europe was so totally dependent on foreign oil. The doubling or tripling of oil prices in Europe was a disaster for what had been a very smooth and rapid growth throughout western Europe and particularly throughout the countries of the then European community. Europe lost confidence in its ability to manage its own affairs from which I don't think it has recovered.

The reality of the United States as the deciding factor in European affairs was really cemented then. Today, even as we try to withdraw from that role, as we see from our initial posture on Bosnia. The Bush administration initially said in Baker's language: "We don't have a dog in that fight." We wanted the Europeans to take care of the problem and the Europeans thought they could run it, but they couldn't, and we had to get into it. That I think shows the fundamental.

There were a whole series of policies that had to be drawn up to address. First of all we had to give to the Europeans some sense of confidence that the United States was still there. At the same time, we had to bolster their confidence in themselves so that the

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process of integration would continue. That was a key of United States foreign policy which we wish to maintain.

The embargo also forced us to give greater attention to Latin America - e.g. Mexico, Venezuela. I think the staff member for that Luis Renaldi; he was one of the principal ones working with Lord and devising these new LA policies. There was a certain sea change in the sense that American foreign policy was close to being entirely Eurocentric; everything proceeded from that. What came home to us was number one, we had to have clear goals regarding the Middle East.

We had to develop some clear idea of what were the United States goals vis-a-vis the Middle East - i.e., what are our policy objectives there were - and clearly we had to focus in on Latin America again. In a sense, I would say that we ended the old type of foreign policy, what everyone called the banana republic policy, and shifted to something else regarding Latin America; We recognized the importance of Mexico to us, the importance of Venezuela, which I think may have diminished, although I think our interest in Mexico has increased.

For Asia, it was a different type of attitude, that was driven not so much by the energy crisis except probably for our relationship with Japan which had to shift because on the energy crisis brought home to the Japanese how totally dependent they were on foreign oil resources. You can harken back to some of the reasons for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and the expansion of the Japanese empire, which was related to this rapidly industrializing country which had no natural resources at all. That reliance on foreign resources was raised again, but obviously the Japanese were not going to repeat their 1941 policy, and therefore a new relationship evolved with the Japanese. At the same time the Japanese also began to understand even more than in past their need to export and develop real competitive export capability.

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We had to address some of those issues. I remember very vividly the policy planning staff meetings we had with the Japanese policy planning staff which was one of the earliest set of meetings to develop. The Japanese had great difficulty in engaging in policy planning. They were willing to have open dialogue, not just with us, but actually you might say among themselves in our presence. That was quite a development for the Japanese and I think it helped modernize the Japanese approach to their foreign affairs.

I would say that the China policy was very little affected by the oil crisis. The policy had been set in motion with the Shanghai communique. Win Lord was involved in the efforts of the first couple of years after that. There was a very important issue which I think the policy planning staff handled. A very important part of our attitude towards the Pacific was in national security terms. We saw the beginning of an increased U.S. attention to the Pacific which did not diminish of the importance of the Atlantic and Europe in our national security thinking, but raised our consciousness of the Pacific area.

What is interesting is that this was just at the time when Vietnam war had ended. In light of the U.S. withdrawal you would believe that the U.S. was sort of trying to turn its back on the Pacific in national security terms. But there was this opening of relationships with China which kept us engaged in the Far East; furthermore we saw that the Soviets were finally developing their ability to project power to the Pacific. They had developed a blue-water navy; there was a lot of concern about that and it required the development of a conceptual framework that would say, "Even in the wake of Vietnam, the United States must maintain a credible presence in the Pacific, one which was not only military but was also economic." We brought up the economic part of it.

It was a very interesting period, during which the word "ambiguity" first began to be used within the policy planning staff. You'll see that in a number of the Kissinger speeches and the policy planning statements at that time. There were very significant changes which had occurred in the '70s - i.e. Vietnam bringing home to the United States the limitations on its ability to determine events if not on a macro level. certainly at the micro level. Also

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Vietnam forced us to define our strategic interests much more carefully than we had done in the past.

Q: Vietnam was falling or had just fallen apart by the time you got there, or was in the process?

SWIERS: That's an interesting expression that you use: "Vietnam had fallen apart." In fact, I'd say it was the other way around. It had actually come together, but not in the way that we had wanted it. I think we've discussed in an earlier sessions the relationship between the North Vietnamese and the United States and particularly Ho Chi Minh's great admiration for the United States, going even to the extent, whether they put it into practice or not, to have their constitution models ours.

Q: Well now this was obviously something the policy planners had to look at. Here was something we'd been fighting for years that had happened, and that was a unified communist Vietnam. How did we look upon this in whatever the policy planning sphere was, in the long-term?

SWIERS: I would say to the extent that we looked at it at all, it was in the sense that we had pulled out in January of '73 when the so-called peace agreement or cease fire was signed in Paris. The United States began to disengage and accelerate a process of Vietnamization. Vietnamization of course became other than what we expected. I certainly would say - as many of us who had seen it earlier in the first part of the Vietnam talks would say - that the people we were backing were the weak sisters. We also learned from that, for better off or worse, that the group that we were backing were not the national image of Vietnam. The national image for better or for worse lay with Ho Chi Minh.

I like to be careful in drawing analogies with Korea, but the national image was on our side in Korea, in namely Sigmund Rhee. There were other analogies which you had to be careful about. The Korea war was much more clean cut; it had already been divided, it was much

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more easier to block the North Koreans from invading the South. Vietnam was a much more amorphous situation.

What was significant was that in many ways our withdrawal from Vietnam had very little impact on the development of our overall policies. The principal effect of Vietnam which we did not have to address in that period was the reluctance of the United States to engage itself militarily abroad, as we have seen in every event since then. That has been the principal loss for the United States, or perhaps it's a gain. We are now going to be much more careful where we engage ourselves militarily and particularly in addressing the strategic interests of the United States.

No one should not criticize the decisions made at the time regarding Vietnam. After all, when we did engage in Vietnam, communism looked much more monolithic. We did not yet understand the great gulf between China and Soviet Union. I would say we did not understand the intense enmity between China and Vietnam. We became too concerned with the "domino" theory. There are a whole series of things which we learned from Vietnam which I think in the longer term are to the advantage of the United States.

Q: Did you see, I mean looking at southeast Asia now, talking about the policy planning at the time, the situation around Vietnam. Let's talk about the "domino" theory or things that fall apart, that because of the growth and the strengthening of the economies around them, the obvious enmity between China and Vietnam, do you see this being a self-sealing situation that no longer was the problem we'd seen it previously?

SWIERS: I wouldn't put it in positive terms. It was rather the absence that it was not on the screen. I think what had come home was that Southeast Asia was not a principal strategic concern of the United States, or at least the Indochina peninsula was not.

Q: *Well I mean that's the answer in a way.*

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SWIERS: This is why you need a policy planning staff because situations are never static. ASEAN had just been founded, primarily out of fear of Chinese or Soviet encroachment. These were all things we were learning in the United States. As we went along, there were real differences in perceptions among the ASEAN countries as to which country was the real threat. The Malaysians and the Indonesians were obsessed with China. The Thai, who you would think would be bothered by China, were more worried about the Soviets. As it turns out, now we know that the Vietnamese were concerned about the Chinese. I often wonder if we had thought about that we might have played our cards a lot better.

There are a whole series of things that we learned as part of the process because the whole area had just recently been decolonized, and many of these ancient enmities and relationships were reemerging. I always found it interesting that Cambodia was by the end of the nineteenth century a disappearing country between Thailand and Vietnam which encroached upon it and shrunk it. In a sense what kept Cambodia alive was the arrival of the British and the French in the area.

Thailand was never colonized because the British and the French had certainly reached the limits of their colonial capabilities; they didn't wish to get into a struggle over Thailand, so came in: the United States; it was a classic situation: Thailand's reforms under the great king Chulalongkorn in the 1860s were not exactly what the Thais wanted, but Thailand (or Siam) was nearly bankrupt and couldn't pay its debts to France and to Britain. Rather than in classic colonial terms the British and French splitting the country between them - as I say they had reached the limits of their colonial capabilities if not aspirations - the U.S. came in as the honest broker - namely in the person of Francis Sayre to whom a street is named in Bangkok.

There were a whole number of issues unfortunately that we learned about in the process, but today ASEAN is becoming a major economic factor even if not collectively. The economics are still largely competitive, certainly individually, and that maybe of great importance to us. Think up how easily we gave up the Philippine bases and how delighted

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we are to be rid of them without a hiccup. Yet if we look on a map, how strategically placed the Philippines are in terms of Southeast Asia, and yet it's no longer a concern.

Q: Can you give some examples of where the policy planning got involved in, we've already mentioned the oil crisis, making people focus on that? Any.

SWIERS: I just gave you the outlines of the policies as they were shaped and in effect the options that were developed for Kissinger. After I was in the policy planning staff we only had Nixon for another six months or so - August of '74. He resigned if I remember correctly then. Once Nixon resigned, Kissinger became the dominant figure in foreign policy. Let's not carry that too far. Gerald Ford was a very effective president, and Brent Scowcroft a very good NSC adviser. In fact it was a very good division because one of the first things Ford did was separate Kissinger from the NSC. But Kissinger clearly for the remaining period of the Nixon-Ford administration was the dominant conceptual figure in American foreign policy. It was a role with which Ford was comfortable and one that Ford with Scowcroft could live with.

I have just spelled out the areas in which the policy planning staff played a role in developing the concepts and the policy options on which Kissinger decided, and dealt with the president, and with which President Ford largely went along. Operationally, I mentioned the energy crisis. The policy planning staff had a very large operational role, working very closely with Tom Enders, the assistant secretary for economic affairs. The China role one was a mixed one. We tried to stay away from that to some degree. The relationship with the Soviet Union was still largely with Hal Sonnenfeldt. He who was just really outstanding, and he had a very small but outstanding staff around him which in fact played the same sort of policy planning role for him as we did for Kissinger. So I have to say we were not as heavily involved in our relationships with Europe and the Soviet Union. The shaping of policy towards Japan was one where we played an important role, but we were not that operational.

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One of the times when I stepped out of the special assistant's hat was to ensure that the machinery of the policy planning staff was kept well oiled, and also to signal to Win where I thought we were not doing something. It was a very interesting and a very tricky role because obviously we had three very strong deputy directors of the policy planning staff. Brandon Grove played the coordination role of the SIG's for the period he was in SP. Sam Lewis was there and Reggie Bartholomew we brought in as a deputy director. Reggie was very vigorous the Pol-Mil front, and the European front. Sam Lewis looked after other parts of the world. Those three oversaw things on a daily basis. Sam I guess after about a year, was made assistant secretary for IO and he was then replaced by Nick Veliotis.

But my role was a different one. While I wasn't clearly in the command structure, Win wanted me to keep my eyes open and tell him where I thought things were going astray or where we'd moved back; he would then work it out with the deputy directors. I also kept my eyes on when we needed new personnel.

One place where we did play an operational role was in 1974 when the Greek junta collapsed. On this one, since I knew Greece, Tom Thornton and I worked together on it. Kissinger initially felt that the United States should not involve itself in that situation. He had several reasons. One was the legitimate sense of, "Let's not get involved in that." I have to say it, if I have to fault Kissinger, I don't think he was as sensitive to the importance of democracy in the stability of a region or its importance to the advancement of United States' interests.

Q: I think this comes through rather clearly.

SWIERS: There's a very good reason for it. It's something which one must understand. It was his own history. He actually sort of talked about that; he talks about it particularly and writes about it when discussing Europe. You have to remember the collapse of the Weimar republic - the great German democratic experiment of the '20s. Once the crisis

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came, which was actually economic more than political, the Weimar republic was unable to address it.

We know the reasons now for it; in fact Germany had become almost too democratic. There were no limits on the amount of vote a party had to gather before it could be recognized as a legitimate political entity. After the war in what I think is one of the wisest articles in the German constitution, there was an insistence on a five percent minimum for a party to participate in their parliamentary system and partial direct elections, partial proportional elections. That ensured a political stability for the government; it avoided the multiplicity of parties which the Weimar republic had.

Kissinger spent in his formative years there. We know he was Jewish, his father was a high school teacher in Furte which was a highly distinguished position in German middle class society; suddenly this all collapsed. I always think that Kissinger always had a concern about a democracy's abilities to handle a crises. In this sense this played a role in terms of Greece which began to emerge as another weak democracy.

Q: I left there the first of July in 1974; I was the consul general in Athens for four years and there was an uncomfortable acceptance of the regime by Nixon and I assume by Kissinger. The Nixon children came and stayed with our ambassador there; Spiro Agnew came out; there was more of a closeness between countries and most of us really felt very comfortable with these colonels there.

SWIERS: We know that the ethnic Americans - be they Greek-Americans, Slovak-Americans or whatever - seem to be rather paradoxically or ironically more comfortable with the conservative element in their former society. That may in part be a reaction in the post-war period, or in part a reaction to communism and a concern that whoever is not conservative in those countries would be a little too soft on communism. I think that both views were represented in Greece; there is this constant back and forth in Greece. But in any case I think both for that reason and also frankly the anti-communist question - after

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all the colonels had been loyal allies - that Kissinger basically wanted to pursue a policy of non-interference.

Tom wrote the first draft of the paper on Greece. I remember that well because frankly although that wasn't my role, I nevertheless was involved in it. We pushed the view that, in Greece, non-interference was in effect tantamount to interference. We had 1967 example when we did not step in.

I must add a third consideration which was that we had just been burned in '73 by Allende and we were trying to get away from that whole question of interference.

Q: Talking about Allende in Chile.

SWIERS: We were trying to get away from the image of the United States in effect running the country. The basic point that we tried to make was that the United States was just too heavily involved with Greece. It was a small country; there were too many Greek relations, family relations, with the United States, as we well know. Thus, whatever the United States did or did not do, would still be seen by Greece as a decision.

Kissinger finally agreed to that and as we know Ambassador Henry Tasca was encouraged to remain in Italy. I think you could argue that it had been a bit of a mistake to send him as ambassador to Greece in the first place because this was after all still only thirty years after the end of the war which for the Greeks extended really into the '50s with their civil war. The image of an Italian-American ambassador who was so strongly Italian in the way he projected himself, grated on Greeks. So Tasca was encouraged to remain out of Greece, and I think we succeeded quite well in that.

I'm not sure where the Greek desk was on this; I don't remember too well. Dan Brewster was involved and I remember Dan got in trouble as one of the people who was warning about the perils of our policy.

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The other time in which the policy planning staff stepped in in an operational role was when Monty Stearns had just come back from Laos to become a deputy assistant secretary in east Asian bureau. He was very happy to be home. For the history, people may not realize Monty Stearns was one of the old Greek hands. He had met and married in Greece. Toni Riddleberger, the wife of our then ambassador there, James Riddleberger - one of the great old figures of the foreign service - and Monty had been Averill Harriman's special assistants when the job opened. It had actually been Monty who had remembered me from Greece and had interviewed me and thought I was okay and had introduced me to Harriman, and that was how I ended up getting hired by Harriman.

I wouldn't exactly call this returning the favor, but here was Monty, happily back in Washington. I remembered that and also that Monty was one of the few people not tainted by the '67-'74 period. He was very, very popular among the Greeks who were beginning to move into power replacing the colonels. I called Lilly Leatherman who had been one of Harriman's secretaries and was then working for Larry Eagleburger - in fact, she pretty much worked with him through the rest of his career. I said that she should pass on to Larry that what he needed to do was get Monty out there as charge as quickly as possible with perhaps a view to becoming the ambassador at some point, which is exactly what happened. It must have been about a week later when I had a call from Monty saying, "I understand you're responsible for this."

Monty told me years later that it was quite moving when he arrived in Greece. A large number of his Greek friends were waiting at the airport, and they understood what the change meant. That says, and this is a tribute to people in the Foreign Service, Kissinger then for different reasons recommended a fellow by the name of Jack Kubisch who was then the assistant secretary for Latin America.

For some reason Kissinger wanted to get rid of him; I can't remember why. He was not appointed to Greece for positive reasons; there was some sort of Latin American policy differences and so Jack was sent out as ambassador, and Monty ended up remaining

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as DCM. Monty said to me that there was obviously a certain initial disappointment, but he said on reflection it turned out to be the right decision, because Monty would have been too visible. He was too popular, too well-known, and the United States needed in that period, when Karamanlis had just returned and was reestablishing a democratic government in Greece, to take a low profile, after its close connections to the colonels. Jack was just the right ambassador. He had a very good political sense; he was involved when he needed to be; he stayed out of it when he should have and he wasn't a visible person publicly. Monty said that he would have been a public figure. Monty several years later did finally go back to Greece as ambassador.

Q: I think your suggestion is that often a Foreign Service person understands how personal the Greeks take it when a new ambassador comes out; the people will take a look and say, "What does this mean?" In a normal country you say, "Well, it's just another guy coming out." But no, the Greeks ask: "Is this a hard-liner or is this a friend of our's or an enemy of our's?" We are often oblivious to these messages. In a critical situation it can be important to send the right message, which was first, "Yes we're with you," by sending Stearns there to handle the thing and to move Tasca out, and then to send a no-nonsense, somebody who's not identified with anything out there to handle business, particularly base negotiations that could be very much involved.

SWIERS: Yes. This was an illustration of the operational role of the policy planning staff - sort of an unusual one but interesting.

Q: You got there I guess after Allende had been overthrown and all that, but did you find this was a burning issue. Everybody said, "With Latin America we've got to be looking for Allende land mines," or something, because the United States got a lot of criticism on that one.

SWIERS: It did, but Allende was in the past; it was the year before, but the shift was to a policy of a different type of engagement. I don't know whether you want to call it treating

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the Latins as equals, but to try and draw them out more. Until Roosevelt came we had practiced a gunboat policy, and then we basically had a policy of neglect.

Q: Good neighbors but neglected neighbors.

SWIERS: Really they called it good neighbors, but what it ended up was, probably because of WWII and the fact that communism came on, with neglect, unless we were worried that a country was going left, and anything left was bad. We had been burned in Cuba, and we were concerned; Cuba was being used, not just being used but it really quite actively was trying to extend the revolution into Latin America.

I think we misunderstood that the problems I have mentioned. If I might jump forward to when I was in the Atlantic Council in '83. The Atlantic Council actually did quite a pioneering paper on the Caribbean basin written by a group chaired by Brent Scowcroft and Jim Green which was provided to the Kissinger commission in the mid-'80s in draft. The important point of the Council's paper was that the problems in Latin America were not the result of communism or socialism, but rather communism and socialism were a result of the rather terrible socioeconomic conditions in those countries. Now I think if we had addressed those problems as well as that of preventing the communist infiltration, which we were still worried about with Nicaragua, and we had some very good...I'm jumping ahead.

I would say that there was a certain consciousness in the policy planning staff of the 1970s. I would not say it was expressed in those terms, but there was an understanding that we needed to deal with Latin America differently than we had. We needed to look at the countries themselves, to look at the problems there and to try and address those as well as the real danger of communist or socialist infiltration into those countries. So the Allende experience was a lesson for us; we had fits and starts throughout, but we simply could not neglect Latin America. We had to deal with it actively. Perhaps that really sums it up. There was a real effort to deal with it actively instead of...

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I will say, because we were just talking about how effective the Foreign Service could be, that at that time we discovered something else which was on the negative side of the Foreign Service. When Kissinger went to Tuataloco, that was a culminating thing; it was to symbolize the new United States relationship with Latin America. He was appalled at what we now call the "localitis" of our "Latin American hands;" that basically they had never been anywhere in the world, and just moved from one Latin American post to another.

I have not served in Latin America, so I have to be careful on this. The perception was that it was too comfortable a life. Maybe this is the prejudice of an European hand, but our Europeanists in contrast to what people think (because the U.S. dollar wasn't as strong in Europe) lived in circumstances that were certainly no better than what they would have able to have in the United States, and in some senses, particularly after 1973 with the devaluation of the dollar, they were in much less desirable circumstances living in Europe. On the other hand, I know from many of my colleagues who were in Latin America, that they had a rather comfortable existence with servants, fine homes and the rest. The danger of bombing and kidnapping was only then beginning to emerge. It hadn't then. But anyway, Kissinger was quite turned off by that, and that was the rationale for the GLOP policy which required every three tour...

Q: Basically it was to mix things up and get officers out of their area specialties.

SWIERS: Out of their area of specialty, because he could not - I remember Win was somewhat appalled by that - get many of the Latin American officers to relate policy in that area or United States goals in that area to overall United States strategic goals both in the macro sense and in relation to other parts of the world. So I think it was actually a very good thing, and I accepted the concept when I went off to Malaysia. I had largely been assigned to Europe. I recognized that even in Europe, where the European military by definition had to think globally, there was an element of provincialism. In fact, those two

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years in Malaysia were two of the more interesting and revealing educational parts of my career.

Q: After Sp, you went to EUR-RPM, or is there anything else we should cover?

SWIERS: No, other than to say for the record that I had hoped that after two and a half relatively exhausting years at policy planning staff - I mean it was essentially a six and a half or seven day a week job - to going up to the Hill under the Pearson amendment, but alas we had a shortage of budget. I had been up to be interviewed by Doug Bennett who was then the staff director of Muskie's new Senate budget committee. I thought it was all set then there was no money, so I lost out on that. The other thing for the record was that in 1976 in Howe and Efensolk had learned from their mistakes. There was already a discussion at the time of what was the real Foreign Service and what was not. The real Foreign Service was in the smaller, more difficult posts in the third world versus the European political-military or these jobs on the seventh floor. I remember Carol Laise had sent a notice around urging all FSOs in the commentary section of their efficiency reports to talk about what they really thought about where the Foreign Service was going. I was still young then and rather foolishly I took that as encouragement and rather frankly said that I thought the Foreign Service was making a mistake, that we were being told that the real Foreign Service was the third world, I forget my exact language, but that being on the seventh floor, working long hours, I felt that deserved equal credit.

Of course you don't do that in the Foreign Service - express yourself openly, and in fairness to Sam Lewis I remember him saying: "Do you really want to write this?" I said that was what Carol was encouraging us to do and frankly I feel that quite strongly about that. I was later told by a friend of mine who happened to be on the promotion board that I wasn't promoted that year because of my comment without which I might have been seriously considered, having had a special assistant job. Anyway, you learn hopefully from your mistakes.

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Unfortunately most of the obs that I might have taken were gone by the time the decision was made about my Pearson assignment . As I said, I thought I was locked in with the Pearson assignment on the Hill; when it was rejected I ended up staying an extra six months on the policy planning staff doing sort of odd things on European affairs, and it also enabled me to travel with Harriman in September of that year on his trip to Soviet Union and to Yugoslavia. We might want to discuss that.

It was later in that year when Bill Shinn, who was director of NATO affairs in EUR-RPM (Bureau of European Affairs, office of regional political military affairs) - funnily enough we've retained the symbol RPM although the office now has a different title - approached me to come to RPM initially for six months in an over complement situation, because he needed somebody to oversee the NATO east-west study which would be undertaken in the first part of the Carter administration. He also wanted somebody to chair the CSCCDM's working group - inter-agency CSCCDM working group. So I ended up going to RPM over complement for six months and then when another person left I went into that job, but I still retained these two jobs and I reported directly to Shinn, unfortunately creating a little friction which we can discuss.

Q: Why don't we talk about the Harriman trip then.

SWIERS: Yes, this was very interesting.

Q: What was Harriman doing at that time?

SWIERS: This was very interesting. I should back up to 1975. Harriman had been in Soviet Union in 1960; I can't remember whether he really went back for business or pleasure, but he finished his government service in 1969. He came through Moscow in '71 as a sort of semi-official advance party for Muskie, but he was really their to do his own thing. I didn't really do anything substantive at the time. I saw him again in '74 when he took his new bride, Pamela Harriman, to see the Soviet Union for her first time; members

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of the family came along on that trip. Then in 1975, while I was in the policy planning staff, he must have asked Kissinger directly, or maybe he asked me to ask whether I could accompany him on the 30th anniversary. He was to lead the U.S. delegation on of the 30th anniversary of WWII. So I went on that trip with Harriman that year.

At that time, the Brezhnev-Kosygin relationship was still uncertain; we didn't know for sure who was the top person, although I will say that Brezhnev clearly was; he had emerged as the top man, but Kosygin retained a considerable amount of influence. Harriman saw Kosygin - at the time he was the main person he wanted to see. I accompanied him on that visit; it was a fascinating exchange. Because the celebrations were about the, they got into a long discussion of WWII, and the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The reason I was there was to take the notes and to draft all the reports. Harriman made sure it was not only his personal report and that a full report of the meeting went to Kissinger.

Harriman did speak to Brezhnev, but only at the reception that was held for the three delegations - the French, the British and the Americans. The British delegation was led by Lord Mountbatten, quite a remarkable figure even at that late stage in his life; he was killed four years later. We went to have lunch with him. The French delegation was led by a French general whose name I forget; he was not as major figure as Harriman and Mountbatten were. The American delegation was composed of John Eisenhower and his then-wife, mother of Susan and David, and Avis Bohlen - she'll love this, we used to say "Little Avis." I think Jane Thompson was with us. But the most charming thing was our two generals, Lemnitzer and Gunther, who were part of the delegation. We were all put up in a guest house; there were several very nice ceremonies throughout the time, but I can't remember the details. That trip was very important and Harriman specifically asked Kissinger if I could come.

Q: Now at this time Harriman was sort of...

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SWIERS: Elder statesman.

Q: Elder statesman.

SWIERS: The trip took place in September of 1976. The presidential campaign was in full swing. Clearly it was complicated that he asked me to go on this trip. I wasn't going to turn it down; I wanted to go. You could say it finally once and for all marked me for the Democrat that I am - in light of the Harriman link. But he did call Kissinger. Kissinger could rise to these occasions; Harriman was very, very much touched by that he was going again. When asked about my coming with him, I said, "This is tricky," since there were clearly campaign elements in it. Harriman called and said he was going and that he would obviously make a report of his visit to the administration; he asked whether there was anything they wanted him to say? Kissinger made this absolutely marvelous statement which was: "When you will go, it will obviously be in the service of your country." Kissinger was very capable of this because he was a historian; he could say that. Harriman was deeply touched by that.

I should mention by the way that there was a close relationship between Harriman and Kissinger. Throughout the period that Kissinger was national security adviser and secretary of State, he and Harriman consulted regularly. He would come over and talk with Harriman. I was there one day when Kissinger showed up for lunch. I wasn't in on the meeting; it was private, just between the two of them. Kissinger was one of the few people invited to use the Harriman pool. He lived around there, was it P Street? In fact one day we were going to the pool; there was a driveway you have to go down, and the Secret Service rather in their clumsy way, raised a fuss because Kissinger was there.

The following Monday I called Jerry Bremmer, who was Kissinger's assistant at the time, and said: "Look, you've got to do something about this." There were several other members of the Georgetown set which used the pool - one of them being Joe Kraft. I could just envision, as I said to Jerry, Joe arriving and having the Secret Service refusing to

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let him in. You can picture the column the next day in the paper. So Jerry took care of it, and I don't think they had the problem again. They were just overdoing their security a bit, trying to intimidate a lot of people who didn't need to be intimidated. They should have recognized these as people who were not about to assassinate the secretary of State, - people who were largely his friends. It was an amusing story. so we did go to Moscow in September of '76. Pamela Harriman came along, as well as Izzy Rosenfeld, Harriman's doctor who's one of our great cardiologists. He was co-chairing at that time, under the exchange program - remember '76 was still detente, even though the Jackson-Vanik had been passed, things hadn't quite collapsed yet.

Q: Jackson-Vanik being the Jackson-Vanik amendment which linkerelations with the Soviet Union to the emigration of Soviet Jews.

SWIERS: Soviet Jews - a very hard matter. Harriman always felt that the legislation like that were better as threats or possibilities. Once you pass it, it loses effectiveness because any country, not just the Soviet Union, would adjust to it. First of all, it would take umbrage at it, which depreciates the relationship a little; then the country adjusts to it. So Harriman would have preferred to keep it that as a threat. Also his argument against passage was that there was an economic aspect to it. I remember him saying, "One of the most subversive things to communism will be the automobile." There was some background to why Fiat ended up building the plant in the Soviet Union, but we as you know was never involved on the scale that say Henry Ford had been in the 1930s.

Q: Oh very much so; we had a big Ford plant.

SWIERS: One could argue that Harriman was correct, because once there was the ability of ordinary Soviets to travel a lot more, it would change their perspectives. Furthermore there would be pressure to improve roads, build more service stations - a whole industry would develop which would put pressure on this military industrial complex, which at that

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time was about in mid-swing. They had decided to go for that after the Cuban missile crisis.

Anyway, we had a lengthy exchange with Brezhnev. Brezhnev, in substantive terms, came out once again that the Soviet leadership we were not fools. We were dealing with competitors, but competitors who would want to try to avoid a conflict with us. That I think is quite significant. That contrasted with a Hitler who was very much prepared to go to war.

The Soviets did not want to go to war, and I recall at that time there was a sort of emotional discussion with Brezhnev, as the grandfather. Brezhnev was always quite emotional; he was very much an ideologue, but he was a rather uneducated ideologue. He knew all the buzz words, although I'm not sure how much deep understanding he had. There was still a certain balance there; this was just about the time that he had absolute power; he had not yet begun to deteriorate physically nor was it known that he was allowing the corruption in his family.

While there were no specific messages that were being sent in real substantive sense, there was one in a sense from Carter. It was that if Carter were to win, it would be very helpful for the development of a constructive relationship between the Carter administration and the Soviet Union, if the Soviet Union would refrain from taking actions to try and embarrass the new administration as they quite often had done in the past with other administrations.

It was actually an agreement which they carried out. I think it may have also sadly affected their receptivity to the total new arms control initiative which the Carter administration presented in early '77 which I personally feel was a mistake. What the Soviets had become accustomed to, and I think it had been our policy, was the building of an arms control regime step by step. The Carter administration wanted to show itself as different from its predecessors. I don't know what Brzezinski's role was in this, but I frankly get suspicious whenever he had a role to play because it wasn't a role designed to be constructive. He

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wanted to sock it to them. We surprised them with a new approach- a comprehensive approach - and of course the whole thing collapsed. The other thing they learned was to understand the election rhetoric, not just by the Democrats or by the Republicans, and not to take it too seriously.

Q: This was Harriman, right?

SWIERS: This was Harriman conveying these messages. The latter one probably had a certain content for both political sides - the Ford administration and the Carter campaign. We recognized at that time that we still largely had, although it was being diminished somewhat, a consensus that there should be a bipartisan approach to foreign policy - that we should try to reach a bipartisan consensus. That still existed. It was deteriorating at that time. I think the "Committee of the Present Danger" had just been founded in part because of certain resentment of Kissinger. Interestingly enough, it has most effect during the Carter Administration.

We went from Moscow to Yugoslavia which was in a very interesting period. I would say we came again once again with the sense of "Let's finish off the Soviet Union" - it wanted largely trying to avoid conflict. There would be competition. In fact Brezhnev emphasized his continuing support for what he called "liberation" movements. They were going to compete with us through these movements. He stated that quite fiercely; that their system was the way to go and he was going to compete on that basis. They wished to avoid direct conflict with us, but they were going to show the way. The sad thing was that so much of this was so shallow, and I would note, when we address the visit to Andropov at a later period, you saw in Andropov a much more educated, sophisticated appreciation of the Soviet Union, its relation to the world and how the rest of the world functioned. We didn't have that type of conversation with Brezhnev, but let's hold that thing for now, that was seven years later.

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Brezhnev was essentially an unsophisticated leader - what you'd call a ward politician at the large scale. He was of the generation that knew WWII, knew the horrors of WWII, and wanted to avoid direct conflict with the United States. We went on to Yugoslavia where Harriman expected to see Tito. It was rather interesting because we kept getting the runaround. We were treated in the government guesthouse and all of that. The chief of protocol and others took us around. But no call on Tito. Harriman finally said, "What's going on here? I've come to see Tito."

Q: I might add that Harriman had been seeing Tito for years.

SWIERS: Yes, Harriman and Tito had developed a certain type of friendship. They had first met in Brindisi during the war. We then had a real falling out with Tito at the end of the war over Trieste and other issues. In '51, Harriman was in charge of the Mutual Security Agency; it had programs developed that provided Yugoslavia the wherewithal to make a Soviet attempt to actually extend its agenda militarily a reality. In fact I remember when we landed at the airport, we saw lined up at the other end of the field from the commercial side a number of FA-86's which we had provided Yugoslavia.

Q: These were saber jets.

SWIERS: They were Korean war vintage planes, which made them already obsolescent for us, but in typical communist country fashion, they never destroyed; they just had the things lined up on the other side of the field. Our ambassador at that time was Larry Silberman, who was an appointee of the Ford administration. He viewed Yugoslavia in strict bad guy/good guy terms. They were communists, therefore they were bad. He could not appreciate the subtleties unfortunately. That is sometimes the danger of a political ambassador. However gifted and sophisticated Mr. Silberman was otherwise, he was a conservative and a highly competent jurist. He is now a member of the Court of Appeals in Washington, DC.

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In '79 he wrote a famous article on the Foreign Service in which he basically said the Foreign Service should not have any policy positions above those of a couple of office directors, with exceptions. The sad thing is that his article was quite prophetic. It has happened probably not because of deliberate policy but simply unconscious policy. The article is well worth a reading.

Anyway, we were suddenly told that we were going to be flown down to Skopje to see Edward Cardell, who was Tito's closest adviser and who had been at Dejuilasse with him throughout the war.

Q: He was sort of the ideological leader.

SWIERS: He was Tito's Harry Hopkins. It was that type of relationship. He was a Slovenian. Tito was a Croatian. Harriman was carrying a message both from the Ford administration and the Carter campaign that, whichever won the election, the independence and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia would continue to be respected and supported. Cardell, whom we found out later on had had prostate cancer that eventually killed him two and a half years later, made a remark to the effect he was glad to hear that; that was fine, but he really wondered what the attitude of the United States and other countries would be once the east-west conflict was over. In retrospect, when you look at the conversation, he as well as Tito knew the fragility of the Yugoslav confederation. What really held Yugoslavia together was Tito. We saw when Tito died in 1980, that system he set up of the...

Q: Why didn't you see Tito, was he...?

SWIERS: I'll explain that - a fascinating anecdote. Cardell started off by explaining to Governor Harriman why he would not see Tito this time. The president felt Harriman would understand it. Furthermore, in spite of the fact he would not formally be seeing the president, he was seeing Cardell and Cardell was speaking for Tito in this meeting.

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Harriman would, at this meeting, be treated with all the honors that a person who sees Tito would receive - which namely means we will still go to Brioni.

Q: The island that Tito...

SWIERS: There are two things. You have the big island of Brioni which is off this old lovely Greco-Roman town of Pola. You go out by a high-speed patrol craft in those days. And the hotels are there. But then there's another island called Vanga which is part of the Brioni island complex. That was actually Tito's private island. We were to be taken over there for the day to tour around so we would see all of the vineyards and all because Tito loved to think of himself as a farmer in his off hours. We had lunch over there.

The reason for not seeing Tito was that, although it had not been announced publicly, had come back from a non-aligned meeting in Sri Lanka with some illness. It had not been made public because they did not wish to offend their hosts in Sri Lanka. It had really hit Tito badly, but he was now recovering from it. In fact he would have been quite capable of seeing Harriman, with whom he could have an informal and friendly time. I emphasize they were friends. However, the Soviets had been pressing for a Brezhnev visit, within the next month or so, but Tito simply was not only not up to seeing Brezhnev; he didn't want to see him. But obviously if Tito had been able to see Harriman, he then would have had to acquiesce in Brezhnev's coming. Cardell said he assumed that Harriman would understand why his friend could not see him this time. It was most unfortunate, but whatever Harriman had to say, he could be assured would be conveyed precisely to Tito, and that Cardell was speaking at this meeting on behalf of Tito. I must say Cardell looked terrible. He could barely move out of his chair. He had obviously had one of those God-awful prostrate problems - imagine in '76 what it must have been like.

So we all laughed, and Harriman said: "Of course" and sent his warm regards to the president. Our message, which I summarized earlier, was a very, very interesting one. In light of what we see today it was very important, but it is very sad. I actually reminded

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Brent Scowcroft of that one day after he had left office. He had forgotten it. In many ways I think we should have thought about that when the troubles began in the early '90s.

There were two aspects to it. One was our reluctance to be involved in a break-up of Yugoslavia; we would leave it to the Europeans. But the other side, initially our policy was to try to keep the country together and I think that probably was a mistake. What it did was to exacerbate the break-up. This is speculation on my part, but nevertheless it was a most important, tremendous thing, coming from one of the people who had helped Tito shape the post-WWII Yugoslavia. So we just went home after that.

We then went to England and spent a few days there. Harriman was going to speak to the English Speaking union; so we spent a few days with Winston. I only spent a day or so; it was the first time I met young Winston Churchill; he was a very pleasant man.

Q: This would be the son of ...?

SWIERS: The grandson of Winston Churchill, the son of Randolph Churchill and Pamela Harriman. They had their had three children, born close together; then there was an interval and then they had this baby Jack. We had a really lovely time there. Often life is so sad because you really felt that he was a real family man, and now we know that there were all sorts of marital troubles even at that time. It is so strange.

I went back to Washington early to draft a memo on the trip. I was at the Harriman's office when I got a call from Dick Holbrooke. He wanted to know where Harriman was because Carter was coming to Washington in about two or three days, and he thought Carter should get a briefing from Harriman on the trip. It's always interesting when you called Harriman. I called him in England and announced to him that I thought he should come home, and as close as we were, Harriman was still a bit of an older man and he said: "What do you mean I have to come home!" I said, "Because you have Carter arriving, and Dick has talked to me and asked me to give you a ring; and he's coming and he would like

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you to be here in Washington to brief him.” Att that, there was enormous grumbling, but he came home.

Q: Did you get any impression at all of what Harriman thought about Carter - Carter was this governor from Georgia coming out of nowhere?

SWIERS: Let me say it was too early. He probably knew Carter even less than I did. I believe I may have mentioned in one of my earlier tapes that I was in Berlin when Carter came through with Mrs. Carter and two others - probably Jody Powell and Ham Jordan - I don't know. They were very easy people. I was assigned as their control officer and took them around Berlin. We got a military bus so we could take them over to East Berlin. Carter was absolutely interested in everything. He was soaking up knowledge, which was Carter's great capability. The problem was how it came out at the other end. He could see all the trees, but then to create the forest was hard. I really saw that. His questions were extraordinarily intelligent; they were to the point on the day I had to take care of him. My father and mother were visiting us at the same time; my mother had fallen and hurt herself, but I took my father along on this trip, too. After we dropped Carter off at the hotel and continued on home, my father, who was then 73, said to me: “You know, I think that man intends to run for president.” That's exactly what he was doing. He was building up some foreign policy knowledge.

He made a very strong positive impression. I cannot tell you how Harriman felt about Carter in 1976. The fact was that Harriman came home when asked. It was to be, I guess, his first meeting with Carter; it had been Holbrooke who had signed on with Carter very early who was the intermediary. Actually Holbrooke had been trying to convince Harriman before the trip, sometime during the summer, to come out for Carter, but Harriman felt a loyalty to Hubert Humphrey. He had a loyalty. I happened to be at M street office the day, sometime in the summer of '76, when Humphrey called Harriman to tell him he had decided not to run, which then released Harriman to go out to support Carter. A lot of the old guard then felt a loyalty to Hubert who died only a few years later from the cancer. I

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don't know whether Humphrey knew that at that time and just wasn't telling anybody, but he had decided not to run against Carter.

I think there was a good chance he probably could have gotten the nomination. On the other hand, we probably would have had a very bitter primary. As it was Carter pretty much swept through. Carter did make a very good impression on you. He listened; he was thoughtful. He asked the right questions; it was only as time went on you began to have some question about his ability to put it together. Let us always remember with all these people that it is all relative. I mean who's good and better; they're all good. Some maybe are better than others.

Q: And circumstances often call...

SWIERS: Under other circumstances Carter may have done extremelwell. He did do very well.

Q: I give him credit. He got the Panama Canal; he got Camp David. These were things that were difficult.

SWIERS: What happened then was that Carter came to town and Harriman met him out at the airport, and they drove from National in a pouring rain. I forgot whether it was Dick or Harriman who drove. It was absolutely hysterical in this car with the three of them in the back seat with the windows all steamed up. Harriman held a 40 minute briefing with Carter again taking in the briefing, passing on it, commenting on it, questioning it. I guess obviously Harriman reported on giving the assurances on Yugoslavia.

At that time it was a very important political question; was the United States going to continue to support the independence and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia? There was something quite important that both countries had to do. Maybe the Yugoslavs were feeling a little pressure from the Soviets. This was 1976, just a few years after the crash of Vietnam, and there was some question about the United States commitments.

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Q: I think also the Soviets were running with the fact that history was with them and Brezhnev was beginning to articulate this and we were feeling this. We were kind of wondering. Things were happening in Angola and other places, so the Yugoslavs may have felt vulnerable because they were actually at apostasy.

SWIERS: They felt vulnerable. There was also the broader question of the U.S. role in the world in the wake of Vietnam. Furthermore, the first major election was coming up in the first post-Vietnam, post-Watergate era. It was very important to spell out things for the Soviets, which Harriman did. One of the main messages which he conveyed was: "Don't think you can play Carter and Ford off. There is still unity in American foreign policy." That was important. The second message was for the Yugoslavs, which he also indeed conveyed. At the time, I would say that Harriman certainly had an extraordinarily satisfactory impression of Carter, and I did from afar.

Later, after the election, Harriman was invited down to Plains. Pamela Harriman went with him to brief Carter. I had the impression that Carter had at least inquired whether Harriman might be interested in being secretary of State. Harriman had simply told Carter that he thought he was now too old for office, that he would be willing to do any special things they wanted him to do, and that was, I believe, when he strongly urged Carter to take Cy Vance as Secretary of State.

Harriman also had an influence on Carter selecting Harold Brown as the Secretary of Defense. I remember us talking about it with Harriman mentioning that he had supported Harold Brown to be the secretary of Defense.

We already saw Brzezinski's very strong influence on Carter. Carter in the four years period before he actually became president, when he decided to run for office was clearly then trying to inform himself on foreign policy about which he basically knew very little. Carter joined the Trilateral Commission, and Brzezinski was involved in the Trilateral Commission with David Rockefeller. He apparently impressed Carter, as he does with so

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many other people, with his incredible ability to articulate things he believes in, and makes them very convincing.

I felt a sense of tension, because of what I already knew were the starkly divergent ways of approaching foreign policy - both in the management of foreign policy and the principal goals of foreign policy, as we saw later on between Vance and Brzezinski.

Q: Do you have any feeling about Harriman and Brzezinski; did thaever come up in any way?

SWIERS: That is rather amusing. When Brzezinski first came back to Washington he actually stayed at the Harriman house for a brief time. Marshall Shulman was there for the whole time; Marshall Shulman was Vance's advisor. Harriman had the main house and in a separate house which were where his offices were, had a couple of apartmentIn fact, Dick Holbrooke was also living there for a considerable period of time. Brzezinski was just there briefly. They were gentlemen. But let's face it, there were very sharp differences of view between Harriman and Brzezinski on the approach to the Soviets for example.

Q: How would you characterize these differences?

SWIERS: I'd say Brzezinski never escaped his origins. There was certainly a lot of truth in what he was saying. He was certainly warning people of the Soviets and was distrustful of them. But I think he looked at the issue as a Pole, not as an American. One cannot fault him for that; he had some terrible experiences. But I think this is an issue. That's in contrast to Kissinger who although Kissinger loves to, still has the accent and has a certain pessimism about the ability of European democracies to function well in crises, that's one of the reasons. He really saw the U.S. role in Europe as not just being the leading role, but must actually be the dominant role. And in certain ways it's proven in Bosnia today. He is probably correct in that.

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But Kissinger certainly largely escaped his origins. He certainly remembered them; Brzezinski remembered them. I heard that when he was in the policy planning staff as well from people who knew him. He had a very strong influence on Carter. As the national security adviser is, he's the man who is next door to the president. Cabinet officers are not. We began to see that develop during the Nixon administration - i.e. the increasing role of the national security council vis-a-vis the cabinet officers, or rather the whole White House establishment vis-a-vis cabinet officers, to where cabinet officers have very little policy role today.

You could already see the tension that was in the Carter administration right from the beginning. Harriman did not have an inside role in this, other than his closeness to Marshall Shulman. I would say Harriman's approach to Soviet affairs was much closer to that of Shulman and certainly of Vance. Vance and Harriman became extremely close during this period. Just about a year later, the Harrimans bought an estate out in Middleburg. That was a small house on the estate, and Vance used that as his extra home. Vance actually rented Walter Stoessel's house in Washington. Stoessel was iGermany as our ambassador. I would say they became extremely close and consulted.

Q: Back really to you. SWIERS: This will lead back into that. In early in 1977 I was asked by Bill Shin to join EUR/RPM. He was then the deputy director of that office which is now called European security and political affairs. We used to call it the office of regional political military affairs, which in a sense was the NATO office of the State Department.

Steve Letebal became director in 1978. I did not have an onward assignment from the policy planning staff since the position in the Pearson program I had hoped for had fallen through. The department did not have the funds for an additional Pearson person which was sad in a way because it was something that played a role for me later on. Doug Bennett was the staff director of the new Senate budget committee. Tom Dine was one of

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the staffers. As I mentioned before, to this day I remember going up and being interviewed by them, but then noting happened.

Bill wondered if I could come to RPM over complement, for six months, then I would take over formally a position in the defense office of RPM which was then held by Peter Collins. What Bill wanted to use me for came to be called the "U.S. coordinator for the NATO east-west study" which was to take place in the Carter administration and was to be used for a review by the Carter administration of how we'd been handling U.S.-Soviet affairs, but do it in a NATO context referenced back to the Carmel report of late '60s. It was not a study of that height, and in fact you might say it was the first collective NATO study.

So I was assigned to that and I was answerable directly to Bill which created a little tension with my titular boss, a fellow by the name of Jack Froby. I didn't report to him on the study issues. I was also given another job by Bill and I didn't report to Jack on that either although there was a little bit more coordination. I was the chairman of the CSCECBM's working group which looked at CSCE (the conference on security and cooperation in Europe), and the confidence-building measure that were then being developed at the time. It was a very interesting job. I was still an FSO-04 at the time; I had more responsibility probably than my grade warranted, but that's another story. Bill thought I could do it, and I guess I did do it.

The east-west study was a most interesting exercise. Bob Hunter and I worked closely together. Bob was assigned to the NSC initially responsible for European affairs. He had working for him Greg Treveton on the NSC. We didn't start exactly with pre-conclusions on how we should come out on the U.S.-Soviet relationship. The conclusion ultimately was one which has been a consistent theme throughout: that we have to maintain a strong deterrent, on the one hand and on the other, we should look for ways to negotiate.

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Q: How did we look at the Soviet Union? Later on in the Carter period, about '79, things got quite nasty. But at this time in '77, what were we seeing, because everything was predicated on “What do we do about the Soviet Union?”

SWIERS: You raised a most interesting question concerning whether there was an inherent conflict in the Carter administration. One always uses personalities, but the basic U.S. foreign policy had been driven until that time by the east-west competition. Everything that we were doing in foreign policy was related to the east-west competition - the U.S. - Soviet relationship. I mean even in Vietnam there was an element of that. The Carter administration was the first regime that came in saying we also had to really and truly address the needs of the third world, or at least you might say readdress it. Kennedy was the originator of this concern.

Q: *In the early '60s.*

SWIERS: But that died out with our total absorption with Vietnam. Carter wanted to raise it again. If I have to single out a person who really espoused this view it was Tony Lake. You could sense that difference of view when Tony felt, to use the phrases started in those days, that we should give at least as much attention if not more to north-south relationships.

So we had a double type of confusion over policy. One was in the east-west dimension to maintain the really ultra-hard line that Brzezinski wanted, compared with the more dialogue approach of Marshall Shulman and Cy Vance. Then you had another conflict in that administration of north-south versus east-west.

Q: *You might for the context...when we say north-south today what are we talking about?*

SWIERS: We're talking about greater attention being paid to the third world. It was based on the assumption that in the wake of Vietnam we did not understand problems in the third world adequately. It was thought by many that this lack was what led us into the Vietnam

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morass. As the third world nations were emerging and were becoming a more significant political and economic factor in the world, there was some concern over security issues. So those of us who were involved in east-west affairs would argue that there was another dimension to our relationship with the third world because the east-west competition impinged our north-south relations because “we were competing for the hearts and minds” of the emerging nations.

That tension was never resolved until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. There were several centers of conflict in the Carter administration which was unfortunate. Something which I will tell you, I would one day love dearly to explore, was the whole question of SALT II.

Q: Let's go back to what you were doing.

SWIERS: All right. Let me say that these were elements came into play in the NATO east-west study. We were already beginning to think in the '70s of how we get the European allies to take more responsibility for themselves. In contrast to with what I mentioned to you about the Nixon-Ford administration, the Carter administration simply went to the Europeans and brought the Europeans on board which was something we wanted to do. We had to adjust accommodate the Europeans to make sure that a certain policy would be acceptable to them. The NATO east-west study was the first effort really to develop a true transatlantic consensus on east-west policy. The mechanism which was set up was a study was to be composed of analysis, assessment and finally recommendations.

In the analysis, Bob played absolutely a brilliant role in this. We discovered - it's amazing how one is constantly relearning these lessons - that we still had to take the lead on at least the first list of issues that needed to be analyzed in preparation for the ultimate recommendations of the study. And Bob prepared...

Q: I'm sorry, who's Bob?

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SWIERS: Bob Hunter who is a brilliant, student of foreign policy and is now ambassador to NATO in the Clinton administration. He put together a first draft of a list of issues. If you want to define things, Bob was the thinker and I was the operator. There was some overlap, but Bob was highly conceptual; my role was largely implement what he was conceiving. So he came up with this list, I looked at it and we modified it, and then it was sent to the Europeans. They made revisions in it.

An actual working group was set up at NATO and we finally came up with a list of subjects to be studied. Unfortunately I don't have that list. The study I think is still classified. It will be declassified at some point, and there's nothing in it anymore that is really classified; it's just a matter of time. It would be interesting in retrospect to see what we thought were the important issues that needed to be analyzed in NATO and especially in the east-west relationship.

Q: When you talk about east-west and about NATO, there is one significant omission. Where did France play in this thing at this time?

SWIERS: I'll get in to that. France was initially a reluctant participant. The study was under the auspices of the North Atlantic Council of which France was a full member. The French were quite nervous over this. At that time, they were trying to say that NATO was a military alliance and really shouldn't be involved in political issues. The French of course over the years changed that view as it suits their purpose. For them, sometimes NATO is a military alliance, other times it's really political. Right now I think we're into a reality which is a mix of the two, and under Chirac the French are coming back into all NATO operations. But at that time the French reluctantly went along with the study, reserving their position so they could object if things were going the way they wanted.

After we agreed on the topics that needed to be addressed, the Europeans wanted the U.S. to do the drafts, and we flatly refused. I remember drafting the instruction to the mission on this saying that this was to be a NATO study. We eventually

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goEuropean agreement, and then various countries volunteered for different studies; that was extraordinary. Some provided very good drafts; others were frankly were less sophisticated; I mean this was a first effort. The French themselves did some.

We successfully completed the analytical stage. Then we were to go into the assessment. I said: "Why don't we use the formula of three wise men which has always been so successful in NATO's history?" I recommended three people. One was the famous long-time Canadian ambassador to the Soviet Union, Robert Ford, a gifted observer of the Soviet Union. The second was a Danish ambassador, Anke Svat who was then Danish ambassador to NATO. I had known him in Moscow and I was most impressed by his shrewdness, a certain cynicism which I found quite useful and valuable. The third was the British ambassador Sir John Killey who had just returned from the Soviet Union and was British ambassador to NATO. So it was only Ford whom we had to bring in. These three were to prepare a joint assessment of what all the analyses had been completed. They did a superb job.

then we come into the third part of the study which was the recommendations. For that part it turned out that there was going to be no substitute for a U.S. draft; so Bob prepared that draft. Essentially, if you want to strip everything away and I do not have access to the document anymore so I can't tell you in detail what it was, it came down to the need for negotiations based on the fact that the NATO had an adequate deterrent vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

It was clear the nuclear role had to be preponderant because in our view at the time, the Soviet Union had a conventional arms superiority. This referred to the ready forces on the ground and the fact that the Warsaw pact forces were maintained in an offensive posture. NATO forces were in a defensive posture. So the Soviet objective would be to attack and hopefully demoralize things.

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We had the deterrent; therefore the nuclear role was a very important one to supplement what was perceived as, at least in the early phase, as a NATO weakness. On the other hand, it was also served as incentive for the Soviets to engage across the board on a series of negotiations on arms control. In other words, the study came out that the arms control process needed to be continued.

We addressed the north-south issue and concluded that we were superior to the Soviets in the competition for the “hearts and minds” of the third world. I remember that the NSC wished to have in the study something reflecting Brzezinski's views on economic approach to issues. I remember that I had to go to Sam Huntington and argue it out with him. We won the day on that one. There was a real debate on this issue with Huntington reflecting Brzezinski's view on something we needed to do in terms of our competition with the Soviets in the third world.

An amusing end to all this. The study was to be completed in time for Carter's Washington summit meeting. It was to be presented publicly; I drafted a public document which was to be released. You asked earlier about the French. With about a week to go before this public summary was to be released, we circulated it to the heads of to study and comment on and approve. The French suddenly announced that they could not go along with it. Typical French tactic. It turned out that they would not sign oNATO recommendations of a political nature, because NATO was a military alliance, not a political alliance. We were doing it as NATO study, not as the North Atlantic Council one. I explored the French position a bit - something sounded very funny about it. I said: “We'll tell the French if they're worried about recommendations, then we'll just call them conclusions.” The French came back and said, “Fine.” I will tell you there was no changing of the document except the final section which had been called “recommendations” became officially “conclusions.”

Q: Was this the French trying to be beastly or was there?

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SWIERS: Just being French. In the beloved precision of their language, that “conclusion” was somehow more acceptable than “recommendation”.

Q: *Okay.*

SWIERS: It didn't bother us. One would see it to this day that the public statement says: “The conclusions of the study are that...” rather than “The recommendations of the study are that...” I guess that it was just enough of a weasel wording that the French could accept to gain that increment of reserve position to protect the singularity of their defense posture, as they described it, or something of that nature.

Q: *After finishing that study...*

SWIERS: The CSCBM's working group was a continual thing in my twyears while I was assigned to EUR- RPM.

Q: *You were there from '77 to '79?*

SWIERS: Correct. It was quite a bit of work. We were formulating and reformulating different types of CBM mechanisms. We were building up to a Belgrade meeting - the first Helsinki follow up conference. I was by now on my third tour together with John Kornbloom who is now our assistant secretary, and is one of my very dear friends. I have enormous admiration for John. If we want to talk about that later we can; he was a brilliant successor to Holbrooke; there couldn't have been a better choice.

When I was in Berlin, John was in Bonn. Then when I was in the policy planning staff, John was there in the first year as the European expert on the policy planning staff. Then finally when I was in RPM, John was the director of the political office of RPM; so our careers were very closely intertwined and I must say had a very remarkable unanimity of views.

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In CSCBM, John was addressing the political side, mainly the “baskets”. I forget the order of them but were three “baskets”; one was human rights, another was economics and the final one was security. We agreed to a security “basket” in return to the Soviets agreeing to the human rights “basket”.

Q: When you're dealing with a CSCE, did you have a feeling that this was, during the time Kissinger was Secretary of state one had the feeling that this was off to one side, this was not a high priority with him. Did you sense a change with...?

SWIERS: CSCE had a different purpose back in those days. It provided us with the means to address the human rights question in the Soviet Union. The CSCE, that is the Helsinki agreement, is a political document; it is not a legal document. Nevertheless the Soviet Union in return for United States-NATO agreement to the post-WWII boundaries, and namely that the post-WWII boundaries could not be changed except through peaceful democratic means, which was first step in resolving the German question.

The Soviets also agreed to what they thought were some degree of limited western criticism of their human rights position. In fact together with the previous quadripartite agreement on Germany it provided the west the opportunity to criticize Soviet human rights practices both in the Soviet Union and in eastern Europe. And to increase the flow of communications between eastern Europe and the west, to get information to the people of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. The Helsinki agreement - I hope that historians will recognize this - was one of the first major steps in the breakdown of the Communist system.

Q: *I agree with you.*

SWIERS: No question, because of the information factor.

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Q: I agree with you. But did anyone, even the cynics - not the cynics but the hard-nosed people - predict that at the time?

SWIERS: No, no, no. One looked at the agreement in very cold-blooded terms. We realized that it was one of the most effective devices we had to loosen up the communist system, or at least to get it across to the people of the Soviet Union that the west was not their enemy, and secondly to begin to sow the view that there was other ways of doing things in the world, recognizing that these countries had not known another way. Eastern Europe were largely dictatorships before WWII. It may have been economically better off than the Soviet Union, but they were dictatorships. Soviet Union of course except for that couple of months between March and July of 1917 had never known true democracy. It was truly remarkable the degree to which the Russian federation had become democratic.

Q: The attitude was, "Look this is a way to get a practical polidone."

SWIERS: Exactly. We were prepared to put up with a considerable degree of irritation on the security side with the Soviets. We were also frankly prepared to put up with a considerable degree of irritation coming from having to work with what was on paper anyway a consensus mechanism of thirty-five nations. Quite often it was usually one nation that would throw the monkey wrench; at that stage it was Malta all the time. Dominic Mintoff would always come up with something to frustrate us. It was not a very effective mechanism. However, one of the positive things results of the CSCE was the CBMs because the CBMs were another means of opening up eastern Europe.

Q: CBMs?

SWIERS: Military "confidence building measures." At that stage we had only worried about political matters; there was no treaty obligation to respect the CBMs - that is informing people of maneuvers, inviting observers to the maneuvers, other different steps of that nature. Frankly our military were a little nervous of them.

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Q: It meant that there would be Soviet officers sitting in omaneuvers and all that.

SWIERS: Yes, but at that stage it did not include the United States. For the record, the formal name of the conference was the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Soviets quite often, and unfortunately a certain number of our allies, namely the French, would short-hand it to the Conference on European Security and Cooperation. There was a very important distinction between the two. The first meant that the United States and Canada had a right to participate in it.

Q: In Europe because their forces...

SWIERS: It was in Europe, and therefore it was the nations that had concern about Europe that were in it. The other phrase would suggest that this was a European matter and we were there at the sufferance of the Europeans. Very important. Our allies largely understood it and supported it. The French would play with it every once in a while. But this is something we must remember. In those days you had some very funny distinctions.

The CBMs began to work well; we began to have the Soviets and particularly the eastern European officers exposed to western officers. The confrontation slowly but steadily began to ease. They could see in fact that NATO was in a defensive posture. We could then criticize them and say: "You are in an offensive posture." There was military value to this over time as we began to realize that they had no logistical depth. It confirmed some of the observations that we had made through our military missions in Germany, which traveled around.

The Soviets' basic objectives had to move as far forward as they could in the hopes to demoralize particularly the Germans, so they would be willing to call a halt if a conflict ever started. But behind the forward lines, there was very, very little. It really was a hollow shell, as we then knew completely when the Soviet Union itself broke down.

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Q: Were there military officers from the Pentagon working on this?

SWIERS: Exactly. It was an interagency group composed of representatives of OSD - the Office of Secretary of Defense - JCS, the NSC, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency representative at that time was Marvin Humphries who you may have heard of and who was a bit hard-line. He did not accept CBMs at all and he was worried that that would weaken NATO and weaken us. He was probably the only person who ever sent in a “dissent” message from the right. I forget when that was; it happened when I was in Paris. He objected to an order that Jim Lowenstein had sent to the embassy in Paris requiring it to have contacts with the French socialist party. Poor Marv committed suicide later on. It was very sad; I think he killed his wife and himself. Fortunately his two sons were away and they survived. The irony of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency representative was one of the strongest opponents to tension relaxation measures.

We were in a very interesting situation. After all, it was only a few years after Vietnam, and we were in a period of transition in how we would carry out our foreign policy. Vietnam had brought home to us that we were not totally dominant - that we could not exercise what was in many ways a unilateral policy. We needed actually to work with allies, we needed allies who would carry out our policies successfully. There was also the public questioning after Vietnam - really what were the priorities of American foreign policy?

I would argue that just as you could say that the Clinton administration followed the Bush administration at the end of the Cold War, the Carter administration followed a Ford administration at the end of Vietnam, that if Ford had won or if Bush had won, those presidents would have had exactly the same difficulties in defining the U.S.-post Vietnam role and our relationship with the Soviet Union which was in considerable turmoil as the old guard was beginning to die off, and a new administration having to define a U.S.-post Cold War foreign policy.

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There's a very good piece today in either the Post or the Times, noting in how many ways Dole and Clinton have much more in common in foreign policy than they do with their respective rights and lefts. What we would see at the beginning of the Carter administration, because of the Vietnam "failure," was a breakdown in that center - the establishment consensus - on the direction of U.S. foreign policy. The polarization was symbolized in many ways by Brzezinski and the Reagan administration at its inception where you had a number of people who had been in Democratic organizations before becoming these new conservatives - the Reagan Democrats.

I was somewhat fortunate. I had been at the policy planning staff just before as we were starting to address some of these issues, as we called them the "greater ambiguities of the world." You'll see that theme through a number of the Kissinger speeches. The issues that we were addressing were becoming more ambiguous than they had been in the past. In my next assignment I end up in a NATO east-west study and in a CSCBM's effort which reflected both of these. It was a most fascinating assignment to have.

Q: Well you left there in 1979?

SWIERS: It was the summer of '79 and I had three choices. Somebody said to me, "There's a job opening up." I unfortunately had not been promoted for reasons which I think I've addressed. I was finally promoted in September of '78 to FSO- 03, or FSO-01 as it is now.

Q: FSO-03 is basically the colonel level in the Foreign Service.

SWIERS: I know that if I had been an FSO-03 in the summer of '78, I might have assigned to Copenhagen as DCM to by Warren Manshel who had been referred to me by Dick Holbrooke for advice on Denmark. He was about to be assigned to Denmark and he eventually picked Herb Oken, the person who, as I told him was much too senior for the job, but I knew he couldn't pick me since I was only an FSO-04. I remember I advised

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Warren Manshel, that Dick had asked me to be nice to him and tell him about Denmark and what to do and what not to do.

Herb who was then had been the DCM in Lisbon, I think he was already an FS0-01 at the time, never even got to Copenhagen. He went back to Washington for consultation. His then wife and child, Lorraine had packed up to drive to Copenhagen. Vance had some disagreements with Frank Perez who was the State Department representative to the SALT delegation. Once in Washington, Herb, whom Vance knew, was told he was going to go to be the SALT representative instead.

I had a call from Dick, who was in east Asia, asking me to see Warren Manshel. He had taken Dick to be the editor of "Foreign Policy;" Dick asked: "Call Manshel and hold his hand." So I called Manshel who was in Antibes at the time on vacation and he was all upset because he couldn't conceive that somebody would change the assignment for the guy he had selected to be his DCM. I told him: "Okun is too high-ranking." What Manshel then decided to do was to keep the economic counselor on for another year; he then ended up staying on for four years or five years.

Warren Manshel is dead now; his wife first died of cancer and then he died later. He was a very, very nice man and proved to be a very good ambassador in a small country such as Denmark. He had some foreign policy knowledge since he and Sam Huntington had run "Foreign Policy" magazine. Warren was from a Berlin Jewish family which at least had had the wisdom to flee early. When he arrived in Denmark, in his first remarks at the airport, he quoted Bismarck. Why in God's name he did that, I don't know to this day. I had my Danish friends sending me all the newspapers with great amusement. Warren recovered from it.

Q: Well let's move on.

SWIERS: So I missed out on that assignment. The next chance I had, as happens so often in the Foreign Service, came when I was called by Walt Silber who was the personnel officer. He asked whether I would like to go to London. The number two job in the political

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section was open. He told me to call Ed Streeter, the DCM, to tell him whether I would be interested in it; Streeter would support it. I called Ed Streeter, and it turned out that he was on his vacation in Antigua where I think they had a house or something. So I called him there, and they said: "He's out on the beach." I said: "Can I please leave a message for Mr. Streeter? I would appreciate it if he would give me a call at his convenience." I don't know what happened but somehow the guy there went on the beach and called Ed away from the beach.

Ed is not a person who gets called away from things very easily. Fortunately I knew him; he had been director of EUR-RPM. Maybe he was director of RPM the first year I was there. I went off to lunch with a contact from the German embassy and I was in a restaurant in Georgetown when I get a call from my office saying that Mr. Streeter was at the his hotel reception desk and wanted me to call him immediately. So I got the number and I called from this little restaurant in Georgetown. He said: "What's this message to call you?" I said, "I'm certain that's not the message I left. I just said to let you know that I called."

I thought this sounds like a great way to start off with Ed. I said: "I've been told by Walt Silber that the number two job in the political section is open. You know I have lots of contacts in England, and I'd very much like the job." He said: "First call Tom Simons who's coming in as political counselor and is in Bucharest at the moment as DCM. But also I have to tell you that we're actually looking for someone who knows the Labour party rather than the Conservative party." My contacts were in the Conservative side.

They were interested in Jack Binns who was then our political counselor in Lisbon. He had been recommended by Rick Melton who had been my classmate in the Foreign Service entrance class who was leaving that job in London. One of the reason he was there was because Portugal had had the socialist government in '74. I called Tom and it seemed for a while that I might actually have a chance. Karen and I went through this wonderful

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weekend of thinking “Here we are in London with all our friends.” In the final analysis, they chose Binns. Later that year Margaret Thatcher won and the Conservatives were in.

Then was I was called in by Walt Silber and Jim Rosenthal who had been involved in Vietnam affairs when I was in the Paris peace talks. They saw that I was available and the Department was reestablishing the political counselor position in Kuala Lumpur which had been abolished during the Vietnam war but there was so much was activity in Malaysia that the department agreed to reestablish it. It was a rare thing when you think about it. Jim saw my name and asked whether I like to come out. You remember we had that GLOP.

Q: A program to get regional specialists into other regions.

SWIERS: I thought it was a wise thing; it was a perfect GLOP assignment for me; it should look good on my record. So I agreed to go to KL. Within a month or so before we were ready to go, Jim Rosenthal was reassigned, and Lyle Brecken who was the other of two officers who had worked for Ambassador Bob Miller was asked by Bob to be his DCM. I was practically on my way to KL., but clearly Lyle had much different ideas.

I think Lyle really wanted to have a Malaysian hand in the job. This was going to his first DCMship; he was an FSO-02 and quite nervous about it. We had known each other in RPM, he had succeeded Leon Firth as director of the office of security affairs. I mention this for the record; this was the second time where I had a job offered to me, as in Berlin, where I was not the choice.

I'd just like to back up because there is an interesting anecdote for the record about Leon Firth. It was in RPM when I met Leon for the first time. He was a Foreign Service officer when he and his wife Lynn had their second set of twins - twin daughters. Leon was offered a position on the House Intelligence Committee. I believe it was by Les Aspin rather than Al Gore who was still a congressman at the time. Leon had served in Belgrade and was an absolutely brilliant person; he had a real dilemma because for him to join the

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House Intelligence Committee was not go on leave without pay - the traditional route. They wanted him to sever his ties entirely to the Foreign Service so there would be no conflict of interest. Leon was in a real dilemma because here he was with four children all of a sudden. I remember him talking about it to me and I said: "I just don't know how to address it. Do you really want to go abroad again, number one? Number two this is a great opportunity." He made the decision to go to the House Intelligence Committee and everything else is history. He was brilliant. A real loss to the service, but actually to our country an even greater gain.

Q: You were in KL from when to when?

SWIERS: I was in KL from '79 to '81. I keep using the word "transition" because I think it's so important to be understood. We were beginning to realize that we had not only withdrawn from Vietnam but that we also tried to lower our profile throughout southeast Asia. The ASEAN countries were quite nervous. I'm one of those in retrospect who felt we should not have gone into Vietnam in the first place, but I'll never fault the people who made the decisions because as we know there was a different perception of the world.

Vietnam taught us a number of things which we probably didn't see before - i.e. that communism is not monolithic, that there were differences of interest between the Chinese and the Soviets which were profound. It was only in Vietnam that we began to understand the real hatred between the Vietnamese and the Chinese. These were things on which sadly we were not well-informed, or at least nobody paid attention to those who knew them.

There are two basic concerns in southeast Asia in 1979. One was the U.S. willingness to meet its commitments - a familiar sound today. Even those in southeast Asia who may have criticized our policies on Vietnam were worried by the precipitousness with which we pulled out of Vietnam. Did that mean that the U.S. would not meet its other commitments? We know SEATO died in the process of our withdrawal. Secondly our focus was on the

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Soviet Union. ASEAN's focus was on China with perhaps the Thais having oddly more of a more benevolent view.

Q: What about Malaysia?

SWIERS: The Malaysians had a great concern which went back to the emergency of 1948 when there were conflicts in that country between a 55% ethnic Malay population, a 35% Chinese population, an 8% Indian population and a 2% residual European population. I would note of course that the country was 45% Moslem, all of whom were Malay. So there was an immense concern about what the Chinese role might be. I don't think we fully grasped these differences in our policy because we were focusing on the Soviets.

Q: This is still in '79.

SWIERS: Yes. We did not have as much a focus on the Chinese in terms of our presentation to these countries. This changed somewhat sometime between '79 and '80 while we were there. The Soviets, who can always pull your chestnuts out of the fire for you, rather clumsily sent the aircraft carrier "Kiev" - not a full aircraft carrier but a half aircraft carrier - into the South China Sea on its way to Vladivostok and its way made it had it go up and do a little circle into the Gulf of Thailand.

This was part of the Soviet plan, under Admiral Gorshokov, to develop a blue water navy which they could project into the Pacific. Until that time, the Pacific was largely a U.S. lake except for Soviet nuclear submarines, which were aimed against us, not perhaps against others. I think I have mentioned before that I have to give Harriman great credit for his rejection of the Soviet demand for a role in the occupation of Japan which would have given them an access to the Pacific which they did not get until nearly 30 years later. Q: Peter, you left Malaysia when?

SWIERS: I left Malaysia in July of 1981.

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Q: And where did you go?

SWIERS: I was assigned the bureau of politico-military affairs (PM) in the Department of State. I actually had a choice to make which is very interesting for Foreign Service personnel. I had two offers. One was from Bob Blackwell who had become Rick Burt's principal deputy in EUR. He called me to offer a job under Jim Dobbins who was then the office director. The other offer came from Art Woodruff asking me to come to be his DCM in the Central African Republic. I decided that I had had my GLOP tour in Asia, and that I should go back to my main area which was politico-military. Many years later, Art Woodruff told me that my choice may have been substantively correct, but on the other hand I needed to punch the DCM ticket.

This was in the early Reagan administration and so my association with Averill Harriman just made people think of me as a Democrat, which I happened to be, although I was quite strictly a Foreign Service officer and observed that. I think that had some effect, too.

The bureau of political military affairs had been reorganized under Reggie Bartholomew. Reggie was booted out when the Reagan administration came in. Reggie was a career officer but nevertheless he was jobless for quite a while. Finally, Larry Eagleburger made Reggie director of the Cyprus task effort sort to launder him a bit; Reggie's career then prospered a bit later on. But Rick Burt took over.

Rick was the New York Times correspondent who had written many stories on SALT. I never figured out who leaked the information to him, but which I think he played a substantial role in the defeat of SALT in the late Carter administration. There were other factors as well. For example, when the Carter administration decision under Brzezinski's aegis was made to recognize China formally just as the Russians were about to sign off on SALT, they sent a message of sorts. When I was back in PM somebody had saved it and commented to Marshall Shulman, "Well, that does that" or something to that effect.

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One realized later on was there had been a big debate in the Politburo whether the Soviets should invade Afghanistan. What was more important, invading Afghanistan or getting SALT II ratified? The recognition of China that was sort of a slap in their face, and the people favoring war in Afghanistan won; once Afghanistan was invaded, that killed off any chance of SALT II being ratified in the U.S. Senate.

Q: Why was the China recognition so important to the Soviets. After all, they had recognized it from the beginning. Why was our recognition so important when we already had a liaison office?

SWIERS: Brzezinski at the time wanted to play the "China card." Brzezinski, because of the background, was highly anti-Soviet and extremely hard-line. After all, there is the historical Polish hatred of the Russians and the Russian hatred of the Poles. I think that that must have played a role although that will be for historians to determine, but he wanted to play the "China card" to balance off the Soviet Union. There was a three-sided relationship there, and the U.S. to played one off against the other. The Soviets knew that and it had an influence in the Politburo itself.

Q: *Well now you were in PM from when to when?*

SWIERS: I was in PM from late August of '81 until June of '83.

Q: *Afghanistan was then not on your watch.*

SWIERS: It's very important because the Carter administration made mistakes. The first one which was the Carter administration decision not to continue the step by step process on strategic arms control - at that point we really hadn't reached reduction. I do want to cover this because this is one thing that was started in the Reagan administration.

Q: *This is your role?*

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SWIERS: I fit in. The Carter administration came out and instead of continuing step by step controls and hopefully eventually reductions, they decided to go instead for a totally new arms control presentation, which began to be known as SALT II. The Soviets reacted negatively and it took a few years to negotiate something. By '79, there were other tensions that had emerged in our relationships. SALT II was never ratified. Paul Nitze left the Arms Control Agency, followed by George Seignious; there were all sorts of fights within the Carter administration. They never completely got their act together in terms of east-west policy.

At the same time there was a debate in the arms control community on an issue called "throw-away," which concerned the number of warheads a missile could carry. The more conservative members of the arms control community, such as Paul Nitze and Ed Rowney had concerns. I think Brzezinski was probably also in this group since in many ways I think he was always uncomfortable with the SALT II effort. There were a number of leaks out of the Carter administration to Rick Burt who was then a New York Times correspondent, and those stories combined with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the so-called discovery of a Soviet brigade in Cuba, and the Iranian taking of American hostages, killed off any chances of SALT II.

The Reagan administration came in with...

Q: They came in January of '81. And you came in September of '81.

SWIERS: Yes. The new team was in the process of rejecting all that had gone before it. Arms control used to be handled in PM under one office - the strategic arms control, the ICBMs, and the theater arms control or missile - that was then split into a separate office called theater and military policy. It's also noteworthy that arms control was be looked at as a component of national security as a deterrent of the United States, rather than arms control being pursued separate from modernization. The two of them were be looked at together, and our approach to arms control should be dual. I think that was a good idea.

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On the other hand there were a number of people who wanted, I think, to use it to slow down the arms control process and accelerate the modernization process, most notable Richard Perle.

Q: I keep having to rein you in and bring you back to what were yodoing.

SWIERS: That's what I about to get to. We come back into the theater military policy because at that time strategic control was obviously more or less on hold. Theater military policy office, called TMP, was responsible for the INF question, intermediate nuclear forces, MBFR, chemical weapons, and probably a couple of other issues. Let's start first with the chemical weapons question.

Q: You arrived the Reagan administration is just settling in.

SWIERS: In fact it hadn't settled in. What got the Reagan administration to settle in was a presidential speech which he had to make in late '81 on arms control. Prior to that, the Reagan administration was speaking with many different voices on issues of arms control and modernization. There were some who very strong on modernization, others very strong on arms control and a whole spectrum in between. Our allies were totally confused in that period.

Finally Reagan made the famous speech, I think it was November of '81, in which he, was proposed the zero option for INF missiles. The Soviets had begun installing in the late '70s a new type of two-stage missile (it was called the SS20) which had a range sufficient to hit Europe but not the United States. This missile would have been eliminated under the old START treaty; it was an older missile that basically had one stage removed. I sometimes wonder whether the decision was deliberate on the Soviet side or if in fact they said: "Well we've got this thing. Why don't we take a stage off? That falls under the rules." What the did was to increase European insecurity by what we called "decoupling" - namely since the

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United States could not be hit by these missile, the United States might not come to the defense of Europe.

We had several things to do in concert with our allies. One was to demonstrate that the U.S. commitment to Europe remained as firm as ever. In the post-Vietnam period there was a lot of concern about that. We had over 300,000 troops and dependents in Europe at that time, and by definition they were also harm's way from those missiles. Number two, there was a need to develop a response. That was the modernization of an older Pershing missile, called Pershing II, with greater range, and the introduction of ground-launch cruise missiles.

The decision was made in consonant with our allies, after a lot of debate, that we would not increase the number of warheads that were physically located in Europe. So for every new Pershing II, that was going into Europe, we would pull out a warhead. Thirdly, and this was also in concert with the NATO dual-track decision, we would also express our willingness to negotiate with the Soviets for reduction or elimination of the SS20 in exchange for our willingness not to deploy the Pershings.

Our first public statement on our position was made by Reagan in November '81 when he proposed a zero-option. We would not deploy anything if the Soviets would not deploy the SS20. This is quite significant because this was the first true nuclear reduction proposal. Up to then, all we had done was place ceilings on the numbers of a given category or categories of nuclear weapons. When another category would come up, we would negotiate a ceiling for that. So the arms race was constantly accelerating. This was the first proposal to actually eliminate categories.

Q: What was the role of PM and your role?

SWIERS: Our role was we had the lead in the Department to develop the U.S. negotiating position for these reductions - a the zero-option was the one that came out. I believe that all the controversy was a tribute to Secretary Hag and to Burt because the final U.S.

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position was at variance with the original instructions. They were drafted with a major input by Richard Perle of the Defense Department. I don't believe Richard Perle was truly convinced of the value of arms control for United States national security. He had no faith in this and he would have rather seen a modernization and increase in weapons if necessary.

The original instruction to our delegation which was to be led by Paul Nitze and Gene Rostow who was the director of the Arms Control Agency was that we would simply make this proposal to the Soviets and if the Soviets turned it down we'd say, "Thank you," go home, and starting putting in the weapons in Europe without any further discussion. There was a little additional phrase that was put in the instructions that said : "You will also listen to what the Soviets have to say," or something to that effect to keep the negotiating process going, which turned out to be very, very important.

There were a lot of people, the so-called neo-conservatives who came into the government with Reagan; many had been Democrats or leaned more to the Democratic side, but they turned against the Democratic on two counts. Number one, was their total lack of confidence in Carter. They thought that some people in the Carter administration were favoring the Arabs over the Israelis.

Furthermore, they felt that the United States was not taking strong enough positions on arms control issues during the Carter administration. This was false, in my view. I know General George Seignious personally; he was the director of the Arms Control Agency and there as no way he would have accepted the position if he felt that our positions were weak; after all he was a Republican.

I think a number of the new Reagan team realized that they had opened a Pandora's box by employing people who were totally opposed to arms control and who wished to pursue a line vis-a-vis the Soviet Union that could actually might lead to conflict. I always felt that a number of them were trying to close that Pandora's box, but didn't know how to go about

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it although they succeeded in the final analysis. There are a number of people still alive. I'm not going to use names yet on that.

The INF talks proceeded in rather desultory fashion. The Soviets weren't prepared to negotiate. There was that famous walk in the woods with Paul Nitze and the Soviet negotiator, Klazinsky, during which they came up with a partial solution; while the Soviets objected to the zero-option proposal, Nitze and Klazinsky came up with a partial reduction proposal. There were several variations of the formula, but nevertheless it came up.

Q: This is when? This is while you were in PM.

SWIERS: While I was in PM.

Q: What were you...?

SWIERS: Our office the whole time was drafting the responses to the proposals back and forth.

Q: Can you give me a little feeling about the attitude when you arrived there? In the first place when you arrived did you feel that here was an office somewhat under siege because of the new Reagan team?

SWIERS: No, quite the opposite. The reason was that there began a disappearance of what I would call the bipartisan approach to foreign policy, or the effort to have a bipartisan approach to foreign policy, in the late Carter administration. I saw that when I left Washington in the summer of '79. That was just at the point when Brzezinski was beginning to get the ascendancy in the national security process which ultimately led to Vance's resignation in 1980. Then, while he was away Brzezinski rammed through his concept of sending the Delta Force to rescue the hostages in Iran; as we know it was a disastrous operation and Vance opposed it and thereafter resigned.

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But you saw in the late part of the Carter administration a split in the Democratic party itself which subsequently helped to defeat Carter in 1980. That 1980 election obviously was very interesting because it was one of the elections when foreign policy really played a role in the election and in the defeat.

Q: Anyway, when you arrived....?

SWIERS: When I arrived by the summer of '81 the new Reagan administration had purged everyone who had some type of senior position in the Carter administration including those in the Foreign Service. The new people in PM were people who were all Reagan administration loyalists, or Foreign Service officers who were very clearly comfortable with the Reagan administration. Thus at PM you had Rick Burt as the assistant secretary. PM remember for years had been headed by a director who was considered as an "assistant secretary equivalent". Bob Blackwell was the principal under Burt - a Foreign Service officer - who felt much more comfortable with the approach to national security which the Reagan espoused. So PM was a very strong office.

Rick by the way was actually more moderate than people probably give him credit for. Another person in the bureau was Bob Dean - is a prominent moderate Republican in national security affairs with whom I am still friendly. Then there was Richard Haas and Arnie Kantor. It was a different group from that which had been employed in the Nixon-Ford administrations. They were not part of the "eastern establishment" although many of them were educated.

I say it was a very strong office. The office that had a struggle in many ways was the bureau of European affairs. Larry Eagleburger was the assistant secretary and he kept what I would call a solid, traditional, moderate Foreign Service establishment. Alan Holmes was there, and Avis Bohlen was there as a director. Larry was a sufficiently prominent Republican that he had his own way; he was Larry Eagleburger, he had his own personality and they had to listen to him. But he was under some cloud as well because he

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was identified as a Kissinger person and as we know Kissinger was not in favor with this group.

But PM was clearly a very strong office, and Burt of course had very strong personal relationship with Alexander Hag.

Q: What were your particular responsibilities?

SWIERS: I was the office deputy director under Dobbins. He expected me to keep track of the day-day operations of the office. Eventually, Eagleburger moved up to be under secretary of state. Haig then moved Burt into the EUR job and Burt took Dobbins and Blackwell with him; he was replaced by Jonathan Howe.

Q: Who was a retired admiral.

SWIERS: He was a retired admiral. I in fact was acting director of PM for eight months, a very, very long time - I remember it was at least half a year. This is why I ended up overseeing the whole office. I had responsibility across the board in the office. Dobbins had been a young officer who was assigned to the Vietnam delegation in Paris and we knew each other from 1968. It was a bit of a role reversal. Dobbins and Blackwell had known each other from several years before, and it was Blackwell who had recruited Dobbins to be the office director.

We worked very well. Jim had complete confidence in me and we had an easy relationship. There were matters on which he took the lead. Jim was actually more a thinker than a doer; Jim was the one recruited to write different speeches an arms control and some of the broader think pieces. He expected me to keep the office running on a day-to-day basis. It was actually a rather pleasant office to work in, despite that there were some major shifts in American national security policy that were going on at the time.

Q: Were the battles coming from other bureau - I would think the EUbureau particularly?

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SWIERS: The battle really was between PM and EUR who had the primacy on politico-military issues that could concerned Europe. INF was an obvious one since that was totally related to Europe, or rather it was totally a NATO issue that was going to be decided between the U.S. and its NATO allies. The reason I hesitated for a second is because the Soviets had deployed sizable numbers of the SS20 east of the Urals directed towards Asia. We found it necessary to consult the Japanese on this. I mention this because at one point the German director of arms control, I think his name was Fred Ruge proposed a zero-option in missiles that could reach Europe, and a hundred pointed elsewhere. We rejected that as well. We felt it should be...

Q: It was like selling the Asians down the, I mean we couldn't, being a...

SWIERS: No, but it's certainly a comment. The Germans really still looked at issues in continental terms. If you wanted to have an ally to whom you could talk in global terms there was one and that was the British. The French had some element of it, but they always had a peculiar perspective. I could talk with Danes in global terms, but the Germans looked at things solely as continental questions. The SS20 was highly mobile and we rejected the German proposal because the Soviets could probably without too much trouble move the missiles to threaten Europe.

I remember this even today because it almost made Strobe Talbot's book about INF. When Paul Nitze came back from his walk in the woods, there was a debate over whether we would going to be support his suggestion or not. I was by then acting director of the office, and Hal delegated me to go to a meeting Paul was having. When Paul came back, he always had a meeting of his delegation to which a PM rep, I guess an EUR rep as well, was invited. Hal didn't go to the meeting. He sent me to the meeting to tell Paul that the Department of State would not support "the walk in the woods: proposal; we had decided to continue with the zero-option.

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The “walk in the woods” proposal was a sincere effort by Paul to find some compromise, but it had still major verification problems because the missiles would be too hard to verify. Where were they, were they still being produced, were they being hidden? The only real measure you had was to go to a zero-option and thus if you saw one of them at some point you knew that they were violating the agreement. We had reached that rather unfortunate stage of sophistication. It was the same actually, if you want to look at it from the Soviet side, for our Glickems which we could conceal. Pershing IIs would be a little harder to conceal.

I remember Paul took it quite calmly. I think he probably realized the proposal would be turned down. A couple of months later I had a call from Strobe Talbot who was then with Time magazine and was writing his book about Paul's negotiating. Someone had told him that Paul blew up and we had a big argument. That was totally false. Whether Paul got mad after I left, I do not know, but Paul was always the great gentleman and great American..

I have to say that I shared the opinion that Paul's proposal was deficient. I shared it both for verification reasons but also for political reasons. In the Carter administration, there was thought being given to deploying a neutron bomb. This was a new type of atomic weapon which would kill human beings but not destroy infrastructure. We had reached that level of sophistication. The reason it was neutron was because the radiation would be neutrons rather than explosives.

Helmut Schmidt had gone out on a limb very reluctantly to back this. He was literally on a limb and Carter suddenly reversed the decision, leaving Schmidt, the most loyal of allies supporting the thing, completely by himself. That really was not only the beginning of the end of Schmidt in Germany; it was also the beginning of the end of total allied confidence in the wisdom of American decisions. Our credibility had been hurt by our withdrawal

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from Vietnam, but our reversal on the neutron bomb finally cemented our perceived unreliability.

I said, "We cannot do this again." The allies including the Germans, and Schmidt was still in office at the time, had totally committed themselves to the zero-option at our insistence. We had rejected "walk in the woods," we had rejected the German's "zero plus one hundred" option; we continued to pursue the zero-option.

The Soviets helped us. This one occurred on my watch when the Soviets attempted to mix themselves into the German elections in '82. They threatened the Germans if INF deployment were carried forward; it actually hurt Schmidt. I left the office in December of '82; by then we had decided to deploy because the Soviets had walked out of the talks and then they promptly came in with a rather remarkable agreement.

Q: Was your office involved in getting places to put the Pershing and Pershing IIs or was this an EUR?

SWIERS: We were involved in it on a political sense. There was a lot of rivalry as to who had the lead role. EUR was the one supposed to negotiate. When Burt moved to EUR, all of a sudden a number of arguments which he had been making in favor of PM, he then shifted to EUR; so we had a little battle back and forth there. But the prime siting of where the missiles were to be located had several participants. The Defense Department had to look at it from a military sense and our allies would involve themselves.

For example, the Belgians said they would take a missile site, I think it was a Glickem since all the Pershings were going to be in Germany. The Belgians picked a Glickem site in Florins. If you look at a map of Belgium, in south central Belgium there is a sort of appendix of Belgium; this was a highly depressed area, it's where the coal mines were, the steel industry and all of which were decaying. So there were good political reasons for putting the missile there.

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The Dutch also were going to take some missiles as well. The Dutch were really steadfast on this the whole time, led by Ron Lubbers, who sadly for other reasons we just recently had to oppose as NATO Secretary General. I wish the Dutch had never put Lubbers forward; it embarrassed us; it embarrassed him.

Missiles were also being deployed in Italy, I think it was in Sicily, Siminella; they were having Glickems as well. We began the deployments and then the Soviets realized they had made a terrible mistake in trying to frighten the Germans. It made the deployment in Germany a reality - German opposition really declined dramatically after the Soviets threatened them. They then withdrew from the talks which was totally dumb. I think that was in part because they were in a leadership transition with Brezhnev; Andropov himself was not well.

Q: You had sort of an ailing...

SWIERS: An ailing leadership.

Q: An ailing leadership and Afghanistan which...

SWIERS: Which wasn't resolved until a couple of years later when Gorbachev came into power and finally reached the different agreements. That I think probably covers the INF role. The second one was MBFR.

Q: Mutual balance...

SWIERS: Mutual balance forced reductions in Europe. This dragged on for years and years. Neither side was really prepared to take the reductions or to take a force restructuring until the late '80s when it began to occur with the signing of the conventional forces treaty in Europe. I do remember though, which was rather interesting, a young FSO in our office, I don't want to use his name because I don't know whether he would want me to. He came up with a rather imaginative proposal on MBFR, and I put it through as

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one of the option to go forward. EUR fought it mightily, but Avis and I thought it kind of interesting...

Q: Avis Bohlen?

SWIERS: Avis Bohlen. Rick opposed to it as well, but I thought it should be included in the options. Obviously, we lost. I remember Avis saying we had fought the good fight on that. When finally both sides were ready to begin negotiating seriously on conventional forces, the INF issue had to be resolved first. A proposal was put forward which in many ways was a descendant of this young officer's rather imaginative proposal. There was an enormous amount of work on MBFR - constant papers back and forth, constant positions taken. We were really dancing on heads of pins and all the rest. It was really because nobody wanted to move forward.

Q: It's only when the time is right that something will happen.

SWIERS: We have to understand the period. We realized that we were in a period of change. Americans in the post-Vietnam period, and the Europeans nearly 40 years after WWII, were really getting tired of the Cold War. I don't think the leaders of all the countries realized was just how tired people were of all of the negotiations on INF, etc. What INF brought us was eventually that the western Europeans couldn't see the SS20s, but they could see were the Pershings and Glickems coming in. Somehow the psychology got to be that really it was the Americans who responsible for keeping the Cold War going.

Very early on in my tour, I was sent out to give a speech at America House in Munich for University of Munich students; I was to defend the INF. We sent out a number of people around to make that case. I realized, as did undoubtedly others, that there was a need to review the history of the U.S. relationship of Europe. We had to realize we were now in the second generation, actually starting the third generation after the end of WWII, and there were several things that needed to be remembered.

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First of all, that the U.S. was probably unique in history as a reluctant superpower. What other countries in history do we know of that after achieving victory as we did, withdrew from the lands it had conquered or liberated? It was simply unheard of in history. Furthermore, we set in motion a process to reduce a force of twelve and half million people under arms to not more than a few hundred thousand. One could argue that we should have kept it larger because maybe than the Soviets might have realized that they shouldn't try something in Korea.

Thirdly, in contrast to the United States, the Soviet Union not only had maintained its WWII force but modernized it and extended its hegemony over eastern Europe and was hoping to do so in western Europe until the United States came in with the Marshall plan - a unique effort to restore the economies of Europe. We even offered assistance to the Soviets. They rejected it; we would have had more trouble getting it approved. But nevertheless that's a piece of history and Marshall felt very strongly about it.

Then fourthly was the fact that the United States came back to Europe at European request, and only after enormous debate in the United States whether it should commit itself in peacetime. In previous times we had waited until the war had broken out and in both cases we had been forced into it. This sounds so basic; yet I was amazed by the effect that discussion had.

You could turn to the INF issue and note that we had not initiated putting the weapons in; we responded to the Soviet insertion of SS20s into eastern Europe. We acted at the request of the Europeans. What we were trying to do was hopefully to force the Soviets to understand that it would be better rather if they did not deploy a totally new weapon system. If they did, okay we would deploy our newest weapons to counter it.

In retrospect, some of this seems so fundamental. But that is not unusual given the decline in the understanding of history and perhaps the teaching of history, even in Europe. In the

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United States, the young people had become so accustomed to us being in Europe that they simply assumed it was part of war and it was the Americans remaining.

The third issue that was to be addressed in the TMP was chemical weapons. We had two things going on and, let's face it, part of this was justification for it. Our chemical weapons stock was rapidly deteriorating. We had chemical weapons simply as a deterrent. I would note that we had already agreed to abolish biological weapons. So we had eliminated our stock of biological weapons although maintained a research facility in Fort Dietrich, Maryland which played an important role in this issue.

In the Reagan administration, there was a basic question whether we should modernize our chemical weapons or simply proceed directly to negotiation of the chemical weapons convention - a ban on chemical weapons. I think the Reagan administration position was that if people saw it as pursuing a dual track, that was correct. The people who just looked at having negotiations just as an excuse for modernization were wrong. Our chemical weapons stock were called unitary weapons. That meant that the chemical components were actually within some type of shielding mechanism within the projectile. They were deteriorating; they were very dangerous, but they are still in storage out in the West.

The stock of weapons which we had in the United States were deteriorating as well as the stock which we had in Europe and elsewhere in the world. We wanted to get them out of Europe but at the same time we needed to keep the deterrent, which I shared personally. I obviously carried out whatever instruction there was on that.

We were developing was a new kind of weapon called a binary weapon which were two weapons which would produce the lethal chemical when combined. In the meantime they were kept separate in the projectile and would be combined only when the projectile was fired. It was a much safer process; there was a new factory opened somewhere in the south, it was either Alabama or Arkansas. As these binary weapons were produced, we

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would withdraw the unitary weapons to the storage facilities in Johnson, Iowa and one of the atolls in the Pacific.

That was one aspect. The reason this issue got impetus was the death of several Lao in Laos under mysterious circumstances related to a fungus called "yellow rain." Likewise there was a discovery of some of it with people who'd died with some of the same symptoms in Afghanistan. It was a very peculiar, and it was very evident because the bodies turned black very rapidly and decayed very rapidly.

A sample of the fungus was brought back to Fort Dietrich. Fort Dietrich arranged to get it to a professor, without revealing the source, to check it out. He came out with the conclusion that this was not a natural product. One argument was that the cause of the disease had been bee droppings; thousands of bees who had pooped all over the place. But there was no relation.

I was personally convinced from the Fort Dietrich analysis - based on a very limited sample - that it was the result of some sort of biological warfare or biological testing that was being carried out under Soviet auspices in Laos and certainly in Afghanistan. Secretary Haig though made a decision that we would release the evidence just on the basis of that one sample which we had been able to obtain. That raised a controversial question which still exists today. Nevertheless it gave impetus to an attack on the Soviets on possible violations of the biological warfare agreements and gave credibility to the administration's insistence that we maintain and modernize our chemical weapon deterrent at the same time as tried to pursue a conventional weapons agreement. Conventional weapons are incredibly difficult to verify. There are agreements about what you look at, but that had an effect on our own chemical industries. It might require what some would call "intrusive inspection" and that is still going on today. Nevertheless I think it as a useful effort; I don't know whether we'll ever find out, but I will not be surprised if at some point we discover the Soviets were indeed carrying out biological testing. The evidence from my view is sufficient for that.

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A lot of people who opposed the treaty were also opposed to the Reagan administration not just on foreign policy grounds but on domestic policy grounds as well. Part of the European opposition to the Reagan foreign policy was based on opposition to the Reagan domestic policy. I certainly sensed that in Denmark, which we'll talk later in the mid-'80s when I finally got there, was a total distaste of the social democratic parties of Europe to the policies which the Reagan administration were adopting domestically because they challenged the very fundament of their own positions. We saw that in England as well when Thatcher came in in '79.

When I left PM in June 1983, I was greatly disappointed. John Howe would not make me office director ostensibly because I was still an FSO-01 at the time and those were FSO-00C position. He brought in a very nice fellow who was my boss for my last six months or seven months maybe; that was Olaf Grorbl who was an MBFR expert. I have to say to this day I believe politics played a role in that selection. John was actually a quite political admiral, and I think he sensed that having me as an office director would not have been healthy.

Q: What was Howe's management style?

SWIERS: He wasn't engaged as Burt was. I think in many ways his psychology was much more that of a damage "limiter". Whether you like Rick Burt or not - he was not one of my favorites and I'm not one of his favorites - you had to acknowledge that he had views to which he was committed and which he pursued.

John Howe was a skilled bureaucrat. John was going to carry out whatever he was told to do. He was a careerist and as we know he moved up ultimately to be deputy national security adviser. He got his fourth star. He came from an old Navy family. His major promotions came after highly political assignments, rather than from ship borne experiences. He was not an innovator. However one must give John Howe credit for, helping to set up the Central Command responsible for the Middle East and South Asia.

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Q: Which became very important.

SWIERS: We would not have been able to carry out Desert Shield and Desert Storm without the Central Command. John did that. He played a key role in that; he went out to the Middle East states, such as Oman, to set up the various mechanisms so we had the Central Command.

The strategic office was under Chris Lehman who was one of John Lehman's brothers. In many ways that was a holding operation until the Reagan administration decided what it wanted it do about what became known as START. Alexander Haig opposed that. George Shultz came in as secretary and the department was in transition at the time. Burt lasted a bit under Schultz and was then given the ambassadorship to Bonn. Roz Ridgeway became the EUR assistant secretary. John Howe left not to long after I did and was replaced actually by a fairly aggressive air force officer, Jack Chain. Shultz put his own people in as the time went on; you could see a subtle shift in policy, a policy that was much less confrontational, much better thought out. That's a tribute. It was a high point really.

Q: Well you left PM in '83, and where did you go?

SWIERS: In '83 I had to be honest there wasn't too much I could find. I hoped to be DCM in Copenhagen in '83. That didn't work out. Tim Russell, a dear friend who I later worked for as political counselor in Copenhagen, became DCM. I also realized a couple of years later that in many ways I was one of those people who, if not blackballed, was not to be given a visible position in European affairs. Rick was quite, as I learned later, quite strict about it, and all counselor positions and above had to be vetted by him. I probably would never have gotten a DCMship anyway. That's neither here nor there. That's past. But it is an interesting comment on how political things still were. I'll talk about that again in '85, when we get to '85.

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I then learned that a senior fellowship was available on the Atlantic Council. In fact, John Glassman, who had worked for me in Moscow, had turned the job down and was going off to central America. I got the senior fellowship at the Atlantic Council, normally a year's assignment, and ended up staying there two years. It was absolutely fascinating to be out of the Department - out and looking in. I was heavily involved as a senior fellow in a range of different issues regarding NATO. They used me as an adviser quite often.

What was interesting too was that the people there, some of whom had been present at the creation, were still around. Teddy Achilles who was the father of the man who came up with the idea of the Atlantic Council and had been one of the principal action officers in the drafting of the North Atlantic Treaty, was there. Jack Hickerson was still around. Ken Rush was the chairman. Fran Wilcox who had been Arthur Vandenberg's chief of staff was there.

By the way, I'm omitting something. I just realized this. At the end of my assignment to PM, I was asked by Harriman to go along on his last visit to the Soviet Union. I guess we haven't even talked about that.

Q: No. You might...

SWIERS: It's very important. I mentioned the shift that one began to see. I want to talk about that. Shortly before I left PM in May 1983 - I had not even been assigned - Averill Harriman decided he wanted to make one last trip to the Soviet Union. He was then 92 and as he said he wanted to take a measure of Andropov who had become the Soviet leader. People knew nothing about Andropov other than that he had been the KGB chief. I don't think we even understood at that time, as we learned several years later, how many of the people he had supported or protected were among the original reformers. Gorbachev being a prominent example, but there were a whole number of economists and that added certain of the academic interest. He had a rather open mind. I say that now

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because as far as anybody knew it was just Andropov, the KGB chief, taking over from Brezhnev. We were then in confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Harriman thought he'd go out. He called somebody in the Department. How I ended up getting permission to go I don't really remember. It was not really a problem and I just had the department draft some invitational orders. Harriman paid for the trip and I went with him, and in return the Department would get a nice report. I do not believe Harriman met with anyone in the administration before he left although he certainly must have informed them because we did send cables to and from Moscow. Mrs. Pamela Harriman accompanied us. Also the Shulman's were with us. I can't remember whether they joined us or they were there.

This time Harriman arranged to stay at the suite that Armand Hammer maintained in the then-new International Hotel, which made the logistics much easier. He was an old man at the time, but his hearing was still sufficient when he used a hearing aid. He had lost most his frontal view, and had natural deterioration with the peripheral vision. His mind was sound; there was no ifs, ands, or buts about that. He sort of wanted to introduce Mrs. Harriman to the leadership. Georgi Arbotov, the Director of the Institute of the United States, America and Canada was the one who helped arrange things and let Andropov know of Harriman's plans. Arbotov thought very highly of Andropov. We met with Arbotov before going to see Andropov. The one thing Harriman did make sure this time that he had assurances through Ambassador Dobrynin that he would see Andropov. In the old days you went to the Soviet Union you were never given assurances you would see the leader. So it was sort of obvious that a Harriman would see the leader. However, given his age he wasn't about to make the trip unless he had assurances.

So we got to Moscow and at some point we suddenly heard that the secretary general was available. Andropov had not yet become president, formally become president of the Soviet Union, and they Soviets very funny about their protocol. He did not see us in the Kremlin. He was not the president of the Soviet Union - it's actually chairman of the

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presidium of the supreme Soviet; that was the formal title for the president. Brezhnev like the title "president" and used it. He did not say "pretzidakov" (Russian), he used "president." But Andropov saw us in the central committee headquarters in what is known as old square. But the room itself was identical with the room at the Kremlin; it was absolutely priceless.

Alexander Ortoff was the adviser to Andropov. Victor Sukadrev was still the great interpreter at the time. Harriman had no specific messages to carry; he just wanted to come and meet with Andropov. Whatever the secretary general wanted to say he would carry back. It was rather interesting because Andropov was prepared; that sharply contrasted to the last time Harriman had been in Moscow in 1978 when he met Brezhnev who was obviously fading. Andropov, moved very stiffly, but he was all swollen with stiffness - the issue was the medicine or was there something else wrong. What we know now was he had been given cortisone but that he also had kidney failure and that is what ultimately killed him what about two or three months later.

He was totally a different personality from Brezhnev - much more formal. He even gave a much more cultured outlook. His predecessors had a real earthy, peasant quality to them. Kosygin was somewhat different. But Andropov gave the sense of being a real urban person. He as a very tough man; he had much less expression in his face than Brezhnev. Brezhnev was much more emotional; he would smile, a bit of a back-slapper. Andropov was very cold, very formal, but quite precise in what he wanted to say. His message is contained in Harriman's final testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee given after he returned. Chuck Percy was still chairman - he hadn't yet retired - had asked him to testify.

1983 was a very tense period of relationship with the USSR; it turned out much more tense than were realized in the United States. The Soviets really were beginning to get nervous about us - not to say we weren't nervous about them, but I think it was quite a serious period. Andropov harkened back to WWII. That was typical of anybody in that

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generation; they couldn't help it. To this day any Russian who has any memory or who has ever heard anything still remembers the U.S. role in WWII. It's quite moving at times to remember that in spite of every effort of Stalin to suppress that knowledge, many people understood just how important we were to Soviet survival. That doesn't take anything away from their victory, but it was there.

Andropov reviewed that and he said: "We're now in the nuclear age and in a very dangerous period." It appeared to him that we were losing the ability to communicate. We were not communicating with each other. He found this extremely dangerous. He wished to convey a plea for at least a normal relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was true that we were on opposite sides on many issues, but there was no reason why we could not have a normal relationship, particularly in the nuclear age where the stakes were very dangerous. If we misunderstood each other, it could lead to a conflict that would destroy us both. Nuclear war was unthinkable; there was no question about that. It was a very interesting message. There were several other aspects to it, including just generally chatting on the United States and so forth. But it was totally, and for the first time, non-ideological; he did not discuss ideology. He also displayed an exceptional knowledge of the United States - for a Soviet leader - its politics and the way the United States functioned. The meeting wasn't that long - about an hour and a half I'd guess - and with interpreters really about three quarters of an hour.

Harriman introduced Mrs. Harriman; she was along for the first time on such a visit. Actually Andropov had indicated he wished to meet her, in part I think because he remembered Mrs. Harriman; he knew that Mrs. Harriman had been Randolph Churchill's wife - Winston Churchill's daughter-in-law - so there was an element of that. That clearly played a role. It was quite a contrast: a Soviet leader who had a clear knowledge of the world. We were talking to a man who had until just recently been the KGB chief which meant he had access to the raw data. He didn't just read, I suspect, the highly sanitized versions that reached the Soviet leadership.

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Andropov had a double problem. We know that the leader is very dependent on what information is chosen to send to him. There is an honesty required. In the Soviet system the last thing you want to be is the bearer of bad tidings. You only want to deliver what you know the leadership wants to hear. You would be very foolish to do otherwise. Andropov on the other hand had access to all of the information, and I think he developed an understanding of what lay beyond.

The other thing at which he hinted was that he was going to initiate a reform system. As we know now, he did have one which was called "iskorenea" (Russian) or "acceleration." It's an interesting phrase because naturally it's based on the phrase "iskra," "bark," which was the name of the newspaper Lenin had.

Acceleration. Andropov was concerned about corruption; he recognized that the system was not functioning. Now I've talked with Russians since then and they say they really wonder if he had survived, how much would have changed because after all he was still a committed communist. A few more years later, the system really collapsed, and Gorbachev, instead of recognizing that he had to reject the command economy of the communist system, tried to improve it. That is what Andropov was talking about. There's no question about that he actually was going to implement reforms. This might have also led in foreign policy to an increase in detente; we don't know, because our own administration was changing.

Harriman conveyed that message when we returned to Washington. I remember he was staying on another day to talk with Art Hartman who had had this brilliant embassy in Paris. After that, he was assigned to Moscow and arrived at one of the lowest points in U.S.-Soviet relations. Art, who had been able to deal at the highest level, had had open access, was really an ambassador trapped in his embassy. It's amazing how well Art did, particularly since he was not a Soviet hand. At the time I guess we were a bit more used to

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that, but Art did very well under extremely trying circumstances. Dick Combs was their as his DCM; that must have been Dick's last tour in Moscow as well.

When Harriman returned, he called on Shultz. Shultz by then was secretary of State; Rick Burt as assistant secretary for EUR also attended. Harriman emphasized his view that security, particularly arms control, issues had to be the paramount thing. Shultz did disagree with him on that. Shultz by that time had this four point program that we would pursue: arms control, human rights, and there were two other issues. It was a four point program simultaneously. That was the decision of the administration. There was some difference on that.

I remember one anecdote which is very funny. Shultz said to Harriman: "Well did you see anybody else why you were there? Didn't you see Gromyko?" Harriman just looked at Shultz and said, "No, I didn't see him. You know when I go there I will only see the important people. Had Gromyko asked to see me I certainly would have called on him." George Shultz who as we all know is famous for that poker face, looked absolutely dumbfounded at Harriman. Harriman was not bragging; Harriman never bragged. That as simply a matter of fact statement. Harriman had a contempt for Gromyko that was sometimes difficult for me to fathom. He just felt that he was simply a functionary who did what he was told; he saw no imagination in him, and I remember that.

Q: I always think of Gromyko pounding his shoe with Khrushchev. mean they always said if Gromyko told to sit on a keg of ice...

SWIERS: Maybe Gromyko was still the foreign minister. Later on, after Chernenko died, Gromyko was in effect booted upstairs to be president. I said to Harriman: "Shouldn't you send him a congratulatory message him on becoming president?" Harriman said, "No." I argued with him and he said: "Look. I don't want to argue with you. I don't want to do it. He's not a person I'm going to send a congratulatory message to." There was something which to this day I still don't understand. It was a combination of his total lack of respect

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for him, but obviously there was something else. He had total contempt for the man. It was quite striking. But I wish you could have seen Shultz's face.

We conveyed the message, but nothing came out of it. But in retrospect it was a signal of the change that was going to occur in Soviet approaches to foreign policy which after a hiatus of a year with Chernenko came into full bloom under Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. In many ways, that was Harriman's final service to his country. But if Andropov had lived their meeting might have been an extremely significant event.

Many years later I read an article in one of the papers that there had been a NATO command post exercise in which Richard Perle had insisted that we include for realism purposes a nuclear strike, a demonstrative nuclear strike on the Soviet Union. That was some time in early '83. I believe now that Andropov was talking about was that command post exercise which the Soviets were probably monitoring. It took them a little bit of time to realize it was simply a command post exercise, not the real thing. The coincidence is just so striking, that this must have been... There were two things Andropov was saying: number one, use of nuclear weapons was out of the question for both sides. Number two, we've got to be careful we don't give each other the wrong signal.

Q: This is also the period when some of the hardliners were playing games with: "Well if we have one nuclear strike that will signal something." These were people talking about sending messages with nuclear weapon; it was our ideology at the time.

SWIERS: Yes, we did. We thought we could send messages with nuclear weapons which is totally ridiculous. I remember that there was a famous book on the "third world war." Sir John Hackett wrote it. And that was an exchange. He had, I believe, the Soviets fire the first demonstrable strike, but the Soviets decided that it was better not do it on the United States. It really wouldn't have much effect if they did it on the Germans or the French. So they dropped it on Birmingham, England. Then we arranged for the British to retaliate on Minsk, but that was the only use of nuclear weapons because everybody realized that

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you don't do that sort of thing. We won the way anyway. I think that there was actually a danger there; there was a number of people in the Reagan administration who did believe that nuclear war was a possibility. I remember going to a briefing on how we could survive this ridiculous thing. The only military man I ever recall who really pushed hard for a real nuclear scene was Curtis LeMay. But I think that was a foolish thing.

Q: Well you left the Atlantic Council when?

SWIERS: I left it in '85. Q: And you went where?

SWIERS: I do want to just mention a couple of things about the Council. It was an interesting transition period for the Council. Fran Wilcox retired and died shortly thereafter. It was a delightful period meeting all these people and having your sense of history and the continuity of policy restored. I want to mention a couple of things. The first one was while I was at the Council, we celebrated the 35th anniversary of NATO in 1984. Whenever the NATO anniversary came up it was publicized widely; it was in the press, it was on television and that.

We, working with NATO, prepared a little flier that could be splashed on the television screen saying: "This is wonderful. NATO is 35 years and has done this, this, and that." I'm not sure which network ran it; I don't think it was CBS. It may have been ABC or NBC. By the way the network would always put this on free of charge. The Council didn't get any money out of it either; it was just one of those things that we would do. Whoever we sent it to, sent it back and said: "No, this is a political issue. If you wish to have it run, you have to do it as an advertisement." Fortunately we still had Ken Rush on the board; he had been Nixon's deputy secretary of state, and there was enough of the older generation at the senior levels of the networks, so that Ken got hold of whoever he needed to at that particular network and the ad got on for free. I will tell you that it was the last time, and the other networks did it as well. But that was one signal of change in many ways.

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There was another interesting signal and it's the only time I saw this happen in the Atlantic Council. The Atlantic Council was receiving no money from the Defense Department. The Atlantic Council while it is the organization that has the principal public role on NATO is also involved in a whole range of issues - e.g., an OECD transplanting and all that, formulating policy recommendations. It is not a think tank, it is an operating organization. But our general policy then was that the Council would never have more than one third of its funding from the government to maintain independence. More often than not, it was under 20-25%. In any one project it never allowed the government a majority of the grant, so that the Council would have its independence.

When I arrived or just before, were supposed to get a DOD grant - an OSD grant. I would say it was an ISP grant. ISP was Richard Perle's shop and it wanted to dictate the outcome. The Council, while its directors were always balanced between Republicans and Democrats, had at this time for coincidental reason Ken Rush as the chairman, Teddy Achilles, another Republican as vice-chairman, and Fran Wilcox, III as the director-general. They rejected the ISP grant. These were Republicans and they rejected it. It was a number of years again before the council would take money from the Defense Department. It was very careful on that.

It is quite interesting that in 1985 the Atlantic Council had two things. Number one was that we could see the shift beginning in our relationship with our transatlantic allies as the Cold War seemed to be winding down. We began to see, if not a new detente, a certain accommodation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The political- economic issues between ourselves and our allies were beginning to assume an importance if not surpassing than at least equal with the politico-military issues. As the European community developed, our own economy was not growing at the rapid rates - it had been growing in that first 20 to 30 years after the war. We were only beginning to grasp the effect of the '73 oil embargo.

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I had been asked to be the rapporteur for what was called our assessment planning and development committee - as sort of a State Department person who was somewhat detached from it. I argued that the Council should be giving at least as much emphasis to the political economic aspects of our transatlantic relationships as we had hitherto given to politico- military. And of course this was borne out. This is one of the side effects of the end of the Cold War - the political-economic tensions.

Q: Absolutely.

SWIERS: The fourth item was that the Council had participated in the founding of the north Atlantic assembly which consisted of a group of NATO parliamentarians who met and exchanged ideas. This had been proved to be very important in the post-Cold War period because of the increased inward looking posture taken by ourselves and our allies. So this forum became very important.

We felt as well that the Pacific was assuming an importance in transatlantic relationships that it had not had before. I mentioned earlier Harriman's rejection of the Soviet role in the occupation of Japan which probably kept the Soviets out of the Pacific for 30 years. But by the late '70s the Soviets had developed a substantial blue water navy capability and were extending themselves into the Pacific. The Atlantic Council pioneered in what was called a Pacific parliamentary caucus, which was to bring parliamentarians of the north Atlantic assembly together with those we called the developing democracies of the Pacific. It was a first. We had a partner in an organization called the Pacific forum in Honolulu. That unfortunately has passed. The Pacific forum's president retired and it became part of CSIS. CSIS is a rival institution, when it ended the caucus. I'm sorry it did.

It was quite an effective mechanism and I distinctly remember our first meeting in January of '85 in Hawaii. I had been asked by the Council if I would be willing to extend a year and I said: "You've got to ask the Department. That's not something for me to ask because it has career implications for me." I confess I was not unhappy to do it. The Department

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approved and I ended up extending a year to get under way as well as to complete the first Pacific parliamentary caucus and to write the assessment planning committee report. The CINCPAC the time was Admiral Crowe.

Q: Oh, yes. SWIERS: I was really struck by Crowe at that meeting. He stayed through the whole meeting. He came to make a speech and was so intrigued by these whole discussions that he stayed on; you sensed that he had a rather powerful intellect.

Q: *And of course he had been southern command of NATO, too.*

SWIERS: That's right. He was very impressive. Later he became chairman of the joint chiefs. The Council pioneered on a number of things and it played a role in my interest in returning to the Council after I retired from the service.

Q: *Then you went to Copenhagen. How did you get that job and what were you doing?*

SWIERS: When my second year was up, I had to get back into the Department. There were no DCMships I could have applied for at the time, as I recall, but one of the jobs available was the political counselor position in Copenhagen. I had two promotion boards to go and the odds of getting promoted were rather slim. I called a fellow who'd I served in Moscow with, Marty Winning. Have you ever done something with him? He's here in Washington and is executive director of what used to be the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. Marty's had a rather fascinating career. He's one of those fellows who've had a very early promotion to what is known as FSO-MC now. He got promoted so early he ended up being retired out of the service early. He has some fascinating stories to tell you. Marty was director of northern European affairs, and I said: "Look. That job in Copenhagen is open, and I really would like that job. My wife and I have never lived in Denmark." We were in a very difficult period in our Nordic relationships at the time and I thought maybe I could do something. Marty spoke to John Kelly; as I learned a number of years later Rick Burt was out of town and they rushed my assignment through while Rick was away. I had no idea Rick had these strong feelings about me. I probably could never

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have gotten a DCMship in the EUR bureau. I will always be grateful to John Kelly and to Marty Winning for this. By the way, John Kelly now works for Rick.

Q: Where did, you were in Denmark from when to when?

SWIERS: I was in Denmark from the summer of '85 to the summer of '8when I retired. Fascinating period.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SWIERS: Terry Todman. One has heard all sorts of things about how tough he was, but he was one of the best people I had ever served under. He was very strict, he was fair, and he knew his subjects cold. The two of us just related beautifully. I really genuinely liked him.

Q: What were the issues that you were dealing with in Denmark fro'85 to '87?

SWIERS: The principal issue was that INF was still being negotiated away. In 1982, the Danish Social Democrat party had in effect abdicated government because it was not prepared to undertake the austerity programs required in this nordic country. It was a model for others. The social welfare state had not only reached but was exceeding its limits. The Swedes continued with their program and several years later had some very serious economic problems. The Social Democrats abandoned the domestic scene.

On the other hand they then had an issue which was foreign policy. There was a whole issue of nuclear weapons. With Helmut Schmidt's loss in Germany the moderate wing of the Social Democrat movement in Europe as a whole was weakened. Also there were generational changes. Those with a memory of the war were fading; the memory of the WWII and the Cold War were fading away. Some new groups were coming in and there were some sort of old-fashioned leftist type socialists. They couldn't really argue the issue

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of the economy because they had abdicated their responsibility, but they could pick up on foreign policy.

The principal basis for their policy was that the United States had become the one that was continuing the east-west confrontation. It was a false issue, but it was a good political issue. We had a whole range of NATO questions, modernization questions. After all the Soviet Union was still the Soviet Union and it maintained certain aspects of Cold War policies. It was called the footnote policy where the Danish permanent representative to NATO had to be instructed by the Danish government that it wished to collapse, because the Social Democrats could produce a majority on foreign policy. It could not produce a majority on domestic policy and had to abstain from a given position or make a note of opposition to this particular policy. It was absolutely ridiculous. It was a real low point for Denmark.

Q: I must say, Denmark, we'll stick to the time there, Denmark...it's hard to think of Danish, I mean Denmark's no military power. That's at least, I mean from somebody who doesn't know which is me. I mean how were they considered?

SWIERS: Denmark isn't considered a military power, but it's geography is of incredible importance and this point was made over and over again. I don't think this document is going to get too deep into Danish domestic affairs, but...

Q: *No.*

SWIERS: There were the Social Liberals in Denmark who in domestic policy were liberal in the European sense of the word, which is essentially libertarian - very little government involvement. On the foreign side they represented the historic Danish pacifism and neutralism. They were probably more neutralist than pacifist. All of us in the embassy maintained that Denmark could not escape its foreign policy because it sat on the egress to and from the Baltic. There was no way it was going to escape whatever might happened. The moderate wing of the social Democrats plus some others

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understood that and they were not prepared to go through either with another conquest or an occupation. They thought they could sit out WWII. They could not, as they found out, and a lot of them talked about that. It changed them forever. There were some strong Social Democratic supporters of NATO. Denmark joined NATO under Social Democrats.

Secondly, a Danish possession - or what does one call a Danish dependency - the Faroe Islands, are located midway between Britain and Iceland. We had a major listening post, largely anti-submarine warfare listening post, but also air coverage on those islands. Rather humorously, as we would point out, there was always 200 Soviets present in the Faroes. They would bring a so-called "fishing trawlers;" they kept people on the island to help repair the trawler, so there were always 200 Soviets there. Everyone knew that their mission was to, as quickly as possible, go and take out that listening station if the conflict ever broke out.

The third issue was Tuli in Greenland. Tuli was one of the three principal American BMEWS (Ballistic Missile Early Warning System) radar stations. There was one in Alaska, one in Greenland, and one in northern England in Firelingdales. The geography was there and one way or another Denmark was not able to escape it. This station was a source of embarrassment to an overwhelming majority of Danes, or to a plurality of Danes, but at the same time whenever an annual poll was taken of Danes on Danish membership in NATO, it was always about 70% or more in favor. You had real contradictions.

I think it was an abuse by the Social Democrats of their opposition role to keep themselves forward on foreign policy; it largely embarrassed their country. As political counselor I was assigned to deal with the opposition. The ambassador and the DCM largely dealt with the government. It was overlapping, but I largely dealt with it. The government had the ambassador; we worked with both sides, and Todman was absolutely first rate.

He would have the leaders of the parties, including the opposition parties, for private lunches just for one-on-one. It was a totally different type of conversation. Todman was an

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absolute master of the art of the diplomacy, which was even more amazing when you think of what that man probably went through earlier in his career. I can understand why he kept up a certain wall; there was something beyond which you did not go with Terry Todman. I understand it fully.

Q: When you had contacts with the Danish opposition, did you feel you were up against a party line or something?

SWIERS: No. In Scandinavia, there are largely homogenous societies, and the parameters of opinion are not really as wide. Even the extremists, the so-famous Progressive Party, stayed within bounds. Molins Glistner refused to pay his taxes, but that was acceptable as a protest. Then there were the communists who had been largely discredited over Hungary. There was another party called the Left Socialists, (Danish), who were the communists that broke away as a result of Hungary. They were still quite anti-American nevertheless. There was a malice element there. There was a wide spectrum of opinion because in the Danish parliament system a party only needed two percent of the vote to get into parliament.

In contrast, the Germans realized that to avoid Weimar Republic fiasco, it should be a minimum of five percent. The German federal republic would not be what it is if it had the system that existed in other European states. You needed five percent in Germany in order to be represented in parliament. I might note that's also what you needed to be represented in the Russian Duma, and that in part came out of a program the Atlantic Council held with the Sergei Valotov, Yeltsin's chief of staff.

But there were a lot of them who were committed in different ways. It's true that if you were a politician in a northern European parliamentary system, your point of view was defined at a certain vector along the spectrum of where your party lay in the political structure. Organizations such as the American embassy served in a way to bring these various people together. It was very rare that a Social Democrat met with a conservative except

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on the floor of the parliament. But if you brought them together in the U.S. embassy, you actually got the two of them to talk. It's quite striking really; quite different from our system.

Q: Was there much interest in Danish affairs back in Washington?

SWIERS: Yes. There are some very interesting things that went on in that period because the Danes were a unique member of NATO. The European community had not yet become the European union, but the Danes were a member of the Nordic Council. They were very, very active in the U.N. and heavy participants in the U.N. peacekeeping operations. So while it was a very small country, the Danes had and probably still have a highly effective intelligence service.

I should note that since I was married to a Dane, I was lucky. But oddly enough, it's a very small country and in part because it is a small country and a sea-faring country, the Danes were highly cosmopolitan. Danish diplomats are exceedingly sophisticated and worldly.

I would like to return for a second to Tuli. Where, as I said, we had a BMEW station, which was part of a line that could track Soviet missiles that may or may not be coming in our direction or in the direction of Europe. These radar had been placed I think sometime in the '50s and had not been modernized since then. In the meantime the Soviets had modernized their radars with a new system called "phased array." If somebody's very interested I'd be glad to go into the details of what it was, but it was the system needed to track large ballistic missiles. The Tuli radar as I understood it couldn't be certain of the direction of the missile flight. Was the missile actually coming at you or was it going parallel to you? It was also hydraulic operated - just to give you a sense of why this thing needed to be updated. Obviously, the ABM treaty...

Q: ABM, Anti Ballistic Missiles treaty.

SWIERS: ABM had an ambiguity in it which could open to question whether we could upgrade the radar that was located in third countries. Now if you look at the map at the top

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of the world, the Soviet Union had an advantage because it could place all of its BMEWS radar within the Soviet Union. In our case we were highly dependent on our ability to site in Canada or in England and or in Greenland. We decided to modernize. At the same time the Reagan administration was talking about SDI, (Strategic Defense Initiative) - the anti ballistic missile defense system. The Danish left got quite excited about this. Some felt that modernizing the missile system would be a violation of the ABM treaty. Secondly, some felt that the Reagan administration was trying to make it into an extension of SDI, in other words ballistic missile defense, as opposed to a passive system.

If you understood ballistic missile defense systems there is no way that you would put your battle management radar at the periphery of the system. You would want to have it at the center looking out. But most people didn't understand the technicality. Secondly, it's very easy through what do we call "national methods" to determine whether a system is a passive defense radar for monitoring, or an active radar that could be used for actual battle management.

On the first issue, the clear point was that if we were going to deploy a strategic ballistic missile defense system (an SDI) that could be construed as a violation of the ABM treaty. That was independent of whether we had the right to modernize the Tuli radar. I think it is clear when you read the language of the treaty that we did have that right; there was a proper grandfather clause. That is my interpretation. That was the interpretation of others. However, it was a real serious question because on the extreme left a party called the Venstra Socialists, which had broken off from the communists over the Hungarian revolution, were quite opposed to this.

I had gotten to know the then deputy chairman of the Danish Social Democratic party, Sven Elken. I spoke to him about it, and we arranged with USIA that he would go under the international visitor program to the United States. The program had to be cut down to two weeks, maybe even one week because he was required to be back in Denmark. There was an enormous fuss about it back in Washington because visitors are only supposed

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to go if they will stay a full four weeks. We also had a problem with the Department of the Air Force because they were worried about hosting a socialist. It was frankly a high-risk initiative.

I thought we should send him directly to the headquarters of the North American air defense system which is located in Colorado Springs. General Bob Harrings was then the commander there. Ambassador Terry Todman knew Harrings, and Todman wrote Harrings about it because we were encountering some resistance in the Air Force. Some people there, in my estimate, had difficulty distinguishing between socialist, communist, and social democrats. Elken in fact was U.S. educated in part. But we finally managed to get Elken out there.

He had not realized, and perhaps others are not aware of, that NORAD is a unified United States-Canadian command. This is quite striking. This goes beyond NATO; the way NATO would have joint commands, we function in NORAD as one country. That day Harrings had been summoned to Ottawa by the Canadian defense minister and couldn't host Elken personally. Instead Elken was hosted by the acting commander who was a Canadian. They showed him pretty much everything he needed to see and were quite open about the process and in answering his questions.

He told me later that he was astounded that the we and Canadians were totally integrating all the systems. He said frankly, I may be using a bit of an anachronism here, I don't think it was "blew his mind" but something equivalent of that. That here was the United States of America in effect putting its final defense in the hands of a foreigner. I said: "Well he's Canadian." "Yes, but he's a foreigner." He just thought this was quite remarkable. He said it affected him instantly; it was just happenstance that the Canadian general was hosting him because of Harrings absence. That was an extra we didn't anticipate.

Elken came back to Denmark and met in closed session with the foreign relations committee of the Danish parliament, and made basically four points. Number one, this

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system is vital not just to United States' defense but to NATO's defense as well. The NORAD system would be transferred to NATO through whatever defense mechanisms had to be set up if or when something happened.

Number two, he said that clearly this was not a battle management radar. Number three, if there some ambiguity in the ABM treaty about it, that was a matter between the United States and the Soviet Union. Denmark was an ally of the United States and until that issue was resolved, Denmark had to be with the United States. I must say that Mr. Elken while he sometimes could be very irritating, stood firm even during the whole period of questioning United States' motivations. It was quite a courageous position for him to take.

The Danish government was a conservative liberal coalition, which always had a majority on domestic matters, but on foreign policy matters was dependent on the Social Democrats, and this is why they could hold the government hostage on various security issues. The government did a white paper on it and that was the end of the matter. We modernized the Tuli and had it as in a "phased array" system. Firelingdales in England was already under construction and I think Clear in Alaska had already been modernized. I will tell you this was a vital security interest of the United States, and I will tell you I was very pleased by the position that Mr. Elken adapted.

He paid the price later when he was finally driven out by the left wing. He made a very foolish move in my view in the year after I left. The Danes are maybe the only foreign country that actually celebrates our fourth of July. It's a tradition and the queen usually goes; high-ranking U.S. visitors come, and more often than not we send a U.S. navy ship in for a visit to the nearest port which was Alborg.

Elken decided to challenge the ship visit because the Danes did not know whether it had nuclear weapons on board; that would have been a violation of the Danish posture. Our usual response to this is: "We neither confirm nor deny." That has been traditionally

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accepted and everybody knew that the odds of having anything on board were rather slim, but we just did not comment.

I have to say it was our government, and maybe it was Roz Ridgeway, the assistant secretary, very smartly did not take the lead on this issue but left it to the British because under NATO reinforcements plans for northern Europe it was actually British land forces that would be sent to Denmark.

The Brits have the same policy that we do on nuclear matters; so the British government informed the Danish government that if this issue was to be pursued then the British would have to reconsider their commitment to Danish defense. The Danish government was absolutely delighted because they finally had an issue on which they could bring to a vote. They had a skilled prime minister at the time, Paul Shluter; he called for a vote because he said this was bringing Denmark's membership into NATO into question. Needless to say he had an overwhelming victory and that was the end of that. The Social Democrats dropped poor Mr. Elken as chairman, and the current prime minister of Denmark, Paul Neurbraus succeeded him.

Q: You mentioned that the Danish foreign service was particularly well-informed. Could you give a little feeling for how they recruited and how it was put together as compared to some other foreign services?

SWIERS: Actually in a very traditional way. There is a foreign service exam. Even today it is still largely a male foreign service although they are making some serious efforts to change that. In fact I'm very proud that we had a young lady as an intern at the Atlantic Council - the Danish Atlantic Association traditionally sends an intern - who was actually brought into the Danish foreign service just after completion of her internship last year. They almost without exception are lawyers which is again much more a continental matter. The Danes are extremely well-educated people, and are simply very shrewd observers; almost without exception I've found that. On the one hand, they're an interesting country

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psychologically; they're almost schizophrenic. They're bound to the European mainland and you would therefore think that their mentality would be continental as the Germans, for example, but they're actually more British in the sense of a global outlook. They are a sea power. I may have mentioned the story about the Maersk line and the support they gave us in the Gulf War. I guess probably not because it's not in this but, the Maersk line which you see in Baltimore.

Q: That's Maask?

SWIERS: Maersk, Mask McKinney Mullough - his father, A.P. Mullough founded the firm and his mother was American. That line is the third largest container shipping fleet in the world, and I believe it's the sixth largest shipping line. To get a sense of how worldly they are, the Danish East Asiatic Company, which is a major trading company around the world, has its own fleet and in fact functions like a foreign service the way it works.

So they have a very worldly outlook and I've always been impressed by that. At the same time, because they're a small country, they can sort of just get around. I've found them consistently well-informed on the countries where we both have representation; more often than not the Dane's observation on what is happening or what is about to happen was the accurate one. So I've found them extremely helpful and to this day I maintain that link.

Q: You retired when?

SWIERS: I retired in September of 1987. I had already been recruited by Tom Hughes, the then-president of the Carnegie Endowment to, as he said, reinvigorate his face-to-face program. What Tom had wanted was a program not just where people in foreign affairs could get together with a speaker and talk, but could actually try to focus on some specific issues. I was there for two years and would focus the program on about six issues which I decided were the key issues for the coming year for foreign affairs. I would try to get speakers. But the speaker was not a speaker; he actually was a catalyst to a discussion.

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The other problem was that we wished to have a mix of senior people in foreign affairs and the working level, or the juniors. This is both within government and without. The program included only American citizens to participate. I made one exception once when somebody came to me about a person who was I think about two weeks away from being naturalized. That was fine. But we were quite strict on that because it was off the record, or at least not for attribution. It turned out to be a very effective foreign policy mechanism. Quite honestly, one of the reasons I was asked to do this by Tom, apart from the fact that we had known each other from the mid-'60s when he was the director of INR and I was with Harriman, was that people knew my name and my association and I could get a good crowd of the more senior people to participate. It was a very good mix. I thought it was a very effective mechanism in terms of advancing a discussion in foreign affairs. I looked at it as sort of an oral policy planning staff outside.

I was there for only two years. Tom had wanted me to extend, but George Seignious who was then president of the Atlantic Council - a former lieutenant general in the joint staff who had retired early at the request of the governor of South Carolina to revamp the Citadel in the mid-'70s and then was called back by Carter I think it was in '78 to become director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency - stayed on as president of the Council. Our chairman was Andrew Goodpaster and I had worked with both in Paris. Goodpaster was the first military representative; Seignious the second military representative in the Paris peace talks. This is how these things happen.

By 1989, they had managed to get funding for an east-west program which they wanted to call the "Harriman Chair for east-west studies." They wanted to bring me in as the director. They approached me to let me know they had the money. I must say it was rather awkward because Tom who was a very close friend had wanted me to stay at Carnegie; so I sort of pulled back and said: "Why don't you and George chat about it." It ended up with me going to Council and I've been there ever since.

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I've been principally running this two rather interesting programs of interchange between the two senior institutes in the Soviet Union, now the Russian federation, and Ukraine. We produce a joint policy statement with joint policy recommendations about twice a year with alternating visits to the respective capitals. It has received considerable attention not only by their governments but with our's as well, and I must say I am very impressed by the receptivity of the Clinton administration. We always obviously had very good entre with the Reagan and Bush administrations, but the Clinton administration has really been quite receptive; it wants to hear ideas, is looking for new approaches to relations with Russia and the Ukraine.

Q: What is your impression during the period we're talking about, which is when you've been doing this up to now, the use of sort of the outsider, people who are experts or thinkers who are dealing with foreign relations, how does that plug into the Russian and Ukraine governments.

SWIERS: There are two aspects to it. There are think tanks and there are operating foreign policy operations, and the Atlantic Council fits the latter category. We are not interested in the long-term, what's going to happen in 25 years; almost all of us, both the permanent staff and the council and its directors who are its voting members, have been in government in different positions, and so we have a sense of what a government person knows. Today government is so taken up by day to day instant decisions; it is very difficult for them to focus on longer term implications of what is happening.

The longer view has traditionally been the role of a policy planning staff. General Marshall founded the policy planning staff; even back in 1947 he had in mind to try and anticipate the shape of things to com; to question policies that may have gone on too long. But we also will focus no farther than the mid-term because that's where you can make practical proposals. In that context I think our government has become increasingly receptive to that

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type of advice and counsel by outside organizations, particularly when they try to function in a bipartisan way; we're very, very strict on. We must be bipartisan.

Q: Where do you plug into the government, I mean to the State Department for example, or Defense or where?

SWIERS: Highest levels.

Q: Well when you say highest levels, I mean, who do you...?

SWIERS: Highest levels.

Q: Okay.

SWIERS: And on down. We have contacts at the highest levels of government, senior levels of government, and working level. We do all three. What has struck me is the receptivity at highest levels. The response, not just from the working level, is clearly redrafted or there's extensive handwritten commentary by senior officials. In part, that reflects the substance of what we're doing and it reflects the people involved in it. General Goodpastor obviously enjoys a bipartisan respect which is extraordinary.

Q: What is the, how does this work within the Russian government? I mean you have a president there, Yeltsin now who is sort of learning his way, and you have a foreign minister who we consider to be more a meddler than not, Primakov.

SWIERS: When this program was finally established - the first interchange under the program which we now call Russian-American relations in a pluralistic world - in February, 1990. It was proposed by INEEMO (the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, the Russian Academy of Sciences), when Primakov was its director. I guess one could say Primakov probably has a more open mind, although he is very difficult. His

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successor, Vladimir Martinov, has carried it on. INEEMO enjoys considerable influence within the foreign ministry.

It was one of the first organizations that broke away in 1990 and supported reform. In 1991 almost all of its members including its director and its director ex officio were members of the central committee of the communist party. The director ex-officio not only resigned from the central committee, he resigned from the party. They were very active as was their sister organization, the Institute of the United States, America and Canada; Georgi Arbotov's old institute, in opposing the coup in 1991. These people would have been in serious danger to say the least if that coup had succeeded.

Q: We're talking about, what was this, October of?

SWIERS: No, August of 1991.

Q: August of 1991.

SWIERS: Which led to the total collapse of the Soviet Union and Yeltsin's emergence as the hero. INEEMO we know for a fact has access to Primakov; it has access to Chubayev; it is considered one of the leading proponents of reform, particularly in the economic area. One of its members was the son of the famous Georgi Arbotov, Alexei Arbotov who is now deputy chairman of the defense committee and exercises major influence on the direction of Russian national security policy which is quite complicated now.

The other organization I mentioned, the Arbotov, is now Sergei Rogov. It also has enjoyed influence. In contrast to INEEMO, it is suffering very badly financially and we're told may have in fact closed down most of its operations until it is able to find a way to survive. They no longer have the subsidies which they had through the Academy of Sciences, and like most non-governmental organizations, they're having trouble. I think it's a great tragedy because they've been very strong supporters of an engagement with the west. In other words the process for Russia is one of inclusion in the new Europe - i.e., the new Atlantic

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community which Secretary Christopher proposed in his Stuttgart speech, the one made on the 50th anniversary of Jeremy Burns' famous speech in 1946.

In the Ukraine there's a parallel. We have parallel interchanges in Ukraine, and for example just on the last trip I met with the foreign minister. It was at Strobe Talbot's request that we do so. Non-governmental organizations sometimes can say things that governments can't say. We did that and we can also convey back messages as happened while we were in Moscow. We didn't see Primakov; in fact because Primakov was leaving for the United States, but we saw his senior person on U.S. affairs and also Andre Kukoshin who is the first deputy defense minister - the first civilian defense minister, a senior civilian defense official ever in the Russian defense ministry with whom we've had a long relationship dating from 1986 when we began the predecessor of this current exchange - now called the United States-Russian dialogue with the Arbotov institute.

Q: Do you see the Ukraine...?

SWIERS: Ukraine by the way, it's very funny.

Q: Do you see Ukraine trying to establish a foreign policy? It of course is not a global power the way Russia is, if nothing else because of geography.

SWIERS: No, but it's not. Ukraine is a country the size of France - population, size, about the same in natural resources. When Ukraine finally revamps its agriculture, it's going to be a serious competitor with the European union. They see themselves as a medium sized European power, if we use that traditional phrase. They would like to be integrated politically and economically into new Europe. In terms of security, while they will participate fully in the partnership for peace, they do not anticipate becoming an actual member of NATO in the foreseeable future. They like to say they prefer to be a bridge rather than a buffer.

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Our view is that ideally ultimately the Ukrainian-Russian relationship will be similar to that between Canada and the United States; there are very distinct parallels there which I can't use. When I say Russia now, remember I'm not talking about the old Soviet Union; I'm talking about what is really a new country in many ways although obviously tied down by quite a bit of history.

End of interview