Interview with Paul M. Kattenberg

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

DR. PAUL M. KATTENBURG

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: This is an interview with Dr. Paul Kattenburg concerning his career in the Foreign Service. This is being done on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Okay Paul, I wonder if you would give me a little about your background.

KATTENBURG: I was born in Brussels and educated there in a private school. I came to the United States in 1940 without any particular intention of remaining there permanently because I was determined to get into the Free French Forces in London. I had come from Brussels via London to the U.S. By early 1941 I was enrolled in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on a scholarship provided to foreign refugees from Europe by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Her acolyte Joe Lash, who was subsequently her biographer, was the administrator of this. After I started college at Chapel Hill I never gave leaving the United States another thought. Immediately after graduation in March 1943, on a speed up system, I was drafted into the army. After basic training, I was assigned to ASTP where for some reason which I will never be able to understand I was put into East Asian area and language studies and sent to study Chinese at Harvard. From there I went to the Office of Strategic Services and they plucked me out for a western European mission, a sabotage mission. I went to the SO part of the Office of Strategic Services, Special Operations. The

mission was scrubbed before my training was completed and I was returned to the central pool of OSS. We are now in mid-1944.

At this point I was picked out for research and analysis in OSS which was the ancestor group of what later became INR in the State Department. I joined it along with a lot of other military people at that time as a tech sergeant, I guess. One of those, by the way, was Boris Klosson, another was Clint Knox and there were a lot of interesting stories one could tell about that whole contingent, including the day of our discharge at Fort Belvoir, November 1945, when we refused to be discharged separately from Clint Knox, who as you may recall was black. They wanted to segregate him for discharge. Boris Klosson stood in the back of the bus, I will never forget it, as we reached the gates of Fort Belvoir (Phil Trezise was in that bus and so was Joe Yager and a lot of other people who later became quite famous), he said that we will not be separated, none of us will get discharged. We all agreed with Boris. A captain came on board and said, “Well if that is the case you might just as well go back because you will not get discharged.” So our rebellion failed. Clint said, “Don't be silly fellows” and he left the bus. Then we all got discharged.

We got discharged on some sort of deal that had been arranged between OSS, and the Department of State and were immediately pumped into the State Department. I believe it was called then, I may be wrong, RNA. I was part of what was called DRF, Division of Research Far East, which was then headed by Charlie Stelle. Later by Phil Trezise and I think Ed. W. Martin also at one time headed it. I became the Indonesian analyst, as I had been in OSS. Reasons I believe I was picked out for Indonesia was that I could read Dutch and had some Far Eastern background, given the training at Harvard. So the combination seemed appropriate and they had...

Q: Indonesia was a Dutch colony at that time.

KATTENBURG: That's right. Indonesia was a Dutch colony, of course, the Dutch East Indies at the time. The only other person in a similar situation was Richard K. Stuart, Dick Stuart, who never left the civil service in the State Department and later became the Director of our Liaison with the CIA in that particular portion of INR. He and I both worked on Indonesia under Claire Holt, a famous person whose name should be recorded here because she did a lot of work for the U.S. during WWII.

To cut all this short, I left the Department 7 or 8 months after my November '45 discharge, in July 1946, and went to graduate school. At this point I was about to obtain an MA from George Washington, having written a Masters Thesis during the time I was working. I started almost immediately upon coming to Washington in 1944 taking courses at GW at night and some early in the morning. All I had left to do was writing the thesis, which I did in the summer of 1946 on Indonesia. It was on internal aspects of Indonesian political development. By that time I was about to publish a couple of articles on Indonesia. Frankly, unabashedly these were based on what I had learned being a research analyst on Indonesia. These articles appeared in what later became a very unpopular publication, Far Eastern Survey, part of the Institute of Pacific Relations. It was hounded down by McCarthyites later. I don't think it hurt me particularly.

Anyway, I went to Yale in the early fall of 1946 and did three years of graduate work culminating in the Ph.D. in June or July '49. My dissertation was entitled, “The Indonesian Question in World Politics, 1946-48.” It stressed the U.S. role in Indonesian independence. That dissertation was never really published but a lot of people have used it; it is on micro film at the University of Michigan.

Then I had a year's post-doctoral study as a Social Science Research Council Fellow in Indonesia proper where I did a village study in a village in central Java. This study, called “A Central Javanese Village in 1950”, was published in the Cornell Data Series on Southeast Asia.

I came back from Indonesia right after the Korean War had started in the middle of 1950, June or July 1950, and after a brief period of recuperation because I was a little ill, reentered the Department in INR to work again on Indonesia. This lasted until early 1952. I came back in September of 1950 and stayed in INR Indonesia until sometime in the spring of 1952 when I traded places with Al Seligmann, who had been working on Indochina and who wanted out of that being, I think, quite a bit disaffected by the policy, by the whole situation...

Q: Can I ask a question?

KATTENBURG: Sure

Q: Indonesia was going through a major decolonization process—a forceful process through revolt. What was the attitude within the Department?

KATTENBURG: The attitude was that those of us in INR, working on Indonesia, along with the desk officers, and I recall very clearly who they were—Jim O'Sullivan and his assistant Wym Coerr, who later replaced Jim and went on to become an ambassador to Latin America in the '60s. Wym Coerr, Jim O'Sullivan, who has since retired from Political Science at the University of Louisville, and Dick Stuart, Dick had also come out of OSS and had remained steadily in the same position and was really my boss, and Jack Lydman (later our Ambassador to Malaysia) who was the director of our division of Southeast Asian Studies, or Southeast Asian Analysis, whatever it was called—our attitude was one of considerable conflict really with the Dutch Desk, headed by none other than Fritz Nolting and it seems sad to me in a way, I have never known Nolting very well, but on two occasions in my career I was at opposite ends of policy with him, but much junior to him. I sort of liked and admired the guy and felt it was a little sad that we came out on opposite sides of things. Anyway, Nolting was waging quite a battle for Holland and the survival of Dutch colonialism. He wasn't the only one, there was Bill Lacey (I hope I have the name right) who in the bureau was fundamentally opposed to us. None the less the ambassador

in Indonesia, Merle Cochran, carried the day. He was really the essential policy maker. The United States agreed, largely because of his pressure, to participate in the U.N. Commission for Indonesia which was the ultimate mediating body with the Netherlands. It formulated the terms of the so called—I have forgotten the name of the agreement that called for independence by December of 1949. There was an interim period until July '50 which was called the United States of Indonesia.

Now we are talking about a slightly later period here when I was working on it—'50-'52—at which time these matters were settled, and I may have confused some of what I just said with the earlier period during the war and immediately after the war on the independence question because by the time I came back to Indonesia research in '50, Indonesia was fully independent.

So these were the first two and relatively uneventful years of Indonesian independence, although there were lots of little things going on. The main one was a rebellion by a group of right-wing fundamentalist Muslims called the Darul Islam. That became a more important movement later, but that was, as I recall, the chief development internally. We had reasonably good relations with Indonesia in the period '50 to '52.

On Indochina that is quite a different story.

Q: Okay, let's move to Indochina then.

KATTENBURG: I switched with Al Seligmann, who was quite tired of Indochina business, and none of us had been Wristonized at this point. We were civil servants. I was more than willing to change my scenery from Indonesia to Indochina. Here I fell into quite a different story because of the struggle between the bureaus that we in the Division Research Far East supported: the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, on the one hand, and the various personalities in that bureau including Mr. Reed the head of Southeast Asian Affairs, who

had at one time been consul general in Hanoi, and the European Bureau on the other hand. Relations were quite strained.

I spoke French and I was sort of a natural in a way to do Indochina as so much of the documentation and the analysis had to be through French material. Jack Lydman and I established a pretty close relation with the working people on the Indochina Desk in the Far East Bureau—this was the period '52 through early '55. I had spent the summer of 1952 in Saigon at the Embassy under Don Heath, the ambassador. This was a period of conflict within the Embassy as well because Ed Gullion, who was his DCM, opposed the pro-French policy. He supported greater independence for Bao Dai's Associated State of Vietnam. We had provided the French support since early 1950, when we had started giving them economic and some military assistance. We increased the military assistance a couple of years later when the French started having a tough time with the war. In any event, as far as the relations within the Department, we had a fairly tough time holding a point of view which on the whole, I think, was supportive of assistance to Bao Dai's Vietnam. We felt we should move faster towards independence. I don't know if this is the place to go into detail on all that...

Q: What was the situation in Vietnam? You talked about the Associated States.

KATTENBURG: These were created in 1948 under the Baie d'Along Agreement, and all this is recorded in a lot of literature so it is easy to get a hold of. Our policy anchored itself in support of the French when we recognized Vietnam—Laos and Cambodia were secondary problems. They didn't really achieve full recognition. We maintained merely Charg#s in Vientiane and Phnom Penh. In fact they were in many ways dependent on the Embassy in Saigon.

Q: Our Embassy was in Saigon and not in Hanoi?

KATTENBURG: No, our Embassy was in Saigon where the French had re-established the capital.

Q: I see.

KATTENBURG: Bao Dai was in Saigon with a summer home in Dalat. We maintained a Consulate in Hanoi until the summer of 1955. Here, before I forget, I would like to clarify something because some of the literature incorrectly assumed that we closed the Consulate in Hanoi after the Geneva Accords of July 20, 1954. South Vietnam took what had been the French territory south of the 17th parallel or the Bao Dai area under the French, if you want. But we did not close the Consulate in Hanoi. It remained under Tom Corcoran, who closed it in the summer of 1955. I was the person on the Desk at that time who recommended him for the Superior Service Award, which he got for the remarkable job he did in quietly, efficiently and thoroughly closing the Consulate operation.

The Embassy, in those intervening years, '52 when I started working on Indochina and first went out there on detail through '55, when I went back again, was under Don Heath virtually the entire time. He may have left in 1954, but I don't think so. In any event there was a mission sent out by the President and Secretary Dulles in 1954, under General J. Lawton Collins, a famous mission.

This leads us to a very interesting episode about a key meeting on Vietnam that I described somewhere in my book, but not in great detail. The meeting took place in late April or May, 1955 during the Sect Battle, so called, in the city of Saigon. When Ngo Dinh Diem, who had by then returned, that is, post-Geneva, as the new President of the Republic of Vietnam, was under siege by the Sects, so called Binh Xuyen. A meeting was held in the Department in late April or early May 1955, chaired by Under Secretary Robert Murphy, to consider a report by General Collins who had been sent on that mission by the President and his political advisor Paul Sturm. They recommended going easy on support

for Ngo Dinh Diem and a possible change in government if someone able to handle the situation could be found. I think that was the essence really of the meeting.

At that point Brig. General Edward Lansdale had already been moved from Manila, where he had supported Magsaysay under auspices of the Agency, of course, to Saigon where he and a number of other Americans, some of whom played a very important role and were private Americans, not necessarily directly linked with the Agency, had supported Ngo Dinh Diem. During the time of the meeting a general who had been loyal to Ngo Dinh Diem was able to take care of the city and push the Binh Xuyen back and out of the city, thereby actually solving the situation on the ground in favor of Ngo Dinh Diem. The meeting just naturally gravitated in that direction.

I, myself, during this time in INR supported the Diem regime. I thought Diem was quite capable of holding the situation and I would have hated to see a change made which would have brought in some uncertain military leaders—as happened ten years later.

Q: Yes.

KATTENBURG: Immediately after this particular meeting, I went out to Vietnam. It had been decided that I would take the Desk in the fall of 1955 to succeed the two people who had been working on Indochina in the Bureau. The director of the Bureau of Southeast Asian Affairs was Philip Bonsal and his Indochina Desk officer was an army colonel, who came into the State Department at the end of the war, but did not join the Foreign Service, to the best of my knowledge. This was Robert Hoey who played a key role in the whole period of the French war. He was assisted, and very ably so, by FSO John Getz, later U.S. Ambassador to Malta before retirement [who can be interviewed, living in North Carolina], with whom I was very close from the INR vantage point during this whole period.

Somewhere or other it was decided, I think with Jack Lydman and other Bureau people, that I would go to Saigon. Now in the summer of '55 I was involved with the question of how to handle the provision of the Geneva Accords of 1954 which required consultation

between the two zones of Vietnam, the Peoples Republic of Vietnam north of the 17th parallel, temporary demarcation line, and the government south of that line, that is the Republic of Vietnam. The political part of the Accords had called for interzonal consultations which would lead to all-Vietnam elections to be held in July of 1956, two years after the signing of the Accords. The consultations, of course, had to bear on the question of what the elections were for, what kind of body, what sort of constitution would there be, what method would be used for these elections, was there to be a parliament elected, etc., none of which was determined in the Accords, except that the elections would be by secret ballot. During the year '54-'55 I, from my desk in INR, worked together with Ed Gullion, in the Policy Planning Council, on preparing various papers for the Secretary. The policy in the end shuffled itself out to support for Ngo Dinh Diem. Whatever he wanted, we would support. That was what was essentially confirmed in the 1955 meeting that Murphy held. While the general in Saigon, who was Little Minh or Tran Van Minh, won the war against the Sects in support of Diem, Lansdale supported Diem, Wesley Fishel from Michigan State University, who was the other very important American there, supported him. It was decided at that meeting, although no details were forthcoming that day, but I recall very clearly a discussion of the replacement of the ambassador and designee, Freddy Reinhardt, who went out almost immediately afterwards.

Q: What was your impression of Donald Heath? Both how he ran the Embassy and also how we viewed the situation because he was there during an important time.

KATTENBURG: Oh sure. That's right. I should say that Ambassador Heath was a charming person. I never got to know him very well, but from my observation of him he felt that our policy should be to support a very gradual transition to independence. He was very conscious of Dulles' anti- communism and of his fear that another loss to communism after the loss in China would be a defeat for us, therefore Heath supported most of the French moves. In the end he was strongly pro-French and against giving the Vietnamese greater independence, which Gullion wanted. We had quite a struggle there in '52 to '54, between Gullion and Heath. I hope I have the timing right. Actually if Gullion left earlier the

struggle occurred between '50 and '52 and had gone on and grown apace during that time. It was described in a novel by Bob Shaplen of the New Yorker, called “A Forest of Tigers.” It is quite accurate as Shaplen was in Saigon during this entire time.

But Heath, I think, when Diem came back in early fall 1954, after the Geneva Accords, from France, from the U.S. really, via France, gave Diem adequate support. The policy shifted. I can't remember when Ambassador Heath departed, but policy-making gradually shifted to General Collins and his assistant Paul Sturm, who was in effect the political counselor.

Now you have a great change in the Embassy, when Freddy Reinhardt comes in mid-1955. His political counselor was Frank Meloy, who was subsequently assassinated in Beirut. The Office Director in EA changed from Bonsal to Ken Young. Here we have an entirely different cast of characters. These are committed to an independent South Vietnam, to the full support of Ngo Dinh Diem and to try their best “to build a nation”. I have written at length on this and some of the errors that we may have made even in the very early period. But when you look at it in retrospect, the period from mid-'55 through '61, which is a fairly long period, more than 6 years, was probably the best period of our Vietnam involvement. The French war was over, the French departed, not right away but in due course—by mid 1955 they were out and we were taking their place in terms of economic and military assistance. We started with minor military assistance, since the Geneva Accords barred any kind of direct military assistance. We were very cautious about the number of military advisers we had there. I became the Desk Officer in the fall of 1955. The most important thing I was involved in was the increase in the number of U.S. military advisers. They were doubled from the 385 or so that we had in place at the time of the Accords, which is what the Accords said could not be increased. In negotiations in 1956 by Dulles with Nehru, who was the Chairman of the International Control Commission, we were allowed to double the number. Part of the reason that Nehru was persuaded by Secretary Dulles to double the number was that there was a considerable fear in Congress that if our American equipment was left rotting in rice

paddies, as it was, without the ability of Diem's side to gather it and use it effectively, the French would transport it during their evacuation to Algeria. This was considered undesirable in Congress and the Administration. We therefore figured out various ways to increase the number of our military advisers to keep this from happening.

Q: Were you involved in this? I want to keep this to your experiences.

KATTENBURG: Yes, I was deeply involved in this mission called the TERM, Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission. I created it, as a matter of fact, with the assistance and support of Frank Meloy, the Political Counselor in Saigon, and in a series of telegrams we set it up. I also supported and recommended greater assistance to Ngo Dinh Diem and the maintenance of the Lansdale Mission and of Wes Fishel of Michigan State, director of police training operations in Vietnam during that period.

Q: How did INR and the people around you view China? Did you see this as a monolith and that North Vietnam was part of this? And did you see that there were cracks that were coming?

KATTENBURG: Up until the time I left INR, even after that in my case, we were certainly more willing to consider cracks and to look, perhaps we were more open to another view of Ho Chi Minh, but it was remote given the firm hand the Secretary had on Vietnam and what was to be done and not to be done. Here you must remember that the Secretary [Dulles] created the SEATO Pact in the Fall of 1954 as a way, really, of putting a better face on what had been in sheer power terms an American defeat along with the French at Dien Bien Phu and at the Geneva Accords, since we had been forced into some sort of negotiated agreement. Half of Vietnam was considered to be salvageable and the Secretary's policy on this was very firm. So the question of cracks and flexibility of this policy was really rather remote. I got my cue on it at the time that Gullion and I presented our long paper on what could be the consultations between the two zones. Dulles dismissed that, and decided he would do what Diem wanted—there would be no

consultations and no elections. That was, it seemed to me, a clear marching order and I have to put this in the context of the McCarthy period, of course. It undoubtedly had an impact. Those of us who were then working on East Asia matters were very conscious indeed of what had happened to some of our predecessors and...

Q: You are talking about China...

KATTENBURG: Exactly, China hands....Frankly I had young children and didn't want to lose a job. I could see Wristonization coming and I hoped to get into the Foreign Service. That was, of course, a very tempting thing that I could become a diplomat in my adopted country. This happened in 1954, '55.

Q: For the record, Wristonization was a process of civil servants becoming Foreign Service officers. Civil Service and Foreign Service were amalgamated at the substantive level.

KATTENBURG: There was an examination, of course, and I had an interesting interview in which I was told by the interviewer that the height I could reach in the Foreign Service would be limited because of my naturalization. This surprised me at the time and I recall mentioning that to Jack Lydman, but it didn't hurt me particularly. I think it was either an unfair or untrue statement. I never protested it because I was mainly interested in a change of scenery as often as possible and in the politics of given situations, and not so much in what I could aspire to become.

Q: It didn't hold anyway.

KATTENBURG: It didn't hold at all.

Q: I want to move on. Your first assignment abroad as a new Foreign Service Officer was to Manila. You were there from 1956 to '59. This was a very interesting period. I wonder if you could talk about what you were doing and how you saw the Embassy at that time?

KATTENBURG: I was picked to go by Jim Bell and replace Bob Brand in the political section, under Bill Walker, who was the political counselor. I believe “Chip” (Charles) Bohlen was there when I arrived, if not, he came soon afterwards. One of the most interesting people in the Embassy at that time (I have seen him recently, he is in his eighties now and probably couldn't give an interview) was Henri Sokolove who was labor attach# in Delhi previously and came up from the Labor Department. Henri took me under his wing. He had more Philippine acquaintances than anyone. One of the reasons Jim Bell picked me, he had had considerable experience in the Philippines before, was that he felt we needed more contact with the Filipinos, the Philippine elite, and politicians, that we were doing well enough with the American community but not moving enough around in Filipino circles. Pretty soon this became my function, although I started out doing external reporting on Southeast Asia—and I think that was also in Jim Bell's mind, that we would bring the Philippines a little closer to the Southeast Asia fold. They were escaping it by these special arrangements with the U.S. SEATO was one of the ways to tie the Philippines more to the region.

But very soon my function at the Embassy became internal political reporting. I must say that I got to know a lot of Filipinos very well. One of them, it turned out, was Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino. One of the things I am proudest of in my career in the Foreign Service is a despatch I wrote to the Department in March 1957, shortly after President Magsaysay's airplane crash in which he was killed, titled, if I remember it correctly, “Mayor of Tarlac Benigno Aquino, Jr., Future President of the Philippines.” I did a biography of Ninoy Benigno whom I had gotten to know even in those few months quite well—both he and his wife, Cory. Mary and I had been up to the hacienda Luisita in Tarlac and had a very good time with Ninoy and Cory. Now she is President of the Philippines but then she never left the hacienda, she tended to stay in Tarlac and take care of the family, but Ninoy was all over Manila all the time. He was only 25, then, ten years my junior, but somehow we hit it off and continued our friendship up to the time of his assassination.

Q: What was our view of the Filipinos as far as contacting them? Here you have the well-to-do group which the Aquinos were, but it seems that there was a substratum that even today seems to be almost uncontactable or something.

KATTENBURG: Well, there is a substratum in the middle classes. Mass contact is always difficult except to shake hands in a village. The substratum, I think a number of us in those days got to know quite well. You can't get to know everyone. There are a large number of universities, hence they were producing a large number of relatively well- educated people who were occupying middle-level positions in the bureaucracy and in the private sector. I think we started in those years, but not much before, to open up to these groups. The Aquinos were, of course, in the top elite, but there were a lot of others more wealthy and a lot of others less wealthy with whom we had considerable contact. My particular beat was the Congress, both the Senate and the House, and we had very good relations in those days, or I certainly did. There was Congressman Macapagal, who later became President, for example. Also Congressman Marcos, though Jim Bowers, who was another political officer in the Embassy, was cultivating Marcos in particular and I was not. We had contact with a large number of academics, partly through USIA. We moved about. I think this must have been a peak period for me in terms of output and contact numbers. I was on the go constantly.

Q: What was our attitude within the Embassy towards the Philippines. Would you say it was a Big Brother attitude?

KATTENBURG: I think we were trying to get out of the Big Brother attitude and to move towards more genuine independence—to loosen the grip of the special provisions of the treaties. I don't want to go into the details, but the Laurel-Langley Treaty was signed in 1955 reaffirming some of the provisions that were really infringements of the constitution. For instance, the capacity of Americans to own land in the Philippines and to own public utilities were regarded as difficult by the Filipinos. On the military bases issue, we tried in those years, in the Bohlen-Serrano Agreement, which was signed during my stay there

but which was worked on by George Newman (he was the one who helped Bohlen in that negotiation) and Bill Walker as well, the Political Counselor. Subsequently Bill Walker was replaced by Barney Koren who was very instrumental indeed in moving us out of the superannuated SOFA provision—a Status of Forces Agreement provision that we had in the original military bases agreement of '47—and moving us toward something like the NATO provisions. In other words, really enhancing Philippine sovereignty. But I ought to say here, Stu, to balance out the considerations on this, and I think Karnow's book makes this clear—a very good book...

Q: Yes, it is very good, I have read it...

KATTENBURG: It's called “In Our Image—America's Empire In the Philippines,” by Stanley Karnov and published in 1989, I believe. I think the book is the best thing on the Philippines that has ever been done, at least at a relatively popular level. This is not an easy game to play with the Filipinos because the more you give them the more they feel cheated in a way because all they have to do in life is to twist our tail, at least in those days anyway, and play the anti-imperialist game. In other words, it was somewhat akin to “Bulwerism”, if you give the labor unions everything they want there is no reason for there being any labor unions.

The Filipinos had no other role to play that I can see in politics, external politics anyway, than barking and haranguing the United States. It was not an easy game to win. I came back to it again ten years later as country director, at which time we really got rid of all the provisions that infringed on Philippine sovereignty in both economics and the military bases spheres in the Rusk-Ramos Agreement of 1966 which was signed during President's Marcos' visit to President Johnson in September, 1966. Bill Bundy, the Assistant Secretary...Q: Let's stick to your time there.

KATTENBURG: Well, that was when I was country director ten years later, that is why I brought it up.

My time there, 1956-59, was really a very good time. It was probably, from my point of view, a peak period of career production. I think perhaps the most important despatch I wrote from there was a very long, serious analysis of the press in the Philippines. I did a series of despatches on government institutions, and structure and personalities, including bios. It was a very interesting period. Nothing of tremendous significance.

Q: What was your impression of Charles Bohlen, Chip Bohlen, as ambassador? In someway one feels he was a fish out of water. I mean, he was a supreme Continental man, a Soviet and French specialist.

KATTENBURG: I think he was absolutely wonderful. He was probably the most wonderful person I have worked for in my entire Foreign Service career. He was a man of extraordinary intelligence, charm, and dignity. He knew how to handle relatively junior officers, as I was, after all I was a second secretary in the political section. He was sitting in his bedroom, watching television and he saw a picture of me on the floor of the convention of one of the political parties. He called me in and very gently explained to me that I was going a little too far in that one. I remember that very well, but he did nothing hasty. He said that I had to realize that Sergio Osmena, Jr. was using me. I explained how it happened. While walking with Osmena in the corridor he moved out to the floor with me trailing behind. Osmena then motioned to the camera to have me pictured on the floor with him.

Another thing occurred during that time for reasons which I will never understand. My name appeared in the New York Times all of a sudden, although I didn't know it (eventually I learned about it because some friends and relatives in the U.S. sent me the column) as being one of the plotters along with President Garcia and a number of other people of the Indonesian coup of 1958—that the CIA was preparing. Well, I was, I think being used as a foil by the Agency because I did have some contacts in Manila with Indonesian exiles who were plotting the overthrow of Sukarno. One guy in particular, who was a son of former Prime Minister Sjahrir, whose name was Des Alwi, visited Manila

even though he was resident in Singapore with Sumitro, which was the exile group that was trying to overthrow Sukarno. The Ambassador was, I think, extraordinarily broad-minded about all this. He realized that I hadn't done anything and so I suffered no ill consequences.

Though that was a strange one. To this day I wonder how my name appeared. It must have been put there for deceptive reasons by somebody. I think if you read the memoirs, the extremely interesting memoirs of the same period, by Joseph Burkholder Smith, called, “Portrait of A Cold Warrior,” on the CIA and its activities in southeast Asia in the mid to late fifties, it describes some of the activities of the Agency in the Philippines. In particular in the Philippine elections of 1958 and it becomes clear why I might have been used a little bit to take attention away from Agency involvement.

Q: Did you interact with the Agency in the Philippines?

KATTENBURG: I never knew exactly who was with the Agency and who wasn't. Perhaps I was naive in some respects. “Little Joe” Smith, the author of the memoirs mentioned, actually berated the Agency for some of its dumber, sillier activities in the Philippines, including passing along condoms that were defective which were presumably being passed on behalf of then candidate Recto whom we didn't want to see elected, as he was too strong a nationalist. This is idiotic, but this kind of thing did happen. I'm never mentioned in the book, but we knew each other. His cover was that he was working for some army unit in downtown Manila, but I suspected that he was Agency. How deeply involved we were in Philippine elections in that time is difficult for me to say. I think we probably provided some assistance to more than one party. The Agency was clearly involved in helping the exiles in Singapore plot the overthrow of Sukarno. In 1958 it did what I think was an unforgivable thing. I didn't know the full scope of it until later. It used the base at Clark to assist the exile army with bombing runs against army positions in Java and Sumatra. That's where Pope, an American pilot, was captured by the Indonesians and put on exhibit in Djakarta by Sukarno. I think that was going much too far, although my

own sympathies were probably anti-Sukarno at that time. His government had turned very repressive.

Q: But these things usually don't work anyway...

KATTENBURG: That's right.

Q: Well, lets move on. You were then assigned to Frankfurt from 1959-62. What were you doing there and what was your main focus?

KATTENBURG: I had it directly from Mr. Williams, Elwood Williams, on the German Desk, the permanent fixture on the German Desk, that I was picked out to go to Germany because I was capable of contact-making. They wanted someone in the Embassy in Bonn who would be around the Bundestag more. So I would supposedly do what I was doing in Manila—I couldn't understand Germany as an assignment. I didn't know German and couldn't figure it out.

My original assignment had been to Bonn. While on home leave in Michigan we got a phone call that Wendell Blancke, who had known me earlier when I had been Vietnam Desk Officer and he had been Burmese Desk Officer, and who was then Consul General in Frankfurt had picked me to replace his departing political officer and that I should go to Frankfurt rather than to Bonn. I called Mr. Williams about this [I was quite happy to work for Wendell, by the way, as he was a wonderful person...

Q: Oh, I know. He was a delightful person.

KATTENBURG: Were you in Frankfurt?

Q: But not at the time you were there. I left in '58. It was my first post.

KATTENBURG: Well, a wonderful guy. Williams told me that we did most of the important political reporting from the Consulates in those days. I think that changed over the years

and more was done in Bonn. But it is quite true that Bonn didn't really have an internal political section that was worth a great deal. They followed the Bundestag, but they mainly negotiated.

One of the things that I remember was that it was a wonderful assignment. There are two points that I want to make about it. One was that I did a lot of liaison at the local level with elements of the U.S. military and helped them settle local problems that were apparently almost insuperable. Now Dennis Flynn was the political-military officer in Bonn, but he was totally tied up in high strategy and negotiations, NATO relations, so that someone was needed to help settle the problem we had, even in Wendell's time, with the mayor of Kaiserslautern whose garbage bills were not being paid by the army because the commander, Northern Area Commander in Frankfurt, refused to pay because he felt they were over charging him. Then we had electric bill problems. I had a hand in those which gave me a new type of experience which I enjoyed entirely.

I also established a kind of informal POLAD position at Wiesbaden with the head of the Air Force in Europe, USAFE, or his staff, really. This was blessed by Wayland Waters, who was deputy to Wendell, and by Wendell and later his successor, Dorsz, Edmund Dorsz. Now Edmund Dorsz was not really the smartest guy who ever came down the pike, but he was a very decent man, one who would do the right thing. Wayland Waters, who you may have known, had some physical problems that prevented him from doing a lot of traveling and moving about. But he was a wonderful officer. He was the executive, and I was sort of the deputy executive and political officer. Anyone who has as consular districts, the Saar, with its rich liquors and wine, Rhineland and Hessen, is bound to have a wonderful time. We had a great time. This was good for our children, who were going to the American Schools.

The other thing I wanted to signal, an unforgettable thing, was that I was there when the Wall was built in Berlin and I was there in October, 1961, and really lucked out. Mary and I were designated alternating officers from the consulates to drive the autobahns, the one

from Munich, the one from Helmstedt and the one from Hamburg, and maintain our right to have access via Soviet controls, rather than East German controls, which was at the heart of the crisis of '58-'61. I turned out to have been picked at the time of confrontation at Check Point Charlie at the Wall on October 24, 1961. I will never forget the date. That was a great moment. All of a sudden my wife turned to me at about midnight—we were there with the PAO in Berlin and a couple of people from the Mission in Berlin—and said, “What are we doing here?. The kids are in Frankfurt.” War did not erupt but it was an unforgettable moment. [I have just been back to Berlin in the past two weeks, and there are quite a number of changes!] So it was a very good assignment.

Q: We will move on. You came back to the Senior Seminar from 1962-63.

KATTENBURG: Right. The fifth Senior Seminar in which Martin Herz was also present. We had Jack Lydman, by the way. I think I made a considerable career mistake during that assignment process, coming out of the Seminar, in that my name had been requested by Fred Hadsel, Bureau of African Affairs, to be his deputy in African Regional Affairs. I knew nothing about Africa and I didn't know why EA didn't show any interest in me, but it didn't at the time. I should have taken that job, but instead, well EA did show some interest, that is what happened. EA was headed by Averell Harriman when I entered the Seminar, but during the year he moved up to Under Secretary and was succeeded by Roger Hilsman. Roger Hilsman and I had gone to graduate school together and knew each other very well, so Roger thought I might replace Chalmers B. “Ben” Wood on the Vietnam Task Force. They wanted more control in the Bureau over the Task Force. Ben Wood was due for an assignment abroad and the job was vacant and I had Vietnam experience, although by that time it had been a number of years since I had been in it. I told Roger this and was rather reluctant. Then the scene changed again because Barney Koren, my former boss in Manila, entered the picture. [I want to put these things on record because I think they can show future historians that ultimately these personnel decisions are far more important than we give them credit, and are often the product of no systematic planning or thinking, but simply the result of personal politics or vendettas.] It turned out that there were two

possible candidates for the Vietnam position to succeed Ben Wood in the summer of 1963, when I graduated from the Senior Seminar. One was Joe Mendenhall who had come out of the National War College at the same time. The other was myself, from the Senior Seminar. Koren and Mendenhall had apparently had a difficult personal relationship when they had both served in Bern, Switzerland. I don't know if the oral history project wants discussion...

Q: Oh sure, sure.

KATTENBURG: Barney did not want Mendenhall. He was now director of Southeast Asia under Hilsman and had been chafing at the independence of the Vietnam Task Force which had been moved out of the Bureau in 1961 and relocated on the 7th floor. He felt this was a golden opportunity to bring back some systematic Bureau control over this thing which had gotten out of hand, growing much too fast. He wanted me to work for him, in effect, even though it was called a task force for some reason. So I succumbed, I think clearly a character trait of weakness that I have had, that I easily said “yes” when felt needed or wanted by someone. I am a succumber type.

Q: But that was the Foreign Service attitude at least at the time—you do what you were asked.

KATTENBURG: Well, I really didn't pay much attention to where I would come out in the career. It didn't matter to me that much. I do know that he made quite a plea to get me. The director of the Seminar was Andrew Corry who thought I should be very careful. He thought it was a loser. But, of course, my sentiments were still very pro-Diem, pro- Vietnam. Diem was then in a very, very difficult situation because of the Buddhists burnings, a key moment in Vietnam.

July 1, 1963 was when my short leave ended, or June 25, something like that. In any event, I would like to call attention to a section in my book called, “The Vietnam Trauma In American Foreign Policy,” published by Transaction, 1980 and reprinted in paperback

in 1982—there will be a new edition sooner or later as it is out of print at this point. In it I have something called, “A Personal Note,” in which I describe this particular difficult period leading up to the Diem coup. I came back, not only with an entirely new cast of characters, but not fresh on Vietnam having been away about 10 years—from '56 to '63, not quite 10 years. The other thing that made it especially difficult was a new ambassador. Nolting was being pulled out and Henry Cabot Lodge had been appointed by President Kennedy as our new ambassador. We arrived on the desk, in effect, the same day. Koren had made clear to me that he did not have direct authority because it was still a task force. He had authority over me as a member of the Office of the Southeast Asian Affairs, or whatever it was called, in the Bureau but the Assistant Secretary really ran the Task Force. It was a matter of Hilsman, Forrestal in the White House, Mike Forrestal that is, myself and Lodge. I went through all the briefings in the White House and elsewhere with Lodge, which lasted until about the Fourth of July [I went on duty on June 25] and it was a very difficult time because the Buddhist situation was getting worse and worse. Then Wood briefed us, and the Pentagon. These briefings were with Lodge and his two henchmen, Fred Flott and Mike Dunn [Mike was essentially a military aide and bodyguard and Flott, a tough character, was a former Agency type who was also capable of wielding a pistol). We had established pretty good relations.

Anyway, I will never forget a moment, and this is absolutely true, in which Lodge went to my office in EA. My deputy was a man named Conlon, Dick Conlon, who you may have known. I was unfortunate in having one of the few bad secretaries in the Foreign Service. Not only was she nasty, she wasn't interested in doing any work. I was overwhelmed with problems. Lodge walked in and threw a pencil across my desk, right to my face. He said, “Who is going to politic my nomination through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee while I am up in Boston over the weekend and a few days afterwards?” And I said, “Please, don't worry, Mr. Ambassador, we will get it through.” So this is my opportunity to thank Skip White, who was then the Congressional Liaison, for enormous help because we worked all weekend to persuade the Chairman to schedule hearings and to put Lodge

ahead of Admiral Anderson who had been appointed Ambassador to Portugal and who was controversial and therefore was delaying the hearings. We got Lodge in, and when he came back the next Wednesday or Thursday, and found out that his hearing was scheduled for the following Monday, I could do no wrong by Lodge. I was made!

Anyway, Mendenhall really should have taken this job because he had, even though he couldn't get along with Koren, he had a much tougher and gung ho attitude on the whole Vietnam involvement than I did at this point. Looking at it from the briefings and thinking about it a little bit, even without going to Vietnam, I was not very optimistic as to the future prospects of President Diem and very weary of any further direct American involvement than we already had. But I made Roger promise me that I could go as soon as possible to see the place. He did promise. On July 20 there was a meeting in Honolulu that Lodge, Roger and I attended, after which Lodge was going to take a very long, slow trip through the Far East to show his displeasure with Diem and arrive as late as possible to present credentials.

Q: This displeasure was because of the Buddhists...

KATTENBURG: Correct.

Q: ...burnings and repression. And his brother...

KATTENBURG: And his brother. Exactly. It was decided at this meeting in Honolulu that Kattenburg, having known Diem and been in part responsible for his being in office earlier, would go to talk to him—"hold his hand" it was put to me by Roger. When I arrived in Saigon, Nolting, of course, was long gone on home leave, and Bill Trueheart, a wonderful guy with whom I had the best of relations always, had taken over as Charg#. Trueheart was just as analytically aware of the dangers and difficulties of the situation as I tended to be, and Nolting felt betrayed by Trueheart—a sad story, as they were very close friends. After a few conversations with some of my older contacts, including Vu Van Hai, the Chef de Cabinat to Diem, who had been with him in 1954 when he first came back and

had been with him when he visited the U.S. and we had gotten him an appointment with Bonsal back in '53, Jack Lydman and I. Vu Van Hai told me “sauvez le patron!”, by which he meant get Ngo Dinh Nhu, his brother, out of here by whatever means and get the woman out, Madame Nhu. When I came back to Washington I spent a lot of time trying to cook up this trip for Madame Nhu, which she eventually took, around the U.S., so she was away during the coup. Lodge arrived in Saigon a week before I left. There is on record in the Department a telegram that I sent of a conversation that I had with Diem shortly after Lodge had arrived and just before I left and just before Lodge presented his credentials. It is a long telegram. I have never made a request under the Freedom of Information Act, and I don't know if it has been included in the Vietnam FRUS (Foreign Relations of U.S.) volume. Anyway, it was one in which I was very pessimistic as to the prospects unless we got rid of the Nhus. Then I came back to Washington and found two difficult situations. On the one hand Mendenhall, who had obtained the job of Deputy Director of Regional Affairs in EA, to Dick Usher, was very gung ho and very much in favor of going ahead with the war effort without much consideration of the politics of it. But he wasn't the real problem. In Defense, however, and this I regret to say was Bill Bundy who was Assistant Secretary for ISA...

Q: This was the Department of Defense?

KATTENBURG: In Defense. He hadn't moved over to State yet. Defense was so number conscious and so technocratically oriented to management and to all this nonsense without thinking through the “whys” and the “whats” of things, that we had a fairly difficult time. I think he maneuvered to isolate me somewhat and I wasn't beyond being removed somewhere.

What I worked on during the next two months mainly was with Bob Barnett, who was the EA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, on what was called salami slicing tactics, a term taken from the Berlin Crisis, and imposed on Diem, that is, a slow cutting off of aid to his special forces. Anyway, we were well clued in that the coup was coming. I

believe it is still correct to say that we climatized the coup, we did not make the coup. The coup eventually occurred and then Roger...

Q: This was October, 1963?

KATTENBURG: November 1, 1963. Roger and Barney agreed to my going back and taking a real look at the war. I came back just before New Year and wrote a very pessimistic report which is buried somewhere in the Pentagon. On January 4, 1964, and I am certain of the date, I talked to Roger—how did I get to this one, I didn't explain the NSC meeting of August 31, 1963, but I will come back to it—but Roger said to me the President has said if it is too hot in the kitchen, get out of it. Did I want to get out? I said, “Absolutely, I want to get out.” The simplest way to get me out of it and to make a real change in policy and personnel was to bring Mendenhall down from RA and to put me in RA. And that was done.

Q: Regional Affairs in...

KATTENBURG: In EA. So I went to Regional Affairs in EA and took a distance from it and looked at other things...

Q: Was this mutually agreed because you were taking too pessimistic a view?

KATTENBURG: It was agreed that I wanted out.

Q: Did you want out or were they trying to get some true believers on board?

KATTENBURG: It may have been a matter of both. It is a very good point, but I was certainly taking too pessimistic an attitude. Roger felt his own position beginning to weaken somewhat with the true believers and I thought it was best for all to move. I certainly wanted out. After my two months in Vietnam I felt there was no way we would ever win the war or that Diem could ever win.

Q: When you went to Vietnam, this was after Diem was killed.

KATTENBURG: That's right.

Q: What sort of views were you getting and from where?

KATTENBURG: Mainly really from my own moving about. I went to every Corps area and talked to a lot of our military and I confirmed all my feelings that we were absolutely replaying the French war. We were just simply replaying it—down to the minute details of the Beaugeste Forts that the Special Forces were manning along the Cambodian border.

Q: Some of them were the same forts. I know, I helicoptered over some of them.

KATTENBURG: Now, the other thing is a more complicated thing which requires more historical study than it has received up to now, and some of us take different viewpoints on this in the profession—among academics who have studied this period. My firm opinion was from conversations with three people, Tran Van Dong, who was chief of staff, Big Minh himself, and most importantly the minister of foreign affairs, General Le Van Kim, that we were going towards an arrangement, they wanted an arrangement, and what's more it played within my own sense of what we ought to do. It is clear, I think, that Washington felt, probably rightly, and I agreed with this, that if we made an arrangement with the communists, if they made an arrangement, Le Van Kim made an arrangement, we would get a coalition government that would be gobbled up fairly quickly by the communists. I don't disagree with that but I don't think Kim and Big Minh or Dong really thought this would happen. I think they felt that they had a going concern to sell to the North Vietnamese, that they could make deals because of personal acquaintances. This is not to be confused by anybody who listens to this tape to the previous period in which Ngo Dinh Nhu before his assassination is alleged to have sought contacts with the communists. That, I've always felt, was pure and absolute bluff with the U.S. in order to try and get the U.S. to support him for fear that otherwise he might run to the communists.

I don't think the communists would ever have responded, given their basically favorable position, despite their enormous sufferings and the demands put on them. They were basically in a favorable position until we entered with full ground forces. I don't think the communists would ever have deigned to even speak with Ngo Dinh Nhu or Diem, not to speak about making any kind of deal.

However, these generals were a different matter. They might have been believable. What's more, they had forged an alliance with the neutralist elements among the Buddhists groups. Some of the Bonzes that we regarded with suspicion...

Q: Bonzes being Buddhist priests.

KATTENBURG: Correct.

I think here we have a clear clash between the gung ho element on the U.S. side, including many in the Agency, but not everybody, and the more military oriented, more confrontationalist groups (a difficult thing to summarize in a few words), and those who had retained some vestige of knowledge of what diplomacy could accomplish if used properly. The great problem with post-war American foreign policy to me has been that we lost the diplomatic art in the interim pretty much to military confrontational thinking. We all had become political/military experts, but no one was about to do smart maneuvering. That is what you needed in this situation. And it is what I felt when I came back to Washington and that is also what I put in the report which is buried over in DOD; never saw the light of day.

Q: When you came back and talked about making an agreement, was this anathema to even mention this?

KATTENBURG: I think it was. Certainly anathema to ISA which was becoming more important under Bill Bundy at that time. That is why when Bill Bundy came to State to take

Roger Hilsman's place in March of 1964, I was immediately “exiled” out of the Bureau to Policy Planning.

Q: Was it your impression that with Bundy coming over from Defense the military solution took over?

KATTENBURG: Right. The only correction I make to that statement would be that it wasn't so much a military as what I would call a technocratic-managerial-McNamara attitude. One in which we thought we could win by systematic systems theory.

Q: What I remember is the village count. The whole approach of the body count.

KATTENBURG: That's right. That whole type of approach, rather than our more conventional State Department, diplomatic or political approach. Indeed, you are absolutely right. So we have a very clear change in attitude. Now there is some modification of it when Max Taylor becomes important in policy, but that was not until a few months later.

Q: But during this time were you feeling increasingly isolated?

KATTENBURG: In the Regional Affairs unit of the Bureau I was very isolated from the Vietnam policy thing, but at about this time, or not too long thereafter, Koren was moved from Southeast Asian Affairs [I can't remember when this happened] and replaced by Bill Trueheart, who had come back from Saigon. Then, in all honesty, I felt less isolated. Trueheart and I viewed the situation very similarly.

Stu, I think you ought to interview Robert H. Johnson, who was a member of the policy planning council for the Far East, who had come from the NSC staff some years previously. I think he shifted at the beginning of the Kennedy Administration to SP (Policy Planning Council). Walt Rostow had a good deal of confidence in Bob Johnson. Bob Johnson, too, was extremely dubious about the Vietnam effort. I think we ought to point

out that at this time the emphasis changed more to whether or not we should bomb the North— this became a key issue. Much more so than what should we do with the problem of Vietnam. We didn't review the stakes at this time. And that is one of the points I make in my book. I have a chapter called “Ten Key Decisions on Vietnam” in which I deplore that we didn't review the stakes at a number of times. And that was one of them.

I was in RA with Dick Usher who is a very decent guy, working on a variety of small problems, including the Philippines again, for a very short time until Bundy came— March, April. Bundy got me out of the Bureau. Rostow agreed to take me on. I think there was an understanding that I would leave Vietnam alone.

Q: You went to Policy Planning.

KATTENBURG: Right. To write a policy planning paper on the Philippines.

Q: Before we leave Vietnam, there was one place where you said, “how did I get on this without talking about an NSC meeting...”

KATTENBURG: Right. In August of 1963, after Lodge had arrived in Saigon and finally presented credentials, which is the only time he saw Diem until the very last and futile meeting just before the coup. He never saw him in the interim.

Q: Was this Lodge?

KATTENBURG: Lodge. This was Lodge's policy clearly. More Lodge's than the State Department's. It was his way of handling—keeping his distance.

Roger wanted to see me immediately after my return from Saigon August 30. I went to see him and at that point the question was whether the coup would take place immediately at the end of August, what we now call the abortive coup at the end of August 1963 had become red hot, and he said, “You had better be ready to go to an EXCOM meeting of the National Security Council.” It was on August 31, 1963. It was at that meeting that I blurted

out my dissent with the policy. I don't know if you recall this, but it has been written up ad nauseam. It is even in the Pentagon Papers, although I didn't know at the time that it would be recorded.

What happened was that everybody was at that meeting, except the President. Johnson was chairing it as Vice President. Rusk, McNamara, Forrestal, Hilsman, and Harriman were there. Max Taylor was there as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And a number of other famous people. This was the meeting in which I imprudently said that we ought to get out with honor. I used the term “with honor.” It was clearly imprudent. As I have said in the personal note in my book that I drew attention to, the reason I did it was not so much out of analysis or out of substantive feeling that we could never achieve anything there, than it was out of being personally appalled after about an hour of discussion at the low quality of the discourse. That these people didn't know a damn thing about Vietnam. They really didn't. Now maybe I wasn't the greatest Vietnam expert in the world, I didn't speak Vietnamese, but I had been around the issue a long time. Although I hadn't served in the Embassy for a full tour, I had been on the Desk. I had lived the experience of the French war and its wrenching agonies. So it was more that, I think, than anything else.

Q: Did you feel there was a great deal of posturing?

KATTENBURG: Yes, there was. But at this particular meeting they just said—you can read the account of the meeting, the account was written by “Brute” Krulak (Major General Krulak) of the Marine Corps, who unbeknownst to us (I don't think Roger knew it either, as the meeting was supposed to be totally off the record), was making notes for somebody, I don't know for whom. He was the SACSA, Special Assistant for Counter-insurgency and Special Activities.

Q: Was it before or after he had made his tour over there?

KATTENBURG: Oh, it was before the tour. Before he and Mendenhall went out. The President came back and said are you two guys certain you went to the same country.

Krulak was certainly very gung ho. In '63 we probably weren't doing that much better than earlier. It seems to me that the macho factor that prevailed in 1961 was extenuated somewhat because by this time in '63 Kennedy had already made his American University speech which as I look upon it now in retrospect strikes me as a very important policy statement. That is, I think Bobby and John Kennedy had decided after the Cuban Missile Crisis, this was in October 1962, to get closer to the Soviets and engage in some pre-detente diplomacy if possible. And that was what was implied in the American University speech in April, 1963. I think as we look at the history of the 20th century that speech will rise in significance. We kept up a very strong stand against Fidel, of course. We didn't change the Cuban policy. I don't want to ramble on. The point is that despite this in '63 we weren't ready to review the stakes in Vietnam, just as we weren't ready when I came back in '64.

I want to say here for the history of the State Department that we, as I put in my book and mentioned names there, that there were a number of very good people in State [I mean by good, not just able people but respectable people with credibility, more credibility than I probably had] who felt the same way—that we were barking up the wrong tree. And of course as everybody knows the chief of those was George Ball who was the Deputy to Secretary Rusk. But I should mention some of those in that group so that they may become better known. George Springsteen, who was Ball's chief assistant in his office [sort of an in-box guy], was also of the same mind, probably because Ball felt that way. But Springsteen, I think, was extremely helpful in facilitating what I would call the State Department dissenter club's work. We essentially staffed- up many of the memos that Ball wrote. I don't want to take anything away from what Ball did, but we produced many papers and pieces of junk and memos and I know one paragraph in the July 15 memorandum to Johnson by Ball is verbatim something I wrote in a memo to George. So George convened this group that included Bill Trueheart, in particular. And Bob Johnson, and myself, and Carl Salans who was Deputy Legal Advisor [who later became a lawyer in

Paris, but I don't know where he is now]. And I am now probably leaving out a number of important names...

Q: Well, you can add them.

KATTENBURG: Several of the people in INR, Alan Whiting, in particular. They were in essence dissenters to the general course we were taking and wanted to get it back on the political track.

Well, that will be the end of this Vietnam thing, I think. I want to briefly mention here the interesting circumstances under which I was readmitted to the Bureau of East Asian Affairs about a year and a half after I left it because of my Vietnam dissents. In 1963 Edward Rice was deputy to Roger Hilsman. He was a very interesting and able man who—you were asking earlier about the feelings in the Department weren't you?—

Q: Yes.

KATTENBURG: I think Ed Rice had doubts about the Vietnam operation—and I want to put this on record—almost from the beginning, but he was another one who, I think to some extent, had been marked personally inside by the McCarthy period since he was a China hand, a period which he survived, and I don't think he was going to risk a great deal given that background. And many of us were in that situation. I was in the Policy Planning Council when Rice left and Bundy brought in a new deputy, Marshall Green. In the summer of 1965 I had completed one of only two national policy papers I believe ever have been written. A guy named Donald MacDonald did the other one, on Korea.

Q: I had dinner with him last night.

KATTENBURG: Oh, for God sake!

And I did the one on the Philippines. I went back to the Philippines for the first time in many years in the middle of 1965 with a large working group. We proposed all sorts of

policy changes, many of which were subsequently implemented. Some of them even in my period as Country Director which began in the summer of 1965, I don't recall the exact date. But here was what I was told were the circumstances of that appointment. Marshall Green apparently couldn't find a proper replacement for Bob Ballantyne, departing Philippine Country Director and he asked Bundy whether Kattenburg could come back from Policy Planning to work on the Philippines. I had really no role in it. They did it down there. Bundy said okay, provided he keep his dirty mitts off Vietnam. This is what I was told, but I can't remember exactly by whom, but a number of people said those were the terms—maybe Marshall mentioned it—under which I would be admitted. And I kept faithfully to that, so that beginning with the summer of 1965 in effect any impact that I might have had on policy in Vietnam or what went on dwindled, disappeared and I became so busy with the Philippines that I no longer had time...

Q: So you were with Policy Planning from '64 to early '65...KATTENBURG: From early '64 to mid '65. And I was able during that time to work in this group of dissenters and ...

Q: One quick question. In this period, '64-'65, what was the role of Policy Planning as you saw it? You hear about Policy Planning under George Kennan and slightly thereafter under the Eisenhower Administration and then it almost disappears from one's radar. It is always there but how important is it?

KATTENBURG: Well, I think a lot of it always depends on the chairman. I think Walt Rostow had credibility and a very strong, aggressive personality at that point and was able to assert some influence. I wouldn't say it was overwhelming. Now one of the reasons why I say that is because we did a study, done legitimately out of Policy Planning that was initiated, pushed and driven through by Robert H. Johnson, who I hope you will interview, on the potential impact of the consequences of bombing North Vietnam. First we considered tit- for-tat bombing, then retaliatory bombing on a more sustained basis, etc. and then outright bombing. This study took place in the spring of 1964 and even ran through the summer, I believe, and the results were contrary to what was wanted. It

said bombing would have very few, if any, effects other than pushing the Vietnamese to invading the South massively with ground forces. That whole study which had a Pentagon and CIA participation was buried. I believe among others Dan Ellsberg worked on it but I can't recall for sure, although I know I met him during that time—Bob Johnson would know.

Another study on the same subject took place under Bill Sullivan. Now Bill at that time was sitting in Harriman's office. When he came on board sometime early in '64, maybe even in '63—well, he had been at the Laos conference of '62 and I guess he had been with Harriman and stayed in his circle and became extremely important and influential in policy making on Indochina. I have the greatest admiration and respect for him and always have had. I like him personally, we have always been friends, although never very close friends—I would say more acquaintances. I would go to see Bill whenever I felt I would not be imposing on him and talk about Vietnam. He would always say “You are premature,” or “You are too soon, just wait, hold on.” I will never forget that. Just hold it, it is going to go the way you think it should go. I wanted an agreement. But I could see that as time went on we would get less and less out of an agreement. Eventually we lose, in effect. Bill served Harriman as loyally as possible. He chaired another study on the consequences of bombing which was more acceptable.

Subsequently Bundy took all this paper with him to Camp David right after the elections of the Fall of 1964 and he came out with the famous options paper on Vietnam. Options A, B and C. I really think Bundy, too, had his doubts about the policy. And I believe, as I have indicated in my book, that McNaughton, who was over in the Pentagon and working for McNamara, replacing Bundy as Director of ISA, had even greater doubts than Bundy. He was beginning to impart these doubts to McNamara which eventually led to the McNamara dissent with the policy in the Fall of '67. That all culminates in the Tet offensive in '68 and the abdication speech by Johnson. There is no need to go into that here. But I did want to talk about the conditions under which I was reallowed into EA.

And then I came back down and really and faithfully stayed with the Philippines. I am very proud of that period because I think on paper at least we made certain very big changes, including a speech by Bill Bundy in Manila sometime in '66 during which he renounced the parity amendment to the Philippine constitution; the Laurel-Langley Trade Agreement was repudiated and we went into even more advanced version of SOFA provisions on Philippine bases than we had had ten years previously in the Bohlen-Serrano Agreement. So we gave the Philippines more rights.

Q: I would imagine that this probably was heavily resisted from the military side...

KATTENBURG: No. The only thing that they really resisted was the giving up of land at Clark and Subic. They didn't want to lose land, or as little as possible. They did not resist changes in the SOFA. I am glad you asked this question because I had forgotten an important point. I think the single most important change that we made was in the Rusk- Ramos accord of 1966, although it is not called that in the literature where it has disappeared, but it was a signed agreement which they signed during Marcos' State Visit here, September 1966. Ramos was the Secretary for Foreign Affairs— the father of the present Fidel Ramos, now Philippine Secretary of Defense, which is interesting to remember. The most important change that we made was to provide in detail for consultations on the use of the bases. Much greater detail than we had in the Serrano-Bohlen Agreement. In there we had said in general terms that we would consult the Philippines prior to the use of bases for purposes of U.S. policy outside the Philippines. In the Rusk-Ramos agreement we went much further than that. We indicated that we would genuinely consult and obtain advice on U.S. policies and actions outside the region and with the concurrence of the Philippine government possibly use the military bases. That was the purport of this, to detail it.

We also—and I have said this publically before, although I want to approach it somewhat warily because it is classified information and probably still is. We are talking about 1966 so we are approaching the 25 year mark so it seems to me we could let this out. To my

horror I discovered—I hope I am historically accurate—when I was Country Director in '66 that we had never informed then President Marcos, who was elected November, 1965, or any previous president of the Philippines of any nuclear storage on the Philippine bases. I brought this up to Bundy via memos and suggested that it be discussed during the President's State Visit (Marcos visit) and that he be informed of the presence of nuclear weapons. Ray Bonner has this in his book called, “Waltzing With A Dictator,” a story of the Marcos Administration, and he checked with a number of other sources, I believe. Anyhow I think that was important, that we notify Marcos of this.

Q: How was this taken?

KATTENBURG: It was done.

Q: Everybody assumed they were there anyway didn't they?

KATTENBURG: To this day the Filipinos are making a big fuss about it saying that they don't know officially that the weapons are there because the information has never been released.

Q: Well that is true in Japan too.

KATTENBURG: Well, I don't know in '66 how much assumption there was that there was nuclear storage. And the point of doing it without keeping the Chief of State informed that we had this capability there... There was a beginning consciousness of risk as well in having these things around. I don't know, I feel fairly proud of it. Also it was a good period. And Marcos' first year was basically successful.

Q: I was going to say what was your attitude looking at Marcos at that time?

KATTENBURG: I never was very close to him personally, although we have many photographs of him as a congressman coming to our house, etc. But I didn't particularly like him— I didn't play golf and I should have. He was quite a golfer. Lou Gleeck, who later

became Consul General in Manila in that period, became an extremely close personal friend of Marcos, knew him extremely well and has written about him. Lou remained in Manila and stayed close to Marcos until the early 80's. We thought Marcos was perhaps the great white hope and that the internal problems which were accumulating there might conceivably be resolved by some real fundamental reforms, particularly land reform which we pushed him on very hard. Regrettably it didn't occur. I lost track of the situation in late '66 as I was transferred to Georgetown, Guyana.

Q: What were you doing in Georgetown?

KATTENBURG: By late '66 I felt the time had come to decide what I was going to do with myself in the Foreign Service. I was looking for an assignment having been in Washington for four years. Somehow, someone I had known in the past, as a matter of fact we had been undergraduates together at North Carolina—again the personal factor plays a role—saw that I was available for an assignment. He was the Desk Officer for Guyana, Bill Cobb, who is currently the Executive Secretary of DACOR. Bill told me the DCM position in Georgetown was open. I said, “Where the devil is that?” It turned out to be a really fantastic place—to go there as the DCM. I found out the Ambassador in Georgetown was a guy named Delmar Carlson. I don't know if you have ever known him.

Q: No. I have just heard the name.

KATTENBURG: Del had been in the Embassy in Ottawa and I think he had served also as Consul General in Vancouver and had some Washington experience on Germany—or perhaps he had served in Germany after the war. In any case he had experience only in Canada and Germany. But he had been made Consul General in Georgetown, Guyana before independence. I believe the Prime Minister, Burnham, had requested his appointment as ambassador after independence. Since he was another Coloradan and U. Alexis Johnson was from Colorado and there weren't any other ambassadors from Colorado, Johnson—I believe Del Carlson told me this—pushed his appointment along.

I was sort of delighted when I began reading about Guyana. Here was a place, lost in the jungles of the Amazon, a sort of no-man's land, a kind of wild place which should be interesting. A microcosm of politics anywhere because of its ethnic problems, the great division between East Indians and blacks with colored, some whites and a small number of Portuguese and 2 percent of Chinese who were totally disacculturated from China. I thought it was an interesting mix and a good place to go. At the time my children were in college. Only the two youngest ones went.

1966 had been a harrowing year on the Philippine Desk, because I went there 3 times in that year, both my parents-in- law died in the middle of the summer while I was in Manila. We signed another rather important agreement with the Philippines at the end of the year on Filipino veteran claims. We settled that issue hopefully forever. We gave them a final grace payment declaring that we would never again pay another penny, and I trust that will be honored. So, I looked upon this as kind of relief. Also I might say that we had the Marcos State Visit and anyone who has been a country director during a State Visit knows what that can be like. It was a very important State Visit for LBJ, I guess, and for our reward we were told the day the visit ended that our President was going to Manila in the next month to discuss Vietnam! So I needed some relief!

I went down to Georgetown and found a very interesting small post with no marines, this had been the decision of the ambassador. The Ambassador mixed little, not being much of a mixer. He was away a good bit of the time, because the place was humid and difficult to take, perhaps, visiting Grenada, Montserrat and various small islands or on consultations and home leave. There had been issues of interest to the U.S. in 1964 but there would be nothing serious again until 1968 when an election occurred and it was determined that Burnham should stay in power.

I found the single most difficult thing was that while Bill Cobb had told me I should establish contact with the East Indian political leaders, not necessarily barring Cheddi Jagan, the head of the People's Progressive Party and a proto- communist (his wife was

the former Janet Rosenberg from Chicago), I found that Del Carlson had adopted a policy, which Burnham really in effect talked him into, of total and complete abstinence of any contact whatsoever. I'll relate two incidents of my Guyana career.

One occurred when Del first went on home leave which was sometime in the early Spring of 1967 and left me in charge and told me not to have any contact with Jagan. But he wasn't gone a week when I received a letter addressed to me personally from Cheddi Jagan, whom I had never met, asking me if I would represent the United States in a debate at City Hall on U.S. policy in Vietnam, in which members of Burnham's party, he said, and himself and a number of other political leaders would appear. I felt that I should do something even though I thought an appearance would be directly in conflict with what the ambassador wanted. So, I called the Department and got out of EA a film which had a speech by Bill Bundy on it. I knew something like that existed explaining policy. I delivered the film to Cheddi's offices on my behalf with a note saying I would appreciate it if he could play this film, as I was unable to attend the event. I thought I had handled it okay. I was amazed when the ambassador came back and berated me for it—"I said no contact with Cheddi, you are just playing into their hands, etc." Then I got to know the situation a little better and realized that while Janet Jagan was absolutely a neurotic, who is nonetheless devoted to her people and the poor there and doing good works, that Cheddi was a fairly reasonable politician who was really much more comfortable in opposition.

We then began to engage in a clandestine operation which I thought was absolute baloney. But we did it and it was a very costly and considerable one involving the 1968 elections. I don't want to go further into that, there is no point to it. It has not been recounted in any detail anywhere yet. We obtained what we wanted, the reelection of Burnham. But I played no part because I told the ambassador quite clearly my difficulties with it—I did not think we needed to do it.

Our relations remained good on the surface but I got to feel that he was a timorous person who did not dare leave the capital and who constantly tried to keep me from traveling in

the countryside. He didn't want me to go anywhere. He thought perhaps the risks were too great. After our ambassador in Guatemala was assassinated, Gordon Mein, he became timorous to the point that I had to drive his automobile to the office while he drove my car on another route. I didn't mind that. I said, “Sure I would be happy to do it.” But he was extremely afraid as to what we might confront. He just wouldn't accept responsibility. For example—I think these examples are legion all over the Foreign Service so they are nothing special—but I recall one example in which a guard, East Indian guard that we had, was seen by two or three Embassy officers sleeping on his post in front of the Embassy at night. He asked me to have a— what do you call this sort of court-martial—kangaroo court and get the guy fired. I said, “Yeah, but I think we have to go by the labor laws here which we have agreed with them.” A minor incident, but anyway, he accepted no responsibility whatsoever. I fired the guy but I wasn't very proud of it. I think the guy should have had a better hearing than he got. Sure he was spotted asleep, but was he really told he wasn't supposed to sleep, did it just happen, was somebody after him, etc.

The main problem for me, I suppose, in the end was that by now we had gotten to 1968 and I wasn't finding myself advancing anywhere. I had been class 3 since 1961. So I wrote a letter to personnel in late '68, I believe, saying that I would like to have an assignment to the Foreign Service Institute if there was a possibility to have one. About six months later in early spring 1969 I got a letter from John Stutesman at FSI saying that some guy in the Department had told him that I was looking for an FSI assignment. “You must be out of your mind. But if you really want one, I am here and would love to have you at the School of Professional Studies.” So I departed happily for FSI, feeling that my career was ended. The reason for that was probably mostly because of Vietnam but secondly probably the fact that while giving me good efficiency reports Carlson had never been effusive or really given me full due for anything. I felt he didn't give a damn. I thought, well, what difference does it make, I am not really that interested in being an ambassador, but maybe if I don't get beyond class 3 I won't get any good jobs anymore.

I went to political training in FSI which was probably the best conceivable move I could have made. I was greeted with open arms by John Bowling with whom I disagreed on almost everything. Never have two such different people been in the same place, that is politically. And to show you what good friends we are the poor guy has Parkinson's disease but he is visiting me over the Fourth of July (1990) in Michigan. We have remained very good friends. He is an arch right-wing conservative. I'm, to say the least, a moderate liberal, or maybe moving more towards the middle now, but there have been periods when I have been more progressive. We disagreed but it made for a very stimulating intellectual environment. He was getting, or finishing his Ph.D. at American U.

We started a very serious program, I hope it was serious, of political training. We established all these short courses finding that personnel would not release people for long terms. To some extent it was successful, I guess. John at that point had become very interested in some of the more academic aspect of things. He went for behavioral and quantitative political science. He put in the computer courses and the systematic political analysis courses. I did some of that also. Jointly, we did negotiations courses, we started it and others continued it and actually broadened and expanded it. I don't know what has happened to it since. The first simulations we wrote, Bowling and I, were on Graustark and Ruritania. And then I created the intelligence course which we didn't have before but which I thought was a big gap. Our mid-career people were beginning to get briefings at Langley and all that. It was a good period. It lasted from the Spring of '69 through December '72 when I reached 50 and simply retired into academia. I never regretted a single day in the Foreign Service.

Q: What was your impression of how the Department of State or Foreign Service responds to training?

KATTENBURG: It was a battle all the way. I'm sure on the political side more so than in the other four, five functions. There is a feeling that one learns it by the seat of the pants, and that one learns it intuitively. Of course, I think there is something to that, but

there is simply no substitute for rigorous analysis, some degree of knowledge, at least, of systematic methods, even if it may become ponderous and at times not really suited to our vehicle. Nor is there any reason why we couldn't do a great deal more reading—I'm sure this has happened in the intervening, well it has been nearly 20 years now, but I have kept in contact with the Foreign Service Institute all through the 70's and done a number of contracts for them, wrote more simulations and I had one very extensive simulation which has been used, I think, ever since it was written in the JOT course (Junior Officer Training) which includes some consular problems, some economic, some information and admin and political ones. It is a battle for the Department to give training its due, nor does it get much publicity—I don't know right now who the head of the Foreign Service Institute is, I mean who replaced Steve Low, he was the last one I knew of.

Q: Brandon Grove, he was a Middle Eastern hand.

KATTENBURG: I mean, given the scarce resources of personnel and budget, we are just way under budget, underfunded as an agency in the government. We will never have the clout and facilities that we need now. I think John Sprott, the Deputy Director of FSI is trying very hard to do something there. In some respects training is very successful, such as languages. I think we have nothing to be ashamed of there. I don't know what has happened to political training. It is hard for me to comment since for the last five years I have had very little contact with anything. But there are few functions that require more money, attention and push. Among them are not only training, but our historical record. I am a member now of this historical advisory committee and some of the things that have gone on there are simply appalling. Nor are there really any in-house solutions to those. Let me give you as an example, in case I didn't mention it before to you on the phone or anything, the issuance by the Department of the 1951 through '53 Foreign Relations, U.S. Volume on Iran, does not mention any role by the United States in the overthrow of Mossadegh. Now this simply makes us totally incredible among all historians. It is on record there for anyone. I am not saying it is the Department's fault, given the fact the Agency won't declassify anything or is making a great deal of difficulty. But what is the

Department's fault is not to seize the problem by the hand and really look it over at an appropriately high level. This is the kind of thing that requires some Congressional review and probably eventually a new Presidential Executive Order. We either put out the record or we don't.

Q: I sometime think that...people keep reoccurring...say all right 50 years and it is open, rather than all this nonsense because from a practical point of view what is the difference between 20 and 30 years.

KATTENBURG: I think the issue of years is negotiable. Fifty, I think would be the outside, 30 would be desirable, 20 is probably too soon, 40 would be a compromise. But anyway, the answer is not to have an effort to put out a record which is selective anyhow, but to let the historians plough through it and look at everything and know that a lot of people are covering their asses, which is in effect what they are doing, by denying declassification so long. The Agency is more responsible.

Q: NSC is a problem too.

KATTENBURG: NSC may be as well.

Q: Well, shall we call it a day?

KATTENBURG: Sure.

Q: Thank you very much.

End of interview