

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

WILLIAM G. COLMAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	
University of Missouri	
University of Chicago	
Missouri State employment	
U.S. Navy World War II	
Oregon State Civil Service	
Athens, Greece	1947-1948
Personnel specialist	
General survey of Greek Government personnel situation	
Greek Ministry of Public Works project	
Problems	
Athens Greece	1949-1950
ECA (Organizations Management Division)	
Management problems	
Program Methods Control Staff	
Anglo-American Division	
Tokyo, Japan and Seoul, Korea	1950-1951
ECA Mission	
Wartime in Korea	
Pusan	
Harlan Cleveland	
Federal Civil Defense Administration	1951-1952
Deputy Director	
Regional Civil Defense directors	
Office of Defense Management	1953
Seoul, Korea	1953

Economic mission

INTERVIEW

Q: This is an oral history project under the Marshall Plan portion of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program which in turn is a part of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. The subject today is William Colman, a distinguished public administrator who has worked in both international, national, state and local fields. We are going to concentrate today mainly on his experience with the Foreign Aid program. My name is Mel Spector.

Bill, why don't you go ahead and tell us a little bit about your background and how you got into the foreign aid business.

COLMAN: In brief, my university training was in the field of public administration at the University of Missouri and the University of Chicago. I finished my academic work in 1939-1940. My first working experience was in the State government of Missouri to carry out the requirement under the Social Security Act that employees of State and unemployment compensation agencies be selected under a merit system. In a lot of states this called for setting up a new personnel system because the civil service competitive examination process had not been universally adopted.

Q: In what year was this, Bill?

COLMAN: In the spring of 1938 I took leave from my M.A. graduate work at Missouri and went to St. Louis to assist the person who had been selected to handle the Missouri state government program to establish a merit system in unemployment compensation. That person was Professor William Burke at Washington University. I finished some work under his supervision and returned to the University of Missouri in late 1938 to finish my Master's Degree work, and I received the M.A. in June, 1939.

Q: The degree was in what field?

COLMAN: Political Science. Then I went on to the University of Chicago to begin work toward a Ph.D. I studied under Charles Merriam and Leonard D. White.

Q: Two of the greats.

COLMAN: I was there two quarters, and it was then decided in Missouri that they would move the merit system office from St. Louis to Jefferson City, the State capital. Congress, in the meantime had broadened the amendment to the Social Security Act by extending the merit system requirement to state public welfare and public health. So it was necessary to install a merit system in the health and welfare departments of the state

government as well as perfecting the one in unemployment compensation. I was contacted because of my earlier experience in St. Louis to come out and set up the larger system.

I went to Jefferson City in April of 1940. A Merit System Council appointed by the governor was in overall charge and I was the Merit System Supervisor. I went through the whole process of setting up rules and regulations, getting positions classified, examinations held, and registers of eligibles established. I completed that for the agencies and they began to appoint their new employees off of the merit system registers. By that time it was late 1941 and I was then asked by the Director of State Personnel in Louisiana (perhaps with the encouragement of Albert Aaronson of the Social Security Board) to go down and do the same thing in Louisiana that I had done in Missouri. I arrived in Baton Rouge in early October and set up shop and laid out the installation schedules.

Pearl Harbor occurred in December. Rather coincidentally, I received a telegram from Charles Mills in Washington who was in the Office of Emergency Management asking if I would be available to take a position in the Classification Section of the Personnel Office of the War Production Board (WPB). My natural instincts, perhaps like those of numerous people at that time, told me that I might have a better chance of not getting called to military duty if I were working for the Federal Government and particularly in the War Production Board. It was like a magnet; it drew me to Washington. There, for a brief period of about two months, I was a Classification Analyst under the immediate supervision of Arthur Tackman. However, the Personnel Director of the War Production Board then declared that he would no longer ask for deferments of employees from military service and I applied to the Navy for a commission and was commissioned an Ensign in May of 1942. I put in four years in the military, all in personnel management work.

My first duty was in the Office of Naval Officer Procurement (ONOP), First Naval District headquarters in Boston. That involved interviewing civilians applying for commissions in the Navy. Then I was transferred to the Naval Training Station at Bainbridge, Maryland where I later became the Selection Officer in the Station's personnel office. My staff and I were in charge of selecting or assigning graduating recruits to various kinds of duties, filling orders coming into the Training Station for personnel with various qualifications. By that time IBM was a well-known firm, and we were putting the qualifications of these people on punch cards and then when they needed people with certain backgrounds we would make the selection and fill the order.

In the spring 1945 I was transferred to Washington with the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department, where I again was in what you might say was the central management of the duty selection process over the country. I made a lot of field trips to particular stations to see how things were going. I was demobilized in February of 1946. A trip to a Navy conference in San Francisco in January had allowed me to go up to Salem, Oregon and be interviewed for the position of State Civil Service Director and I was selected for

the position prior to leaving military service. I reported to Salem two days following demobilization.

For the first time, I had state-wide personnel management jurisdiction over all the departments. In Missouri and Louisiana my duties had been confined to the merit system mandated agencies by the Federal Government under the Social Security Act. Again in Oregon, I started from scratch and got rules set up and positions classified. The governor already had the Civil Service Commission comprised of three members, the chairman of which was Samuel Chambers. They had contracted with the Public Administration Service (PAS) to classify the jobs in the state government, so that was pretty well underway. We proceeded and set up the rules, the salary ranges, and the examination processes by which registers would be set up and so forth. I arrived there in early 1946 and left in the summer of 1947.

Q: You got quite a bit done in one year.

COLMAN: It was fifteen months. I arrived in Salem in February of 1946 and left in June of 1947. I came back to Washington and settled down in the same apartment building at 14th and Clifton Streets, in which I had lived when I was stationed in the Navy Department. I began looking around for employment and I was told that Sam Board, a personnel recruiter for the State Department, was looking for a personnel and civil service experienced person to assist in modernizing the Greek government in Athens, as a part of President Truman's program for aiding Greece and Turkey in their post-war rehabilitation endeavors. So I was selected to go over as a Personnel Specialist in the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG).

Q: This is to Athens?

COLMAN: Athens, yes. There, for the first time, I met Hubert R. (Hugh) Gallagher. He was the Director of the Civil Government division of the Mission. The Chief of Mission was Dwight Griswold, former Governor of Nebraska. He and Gallagher had known each other in connection with the Council of State Governments for whom Gallagher had worked in prior years. Hugh asked me to be his deputy, I don't think we ever had more than four or five people working in the division. He was number one and I was number two. I conducted a general survey of what the personnel situation was in the Greek government. Of course there was a lot of patronage. Also, they had copied several aspects of French Civil Service in earlier years.

Q: So you were dealing with a French model?

COLMAN: A French model and also British to some extent, and I will always remember my first meeting with Minister of Finance Helmis, who you might say was really the minister of administration for the Greek government. He looked after financial, personnel and central management matters. He was explaining the greatness and the competence of the Greek personnel system. He said that the war had been a very disorganizing influence,

but that before the war Greece had been recognized as "one of the very best personnel systems in all of the Balkans!" (I had naively been expecting him to say "Europe".)

Q: One of the best personnel systems in all of the Balkans!!!

COLMAN: All of the Balkans. This was an important transition point for me in two respects: The transition into working abroad; and the opportunity within the field of public administration central management that might allow me to get over into organization and management as well as personnel issues.

On another occasion, the Greek Government came to Hugh and said, "We've got a terrible mess here in the Ministry of Public Works and we would like you to have a look taken at that." We looked at organization structure and so forth and made some recommendations, a few of which were, I think, adopted. An interesting conference occurred between Gallagher and the Minister of Public Works, his name being Nicolliades. There was a lot of duplication in the field offices of the Public Works Ministry and Mr. Gallagher was kind of impatient. He said, "Mr. Minister don't you realize that that's poor administration?" The Minister replied, "Of course it's poor administration, Greece is a poor country!" I remained in Greece for about a year, arriving over there in August of 1947 and coming back to Washington in July of 1948.

Q: May I interrupt a minute Bill, and ask, before you leave Greece. What did you find, say, on the personnel system; what did you do? Did you try to convert it all to a US model or did you...?

COLMAN: As the expression goes, "That's a very good question." That was my first instinct, but I discovered that it was a serious mistake and I again tried to help the Greeks develop an improved system based on their own history and culture.

Q: I believe we were talking about your experience with the Greek Personnel System and you were making some comments. I think you said you had written an article about it, Bill.

COLMAN: Yes, I did. The article was entitled, "Civil Service Reform in Greece" and published in the *Public Personnel Review*, which was a publication of the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada, 1313 East 60th Street in Chicago. The title of the article as I submitted it was "Civil Service Reform in Greece: A Failure!" The editorial staff refused to publish it unless those two words, "a failure" were removed.

Q: They didn't want to admit to it?

COLMAN: They didn't want to admit that civil service systems failed. Now, there were a lot of things wrong with the civil service system in Greece. Immediately after we got there, several things were apparent. They were over-staffed, they were inefficient, and the civil service was not capable of carrying on the day-to-day operations of the Government,

not to mention the expanded (and remember civil war between two major factions was going on at that time) the expanded and vigorous military and economic programs needed.

The most pressing problem was a requested increase in civil service salaries by the Greek Government since employee unions were threatening to strike if their demands were not met. After we had negotiations, a compromise was reached with the understanding that the Greek Government would put a freeze on all new appointments, reduce civil service strength by 15,000 positions, eliminate overtime pay and reduce pay for serving on committees and finally, last but not least, an increase in the work week from 25 hours to 40 hours. Of course we wonder where we got the 40 hours. The answer; United States. The most important lesson that I learned about technical assistance to foreign countries from the experience in Greece was that it is a terrible mistake to try to transplant the practices and structures and so forth from federal, state, and local governments in the United States over into another country.

Q: May I interrupt there? If you don't transplant then what do you do?

COLMAN: You try to look at the needs that country is facing and ask yourself the question, "Starting all over to deal with this particular question, how ought we to organize it?" and not think well let's pass a Civil Service Law that provides A, B, C, copied out of a statute from Illinois or some other state, or the US federal government.

Another major question, and this still, I believe, pervades our foreign Assistance to other nations: "To what extent should the United States Government require, or demand that countries receiving economic aid to take steps to improve or modify governmental practices?" That's a major question. If the answer to that is yes, then should the United States try to lay down detailed plans or should it confine itself to objectives and ask for the reaching of the objectives by such means as the sovereign country would decide? The tendency of a lot of people, and I discovered this not only in Greece but in the ECA technical assistance program, that too many of our people are transplanting or trying to. That tendency is very understandable, but the main lesson that I learned from my Greek experience, was the necessity for flexible approaches.

Q: Very good. What do you think generally? Do you feel that you and Hugh Gallagher and others--do you think you made a difference in Greece?

COLMAN: Yes. We stirred things up and got them to recognize that they ought to make some changes. The pressure was kept on by our successors, our mutual friend Ford Luikart, for example. They adopted some legislation, those things they agreed to do that I mentioned a minute ago, about changing the work week and so on. My understanding is that in a later year they passed a civil service act of some sort, but with more rhetoric than substance.

Q: Really.

COLMAN: They moved off the dime and so some progress was made. It certainly gave me a big dose of caution for future matters of that kind. When I came back to the US I asked about the details of the Marshall Plan and...

Q: So the Marshall Plan had been passed while you were in Greece?

COLMAN: That's correct. In the summer of 1948, when I returned I went to the ECA headquarters in the Miatico building.

Q: Economic Cooperation Administration?

COLMAN: Yes, headed by Paul Hoffman, former president of the Studebaker Company. I applied in the Organization and Management (O&M) Division because I had gotten into organization matters in Greece, and I wanted to broaden my public administration experience. The person who interviewed me was Robert Rupard. He thought that the fact that I had the organizational experience in Greece and had been in the various executive positions in personnel management in the United States might qualify me in O&M. The head of the O&M Division, Harry Fite, who had joined the organization from the Budget Bureau, interviewed me and appointed me as both an analyst, and as an assistant to him in running the division. The division was one of four reporting to the Director of Administration, who was Donald Stone. The other divisions making up the whole administrative area were Personnel, Budget, and Administrative Services. The Personnel Division was headed by Virgil Couch and I forget who was head of the Budget Division at that time though we had adjoining offices. The Administrative Services head was Orbun Powell.

I began work there with the O&M Division and we tackled various management problems that would arise in divisions throughout the agency and go in and look at them and make some recommendations. For example, we had a system of personnel ceilings for the various organizational units of ECA; the Budget Bureau was imposing agency personnel ceilings throughout the Government at that time. Don Stone would have periodic meetings with the division heads under him about how to handle the personnel caps. At O&M, along with Budget, we looked at various divisions and departments, giving them suggestions as to how they could meet the personnel caps and still get their jobs done.

Q: When you say you did that. Did this give you an opportunity to help them perhaps improve their operations, organize better?

COLMAN: Yes. For example, we devised and helped set up a small unit in the agency called the Program Methods Control Staff (PMCS). For quite a while they would develop new forms, and they would develop various program processes for different departments. But they were not part of the Department of Administration. They were a part of what fell

under Tyler Wood, the Assistant Administrator for Operations. Dick Bissell was Assistant Administrator for Programs.

Don Stone asked me to give some study to the provision of the Economic Cooperation Act that dealt with technical assistance. That was a very brief subsection but as far as Western Europe was concerned, we would try to give assistance wherever we could in the reconstruction problems and rehabilitation problems that those countries were facing. A separate part of that, at the outset it was separate. The British and the US had agreed to form an Anglo-American Productivity Council and my recollection is that it was pushed by Philip Reed, President of General Electric, who had been in some conversations with British industrialists. They thought it would be a good idea, and I think took it up with Hoffman, and thought it would be a good idea to have that. So it was formed with a small council made up of US and British officials, comprising not just public sector but some private sector people in there too. It was a discrete part of the ECA Technical Assistance Division.

I thought that the technical assistance provision had great importance, and I sent Stone some memoranda on it. I don't know what the internal discussions were, but Hoffman decided that there ought to be a division of technical assistance (TA) and that was assigned to the jurisdiction of Ty Wood, who was head of Operations. When you give technical assistance, you bring people to this country and take them around to see our processes, and you send our experts to other countries. That's an operational thing. A very able person out of the General Counsel's Office, William (B.Y.) Hoff, was named head of that division and he recruited an assistant working in Don Stone's office, Jack Fobes. Hoff set about organizing the TA division and because of these papers that I had written for Stone, he asked me to take over the operations side of the division and Jack Fobes would take over the program side. That may seem like an overlap, but the way it was divided was that a decision would be made over on the Program side that we ought to let half a dozen teams from half a dozen countries come over here and look at such-and-such a subject and make that offer known through our missions abroad. Then the handling of these people and working up of the itineraries and so on would be over on my side--Operations.

Q: Oh, I see.

COLMAN: I had a staff, I guess, of about thirty program managers. I had four sections. For the handling of people coming in--every delegation that came over--a project manager would be in charge. Sometimes they would handle more than one delegation at a time, because if it were a fairly simple itinerary they, after making advance arrangements, would let one of the people in the delegation kind of look after the rest. Sometimes, not very often, but sometimes a Project Manager would be handling two or even three different projects at the same time. In terms of personnel, that was the largest of the sections. I had a recruitment section of two or three professionals to work with the Personnel Division in getting the right kind of American experts that the overseas country had asked for.

A third section had to do with, you might say, the logistics and other supporting services, such as what visiting delegations would need in such-and-such a field. What kind of books ought they be provided, and what kind of other services. That section was tied in with the Budget Bureau Division, headed by Bernie Rosen, whose job it was to be a reservoir of knowledge about how the US Government worked. Finally we had the equivalent of a fourth section--the Anglo-American Productivity Council, located in New York City. I visited it there on an average of every ten days or so.

Q: Didn't Bernie Rosen also supervise the people that came to be trained at the Bureau of the Budget?

COLMAN: That's correct. The head of our section that handled visiting delegations was Elliot Hanson. He was succeeded by Ted Weems. The recruitment section was under Mr. Gale, and he was always called Biff.

Q: Biff Gale, I had forgotten him, yes.

COLMAN: He was in a lot of hot water and was transferred out shortly after I left the TA division.

Q: I don't remember the details.

COLMAN: We got him transferred out. The logistics person was Al Hurt, close to, but different from the orchestra leader Hirt's name. What I have just described were the three Washington sections of the operations side of the TA Division. The fourth section--the Productivity Council in New York covered both operational and program matters. We handled a lot of visiting officials from both public and private sectors in Western Europe. We would all the time be discovering better ways to implement technical assistance policies. And here again my staff and I, warned others about the transplanting concept. Our job was to inform participating countries of our practices and ways in which they might and might not be applicable to their situations.

Q: Good.

COLMAN: To acknowledge and remember that we were dealing with sovereign nations and their sense of pride, ambition and so on.

Q: Don Stone; although he was not your supervisor, didn't he keep a kind of a very close touch with the organization?

COLMAN: Yes. He certainly was interested in it. Occasionally when we would run into disputes with other parts of the agency--for example, there was an office of labor advisors under Clint Golden to begin with and I forget who took his place, but incidentally, Clint Golden was our labor person in Greece. He came back and headed up, for a time, the

Labor Relations Office in ECA and then his deputy took over. But anyway, if a nation wanted to learn better how to do certain things, some of the best places for them to learn often would be in unionized plants, but other aspects would be in non-unionized firms. The labor division wanted to rule that foreign visitors would not be taken into any non-unionized plants in the United States and between Hoff and myself and Stone and Ty Wood and Hoffman, that was quashed. As a compromise it was agreed that if the itinerary developed for a visiting team covered mostly non-union plants, the labor division would add some unionized ones for a better balance.

Q: This is a recording with William Colman. I should have said the date is May 8, 1996, but we will put that in later at the beginning of this.

COLMAN: I was with the Technical Assistance Division from 1949, when I entered it, to the fall of 1950 when I was recruited by Edgar Johnson, the head of the Korean program in the ECA to go over with Chief Meyer, the newly appointed chief of mission as his deputy. I would like to ask Marge a question here. Was Chief his proper name?

MARGE: No, his name was Clarence.

(Marjorie A. Van Auken joined the ECA mission in Seoul, Korea as a secretary shortly after its establishment, and, along with most of the ECA staff was evacuated from Seoul to Japan, within a few days after the outbreak of the Korean War in June, 1950. A small core staff was set up in Pusan, as the China-supported North Korean army moved through Seoul and occupied most of the peninsula. Within Japan she was transferred to the ECA Field Office in Tokyo and became secretary to the Director. Upon the arrival of a new Chief of Mission and the decision to conduct the downsizing and eventual liquidation of the ECA Mission in South Korea from the Tokyo office, she became secretary to the Acting Chief of Mission. She and Colman were married in 1954.)

COLMAN: Clarence and they called him Chief.

MARGE: It was because there was a baseball pitcher in the big leagues named Clarence E. Meyer and they called him Chief Meyer.

COLMAN: Well that was his usual name. The reason that you were thinking I spent time over there and so on and how I managed to forget the name of this person. Well in World War II he had been captured by the Japanese at the outset of the war. He was an oil industrialist and...

Q: You are talking about Chief Meyer?

COLMAN: Yes. He was running a big oil operation in the far east and he was captured and held in a Japanese prison camp for about two years. The prior Chief of Mission over there, and I have forgotten who that was Marge, before Meyer came over there. Who was the big boss? Do you remember?

MARGE: Arthur Bunce; but the mission largely scattered, upon its evacuation from Seoul early in the war.

Q: Now this is before the Korean war broke out?

COLMAN: No. I arrived in Japan/Korea shortly after the second allied retreat from Seoul. What was the name of the river up there at the border?

Q: The Yalu?

COLMAN: The Yalu; the retreat from the Yalu was going on. Chief Meyer and I went over to Seoul, Korea. No, we didn't go on the same plane, but we got there roughly at the same time. We went over to have a session with John Muccio, the US Ambassador to South Korea. The Chinese and North Koreans were getting pretty close and Chief Meyer went into Muccio's bedroom and saw that all over the Ambassador's bed were valises packed, leading Meyer to think he was ready to get the hell out! Meyer recalled his prisoner period with the Japanese. In the meantime there was a big row going on in the U.N. about the critical military situation in Korea. Meyer said that he was not willing to undertake this assignment and would I be willing to stay in and run the show?

Q: Wow!

COLMAN: I said all right, provided that Edgar Johnson and people back in Washington would okay the arrangement. They did and Chief Meyer left in a few days.

Q: When you say, "run the show," what was the Economic Cooperation Administration Program doing at that point?

COLMAN: On the point of partial liquidation because it looked like South Korea might very well be, if not defeated, occupied. We had all kinds of contracts out for raw materials and various other things. On the logistical side we worked hand-in-glove with the G4 part of the military establishment of MacArthur's. The US Military occupation of Japan (SCAP) was still in existence. MacArthur was still "God Almighty," and Japan hadn't yet formed its own government. That didn't come for a year or so later. We had to reduce our personnel. We had to cancel contracts. We had to divert shipments headed for our Mission in Korea to Manila, Hong Kong, Taipei and other ECA missions.

MARGE: Bill, you are forgetting that meeting in Manila right after you got there. You went down to Manila and met with the Mission Chiefs and everybody wanted cars. They didn't care about two by fours. They all wanted cars.

COLMAN: Yes. That was both an information and deal making conference. We had the Mission Chiefs from the Far East in there. We explained the situation to them, "Here are our orders and here are the personnel and so on, and who wants what?" Then about a month or two or three or four after that we had a similar meeting with the Mission Chiefs

in Tokyo, to wrap up some more things. Essentially it was to protect property and to get out of there in an orderly way and get the personnel redeployed. Of course there were some ongoing things in which part delivery had been made and where it could be made by getting into the Pusan Harbor. That was the only way you could get it over there. The Japanese were very cooperative in some respects. They would transfer funds over there via the Japanese and Korean banking systems.

My time was about two thirds in Tokyo, maybe three fourths, and the rest over in Pusan. The dozen or so staff members in Pusan were under the immediate supervision of Allan Loren, who reported to me. There was a get-away plan that if Pusan got overrun, Korean military and civil personnel would go to Chegu.

Q: This was an island off of Korea obviously.

COLMAN: An island off of South Korea. I saw it in the paper, reading about it the other day. The plan was for the officials and the records and so on, both Korean and US in the office over in Pusan, to get on this ship. One of the staff people took me to the ship and I've got a picture of it. In fact I've got a whole album of pictures of these countries that I'm describing. Anytime your curiosity gets overpowering I imagine I have a picture of the get-away ship and many other things and people.

Q: Okay.

COLMAN: We've got a picture of departure day for MacArthur en route to the airport, having got his butt kicked out of SCAP leadership. Well, pictures that you would naturally take at exciting times. Edgar Johnson wrote me a highly complimentary letter about how well the liquidation had been executed. I ran onto the letter, I had forgotten all about it, here yesterday or the day before, when I was going through these papers.

Q: May I interrupt you? Harlan Cleveland wasn't associated with the program anymore at that point. Is that right?

COLMAN: Harlan ran the China program.

Q: China. I see. So he had nothing to do with the Korean?

COLMAN: He had nothing to do, at that time, with the program. Now when I went back with Ty to help set up a new mission in South Korea Harlan was in a position up, I think, in Bissell's earlier post of Assistant Administrator for Program. During my first tour in Tokyo and Korea, Paul Hoffman had been succeeded by William Foster and ECA changed to MSA--Mutual Security Agency.

Q: That's right. I didn't mean to get you off your stride here.

COLMAN: I remember writing a letter to Harlan in that capacity that he was in from over in Seoul about some things that I thought were going badly wrong in the Far Eastern setup, mostly political, stuff about Chiang Kai-shek and so on. Harlan was not in the picture at the time of my first tour. Edgar Johnson was, you might say, the equivalent of a State Department Desk Officer for Korea, and the Far East was in the charge of Allen Griffin.

MARGE: Harlan was with UNRRA.

Q: Before that, yes.

MARGE: ...in Shanghai because that's where I first ran across him and then he went to the, what we called the "Gravy Train," in China--the China Program. He was over there in a civilian capacity.

COLMAN: He was running the China program when I was in the Technical Assistance Division, I think.

Q: I see. So when you finished...

COLMAN: Harlan was in a back and forth situation with UNRRA and running the ECA aid to China.

Q: When you finished in Korea you came back to the States?

COLMAN: I came back to the States.

Q: What did you come back to?

COLMAN: I came back to the Federal Civil Defense Administration. That was after about two months in MSA headquarters. There were a number of things that Griffin wanted to really get updated on and things that some other missions... Oh! Another thing; In the Spring of 1951, Griffin, Ed Arnold and others wanted me to look in on two or three ECA missions in the Far East. For that brief period they added something onto my title about Far Eastern Representative and in July 1951, when I left a man by the name of Arganoff took over these duties. He resigned, I think, about two months after I had come back to the United States. This had to do not only with the liquidation--there would be occasional liquidation things tied into Korea, money and so on--but this was to look at things that Griffin was concerned about. I remember going to Taipei and spending two or three days with Raymond Moyer and went down to the Philippines again and spent a little time with whoever was in charge down there.

Q: Probably Vincent Checchi.

MARGE: Was that Vince Checchi?

COLMAN: We got a telegram from Vince Checchi in the course of this personnel redeployment. We sent somebody on their way to Manila and a cable came back about this individual, I have forgotten who it was, from Checchi--"Why was he dispatched?"

Q: Dispatched?

COLMAN: Yes. Why was he showing up in Manila? Either at Checchi's end or my end there was a screw up, I don't know which. I spent a month or so when I got back with Griffin chasing down a few things and then Hugh Gallagher stepped into the picture again. A Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) had been established as an independent agency of the Federal government. Civil defense was a big thing at the time. He said come over and be my deputy. Millard Caldwell, former Governor of Florida, was named chief of the organization. Ralph Spear was over there and also Joe Chambers. I don't know whether that rings a bell with you or not. He got the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery in one of the island landings in World War II. Hugh headed the Field Operations Divisions of FCDA and wanted me to be his deputy and to organize regional FCDA field offices over the country as a part of readying the country for defense against foreign attack.

We went by common regional lines e.g. New England. We recruited Regional Civil Defense Directors. We had about twelve of them. I was chasing around recruiting and then working with the regional directors on getting their offices set up. A lot of legislative stuff in their own regions--how to deal with the governor and legislature of the states in their region. We wanted to get the National Guard more involved and so did the Executive Office of the President. I spent about a year with FCDA from October 1951, to September 1952. It was about eleven months. At that time another person, another former boss, captured me and that was Bill Hoff, who had been head of the Technical Assistance Division in ECA.

Q: Right.

COLMAN: During all of the war planning that had gone on during the Korean War--he helped set up the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM) and the Defense Production Administration (DPA). One of the issues closely tied in with civil defense but not dealt with in FCDA--How you recover from an atomic attack? How do you best prepare yourself for the worst?; and then, how do you come out of it as quickly as possible? The job was to develop an index of vulnerabilities to attack. It was called the Post Attack Production Staff. I joined that staff as a consultant.

Q: This was under the military?

COLMAN: No. These were independent agencies. The ODM was given general directions by the Executive Office of the President.

Q: I see.

COLMAN: I was with them, and at that time I had shifted over to a daily basis of consulting.

Q: I see. Then you went back.

COLMAN: I was with Hoff from September 1952 until January 1953 when I shifted over to the ODM and served there until August of that year and that's when Ty Wood called me back into the foreign aid program--to go with him to Korea and help him set up a new economic mission. The Korean War had ended with an armistice, and North and South were in a semi-peaceful mode.

Q: This is C. Tyler Wood, not to be confused with Tighe Wood.

COLMAN: Right. After the armistice agreement was signed, not a peace agreement. (That has been emphasized here lately in 1996 in connection with US-North Korea negotiations, that what ended the Korean war was not a peace but an armistice.) It seemed logical to reestablish an Economic Mission to Korea and treat it like other friendly countries, regarding economic assistance. Ty asked me if I would go over and help him set it up and partially recreate the earlier mission. I left and went with Ty in August of 1953 and I came back in November of 1953, so that was just a short period over there, but it was a formative period. It worked very fast and I think pretty effectively. The foreign aid agency was now, in the early days of the Eisenhower administration, the Foreign Operation Administration (FOA), under the leadership of former Minnesota Harold Stassen.

Q: And you were setting up in effect a brand new mission.

COLMAN: That's right. We were stationed in Seoul, living in the Chosun Hotel and dealing on a daily basis with South Korean officials. During the other period I perhaps had met with President Syngman Rhee no more than two or three times in that period of commuting between Tokyo and Pusan. In 1953 we could get right down to business with the top Korean officials.

Q: It was very good that you had that access to President Rhee.

COLMAN: We had some very useful assistance from the US military. It had taken over the remaining odds and ends of the MSA mission. Upon our arrival in 1953, we found that we had inherited several very able military people and they helped us set things up. Max Taylor was still commanding the 8th Army over there but they were in a peace keeping role at that time rather than a combat one. Also, some people in the former ECA posts in Korea, Japan and elsewhere came back and joined Ty Wood's staff. I came back to FOA Washington in November 1953.

Q: So when you went you just knew you were going to go on a temporary basis?

COLMAN: Oh yes. I specified that it would just be a start-up kind of thing.

Q: I see.

COLMAN: The US Ambassador in that period was Ellis Briggs. I came back to FOA Washington for a period of a few months from November to February...

Q: This is 1953 to 1954?

COLMAN: 1953 to 1954. I was asked by Al Roseman to join his staff as a consultant to study their operations. I was asked by him to assess the work that was being done in the Division, I guess the report was somewhat critical because he thought it was too critical. I had completed the job. Oh, and in the interim when I was still with Ty Wood, I think it was in that period, Don Stone had tried to get me to come back and head up the Personnel Department. Virgil Couch had left. I wrote Don that I just didn't want to get back into central management. I was through with central management types of activity, and why didn't he take a look at Bob Rupard? Don wrote a letter back saying that he had always taken my advice and that this time he was appointing Bob. I read this letter yesterday. I had forgotten it existed, but I remember it now.

After I finished that report for Roseman, I saw a new employment opportunity and that was with a commission on intergovernmental relations. Eisenhower had promised Robert Taft that if he were elected he would set up a commission to look at the division of powers and responsibilities between the national government and the states.

Q: So this was where you left the Foreign Aid Program?

COLMAN: Yes, in the Spring of 1954.

Q: This is all I'm going to tape now. And, thank you very much.

End of interview