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

AMBASSADOR CHARLES T. CROSS

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INTERVIEW

Q: Let us start at the beginning. Where and when were you born?

CROSS: I was born in Peking, now called Beijing by foreigners also, which is the name that the Chinese used all along. I was born in 1922. I stayed in China - except for a couple of years spent in the U.S. - until I was 18. I spent those two years in Auburndale (Massachusetts) and Oberlin, (Ohio) - a year in each place. Much of the material in this oral history can also be found in my book, Born a Foreigner: a Memoir of the American Presence in Asia - Rowman and Littlefield 1999/2000.

Q: Tell us a little about your parents and life in Beijing in your teens.

CROSS: My parents were missionaries, essentially in the education field. My mother went to China first in 1915; she was a music teacher and a professional kindergarten teacher in Beijing. She organized some of the first kindergarten teacher training schools in China. She also established a number of kindergartens in the city.

My father came to China in 1917. His first job, after a couple of years of language training, was at Peking National University (Beida) - then and now China's foremost university. It was an interesting time for him to be there because it was a time of seething intellectual activity in China. Mao Zedong was at the University; Chen Duxiu, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, led some of the discussions that had been organized by my father. So he was very much part of the surging intellectual activity which was part of the May 4th Movement. That movement was one of the great forces in Chinese intellectual history. A lot of things happened at about the same time. For example, the Chinese characters, which were used in ordinary talk, were substituted for traditional, classical-style characters. That made it possible for many, many more Chinese to be literate. The communists and the nationalists, as well as non-political forces, took advantage of this change since they could then reach much wider audiences.

My father later became the General Secretary of the American Board Mission in North China. That board was part of the Congregational ministry. Both of my parents were Congregationalists. In 1931, we returned to the States for a couple of years, as I mentioned. We returned to China in 1933; we took up residence in what is now a suburb of Beijing - about 14 miles outside the city walls. In that suburb was an American boarding school which I attended.

I attended that boarding school for seven years. During that time, the most important event in my life was the Japanese invasion of North China in 1937, starting on July 7. There was a considerable amount of fighting in our neighborhood; there were sizeable massacres first perpetrated by the Chinese and then by the Japanese. So my last three

years in high school were under Japanese rule although we had extra-territorial privileges and therefore did not suffer the hardships that were rained on the Chinese.

Q: I have been reading an interview of John Stewart Service, who was also an off-spring of missionary parents. He said that his parents kept him away from Chinese kids which resulted in his Chinese not being very good. What was your experience?

CROSS: I don't think my parents kept me away from Chinese playmates. When I lived in Beijing, I had as many Chinese playmates as American. It is true that our Chinese language skills were not advanced sufficiently. We learned Chinese in school, but we didn't go very far because it was just another academic subject. We also had to learn French and Latin, for example. So I never progressed very far in the written aspects of the language. My accent in conversations has a Beijing flavor and that is an asset.

Q: Did you, in high school, manage to feel the ferment that was going on - the Kuomintang, which was then relatively new and rather progressive. Then of course came the Japanese.

CROSS: The Kuomintang had just barely finished the formal unification of China in 1937. In 1931, the Japanese took all of Manchuria. From there, they began to infiltrate south of the Great Wall into the Beijing area. Starting in 1933 and for the next couple of years, they marched inexorably south. The Kuomintang was the national resistance. In December 1936, Chiang Kai-shek was kidnaped by General Jang Xueliang, who had been a young marshal in Manchuria where he had been defeated by the Japanese. He stayed in North-West China where he kidnaped Chiang Kai-shek. The latter had come to attack the communists, who at the end of the Long March had reached Yanan. Chiang's release was contingent on his declaration of nationalist solidarity.

I remember that on Christmas night - or Eve - Chiang was released. Immediately, in the area where our home was, the Chinese students from near by schools paraded past our house and the Japanese sentries were stationed on the city walls. They shouted slogans such as "defeat the Japanese" or "long live the Kuomintang," sung to the tune of *Frère Jacques*.

My father noted at the time that this demonstration and those throughout China would remind the Japanese that China was united, which should have been a warning to them. The Japanese read it as a threat and decided to complete the conquest of China, which they started in July 1937.

As high school students, we visited the battlefields and had some contacts with Chinese students. A classmate of mine and I took some money, wrapped in some old clothes, and traveled from Beijing all the way out to Fenzhou in Shanxi province - that is the area from which Art Hummel, later an ambassador to China, came. Carrying that money was illegal under Japanese rule. The train tracks had been blown at a couple of spots, which made the trip quite exciting.

Q: Did your schoolmates support the Chinese rather than the Japanese?

CROSS: Oh, yes. We were fanatically anti-Japanese. I was a strong anti-Japan proponent. That is not surprising; they were brutal.

Q: Did the Japanese occupy Beijing while you were there?

CROSS: They did indeed in 1937. I graduated from high school in 1940, so that I spent three years watching the Japanese from a close vantage point. The foreigners were not mistreated, but our lives were certainly restricted.

Q: Do you have any impressions of how the Japanese were acting?

CROSS: I think they were somewhat less belligerent in Beijing than there were in the rest of China. I remember one time, in the winter, seeing a burning village. During the train trip I mentioned earlier, we noticed the communist forces being very active. In fact, the Kuomintang forces were defeated by the Japanese and had to retreat. That left a vacuum which was rapidly filled by the communists.

Q: Did your fellow students have any views about the communist resistance?

CROSS: The communist resistance was all there was opposing the Japanese. So a lot of the foreigners had contacts with them. They were all very tightly organized. Inside Beijing, they had many agents. But if you went to some of the rural areas which had mission stations - some that were less than fifty miles from Beijing - you could meet the communists quite openly. In fact, Chinese students were heading towards "Free China" - the nationalist area where Chongqing is located. They would head that way by foot transiting areas run by the communists, who would help them reach "Free China."

Q: Did any of your Chinese friends make this journey?

CROSS: Several of them did. They went to Chongqing. I don't remember any of them joining the communists, but obviously many Chinese did, including some from Yanjing University about whom I learned later.

Q: How did your parents do their work under Japanese occupation?

CROSS: They had certain restrictions on their work. Americans had the right to run certain schools; they were not interfered with by the Japanese themselves, but some of their puppets tried to place some limits on activities. But the schools and the missionaries were handled quite delicately, until Pearl Harbor. My father's travels in China were somewhat curtailed. [Note: See Born a Foreigner for more on the Japanese in China]

Q: You left China in 1940 when you were 18. How would you grade your secondary school education?

CROSS: I think I got a good American education, if passing the college entrance examination and being accepted by a good American college is a standard for judgement. Our teachers were from Yale, Haverford, and Smith. They were not professional teachers since most had just graduated from college. Some were better than others, but I think we all received a pretty good education. Our parents had advanced degrees themselves, which was the goal that they demanded for their children.

I went to Carleton College - the second Cross generation to do so. The Congregationalist had started Harvard, Yale, Amherst and Williams. Then they moved west and founded Oberlin and then Carleton, Grinnel, and Pomona further west.

Q: You were in Carleton during what years?

CROSS: I was there from 1940 until I joined the Marines in May, 1942 after finishing my sophomore year. I remained in the service for four years and then returned to Carleton and received my degree in 1947. Then I went to Yale for graduate studies and got an MA in 1949.

Q: Let me ask about the first time you were at Carleton. Had you decided what to major in?

CROSS: I had been interested in the Foreign Service since high school. I don't know exactly why it caught my fancy; I had considered a medical career as a doctor. There was no place better to be exposed to that career than in a mission hospital. The doctor there would let me observe operations and other processes during school holidays. But I got a "C" in chemistry, which suggested that I seek another line of work.

In any case, my interest in other areas increased. My father had a number of acquaintances in the Foreign Service; he liked them. One was Edmund Clubb, the consul general in Beijing. He knew Colonel Stilwell-later a well known general. I think my father liked these people because they were interested in learning Chinese and saw that they worked well with the Chinese. So I was exposed to the Foreign Service through my father's contacts. I also met some Foreign Service kids. All of that raised my interest in the Foreign Service.

When I entered Carleton, I decided that I would major in international relations, history and English. In fact, practically all of my courses were in those three subjects except for the required courses in science, philosophy, and economics.

Q: When Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese in 1941, what did you do?

CROSS: I was working in the tea room of the College - that was my employment. I was surprised by how many of the customers whom I was serving did not know where Pearl Harbor was. I was excited by the war because I hated the Japanese so much. So I began to think about volunteering for military service, but I was considered too short and not yet academically ready for some of the Navy programs. I had earlier decided that the Marines

were the branch of service which I wanted to join. But just as I was about to enlist, I found out about a Navy recruitment effort for people who could learn Japanese or who already knew it. By using some family influence, I was allowed to enlist to go to the language school in Boulder, Colorado. Upon graduation from that school, one was eligible for a commission in the Marine Corps - a fact that I discovered after I started in school. So that is how I got into the military.

Q: What was your impression of the language training program?

CROSS: It was a high pressure cooker. One of my colleagues was a young man from Carleton, Roger Hackette, who had been born in Japan. He and I were the youngest members of the class. Everyone else had graduated from college and some were attending post-graduate schools. They were all people who had made their marks academically. We were assigned to small classes, according to our progress. There was movement from one class to another depending on one's ability. We had a horrendous exam every Saturday morning; the results were publicly announced. The pressure to stay in the course was tremendous since the alternative was to be sent to the fleet as a low level enlisted man. We had constant language drills; we used Naganuma readers which had been used to teach our military attaches assigned to Japan before the war. These were good text books. We had to memorize long Japanese paragraphs to get the feel for conversational Japanese. We didn't get much instruction on military Japanese, which was to be our fundamental tool. I caught up to that aspect of the language after my officer's training on the West Coast. I was sent to an Army camp outside of Minneapolis - Camp Savage. It was staffed primarily by Nisei and our task was to examine Japanese military documents which we were most likely to encounter in a combat situation.

When I joined a Marine combat group, my Japanese was used mostly in trying to talk people out of caves and other hide-outs. I did do quick scans of some captured documents.

Q: To what unit were you assigned and where were you stationed?

CROSS: I was in the 23rd Marines, an infantry regiment which was part of the 4th Marine Division. We went from San Diego to the Marshall Islands - the longest amphibious operation in history. When that was over, we went to Maui. From there, we went to Saipan followed by Tinian; then it was back to Maui to prepare for Iwo Jima, where we fought in February, 1945.

Q: Where did you go in the Marshalls?

CROSS: We went to the Kwajalein Atoll. My regiment landed on a small island called Roi where the airfield was located. We didn't encounter very much resistance. My role as an interpreter was first of all to participate in the interrogation of prisoners and the translation of captured Japanese documents. We could quickly scan those papers and select those which appeared to be of special interest. That operation only lasted for a brief period; Saipan and Tinian took about ten weeks all together.

Q: Was it on Saipan where there were a lot of civilians?
CROSS: Yes. Some of the civilians surrendered without putting up any kind of fight. Those were the ones that were further removed from Japanese troops. Others panicked and in the latter stages of our operation jumped into the sea off some cliffs. We tried to talk the soldiers out of the caves, as I mentioned earlier. If they didn't respond, I would order my squad - engineers, rifleman, a corpsman, a radio operator - to blow the cave shut. There were a few soldiers who surrendered.

Q: Did you get much from a captured Japanese soldier?

CROSS: Most of our captives were lower rank soldiers who really didn't have any information. The Japanese had been drilled not to surrender; that meant that those who were captured really felt in their minds that they were no longer Japanese and therefore, more or less, felt they had switched sides. We treated them well in a friendly way and that had a positive impact. They were astonished by their treatment.

Q: I would imagine that in the heat of battle it would hard to control the troops.

CROSS: That is right. I had no problem with my own Marines, but we did have some stupid commanders in front who let their emotions rule good judgement. I must say that that didn't happen at Iwo Jima. By that time, these commanders had been better trained and we were veterans - those of us who survived.

Iwo Jima was a very tough battle. We took very heavy casualties. The Japanese defended the island with considerable skill. Previously, as for example at Saipan, they would make *banzai* charges, which resulted in devastating losses to their troops. In Iwo, they didn't give up any positions; they had to be uprooted position by position. The soldiers we did capture had been left behind, mostly living in caves - the remnants of squads who had not died nor been wounded. We treated the prisoners very gently.

I remember one whose nose had been blown off and whose spinal chord had been damaged so that he couldn't move. He was sent to Pearl Harbor, placed in a Navy hospital and cured. He was given a new nose which was then - and still would be - bigger than the average Japanese nose. He now points to his face and says that he is part American. The medics repaired his spinal chord so that he first got around in a wheel chair, then graduated to crutches, to walking on his own at an increasing pace. During his convalescence, the command gave him a job maintaining the hospital grounds. When he was ready to return to Japan in 1948, he was given back pay for the three years he spent working in the hospital. He used that nest egg to start a little business.

Q: They were Japanese showing up months after our invasion.

CROSS: That is true. I returned to Iwo Jima in 1995 - 50 years after seeing action there. I was a guest of the Sumo Association. My friend, John Rich of NBC, who had gotten me invited was also a veteran of the battle; in fact we were the only two American

participants who had been there 50 years earlier. There may have been as many as ten Japanese who had fought on Iwo Jima also and had been captured. Every one else in the huge crowd were relatives of Japanese people who had been killed in the battle or newsmen.

We attended a lot of ceremonies. We went to the top of Suribachi, which is the hump at one end of the island. From there we spotted a rock in the middle of the beach. Two of our divisions had lined on that rock; my division was on the right of it and the 5th Division was on the left. I landed very near that rock. I am sure that the Japanese, dug in on the hump, could have seen my face. We finally captured it and then raised the famous flag there. The Japanese were directing their fire on us from the other end of the island; there were no heavy guns on Suribachi. They just had enough weapons to protect the observation post. For the first few days, we had to suffer very heavy artillery fire.

The Japanese whom I described earlier - the one who had reconstructive surgery and payment for work done - was at this meeting. He described his experiences with Americans; some of the audience commented that "the Japanese would never have done that."

Q: Where were you when the war ended?

CROSS: I was in Pearl Harbor attending a course. We celebrated like mad, of course. I must say that I had some different reactions to the use of atomic bombs. I wondered if it could have been used earlier in places were we fought and lost so many men. I have never been apologetic about the bombs. Beyond the fact that we would have continued to just slaughter thousands of Japanese from the air and to starve the main island, the use of the bombs ended the war and forced the Japanese to abandon their empire, such as in China. They had mistreated the Chinese and others in Southeast Asia and were a great concern to many other countries. The bombs provided the opportunity for the emperor to surrender - even if it was opposed by some of the Japanese army hotheads. It also provided the opportunity for a benevolent American occupation of Japan; we didn't have to share control of Japan with the Soviets.

After the end of the war, I was detached from the 4th Division and sent to the 1st Division which had been ordered to move into China. I had the pleasure of liberating my home town.

Q: How did you find China when you returned? How did you get there?

CROSS: I first flew to Shanghai; then I went to Tianjin, where I caught a troop train to Beijing. I was part of the first American Marine contingent that entered Beijing. I was caught in a moment of supreme pride and joy because it was the American Marines who were taking the Japanese out of China.
Q: While you were in China, did you observe any of the frictions between the nationalist and the communists?

CROSS: Sure. When we arrived, we were met by some Chinese officials waiting on the train platform. The first thing they said to our colonel was to thank him for his speech, which included some words about peace and the UN. But they went on to say that they had a big problem. The Japanese had retreated to their barracks leaving the guarding of the city wall to the "puppet troops." The 8th Route (communist) Army was in the west in the hills, right outside the city. The officials wanted a show of American force. So we patrolled the city in trucks and jeeps, displaying our presence to the thousands of Chinese citizens.

We did bring nationalist troops into Manchuria. Some came into our area, but at a much slower pace because our priority was the Sino-Soviet border which we did not wish the Soviets to breach. In fact, some Soviets had entered Manchuria and had looted it bare. The Chinese communist troops were also moving towards Manchuria. One day we Marines were on patrol duty between Tianjin and Beijing and came across a fellow in a mustard uniform from the communist army. He stopped us; we asked him why. He asked us to wait while his troops crossed the road. We asked what troops. He told us what division or brigade of the 8th Route Army he belonged to. I asked him to let me talk to his commanding officer. The Chinese whistled and his officer came up to us riding his bicycle. He had a small pistol in his pocket. He told us that his troops had been marching 90 li each day - about 30 miles - for the last three days. We asked where he was going; he said that Manchuria was his goal, which he was going to help to liberate. I pointed out that there were already Chinese troops there; he said he was <u>really</u> going to liberate it.

Q: Were we taking sides in this intra-Chinese struggle?

CROSS: We were; we were supporting the Nationalists. We transported them, for example, from West China to Taiwan. We were transporting them as rapidly as we could while at the same time removing the Japanese from China. We would load the Nationalists on a ship, take them to a Chinese port, disembark them and then embark the Japanese for a trip to Japan. Then the ship would go to some port, like Shanghai or Hong Kong, and start the circle once again. We poured the Nationalist troops into North China.

Q: Did the Marines have a sense of mission?

CROSS: No, we didn't. This is an important point. We were assigned a political task, but knew few of the details because it was a very delicate game that the U.S. was playing. We were trying to help the Nationalists to get into position, but our orders really were to evacuate the Japanese. If we really wanted to help the Nationalists, we should have kept the Japanese in China. But of course that would not have been acceptable. We were never fully briefed on the American game.

Q: In retrospect, do you think that you didn't have full guidance because the Washington policy makers weren't sure themselves on our objectives?

CROSS: I think, in looking back, that we were really seeking peace between the Nationalists and the Communists. We were not going to let the Communists win by

default. Only a few months after we landed in China, the Marshall mission came. I had already left China by that time. That mission was mounted in the hope of finding a peaceful solution to the Communist-Nationalist struggle. It did not succeed because neither side was willing to share power.

Q: After your China tour, what happened next?

CROSS: I had enough points to enable me to be discharged. I went home to my parents' apartment in New York. I arrived there on December 23, 1945. I got married six days after being discharged. I had met my wife at Carleton; she comes from that part of the country.

I then went back to college for another two years. Then I went to Yale graduate school.

Q: How did you find college after your four year absence?

CROSS: I was four years maturer and was married. I had been an officer. My service in the Marine Corps had not changed my mind to enter the Foreign Service. But I didn't want to take the exam right away. The GI bill paid for my last years in college as well as my graduate studies.

Q: What did you focus on at Yale?

CROSS: I concentrated on Far East studies and international relations. I had a chance to go on for a Ph.D., but by this time I was tired of academics. I attended Yale from 1947 to 1949.

Q: Were you impressed by the Far East study courses?

CROSS: It was spotty. The courses in modern Chinese history were rather weak.

Q: That is surprising because Yale always had a association with China.

CROSS: It did, but the "experts" had not really returned to Yale by that time. Yale had some graduate students teaching in China; some were Ph.D. candidates. Some returned, but were not quite at a professorial level.

The language studies were very good. I took more Chinese language courses. Japanese history courses were good. One of the Chinese history courses was taught by a Harvard professor.

Q: Were you at all engaged on what was happening in China at the time?

CROSS: Yes indeed. My father, who, as I mentioned, lived and worked in New York, was the head of the Far East Committee of the Foreign Mission Conference - a sort of eclectic organization. So he was greatly concerned about what was going to be done with

China. He of course had very strong feelings about all that was going on in China at the time. On the whole, I think he leaned toward the Communists.

Q: What was the general attitude towards the KMT and the communists? That is the alleged general corruption in Chiang Kai-shek's KMT and the communist willingness to carry the burden of the fighting?

CROSS: There was considerable discussion of the corruption; there was a general feeling that the Nationalists would not win the civil war and that therefore we should make some kind of a deal with the Communists. The Marshall mission, which I mentioned before, was still active during this time.

Q: How did you find the Yale faculty on this issue of communists versus the KMT?

CROSS: It was really split. My faculty advisor, David Rowe, was very pro-nationalist. Some of the other faculty members were less so. It was interesting that many of the Army officers who were at Yale to study Chinese had served in the European theater. They were largely anti-communist in light of their experiences - and this was still only 1947.

Joining the Foreign Service

Q: While you were studying at Yale, did you make any inquiries about the Foreign Service?

CROSS: Indeed I did. I took the Foreign Service exam in September, 1948. It was then still a two and a half day exam - terrible. I passed the written part, but I failed in the French exam. I thought I knew enough of that language so that I didn't do any extra work preparing for the exam. Roughly in this same time period, I was offered a very attractive scholarship to pursue a Ph.D., but I was tired of academia at the time.

So I went to Washington with a list of Yale alumni in various bureaucracies. I visited CIA and military intelligence. I went to the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) - or its predecessor. All of these organizations offered me a job, but the best one, in terms of interest, was the one I got from the United States Information Service (later USIA) - then still a part of the Department of State. I accepted their offer. I finally took the Foreign Service exam again and passed it while I was in Hong Kong - my fourth post.

Taipei - 1949-1950

Q: When did you join USIS? What were your first assignments?

CROSS: June, 1949. I started in Taipei. We had been assigned to Chungking, but just before we boarded the ship on our way to Hong Kong, we were told that the assignment had been changed to Taipei because the State Department had withdrawn all our personnel from Chungking.

We were in Taipei from August, 1949 to January, 1950. My wife had gotten a job at the university. The tour was cut short for a very interesting reason. Matters were progressing quite well in Taipei. The U.S. had bombed the city quite heavily during the war, but the Taiwanese and the nationalists were moving along quite smartly in reconstruction. But the Department became rattled; it thought that the island would fall into communist hands. It sent a fellow by the name of Krentz, who had been in Taipei as consul general at one time. His task was to get us all to leave. The staff had met together and had assessed the situation in Taipei. We sent a message to the Department saying that in our view, the Chinese on Taiwan had decided to stick with the Nationalists. We called them "the distillation of defeat" in that they could have joined the Communists on the Mainland but did not. That suggested that they would oppose any communist takeover and that in our view, there was not a danger of Taipei falling into the wrong hands.

The Department, of course, did not accept our view. I said that I would remain in Taipei, but I would send my family to Hong Kong. That was not acceptable because the Department saw Hong Kong as also falling to the Communists. I then suggested Japan, but that was also turned down because it was under the Occupation. It suggested that my family be repatriated to the U.S.; that was not acceptable to us because we had no place to live there.

Finally, all of us who had families were transferred to other posts - all of which were by any standard far more dangerous than Taipei. We went to Jakarta in the middle of the transfer of power from the Dutch to the Indonesians. One family went to Saigon; one went to Rangoon where the Red Flag Communists and the White Flag Communists were engaged in a war. One family went to Seoul - just before the end of the Korean war. Ed Martin went to Burma. Dave Osborn went to Japan, I believe. Some of the CIA officers were sent to other posts. Some people sent their families to the U.S. and then sat in Taipei for many months - in perfect safety and comfort.

Q: This is a very interesting story. You said that it was the Department that misread the situation.

CROSS: Indeed. The decision was made at the highest levels of the Department.

Q: When you first arrived in Taipei, what was your assignment?

CROSS: My first job was to open some branch libraries throughout the island. I went first to Taichung and Kaohsiung to talk to owners of some stores. We opened USIS libraries in both places with locally-hired librarians. We gave them books and they were in business. On one occasion, I was sent around Taiwan - I was one of the first people in the consulate to travel all around the island. Now it can be done easily, but in 1950 the roads on the east side of the island were cut right into the cliffs. They were very narrow and some parts were still unpaved. Traffic had to be directed so that passage was open only in one direction - changing that direction every two hours or so.

Everywhere I went I was treated royally, as if I were the ambassador himself. The Chinese refused to accept the idea that even one as low in rank as I would not have some goodies to bring them. But our policy was that we were not going to do anything to support the Nationalists - at that time, anyway.

I took notes. I remember one case in which a Chinese army communications officer asked for some equipment. I told him that I thought we would not honor his request. He replied that when we sent communications equipment to Taiwan, we should make sure it got to him. By the time I finished this five day trip around the island, I found that we were again sending a lot of equipment to the Nationalists - some of which was communications material.

Q: Was there in late 1949, an obvious distaste for the Nationalists? Did people think they were losers who didn't have a chance? Was our policy under review?

CROSS: I think there was a desire to write them off, so that we could start all over again. There was a feeling that they would lose Taiwan because they had given up on the mainland. You have to remember that many of the losses on the mainland had much to do with defections. I think that experience weighed heavily on our policy makers. They didn't believe our "distillation of defeat" theory. The hard-core Chinese - Chiang Kai-shek, some intellectuals, some doctors, the western trained - didn't see it as we did. These people were less pro-Nationalist than they were anti-Communists. They were scared.

Q: Were there any signs at the time of frictions between the mainland Nationalists and the native Taiwanese?

CROSS: When I arrived, we talked to the Taiwanese in Japanese and to the mainlanders in Mandarin. I still had enough Japanese to carry on a conversation. The Taiwanese had been treated very badly by the nationalists, including massacres. The consulate was in a difficult position because we were under surveillance all the time. Yet we had to have contacts with the Taiwanese. We tried to discourage them from coming to our homes where they might be arrested. We would meet them casually in a variety of places.

Q: The nationalists were pretty tough.

CROSS: They were, but they were also tough on their own members. Any sign of doubt, particularly if it might result in a defection, was immediately squelched. The Nationalists had learned a lesson from their experiences on the Mainland. Even today, in China, you will find people who will do the right thing. Then and now, these people find ways of doing what they consider right even if the authorities don't permit it. They will pursue their education regardless.

There were some who worked for the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) - a joint American-Chinese endeavor which had been in existence on the mainland and was continued on Taiwan. They proceeded without government support and developed a

land distribution program which became one of the most effective U.S. assistance programs anywhere in the world.

I think that the top KMT officials behaved in one way, while some of their subordinates behaved somewhat differently. Then there were the Taiwanese. The more enlightened KMT officials and the Taiwanese began to meet and slowly the two began to merge. That is the situation today; Taiwan has a Taiwanese president.

Q: You mentioned that your wife was teaching. What were her experiences?

CROSS: She taught at Taiwan Nationalist University - a large school. She taught American literature - novels. There were no American novels available on the island, so she typed out the "Red Badge of Courage" on a little typewriter and made 14 copies. Her classroom was without a ceiling - it had been blown up; a tarp was used instead. She also participated in an English language radio program; she was "Mrs. Chase." The role of a Mr. Lee was played by David Osborn, who at the time was also employed by USIS. The core theme of the program was that Mrs. Chase would meet Mr. Lee some place where they held a conversation. They would pronounce the words slowly at first and then in normal rhythm. At the start, they had no audience. After two or three broadcasts, their listeners totaled 20-30,000.

Q: Did you or your wife try to reach out to the Taiwanese or was it policy to focus on the Nationalists?

CROSS: We tried to meet as many Taiwanese as possible, but in her university class there were only a couple of Taiwanese students. The other dozen or so of her students were mainlanders who had already progressed some ways to knowledge of English.

Q: After you and your colleagues left Taipei, did we have any residual representation there?

CROSS: Indeed and it proceeded quite well with just the remnants of the consulate.

Indonesia

Q: When did you arrive in Jakarta?

CROSS: We got to Jakarta in early February, 1950 and we remained there until November 1951.

Q: What was the situation in Indonesia when you arrived?

CROSS: The Dutch had just transferred sovereignty to the Indonesians. So we entered a very unsettled atmosphere. Some questions were unresolved; for example, people were trying to figure out what to do with the Dutch army - in fact, a battalion of so-called native troops who were being given a choice of going to Holland or joining the

Indonesian Army. That caused a lot of friction.

Then there were some Dutch renegades running around. The day we arrived in Jakarta, a Tunco Westerling, one of the renegades, cut the road from the port to the city. So we were stuck in the port for most of the day before the embassy could rescue us.

Q: What was our role in the founding of the new country of Indonesia?

CROSS: The U.S. had a "good offices" role. The thrust for independence started with VJ day. On August 17, 1945, Sukarno declared Indonesia an independent state. The Dutch had no troops on the archipelago. So the British Ghurkas arrived primarily to capture the Japanese. But Sukarno, who had been essentially a Japanese creation, and his men scrounged for arms and resisted the Ghurkas briefly. Then the Dutch arrived with their troops and began to arm their Indonesian supporters.

Indonesia is a huge country spread out for thousands of miles over innumerable islands. In 1948, a "good offices" committee was formed - I believe under UN auspices. The Indonesians were allowed to choose a member and they selected Australia. The Dutch chose Belgium. The two chosen countries then asked the U.S. to join them as the third party. We sent a cruiser - the "Grenville" - which was the name then given to the agreements that the Indonesians and the Dutch finally signed. These agreements moved Indonesia gradually towards independence. So we did play a "good offices" role.

By the time we arrived, these various accords were being implemented. It was a fascinating time because we were then beginning to be engaged with the Indonesians in their efforts at nation building.

Q *Were there many expatriate Dutch and what was their attitude towards us?*

CROSS: There were a lot of expatriates who were rather bitter about the U.S. Many of them had been prisoners in Japanese camps; they were bitter about the treatment they had received there. Many, of course, had led a good life in their 300-years old colony; they found it hard to give that up. The younger and more modern settlers and those who had arrived more recently from Holland were more far-sighted and understood the direction the world was taking. But I think almost all of the Dutch wondered why the U.S. was forcing them to surrender their colony. They thought we were their friend; they had supported us in the war - to the extent they could. I pointed out that we had liberated their mother country. They weren't any happier with their own government.

Q: What was USIS' mission in Indonesia at this time?

CROSS: USIS was headed by Willard Hanna. He was probably the most informed officer in the embassy. He had made an extraordinary number of friends - some of them very senior Indonesian officials - who kept him up-to-date on goings on. The Dutch were mad at him all the time. After the transfer of power, Hanna was very close to the top - people like Sukarno and Suton Sjahrir - the leader of the socialist party. Sjahrir eventually was

shoved aside by Sukarno, but at the beginning he was quite influential. As a member of the USIS staff, we were part of Hanna's network. For instance, I took movies into the hinterlands; we couldn't go very far because of security considerations, but we certainly were welcomed wherever we went.

I worked on several publications. We had on our staff one of the top Indonesian journalists; we produced a news pamphlet mostly about the U.S., but including some general subjects. It was written in Bahasa Indonesian, which was the language most used throughout the country. We had government support for this publication, so that our Indonesian editor was in effect teaching the Indonesians how to use what was to be the official language. The Indonesian government was trying to do the same thing, but couldn't match what we were putting out. So we were close to the leading lights of the new country.

We also worked very closely with the development of the educational system. We were in at the start of the university system. The Dutch had a different system from the French; only the very best Indonesian students were admitted to Dutch institutions for advanced education so that the Indonesians were quite deficient in people with advanced degrees, such as doctors, etc.

Q: Had we started bringing Indonesians to the U.S. for training?

CROSS: I was for a brief period responsible for the exchange program. We had begun to seek potential exchange students, but I don't remember now whether the first had gone to the U.S. by the time I left Jakarta. We did spend considerable time on the leader program; I think we did build a program base for exchanges and training which did become quite successful. Hanna was a great proponent of these kinds of programs.

Q: Who was the ambassador during your tour?

CROSS: H. Merle Cochran. He had been the Treasury attaché in Paris for seventeen years. Then he became the chief of the Foreign Service Inspection Corps during the war.

Q: How did he fit into this rapidly changing and developing situation? How did he run the embassy?

CROSS: He didn't run the embassy all that well. His main concern was to insure that the U.S. - and its representatives - did not become too involved in the Indonesian struggles. He was continually concerned with us taking on more than we could deliver. He opposed the growth of the staff, partly because all of us had to live in the same hotel, at least when he first arrived. Later we did disperse, but initially, the accommodations were Spartan. Cochran was an old-line, very conservative guy. He later became deputy director of the IMF. He was a very good financial analyst. He did not support assistance per se; he was not enthusiastic about technical assistance, in part I assume, because it would have expanded the American presence in Indonesia.

Q: What about the embassy staff?

CROSS: The DCM for most of our tour was Jake Beam. He had come from serving on Secretary Marshall's staff - what is now known as S/S. He had a German background in the Foreign Service. I was told (by Beam) that he got into trouble with Marshall because Marshall had insisted that a policy issue be presented on one sheet of paper which at the bottom gave the Secretary the opportunity to vote "Yes" or "No." So the policy question had to be phrased in such a way that it could be answered either in the affirmative or the negative. Jake sent a memo to the secretary which ended in the customary "Yes"or "No" fashion, but he added the words "Don't Know" as a third option. That didn't sit too well with the Secretary, who told Beam that one should not make fun of U.S. policy. So that the next thing he knew was that he was assigned to Indonesia, despite his long background in Europe. He was a great guy. He used to serve "beamlets," gimlets in drinking glasses [tumblers].

Q: Later he became our ambassador to Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Did you have any hard charging, more junior officers?

CROSS: I think we had a first rate staff. The political officer was Frank Galbraith, who also later became an ambassador to Indonesia. He became one of my best friends in the Foreign Service. He had gone to Yale to learn Indonesian at the same time I was there; the Galbraiths took us under their wing when we arrived in Jakarta. The economic section included Coby Swank, later our ambassador to Cambodia. Fred Farnsworth was the administrative officer.

Q: Did the staff, despite the ambassador's views, mix with the local officials?

CROSS: Most of the outreach was done by USIS. We were very good at that, if I may say so. We were more unrestricted than the embassy people, but, example, Frank Galbraith was superb. He built a whole network of embassy contacts. Coby had to deal primarily with what was left of the Dutch infrastructure; the Indonesian follow-ons knew something about economics but were obviously inexperienced.

Q: What was the Indonesian government like when you arrived?

CROSS: It was just getting started. Many of the top jobs were still held by Dutch, some of whom were very conscientious and others were not. The Dutch did what they always had done and now at the same time also trained Indonesians. Some did that seriously; others were not so helpful. The security situation was very "iffy" much of the time. There were a lot of guerrilla groups still operating in areas not under the control of the government's forces.

There was a question whether Indonesia would be a unitary state or a federal state. Indonesia is populated by many different people and cultures; the predominantly Muslim areas, such as Java and Sumatra, were viewed as separate entities; the Sulawesi was not a majority Muslim area. These tensions were resolved while we were there when it was

decided to make all of the islands into a single unitary entity.

Q: You mentioned the security problem. What was it?

CROSS: The Dutch troops were leaving on schedule, so they were not concerned with the country's security. The Indonesia army was not all that well disciplined; it included forces that had been commanded by the Dutch whose loyalty was not certain. Then there were just plain bandits running around all over the place. At one time, a Yale professor by the name of Kennedy was shot near Bandung. A couple of our friends were shot and stabbed. The embassy itself was unmolested.

Q: Did these various groups inhibit your work at all?

CROSS: We really didn't have any major problems because we were well briefed on where we could go and where we couldn't. I traveled throughout the country because my focus was really on the Overseas Chinese. They had their own problems; they were mistreated by the Indonesians - in some cases, something like pogroms. In some instances, the Mainland struggles between the KMT and the Communists were reflected in the Indonesian Chinese community; because of that, I spent a lot of time in that community.

Q: By this time, the Chinese civil war was over and we were looking at the Chinese communists as a major threat. Was your work influenced by this?

CROSS: The People's Republic of China (PRC) had established an embassy in Jakarta. It was very active with the same groups with whom we had contacts - Chinese language newspapers and schools. The KMT had some very good representatives either from the mainland or Taiwan to work with the Overseas Chinese community. There was a lot of infighting between the KMT and the communist representatives for the souls of the Overseas Chinese.

Q: Were we viewing the PRC as the enemy at this point?

CROSS: Certainly. As far as we were concerned, the Cold War was going full blast and the Chinese Communists were on the other team. This made it very difficult for the Overseas Chinese who depended essentially on foreign protection to save their lives and goods from the Indonesians. While the Dutch were there, the Chinese had their protection; when the Dutch left, they had to look towards the PRC, which was a formidable power in the Far East. The communists used this opportunity to rouse the Overseas Chinese to their side.

Q: When you were in Jakarta, what was our embassy's impression of Sukarno?

CROSS: I think he was viewed as a demagogic person who was very charismatic. He was favorably disposed to the U.S. as well as to most other countries. He was trying to move Indonesia into the non-aligned world. However, from the very beginning, I think the

embassy had serious reservations about Sukarno's ability to lead his country into the modern world.
It should be noted that for the first few years of his reign, Sukarno was very busy consolidating his power, including military sweeps of some parts of the archipelago to put down the dissidents. He was also trying to acquire the western part of New Guinea (Irian Jaya). That consumed his public appearances, and he wished to avoid being involved in the battles of the Communists and Nationalists among the Overseas Chinese.

Q: What was Sukarno's rationale for wishing to incorporate Irian into Indonesia?

CROSS: Irian had been a Dutch colony; so the Indonesians felt that when the Dutch left Indonesia, they should also leave Irian and turn that over to the Indonesians. Of course, Irian was not a free standing island like those that composed Indonesia, but only part of an island.

Q: Was the Communist Party (PKI) active while you were in Indonesia?

CROSS: It had been badly defeated in 1946 during a battle that was fought between it and the Indonesian republican forces. One of the PKI's leaders was captured and shot. So after that, the PKI was not really a force, although Sukarno watched the communists carefully and worried about their connection with the Chinese and the Soviet Union. But both of those communist countries were very careful about their relationship to the PKI; they were much more interested in developing a close connection with Sukarno. In those days, he did not align himself with the communist world; he was much more interested in becoming a leader of the non-aligned world. In the end, of course, he became too close to the communists and was unseated.

Q: Were you aware of anything that CIA was doing in Indonesia?

CROSS: While I was in Jakarta, the CIA was just getting started. The first station chief was an odd duck who would often chase the waiters around the garden of his residence. He drank heavily. His cover position was that of Treasury Attache. I don't think much happened during my tour in Indonesia; the station was moving along slowly, but surely, in its infancy stage.

Q: Was McCarthyism a problem for you at this stage of your career?

CROSS: It was not; I was the only Chinese expert in the embassy and therefore not a focus of any investigations. You have to remember that by 1950, all government employees had to pass a loyalty test, which had been implemented by the Truman administration. It was a rather thorough security check. This program brought to light some notorious cases of espionage, like Klaus Fuchs and the Rosenbergs. McCarthy just picked up the Truman program, in part, I believe, because that program was beginning to dissipate. The senator began his own investigations because the Truman loyalty program was not doing all McCarthy thought it should be doing. I will have more to say about McCarthy and his program when we get to some of my future assignments.

Q: Did our position in Jakarta change after the beginning of the Korean War on June 25, 1950?

CROSS: I don't remember anything special happening because of the Korean War. I do recall being somewhat concerned because I was in the Marine Corps reserve; if any one should have been called up, it should have been me since I spoke Chinese. But I wasn't. The Indonesian government, I think, supported the UN in its actions on the Korean Peninsula. But I am not sure how the Indonesians might have reacted had the war broken out a couple of years later, by which time, the Indonesians were not that wed to us or the West; they were concerned that we might somehow take away their independence. We also became a convenient whipping boy for Sukarno when he wanted to distract his people from any domestic concerns. But I don't remember the Indonesians making much of the Korean War.

Q: What were your experiences with the Indonesians in general?

CROSS: We did a lot of outreach to the Indonesians. Both Frank Galbraith and I had an American friend who was a movie distributor. He lived near the Punjak. He used to lend his house in the hills for weekend retreats by embassy officers. He was never bothered by bandits because he used to show movies on an outdoor screen the villagers watched; and they, in fact, became a protecting power for the distributor.

One time, we went to this village together with Mechtar Lubis, the editor of Merdeka, and Rusian Amwar, also in the newspaper business, and I think there was a third Indonesian involved in media; so it was Frank and I and those three Indonesians. The five of us spent the whole weekend talking about the state of the world. It was very hard for Americans not to mistake Indonesian politeness and smoothness for agreement; the Malays are the same way. You have to get behind this veneer to see where the tensions really lie. Indonesians liked casual conversations; they liked to laugh a lot and therefore enjoyed jokes.

Q: Did you have anything to do with Congressional delegations?

CROSS: We had some visitors. I remember one delegation headed by a State Department man which was sent to see what kind of assistance we might be able to provide. There was Congressional input into that mission. But there weren't many Congressmen who at the time cared about Indonesia. In any case, even if there had been visitors, I don't think I would have seen them, being the most junior officer in USIS.

Q: Did you see USIS as the agency with which you wanted to spend the rest of your working life?

CROSS: No, I was much more interested in political work and reporting. In some sense, my work with the Overseas Chinese community was political in nature. I wrote quite a few reports on Overseas Chinese in different places in Indonesia. I sent those through Frank Galbraith and the embassy's political section.

Q: Were these Overseas Chinese potential allies with the PRC?

CROSS: Yes, although much depended to which generation they belonged to and perhaps their economic status. The appeal of a victorious, successful China was very strong, even to those who had been born in Indonesia. There were really three groups of overseas Chinese: a) the descendants of those who had emigrated to Indonesia a long time ago - most of them had come from South China as laborers for the Dutch and then had worked their way up the economic ladder to be small shop owners or what were called "native managers." They were well established. Some of them had lost their Chineseness - had become Muslim, etc. This group stopped supporting Chinese schools in Indonesia.

The second group had arrived in Indonesia in the early part of the 20th Century. They were workers in the tin mines and other extracting industries. They were more China-oriented. Some of this group had graduated from being workers and had accumulated sufficient funds to found Chinese language schools. They lived in typical overseas Chinese enclaves all over the country. These people were the victims of periodic pogroms conducted by the Indonesians. They were careful about their support of the PRC, in part because originally they had been members of the KMT. Some of the richer overseas Chinese were shaken down by the KMT and had to pay some tribute.

The third group were people had fled the 1930s travails of China just before and immediately after WW II. These people felt much closer to China than the other two groups.

Q: How successful were you in getting close to the Overseas Chinese?
CROSS: I worked very closely with people who had been sent to Indonesia from Taiwan. I think they were successful in maintaining good relations with the Overseas Chinese until the Indonesians began to block the publication of Chinese language newspapers. The theory in the Overseas Chinese community was that unless a large power protected them, they would become victims of the Indonesians.

Q: Did the Indonesian government try to prevent you from working with the overseas Chinese?

CROSS: No, but Ambassador Merle Cochran knew that Sukarno did not want the PRC to become too influential in Indonesia. By the same token, he did not want the U.S. to be engaged in a struggle with the PRC on Indonesian soil. Sukarno didn't want us flying the Cold War flag in his country. Cochran talked to Hanna who told me to concentrate on just learning about the Overseas Chinese and not to engage in anything that might be construed as propaganda.

Hong Kong

Q: When you left Indonesia in November, 1951, what was your next assignment?

CROSS: We went to Hong Kong; we arrived there February or March, 1952. We stayed there until April 1954. I was still in USIS. I worked with Chinese refugees who had just escaped the PRC. We had a book translation program which had been started by Dick McCarthy - he was also an FSO. He thought that much could be done to strengthen the Chinese refugees by a) providing them with reading material and b) providing them jobs as translators. We built up a network and managed to translate and publish a lot of good books - all anti communist - e.g. Koestler's "Darkness at Noon."

I was also editor for a while of a magazine called *World Today* which had enough attractions in it to develop a good readership. It also had an anti-communist bent. It was distributed to Overseas Chinese as well as residents of Hong Kong. This magazine soon reached a circulation of approximately 125,000 people.

I also participated in "China watching" by working on the weekly summary of Chinese propaganda. The theory was that a good "China watcher" could predict what might happen in the PRC by reading carefully the instructions that were issued to the Chinese propaganda cadres - e.g. "This is the way this subject should be discussed now", etc. I remember the instructions concerning land reform which gave a clear sign of communist intentions and what should be said at each stage of the land reform process. The same steps were followed for all the mass propaganda programs and you could tell what the final objectives were by how the propagandists were instructed to "spin" them and the slogans to use.

Q: Please explain what "China watching" was.

CROSS: I compare "China watching" to an ornithologist at the edge of a woods. We were looking into China from the outside. We depended heavily on those countries that had missions in Beijing as well as Chinese media output. Part of our task was to acquire - against the rules - material from inside China. We would read it and translate or summarize that which we considered important. We surveyed the PRC's press on a daily basis and submitted digests of that. The articles to be highlighted were chosen by the Chinese language officers in Hong Kong and then translated by our superb Chinese staff. In those days, these translations and summaries had to be sent back to Washington, but we would also make them available to selected newspaper reporters and scholars. But the principal use of these efforts was for analytical purposes, to see whether we could divine what was going on inside the PRC. "China watching" was a full-scale occupation for a large number of people, not only for the U.S. but for members of other countries' consulates in Hong Kong. We would occasionally discuss the available information with other diplomats.

On the economic front, we had a rather sizeable staff doing analysis of China's economy. When I joined the Hong Kong consulate, this whole "China watching" exercise was relatively new. But we were able to watch developments over a period of years. For example, the land reform movement that I mentioned earlier came to a conclusion while I was still in Hong Kong.

Q: Tell us a little about this land reform movement.

CROSS: Simply put, the communists appropriated the land owned by the landlords and gave it to the landless. They shot many of the landlords and divided up their holdings. The communists would first hold meetings during which accusations would be made against the landlords and their "brutal treatment" of the peasants. Then meetings would be held on how the property would be split. The first step of the Chinese communist policy was to redistribute land; the next step was to form cooperatives which eventually led to the formation of communes. The commune program was part of the Great Leap Forward. It was poorly developed and miserably implemented, resulting in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in one of the greatest famines in history.

Q: During your tour, 1952-54, what was the consulate's impression of Communist China?

CROSS: We had a very clear idea of how ruthless and cruel the Chinese were. However, we still felt that the country was not falling apart and that people were working on problems. This was a period when it appeared that China was using all of its people and charging ahead.

On the other hand, the Chinese we knew in Hong Kong were giving us a different perspective. I think, in some cases, we didn't consider their views seriously enough. We viewed these Chinese as refugees who were bound to have serious misgivings about the Communist regime. In the final analysis, I am not sure that our neglect had any serious impact on our conclusions about the PRC. We did report what we were told, although as I suggested, we might well have indicated some skepticism.

Q: Were you at all affected that by this time, *our troops were in combat with the Chinese in Korea?*

CROSS: That was just one more interesting aspect of the Far East situation. We were living in Hong Kong, a bastion of a free society - totally free economy - right next door to the most communist country in the world. Great Britain had troops in Korea, while running a part of China - Hong Kong - which it had wrested a century earlier - and which could be wrested away from it by the PRC without a moment's notice. Yet we did not think that the PRC would take any precipitous steps or, on the other hand, that Hong Kong would become the economic gem of the Far East that it did.

There is one important fact about Great Britain's participation in the Korean war. It had considerable impact on the economic well being of Hong Kong. Before WWII, Hong Kong was just a "godown" on the China coast. Its only claim to fame was that it was under British rule. The British used Shanghai as their main trading post. The trade used to flow between Shanghai and Tianjin and other treaty ports. These trade routes were protected by foreign troops. The trade was primarily intra-China led by large foreign companies.

Then came WWII; the West lost its extra-territorial privileges in the Chinese treaty ports. Nevertheless, the intra-China trading policy still prevailed, and Hong Kong was looked at as part of this old trading pattern; i.e. part of the intra-China trade, not as an entry point for trade between China and the rest of the world.
Then came the Korean war and the UN embargo. That barred Hong Kong from exporting goods that were made on the mainland; they had to be manufactured in Hong Kong itself. So it lost some connection with the PRC; but at the same time, it became a major exporter of its own wares to the rest of the world. Manufacturing increased sharply as Hong Kong discovered that its goods were in high demand, and that was really the birth of Hong Kong's economic boom.

Q: What was your impression of British rule in Hong Kong?

CROSS: I don't think the Chinese in Hong Kong liked British rule very much, but on the other hand, they didn't want to join the PRC either. Most of them had already voted on that choice with their feet; they had fled Mainland China. The British gave them the rule of law, which was consistent and transparent. The Chinese may have chafed at British rule, but I think they appreciated the security and confidence the British brought them, not to mention that it brought a rising standard of living for most of them.

Q: Who was the consul general during your tour?

CROSS: Walter McConaughy.

Q: Wasn't he an "old China hand?"

CROSS: He was and he wasn't. He had been stationed in China but, for example, didn't speak any Chinese. He was a good consul general; he was a "cool cat." He had been kicked out of Shanghai where he had been the deputy to Consul General Cabot - of the well known Boston family. Cabot was a tall, stuffy man; he got out of Shanghai in time, leaving a skeleton staff to watch the communist takeover. The Chinese immediately made everything difficult for the consulate general; the Chinese employees began to be very demanding.
Walter was a good consul general. I liked him a lot. He had an old fashioned Foreign Service ability of not taking notes but remembering all conversations almost *verbatim*. He would then commit them to paper.

The staff of the consulate general was very good, especially the "China watchers." We had a fellow by the name of Howie Borman, who left the service long ago. He was a protégé of Edmund Clubb, a legendary linguist who served several years in Beijing before and after the war. Howie knew about Chinese leaders thoroughly, even though he was a relatively junior officer. His main stock in trade, and one that he worked on very hard, was to know the biography of every Communist leader. He was the father of this esoteric program which subsequently became a major stock in trade for the Foreign Service. He also established the press monitoring system. Ralph Clough, now a teacher at SAIS, was there; he was the head of the political section. Doak Barnett was there as well

as Art Hummel. On the economic side, we had John Heidemann.

The Chinese language speakers were Hummel and to a lesser extent, me. We had people who were quite fluent in the language; they also were skilled in dealing with the Chinese. I think this was a period in Hong Kong when we were best staffed for reporting on events in the PRC.

Q: Did the "China watchers" work well with you on your publications?

CROSS: Yes indeed, although I think I would have put the question in reverse. It is we who had to work well with them. We had a superb Chinese staff who produced these publications; the role of the American supervisors was essentially to determine which products would be included in the publications. But I think we all worked together as a team. For example, working with USIS was a "Union Press" group called the "Third Force" people. They kept looking for a third power center, somewhere between Chiang Kai-shek and the communists. They were mainly graduates of Peking University who had fled China one way or another. They formed teaching groups, drama groups, a research group which is now known as the "University Research Center" in Hong Kong. It provided raw material - clippings and other written information - on what was going on in China. This group was supported by USIS and other elements of the consulate general.

Q: Do you remember any particular occasions that took place during your tour?

CROSS: There were a lot of developments in the PRC. The Korean war came to an end in this time frame. There were a number of foolish things that the PRC was doing - e.g. accusing the U.S. of conducting germ warfare. They would show things that looked like large canisters with flies crawling over them. That was what we intended to drop on the Chinese people. People who should have known better believed this propaganda - international scientists like Joseph Needham who had written a history of Chinese science. He maintained to a group of fellow travelers that we were dropping those canisters.

Q: Did the end of the Korean war make any difference to our operations?

CROSS: I don't think so, because even with the end of the war, there was no improvement in the Sino-U.S. relationship. I left in 1954 when Dulles was just finishing his "ring of containment" - Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Phillippines, SEATO, etc. So by that year, we were fully committed to the independence of Taiwan.

Q: Was there any concern in Hong Kong in the early 1950s that the PRC might just occupy the territory?

CROSS: There always was that feeling of uncertainty. The British were very cautious; they went out of their way not to antagonize the PRC but were at the same time quite firm about their rights in Hong Kong. They tried to make sure that no aspect of the Chinese civil war would take place in Hong Kong. They were not entirely successful. The KMT organized thousands and thousands refugees who would demonstrate whenever called

upon. The communists organized the labor units who would periodically take to the streets for demonstrations. The British would squelch all demonstrations as quickly as possible.

Q: Did we share information with the British?

CROSS: I worked with the British Information Service. I think others worked even more closely with the British than I. But I am not sure how much we shared with the British. They did consider Hong Kong as part of their empire; the governor was part of the British Colonial Service. By my second tour, the governor was a member of the British Foreign Service, perhaps representing some change in the British view of Hong Kong.

The British were very security conscious. They were very tough on anything that might have weakened security, including even, for example, our relationships with the KMT in Hong Kong.

Washington

Q: When you left Hong Kong in 1954, what was your next assignment?

CROSS: I returned to Washington to become a member of the USIA Policy Planning Staff. That assignment was given to me principally because the personnel people were trying to get me back into the regular Foreign Service. The job dealt primarily with China; it was not very exciting. The only thing I remember about that tour is that I stopped a propaganda ploy that we were going to perpetrate by publicizing a famine that was taking place on the Mainland. Some of the policy makers wanted to offer food to the PRC, knowing well it would be refused and that we really would not come through even if accepted. But the refusal would be played up as a sign of the tyranny of the PRC. This ploy seemed to be so childish to me that I could hardly believe that it had in fact reached very senior levels in the Agency. I wrote a strong dissent in part because in Asia, making fun of people's hunger was viewed very negatively and the ploy would prove counter-productive. Fortunately, the decision makers took my side.

Mostly I worked on material that praised Taiwan and that denigrated the PRC.

Q: You were involved in this policy planning from 1954 to 1955.

CROSS: Right, and I'll explain in a minute how that transfer came about. But first of all, I want to talk about McCarthy and his pursuits.

When I arrived back in Washington, I was first debriefed. On the second to last day of that, as I was preparing to go on home leave, I entered the offices on Pennsylvania Avenue. I was stopped by a dapper man with pointed shoes who declared himself to be a member of some old family from Virginia. Shortly after, he told me that he was a personnel officer. I am not sure why the connection, but it was made. As I was entering the elevator, this fellow asked that I go with him to his office. There he asked if I could

replace a Bob Catto right away - the job to which in fact I had been assigned. I said that I thought Bob was not leaving for four or five weeks to his next post. I saw no reason why I should give up my home leave under that kind of time schedule. The personnel guy said that plans had changed and that Catto was resigning that day.

In fact, I had been told that Catto was through before they had even told him. I discovered that when, after my conversation with the personnel man, I went to Catto's office where I overheard a telephone conversation that he was having with that personnel man. In that conversation, he agreed to come down to the personnel office right away. It was obvious that his termination would be announced then; so I was told of Catto's fate before he had been.

I went off for about an hour to some other office. When I returned to say goodbye to him, I found the office empty; he had come back from his conversation with the personnel office, cleaned out his desk and left. He hadn't said anything to anyone. I tried to figure out why this had happened; I could only surmise that he was terminated because in Taipei, where he was in 1947, he had been particularly friendly with a Taiwanese individual during the worst part of the massacres perpetrated by the KMT.

Q: That suggests that the axe was falling not only on those who might have seemed to be communist sympathizers, but others as well.

CROSS: That is right. If you were not an ardent Chiang Kai-shek supporter, you were - as seen by the KMT - suspect. Their views were incorporated into the American loyalty system and translated that anyone not pro-Chiang Kai-shek obviously was pro-communist. Neutrality was not acceptable. That is what happened to Catto.

Only a few weeks later, Elizabeth Maurer, who had been a member of the Institute for Pacific Relations - or some organization with a similar name - was fingered as a suspect. It didn't make any difference that this institute had been financed by the Rockefellers.

She had worked for them as a rather low-level person; she also had been in the old OWI (Office of War Information). We were going out for lunch; we had a practice that most of the USIA employees would go for lunch at the same time. We would go across the street to the Roger Smith hotel - or even cheaper eateries.

When we went to pick her up for lunch; affixed to her old typewriter was a note to all of us which said that she liked working with us and that she thought we were all good people. She wished us good luck and bid us goodbye. She had also just quit - presumably under some threat. We never had the slightest hint. Employees were not given much time to clear their desks and leave. They were often threatened with a long and prolonged loyalty review process; they were also told or suspected that if the review proved to be negative - as it was likely to be - there was no recourse and that they would have to leave with a blemished record, thereby severely damaging their possibilities for another good job.

Q: What effect did these situations have on the rest of the USIA staff?

CROSS: It was demoralizing because the Foreign Service gossip - to which I had probably become unnecessarily addicted - would whisper that Mr or Ms so-and-so was in some sort of trouble or he or she didn't get a particular assignment because they were under suspicion. This speculation, along with the persistent charges by McCarthy, created an atmosphere of suspicion and people began to watch each other. The grapevine, as I suggested, was vicious; people would gossip about what they heard from or about others; innocent statements were warped into "disloyal" comments. People became very careful about their words.

It is not often noted that the Republican administration employed well known "security experts" who had pretty much of a free hand in the Department because John Foster Dulles wanted to have no part in this activity. So we had professional security people inspecting the Foreign Service. That radically changed the atmosphere which lasted for many years.

Personally, I was too young to have "lost China." In fact, by the time I got to Taipei, the U.S. had given up on China anyway.

Q: I think you might call these "professional security" types as cops.

CROSS: You might, although we have to recognize that these people were really not security people as we would define the term today. They were not trained in security processes. They were essentially retreads from ordinary police forces or Army Intelligence or other organizations like that. But they had Republican party connections and furthermore soon developed their own network so that they supported each other in their work.

Q: It must have been an unhappy marriage under any circumstances in that the Foreign Service was interested in stimulating analysis and the security types were neanderthals who really viewed "brains" with some suspicion.

CROSS: There was a snobbishness in the Foreign Service which simply rejected these security people even when they joined the Department and the Foreign Service.

Q: What was your job?

CROSS: The Information Agency had a policy planning staff which reported directly to the USIA director - Ted Streibert. I was assigned to that as were Monty Stearns and Pat O'Sheel, who later went to Cairo and other places. We were the three FSOs on that staff. Eventually, we all were reassigned from USIA into Foreign Service positions.

We had to clear a lot of our policy initiatives with the Department. That added some extra unnecessary steps to the process. But since USIA had been sponsored by Dulles, it became necessary for its own officers to work in its headquarters, rather than using some

in Departmental offices such as Public Affairs.

When I was about to be reassigned from USIA, Oscar Armstrong was leaving Kuala Lumpur. I was asked whether I wanted to replace him. I was absolutely delighted because this was a political officer's job.
Q: While you were in USIA, did you feel the hand of Walter Robertson (assistant secretary for Far East in State Department)?

CROSS: Part of the job was to insure that USIA programs supported State Department policy, meaning support of Chiang Kai-shek and opposition to the communists. In fact, that was our only policy, which tied our hands, leaving little room for gray areas.

Q: Did you or any of the other younger officers have any doubts about Chiang Kai-Shek as a star to which we should hitch our wagon?

CROSS: I think we all had doubts whether our allegiance to Chiang was the best course for the U.S. in the long run. But I had just been in Hong Kong, which I suspect pretty much prejudiced me against the Communists. I felt that the KMT was certainly marginally better then the communists, but I didn't think that it was that great either. I hoped that sometime in the future, we would find some way to have better relations with the PRC, but I certainly had no bright ideas of how to proceed down that track. The Communists were difficult to deal with, even if the academics of the day were still maintaining that the strains between the two countries were as much our fault, if not more. I did not share that view at all.

Q: Other people have told me that Mao and his government were using the U.S. as a whipping boy to get to their goals, whatever they may have been. Then came the "Great Leap Forward" and other communist initiatives which did not leave much time for the PRC to worry about its external relations.

CROSS: There was a brief period in the early 1950s when the Chinese were trying to develop a "united front" which might have made *rapprochement* between China and the U.S. possible, although even then, internal struggles predominated in China - e.g. all the landlords were being shot. In fact, I think for several decades after WWII, the Chinese were so consumed with their internal struggles that they had no time for any foreign relations. The period of the "Let 100 Flowers Bloom," for example, was pure propaganda which blew up when the Anti-Rightist Campaign started.

Q: Did you think there was anyone in the administration at the time who was giving even the slightest consideration to a dialogue with the PRC?

CROSS: I don't think that was a possibility in the 1950s and early 1960s. It was not possible to discuss such a possibility with Dulles. Our policy was clearly to contain the PRC which, in fact, we did successfully.

Kuala Lumpur

Q: Then you went to Kuala Lumpur. Was it then Malaya or Malaysia?

CROSS: It was the Federation of Malaya. I was there for a little more than two years - winter of 1955 to the summer of 1957. As I said, I was the political officer - the only one at that post. I covered the first elections, the "Emergency" - i.e. counterinsurgency which I really learned on the ground - and the negotiations for a new constitution. None of these were bilateral issues; all were internal which left me with the major burden of reporting. We supported the British as they were leaving the country. They left the country in good order, quite stable after the "Emergency," in the hands of a popularly elected prime minister elected by the Malays and the eligible "Overseas" Chinese. That person was Abdul Rahman who was the right person for the times - a very unusual circumstance.

Q: What was the situation when you went to KL [Kuala Lumpur] in 1955?

CROSS: The communists began their full scale insurgency in 1948. They started these activities at about the same time in India, Burma, Indonesia and Malaya. The latter was the strongest movement because there it involved ethnic Chinese. The peak of the insurgency was reached approximately in the 1950-51 period. Then it began to de-escalate. So by the time we reached KL, there were already areas designated as "White Areas," mostly along the coast in such towns as Penang and Malacca. Nevertheless, travel around the rest of the country required a convoy. We had to have a convoy escort if we wanted to go from KL to the Cameron Highlands. During our first few months, we needed a convoy to go from KL to Malacca. But slowly, the government forces began to whittle away at the insurgents.

The government, as part of its counter-insurgency program, established what were called "New Villages." This was an idea of Sir Robert Thompson, who not only established them in Malaya, but later was also instrumental in establishing the same kinds of villages in Vietnam during our experiences there. There they were called "Strategic Hamlets." They were not that in Malaya because there the government took the Chinese who were targets of the insurgents and moved them away from the areas bordering the jungles which is where the insurgents operated. The removal of these Chinese not only protected them, but also denied the guerrillas easy access to food, medical supplies, and intelligence.

So by the time we arrived in KL, the insurgents were in bad shape. The government used a lot of tricks to defeat the insurgents. They infiltrated them with government agents who then assisted the government forces in wiping out some guerrilla units. In addition to these tricks, the government was offering independence to the Malays and economic opportunities for young Chinese. While the British were still in Malaya, they fought the insurgents. When they left, the government used enticements as well as power to finish the insurgency. They promised protection to the Chinese and pretty soon, the insurgency was no more. Since my time in KL, there have been tensions between the Malays and the Chinese from time to time, but they were managed without major recourse to violence. I think the British did a great job; they kept the Malays united behind the idea of

cooperating with the Chinese while at the same time keeping the Chinese united behind the idea that co-existence could take place if the Chinese who made up the Malayan Communist Party ceased their insurgency.

Q: I assume that our representation in KL was a consul general. Did you have many dealings with the British.

CROSS: I did work in a consulate general. We dealt only with the British - or Malay officials who were part of the British colonial government - there primarily to train so that the new Malay government could function once the British had withdrawn.

Q: What about the election and the new constitution?

CROSS: First, there was an election for parliament. This legislature was not totally in charge, but it established a party structure for Malaysia. One party was Negara, which was a Malay nationalist party. It lost the election to the Alliance Party - a consortium of the united Malay National Organization, the Malayan Chinese Association, and the Malayan Indian Association. The Alliance was led by Abdul Rahman, whom I mentioned earlier. The Malays governed in those areas that were primarily populated by Malays: the Chinese of the Malayan Chinese Association did run in areas where the Malay might have been a small majority and yet many of them won. So the Alliance swept this first election for the new legislature.

Q: What was the consulate general's impression of Rahman at that time?

CROSS: I think we were great supporters. He was very personable. In some ways he was like Reagan. He would say something, and it would be misinterpreted by some people. He would never bat an eye and deny that he had said whatever he said. The whole country knew his style; it never questioned his statements, but rather praised him for sticking to his guns - whatever he really meant.

Q: Did you ever have any contacts with the communist insurgents?

CROSS: Almost never. Every once in a while, the special branch would ask me to interview a former member of the insurgent groups. These were not people who had been imprisoned but rather had changed sides. Howie Schaffer and I watched one of these operations once. We were on our way to call on the Sultan of Johore. We were riding in the consul general's Chevy. On the way, we stopped for a night and stayed with the chief of the Special Branch in a town which was still surrounded by communist terrorists. We had a briefing about the local situation; then the chief, who was a flamboyant Welshman, asked whether he could take our car to carry some supplies to one of his patrols. Both Howie and I knew that our bosses as well as the Special Branch higher ups would disapprove of any such use of a CG vehicle. But we went happily anyway. We drove down narrow little roads - lanes really - between rubber plantations and finally came to a rubber estate. The high jungle really shades an area; it is practically dark if you are in it. Nothing grows in it, but on the edge of such a jungle, there is some heavy growth because

the sunlight is able to shine there. That is called blukar.

So we were driving along this lane and the Special Branch chief asked us to stop somewhere along the road. He asked us to get out and lift up the hood of the car to pretend we had car trouble. It was very quiet and all of the sudden there was a whistle and a group of insurgents came out of the jungle. They had little red stars on their caps. I was somewhat concerned because I didn't know what would happen next. It turned out that this group was composed of former terrorists who had been captured and had changed sides. They had to stay in the jungle for a while - I guess to prove their *bone fide*s - and then they were permitted to re-enter society. While in the jungle, they were led by a British army non-commissioned officer. The group was also accompanied by two Chinese Special Branch members, all in their jungle get-ups. These groups would live in the jungle for months on end, although the British leaders would change because they could not remain in the jungle as long as the natives.

Q: So you spent a lot of time just observing what was going on in the country?

CROSS: Yes. We had no political differences with either the British government or the Federation of Malaya. There may have been some discussions about the size of our representation; it may have been larger than one might expect from a consulate general, but that was because it soon would become an embassy.

Q: Who was the consul general?

CROSS: At the beginning it was Eric Kocher. He had been the labor attache in Belgium and perhaps at another post before being assigned to Kuala Lumpur. He was a very good political reporting officer. His wife, Peggy, was related to Lillian Hellman - the playwright. Eric was very good with the staff; he introduced me to Rahman the first week I was there. I was also helped greatly by Oscar Armstrong, whom I replaced. He was also a son of China missionaries. Oscar gave me a very good list of people whom I should contact, along with his own ratings of these individuals. I also got a lot of help from Lucian Pye of MIT, who had studied the communist movement and was an expert on its motivations.

After Kocher came Ken Wright. He had been in the Navy prior to joining the Service. He was very military minded; he liked everything to be neat and tidy, as if we were going to be visited by a VIP. He used a lot of nautical expressions. One that I found quite descriptive and useful was his characterization of a bureaucratic impossibility: "You can't piss up a rope." He didn't like political reporting; he didn't like to write. So I became the political reporting officer of the consulate general. If he had talked to someone who might have had some interesting things to say, he would ask me to go see the person and write something to send to the Department.

Q: Did you get to Singapore at all?

CROSS: Yes, although we didn't do anything in Singapore. Elbridge Durbrow was the

consul general there. Technically, he was responsible for our operations in KL. He would visit us periodically. He was always very friendly and helpful to me. I think that the Singapore staff was more worried about Rahman than they were about Lee Kuan Yew, even though the British saw the latter as potentially quite dangerous. Lee played the game as it had to be played. Early on, he played "footsie" with the Communists briefly in order to get control of the Overseas Chinese on Singapore; when that was accomplished and the British left, he was ruthless in eradicating the Communists.

Q: You left Malaysia in 1957. Did the Vietnam Geneva Conference of 1954 have any impact in Malaysia?

CROSS: None whatsoever. I think the British felt that they had done extremely well in Malaya, particularly with respect to the spread of communism to South Asia. I think they in fact had done well. I should mention that I was asked to stay in KL for another year, but I really didn't want to stay on in an embassy. All of the Malay leadership were personal contacts; once the U.S. had an ambassador, how could I as a lowly FSO-5 officer maintain those contacts?

Egypt

So in 1957, I was assigned to Alexandria, Egypt where I served for two years. I had asked that I be transferred before the consulate general was turned into an embassy because I really didn't want to be around when a more senior political officer was assigned and when the political section would have grown - as well as CIA. I really didn't have any interest in the Middle East, but I was told that the then consul general was not very interested in the management of the post and that the Department needed a good deputy for that consul general. This was right after the Suez crisis which gave the assignment some additional urgency.

I tried a couple of inept "end- runs" around the personnel system, but they didn't succeed. In retrospect, I am glad we went to Alexandria; we had a very good time there. My boss was Hayward G. Hill - the large contributor to DACOR. He was one of the nicest guys I have ever known, but he also was a living example of the failure of the Foreign Service's "selection out" system. He should have been "selected out" because he was essentially incompetent. He had been born in Louisiana and spoke "Creole" French. He had served in Panama, Havana, Geneva and several other posts. He had come to Alexandria from Marseilles, which I think made it clear that this was going to be his last assignment. Hill was very nice to me; he was a bachelor, so my wife Shirley had to do much of the "hostess" work. He entertained very well, but it was usually in spurts.

As deputy principal officer, I really ran the post. I did all of the political reporting - whatever little there was. I did all of the consular work. We did have an economic officer - first Richard Adams, who was able to speak good Arabic by the time he left - as well as good French. He was followed by Dirk Gleysteen, who was much younger than I, but our families had been close in Beijing. I had been at Yale with Culver, who was the oldest of the three brothers in the Foreign Service. He was one of the last consuls in Dairen (now

rendered Dalian) in China, and one of the first in Leningrad. Culver focused on the Soviet Union and China; Bill centered on the Far East and Dirk, the youngest, took on the rest of the world. He served in Alexandria and Berlin, for example.

Q: You got to Alexandria a year after the Suez crisis. What were the repercussions and what was the political situation in Egypt when you arrived?

CROSS: Nasser was still tightening his control over Egypt. Alexandria was a very cosmopolitan society. It had its own centuries-old mystique of having been a great city, but in decline. It was multilingual with French serving as the social language, but all the key players spoke English and everyone spoke Arabic. We were watched carefully by the regime, but it didn't really interfere with our work. Alexandria had long been regarded as the center of opposition to the regime. The former King Farouk had a lot of supporters in Alexandria.

The international scene changed as far as Egypt was concerned. After we stopped the British and French from invading Egypt to recapture the Suez Canal, then our usefulness to Nasser was past. Since we refused to help him in the construction of the Aswan Dam, the Soviets were invited to do so and accepted readily. The U.S. decision was made around the time I arrived in Egypt.

Nasser nationalized the Canal for reasons of his own, but it set much of the world against him. We thought we could stabilize the situation and keep the Soviets out of Egypt. And we might have been able to do so, except that the British - Macmillan and Eden - were determined to show their "muscle." So they proceeded, irritating Eisenhower greatly. The Dam decision was really only one of the several decisions made by the U.S. administration that affected our relationships with Egypt. The Soviets agreed around this time to allow the delivery of Czech arms in exchange for Egyptian cotton, thereby mortgaging the harvest of that plant for a couple of years. The cotton was then dumped on the European market by the Soviets, thus undermining the normal market.

Q: One of history's great antipathies was between Dulles and Nasser. Was that reflected in your work?

CROSS: Much was made out of it in Egypt; we were often told by Egyptians of all kinds that Dulles was rude or bad or whatever - never blaming Nasser for the situation. It must be remembered that all Egyptians agreed, including Nasser's opponents, that the basic root of all problems in the Middle East was U.S. support of Israel. We were told that neither the seizure of the Canal or any other tensions would have happened had it not been for our support of Israel.

Q: How did we respond to these allegations about our support of Israel?

CROSS: Normally we would say that the only way to reach peace in the Middle East was to resolve Israel's status. Israel took a major portion of the West Bank and Gaza after the 1967 war - many years after I worked in Alexandria. I think there were some possibilities

for reaching a settlement of the Israel-Arab conflict in the 1950s, even after the Israelis had joined the British and the French in their attack to recapture the Suez Canal. We tried to appear balanced in our attitude toward the Middle East issues so that we could try to have a reasonable dialogue with the Egyptians. They did make some comments which had a faint ring of truth. For example, they would point out that it was the Germans who had killed all the Jews; there had been Jews living in Egypt and other Arab countries for centuries. So the question we would get was "Why are you taking our land when we had no responsibility for the Holocaust? Why don't you take part of Germany if the Jews need a homeland?"

Q: What were your impressions of Nasser? What were Alexandrians saying to you about him?

CROSS: There were three separate societies in Alexandria. One was the cosmopolitan crowd which had been very wealthy and lived an old-fashioned regal existence. They were something to see. There were four books published by Lawrence Durrell about this crowd while I was in Alexandria, The Alexandria Quartet. The first was titled. Justine. She was the sort of character who played around a bit. One would have thought that Alexandrians would have denied knowing her at all - there couldn't have been any connection between them and her. But we had a number of absolutely beautiful women come to us and whisper to us who Justine really was or "Moi, je suis Justine." This group really represented the past and were disappearing. They lived very well. Most of them were trying to protect their properties from Nasser by making deals and barely just holding on to their past.

There were some Sephardic Jews who had lived in Alexandria since the beginning of the 16th Century. They were later joined by other Jews. That was the second group.

Then there was an Egyptian community. We became well acquainted with many of them. They were mostly bankers, engineers - middle class with substance and ability. They had not been particularly pro-Nasser but were interested in moving Egypt ahead so that it could catch up with Europe and the First World. They hoped that Nasser would be a better leader than their dissolute king. But they were becoming disillusioned with Nasser. Dodi Fayed - of Princess Diana fame - belonged to this group.

Q: Did you feel any pressure from the Israeli lobby?

CROSS: Not at all. Occasionally we would get a consular cable telling us that a Senator "so and so" was inquiring about a visa for someone in Alexandria. That was a problem because as a consular officer we might have a view on the eligibility of the applicant, but the fact that there was Congressional interest had considerable influence. These were primarily applicants who had had difficulty in obtaining an Egyptian passport in the first place - often limited to visits to certain countries and sometimes specifically excluding some countries that the traveler could not visit. Among the latter group, sometimes the UAR would be listed - particularly Jews - so that the traveler could not return to Egypt. So I was faced with these problems and raised a fuss about it because how could I issue a

visa if I knew that the traveler could not return to Egypt. These were people who were well-off - with secret bank accounts in Switzerland and other countries - and had many contacts in the U.S. who could support them if necessary. So they were obviously well qualified to have a visitor's visa, but since they could not return to the UAR, it was hard to issue such a visa. I finally rationalized that even if these Jews could not return to Egypt, they would be welcomed in Israel and therefore would technically not need to stay in the U.S. beyond the length of their visa. I tested this approach on my Egyptian assistant, who knew everybody; she said that these people were not interested in going to Israel. My view was that despite the applicant's reservations, he or she was qualified to go to Israel and therefore would be eligible for a visa to the U.S. So that is what I did and INS never rejected any of the people to whom I issued a visa.

Q: Nasser was trying to foment unrest in Lebanon. It has been alleged Egyptian diplomats in Lebanon were posting propaganda and undertaking other anti-government activities and that was one of the reasons why we invaded Lebanon. Was there any reaction against the consulate general during this period?

CROSS: I think there were some threats of demonstrations. We had to be careful, but I don't remember any anti-American activities. During this period, I had to attend a speech by Nasser as the senior American - the consul general was out of town. I had to listen to two or three hours of anti-U.S. haranguing; my Lebanese colleague had to listen to some vitriolic comments about his country. We both sat separately from the rest of the consular corps, and I began to feel somewhat uneasy about having to walk to the office after this event, even though it was only a five block walk. In another setting, I might well have walked out, but there were 100,000 Egyptians in the audience. They had been listening to this diatribe for a long time, and I wasn't quite sure what the their reaction might be. I was assured that all would be well and, in fact, as I was leaving the area, walking between two lines of policemen, I heard a few of them shout, "How are you, American consul? Are you enjoying Alexandria?" These comments were accompanied by some friendly pats on the back - even though I had just been lambasted as a representative of an "imperial power."

Q: By 1959, what were your hopes for the next assignment?

CROSS: I had liked Alexandria, but I didn't think I wanted to pursue a career in the Arab world. Without any prompting from me, Eric Kocher, when my two years were up, asked that I return to Washington to work in the South-East Asia office.

Washington

Q: What countries did that office cover?

CROSS: That office had been created after FE [Far East Bureau] was broken up into several sub-regions. So South-East Asian affairs covered Indochina, Thailand, and Burma. We did not cover Singapore, Malaysia or Indonesia or the Philippines. My first assignment was the Vietnam desk. I knew nothing about Vietnam. So when I reported for duty, they changed my assignment to the Burma desk because the officer there had

Vietnam experience and we just switched. So for two years I was the Burma desk officer, until very early in 1961.

Q: Who was your immediate boss and who the assistant secretary for East Asian affairs?

CROSS: When I first arrived, the assistant secretary was Jeff Parsons. Bill Sullivan was his special assistant. The office director was Eric Kocher, whom I mentioned earlier. He had two deputies: Dick Usher and Bob Cleveland. There were, of course, personnel changes in the time I was in the bureau; for example, Daniel Anderson became the office director about a year after I arrived.

At the time, Laos was the key issue in the area. Everyone was interested in what was going on there.

Q: Including the president.

CROSS: That is right. This was towards the end of the Eisenhower administration. I was drawn into Laos affairs and spent a considerable amount of time fighting AID over our assistance programs. Christian Chapman was the Laos desk officer but he was swamped, so it was decided that I would help him out. I often had to take messages around the Department for clearance - couldn't do it over the phone in those days. I wasn't always met with open arms and had often to argue Chris' case. As I said, AID was a problem as was NEA, which had jurisdiction over India and therefore greatly interested in Laos; also the China desk had great interest.

When Kennedy became president, Chapman decided he had enough of Laotian affairs. He was going to be married and didn't want to spend seven days each week at his desk. So I was asked to take over the Laos desk. That is how I got started in Indochina.

Q: Let me go back to Burma for a second. What was the situation in that country when you first reported for duty and how did you get up to speed?

CROSS: That is an interesting question. I got up to speed through sheer luck. My immediate boss, Dick Usher, had been in Burma; he was very sympathetic and a very good guy - even if a workaholic. He spent many hours briefing me on Burma. Bill Sullivan, my predecessor, was also available. He told me all the things that needed to be done. But the greatest assistance I got came from a childhood friend from my China days and my former college roommate, Lucian Pye. He had just written a book on Burma in which he described the culture and how it operated. So before I actually reported for duty, I spent a weekend with Lucian, reading the manuscript of his book which was to be published shortly. So I started on the desk quite knowledgeable about Burmese culture and habit. People were astonished that I knew such details without having ever been in the country or having had anything to do with it until then.
The political situation was that General Ne Win, having mounted a successful coup, was the president - which he was for over 35 years. He had a reputation in Washington as an anti-communist. That was true, but then he was anti everything. So we were to get along

with Ne Win, and as a show of our support, we were going to finance a new "road to Mandalay." He had decided that a new road was needed and then had come to us to ask how much we could contribute to its costs. It was a substantial cost and AID balked because it had other ideas for the use of these funds. Of course, whatever we devoted to this road would have to be matched by the Burmese. They didn't understand that; they thought that if we were going to finance the road, they would not have to put a penny of their money into it. The construction would have caused some political problems because certain properties would have had to be expropriated and some businesses destroyed. That would have raised problems for the government; it could not really blame us for causing problems because they had asked for the road.

In any case, they were not happy to be asked to do something, even though it was for their road - "burden-sharing" was not a familiar concept to them. The Burmese preferred to bargain mile by mile; they didn't want to be burdened with responsibilities before the first shovel-load was even thrown, particularly if these were demanded by foreigners. We had some very good people working on this project, and I think the final product would have been a showcase. But we could not convince the AID bureaucracy to make the necessary funds available, although I must admit that I had sympathy for their viewpoint. It would have cost a lot of money, and its main rationale was to make Ne Win feel better. I think even if we had found the resources, Ne Win would not have been appreciative because with our investment, as I said, came a lot of responsibilities that the Burmese would have had to carry out. The more requirements that we levied on the Burmese, the less Ne Win liked the project. The only way that we could have gained some political points would have been to do it all ourselves; that of course was contrary to our assistance program philosophy. On the other hand, the resources could have been used quite effectively in providing technical assistance in such areas as health and education and rice distribution. That in my view was far preferable to our participation in the road construction project.

Of course, had we agreed to finance the project, Walter P. McConaughy, as the new ambassador, could have delivered the good news to Ne Win. But, as I said, AID was much opposed to the idea. Finally, we reached a compromise and financed a partial road which was built long after I had left the desk. This whole episode was not very helpful to Burma-U.S. relations, but then nothing much would have been.

My biggest concern was that Ne Win was not a benevolent man. But he did put a very good face on what he did and was quite accommodating to American visitors. Ne Win visited the U.S. while I was on the desk. During this time, a member of the Burmese delegation came to me and said that the prominent American doctor who had been provided by the U.S. government had reported to them that CIA had asked him to give CIA a medical report on Ne Win. Why CIA asked the doctor for this information I didn't understand; there were many other more subtle ways of getting the information. The doctor was very upset with this request and told Ne Win who also became very upset. So the visit did not end well, even though Ne Win had been well taken care of.

I think that visit was my major contribution to U.S.-Burma relations. We were taking a

lot of little steps which were very good for that relationship. For example, we had a very active USIS program which was very helpful.

Q: Was Burma the hermit country it is today?

CROSS: It was about the same, except it was less vicious because shortly after Ne Win's visit, the Burmese held an election which was won by U Nu. We were against him for dumb reasons because he was not perceived as anti-communist as Ne Win. After I left the desk, U Nu was pushed out, never to be effective again as a Burmese leader, although he should have been a world figure in the so-called "Non-Aligned Movement."
Q: Was there a communist insurgency in the country during this period?

CROSS: The communists were split into two factions: the reds and the whites. One had more Chinese support than the other. I should note that in 1959, there were still some Kuomintang troops in Burma - left over from the Chinese civil war. They occupied northern Burma and had already become involved in the drug trade which flowed from China through Burma to its ultimate destination. The NSC issued an order to get the KMT troops out of Burma because with anti-communist Ne Win in charge, we didn't want anything to upset his apple cart. The KMT, of course, was not eager to leave, and although the CIA made a major effort to get them out, it was not successful. It would have taken a much more concentrated and continuing effort.

In fact, there were KMT troops in many parts of Indochina keeping the Chinese communists from infiltrating into Laos and Thailand and Burma. Some were good soldiers; others were terrible. Some of the good ones were eventually evacuated and brought to Taiwan. The others remained. Later, Taiwan actually inserted some of its troops into the area who were very disciplined and participated in some activities against the communists.

Q: Was drug trafficking an issue at this time?

CROSS: No, not during my time on the desk. Thailand was considered the major offender in the area.

In the north of Burma, we had two tribes: the Kachins and the Karens. They were essentially trying to establish themselves in the country; they had been shunted aside by the Burmese. These tribes were big and well-organized minorities. They were interested in some kind of autonomy. The government had a lot of problems with these two tribes. One of the difficulties we faced was that both tribes had been on our side during WWII, whereas the Burmese had supported the Japanese. So we owed these tribes some debt. Furthermore, the Karens were Christians and that gave us an affinity.

Q: Did we believe that the Chinese communists were trying to subvert the Burmese regime?

CROSS: I suspect that we felt that the Chinese communists were trying to subvert all

governments in the area who were not devoutly communist. But we had no indication that the Burmese government was in any way playing ball with them. It would have been quite inconsistent with Ne Win's views. The end of the 1950s and the 1960s were the heydays of the Non-Aligned Movement, though Ne Win, in his own words, was "not aligned with the non-aligned." So I don't think that the Chinese communists were much of a factor in Burma in this period, although I am sure that the regime watched the Chinese population in Burma very closely.

Q: What about India? Was it a factor in our relationship with Burma?

CROSS: I think it became more of a factor when U Nu took over as president. He had a certain affinity with the Indians because both Nehru and U Nu felt that they were leaders of the "non-aligned" movement, although U Nu did not have the sharp tone that Nehru displayed and indeed was less active in the movement. But I think in all situations, the Burmese were comfortable with the U.S.; they were friendly with Americans who reciprocated their attachment. The Burmese are very likeable, but I don't think that personal relationships had much influence on governmental policies; Ne Win was going to do whatever he wanted regardless of any outside advice.

Q: Did the Burmese embassy in Washington play any major role?

CROSS: We had a lot of contacts with it. It wasn't an organization which initiated very much. They needed our support. For example, if they wanted to entertain, we would have to supply it with names of Americans who might be invited. They never would start a conversation about business. That was not part of their culture. We would have to raise the issue and then they might respond.

Laos Conference - 1961-1962

In retrospect, I was lucky to be chosen for the Burma desk and then becoming the Laos Desk officer because that led to working with Averill Harriman. Early in 1961, a power struggle ensued with Kenneth Young, a former head of the South Asian Affairs office, who wanted to be ambassador to Vietnam, but that ran into problems. So he was then considered for Thailand. But before his name could be sent to the Senate, he had heard about a 14 nation conference on Laos that was being planned. The Office of South-East Asian affairs was asked to develop some position papers for this conference. I was asked to join a group consisting of Pat Byrne, Skip Purnell and others to meet - secretly, I might add - to draft some of these position papers. None of us felt very strongly about the issues in any case and I am not sure that the Department did either. We had just one meeting with Harriman, then an ambassador-at-large, before he left for Geneva. We went along on the same plane in May 1961 with people like Joe Sisco and Abe Chayes, the legal advisor. They all had their own ideas on the U.S. positions. Paul Nitze, representing DOD, was also on board with ideas of his own. We all met with Secretary of State Dean Rusk in some lousy office near our hotel in Geneva.

The first week was utter chaos. Meetings were called and then canceled; press

conferences were convened without anyone having a clear idea where we were going. Harriman sat out in a hallway. Then they all went off to Vienna to meet Khrushchev. Finally, we could actually participate in the conference. But even then, we were confused because John Steeves, Harriman's deputy, was not in accord with his boss' views, which were basically to find some way to reach agreement at this conference. The basic concept sort of fell into Harriman's lap when he was visiting Cambodia and met with Prince Sihanouk. It was a pretty concept, but Steeves did not think that the conference should come to an agreement beyond agreeing that the North Vietnamese should not be allowed to occupy Laos.

So Steeves and Harriman did not get along. I remember that one time, we were meeting with the French foreign minister. The conversation was non-controversial, when Steeves all of a sudden asked in front of everyone why were we holding this conversation. Harriman turned to him and said: "Because I want to!" Soon after that, Steeves and all officers above Class 3, were sent home and Bill Sullivan was sent to Geneva to organize the U.S. delegation, which then consisted only of young officers . The theory was that a group like that would work better because it would follow Harriman's views without challenging them. Early in the U.S. delegation's meetings, Harriman had stated that he did not believe that the president would ever put U.S. ground troops into Laos. He thought that although we were junior officers, we would understand the president's position. We therefore had to get an agreement which did not call for U.S. military intervention on the ground in Laos. Using CIA or other means were acceptable, but no American ground forces.

After my return to Washington, I handled the Washington end of the Geneva conference. Harriman returned twice during the fall to talk to senior officials and the president. I think it was quite clear that neither Walter McConaughy, the assistant secretary for East Asia or Alexis Johnson, the deputy undersecretary, were on the same wave length with Harriman. So he had no support from senior officials and much of the work fell on me.

I often rode in Harriman's car, an old Checker's cab, which he claimed could be driven for more than 400,000 miles. I used to go to the White House to pick Harriman up to take him to the airport. On one occasion, as we were driving over Memorial Bridge, Harriman said to me, "The President (Kennedy) will not put ground troops into Laos." I asked him whether that was a direct quote. He said:"I have been in Washington long enough to know that he means it when he says it! But I don't want the president's position to be known by anyone except Alex and Walter." So I dictated a message to Johnson and McConaughy. I then took to it the sixth floor and left it on the secretary's desk. I didn't hear anymore about it.

A few days later, Dan Anderson, who was my boss, came to see me. He showed me my memorandum with comments from McConaughy and Alex Johnson saying that they didn't think that I should be passing around information like that. Dan took the memo and put into the "burn" bag. I knew that I had quoted Harriman accurately and I was confident that Harriman had very clear instructions from President Kennedy to bring the conference to a successful conclusion. Nevertheless, there were continual battles over

each and every word of what was to be the final agreement. Harriman's view was that if the U.S. position could not have been supported with a particular phrase, it would have to be included in some other way. There was no way, in his mind, that the conference would not succeed. The only thing that might have ended the conference would have been a resumption of war in Laos; as long as the cease-fire held, so would the conference. Harriman thought that if the conference seemed to be floundering, the cease-fire would break down. He also had some plans to enter into some joint efforts with the Soviets. My guess is that the tensions between Harriman and McConaughy were over Harriman's determination to get an agreement. McConaughy was transferred to Pakistan after only a short tour as assistant secretary, to be succeeded by Harriman.

So the struggle over what the desk officer was to do changed again. What Harriman had wanted when he was in Geneva was someone in Washington to watch out for his interests, which I tried to do. Now that he was an assistant secretary, his requirements changed. The Laos agreement was signed in 1962, which, on the surface, conceivably might have done something about the situation in South-East Asia. We managed to incorporate into the agreement a key provision which would have barred any party which had signed the accord to use Laos as a base for subversive or other activities in another country in the region. That was called the "corridor" provision because it barred the North Vietnamese from using Laos as a passageway for their efforts to conquer South Vietnam. But the North Vietnamese never lived up to that provision; in fact, they never withdrew their forces from Laos as required by the agreement.

I believe that the North Vietnamese unwillingness to abide by the agreements that they had signed had an effect on Kennedy. He might well have hoped that a 14-nation accord, which stipulated that Laos would become and remain neutral in the South-East Asia conflicts, might have led eventually to a similar solution for the whole region, barring all the major countries from involvement in the affairs of that area. The fact that the North Vietnamese refused to abide by the terms of a agreement must have been a great disappointment, despite the fact that all the experts had predicted that Hanoi would not live up to it. Harriman was heavily criticized for convincing the president to sign off on an accord which was not likely to be implemented by one of the signatories.

I spent a lot of time on this agreement. Once it was signed in the summer of 1962, I spent a lot of time on seeing to it that the North Vietnamese would meet some resistance in the South in their efforts to subvert the agreement. This included such actions as having CIA arm the Meo (also called Hmong) tribesmen to fight the communists.

Q: Who was providing the information that the North Vietnamese troops were moving south?

CROSS: We already had in place some elements of an intelligence collection effort. We said that we would withdraw all of our presence from Laos within 90 days after the signing of the accord; in the meantime we continued our activities there which were far more expansive than we ever admitted. In any case, we knew from observers on the ground that the Pathet Lao had run over a certain village and then had withdrawn. So

communist activities were hardly covert.

Q: Who were the principal guarantors of the accord?

CROSS: The conference was made up by the two co-chairmen of the 1954 agreement - the Soviet Union and the UK. The 1954 agreement had given these two an oversight responsibility which we interpreted to mean that the British would work with us. and the Soviets, with the Chinese and North Vietnamese. Then there was an international control commission consisting of three countries - Canada, India, and Poland. The composition of the commission was based on Khrushchev's concept of a nation from each side - east and west - and a neutral party. He called it a "Troika" or a Russian three-horse sleigh. The function of the ICC would have been to report on violations of the agreement. If the Indians had indeed played their role well, we might have been able to have a manageable situation; the agreement did not specify that the commission's reports had to be unanimous; majority-rule was acceptable. That allowed the issuance of reports, but when it came to recommendations and implementation of findings, then the commission would have to be unanimous and that, of course, was not feasible. So the commission start with high hopes was soon dashed by reality.

Then there were the countries neighboring Laos: Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and North and South Vietnam. They also had a deep interest in what would be happening - or not happening - in Laos. Laos itself was divided into three factions - left, right, and center. The left was purely ideological, unlike the right or the center led by Prince Souvanna Phouma. It was agreed that the Prince would head up the coalition government.

Q: As has happened so often before after accords are signed, the principals withdraw from the issue, leaving the mess for the desk officer. That is not a very comfortable position.

CROSS: The fact that the accords were not working was soon communicated to us by the CIA. So we began to work intensively with the Canadians. They agreed that the arrangements were not working and said that they had been putting pressure on the Indians for the International Control Commission to take some remedial action. We asked our ambassador in New Delhi, John Galbraith, to talk to Foreign Minister Krishna Menon, but the latter was basically anti-American and therefore not helpful. The Soviet Union on the surface wanted to be seen as helpful but was in fact engaged in giving aid to the communist Pathet Lao - mainly by providing air transportation. So the whole agreement sort of petered out by 1962. Meanwhile, we were very active in South Vietnam with our "strategic hamlet" program headed by Lansdale and Bobby Thompson of the UK. With all the unrest there, our government's attention moved from Laos to Vietnam. Harriman left Laos matters, and I left the desk in the summer of 1963 to go to the National War College.

Q: We must have reached the point somewhere along the line when we must have said that "there is no use us playing by the rules; no one else is."

CROSS: What we said was that since the other side was violating the agreement, we did not feel bound by it. We never said that we would break the agreement; we were only going to counter what the other side was doing. That is in fact what the Laotian tribes funded by the CIA were doing; they were just resisting the North Vietnamese. The communists built the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which mostly ran through Laos. They were essentially opposed only by the Hmong, not the lowland Lao. In the summer of 1962 after the Geneva accords were signed, I had visited the area. They took me to a place where I saw a whole North Vietnamese battalion settling in in a highly organized fashion - straw/bamboo huts lined up in neat rows, fences, sentries - the whole bit.

Several years later, I asked whether those North Vietnamese troops had ever left in accordance with the agreements they had made. We bombed them, but I am not sure that they weren't in Lao territory until long after our withdrawal from South Vietnam. But back in 1962, we had some hopes that the agreements would stick and that some semblance of stability might return to the area. There was a lot of good work done to support Laos economically; in fact, Laos developed considerably in the post-1962 era. When Bill Sullivan was the ambassador in the mid-1960s, I think we managed to hold the Pathet Lao off, keeping them in the jungles. The North Vietnamese did not make a major push into Laos, with the exception of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They were concentrating on South Vietnam.

Q: Did you have many contacts with the desk responsible for South Vietnam?

CROSS: We were all in the same office. They supported a more robust stance. They felt Diem was not strong enough. The Thai desk headed by Ed Masters was also in favor of stronger stance.

Q: How did you resolve these questions at your level?

CROSS: We resolved it in I guess the simplest way; Harriman just told them what he wanted to do without asking for their blessings. These were good officers but saw the world in different hues than we or the Laos Desk did.

Q: Were the Thai and South Vietnamese desks fighting a rear-guard action?

CROSS: Yes. They didn't really have a chance to test their ardor. But I don't want to overstate what were really shadings of U.S. policy. Harriman was not opposed to doing anything for Thailand, but he was focused on getting the agreement on Laos and everything else came second.

Q: What was your impression of Harriman?
CROSS: I liked the governor. In many ways he operated quite differently from other senior officials. I think his outstanding characteristic was his ability to gather all the facts and details and assess them, depend on his staff, and then ram things through by sheer will. He was totally loyal to the president and whatever Kennedy wanted, Harriman would do.

Q: What was your impression of Souvanna Phouma and his government?

CROSS: I think that Souvanna was a very skilled Lao. He did not come across as a very hard charging leader. He was an aristocrat; he was married to a French woman. He was very urbane and I suppose suave by his lights. He was respected by most of his countrymen. The right wing was not antagonistic to him as long as American aid flowed to them, too. He was really the only person who could have brought the various Lao factions together.

The National War College - 1963-1964

Q: In 1963, you were assigned to the National War College. How was that?

CROSS: That was a great break. It had been a long three years. Except for my two week annual vacation, I was in the office every day, except for one day and one Memorial Day.

So the War College was a welcome change of pace. My only criticism of the curriculum was that it did not include enough military subjects. We FSOs were advanced beyond the military students in world affairs, so we had to listen to a lot of repetition of what we already knew. I think the curriculum has been beefed up considerably since I attended.

I did not see ourselves as a resource for the professors. There were State officers assigned to teach classes; we students should have been that and only that. We were regarded as people who didn't know very much about certain subjects in which our military colleagues were far more expert and, on the other hand, we were also students who knew more about other subjects. So there was a useful combination of backgrounds and talents which I think worked quite well when we broke down into working groups. We got to know each other very well in those groups. We did of course become well aware of the military's attitude toward certain issues. Since I had been in the military myself, I was not surprised by the positions that my military classmates took.

We did have a thorough briefing on nuclear issues, but as I said, there might well have been more military issues discussed. On nuclear weapons, we had a highly classified briefing and became acquainted with how an explosive device and the whole system really worked.

The most interesting revelation I had during that year came during the annual trip that the class took overseas. I chose Europe because I felt that I would never be assigned there. We were one of the few classes that went to Moscow. There we were invited to attend a "war game" led by a senior Soviet tank commander. It was about this time that there was a lot of discussion about the use in tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. The "war game"' scenario, as written by the Soviets, was intended to prove that after one tactical nuclear weapon was fired, we would all immediately find ourselves in a complete nuclear exchange. We all took notes of the Soviets' conclusions and I am sure that my military colleagues reported that Soviet doctrine to the Pentagon after our return. Our doctrine of

course was quite different and stemmed from our analysis that the Soviets had a military advantage in conventional forces which could only be off-set by these tactical nuclear weapons. Any ground attack would be met with tactical nuclear weapon and that was to bring the fighting to an end.

Cyprus

Q: Then you went to Cyprus as DCM and served there from 1964-66.

CROSS: I was the last person to receive his assignment in that War College class. I was supposed to go to Singapore to be the consul general, replacing Sam Gilstrap who was to go to some African post as ambassador. He was an administrative officer who was from Texas and a buddy of Lyndon Johnson. On the next to last day of the course, I was told that FE could not hold on to me any longer, waiting for the Gilstrap assignment to go through. Therefore they had released my name for assignment to NEA. I was told that I would go to Cyprus as the DCM. I found that intriguing because this was the time when Cyprus was attracting considerable attention. The UN was just beginning to mount up its mediation efforts between the Turks and the Greeks. Greek Cypriot terrorists had placed a bomb in our chancery and partly destroyed it (No one was killed, but the embassy had many security scares while we were in Cyprus. A few years later, our ambassador was killed by sniper fire.)

Toby Belcher, who was our new ambassador, was anxious for some leave. He was an expert on Greek affairs and had been the consul general before the post was upgraded to an embassy. As a newly arrived ambassador, he wanted his own choice as his DCM. So I was delighted to go to Cyprus for two years. They were very exciting years for a DCM.

I should mention that the day after I graduated from the War College, I went to the office responsible for Greek, Turkish and Iran affairs in the Department. That office was headed by Kay Bracken, who had served in both Iran and Greece. When I went to see her, I was told that she didn't have time to talk to me nor to give me any work. She suggested that I go to the Operations Center which apparently had a vacancy, and while I was working there I could read all of the telegraphic traffic which mentioned Cyprus. So I did that only to find that there was no one in the Operations Center. There wasn't anyone who was reading the cables about Cyprus. So I sat down and started to read the files when along came someone from the Secretariat. He had a messenger with him; he asked me to read a draft cable, put in appropriate paragraphing, check the spelling, but not to change the message in any way. I started; it was exciting since I had been in the Ops Center just a few minutes and in an area strange to me and here I was working on obviously a very important message. It was a message from President Johnson to President Inonu of Turkey. It turned out to be a very important message for U.S.-Turkish relations. It was in my eyes a very crude message; it was just phrased wrong. It asked how the Turks could expect the U.S. to protect them when they took unilateral actions. I thought that this was not the way I would approach the Turks. But I didn't change anything and gave the cable to the messenger. Soon after that, Kay came to see me and asked how things were going. So I told her about the message, which surprised her since she had never heard of it. I had

not even finished my sentence when she flew out the door, very distressed. It was obvious she had been left out of the loop. The draft had come from Rusk's office which was trying to prevent an intra-NATO war. This was after George Ball, the undersecretary, had visited Athens, Ankara, and Nicosia without success.

Q: What was the situation in Cyprus when you arrived in 1964?

CROSS: The UN peace-keeping force (United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus - UNPKC) was just getting started. The commanding general was an Indian, General Thimayya, a wonderful guy. The British brigade, which had been stationed in Cyprus for many years, was assigned to the UN command. Then the command also had regular battalions from Canada and Ireland and forces from such countries as Sweden and Denmark, seasoned "peacekeepers," plus a medical team from Austria.

But this command was just getting organized when I arrived. Its main goal was to stop incidents between Greeks and Turks before they could spread. For example, there were allegations that some Greeks were mistreating Turkish farmers. So the UN command set up a check-point to end that harassment, and with the visible presence of the UN forces, the violence did end. The command submitted regular reports to UN headquarters in NY that were published and distributed around the world. There is no question that the UN presence reduced the number of incidents, but it never was able to eliminate them entirely.

About two or three weeks after my arrival, the Turkish air force bombed the island. That obviously raised tensions between the two communities.

Q: Was the embassy staff relatively small?

CROSS: Yes. We had a political officer - Robert Sharp. Barry King was there. George McFarland, a Turkish language officer, was assigned to the embassy. You have to remember that we in fact had a dual workload. Whatever we did with the Greeks, we had to do with the Turks and vice-versa. We could not afford to be seen as giving one side greater weight than the other. On my first day in Cyprus, I was taken to dinner in Greek territory. I heard all about their positions. Then after dinner, I went to the Turkish side to have a brandy with Turkish leaders who told me their positions. As far as I can remember, when I left two years later, both sides still had the same positions they aired that first night.

Q: Archbishop Makarios was the president of Cyprus at the time. What was your impression of him?

CROSS: I had no background on Greek, Turkish or Cypriot affairs. I found him a remarkable person. He had a noticeable steeliness and stubbornness to him - which was not a rare phenomenon among the Cypriot Greeks. There was no question that Makarios' main - and perhaps sole - goal was to achieve independence for Cyprus. He was not interested in annexing the island to Greece. In the early years of Cyprus - somewhere

around the 6th Century - a princess from Christian Turkey came to the island and was healed from some malady that she had. From then on, the archbishop of Cyprus became an independent power, an Autocephalous Church. For example, he was allowed to wear a blue robe rather than a black one as did other members of the Greek Orthodox Church and use a special purplish-colored ink to sign documents.

So for centuries, the church on Cyprus was an independent entity and no archbishop would have considered really turning the island over to either the Greeks or the Turks. So Makarios just followed the lead of his predecessors. The Greeks, in the person of Colonel Grivas, were still a major force on the island; later this group tried to mount a coup against Makarios. I met Grivas several times; I found him to be a "barbershop" kind of hood - that is, talkative, boastful. His actions set Cyprus back a good many years and gave the Turks a very good reason to invade the island in 1974.

Q: Was Denktash the Turkish leader at this time?

CROSS: The same people were leaders then as they are today (except for Makarios.) We used to have dinner with Clerides quite often. Glafkos Clerides at the time was a policy advisor; the foreign minister was Kyprianou. At the time he was very young - about 30 years old. We got along with the government pretty well - they thought we were on their side. Toby spoke excellent Greek and I think did in fact sympathize with the Greek Cypriots because he was concerned that the Turks would invade and occupy the whole island.

Q: What was our view at the time of the treatment that the Turks were receiving?

CROSS: They were essentially badly treated. The Greeks kept them down, despite the warnings from Turkey that such treatment would call for a response. The Greeks operated in gangs, driving the Turks out of their native villages. It was very cruel. The UN tried to put a stop to this barbarism, and I must say that during my time, there weren't many incidents.
Q: Did the Turkish Cypriots take any action?

CROSS: They were arming themselves and eventually were able to defend themselves against the Greek gangs. According to the 1961 agreements that made Cyprus an independent country, a battalion of the Turkish army and a battalion of the Greek army could remain on the island. In fact, they were stationed relatively close to each other near Nicosia. When matters seemed to get out of hand, the UN advised the Greek army that further escalation might force the Turkish battalion to take action. That stimulated the commander of the Greek battalion to call the Greek Cypriot leaders to encourage them to calm things down. That helped quiet the waters.

Q: I think that in the 1960s we saw the growth of the Greek-American lobby which painted an unbalanced picture of Cyprus. The Turkish story was really not told in the U.S.

CROSS: I think that is right. I think the Department was under considerable political pressure from the Greek-American lobby to support Greek Cypriot claims. I should mention again that during my tour, there was in Cyprus a representative UN secretary general. This official kept looking for a solution; first it was Galo Plaza, the former president of Ecuador. He was very skillful, but he was not able to get the sides together. He was replaced by Carlos Fernandez, a prominent Brazilian diplomat. Fernandez ran into the same problems as his predecessor.

We worked with these UN representatives most of the time. They would talk to us and the British about their efforts and possible solutions. The dialogue was almost always the same because there weren't any solutions acceptable to both sides. Furthermore, these Latin American diplomats were limited in what they could propose. They had to be careful not to push either side to the edge because then failure was certain and mediation would have to cease.
A few months before I left, Ambassador Toby Belcher and I began to see that the whole situation was ridiculous. Our embassy in Athens was supporting the Greek Cypriots, and our embassy in Ankara was supporting the Turkish Cypriot cause. They were just showing "clientitis." Only we in Nicosia had any ideas on how the issues might be resolved. I was certain that if there were no interference from either the Greek or the Turkish governments, a solution could be found by the parties living in Cyprus. So I suggested that the embassy in Nicosia develop some general outlines of a solution based on our knowledge of what would work in Cyprus. We would then approach the Greek and Turkish governments with our plan. We would put it to these governments that we were sick and tired of the stalemate and that this plan would be our last effort. If they accepted the plan, we would pursue it on Cyprus with the Greek and Turkish leaders there; if they didn't accept it, we would announce we had lost interest in Cyprus and would be unresponsive in the future to the pleas of either government. We would declare that the Cyprus crisis had nothing to do with NATO and that we would have no further interest in the matter.

We sent this proposal to Washington where it was met with considerable fear. But the Department did agree that the idea could be floated in Athens and Ankara without it being designated as an official U.S. proposal. I went to our embassy in Athens which agreed to most of our suggestions. I then went to Ankara where Ray Hare was the ambassador with Ed Martin as DCM.

Hare said simply that one doesn't present the Turks with ultimatums. In any case, they didn't buy our proposal. Soon after that "shuttle" diplomacy, I left Cyprus and was never again engaged in this issue. I went to London on a direct transfer, but went through Washington for consultations and saw Ray Hare, who at that time had become the assistant secretary for NEA. He told me that he thought the plan had lots of merit, but that if we were to approach the Turks on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, it wouldn't work.

I should explain that the plan called for the same Turkish political status that was in the Cypriot constitution. But the issue was that the Greeks were seeking a unitary state under one president, not a confederation that the Turks sought. We tried various formulas which

would satisfy both positions, and I think we finally found one that we thought might have met the political needs of each side.

Q: How was it to deal with the Cypriot Turks?

CROSS: Toby dealt with Denktash. It was easy to deal with them because the leadership was well educated and even the shepherds spoke English. So language was not a problem, but they did have their share of "hotheads" who pushed the leaders. I think it is fair to say that neither the Greek not Turkish leaders could have remained in power - or even perhaps alive - if they had not heeded the pressures from the "hot heads." I must say that since my service in Cyprus, I smile whenever I read about the periodic surges of optimism that the community problems on Cyprus were about to be resolved through the appointment of a new negotiator who would bring the two sides to Geneva and settle the whole thing - probably by sitting in some good restaurant where he would say the same things that had been said *ad nauseam* many times before.

Q: I went to a meeting in Washington a couple of years ago, mourning 25 years of tyranny on Cyprus - obviously sponsored by the Greek-American lobby. This tyranny allegedly started with the Turkish invasion of 1974 - which was a response to a Greek coup. All the speakers attributed the Cyprus "problem" to this invasion. There was never any reference to the Greek atrocities perpetrated on the Turks. I think one could not have left that conference without having a feeling that the Cyprus problem stems from irrationality - on both sides.

CROSS: Of course, it doesn't help that the Greeks and the Turks have been enemies for centuries. It seems to me that there is really no possible negotiated solution to the Cyprus problem. I think the world might be able to impose a settlement if enough pressure were brought to bear on both countries. At the moment, the Turks have the better of the situation because they occupy a much larger portion of the island than their population would seem to merit.

Q: From 1970-74, I was consul general in Athens. I liked the individual Greeks, but I found their political behavior very hard to take. They blamed us for everything, and they kept poking sticks at the Turkish tiger who could eat them up without lifting his paws. The Greeks never seemed to quite grasp the reality of the situation.

CROSS: I agree. The Turks put the Greeks on notice many times that unless they stopped harassing the Turkish Cypriots, they would bomb the island. And finally, when the Greeks did not change behavior, they did bomb. The world was shocked, even though it had heard the warnings.

Q: The oral history collection has many stories about the vicissitudes of trying to deal with the Cyprus problem. In today's terms, it is somewhat akin to dealing with the Yugoslavia. The history of these conflicts goes back centuries. We still have in the Department an ambassador named to deal with the Cyprus matter. Talking about sinecures!

CROSS: Holbrooke had the job for a while. I felt like writing to him to tell him that the best way to handle the Cyprus problem is to tell the warring parties that the U.S. had the solution and not to accept any arguments.

London

Q: You may be right, but I would guess it is a non-starter. But to go on. In 1966, you were transferred to London. Did you think that by this time you had been tagged as a Near East hand?

CROSS: I felt that I knew the Cyprus situation, but that was only a small corner of the Near East. In London, I was assigned to handle Asian matters as part of the embassy's political section. I think that assignment was the doing of Bill Bundy, the assistant secretary for FE. It was a great job.

Q: At the time, did we have an Asian, an African and a Middle East expert in the London embassy?

CROSS: We did then; I don't think that is true any longer. The political section was headed by Bill Brubeck and had Tom Byrne in as the labor attache, Bill Galloway as one of the political officers and so on. Bill was in London for many years; he was already a veteran when I arrived and stayed long after my departure. He had a stroke while we were in London, and I am glad to say that he recovered. I should note that I was in London for only 10 months and left in 1967. My family, however, stayed for over two years.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

CROSS: David Bruce. The DCM was Phil Kaiser. My job was to maintain contacts with the British Foreign Office on a variety of issues of mutual interest in the Asian area. We did tend to concentrate on China and Vietnam. But I was sent to London primarily to take part in some secret negotiations we had with the British and the Soviets concerning Vietnam.

I need to go back to the beginning of the negotiations. I mentioned earlier that the co-chairmen of the Indochina negotiations were the UK and the Soviet Union. This dual chairmanship allowed us to pass information and views to the British who could then pass them along to the Soviets. The Soviets, as co-chairmen, could then pass the information to the Vietnamese. It was a very long round about way; we did sometimes cut out the Soviets, but that was rather infrequent. My job was not too stimulating because all I did was set up meetings and report back to Washington on them and on any other information on Vietnam that I picked up. The job did not call for much initiative.

My biggest challenge was public relations. In my first week in London, I called on David Bruce at his residence. He preferred that to meetings in the office. He was a wonderful

guy - a first class diplomat. He told me that he personally felt that Vietnam was distracting our attention from Europe and that therefore we should probably disengage from there. While saying this, he had in front of him instructions to encourage political support for South Vietnam in Great Britain. So he told me to get together with USIS and do something. I worked with the PAO and the deputy PAO; they weren't very enthusiastic and neither was the rest of the political section. So the job landed in my lap.

As part of this PR [public relations] effort, we were to support Harold Wilson's Labor Party which was defending itself not from the Tories, but from its own back-benchers who were demanding a much more vigorous anti-Vietnam policy, reflecting some strong feelings in Great Britain, particularly from students. So I was involved to a considerable extent in preparing the answers that the prime minister was to use in Parliament during his weekly question-and-answer sessions. George Brown, who was the foreign minister, was not very adept in answering Parliamentary queries - they took place in the afternoon and that was a little too late for him - after a few nips. So the prime minister had to field the questions. We knew some of the questions that would arise; I would transmit them to Washington, even though we knew that the British embassy in Washington was already raising the same questions with the Department. I sent the same message to Saigon so that our embassy there could join in drafting a reply for the prime minister. My main concern was that London would say one thing, Washington something else and Saigon something different from the other two. We had to be on the same wave-length.

I would attend the Parliamentary session to listen to what the British prime minister did with our information. I think it worked very well and as far as I can remember, there were no PR problems from the prime minister's answers.

My other principal task - and the one that took most of my time - was to speak about Vietnam around Great Britain. I have described this in some length in the book I have written [Chapter 12 - Born a Foreigner). Most of my audiences were hostile. In my 10 months in London, I think I spoke to about 20 audiences. One of these appearances was before the Lady Conservatives of Godalming - a region near London. The other was to the Army/Navy Club in London. That speech was given after dinner, which meant that half of the audience was already asleep. These were my only pro-American - or at least pro-American policy - audiences. All the rest were British students or trade unions. I would have to go to "red brick" universities in Birmingham, or Leeds or Manchester - industrial towns. I was usually met by the secretary of the Socialist club, who was also the head of the anti-Vietnam war committee. He hosted me to a lousy meal at the university cafeteria which was followed by a two-hour meeting in a format which was always the same, university after university. I would speak for 15 minutes after which a student representative would speak; that was followed by a question and answer period. The questions were mostly orations - anti-American. Some of them were undergraduate cagey - like "How many children did you kill yesterday?"

Q: What was the purpose of the exercise? Did anyone think you could change those audiences' minds?

CROSS: We thought it was important for our view of the war to be put in the public eye. What we had to do was to keep our tempers in check, mix some humor with our remarks, never maintain that we were "good" because the British regarded assistance to others as a private matter - not to boast of it publicly. There was considerable give-and-take in these sessions, and I think I actually succeeded in bringing some understanding of the U.S. role to some of the kids' minds.

I tell a story in my book which typifies my experiences. One day, I went to Brighton, to the University of Sussex. For some reason, the anti-Vietnam war movement was particularly strong there. I arrived from London on a train and was picked out as an American - although I carried an umbrella and a briefcase and thought I looked like part of any British crowd. But one student picked me out from all the other passengers who disembarked from the train that evening. I met a nice Quaker lady who was going to be the moderator of the evening's discussion. As I was leaving the station, I saw signs saying "Stop the war in Vietnam" and advertising the evening's meeting. I told the Quaker lady that I would not get into a debate about the war. Those were our instructions because to do so would have been an interference in the internal British political process. Furthermore, the other two participants in the panel were John Mendelsohn, who was on the far left fringes of the Labour Party and another who was said to be the only communist member of the House of Lords.

The meeting hall was packed. People were standing all over the place, with some standing on the platform already making speeches. The aisles had to be cleared so that we could reach the platform. I had learned a technique from previous appearances; I searched the audience with my eyes to see whether there might be anybody who at least would be willing to listen to my presentation. I was asked to speak first; the Quaker lady did not say that I couldn't debate; she just introduced me and thanked me for coming. So I started my speech which usually included quotes from a very important book that had been published in the mid-1960s by Lin Biao, Mao's designated successor at that time. Lin described the tactics that the communists had used first against the Japanese and then against the nationalists. It described how communists took power. It was considered at the time to be almost as important as Mao's "Little Red Book." I used that text because Lin Biao in his book had intimated that the testing place for this action program was now Vietnam. The essential part of the Mao program was to turn the Asian rural areas against the Western urban ones. So I used that thesis as part of my presentation.

Then the parliamentarians gave their speeches lauding the Vietnamese communists for doing all those good things for their countrymen. Mendelsohn was particularly harsh in his criticism of the U.S. After the presentations, the meeting was open to a question period. All the questions were addressed to me. Of course, they were more short speeches than questions which ended with the question of what I thought of whatever the audience member had said. Since I had heard most of these comments before, I had pretty much a ready reply already thought out. As time went by, the meeting became rowdier; suddenly one of the people who I thought might more objective on the subject - older and prosperous looking - stood up and in very proper English said he had been listening to all of the anti-American accusations for over an hour and that I hadn't had a chance to

complete but a few brief sentences. He suggested that I be given five minutes of uninterrupted time for a few comments. The Quaker lady agreed and I began my comments by saying how sad it was that in Great Britain one could hear such attacks on my country. That somehow stimulated me and I went on to speak of the American commitments which we had made to many countries around the world. I said that we would live up to those commitments and that the U.S. could be counted on by its friends and allies. I noted that we intended to live up to our commitments to the Asians just as we did to "you white Europeans." One could hear a gasp from the audience when I said that.

In the audience there was a black man who had spent most of the time looking at the ceiling. I assumed he was attending this meeting by mistake. But he stood up and clapped when I had finished my remarks about commitments. That stopped the antagonism and brought the meeting to an end. It was one of my triumphant moments.

I found speaking about Vietnam a little strange because I had originally opposed U.S. intervention. But I had learned from my parents and from the Marine Corps that it wasn't quite honorable to talk about wars in which one was not involved and from which one was quite far removed. It wasn't quite cricket to do that. So during one of Bill Bundy's visits to London, he asked me whether I would be interested in serving in Vietnam. I told him that I would only be interested if the assignment was in the field - not in Saigon - connected with the war itself. I didn't hear another word about that for a long time until one day in July 1967, I got a message asking me whether I could go to Vietnam to work at I-Corps headquarters. I said, "Okay" and off I went to Vietnam.

Q: Did you have a feeling that in attacking our involvement in Vietnam, many of the British were really showing an anti-American attitude which may have manifested itself in other opportunities?

CROSS: I suppose that there must have been some of the sentiment among the older generation. But on the whole, the opposition was pretty much a party issue. The Tories thought we were in the right, although they thought it was a losing cause. Many of the Tories were very well informed about Vietnam; I worked with many of them. They urged us to change our approach without abandoning our goals. That to me was a very important aspect of the British experience because I had become acquainted with a major point of view. I think that the British opposition to the Vietnam war was very much akin to that in the U.S. itself. Essentially, it was based on moral principles; they didn't believe it was right to oppose a native nationalist movement, even if communist led. Furthermore, this opposition also had a very negative view of the South Vietnam regimes.

I think in some cases, I did make a dent in the opposition by pointing out that the communists were attacking a sovereign nation - South Vietnam. It may have been said that South Vietnam left a lot to be desired because of the leadership, but that was hardly an excuse for attacking it. It wasn't happening against other countries whose leadership might not have been to the British liking. I think this argument did resonate with some. We sent some British journalists, like Mark Frankland of *The Guardian*, to Vietnam and he came back with some very positive comments. He and others had a free hand in

Vietnam; they could see and talk to whomever they wanted. Later, when I served in Vietnam, many of these journalists stayed with me and I showed them around.

I was excited to be assigned to Vietnam, particularly to a rural area.

Vietnam

Q: You were assigned to I Corps from 1967 to April 1969. Where were you stationed?

CROSS: In Danang. I was the deputy for I Corps after Barney Koren left. There were four of us - i.e., John Paul Vann, Sterling Cottrell, Charlie Whitehouse (later). We were mostly FSOs - except for the famous Vann.

Q: What was the situation in I Corps when you arrived?

CROSS: I Corps was in the middle of some of the heaviest fighting. At times we had as many as five North Vietnamese divisions on the periphery of the area we were guarding; sometimes of course they would make incursions into the area. The fighting along the DMZ was continuous. We had a very heavy military load. At the same time, the Marines had instituted some very enlightened pacification measures. For example, they had developed some ways to protect the rice crop. They held County Fairs, which they protected. They would also search villages for subversives. All of that protected the villagers against North Vietnamese and VC [Viet Cong] incursions, although there weren't many VC left in our area.

I had a very good relationship with the commanding general, General Robert Cushman. He gave us full support. We were advisors to the South Vietnamese on all matters except military operations, again with the exception of military operations in support of pacification; we did give advice on those. We had district advisors most of whom were military officers. There were 42 districts in the five provinces of I Corps. The U.S.-South Vietnam establishment in the I Corps area was huge and since we were responsible for all pacification activities - hospitals, education, police, etc - we had 500,000 regional and popular forces in the militia - a heavy workload.

Q: Where were most of the South Vietnamese forces?

CROSS: There were 2 ARVN divisions in I Corps, roughly: the First in central/north, the Second in the central/south. We had a brigade of South Korean Marines; they were not very good. In I Corps, there were three American divisions: two Marine and one Army - the "Americal." One of the Marine divisions was on the DMZ; the other was south of there, near Hue and Danang. The Americal was further south and was involved in the My Lai [atrocities].

Later on, two more Army divisions were added to the command - the 1st Cavalry division and the 101st Airborne. So most of the time we had a lot of troops in the I Corps area and lots of fighting.

Q: What was your job?

CROSS: As I said, I was the deputy to the Marine commanding general. I was in charge of the pacification program, which was one of the general's major responsibilities. My title was deputy for CORDS [Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support] and I was involved in everything. I wrote about my work in great detail in Born a Foreigner (chapters 13-16).

Refugees were a major problem. About a third of the refugees were really not too far away from their homes. Many had moved just a few miles to live in the larger towns. They were not really refugees; I would call them "disrupted" people. That was a large challenge for us trying to ease the transition for these people.

We had a number of very good people working in the field; two or three were actually killed. Right at the beginning, I had a difference of views with a guy named De Haan, who was Ted Kennedy's top assistant working on Vietnam. He came out with a group that was working on Laos, although he himself focused on the refugee problem. I told him that the refugee program was not a nation-building program as far as we were concerned; it was intended to take care of a large group of human beings who had no immediate means of support. For some reason, De Haan took my words out of context and used them as part of a Kennedy attack on the whole refugee program. I thought that was a very unfair attack, particularly since it was made in Congress where it got good coverage. I meant to say that it didn't matter what one did for the Vietnamese refugees if they couldn't be assisted, initially anyway, with food and shelter. Those basic necessities came first; it was a task that only we with our resources - capital and human - could do. The South Vietnamese just were not able to take care of these people. Born a Foreigner (pages 176-177) has this difference more clearly than I have just stated it.

I must admit that I changed my mind later and came to the conclusion that in the refugee program it was vital to have some South Vietnamese participation. But the philosophical difference with Ted Kennedy and his staff soured me on them.

Most of the American visitors we saw in the I Corps area who were opposed to the war did not change their minds because they saw only what they wanted to see, which would reinforce their preconceived notions. Ted Kennedy and his staff were a case in point. One time, he visited Saigon and looked at the medical services there. He was then going to come to Danang. We were instructed to make sure that every minute of his time was filled because he didn't have time to wait. One of his staffers came first and when he saw the program that we have developed, he said that it would have to be changed entirely. He told us that Kennedy was totally booked in Saigon, visiting one hospital after another, but he was not seeing any war casualties. He wanted to see wounded civilians who had been "victims" of American gunfire. I told the staffer that perhaps Kennedy might not be able to find what he was looking for. In Danang at that moment, there may have been no more than ten people who might have been harmed by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese mines; by far the largest number of occupants in hospitals were sick from malaria or

other diseases or burned by stoves. There may have been times when there was a larger number of wounded. Nor were the wounded always our fault. Many came from mines laid by the Viet Cong. This whole experience really embittered me because I thought that people like Kennedy were looking for any excuse to destroy the good work that we were doing. People who had no preconceived notions, like the British ambassador, Sir Murray McLehose, Bob Scalopino - a well known scholar - and some journalists, were willing to see the situation as it was and would go with me to visit all parts of our area. They would follow me around while I was doing my work and observe our efforts. When we were in a helicopter, I had a chance to explain to them what I saw as the situation on the ground. They got a balanced view of the situation because they were seeing the same things that I was.

These people were impressed by what they saw and heard. They heard junior military and Foreign Service officers express their desire to do more in terms of the pacification program if they only had the necessary resources; they would point out that certain programs could not be conducted for military reasons. A listener might well have come away realizing that despite the many problems, there were some solutions and that things might work out. When I left Vietnam, I was confident that we were on the right track.

Q: You were there for Tet?

CROSS: I am glad you asked about that because one of my FSO friends was captured during Tet. I had just returned from a ten-day leave in London the middle of January. There had been a couple of bomb incidents in Danang near our office. I had been briefed that the North Vietnamese were making a major move south, moving a large number of troops, many apparently targeted at Danang. At the same time, the North had asked for a truce to last over the Tet holidays. The South Vietnamese had publically agreed to that proposal. So despite the intelligence reports, the South was reluctant to take any action which might subject them to criticism for opposing or violating a truce. We tried to tell them what we thought was happening, but we couldn't convince them to take any action - even defensive as it may have been.

One day before Tet, I called all the of the senior advisors in the provinces. All the provincial capitals had been attacked in 1967, except for Hue. So when I suggested that they might be attacked again, they were prepared. Our guy in Hue was Phil Manhard, who was a good friend - I got him that assignment. He had been in Hue since Thanksgiving and I think he had good control of the situation. He also had been a Marine and therefore had some experience in warfare. Phil said that he would bring his people together, but not in the MACV compound. That was the last word I had with Phil; he was captured and remained in North Vietnamese prisons for five years and two months.

The night before Tet all of the servants had the evening off to celebrate. I was invited to the nurses' apartment as the senior civilian in the area. We shot off firecrackers in the backyard after dinner and heard similar explosions all around town - not legal, but done anyway. As the evening went on, so did the firecrackers. Somewhere along about midnight, you could begin to hear those noises interspersed with heavy machine gun fire,

followed by rockets. Then the firecrackers stopped to be followed by some very large explosions. These were from rockets that the North Vietnamese were firing into the town. There was some fighting in the outskirts around the I Corps headquarters. The Marines were not attacked directly; the North concentrated on South Vietnamese troops.

By the end of the next day, it became clear that the North's offensive had only been successful in Hue, which they overran - except for the American military compounds. The rest of the city was entirely under their control. We had Marines south of the city which we moved north; but we didn't have many reports of what was going on except for those people who were in the MAC V compound, who really were not aware of what was happening in Hue itself. The North captured some 20 of our people in Hue; they killed seven of the American CORDS people. As I said, Phil was among those captured. The VC invaded his house, but couldn't find him because he had retreated to a hidden room in the house. The VC grabbed the servants who were threatened with sure death if they did not get Phil to surrender. The North Vietnamese were apparently working from a checklist and knew exactly whom they were looking for.

So Phil surrendered, but I have always assumed that the servants were killed anyway. They took Phil off somewhere near Hue, took his shoes away and tortured him for a couple of days. Then they dragged him and the other captives to the north on a journey that took several weeks. They had to be hidden often because obviously we and the South Vietnamese looked for them intently. Eventually, Phil was put in solitary confinement; behind his cell was a very small outside enclosure which held a cistern and toilet. That was also his exercise area. He was never allowed to use the area when the person in the next cell was out there. A sentry would come into the cell to make sure that Phil would not leave. One day, someone peered over the outside cell wall and whispered, "Are you an American?" Phil gave him a signal that the guard was in the cell with him. Later, the other man threw a cigarette wrapping into the enclosure which contained a tap code. Phil memorized that code and then communicated with the fellow in the next cell. They tried to remember all the names of the people they had encountered. This fellow eventually was sent to the "Hanoi Hilton" and reported to his fellow prisoners that he had met Phil, who secretly got the news home. That was the first indication that we had that he was still alive. This was 1969 or 1970.

Phil was totally incommunicado after the U.S. Army officer next door was taken away - until a German nurse was assigned to the cell next to him. She discovered a pencil-sized canal between the cells which drained water and used it to transmit messages to Phil using cigarette wrapping that she poked through the canal with a stick. He sent replies back, poking the same paper. That opened a channel of communications.

Eventually, the North Vietnamese figured out that Phil was the highest ranking American in North Vietnamese hands. They wanted to hear his views on all sorts of issues. They sent an "interrogator" who was nicknamed "Walter Cronkite." Six months after an event took place, the North Vietnamese would try to get Phil's views as if the event had just occurred. He was asked about such developments as Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential race in October 1968 when Johnson had announced his decision in April.

One day in 1972, he was taken to Hanoi for treatment for a carbuncle on his back. When he was better, he was treated to a dinner before going back to the camp. His host was apparently a high ranking Vietnamese, according to his guard. This man assumed that the peace negotiations were moving along well enough in late 1972 so that the North Vietnamese could begin to think about opening an embassy in Washington. So Phil was asked a lot of questions about what that might entail logistically. By this time, of course, Phil didn't really know, having been out of contact with the world for five years. But they left Phil with the impression that the war was practically over.

Phil remembered that experience quite well. Two interesting developments came from this conversation. His interlocutor turned out eventually to be a vice foreign minister. He told Phil that the Soviet Union had been urging North Vietnam to retreat on questions of "our national interests." But the North Vietnamese responded to Soviet president Podgorny that taking such a stance would not only create great objections from the North Vietnamese people, but the whole socialist world would find it repulsive. Phil asked whether the Chinese had participated. He was told that Zhou En-lai had come and had urged the same things. But he didn't get anywhere either; the North Vietnamese were not about to do either the Soviets' or the Chinese's bidding.

Eventually, Phil was sent to the "Hanoi Hilton" himself. By this time, in early 1973, I was in the Department's Policy Planning staff. I was one of the few people who knew Phil well - our families were quite close. When it came time to bring the American prisoners home, the military sent a friend of each prisoner to bring him back. I was sent to bring Phil home. That was a real experience.

Q: What did you do after the Tet offensive?

CROSS: Our first job was to insure that those programs that we had managed to start in the rural areas were resurrected. For a while, all of South Vietnam went into a state of shock. It turned out that we were in fact in better shape than we had anticipated because the North Vietnamese, in order to attack the small cities and towns, had bypassed the villages and then attacked their main targets, most of which they did not conquer. The North Vietnamese took extremely high casualties so that when the offensive was over, there were very few traces of VC or North Vietnamese in the rural areas. So they could not impede our pacification efforts. Once these facts became clear, we really turned up the vigor of our programs. By May - or a few months after Tet - we were going full steam, even though Saigon had to withstand another attack. Hue had to be rebuilt.

The Tet offensive had some positive effects. For example, through blood drives, Danang was collecting only a few pints of blood. After Tet, they collected 300 pints in a very few days. Those province chiefs who had not performed adequately during the Tet period were replaced. There were quite a few who did very well and fought the enemy quite well once they got organized.

Q: What happened in Hue?

CROSS: Eventually, the Marines found ways to fight the North Vietnamese off. Before that happened, the North Vietnamese executed people. I think they killed about 3,000 inhabitants. It was a massacre. We had seven guys killed in our Hue CORDS programs. One was an FSR by the name of Miller. He had just graduated from Harvard and had taken a temporary commission to go to Vietnam. A wonderful guy - eager about his work with the Vietnamese. He was among those killed by the enemy.

Q: Who were the South Vietnamese who were shot in Hue?

CROSS: It was a long list which included government people, the "prosperous" ones. It was a very sizeable proportion of the population.

Q: Was this seen as an example of what would happen if the North won?

CROSS: The Vietnamese in I Corps were a tough bunch from top to bottom. In my opinion most of the Viet Cong from that province, if not all, were eliminated after Tet; they were descendants of revolutionary groups that had fought the French. They had come from Hanoi. They were a tough bunch. So we had two groups which were well matched. The South Vietnamese were from the south-east delta area - not from large cities like Saigon. I think that part of my optimism was that good province chiefs were being assigned to my area, as well as some very tough soldiers. I think we were actually winning the military war; we were able to protect the population and property. That left me with a slightly optimistic view about South Vietnam's future when I left the country.

Q: Did you get involved at all in the battle for Khe Sanh?

CROSS: Khe Sanh was the subject of many morning staff meetings. I only went to Khe Sanh when it had been secured after the battle. It was an example of Westmoreland's attrition strategy. With our air superiority we could do a lot of damage from the air. We saturated the area with bombs - day after day after day. The VC and the North Vietnamese took an awful beating, and we did as well. Eventually, both sides left the area. It was a very sad chapter. I would guess that at least 10,000 North Vietnamese and 600 of our Americans died in Khe Sanh. It had no strategic value; I think the main reason for the North Vietnamese actions was to draw American troops away from pacification.

Q: How effective were the South Korean military?

CROSS: I didn't have a chance to watch their army, but I was told it fought quite effectively. The two South Korean divisions were in II Corps. We had one brigade of Korean marines. Their officers looted the PXs [post exchanges] all the time. Furthermore, when they had to protect themselves, they were very aggressive. They held on to the territory assigned to them, but in doing so, were quite hard on the local population. I received several reports of massacres by the Korean marines. The American general would raise hell with the Korean general, but it didn't have much effect. I don't think it was clear to the Korean military why they were in Vietnam, other than they had been ordered to go there.

Q: That may have been true for a number of "allies" such as the Thai. They also looted the PXs in Saigon and would drive off in their trucks filled with the goodies.

CROSS: The PXs that were American-run did not suffer from raids by American soldiers.

Q: How was it to work with a young FSO or FSR who may have been totally unprepared for war or the pacification programs?

CROSS: It was interesting. Many had spent their academic lives studying European history or some other entirely unrelated subject. But I don't think we could have recruited a more superb bunch of guys. Many of them objected to our participation in the war, but once they got to know the Vietnamese and the American GIs who were interested in helping the Vietnamese, they really performed well and were very popular. They were all very decent and put their hearts and souls into doing a good job.

Q: Terry McNamara was the consul in Danang. I guess he was under your supervision, but he seemed to operate pretty much independently.

CROSS: He did fit his operations into those of I Corps and CORDS very well. He wanted to have another Foreign Service assignment and that is the way he viewed his job in Danang. He didn't want to be seen as being outside the "mainstream" as we were. I remember discussing this issue with him and telling him that none of us, including he himself, were doing "Foreign Service work." I pointed out that as a senior officer, I certainly was not in a regular assignment, but that it was incumbent on me and all of our FSO and FSR officers to make the CORDS program work. That called for the full cooperation of the military as well as the consulate. He performed well, but he just didn't want to be known as part of the team. That irritated me in some respects, but he ended up in Can Tho with the same kind of job I had in I Corps years later.

Q: Did you have any problems with the U.S. military officers? In the Army, they tended to spend six months with the troops and six months in a staff job before being returned to the U.S.

CROSS: These officers wanted to "punch two tickets" on the same tour. That is one of reasons why the staffs were so large and cumbersome. What were called the "maneuver" battalions were not really a big part of the American military effort and many of those officers served later with CORDS. We did have many differences with these officers, but we had some hold over them because all the senior officers received efficiency reports from us. So they at least pretended to pay attention to us. They used to be very upset unless each of their efficiency reports said that they were the "most outstanding" officers we had ever seen.

Q: Did you get involved in planning military operations?

CROSS: Yes, I did. We had the use of the military staff; I had a personal aide, a Marine first lieutenant. We could use the staff in any way we wanted; we had our own staff, which worked with the Vietnamese units in the provinces. So if we heard of a major operation that they wanted to conduct - search and destroy or to meet a potential attack from a North Vietnamese force - we would steer them away from areas where large numbers of refugees might be created by the military action. This helped both us and them.

When I was in Danang I had my own staff coordinating with military staffs so that we could support the efforts of the Marines.

Q: I think that one of our problems was that people served in their jobs for such a short time that by the time they began to become familiar with their responsibilities, it was almost time to leave. I remember being chairman of a civilian board with responsibilities similar to those of a court martial for civilians who worked in the black market or other civilian violations. I was the institutional memory having been in Saigon for nine months or so.

CROSS: The problem was not that acute for the CORDS people; they stayed longer. Furthermore, many were true experts. We had people from the Department of Agriculture who knew their stuff and had also served overseas before. They were able to assist in increasing rice production in the provinces. They established an immediate and close rapport with the Vietnamese farmers. It helped that many of the civilians were accustomed to working with foreigners, which the military was not. We advised the military on various approaches that might be made to the Vietnamese civilian society. I did, but rarely, with Cushman, the Marine commander, who had a fine touch in any case.

Q: How effective were the "popular forces" that defended the hamlets?

CROSS: They were the key to any successes. They were tremendously helpful if they were strong and "popular" - in the sense that they were from the village or hamlet - ones that wouldn't just surrender at the first sight of a VC. We had a lot of great "popular forces." Some were completely wiped out because the South Vietnamese forces didn't respond on a timely basis. The Marines developed CAPS (Combined Action Platoons); they were a group a little larger than a regular squad. The leader knew the rules of engagement. They used to live in a hamlet and made friends; they protected the hamlet, trained the "popular forces" and teamed up with them. Then we had a Marine Reaction Force which was ready to support the CAPS if any gunfire began. That was a good set-up. The CAPS did a lot of good work; they played with the kids, taught them something, helped with minor construction. It was a well-conceived program. The CAPS stayed until the area had been secured.

I learned a lot about being a general because that was the level at which I operated and I had an aide and a cook, etc. I don't think the military ever leveled with us. I got a lot of cooperation because I had been a Marine myself, but I got the straight army attitude as well. At the high level, there was a strong feeling of competition and concern for

professional reputation. I don't think that the military in general had a very high opinion of us civilians. They never showed any sign of being discourteous. They would sometimes tell me that they couldn't do something or other; then the chief of staff would be called and he would have to take on the burden of being negative, if that was the way it had to be. That was a game they played - a very intricate game.

I must say that we in the pacification program were not very admiring of Westmoreland. Bob Komer was the father of CORDS. He had the right idea, but unfortunately the wrong personality. He was a difficult and mean guy, although I never had any problems with him. So Komer had trouble getting along, which Bill Colby did not. When General Abrams succeeded Westmoreland and with Colby in Saigon, we probably had the best military-civilian leadership team. The top team was very good. I wanted to get home to see my family; had I stayed, I think I would have been part of a major success which I think really started in 1970-71.

Q: When I was in Saigon from 1969 to 1970, I thought that progress was being made.

CROSS: I think that somewhere along the line the opposition to the war came to a head and Congress just abandoned the war effort. I have made the following point in my book - it is also very fundamental to military analysis of the war: we did not lose the war; in fact we were more than holding our own. We left Vietnam because our democratic system had elected officials who forced us to withdraw due to the strong national feelings. Therefore, the military reasoned that despite the very high stakes that our leaders had set in Vietnam, despite all the casualties, despite that we were not losing, we left. That taught the military a lesson, I think, and that was that wars like Vietnam would not have any domestic support; a military action had to have a clear beginning and a clear ending when the pre-stated objectives had been met. They believed that in this world, our military should be engaged only to protect U.S. national interests and not to advance American interests. I think that is the national consensus.

I want to mention one more thing about Vietnam. I was there during the My Lai massacre, but I didn't hear of it until I went to Singapore years later. Seymour Hersh had his story published all over the world: I was sick to my stomach when I heard about it because that hamlet was in the I Corps area. It had happened three weeks after I had taken over; I was asked to testify about this incident by a commission chaired by General Peers. But I couldn't return to Washington at the time and therefore submitted a deposition instead. I had to admit that I didn't know about the incident. Under normal circumstances, the system required that I be informed whenever any civilians were killed as result of American action. Normally, I would have heard about it through Vietnamese-CORDS channels, but in this case, I didn't hear a word. So in my deposition, I pointed the finger at several officers including the deputy province advisor who was the deputy to Jim May. That deputy just didn't pass the word up the command because he didn't want the battalion commander in trouble. The whole episode was a big disgrace. General Koster, who was the senior officer in the Corps area, was sent to West Point as commandant not long after the massacre. He was not what I consider to be a figure to be emulated; I wouldn't have left the education of young officers in his hands.

Q: What about the Montagnards in your area?

CROSS: I didn't have very much to do with them. They were in the Khe Sanh area. I think that they were essentially cheated by us; we used them too often and had them do too much. The overall Special Forces commander was an officer who was a classmate at the War College. He was a good guy, but I think they pushed those people too far.

Q: What was your impression of CIA's work in your area?

CROSS: The CIA was an integral part of our efforts. They ran the Revolutionary Development teams. The guys I worked with were first class. The senior advisor in a town just south of Danang was a CIA officer who previously had been in Mexico. He was so good that I selected him to be my deputy. He did a fantastic job. CIA had some rough types among its staff, particularly in the PRUs (Provincial Reconnaissance Units). They were doing some things they weren't supposed to do. Some of the PRU advisers were regular U.S. Army officers, some were New Zealanders and Australians. I used to worry about PRU activities because they could arrest or assassinate people and in general act outside the rules we had laid down, although I think our advisers were basically well-disciplined. The PRUs were Vietnamese operating against Vietnamese.

The *Phoenix* program was long overdue. It didn't really get started because the U.S. army and CIA couldn't get their acts together. It took several years even to get a program designed. We finally assigned U.S. military advisors to South Vietnam units, but the program really didn't get started until after I left and Bill Colby got control of it. Ted Shackley, the Saigon CIA chief, didn't particularly want CIA to be involved; he didn't think it was an appropriate role for agency officers.

Q: The problem as I understood it was in identifying the target and then "taking him out." Wasn't there something akin going on while you were in Danang?

CROSS: Of course; the PRUs were doing this all the time. We had control of them - theoretically - their operations were supposed to be approved by the provincial senior advisor - or sometimes by the district advisor. They would pick a target, but sometimes their intelligence about an individual was not entirely accurate.

Q: The Vietnamese general in the I Corps area was General Hoang Xuan Lam. I have heard stories that he may not have been entirely forthright. Was that true?

CROSS: He was considered to be more honest than his subordinate with the 2nd Division. He was not a soldier at the same level as General Troung, who was the 1st Division commander and was considered to be an outstanding officer who would have been so considered in any military organization. Lam was more political; he was considered to be a Thieu supporter from the beginning. When Thieu became president, Lam rose from a lieutenant colonel to a lieutenant general almost overnight.

There was no indication that Lam was stealing warehouses full of stuff. His misdemeanors were pettier than that. He was not always quick to remove commanders and province chiefs who were known to be on the take. That was our major problem with Lam. I never saw any real proof of his profiteering. We had a lot of information about some of the province chiefs, but they all had been replaced by the time I left Vietnam. They used to play poker with each other; that was the way they paid each other off.

Q: What about the Buddhists in the area? At one point, they had been a big thorn in our side.

CROSS: They were centered in Hue. I think they really were trouble in the early 1960s, but by the time I got there, they had been pretty much brought under control, although we used to watch them warily, because as Buddhists, they really had no philosophical attachment to either side.

Q: Did Thieu interfere with our operations in the I Corps area?

CROSS: As I said, General Lam was his guy. Troung got along with Thieu because he was such a good soldier and we kept telling Thieu that. General Ky came often. He didn't trust us Americans very much. One time, Cushman and I were invited to have lunch with Ky and three or four Vietnamese generals and a couple of Vietnamese civilians. We were the only Americans. They talked Vietnamese most of the time among themselves; every once in a while, they would address a question to us in English. At the end, they all stopped talking and Ky said, "We believe that the United States will leave us. What do you have to say to that?" Cushman denied it; he said he thought that we were too deeply involved to withdraw. Ky argued that we would not stay until the end. I said that I thought we would stay as long as it appeared that the South Vietnamese seemed serious about their war efforts. That ended the conversation. I didn't report it because our embassy in Saigon hated to hear that kind of view.

Q: Did you notice any kinds of disaffection among our military?

CROSS: There were many officers at my level who criticized the way the war was being fought. At the junior level, there were quite a few who were outspokenly against the war; most had been ROTC graduates who were sent to Vietnam for their tour of duty. But in my area, I thought the command handled them quite cleverly. The young officers were told that they would be in Vietnam for a year and therefore might as well spend the time profitably. It was suggested that they seek employment with CORDS where they could help the Vietnamese directly. Many of them did that and when their tour was up, went home feeling that they had had a positive experience.

Singapore

Q: You finished your tour in Vietnam in the summer of 1969. Then what?

CROSS: Upon my return to Washington, I was almost immediately asked whether I

would be interested in becoming our ambassador to Singapore. I don't know why that happened, but I think Bill Bundy, then assistant secretary for FE, was behind it. So I spent the summer as deputy assistant secretary and then went to Singapore. The senior deputy was Win Brown; my area covered everything but Vietnam, which was Bill Sullivan's bailiwick. Sullivan headed a task force which essentially reported to Kissinger, who then was the head of the NSC.

Q: When you returned in 1969, the Nixon administration had been in power for about six months. Did you notice a change?

CROSS: Mel Laird, the new secretary of defense, was a college classmate. Laird wanted me to come to work for him and the Department supported that idea. But it was too late, since the ambassadorship had already been offered and accepted. I didn't really want to go to the Pentagon. But I did write two memoranda, neither of which made much of an impression. The first one dealt with "Vietnamization;" I took issue with that term because my view was that the war had always been a Vietnamese affair. There was no way that the war could be "turned over" to the Vietnamese - it was theirs to start with. I suggested that the phrase "de-Americanization" be used because that was a much better description of our decreased involvement in the fighting without giving the impression that the South Vietnamese would be helpless without us. My suggestion was squarely against the administration's efforts to distance itself from the war.

In my second memorandum, I suggested that if we were going to withdraw, we should not take measures to "improve the war." The efforts to improve the war did not deal only with guns, but also with the military engineers, for example, who looked at what the previous engineers had done in laying square meters of cement and then tried to outdo that. All the new roads that were being built to make it easier for the military to travel and other measures to make life easier for our military, should be stopped. We should leave combat troops in Vietnam, also the special forces and turn over to the Vietnamese all of the infrastructure work we were doing. That suggestion also fell on deaf ears.

Q: You were our ambassador to Singapore from 1969 to 1971. Did you have any problems getting confirmed?

CROSS: No. I had impeccable credentials even with my service in Vietnam. All the questions I received during my hearings had to do with the war. I wasn't challenged on my views and soon thereafter I was confirmed.

Q: Did you have any contact with the NSC and Kissinger before you left for your post?

CROSS: No; I don't think I saw anyone there.

Q: What about Marshall Green?

CROSS: I didn't have too much contact with him. I think Marshall wanted someone else to go to Singapore. I admired some things about Marshall. He was extremely competent,

but we didn't always see eye to eye. There were three other people in the Yale class of 1939 who became senior members of the foreign policy establishment dealing with East Asia at the same time: Marshall Green, Mac Godley, and Bill Bundy. They kept in close contact after graduation. As I said, it was Bill Bundy who wanted me to go to Singapore, even before I was assigned to Vietnam. I was told later that the Department leaned on Bundy to let me go to Vietnam; he never mentioned that to me.

Q: What did EA tell you about Singapore before you went there?

CROSS: I was given a great build-up. I really wanted to go to Kuala Lumpur where I had been previously; it also was a bigger post. But Singapore sounded good and my predecessor, Frank Galbraith, was one of my best friends in the Service. He gave us a very good start. I am glad that we didn't end up in Malaysia; it would have been too much of a repetition of my previous experiences - the Malay-Chinese tensions. Singapore had a lot of glamor. Many large American businesses had their Asian headquarters there.

Lee Kwan Yew and I got along reasonably well, at the beginning. The issues were primarily technical. I used Lee very often and when he caught on, he was very good. I had him talk about the "big picture." Lee Kwan Yew was really an international figure, and he knew the world well. He had very good ideas. American presidents like Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon used to seek his advice. Kissinger also used him as a sounding board. He was more articulate than either Johnson or Nixon - even in English. Actually, he spoke English much better than Chinese. Lee supported our efforts in Vietnam. He would call me in periodically and ask whether some action that the U.S. had taken meant that we would withdraw from Vietnam. He always opposed that, since he felt that we brought some stability to South-East Asia. He was always very clear on why we should not leave Vietnam.

Q: What were American interests in Singapore?
CROSS: We had several. First, we were discovering oil in quite a few places in the immediate area. None of it was in Singapore, but the drillers didn't want to headquarter in KL or Jakarta. They preferred Singapore, which was clean and safe and had good repair facilities, particularly for the vessels. So the oil business suddenly blossomed.

Then Singapore became interested in developing itself into a regional banking center. It had always been a safe haven for money from the rich in other countries, but Singapore really encouraged foreign banks to open regional headquarters. American banks became well represented.

Singapore developed a very sophisticated and highly organized foreign investment process. They organized industrial parks which were very efficient and attractive. That also attracted American business. When I arrived, there were only two or three electronic firms in Singapore working in Singapore; when I left there were eighteen. The first ones were given huge incentives; the next few were given more modest incentives and the last five were not given any. The last one in fact was told that it was the last one to be allowed to move into Singapore. Most of these manufacturers were working on

sophisticated equipment, with semi-conductors having already moved to a place with cheaper labor.

I think our investment in Singapore grew geometrically while I was there; I think it was about $2 billion by the time I left. The American population grew from about 2,000 to about 8,000 in two years. I think the embassy provided good support to American business and people.

I ran into some difficulties with former Vice President Agnew. He wanted to visit Singapore. He had been subjected to Kennedy's snobbery. The men who worked for him were sure that they were on the second team. He wanted very much to meet Lee Kwan Yew but had to invite himself to Singapore. On his first visit, he did have a meeting with Lee, which went smoothly. We played golf over my objections; Lee was a very good golfer and his minister of defense was almost a pro. I suggested that our army attaché be invited in my place; his handicap was much lower than mine. That didn't fly. In any case, I was scared to death by this golf match. I really got scared when the PAO came to me and said, with a big smile, that he had arranged for American TV coverage of the tee-off.

So we all went out to this beautiful golf course. Behind the tee, I saw the scaffolding for the TV cameras. It was decided that the minister of defense, Goh Keng Swee, and I would play Lee and Agnew. Lee started off by stating, "I'll show you the way!" He hit a strange drive about 150 yards off to the right in deep rough. I am sure that he had never done that before. Then Agnew teed off and hit a high fly that went into the jungle. The minister then hit a screaming drive that hit the trees off to the left. That left it up to me; I had never hit any shots like those. I started to drive and as I was doing so I heard the whirring of the cameras. My ball just bounced along the ground and stopped right in front of a very serious group of spectators who were politely not laughing. I think they were the chauffeurs. The camera had no other player to cover since the other three had hit balls where the cameras could not cover them, so I had to hit again on camera until I was finally out of sight.

I thoroughly blotted my copy book because my team, thanks to Goh who played well, ended up being ahead of the Lee-Agnew duo on the last hole. I had a very short putt - 2 to 3 feet - and if I had made it we would have won. But I was short and the two teams ended up in a tie. That didn't help my reputation at all because everyone in Singapore plays golf as if his life depended upon it.

I thought that Lee and Agnew got along well. Lee told him all about his views of our efforts in Vietnam and what he hoped the U.S. would do in the area - views that I had reported many times to the Department. It was good that Agnew heard them; he could confirm my reports.

Soon after that visit, I went to a chiefs of mission conference at Clark Field. When I came back, I was greeted by my DCM with a report that Lee Kwan Yew was attacking three sacred American institutions: *The New York Times* (they had decided to throw its stringer out), the Chase Manhattan Bank, and the CIA. Lee claimed that CIA and the Bank were

engaged in supporting a newspaper - *The Singapore Herald* - that he wanted to close down. He wanted the Bank to foreclose on a small loan it had made to this newspaper to buy a printing press. Lee went through a mean, grinding attack in an effort to get the Bank to do his bidding. It came out later that Lee had gotten it into his head that the U.S. wanted to establish a newspaper in Singapore that might oppose him.

There was a lady in Hong Kong who was a member of a big and rich overseas Chinese family. That family ran a couple of Hong Kong newspapers. She had loaned the *Herald* a fairly large sum for those days - I think it was $200,000. She was invited to Singapore where she had a meeting with Lee which lasted for about five hours - it was more of an interrogation than a conversation. She finally broke down when Lee accused her of subversion and demanded that she withdraw her support of the *Herald*. She finally agreed. The next day Lee called in the Chase Manhattan representative and asked whether the Bank would stick by its loan even if the lady withdrew her support. The Bank guy said that he couldn't answer because the Bank had specific procedures to decide such questions that he would have to follow. Lee viewed that as a refusal despite the representative's assurance that he could not say "Yea or Nay." He did note that there would be some question about the loan if the *Herald* was seen as unable to repay.

The next morning, Lee called in the European manager of Chase Manhattan and discussed this issue with him and Foreign Minister Rajaratnam for three straight hours. At the end, Lee Kwan Yew opened the drawer next to where he was sitting and pulled out a tape recorder. He told the Chase Manhattan guy that all of his comments had been taped. The manager had agreed that the loan might well be recalled if it did not seem likely that it could be repaid. Then he went to the door, and when he opened it, the room was filled with TV cameras and reporters. He told the manager that he wanted him to repeat everything that he told him. When the manager was finished, Lee told the media that they had just heard a sample of U.S. interference in the affairs of other countries.

I reported this story to Washington. The next day, at our staff meeting, I mentioned that I would try to get in touch with David Rockefeller and try to smooth the ruffled waters. I told the staff that we would not take a public position on this dispute; if we had to make a statement, I would make it on the basis of instructions from Washington. I knew that CIA had been caught twice in the last four years in operations and was afraid this was another but was officially assured it was not. This tension lasted for a few days and seemed to be calming down. Then I got a message from the Department announcing that someone from the CIA was arriving, carrying a message from the then director, Dick Helms. The last time CIA was caught with its hands in the cookie jar, Dick Helms had promised Lee Kwan Yew that it would never happen again. The CIA agent did not have a personal relationship with Lee, and I think Lee knew perfectly well that whatever he was complaining about was not a U.S. operation.

Anyway, the CIA representative arrived and we met with Lee. Lee gave all his reasons why he thought that the operation was an American one. After that, tensions were reduced. Lee kept calling me in, producing evidence of the U.S. supporting newspapers abroad which was being provided to him by British friends, but was not at all apropos of

his charges. It was obvious that all he was interested in was in closing the *Herald*.

One day, I got a personal message from the Secretary of State announcing that Agnew was coming to Singapore again. I replied to the Secretary that I thought this was not the time for the U.S. to be seen as making a gesture of esteem. I immediately got a reply telling me that he was coming anyway and that he could help me with "my problems" with Lee. I told the Department that I didn't have any problems with Lee; on the contrary, I had very good relationships with him. The problem was the U.S.
Agnew arrived and we had a meeting with Lee. Agnew told Lee that he had looked into his charges of a CIA operation and that he was convinced that there wasn't such a thing. Then he had to go on - and I can't imagine who gave him this suggestion - to tell Lee that a large government such as ours appreciated being told when something appeared to be going wrong.

About two months later I got a message telling me that the Department wished to transfer me. It wanted to change ambassadors. I got a separate message from Marshall Green suggesting that I accept the transfer without complaint because Lee Kwan Yew allegedly said he would prefer another ambassador, which, by the way, was probably true in light of his many public statements about the U.S. One of my staff, who had been working in the control room for the Agnew visit, had heard from one of Agnew's people that the former vice-president had been disturbed by the harsh exchanges that he had overheard me having with Lee. He was particularly unhappy about my opposition to his visit because he was concerned that Nixon would see it and come to the conclusion that Agnew couldn't handle even a minor problem. Of course, I think that Nixon could not have cared less what Agnew did or did not do in Singapore.

In the final analysis, I think Agnew was unhappy with me not only for my objections to his visit, but also because I had worked for Harriman. He had been given this information by one of his military attachés. That was the straw that broke the camel's back; I was viewed as being unreliable. So Agnew was responsible for my transfer.

Q: Why did Lee take after the U.S.?

CROSS: Inexplicable. I think he thought that the U.S. wanted to establish a newspaper which over time would mouth its "propaganda." Theoretically, that would give us influence in Singapore. The *Herald* had done some things which were pretty wild - for Singapore - and that may perhaps have given Lee the idea that we were behind it. For example, the *Herald* mentioned that the PAP (Lee's political party) had helped certain people to avoid national service. The Singaporeans were very proud of their national service because it was an excellent way to integrate the society, both racially and economically, thereby creating a national identity and a sense of intra-state collaboration. It was impeccably run, as far as I could tell. In any case, the newspaper was accused of trying to undermine this system. That really irritated Lee Kwan Yew, even though I thought the newspaper was pretty mild. In the end, Lee just closed the paper. I mentioned earlier that I had talked to David Rockefeller about the Chase Manhattan loan. I finally found him in Latin America. He was besieged by journalists from all over the world who

were obviously unhappy with Lee Kwan Yew's actions. I suggested that Rockefeller not do anything exceptional.

Q: Was there any thought that you knew of about the Bank leaving Singapore?

CROSS: No. I didn't think anything at all would happen. I didn't think Lee's wrath was directed at the bank but at the U.S. I thought after the furor calmed down, it would be back to business as usual. Lee would give his views on world affairs again to the CIA, to Agnew, to me - to anyone who would listen. Chase Manhattan might lose its loan, but the paper would be closed and the whole incident forgotten. The bank didn't suffer much otherwise except Singaporeans were nervous about dealing with it for a while.

Q: While you were ambassador, were you at all concerned by CIA and its activities?

CROSS: I thought the station had excellent relations with the police. But by the time I arrived, their best agents had been transferred; the Agency was not using Singapore as a regional base any longer.

Q: I would like to return to Lee's views of Vietnam. What did he see as the potential consequences of our withdrawal from there?
CROSS: He was very much taken with the "domino" theory. He didn't think that the Thais, or the Laos, or the Cambodians could resist the communists. He thought the Thais in particular could well change sides in a hurry and align themselves with the North Vietnamese and the Chinese. He didn't like the Malaysians and the feeling was mutual; and he thought that they too would cave. He didn't see the Indonesians as much of a bulwark. So he could easily foresee the whole of Southeast Asia falling to the communists. But he thought that if it looked like the U.S. would stay engaged, and if the South Vietnamese leaders remained in office, and if the U.S. military didn't leave entirely, we would be seen as having won the war. I go through this at greater length in my book.

Michigan and Policy Planning

Q: When you returned to the States in 1971, you were assigned as diplomat in residence for a year.

CROSS: Yes, I went to Michigan. I think those assignments are usually hints that the Department wants the officer to retire. In fact, I got a very good break because it enabled me to get back into Chinese affairs. Michigan has one of the top Chinese studies departments in the country. The staff received me warmly; I taught two courses and lectured in others, but I spent considerable time with the staff on guided reading. I hated going to Michigan under those circumstances, but I really enjoyed it.

Q: Did you feel that the system had let you down just because the vice-president had had a fit.

CROSS: No, I was given good support by personnel. I was told repeatedly that they had

good jobs for me. The good job they had in mind was in the Policy Planning Staff, which really didn't appeal to me because my areas of interest were already being covered and I would have had to work on other Asian areas with which I was not very familiar. I started there, but I could not make much of a contribution. I did prepare a few papers on Cambodia which recommended that we work with Sihanouk to head off the communists.

Q: What was Policy Planning, in your mind, at the time?

CROSS: I thought that it could be of very good use to the Seventh Floor. The members of S/P are usually senior officers, with some outside experts mixed in. They write papers based on very good information. They are supposed to be the long-range planners. If used properly, and if a secretary of state is willing to take the papers seriously - as was true in Kennan's days - then S/P could be a most useful office. But in fact, a secretary is so bogged down in daily crises, as are the NSC and the regional bureaus, that no one has time for long-range planning. These organizations would talk to me anytime I wanted to, but they would or could not pay much attention to S/P's output. I wrote only a few papers, including one on China that didn't get very far - I supported the view that Taiwan should not be encouraged to declare its independence, lest we get involved in a crisis with the PRC which might include armed conflict. I thought that was not worth the trouble since it would ruin our China policy. I don't know what happened to that paper. But those few papers were the total of my contribution to S/P while I was there.

Q: You were in S/P when Kissinger was secretary of state and Winston Lord was the head of the staff. Both of them made their reputations on our relationships with the PRC. Were they at all interested in anyone's else views?

CROSS: They certainly did not want to hear from me about China. Kissinger was still also the NSC Advisor so that we had minimum impact.

Q: How long were you in S/P?

CROSS: About a year and a half. I was always looking for another assignment because I considered S/P as a dead end. I thought the S/P concept was a good one and I think, under different circumstances, I might even have enjoyed a tour there. But I was not doing anything; so I wanted to go back overseas. The grapevine kept reporting that Agnew's staff was blocking all possible assignments for me. They apparently had told State personnel that I was not to get another ambassadorship. The whole thing was a shock; I didn't believe that Agnew could be so small-minded. In fact, I defended him for a while; I was kind of ashamed for him not only because he was a representative of Greek-Americans, but also because he looked like such an honest guy.

One day, I was at the Omaha airport waiting for a flight to Washington and watching one of the National League playoff games. The telecast was interrupted to announce Agnew's resignation. So I thought my luck would now change.

About two days after that event, I got a call from a senior official in the Office of

Personnel, wanting to know whether I would be interested in a Hong Kong assignment as consul general.

Hong Kong II

Q: You were in Hong Kong from 1974 to 1977?

CROSS: I was there three years and nine months. That was about as long as one could hold on to that job, in light of the long list of others who wanted it.

Q: It must have been an interesting time since we had just opened relations with Beijing. What was there to do in Hong Kong during this period?

CROSS: We had a Liaison Office in Beijing, headed first by David Bruce and then George Bush. At the beginning, they were highly restricted in their activities. The Office was not allowed, for example, to get newspapers. They would sit at dinner parties in Beijing with the PLO representative. They were not really being as active as they might wish to have been. So we in Hong Kong still had the main responsibility for "China watching." We had some very good Chinese language officers - Wever Gim and Don Anderson headed the section, for example - and a great Chinese staff. Beijing did not have a local staff - or at least a very small one - and all Chinese were PRC employees. Therefore, it was very limited in what it could do.

So we still had a major reporting requirement which covered all aspects of Chinese life. We still had a lot of resources in Hong Kong, but over a period of time, we began slowly to assist the Liaison Office as best we could. We had a very good relationship; most of us were old friends.

Q: What was happening in China at the time?

CROSS: It was the "Gang of Four" time - for the first part of our time. The Gang of Four and the residual effects of the Cultural Revolution created problems for our Liaison Office. We interpreted this weird phenomenon of the Gang of Four as symbolic of the last years of the Mao regime. We really had no idea of what was happening within the Chinese leadership. Deng Xiaoping had emerged again and in 1974 (I think) was returning to a leadership role. Zhou En-lai died in January, 1976. By April, Deng had been dismissed again. That was followed by a hysterical period in China. When Mao died in September 1976, the "Gang of Four" was dismissed and Deng took over once again.

Q: Was our intelligence pretty good about all of these events?

CROSS: I don't think so. We based our analyses mostly on Chinese directives, which were policy oriented. But Kissinger would always complain that we would provide good reports on what had already been decided, but very little on how and when it was decided or by whom for sure. That intelligence was only developed as the Liaison Office expanded its contacts and then later when full diplomatic relations were established and

our embassy could get around.

As for the "Gang of Four," it was clear to us that they were hated, although the depth of that hate did not become clear until later.

Q: Did we foresee a new day dawning?

CROSS: There was no question that the "Gang of Four" were the worst of the Mao period. We assumed that sooner or later that leadership would fall apart and that one would come out on top. But as long as Mao was alive, the four had to depend on each other - despite the fact that Mao by this time was senile. Eventually, Hua Guofeng became the figurehead leader. In fact, he was such a surprise that our political section did not recognize the name. He arrested the "Gang of Four" after Mao's death. But Hua did not immediately have any base and was soon replaced by Deng. But in the intervening time, Hua criticized the Cultural Revolution and all of it excesses.

Q: Your relations with the Liaison Office were good?

CROSS: Yes. We could hardly be seen as rivals. We were separated geographically and as far as work was concerned, as I said before, the Liaison Office was pretty well circumscribed. I don't think Kissinger really cared much about USLO; he just wanted to be sure that some well known American name like Bush be there so that he could fly out and talk to Zhou En-lai.

Q: While you were in Hong Kong, we withdrew from Vietnam. How did that impact on your work?
CROSS: The fall of South Vietnam was a real blow to many Americans in Hong Kong. Almost all of the American operations, private as well as public, employed a lot of people. Our Hong Kong staff was loaded with people such as myself who had worked in Vietnam. So our withdrawal was a real blow to the many who had been involved at one time or another during their lives. The event didn't come as a surprise. Ambassador Martin, traveling to and from Washington, used to stop in Hong Kong. He kept reassuring us that all would be well, but there were lots of other visitors from Vietnam who were involved in actual operations and who painted a different picture. Just before we withdrew, we received a long list of those people who were to be evacuated. The list was so long that it took the machine two hours to run it off. We used to send stuff to Saigon until the embassy asked us to stop; it couldn't even handle what it already had.

On the day Saigon finally fell, I got many calls from American businessmen asking whether I could get Mr. So and So (one of their friends) out. I told them that we were not in communication with Saigon at all. They found that hard to believe even though I told them that we were evacuating all Americans on that day. We also immediately began to put the word out that regardless of what was happening in Vietnam, the U.S. was in no way retreating from Asia and that we were going to try to do what we could for our Vietnamese allies - several thousands had been picked up at sea by one Danish ship. Ship after ship docked in Hong Kong with these refugees on board. They landed in Hong

Kong and then were sent by plane to Guam. Shirley and I would go to the docks every evening to shake hands with these refugees and sort of welcome them to the U.S.

Q: How did the British authorities respond to this deluge?

CROSS: The governor had been the British ambassador in Vietnam, so he was very sympathetic to these refugees. But the British insisted they had no facilities to take care of the refugees and so they were very happy when we took them off to Guam. The British eventually had to establish a huge refugee operation when the "boat people" began to come.

In closing, our job was to report on what was going in Hong Kong as well as on the mainland. The governor and I would talk frequently; he would insist that the major actors in Hong Kong were the Chinese and the Americans. He didn't mean that the U.S. had any policy role in the governance of the colony, but that the security of Hong Kong depended on our willingness to stay engaged in East Asia. He also felt that if China had confidence in its future and if the U.S. tried to help develop the country (e.g., by joint enterprises), that would reduce pressure on Hong Kong. He used Korea and Japan as models of good U.S. policy.

Senior Foreign Service Inspector

Q: You left Hong Kong in September 1977. Then what?

CROSS: I was Senior Foreign Service Inspector for approximately a year and half, all in NEA. It was an ideal assignment because it was a period of great turbulence for the U.S. and the Foreign Service; Iran, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka were all in the headlines. Add Camp David and the Iran hostage situation and you can see it was a very active period for U.S. diplomacy. I inspected Iran just before the first attack on the embassy in November. I also inspected Afghanistan and was warned that a coup would some soon. I left a few days before it actually happened. But I don't think this period of my career is worth going into in any depth.

Director of the American Institute in Taiwan

Q: Then in 1979, you were assigned to Taipei. How did that come about?

CROSS: I stayed in Taipei until late 1981. While in the inspection corps, I was writing a report on our operations in India. One day I was called to come to the auditorium to attend a meeting with other senior officers. It was then that I found out that we had arranged for full normalization of relations with the PRC which automatically called for a termination of diplomatic relations with Taiwan. There would be some unofficial relations with Taipei. After the meeting, I was asked to go to speak to the editorial board of the *Atlanta Constitution* and to a Rotary Club in Tampa. I was to go the very next day.

That I did. While talking to both groups, I was impressed by how comfortable they were

with the concept of better relations with the PRC; I was also impressed by how these groups insisted that we maintain good relations with Taiwan. Without that, I could see that our overall China policy would be in great difficulties. When I returned, I found that my two former DCMs from Hong Kong, Roger Sullivan and David Dean, were going to organize the new institution that we were establishing in Taipei and that David would become the "unofficial" president of the American Institute here in Washington. I asked what they intended to do in Taipei and was told that it would be as low key as possible. But they were looking for a senior officer to head up whatever the institution would be and they said they would be glad to put my name on a list if I wanted to do that.

I then was assigned to inspect the NEA Bureau in the Department. When that was finished, I formally retired from the Service and joined the American Institute in Taiwan as its first director. Of course, there was no difference in pay or FS perks and the job had the same or, perhaps more, responsibilities as an ambassador. That was very interesting and all of us in AIT felt we were engaged in the difficult but essential work of keeping things going with Taiwan.

Q: What kind of vetting did you go through?

CROSS: Dick Holbrooke was the assistant secretary for EA. Harriman had asked to look at some papers, during which I had a chance to talk to Dick in his home in Georgetown. He asked me what I was doing and I told him that I was interested in the Taipei position. Harriman had been instrumental in getting Holbrooke the Assistant Secretary job in the Department and Holbrooke was living with the Harrimans, so that helped considerably, although I must say that I never did get along with Holbrooke very well. He was worried that I was psychologically too close to Taiwan. We never really clashed, but we did not have a close relationship either. He did give the clearest instructions I have ever received; he told me not to ask for anything because nothing could be done for the institute. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher said roughly the same thing.

Q: Did any congressmen talk to you?

CROSS: Absolutely; Congress was after all the parent of the Taiwan Relations Act over the opposition of the Department, which in some details reflected the PRC view. The Department just wanted to sneak me over to Taipei and then we would see what would happen. But in the negotiations with the PRC, we insisted that we be permitted to sell "defensive" arms to Taiwan. That raised - and continues to raise - some contentious issues. Then came the question of what we would do with all the treaties that we had signed with Taiwan, which were numerous. For example, we had the standard treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation. All trade between the U.S. and Taiwan as well as U.S. investment on the island was governed by that treaty. What would happen under the new circumstances?

These questions and many more like them forced Congress to step in and it drafted the Taiwan Relations Act [TRA]. I looked at the draft and saw that it would be easy for us to operate under it. As I said, the Department was unhappy with the TRA in general and

about a statement at the beginning of the Act which stipulated that the security of Taiwan was very important to the U.S. That was the rationale for the arms sales. It also suggested that an attack on Taiwan could be viewed as an attack on the U.S. It was a very strong statement that raised objections from President Carter and the Department. But it was passed anyway and the president signed it. So I talked to a lot of congressmen, many of whom were unalterably opposed to normalization - for example Ed Derwinski, who later joined the Department. Jesse Helms was also strongly opposed.

I think we should recognize how good Congress was on this issue. There was a fascinating inter-play between Congress and the academic community, for example, that fought the Taiwan Relations Act tooth and nail. Most of the questions were not about arms sales, but how the "unofficial" relations would look. That was hard to explain to my colleagues in the Department and others; it was an unusual arrangement that required considerable pioneering. All of the issues concerning the role of the institute were worked out before I went to Taiwan.

I should mention on the arms sales, with which I was deeply involved, that the Department insisted that we not discuss arms sales in Taiwan. All negotiations on those questions would take place in Washington even though DoD sent a couple of first rate officers - retired - to Taipei. Washington was afraid that we would make recommendations that might be embarrassing. I said that I thought that restriction was unwarranted because it would predictably result in the Taiwan representatives in the U.S. talking to the arms manufacturers, the Congress and DoD, thereby generating lobbies that would really complicate the Department's decision making process. I thought that we in Taipei would be much freer to discuss the Taiwanese requests. We would take a vow of silence; we would just listen and not comment; we would send our recommendations which would not be difficult for Washington to deal with. In the process the Department was establishing, the pressure groups would have been all over the Department before we even had a chance to make our views known. But the restrictions on us were maintained.

The only real dispute we had with Washington was on the question of the follow-on fighter. The Taiwanese had the F-5, which had been the standard export fighter sold to many countries. They were not as capable as some of the more modern fighter planes available by then, such as the F-16 or the F-4. So any follow-on fighter that might be available had far greater capability than the F-5 which had intentionally been built for export and which by then was already many years old. The Taiwanese were partially, if not primarily, interested in a new fighter for symbolic reasons. They knew that their air force could never be adequate to match the PRC's in numbers; so their interest in requesting a new fighter was to see what the U.S. would do after the PRC entered strong objections to the sale as it certainly would. I strongly recommended that the discussions of a follow-up fighter be terminated as soon as possible, before we found ourselves in a major imbroglio with the PRC, the American plane manufacturers, Congress, etc. The decision-making process dragged on and on. President Carter established a new system which required the manufacturers themselves to develop an export model of lower capability than the best U.S. aircraft. These could be sold to countries like Taiwan who couldn't buy the most advanced model. However, Taiwan would still have to have

permission from the U.S. government to buy. Both the Carter and the Reagan administrations dithered over their decision, with the PRC fussing all the time.

Our major task in Taiwan was to conduct all of the business of an embassy without being one. We had to do a lot of little things that irritated the hell out of the Chinese. Fortunately, I knew the Chinese well enough that I think we managed to soften the impact of our Taiwan operation; I think, therefore, that our operation became more acceptable than it might have been.

Q: But weren't your operations difficult to undertake lest they be viewed as part of "formal" relations?

CROSS: They were. For example, the Taiwanese wanted to address me as "Mr. Ambassador." I told them that was not acceptable; I might have been one once upon a time but was so no more. Then they tried to treat us socially as they would have any diplomatic mission - there were a few still left; so after a while we just didn't attend such things as national days unless other private Americans were also invited.

Our operations in Taipei had to be conducted with great skill and caution; much of the business was conducted indirectly. I had a couple of contacts which I used periodically for that process. One was Fred Chien, who was a vice foreign minister; he really became the U.S. desk officer. He could be difficult, but I accepted him for what he was, a hard working diplomat. I also worked closely with the advisor to the president, Admiral Ma Chi-chuang. I wasn't allowed to meet President Chiang. I deliberately did not seek any relationship with him. So we never met, even secretly, even though that might have been useful. But sometimes I met Admiral Ma one-on-one to discuss specific issues, such as the Institute's role in Taiwan's human rights - the KMT security services was beating up on the Taiwanese again. I knew that our view would be accurately conveyed to President Chiang. AIT kept plugging away at these issues, all behind the scene. We kept making the point that the regime didn't need to worry about the oppositionists; its reputation around the world was much more important. I think that our quiet approach did have a beneficial impact on the Taiwanese government's action on human rights in the end.

Q: Were we trying to discourage any movement, if there was one, for Taiwan independence?

CROSS: The KMT of course was pushing against that. There was nothing subtle about their goals; they were right up front against independence.

Q: Was there any noticeable difference in Chiang Ching-kuo over time on this issue?

CROSS: The only hints I saw really came after I left. While I was there, there was no public diminution of the KMT stated desire to return to the mainland or against independence. One person I knew well - a former Foreign Minister and later Secretary General of the KMT - spoke in terms of enough time having passed and that Taiwan should now move towards democracy.

Q: Did you have any particular problems with Washington's general desire to expand contacts with the PRC?

CROSS: I had endless problems with the people in charge of U.S.-PRC relations mainly because I think they viewed me as a strong proponent of Taiwan. In fact, I was really downplaying the issue. The main proponents of closer ties with the PRC were on the Desk and in the NSC. I wrote policy papers suggesting that we could not expand relations with the PRC beyond a certain point without giving Taiwan some assurance that their future was safe. One way of doing that was to make the advance fighter available. But Washington was continually concerned that the signing of an agreement for the sale of the advanced fighter - which, by the way, was not yet built - would be viewed by Beijing as a sign that we no longer believed that the two parts of China could be peacefully reunited. I felt that the some people in the Department had the view that the PRC thought that U.S. arms sales to Taiwan was the main reason why unification was not happening.

Q: I guess Taiwan was really an embarrassment to the administration.

CROSS: Nixon's policy was quite clear. Taiwan was to be tolerated but would not be allowed interfere with the improvement of relations with the PRC. I think we could have handled the situation much better with both the PRC and the Congress, not to mention Taiwan itself. In fact, the Carter administration would often be viewed as being a hand-maiden of the PRC and doing its bidding. That really frustrated Congress.

Q: Did you have many congressional visitors?

CROSS: Indeed, and they all praised Taiwan for its stance. Of course, the Taiwan leadership had no equal in the world on how to milk these congressional visits. I think almost all of the visitors came with open minds. For example, John Glenn wasn't sold on Taiwan. He and Mansfield were leaders in the Senate pushing for improved relations with the PRC all along. When they would come through Hong Kong, I would discuss the situation with them. I also thought that we should have better relations with the PRC; that was one of the reasons why I took the Taiwan assignment. I wanted to help improve the U.S.-PRC relations, but I always ran into suspicions about my sympathies.

Q: I think you have illustrated one of the problems of our foreign policy. At the second or third level in Washington, you often see people who think they can manipulate the policy and the outcomes and want to show their power. I am sure that the China desk found Taiwan an embarrassment which barred them from doing whatever they wanted with the PRC.

CROSS: Not only that, but the PRC was constantly telling us that we couldn't have anything that could be interpreted as diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Taiwan had a consulate general in Dallas and the PRC objected to including the names of the staff members in the official consular list. So the PRC was always on our backs trying to undermine our relations with Taiwan.

Q: Did you get much pressure from that part of the Chinese-American community that supported Taiwan?

CROSS: The Chinese-American community has supported Taiwan for such a long time that there is bound to be a close affiliation. But I must say that the Chinese-Americans were delighted with the opening to the mainland. They also supported American policy to preserve Taiwan. Most of them didn't speak Mandarin in any case, so communications with the mainland would have been difficult.

I should tell you one story which is very important. During all of the debates about the fighter aircraft, in the spring of 1978, I came back to Washington - at my own request - to talk to Secretary Haig. I wanted to talk to him because it was obvious to me that some people in the Department were willing to proceed with the sale of arms to the PRC on the assumption that then sales to Taiwan would be easier. I thought it was a terrible strategy. I am not sure that Haig was familiar with this ploy, but he did want to reduce the number of fighter aircraft that were to be sold to Taiwan. I thought that the American Institute people in Washington were very good, but I doubted that they had access to the leadership of the Department.

So I came back and had long discussions with John Holdridge, the assistant secretary for EA. We were good friends, having served together in Hong Kong. John told me very clearly that nothing at that point in time would stand in the way of the Cold War; that is to say, our relations with the PRC had always to be seen in the context of our competition with the Soviet Union. That clear message worried me even more; it did not portend well for U.S.-Taiwan relations. But there was nothing I could do about the facts of life. But one day, I was invited by Fred Chien and James Soong, who was then head of the Information Office and later a candidate for president. This was a family affair to take place at a resort on the coast; so Shirley and I went. We had a very nice time. On the last evening, after we had finished the social events, the two Chinese took me off into a private room where they told me that President Chiang wanted me to give a message to President Reagan. The essence of the message was that Chiang would not make any waves about the putative arms sales.

I asked why. I was told that Chiang had a personal message from Reagan which was the go-ahead for a Taiwan purchase of the advance fighter. I then asked what type plane was being considered. I was told that it would be a model adequate to Taiwan's defense needs, meaning the FX. It seemed to me that this strategy had been a very good one for the U.S.; it was putting the Taiwan issue on the back-burner. I called my deputy, Stan Brooks, and a couple of other staff members and told them that we had succeeded in our mission; Taiwan was going to get an advanced fighter which should give them a sense that the U.S. was supporting them. I thought that then my job was done and I could return to the States.

So I left; a few months later, the Department turned down the request for sale of the advanced fighter for Taiwan. This was Holdridge's recommendation; he thought that the

PRC might raise serious objections. In fact, as soon as we turned down the fighter, the PRC called in our representatives and told them that it would object to any arms sales to Taiwan. They threatened to withdraw their ambassador from Washington if the U.S. didn't agree to stop arms sales. That pressure finally resulted in the Taiwan communique of August 1982 which stipulated that we would not increase either quantitatively or qualitatively our arms sales to Taiwan. That was completely cynical because within two years, we upgraded our arms sales and then during the Bush administration, we sold F-16s to Taiwan. I still think that had we sold the advanced aircraft in 1979, when I went to Taiwan, we would have saved ourselves a lot of trouble because it would have closed an open wound between us and the PRC. At the same time, we could have restrained Taiwan from making some of its extreme comments because it knew that this aircraft would be delivered whenever it came off the assembly line. (See Born a Foreigner, pp. 263-270, on arms sales and dealing with the Taiwan issue generally)

Q: You left in the Fall of 1981. You retired then?

CROSS: I had already technically retired when I became director of AIT in Taipei and I was also at the then retirement age. I was asked whether I would take a political job, where the age issue would not be a factor. But I didn't think there would be any post available for me that would equal any of the ones I had. So I retired and went sight unseen to teach at the University of Washington in Seattle.

End of interview