Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

THEODORE J. C. HEAVNER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is May 28, 1997. This is an interview with Theodore J. C. Heavner which is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Ted is an old friend of mine. We went to the Senior Seminar together. Ted, could you tell me where and when you were born and a little something about your parents?

HEAVNER: I was born in 1929, which as some of us can recall, was the beginning of the Great Depression, and I was raised in Canton, Ohio. My father's family were grocers, owning a number of stores at one time, but they were pretty well wiped out by the depression. My grandfather had only one store by the time he retired, and my father didn't work at that at all. He did a number of things trying to survive the depression years. The longest job he had was running a string of cigarette and candy vending machines, which actually became in later years pretty profitable. In college, I spent a few summers filling those machines, also fixing them when people put slugs in and jammed them or kicked them because they didn't perform correctly.

In short, I came from a lower middle class background, grew up in the Middle West which was very conservative. Religion was very important, and we all knew that America was God's country and that it certainly was the greatest country that had ever been on the face of the earth, and would always be.

My mother's family were immigrants from Switzerland. You don't think of Switzerland as a place that people immigrate from, but, strangely enough, there was a little Swiss colony in Canton, Ohio. My grandfather, who died before I was born, was a watch maker. He came to Canton to work in the Dueber Hampden Watch Works there, which has long since been defunct but at one time was a big enterprise for Canton.

I went through high school there and then I went to Northwestern University because I thought I was going to be a journalist.

Q: Going back to high school. You were going to high school in the middle of a very big thing that was happening out in the world, World War II. Were you following this in the news or was it something very distant?

HEAVNER: It was pretty distant. We certainly followed it as best we could with the papers and the radio, but it hardly touched my life in those years. I was aware only vaguely of how critical to the future of my world that great war was. Canton and Ohio, for that matter, was and still may be a pretty insular place. Maybe that was part of it. But the war was a long way off. At least that was my perception.

Q: While you were in high school did you get anything about diplomacy, foreign affairs, other countries?

HEAVNER: Very little. I don't recall anything much about foreign affairs. And, the idea that I might sometime in my life serve abroad as a diplomat never crossed my mind. In fact, I didn't know until I was in graduate school that you could get into something called the Foreign Service by taking an examination. That came as a great surprise to me.

Q: You were at Northwestern from when to when?

HEAVNER: I went to Northwestern for just one year after high school because I thought I wanted to be a journalist and there was a good school of journalism there. I decided after that first year that that was a mistake, that I wasn't really cut out for journalism and what I really was meant to be was a professor of English literature.

Q: Just how does one decide they are not cut out to be a journalist?

HEAVNER: I think the idea of interviewing people was intimidating and I also didn't write very well in those days. Subsequently, in the Foreign Service I came to pride myself on my drafting, but I think I must have learned that later on, maybe a lot of it in the Foreign Service.

Anyhow, I decided journalism was not right for me and that the appeal of the academic world was very strong. That may have been the major thing. I just liked the thought of being a professor. Some of the professors became heroes to me in those years. I really looked up to them and wanted to imitate their erudition and their wit. I think that was a factor.

Anyhow I changed schools so I could be closer to home, and I went to Cleveland to Western Reserve or what is now Case Western Reserve and got an undergraduate degree there in English lit.

Q: What year did you graduate?

HEAVNER: In 1951. Then I went to graduate school at the State University of Iowa. I

was thinking then that I would not only be a professor but I would be a great writer. They had a Paul Engel school of fiction, poetry, etc. I think they still do.

Q: Oh, it is renowned. Iowa is the place for writing.

HEAVNER: It was then too. So, I went there for a year. Walter Van Tilburg Clark, who wrote "Oxbow Incident" and "Track of the Cat" was there. I thought he was the most marvelous person in the world and got to know him quite well. We corresponded for some years after I left Iowa. He encouraged me to write and I did a lot of it there. Then I decided if I was going to get a doctorate and maybe on the side be a great novelist, probably I should have a first rate doctorate, to get the best credential available. So, I transferred to Harvard for their doctoral program in English lit.

Q: You went to Harvard from when to when?

HEAVNER: It would have been 1952-53 because I was only there a year. You recall, the Korean War was going on during that time, and the Canton draft board was breathing down my neck. The family was running out of patience and I was running out of money because they ran out of patience. Also, I had gotten married in the meantime. So, it wasn't look feasible for me to continue, at least straight through a doctorate, and I was drafted. I thought initially that I would go in as an officer because my two years of graduate study at that time were considered adequate preparation to go directly into officers training. In fact, I signed up for that. Then I learned that if I did that, it was open ended, it wasn't a just two year hitch. As an officer, you were in as long as they needed you. Well, it was quite unclear at that time how long the Korean War was going to go on, and I didn't want to spend more than two years in the military so I went in as an enlisted man. I thought I would go straight off to Korea, but they shipped me to Aberdeen proving ground, and I got posted there on a troop range doing maintenance work and some clerical stuff. The army seemed to forget me and I was there for the entire two year hitch.

Actually, that was a great benefit to me. While I was at Harvard, I had learned that you can indeed get into the diplomatic service by taking an examination. I had looked into that just prior to getting into the army and got the application forms, etc. I spent a great part of that two years on a remote firing range at Aberdeen proving ground studying for the Foreign Service exam. I would literally plug away for three or four, sometimes six hours a day at history and political science, which I had very little of in school, and also French language. So, I took the Foreign Service exams shortly before I got out of the army.

Q: What year would that have been?

HEAVNER: That was 1955. In September 1955, my day of separation from the army was also my day of entering on duty in the Foreign Service. So, I drove from Aberdeen to Washington, DC, rented a little apartment and began my Foreign Service career there.

Q: Here you are. You are going to be a great novelist and the English professor and you

put yourself off to Harvard in order to get the proper credentials, etc. What got you into the Foreign Service track?

HEAVNER: I'm not sure. I think I had become somewhat disillusioned by doing research in English literature. It did seem to me to be a very well ploughed field. I thought, too, I guess, that if one was going to be a great novelist that just experience in academia probably wasn't the best background. The whole idea of being a diplomat abroad seemed tremendously glamorous and indeed it continued to seem that way to me for many, many years. That didn't fade. But, anyhow, I was young and I changed my mind pretty easily in those days, and I changed from academia to foreign service.

Q: Did your wife have any feelings towards this?

HEAVNER: I think she liked the idea too. That may have been an important factor in my decision. It certainly was not a problem. She was quite willing to go along with the idea. I think neither one of us had any inkling how tough the Foreign Service could be on families, particularly wives and children.

Q: I think another thing too. It is easy to forget in this day of easy travel that back in the fifties it wasn't that easy to go abroad. The war had stopped that. Not a lot of people went abroad unless sponsored by the government in one way or the other.

HEAVNER: I certainly had not.

Q: I hadn't been either. Going abroad was going to be fun.

HEAVNER: I certainly thought so.

Q: Do you recall anything about the oral examination?

HEAVNER: I was very anxious about that exam and maybe that has impaired my memory of it. I do recall they asked me what I would do if I were expected to have a cocktail party for a hundred people, which is certainly not something I had thought about before. They asked me what happened to the stock market in Germany during the Weimar Republic and I hadn't the slightest idea. They were clearly interested in my knowledge of the amendments to the Constitution, which fortunately I had almost memorized. But as soon as I began to rattle them off they saw there was not going to be any opportunity to catch me there. They did focus in on the fact that I was weak on economics. I said that that was something I would certainly try to remedy. I think they were favorably impressed by the fact that, although I had not passed the French exam on the first go, I took the next opportunity a month or two later to take it again, at which time I passed with flying colors. I had really applied myself at Aberdeen going around muttering in French according to my sergeant, who was irritated by this. The oral examiners seemed to like that and take me at my word when I said I would also pick up on the economics. Actually I never intended to be an economic officer. I always had it in mind that I would be in the political cone and indeed I was. I still don't have much

knowledge of economics as my record in the stock market would certainly indicate.

Q: When did you come into the Foreign Service?

HEAVNER: September 7, 1955, the same day I got out of the army.

Q: Could you describe your class of Foreign Service officers at that time?

HEAVNER: I was in a rather strange situation. I didn't have a class. For some reason which I never inquired about, I was assigned immediately to a job on the UNESCO [United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization] relations staff. The idea was I would get my FSI training prior to being assigned overseas after I finished that UNESCO tour. I think graduate work may have made the personnel people think I was a cultural type and that UNESCO was therefore the right place for me. And there was an opening there.

About half way through that tour on the UNESCO relations staff, the Department began to look for people who were interested in specializing in Southeast Asia, then regarded, I think, as a remote and rather unimportant part of the world where we might need one or two officers per country who knew the language and had some notion of the history, etc. I wanted to get out of UNESCO to an overseas assignment, so even though I was too junior for that training, I applied. I think there was not exactly a rush of applicants, so they selected me. So, instead of going to junior class training, I went to FSI [Foreign Service Institute] for intensive training in Vietnamese and then, believe it or not, to Cornell for a whole academic year in Southeast Asia studies.

Q: Ok, I want to back track a bit. What were we doing with UNESCO as you saw it?
HEAVNER: UNESCO was very controversial. It was under attack by a lot of factions, some in the American Legion in particular. Those of us who worked on UNESCO had something of a parochial view. I don't think any of us saw at that time how UNESCO could be made to serve the purposes of the Soviets and other communist regimes. We saw it as a purely cultural organization that was going to increase international understanding and thus serve the interest of peace. I now think that was naive. I also think the attack on UNESCO, which centered around its being an organization that was actually trying to promote world government, was very wrong headed. But it was interesting being involved in it at that point.

John McJennett, who was a retired Marine colonel, was my boss. He was the public relations officer in the UNESCO staff, which was quite large at that time. A lot of prominent Americans thought that it would be great to have that kind of international cultural connection, and they served on the United States Commission for UNESCO.

I was sort of a gofer, also a secondary writer for John, who did the heavy work. Once I went to Detroit for a UNESCO conference to try to develop newspaper coverage. I was pretty successful at that actually. We got a lot of coverage. I also wrote a little newsletter that came out once a month about things happening in UNESCO. The newsletter was

distributed by the State Department. I wrote the first draft, probably the only draft, of the U.S. report to UNESCO for that period. So, although it seemed initially a pretty drab and uninteresting assignment, actually it wasn't. It had some good things about it.

But I was anxious to get overseas, and as I said, I jumped at the chance to volunteer for Southeast Asia training. I never got back to anything remotely related to UNESCO or the UN after that.

Q: While you were in UNESCO were you beginning to absorb the Foreign Service culture in the cafeteria or from your co-workers, or did you feel off to one side there?
HEAVNER: Pretty much off to one side. I think there was only one other Foreign Service officer on the UNESCO staff. The others were all civil servants and in most cases had been on the staff from the beginning or had been in similar kinds of work in the Department or other parts of the U.S. government. The other Foreign Service officer there was, like myself, a very junior first assignment officer who subsequently went off to Italy and stayed there for several tours.

Q: There had been the Vietnamese accords in 1954 so it had been on the map for a while.

HEAVNER: It really wasn't on my map and I don't think too many people were paying much attention. Although that may well have generated the interest in a Southeast Asia program that the Department developed in 1956 or 1957.

I hadn't asked for Vietnamese, though I had asked for Thai language training, but they didn't have many, or probably any, volunteers for Vietnamese. They asked me if it would be okay if I was slated for Vietnamese training rather than Thai. I said sure.

Q: Actually language training is the classic way to get out of a job you really don't want. I went to Serbian to get out of INR. Could you describe Vietnamese training at the time? You must have been about the first class.

HEAVNER: I was the second officer trained in Vietnamese at a time when we thought we would only ever need two or three people who could speak that language. It was in the old FSI at Arlington Towers, in the basement with the ceilings in some cases literally dripping condensation on us. The first instructor I had was a Vietnamese intellectual, and I thought it was quite evident after a few weeks that he really didn't want me to learn Vietnamese because then he would be losing his stock in trade. I was able to persuade the linguists that this wasn't working, and they then hired the wife of a Vietnamese diplomat. She was uneducated but very bright, and she did a good job with the materials then available for study of Vietnamese. The study materials were not very good, but I learned enough Vietnamese to get started. Although even though I had nine months at FSI, I don't think it was a very good start. Where I really got fluent was in Vietnam, because they sent me to Hue where we had a little consulate. Unlike Saigon, where French was really the language that most educated and upper class Vietnamese spoke, in Hue they spoke Vietnamese and to function there I had to use it. That is where I really got going in Vietnamese.

Q: Okay, let's go back. Were you a class of one taking Vietnamese?

HEAVNER: A class of two, my wife was also taking Vietnamese. That turned out to be very useful in Hue, too.

Q: Oh, yes. Who was the first person to take Vietnamese?

HEAVNER: Bob Barbour. He opened the post in Hue and was there about a year before I arrived.

Q: You went to Cornell. What were you doing there?

HEAVNER: The Southeast Asian program there was pretty well established. Certainly they had a number of leading academic figures who ran the program. It offered a good foundation in the history and culture of the area. Unfortunately, they were weakest on Vietnam. Their Thai, Burma and particularly Indonesia offerings were much better. But it was a good year and well spent I think. It prepared me much better than I otherwise would have been. Unfortunately, I got the language before I went to Cornell, so although I continued to take some lessons there, my language skills tended to atrophy. It should have been the other way around.
Q: I think this will come up later when we talk about Indonesia. Did you find Cornell on Vietnam at that time had any particular controversial cast?

HEAVNER: No, not then. Of course, we were not really involved at that point. There was interest in Vietnam and some of the research I did there was quite well received by the faculty. Only subsequently did they become one of the academic hotbeds of anti-Vietnam war sentiment in this country.

Q: While you were taking Southeast Asia studies were you picking up anything about the thrust of the academics at Cornell about Indonesia and Sukarno, who was at his height at the time?

HEAVNER: Well, I wasn't focusing on Indonesia then, although I subsequently did have Indonesian language training and did serve in Indonesia at the time that Sukarno was being shown the door. At that time I was trying to focus as much as possible on Vietnam and I don't think I got a great deal on Indonesia. Certainly that was the major interest of at least one of the leading professors there. He had written an important book about it. But I don't think Sukarno was particularly controversial at that time. He hadn't yet swung to the left to embrace the communists as he subsequently did.

Q: What were you getting about Vietnam? By this time it was divided and Ho Chi Minh was the ruler in the North and Diem in the South. Were you getting anything about a contrast between the two places?

HEAVNER: I focused on the fact that here was a country not occupied by the Soviets or

the Chinese communists which had nevertheless emerged from World War II as a communist state. North Vietnam seemed to have a genuine popular base which was, I thought, quite different from what we had seen in places like Eastern Europe. I examined a number of factors I thought had led to that outcome. However, I'm not sure we saw a glaring difference between North and South at that time. Subsequently, there certainly was a great difference. It was never like North and South Korea, though. The North was never that different, it seems to me. The Vietnamese think of themselves as northern, central, or southern, and in a way the division of the country was a throw back to earlier periods in Vietnamese history when the country had been divided between north and south. So, in some respects, 1954 was not that much of a departure from their past. But the Vietnamese are one people with a common history and culture.

Q: You were in Vietnam from when to when?

HEAVNER: I went first to Vietnam in 1958, had a brief stop in Saigon and was in Hue 1958-60. Then I served briefly, six or seven months, in Saigon in 1961 at which time I came back to the States and worked on Vietnam here. After a period in Indonesia I was pulled out and sent back to Vietnam during the war, i.e., 1966-69.

Q: Let's go back to 1958. You went first to Saigon. What were you doing there?

HEAVNER: I was assigned to the political section, but I think the intention from the beginning was that if I seemed suitable, and they wanted to look me over pretty carefully because this was my first Foreign Service assignment, I was to go to Hue and replace Bob Barbour. That was fine with me. I thought that was a wonderful idea.

In Saigon, I was asked to do some very minor chores, and there were a lot of social events in which I think I was certainly being sized up. But it was all really just a prelude to going up to Hue, and it was a wonderful experience just getting there. I chose to drive up, and it was the beginning of the rainy season. Route One, the only road that still, I think, goes all the way along the coast was broken in many places by floods, with bridges down and various hazards of one kind or another. It took the better part of a week to get there. I had a great introduction to rural Vietnam.

Q: What was the political situation in Saigon when you arrived in 1958?

HEAVNER: Diem had had to deal with a number of private armies, the Hoa Hao and a couple of others.

Q: Wasn't that rather close to Saigon?

HEAVNER: Yes, the Hoa Hao were, certainly. Diem had to face up to them, and he succeeded in imposing his authority. He seemed a very vigorous and straightforward person. We felt he was a pretty good choice as head of the government, and it seemed at that time that with some help from the U.S., South Vietnam could become not only economically sound but also politically healthy. We unfortunately thought then that Diem was inclined, at least, towards democratic institutions. So, it was kind of a honeymoon

period with Diem.

I saw him three or four times in Hue. The consulate corps consisted of only three consulates, the Chinese, the French, and the U.S. Diem's family was in Hue, his very old mother and a younger brother who ran central Vietnam like a fiefdom under Diem. Consequently, Diem came to Hue quite often, and when he did the consular corps, of course, would be out at the airport to meet him. On a few occasions he took us with him on his travels around central Vietnam. So, unlike most junior officers and certainly most consular officers, I actually interacted with the head of government on a fairly informal basis a few times, which was really heady stuff for a young Foreign Service officer. This was especially exciting because the embassy was intensely interested in what Diem said and how he behaved when he was in his own particular area, i.e., central Vietnam. I liked him then. I thought he was a very dynamic person.

What ultimately went sour, of course, was his dependency on his family. He essentially trusted only family in running his government and they turned out to be not very trustworthy. They let him down in a lot of ways. They were also very authoritarian in outlook. The idea of democracy was the furthest thing from Ngo Dinh Can's mind. He set up what was supposed to be a secret political party, which wasn't very secret, known as the Can Lao. That party was what he really used to control central Vietnam. All the prerequisites which he could give to the Can Lao party in order to generate funds for them, like a monopoly on the cinnamon trade, was done.

Q: Cinnamon was a fairly substantial crop?

HEAVNER: Well, it was in great demand because among other things it was old cinnamon which grew wild in the highlands and was thought to have great medicinal powers. Consequently, it brought quite a high price. There was also ordinary cinnamon, not from old trees, and production costs were very low, so I guess the take from that was substantial.

I knew the Can Lao chief financial agent, whose home was in Da Nang. In fact, he took me tiger hunting, but we never encountered any tigers, for which I was very grateful. He had a very sporting notion of how one hunts tigers, and the tiger really had a chance. He not only ran the cinnamon industry for the Can Lao, he also owned the entire Vietnamese merchant marine. I'm not sure he actually owned it, but it was all in his name. Their merchant marine consisted of only four or five vessels, but still... That is how it was.

Q: Who was our ambassador when you arrived in Saigon in 1958?

HEAVNER: Elbridge Durbrow. I read his obituary just a week or so ago in the post. I was amazed that he had lived to age 93 because I remembered him as a) a chain-smoker and b) a very active, overweight person. I thought he was a prime candidate for an early heart attack. Durbrow was quite a character.

Q: I'm trying to get a feel for these people. Was the embassy small enough so that even

as a junior officer you were within his orbit?

HEAVNER: Not really, because I was in Hue. He came to Hue once and was our houseguest. I was in his orbit at that point. The Vietnamese laid everything on for him. I remember we went to Quang Nam province and went up the Tra Cuc River on a barge that could only be described as minor league Cleopatra. They had a couple of big armchairs on the barge for him and the province chief. It was powered by a little, very antiquated outboard motor. Durbrow was famous for mumbling, and he was mumbling and I was translating. This was difficult because the motor was going put-put-put- bang, put-put-put-bang. Durbrow would mumble, then look at me and I would say, "I'm sorry, Mr. Ambassador, I didn't hear what you said." It was not my finest hour.

Q: I take it the feeling at the time, 1958, was that South Vietnam was going to make it?

HEAVNER: Oh, yes. We certainly thought so.

Q: Was there any particular threat from the Viet Cong?

HEAVNER: Yes. There was indeed. In fact I am proud to say I must have been one of the very few people who saw some of that coming. I wrote a dispatch based on talking to missionaries and district chiefs, in the highlands primarily, who told me about infiltration from the North, that the Viet Cong strength was growing. I said this was a growing threat and an ominous one. Indeed, when I finally saw Ngo Dinh Can, who did not ever receive foreigners, but he...

Q: This was Diem's brother?

HEAVNER: Yes.
Q: And sort of the godfather of the central area?

HEAVNER: He was indeed and a very reclusive, mysterious figure. My predecessor, Bob Barbour, had gotten to see him once. I was very anxious to duplicate that as was the ambassador. I can't say that I got to know him, but I did see him. I spent the better part of an hour with him. One of the things I asked him about was this fact, as I saw it, of increased communist activity in the highland provinces as well as Quang Ngai. I don't know if he was ill-informed or simply wanting to put me off, but he made light of it. He did not appear to see it as a threat.

Q: Where is Quang Ngai?

HEAVNER: Quang Ngai is on the coast. If you go south from Hue, you hit Quang Nam province and then the next one down is Quang Ngai. The consular district included all of those central coastal provinces down to Binh Din and the embassy later added, because they wanted me to go there, Pleiku and Kontum, two highland provinces. The Montagnard country.

Q: Was there a consulate in Da Nang at that time?

HEAVNER: No.

Q: So you had pretty much the north?

HEAVNER: Yes, including Quang Tri which was up near the border.

Q: What was the situation in Hue when you got there? A little about living and then how a young Foreign Service officer goes about working in an area like that.

HEAVNER: Hue was a consulate although they didn't want us to do any consular work. If anyone wanted a visa or passport they had to go to Saigon for it. The reason for that was not terribly clear to me because we could have done consular work there. There wouldn't have been that much demand for it.

The main reason I was there, and Bob Barbour before me, and a number of other people after me, was to report on the situation in central Vietnam and in particular the area bordering North Vietnam and the activities of Ngo Dinh Can and his people. So, it was a political reporting post. I think the intention was when they opened the post that we would get soundings from North Vietnam. But it was a sealed border. We never learned anything about North Vietnam as far as I know. Certainly we didn't while I was there.

Q: Was there concern from the embassy and was it transmitted to you about Ngo Dinh Can and his activities at that point?

HEAVNER: We didn't know what to make of him. Certainly the word that the government gave us was that he was doing a lot of good things. He was very interested in education and very supportive of the University of Hue. He was busy working through his people with USAID [United States Agency for International Development] to build rural schools and put in small irrigation works. One of the things I did was to travel around and look at those and it seemed to me that the money for the small irrigation works, in particular, had just evaporated. When I talked to Can, he was indeed interested in education, particularly the University of Hue. I think some of the money which he made or taxed was going there. This was a despot but he was not entirely bad by any means. There was certainly a benevolent aspect to Can and to Diem. They did want the country to prosper and they did want the people to be taken care of, as long as it was clear who was in charge and who would get the cream of the crop.

Q: Were you picking up any mutterings against him and the Diem family while you were in Hue or was Hue pretty much in their pocket?

HEAVNER: One of the things I reported on was how Cam had picked up on a lot of communist tactics for controlling the population, like peasant farmer organizations and political study sessions. He had not done nearly as good a job as the communists did in the North, but he had picked up on a lot of their methods and people were afraid to

complain about him and Diem. There was no freedom of expression. I think that central Vietnam was a pretty introverted, reticent kind of culture to begin with and became more so under Can.

This was the heartland of Vietnam in many respects. Hue was the old dynastic capital for many years, and Bao Dai had been there under the French not so long before.

Q: Was there still a royal presence in Hue and did that have any significance?

HEAVNER: There were relatives I was told, but I never met them and they had as far as I could make out no political impact. I think any of them who might have been interested had been forced to leave. Bao Dai, himself, of course, was very much out of the picture.

Q: Yes, he was in France.

HEAVNER: And I don't think he was wanting to come back.

Q: How did you go about your business?

HEAVNER: That was a bit of a problem for me initially. It was not entirely clear how I would operate there. I began by doing a lot of traveling. In fact I did a lot of traveling throughout because I found that the people who would talk most readily were district chiefs and sometimes province chiefs outside of Hue. I made a lot of contacts within the city, although there wasn't a lot of social life there to begin with. But these tended to be very careful about what they said. I got a lot more information from people in the countryside about what was going on. I reported that. We did a series of provincial surveys in which I described everything I could find out about each province - its economy, its political structure, and what the Can Lao seemed to be doing there. Who the province and district chiefs were and where they came from and how they interacted with the Montagnards in the case of the highlands at least, and in the case of Quang Ngai with the Cham minority. Strangely enough there is still a Cham minority there.

I did a comprehensive survey of each of those provinces as I could, beginning with Binh Dinh, because my predecessor had done Thua Thien and Quang Tri. I did Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Pleiku, and Kontum. That took quite a while, actually because I had to come and go several times and travel over those roads was slow.

Q: This was long before the time when if you wanted to go anywhere you just whistled up a helicopter and off you would go.

HEAVNER: Yes.

Q: Were there many missionaries there?

HEAVNER: I found one who was a very good source and very knowledgeable. He had spent many years there, mostly in the highlands, but also along the coast. He didn't have

the parochial point of view that so many of the missionaries encapsulated themselves in. He really was interested in the political structure and what was going on across the board. I quoted him a great deal in my reports.

Otherwise, my main sources were some province and district chiefs who were a little more loquacious and friendly than most of the others. As I said, I did get to know the financial front man for Can Lao pretty well. I was his guest at his home a number of times and that was an overnight guest because he was in Da Nang. As I said, he took me tiger hunting twice and thank God we didn't find any tigers because his idea of hunting tigers was to get a shotgun with what I think they called a triple 0 shot. It had only three pellets. You went through the brush on foot with a miner's light on your head. The idea was that you would pick up the cat's eyes in this light and that would stop him long enough for you to let him have it with the shotgun. A very sporting proposition it seems to me still. Fortunately, I didn't encounter a tiger with him. I did later, in a much safer situation, but I didn't get that one either.

Q: At that time was there a feeling of oppression? How would you describe what you were getting out of the country?

HEAVNER: It was not at all well received in Saigon, but I thought, as I said, it was a pretty tight, well regulated communist style regime in central Vietnam, given the way the population was organized and required to do this and that. That dispatch was not well received because it didn't read very well from the point of view of this friendly, supposedly increasingly democratic regime that we were supporting. I did not see it as a particularly benevolent regime in that respect. Freedom of expression was not there.

Q: You say it wasn't received well at the embassy. I think an interesting thing is the difference between the...

HEAVNER: Well, Saigon was a very different place. In Saigon, the opposition did mouth off and they did get reported in the press. There was nothing like that in central Vietnam.

Q: Would you go back to Saigon from time to time and were you getting they would rather have you reporting on a different view, or something like that?

HEAVNER: No. I wasn't told that this was biased reporting, although I think that was the message. I think there was also the view in Saigon that "Hey, this country has never been a democracy. These people have never exercised much in the way of democratic rights. Don't get so concerned about it." Although that was never said. There was some justice in it, too, by the way. We are not exactly seeing a democratic regime there these days.

Q: In 1954 there was this mass exodus of Catholics from the North. Did that have an impact on your area?

HEAVNER: I think so, as Diem, of course, was Catholic. He used a lot of northern people who were Catholic. I visited some of the Catholic groups in central Vietnam who

were still in very bad shape in 1959. They were on very unproductive land along the coast and being supported in part by the GVN and in part by USAID. They were certainly not going to be able to grow enough rice to take care of themselves. They were heartedly despised by many of the southern and central Vietnamese by the way. They were seen as carpet baggers and the fact that Diem used them as well as his central Vietnamese Catholics was part of the reason, probably, that he was not more successful in uniting the country under his aegis.

Q: How were relations in your area with the Buddhists at that point? Later this became a major, major issue.

HEAVNER: That is one of my regrets of my Hue assignment. There were a lot of Buddhist temples there and I saw them and thought about them. They were completely excluded from the political scene or excluded themselves from it in those days. But, I thought it would be interesting to get to know them and the structure of their organization and to write a report on it. I had always intended to do that but never got around to it before I left, unfortunately, because as you pointed out the Buddhists became a potent political factor later on. I suppose Tri Quang was there in those days. I did not know about him. I had not heard of him when I was there.

Q: Tri Quang became the Buddhist leader and very controversial figure later.

HEAVNER: Much later. I did meet him later on in Hue, but that was during the war.

Q: Was the Catholic church playing any role up where you were?

HEAVNER: Probably, but again that was not something that was easy to plug into. There was an assumption, I think, that the priests would do whatever was necessary to assist and support Can and Diem. They were very active in some of the social welfare organizations and educational efforts in central Vietnam. My assumption always was that they were important in that respect. The rector of the university in Hue was a Catholic priest. He was, however, central Vietnamese, not northern. I knew him pretty well, seeing him socially a lot. In many ways he was a very admirable man who worked very hard to set-up a university and bring to it Vietnamese who had qualifications for teaching. Father Luan was his name. In fact, he came to the States when I was working on Vietnam here and visited me and had dinner with us. I think that was the last time I ever saw him though. I think he had died before I went back to Vietnam. He had a very active secretary general at the university. A young man who was very, very intelligent and very fluent in English, whom I also got to know pretty well. He was not clergy and had been educated in French as had his wife. The university was a pretty good organization as far as I could make out, a reputable, substantial educational institution.

Q: What about the consular corps? You said there was a French and a Chinese consulate. Did you ever work with them or was everyone off on their own?

HEAVNER: We did not have a lot of social interaction. The Chinese consul was an

elderly man who as far as I could make out rarely went out and certainly didn't travel. His English was negligible so communication with him was in French and my French wasn't very good. So, I didn't have a lot of interaction with him at all. The Frenchman was an interesting man. I think the French did not regard that post as important and I think he was on the skids careerwise. He was a very tall man, about 6' 6," which made him remarkable indeed in a country where most people are five feet and under. I think he did have good connections in the remaining French community. There wasn't much left of that, but he was worth listening to when he was willing to talk, which wasn't very often. I think he saw the Americans as usurping the French role in Vietnam, however, and doing a pretty poor job of it. He basically was not very friendly to the U.S. or to me. In short, by and large, not a useful contact.

Q: What was the social life like there?

HEAVNER: Minimal. There was a Cercle Sportif, a nice building and right on the river, but it seemed like a haunted house. It had been a French enclave, of course, in the old days and the French were largely gone. In fact, as far as I could make out they were pretty much all gone from Hue. I recall going over there early in my tour at noon and walking around all alone in this big building and thinking how nice it was and how lonely it felt.

What social life there was was dinners. They weren't much for receptions. There would be national day receptions and that was about it. The province chief and the delegate, they called him, who was the central government figure for the whole region, but who seemed to be much less powerful than the province chiefs, would come to my home when invited. They rarely reciprocated. I think I was never at the delegate's house for dinner and only a few times at the province chief's home.

The head of the hospital there was very friendly, however, and he did have us around many times. When I departed, his wife thought it would be wonderful to give me a traditional Vietnamese costume, which for males was all black and white and sort of like a tunic with a headdress which was peculiar to, I believe, central Vietnam. So, they were good and well plugged in people and useful contacts as well as nice friends. My wife was a nurse, which probably helped. She had something she could talk about to him that made sense to him and was probably useful at times.

The head of the university and his secretary general were intelligent and knowledgeable people who when they wanted to could tell me things that I found very interesting. Often they were pretty circumspect.

Q: What was your impression of the Montagnards vis-a-vis the central government?

HEAVNER: I think it is fair to say the Vietnamese in general, then and perhaps still, regard the Montagnards as slightly less than human. They were not well treated and the animosity was reciprocated. The Montagnards did not like the Vietnamese any better than the Vietnamese liked them. I did manage to see and talk to some Montagnards, which

was difficult because most of them spoke no Vietnamese. Those who had any foreign language spoke French, and my French was not very good. Neither was theirs, I might add. Subsequently, when I was in Saigon during the war, we had a marvelous go around in which a large group of Montagnards that had been trained and armed by our people had decamped into Cambodia and we were trying to cajole them to come back into Vietnam and deal with the Viet Cong and the Ho Chi Minh trail. The head man insisted that our ambassador, who was then Henry Cabot Lodge, come out to meet him on the border between Cambodia and Vietnam. Lodge was not about to do that so he sent me. I and an army colonel landed in a helicopter in a clearing. As we were coming down the pilot said, "We haven't prepared this landing." I said, "What do you mean you haven't prepared this landing?" He said, "Well, usually we spray it with gun fire to make sure that there is nothing down there in ambush." When we landed and were surrounded by Montagnard troops it was a pretty hairy moment. It turned out they were friendly. But, communicating with them was very difficult, even at that date, because they still weren't speaking English. The colonel had no French and mine was rudimentary. We finally did get the leader to come into Pleiku and talk to the Vietnamese there. Ultimately they did succeed in bringing them back into the fold.

This was much later during the war. The time you are talking about, making connections of any kind with the Montagnard minority was difficult. I did make an effort and did see some Montagnard leaders. They did not make a favorable impression because alcohol was a big problem and they did a lot drinking. A leader there could afford to be drunk most of the time and they often were.

The Vietnamese once staged a Montagnard buffalo sacrifice for my benefit, which I attended as a guest of Can's financial front man. It had to do with Can's interest in the cinnamon trade, because the Montagnards were in the area where most of the cinnamon grew. The Montagnards were given water buffalo to sacrifice and it was a pretty sad, but I remember vividly the dancing women and the dancing men and the spearing of the buffalo who died very slowly, I'm afraid. A nasty business. Even though this was meant to be something the Vietnamese were doing for the Montagnards, I felt strong currents of animosity even at that event.

Q: Was Pleiku used as a special place at this time?

HEAVNER: There had been a lot of tea plantations in Pleiku before the French war and there was still one French planter up there whom I talked to a few times. I don't know how much tea he was getting out. Pleiku was kind of a wild west place then. We had an American construction company there that under USAID was building a road from the coast right up to Pleiku. This was quite an undertaking because the terrain was really very rough. They had actually finished before I left, and I was among the first to traverse that route from the coast up to Pleiku. We had a military MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group], as we called it, there. I don't think there were more than a dozen officers there, if that. The main MAAGs were in Da Nang, Hue, and Binh Dinh. These were the military advisory groups. They would be a handful of officers usually, not a big contingent. And then, of course, there were the Montagnards themselves in Pleiku, with

their strikingly different traditional housing arrangements on stilts with the beams going up. If they entertained you, which they did do a few times for me, a major part of the entertainment was to serve you rice wine. The idea was that everybody sups from the same straw, and if the rice wine won't get you, that straw will. You had to partake because it would have been a terrible discourtesy not to.

Q: Did you get any feel for the South Vietnamese military while you were there?

HEAVNER: Yes and no. The general in charge of what later became I Corps was a man who grew up in Rome and whose Vietnamese was not very good but whose French was impeccable and who spoke pretty good English. I used to see him occasionally. He was one of the principal leaders of the coup against Diem ultimately. I don't know that I knew him well, but I did know him.

Q: What was his name?

HEAVNER: Well, you know, one of the things that happens to you as you get older is that although these things are still all there, the recall mechanism becomes rickety. As I was sitting here thinking about him I could see his face clearly, but I'm blocking on his name. It will probably come to me as we go along. You would recognize it, I think because he was a well known general at the time of the coup. He was probably the only Vietnamese general whom I knew when I was in Hue. Tran Van Don was his name. There were plenty of military about and increasingly they were functioning as district and province chiefs, although most of the province chiefs were still civilians at the time I was there. That changed later on. They came under the military government almost entirely. But even Diem was using some military in those days.

Q: You left Hue in 1960 and then went down to Saigon for a while. What were you doing then?

HEAVNER: I was in the political section. I wasn't doing anything that I thought was of any consequence, but I happened to be there at the time LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson], then vice president, came to South Vietnam. He insisted that he have an American as his interpreter. Well, that was okay when he went to see Diem. We sent Tom Conlon whose French was impeccable and Diem was probably happier in French than Vietnamese and might have felt insulted had they sent me. Also, it would have cut the ambassador out of the exchange. However, Johnson wanted a Vietnamese speaking American to go with him when he went into the countryside to look at the AID projects, etc. So, I spent a day and a half literally on the laps of the Secret Service when we were in the vehicles and more or less at Johnson's elbow otherwise. It was one of the most incredible days of my life. You probably have heard a lot of Johnson stories, I think they are all true.

I remember we had stopped along a road bed AID had financed and there was a cortege of Vietnamese, mostly women, standing along the edge of the road waving American flags. Johnson riveted one Vietnamese woman and said, "Tell her that I am the Vice President of the United States of America and have come here to help the Vietnamese

people." I told her that and she said, as Vietnamese do when they don't know what else to say,"Yah." And he asked me to tell her that this road is one of the great things that we have done to help the Vietnamese people. I did and she said, "Yah". Then he asked me to ask her if she has heard about the American AID program. I did and she said, "Yah". He then asked me what is she saying? Well, in Vietnamese "yah" is a "yes, I hear you," it is not "yes, you are right." It may be "yes, I don't believe a word you are saying" or "yes, I don't understand you," but it is just, "yes, I'm listening." I said, "I don't know, Mr. Vice President, she really didn't say." He stepped on my foot very firmly and said, "Ask her again."

It got more difficult as we went on because we were getting farther away from Saigon and the Vietnamese, at least, were getting a little anxious about his security. We got to a bridge and the abutments were festooned in barb wire. Johnson jumped out of the car, as he had been doing right along to press the flesh, and somehow he got around the barb wire and down into the village that was stretched along the creek down below without any escort. The AID director, whose name was Gardner, pattered after him and said, "Mr. Vice President, you shouldn't come down here alone. It is dangerous." Johnson looked at him and said, "Nonsense," I guess, and kept on going. Gardner persisted and Johnson whirled on him and said, "God damn it, if you can't talk nice you can't come along." He then moved on into the entrance of one of these little straw huts along the river and successfully cornered a Vietnamese woman in the hut. He went through the same drill again of how he had come to Vietnam to show our support for the Vietnamese people and did she know about the American AID program. She said quite clearly, "No." She then exited under the back of the house and Gardner not understanding much of what was going on got very exercised about what he thought and articulated as turning her back on the Vice President of the United States of America where upon Johnson bellowed at him, "I told you once, if you can't talk nice you can't come along." And so it went.

We got to the border of the next province over and the province chief had erected a magnificent arch across the highway which said in English, "Welcome to the Vice President of the United States of America." Johnson really liked that, so he stopped the cortege and got out and said to the vice president of Vietnam, Tho, who was with us... by this time they had put me in the front seat of that car, by the way, and I was supposed to translate Tho's English into Johnson's English, which after a few efforts caused Tho to stop talking all together, because his English was pretty good. Both Tho and I thought that Johnson, when he stopped there and said to his military attache that he wanted to take this with him to show the American people, meant that enormous arch. Tho said that it would be very difficult to get it down and get it into the airplane and it wasn't until Johnson, himself, and the military attache started to detach the banner that it was clear what was wanted. They did get the banner down with Johnson helping and put it into the car and off we went.

We finally got to what was supposed to be a military display. There were some maneuvering of troops and Johnson was sitting on a grandstand in a big easy chair. Sitting beside him was with what to me at least was a novelty, a portable tape recorder, property of an American reporter, a rather attractive young woman. She had this tape

recorder under Johnson's mouth. I don't know what he was saying, I couldn't hear it, but she was asking him questions and he was responding into the tape recorder. His hand was hanging down over the side of his armchair and he began to pat her on the thigh and then on the rump as he talked. Well, if I could see this, I am sure some of the Vietnamese could also see very clearly what was going on. But she is not paying any attention at all to that. She is just busy doing her interview, by God.

That was probably more than I should have told you, but there was more.

Q: Well, let's hear more because this is the personality of somebody. I take it Johnson was feeling rather constrained in the Kennedy White House and would kind of like to get out and do his thing elsewhere.

HEAVNER: He acted as though he was running for office in Vietnam, at least when I was with him, and as if this were an American audience he was playing to. He did everything, I believe, as he would have done it in Texas, and most of it was right over the heads of the Vietnamese.

Q: By the time you left and particularly being in Saigon, did you sense any change in the atmosphere between 1958 when you arrived and 1961 when you left?

HEAVNER: Yes, I think it was pretty clear by 1961 that the North was making a serious effort to infiltrate and organize a Viet Cong underground. The threat was maybe not a big cloud on the horizon, but it was certainly there. I don't know how clearly we saw that. It would be nice to say that I saw it coming, but I don't think I did. I knew from my own experience in Hue that some of this was going on, but if someone had said it would turn into a major conflict and Vietnam would become the linchpin of our whole foreign policy, I would have laughed. I couldn't see that coming down the pike and I don't think anybody else did.

Q: Did you see any change in the attitude towards Diem during your time in Vietnam, both throughout the country and within the embassy?

HEAVNER: There was a lot of increasing skepticism about Diem and in particular, his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu and his wife, the famous Madam Nhu. There was a very articulate, intelligent, well educated upper class in Saigon who thoroughly disapproved of Madam Nhu and her husband. They told us a lot of truths and probably a lot of exaggerated truths about them. How corrupt and nasty they were. Much of that rubbed off on embassy personnel so that under the level of the ambassador and the political counselor, I think, there was increasingly in the political section and other parts of the embassy a lot of questions of whether we were supporting a regime that a) could make it and b) that we wanted to be associated with. But it was our policy to support Diem - and that is why Johnson came - to be very closely associated with and supportive of the Diem regime. That was obviously how Johnson saw as his role and why he made the visit. So, there was a certain tension in the embassy, and I was part of it because I had become increasingly skeptical about the Diem regime and I don't think I kept that to myself. Not

that we weren't good soldiers, but when we talked in house we said what we thought, and I didn't think the Diem regime was very effective or promising for the long term. I did believe all the stories about the corruption, some of which I was aware of firsthand from my time in Hue. It was difficult in Can's case to call it corruption because he did a lot of good things as well. In Nhu's case, if the stories were true, it was pretty out and out - there were probably Swiss bank accounts and the whole nine yards. Anyhow, there was a lot of disenchantment about the Diem regime in the embassy ranks. You may remember that when Durbrow left, he, himself, had become pretty disenchanted and he was replaced by Nolting whose mandate was to repair our relations with Diem and to reaffirm our commitment to support that regime. Fred Nolting did a good job of that.

Q: Did you sense that there was a larger commitment toward Vietnam when the Kennedy administration came in?

HEAVNER: Well, it was the Kennedy administration that really got us started there down that road. They were the ones who first introduced American combat forces, although it was done clandestinely. We had some close air support in Vietnam early on which was called Farmgate. I don't think you can blame Johnson entirely for our deepening involvement in South Vietnam. It seems to me that the Kennedy administration really got it under way. I was working on Vietnam back here until shortly before Diem was overthrown, which was authored in the Kennedy administration too, by the way. I don't know that you can say that Kennedy wouldn't have continued just as Johnson did. I think he might have done.

Q: You left there in 1961. When?

HEAVNER: It would have been the summer or early fall of 1961. I came back here and went to work for Sterling Cottrell who was then head of what was called the Vietnam Task Force and Ben Wood was his deputy. I had known Ben in Saigon. I was happy as a clam because I really liked and admired both of them immensely and we were doing something which was obviously increasingly important in our foreign policy. It had the attention of the White House. I recall Cot, as we called him, going to the White House and riding back to the State Department with Kennedy one day. The interagency group, which started out being called the task force and later became the so-called Working Group, was an interagency organization chaired by State and obviously of great interest and concern to the President himself.

Q: Why don't we stop here. We will pick it up next time and talk about your time on the task force which was from 1961 until when?

HEAVNER: Just two years, 1961-63.

Q: But a very important time.

Ted, we are going to be talking about the Vietnam Working Group, 1961-63. When did you leave in 1963?

HEAVNER: It would have been in the spring of 1963 because I went from there into Indonesian language training.

Q: Could you talk a bit about your leaders in the Vietnam Working Group and how they operated and how this very important apparatus was put together and what it was trying to do?

HEAVNER: It was already put together when I came on board in 1961 so I am not sure how it was initially established. My recollection is that Sterling Cottrell was the first director and Ben his first deputy, although I could be wrong about that too. It was an interagency organization that was clearly led by State in a way that in retrospect seems kind of unusual. It was Cot and Ben who did take the lead and clearly had the blessing of the White House as well as the seventh floor. It was a very nice organization from my point of view. I thoroughly enjoyed all the people in it. We met periodically with the other agencies. It was my relationship with Cot and Ben that made my working life then so pleasant, however.

Q: Ben?

HEAVNER: Ben Wood. After Cot left, Ben moved up to be director and I became his deputy. I think Hilsman was still the assistant secretary then and Averell Harriman took the job later on. Harriman was assistant Secretary then. I thought Averell Harriman was a very remarkable man. I remember him talking on the telephone, reading a draft, and interrogating me at the same time, which I thought was quite a feat. I also learned very quickly if you didn't get his attention in about the first ten seconds, you might as well forget it. He used to take out his hearing aid which was kind of a signal of "I'm not interested in what you are saying." That was when Harriman was assistant secretary. He came in with Kennedy, as you may recall, and after a very distinguished career at much higher levels, accepted that assistant secretary job under Kennedy. I guess this was a real vote of confidence in Kennedy as well as something interesting for him to do.

In any event, I ran into him again in 1975 when I was on Caribbean affairs and Carter had decided that all our ambassadors would be vetted and recommended by a panel of distinguished diplomats and other distinguished folks, one of whom was Averell Harriman. They were talking about each area subsequently and in due course the Caribbean came up. It was the custom that the country director, which was me in this case, was asked to join them for their consideration not of specific names but of the requirements of the chiefs of mission jobs there. Although I wasn't asked for it, I assumed that they also wanted recommendations. Harriman was sitting down at the end of the table and I came in and sat down for my ten minutes and began to talk about the requirements for the job in the Bahamas. About ten seconds after I began, sure enough, out came the hearing aid. I thought to myself that I had lost him again!

Q: When you arrived there did you find this group had a realistic, from your point of view, view of the situation in Vietnam or did it seem to be more dominated by the

Washington establishment?

HEAVNER: I think it is fair to say in general we did not have a very good understanding of Vietnam, so probably we would have to say it reflected Washington concerns and outlook far more than anything else. Counterinsurgency was big in those days as you may recall. In fact, I think there was a period not so long after that when everybody was supposed to have counterinsurgency training. So there was a keen interest in the problem. It was seen, I think through insufficient historical background and even more importantly through insufficient strategic point of view. The assumption from the beginning was that it was not going to be too costly. We were not going to be in a situation where we really had to expend vast amounts of treasure and blood. At no time, I think, and this extends into the Johnson years as well, did we face up to the idea that okay you are in a war, do you mean to win the war or not. We were never prepared to make the ultimate effort, for example, to somehow challenge Ho Chi Minh on his home ground. On the contrary we reassured him repeatedly, at least during the Johnson era, that we were not threatening the integrity of North Vietnam. That we weren't going to invade and take over that part of the country and reunite it by force. We never were willing to face up to the possibility, in short, of another confrontation with China and so we were sort of playing from a bad poker hand it seems to me. In retrospect it is easy to say we never should have gotten in there in the first place, but having gotten in as deeply as we had then, it seems to me we needed to make it clear to ourselves, primarily, but also to the enemy, that we were quite prepared to do whatever was necessary to bring it to the conclusion we wanted. We never reached that.

Q: At the Working Group level were you so involved in the details of working the situation that you all were just not even talking about what might be done?

HEAVNER: Well, there were a lot of phases. Again in retrospect, I think it is fair to say that we won the war a number of times and each time our opponent raised the ante. In 1967, for example, things were in pretty good shape. In fact, I reupped for a second tour there because I wanted to be there when the war ended. I don't think that was an unrealistic expectation given the situation then on the ground. The difficulty was that none of us foresaw the ability and the willingness of North Vietnam to inject more and more men and materiel into the effort, and for the Soviet and Chinese backers to continue their support at the necessary level to raise the ante.

Q: Let's go back to the 1961-63 period. While you were sitting with this Working Group was it a topic of discussion where we should go or something of this nature?

HEAVNER: We thought a lot of precedents like Malaysia, and in fact had an expert on Malaysia come talk to us a number of times. The assumption was that if that strategy which was translated into strategic hamlets in the Vietnam context worked in Malaysia, it ought to work in Vietnam. The difficulty, of course, was that Malaysia had no common border with a communist supporter and therefore was not able to get the continuous infusions of assistance that North Vietnam and the VC got. The other problem was that the Malaysian communists just weren't of the same stripe as the Vietnamese. The

Vietnamese are very tough people, very determined and had a long history of fighting off foreign invaders. The French were not the first, the Chinese were a continuing problem and the Vietnamese had driven them out a number of times historically. So, they were an entirely different kind of opponent and I think that was never understood.

Q: What were you doing in the Working Group?

HEAVNER: The idea basically was to coordinate all of our efforts. The AID effort which grew tremendously over those years. The military effort which also grew greatly over those years. And the political effort which was to build or try to help Diem build support for his regime. That perhaps fared worse than some of the other efforts. Building up military support appeared to do rather well, although in retrospect it is fair to say that we never created a very effective military organization in the South. Certainly the AID program generated a robust, although very dependent economy. All of that needed coordination and direction and repeated infusions of American assistance which grew and grew and funds for it had to be found in the U.S. budget. Dealing with congress was part of Cottrell's job, not the part of it that I got into. When we got into the business of strategic hamlets, the Working Group, primarily at our instigation, although CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] was for it, too, was to do a series of provincial surveys. We got what we thought was an okay from the Diem regime to do that, and they sent me back to Vietnam to organize and start the effort. The trouble was the Vietnamese kept dragging their feet and although I was there for six weeks, we couldn't get it off the ground. We finally gave up trying to get a joint provincial survey effort. It wasn't until much later, I think, under CORDS, that we actually did provincial surveys, province by province.

Our biggest concern from my perspective was the relationship with the Diem regime and how to strengthen it. Diem started out with some heavy obstacles. The Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai private armies were opposed to him. He really didn't have a lot of support even in the Catholic community and yet in 1955 he had managed to take over and exert control. So, there was a lot of vigor and determination there. Whether that deteriorated, got old or something, I don't know. But it became less and less evident that he was able to really take charge and marshal support the way it was required. Part of the problem was again a failure on our part and perhaps on his, to take into account the fact that Vietnamese people in general haven't supported governments. They have tried to keep government of whatever stripe at arm's length. Primary loyalty was to family and village. That was certainly true when I was in the Vietnam before the war.

One of the things that I think I mentioned in one of our earlier sessions, was the extent to which Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Can, had taken over essentially communist methods, mass organizations of all kinds, compulsory study sessions on a regular basis, right down to the family units which were responsible for one another. If you got a bad apple in your group who defected to the Viet Cong, God help the rest of you. They had had 10 years of that before Can came along because the communists were in charge there before. So this population was highly organized, highly disciplined and I think very scared and resentful of government of whatever kind. So, Diem, I think couldn't probably have marshaled the kind of popular support that we seemed to think he was needing and we wanted to help

him build.

Later on in the Thieu Ky period, we tried to somehow graft our notion of political parties onto the Vietnam scene. The trouble was that our notion of a political party didn't resemble anything in Vietnamese history. They had absolutely no experience of it. They had had secret societies, all the communist organizational kinds of control apparatus, and religious based organizations like the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao and the Buddhists, but nothing like a western political party. In their experience, you didn't get support by getting a lot of votes, you got support by having your people in the right place to pull the levers. You had cadre in short.

Q: While you were on this Working Group could you give the perspective that the military were giving to the group and also the CIA in this 1961-63 period?

HEAVNER: To be truthful, my recollection of that is pretty hazy. But, I think it is fair to say we were all pretty much of a single mind. I don't think there were any nay-sayers in those days. We all thought it was manageable. That with the right infusion of assistance and increasing advise bordering increasingly on direction, it probably could be done. We could defeat the Viet Cong and maintain at least a more democratic and more free section of the country than the North.

I don't think it was until the end of my time, and even after that, that we began to have people with real doubts. Paul Kattenburg succeeded Ben as the director of the working group and Paul, subsequently became certainly very anti-Vietnam war, as you may recall. At the time he took over I think he had doubts but they were not operative. When Lodge went out to Vietnam, and Kattenburg was part of that operation, we all, including Paul, I think, still thought that the war could be won and that a free independent South Vietnam could be maintained - and at an acceptable cost, I should say.

Q: Did you while you were with the Working Group begin to sense a growing unhappiness with Diem?

HEAVNER: Oh, yes. That was certainly a feature, and fairly early on, of our thought. I had come out of Vietnam in 1961 with a lot of reservations about Diem's regime viability. Those didn't diminish as time went on. We considered other options pretty early on. By the time I left we were actively asking ourselves what kind of transition might take place, who might be a better leader, and how that might come about. I consider myself fortunate that I left the Working Group before this had degenerated into a formula which ended up in the assassination of Diem and his brother. I feel that my hands are clean in that respect. I think we could have avoided that. It seems to me that it was really quite unnecessary.

Q: You mentioned that one time you ended up coming from the White House with the President...

HEAVNER: I didn't, Cottrell did. Kennedy was coming to the State Department to

address the whole department, I believe at that time. He was keenly interested in foreign affairs from the start of his administration. One of the things he did early on was to come over to the Department and talk to us about how he saw things and to inspire the troops, which he did. When he did that, for whatever reason Cottrell was in the White House and when Kennedy went to the Department, Cottrell rode back with him and they talked about Vietnam. I was not privy to the conversation but I was delighted, of course, to hear that it had taken place, that we were getting that kind of high level leadership.

Q: Did you have any feel for the role of Dean Rusk while you were on the Working Group?

HEAVNER: I never had any contact with Rusk. Both Hilsman and Harriman were less enthusiastic than Sterling Cottrell, but Cot pretty much had his way on most issues. I think Cot talked directly to Rusk, certainly to the seventh floor, on many occasions and had their support.

I did have a fair amount of contact with both Hilsman and Harriman. I remember one of the things that Harriman was very much concerned about, and rightly so as we have subsequently learned, was the use of defoliants. He thought that was a very bad idea. That destroying food crops was a form of warfare that would backfire on us. That it would be seen worldwide as an inhumane kind of weapon.

Q: I worked for Roger Hilsman in INR about a year before you got involved in this. I remember he was a great enthusiast about guerrilla warfare, etc. He had been in the OAS in Burma. I have a feeling that he was the person who was kind of helping to sell the idea of counterinsurgency, etc. and that this was the key to everything. Did you get any feeling about his particular brand of activism about getting out there and putting the kibosh on the Viet Cong?

HEAVNER: He once spent an inordinate amount of time, I thought, telling me about his experience in Burma which was apropos of nothing we were discussing, or at least it didn't seem so to me. I think again though that I'm a poor source in that regard because although I had some contact with Hilsman, it was Cottrell and Ben Wood, subsequently, who had most contact with him.

Q: What was your impression during the 1961-63 period of how the media dealt with Vietnam? Were you following the media and what the American public was getting?

HEAVNER: We must have done. We were very concerned about the impact of casualties on public opinion. I can't say I recall following the media intensely, but I think we must have been concerned. I am not sure the media was at all hostile then, however. It doesn't seem to me it was. Again though, I'm pretty unclear about that.

Q: It may not have been a matter of great focus either at that point.

HEAVNER: Well, by September, 1963, I'm just looking at an old State Department

Bulletin, there was a statement by Assistant Secretary Hilsman and a Vietnam situation speech that I gave to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Clearly it was pretty central by then. The other contents are education and the USSR. Up front is Asia and Vietnam.

Q: What date is this bulletin?

HEAVNER: September, 1963.

Q: You left there in 1963 and started Indonesian language training. I take it you wanted to be a Southeast Asia hand?

HEAVNER: That had been the plan right along. When I got into the specialization program, the expectation was that one would acquire two Southeast Asian languages and serve most of your working life in that area. So, it was very much in line with that original plan, although I am not sure very many people were even by that time concerned about the plan.

Q: We talk about Southeast Asia, what are we talking about?

HEAVNER: We are talking about Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos.

Q: A fairly substantial hunk of geography.

HEAVNER: Yes. Those countries were bureaucratically the Southeast Asia area in the State Department and that was what we were thinking of. We weren't including India, Nepal or any of the rest of Asia like China or Japan. I did subsequently request Japanese language training but I never got it.

Q: One question before we move on to Indonesia. While you were on the Vietnam Working Group, was China seen as the principal supporter of the North Vietnamese?

HEAVNER: Yes, I think so at that time, although again, my memory is pretty hazy. The level of Soviet assistance increased greatly after that. Of course, the Chinese and Vietnamese have had their ins and outs not just during that period and subsequently, but for literally thousands of years. They had a thousand years of Chinese domination and another thousand years when they were fighting the Chinese off. Their proudest recollection, which every Vietnamese school boy knows, is when they twice defeated the Mongol hordes of Kublai Khan in 1280 something. There is a wonderful story about being faced by reportedly overwhelming odds 5 to 1 and the emperor called his leaders from all the villages to discuss what they were going to do about this and with one voice they said, "We are going to fight." This should have said something to us, by the way.

Q: Yes. How did you find Indonesian after studying Vietnamese?

HEAVNER: Indonesian is a much easier language. It is not tonal for a start and the

grammatical structure is not difficult. There are no or very few cognates, but it is a relatively easy language. They categorized it among the hard languages, but I'm not quite clear as to why that was done. It certainly did not compare in difficulty in any way with Vietnamese.

Q: Were you getting much of a feel for the situation in Indonesia through your training?

HEAVNER: I had had a year at Cornell and a little bit on all the countries at that point, including Indonesia. Since George Kahin was the person at Cornell who was most instrumental in setting up and running the program and was also an Indonesian expert, I had some background. I also talked to the people on the desk and did some more reading at the time. So, I had some useful background for that assignment.

Q: You went out there in 1964?

HEAVNER: Yes, the summer of 1964. I think I arrived in August.

Q: What was your job?

HEAVNER: I went almost directly to Medan. I was consul and principal officer in Medan. That had been the plan from the beginning, it was not a change. Howard Jones was the ambassador there. He was a terribly nice man but in my view quite ineffective vis-a-vis Sukarno who really made a monkey out of him in many ways and publicly humiliated him. Jones was a very religious man and certainly turned the other cheek at every opportunity. A very different kind of leader than we subsequently got with Marshall Green, who was much more to my taste.

Q: I think this Howard Jones-Sukarno situation is an interesting one, an odd couple you might say. Before you went out there, what was the impression you got from the desk and other people about Howard Jones?

HEAVNER: I don't remember. I am not sure I got anything in that regard from the desk. Criticizing your ambassador at post probably would not be considered good form and if they had reservations about Jones, I don't recall hearing them. I certainly had them once I was in country, and I think Ed Masters, who went there not too long after I got there, shared some of my views. We were all very pleased when Marshall Green replaced him. Marshall had a very different agenda.

Q: You were in Medan on Sumatra island how long?

HEAVNER: I got there August 1964 and was taken out of Medan and sent back to Vietnam before I ended my two years there. I went back in January, 1966 to Vietnam because Ed Lansdale wanted a Vietnamese language officer and State I guess didn't have anybody else. The uproar in Indonesia was then correctly thought to be subsiding, so they pulled me out of Medan and sent me back to Saigon.

Q: Okay, let's talk about August, 1964. Did you get a briefing at the Embassy?

HEAVNER: I expect that I did, but I don't really remember that. You may recall that in that period we were in something called "confrontasi" when Sukarno was objecting to the formation of Malaysia. I am not clear anymore on what grounds other than that he may have felt his own position in Southeast Asia was being undermined in some fashion. Malaysia was to include part of the big island that used to be called Borneo, now Kalimantan. Sarawak, of course, was going to be part of this new entity, Malaysia, while the rest of the island was part of Indonesia.

One of the more exciting and pointless things that happened early on in my time there was when we got word in Medan, and I think it may have been true, although I have never been sure of this, that the Indonesians were going to engage any British vessels that came through the straits between Sumatra and Java and that they had given the military orders, the air force in particular, to engage them. That didn't happen, perhaps because the British didn't come through. Maybe it didn't happen because it never was going to happen, I don't know. But, I sent my only NIACT [night action telegram] from Medan on the basis of information we had from the military there that they had orders to do this.

Q: Can you describe the situation in Indonesia as viewed from your arrival in August, 1964 in Medan?

HEAVNER: It was a very interesting situation. Sukarno was engaged in a continuing balancing act between Nationalist Muslim factions and the communists. His sympathies appeared to be with the communists. Perhaps he just thought the communists were the stronger partner and would prevail in the end, but certainly Jakarta at every turn was reinforcing by orders, by statements, by all kinds of assistance those factions in Sumatra that were either communists, pro-communists or playing that game. And there were quite a lot of them. In fact, it became increasingly clear that Ulong Sitepu, the governor of North Sumatra, was hand in glove with the PKI.

Q: That's the Communist party?

HEAVNER: Right. When the Pemuda Rakyat, the Indonesian Communist Youth Organization demonstrated, which they frequently did in front of the American Consulate, the reason why the police always came late or not at all, was that the governor told them to arrive late or not at all. There demonstrations became increasing numerous in terms of number of people involved and increasingly threatening and reached some kind of a climax when they actually invaded the consulate. The USIA [United States Information Agency] library was on the ground floor of the consulate and they announced there, having torn down our flag and torn the consular shield off the front of the building, that the library was being taken over in the name of the people of North Sumatra.

This was a very exciting morning for us. We had anticipated that something like this might happen because it had already happened in Surabaya, so we had a system set up so

that the receptionist at the front desk down stairs could press a button if she or he saw a hostile group approaching. Sure enough, that morning she hit the button and the bell rang upstairs. We had a vault type door at the head of the stairs which we immediately secured, or Bob Blackburn did. He was so quick off the desk I just saw his tail vanishing as he went to close that door. Unless they set the building on fire, which they could have done, there was no way they could get to us. All the same, Bob was ensconced waiting to shred if need be the few documents we had left. We were already on a receive-read-burn kind of basis because we anticipated something like this might happen. Our radio operator was also on the radio to Jakarta saying it looked like we had big trouble.

We had a little aperture in the vault door that I could look through and I looked down the stairs there and saw that they were going into the library but weren't going into the administrative offices of the USIA which were immediately below us. So, Frank Ward and I, he was the USIA officer, went down stairs closing the door behind us with Bob locking it behind us and confronted the leaders who were making pronouncements. I said that I didn't recognize this action, that this was consular property, that it was immune to this kind of thing, diplomatic immunity, etc. I also asked for police protection. There were a few policemen on the outskirts of the crowd. The demonstrators didn't leave so I then went to the governor, who I couldn't reach, the police chief, who was out of town, the all-Sumatra commander, who was unavailable. I left a letter at each place asking for protection and eviction of these invaders.

By evening the police had herded most of them out after great palaver and with great ceremony and they had taken down the Indonesian flag, but left all the anti-U.S. signs up. I demanded that they take the signs down, but they refused so I took them down. We kept that library open even though Subandrio, the foreign minister, who was if not PKI was very obviously playing their game, had already announced that our library would be closed. Nevertheless, we kept it open for another month before Sukarno himself told the ambassador that it had to close. At that point we closed the library and Frank was reassigned.

This was a sideshow in many ways because the real target, or the major target in Sumatra was the American rubber estates. They were ultimately taken over, as they called it, by communist mobs. The owners were compelled to sign documents signing over these estates. I suggested when they sign they put under their name "signed under duress," which they did. Subsequently, under the military government, they did get those estates back, although I'm not sure the "signed under duress" had anything to do with it.

Q: When you arrived there I assume you paid your calls on the governor and various officials. What was your reception at that point?

HEAVNER: Oh, very cordial. The Indonesians are culturally given to a very cordial warm kind of interaction. Even if they see you as a deadly enemy, at least initially you are not going to get a confrontation with them. At least that was my experience. It is even more true of the Javanese I think than of the North Sumatra people, the Batak, who are really quite a different people from the Javanese. The Batak are much more direct,

actually, and also Christian for the most part.

Q: This is on Sumatra.

HEAVNER: Right. They were the dominate group in the province of North Sumatra. But the northern tip of Sumatra is a province called Aceh. That is where your really dogmatic Muslims are and that is where the communists, of course, immediately got into trouble. Sukarno and the Indonesian military really misjudged the communist strength, at least in Sumatra. At the time of the abortive coup when all those generals were killed, General Mokoginta, who was the all Sumatra commander called me to his office and said, "Look, I know I can hold Medan, but in the Rantau Prapat area, I know the communists are rallying their forces and I am not sure about your people there. You had better get them into Medan where we can be sure to protect them." We still had a number of Americans on rubber estates in that area. Well, we did that but the truth was that almost from day one the communists weren't rallying their forces in Rantau Prapat or anywhere else in Sumatra, they were running for their lives because the Muslim youth very quickly became quite violent and were killing anyone who they suspected of communist sympathies, much less anyone who was obviously and openly communist. There was a lot of bloodshed in the countryside as well as in Medan. Later that year, my next door neighbor, who was Chinese as well as communist, which was a double whammy, because the Chinese were very unpopular and we had anti-Chinese riots, was beaten to death in his house.

Q: I would like to go back and get a little bit of the development of this. Was it the murder of the generals that started the whole thing, or had things been building up before that and what were the dates?

HEAVNER: Well, all the action really was taking place in Jakarta and I wasn't there, so I am not terribly clear about all this. But, the tension between the communists and the military had been building for a long time. The military was very unsympathetic. Mokoginta, for example, certainly was not at all playing the game with Ulong Sitepu in North Sumatra, in fact, he was in any way he could counteracting efforts to communize the university, for example, which was pretty well accomplished.

The big thing at the time, it seems to me that may have triggered it was this notion that they were going to arm a militia. Sukarno had launched this notion of an armed militia and it was congruent with the anti-Malaysia thing as well. But, the real aim, as the military saw it, and, for that matter, as we saw it, was to put arms in the hands of the communists so that they could effectively counter the strength of the military. It was at that point that the military was really digging in their heels and that may have precipitated the communist coup, I just don't know what made them think that the moment was opportune.

But, as you may recall, on one night they killed something like ten generals. They failed to get Suharto however. He was on their list. They didn't kill any Sumatra military for whatever reason. Mokoginta might have been an obvious target but was not targeted, at

least nothing was attempted. We woke up to hear the news, like everyone else in Sumatra, that there had been this coup attempt and the military was rallying in Jakarta and insuring security and one thing and another.

Sumatra was involved peripherally because Subandrio, the foreign minister, was in Medan at the time. In fact, he had come to Medan a few days before, among other things, to announce or make sure that our USIS library was closed. In any event, when he arrived at the airport the consular corps was out there to greet him, as we always would be, and when we were driving back from the airport, my car was set upon by a group of communist youth. There were quite a lot of them surrounding the car and striking at it with signs and ultimately smashing the rear window with a huge rock, which if it had hit me would have really done for me. They smashed a couple other windows before they were done. Ironically, it was the air force that saved my butt. It was the air force which sided with the communists, you recall, in the showdown between the military and the communists. The air force sided with the communists. Well, air force headquarters was right there at the exit from the airport where I was set upon by the communist youth mob, and the guards came down from the air force headquarters and cleared the way for me and we were able to drive away. My driver was able to drive away. He was a cool one, I must say. My hat was off to him because instead of cutting and running like you might have expected him to do (In his case, I might have done it myself.), he just sat there and tried to drive through.

That was only a few days before the abortive coup, if memory serves, and Subandrio was still in Medan when the coup took place.

Q: After you woke up to hear what had happened, did you go out to find out what the reaction would be?

HEAVNER: As much as we could. Initially everything was pretty quiet and it was very hard to reach anybody in authority because they were fully occupied. But, then, as I said, Mokoginta called me in and he clearly had a very serious view of events. The military intelligence on the strength of the communists in Sumatra, at least, was as poor as ours. I suspect it was equally poor in Jakarta.

Q: They overestimated the strength.

HEAVNER: Tremendously.

Q: What happened in subsequent events. It was the army of Suharto's division that put things down in Jakarta, wasn't it?

HEAVNER: It was a very gradual process apparently in Jakarta. It took them close to two years to ease Sukarno out. From the beginning the military really took charge in Jakarta and never stopped being in charge in Sumatra, although they felt pretty threatened at the outset. They fairly quickly realized what was happening, namely that the communists were being put down by some youth groups which they, themselves, had supported. They

not only continued to support them but then began to direct and reenforce their efforts to smash the communist apparatus. It was pretty scary sometimes to see these truck loads of youth with these enormous banners flying through the town chanting. Of course we had seen the same thing with the red banners not too long before, and we were the target.

Q: Were you able to report what was happening there?

HEAVNER: The best we could. I am not sure that we reported all that accurately or succinctly. Anyhow, Jakarta had its hands full and the action was really there. Sumatra was a long way off.

Q: What about the killings? It became a real bone of contention, 1) how many, 2) who was behind it. Your friends at Cornell, I think, tended to back Sukarno and all of a sudden it was Americans responsible for the killings.

HEAVNER: Actually I think that flap was long, long after the fact. I don't recall anything like that coming up at any point close to the event. But, you may remember that Bob Martens had an interview with a reporter in which he said something to the effect, or at least that reporter thought he said that he had given a long list of names of communists to the military after the coup and that had helped them in some fashion to rout them out and, oh, by the way, to kill them. This generated a freedom of information search at the State Department which caused Paul Gardner to come up with a lot of documents, including some from Medan, none of which supported that assertion. Certainly it was not true of anything we did at the consulate. I don't recall that we had a list of communists. We knew, as did the military, that certain leaders in the government apparatus, like the governor, were communists in sympathies, if not in fact. We didn't have to tell them that. They didn't need any help from us. How much they generated, supported and directed the Muslim youths who carried out a lot of killings, and how extensive the killings were, for that matter, I don't know. I know there were killings. I did see some bodies, saw a lot more during the anti-Chinese riots, I might say, which followed in December of that year. But, certainly the accounts that we got from the rural areas and from the plantation areas were pretty hair raising. Even allowing for exaggerations, I think there was a lot of killing.

Q: What were your contacts during this and before? Did you have much contact with the business and government communities of Medan and would they sit around and talk openly to you?

HEAVNER: Before the attempted coup, it became more and more evident that they were afraid to talk very openly about what was happening. I think it is fair to say that our contacts were being closed down by increasing evidence and conclusion on the part of most Indonesians that the country was heading towards a communist regime because the governor and increasingly all the civilian apparatus, certainly the press and the radio, were controlled by communists or pro-communists in North Sumatra. At the university, people who were anti-communists were increasingly forced out. They just weren't being employed any longer or shut up. The nationalist Muslim party had factions, but the left

faction was increasingly in the majority. People who were in that party who had been our contacts were increasingly reluctant to talk to us, or if they did, they mouthed the line. So, we were increasingly isolated. In fact we had a Chinese guy who used to come around and coach one or two of us at tennis because there was a tennis court on the consulate grounds and I had never played tennis and wanted to learn. He came to me one day and said he was not going to be able to come any more. I said, "Why not?" He said, "It is too dangerous." So that was a barometer.

Q: What happened after the upheaval in Jakarta? Did things change at all for you? Did you find that more people were reaching out to you?

HEAVNER: I wasn't there very long after the coup. You recall the coup was in September and I left the beginning of the following January. I think by the time I left a lot of people were breathing much easier and I guess access to them had improved, I don't know. It was a very gradual process in Jakarta. Ulong Sitepu, the governor of whom I was so fond, ultimately ended up in prison and died in prison. But, he wasn't in prison, as far as I can recall, until well after I left. In fact, I think, at least in name, he was still governor when I left.

Q: Were you there during the anti-Chinese riots?

HEAVNER: Yes.

Q: Can you give your observations about them?

HEAVNER: They were pretty nasty. At one point I had a Chinese family who were employees of the consulate and a Chinese family that lived across the street from me, bivouacking in my house because they were afraid, with reason, that they might be set upon. The riots lasted over several days but the big occasion was the attack on the Chinese consulate. The vice consul had a house on the corner which looked down the street about two blocks away and had a good view of the Chinese consulate from the balcony of his house. We watched that event from his balcony. It was a really big mob, as big as we had ever seen outside our consulate, and a very aggressive mob. They did burst into the grounds and I am not sure whether they ever penetrated the consulate or not, but there was gun fire. I think some of that gun fire was coming from inside the consulate, although again, I am not sure. We saw several bodies carried out, so I think there were some deaths, or at least some very serious woundings.

Following that the demonstrators went on a rampage throughout the town smashing Chinese businesses and attacking any Chinese they could find. I don't know how many casualties there were, but there were enough. It was pretty damn serious. The military did ultimately appear on the scene and enforced some calm, but they weren't very quick about it and I'm not sure how premeditated that was either. But it was the military, not the police, who finally broke up the demonstrations and the rampaging youth groups.

Q: I take it youth groups were sort of the designated weapon of choice, both of the right

and the left then?

HEAVNER: Yes, I think that is a fair statement. Certainly with the youth groups that came to the consulate and tried to pull our flag down and broke windows it was the communist youth group, and then it was the Muslim youth groups who went after the communists subsequently and the Chinese as well. But youth was pretty loosely defined in those days. As I remember, the Pemuda Rakyat leader was in his 30s.

Q: At your working level there, during the pre blowup in Jakarta were you issuing student visas and things like that? Was there much in the way of information or flow towards the United States?

HEAVNER: We had the USIS library which was used pretty heavily. It was a popular installation. As to students going to the U.S., I am not very sure of that. I don't think we issued a lot of visas. I used to get American movies from time to time. We had the "Day of Drums" movie when Kennedy was killed, and even the communist governor of Sumatra came to see that and was moved to say to me something to the effect that Kennedy was a very great man. I think we had an important American presence there.

Q: Did you have any change of marching orders when Marshall Green took over from Howard Jones?

HEAVNER: I had taken a very unbending attitude from the beginning which clearly Jones did not fully approve. That is, when there were anti-American demonstrations in front of the consulate, I protested vigorously to the local authorities and demanded protection and was quite firm about it. No hat in hand stuff. I don't think that Jones ever said, "Don't do that," but then he didn't say "Don't do that," as far as I can make out to anybody. Green, on the other hand, liked that style and I think it was pretty much the way he handled things in Jakarta. He did not kowtow to Sukarno at any time.

When I left Medan, I, of course, went through Jakarta and talked to everyone including the ambassador before I left. The morning I left to go to Saigon, my flight was a very early one, about 6 a.m. Green was out at the airport all by himself to say goodby to me. I still remember that as an important index of how he saw the way we had handled things in Medan as well as a sign of how supportive he was of his troops in general. There was no need for him to be there. He was just there to say, "Thanks, Ted." He was a great ambassador, and I always admired him.

Q: I realize it was sort of a very long transition when Sukarno was being eased out, but did you see the situation pretty much stabilized as far as Sumatra was concerned by the time you left Medan?

HEAVNER: It was, but I was not sure of that then. It turned out that way. But I wouldn't have predicted it. In fact, subsequently when I worked on Indonesia in the Department I said that I didn't think Suharto would be around very long - and he is still with us.

Q: It is 1997 and he is still there.

HEAVNER: Right.

Q: You went back to Vietnam and were there how long?

HEAVNER: January, 1966 to March, 1969.

Q: By the way were you married at this point and did you have a family with you?

HEAVNER: Well, I had my family with me in Medan. I had a daughter and my first wife there. They, along with all diplomatic families, were evacuated after the coup and the families didn't return until after I had been plucked out of Medan and sent back to Saigon. That first marriage was kind of a casualty of the Vietnam War, I think it is fair to say. So, yes, I was married but that marriage ended while I was in Vietnam.

Q: I think one of the casualties of the Foreign Service is caused by these crises which call on people to spend an inordinate amount of time in a place where the families are either under great hardship or can't be with them.

HEAVNER: I think that is so true. I think that in general we just didn't take enough into account the tensions, the stresses on family members and the cost the Foreign Service does impose on the family unit. It is really tough for children and spouses to be abroad in a hostile environment. Of course, I didn't have family with me in Vietnam during the war there, though before I left some of the senior officers had brought their spouses in, were allowed to do so. All of us who were there, however, were separated from our families for extended periods and many of them had their families in Bangkok in what I think were very unsatisfactory housing arrangements, certainly not the kind of thing to cement a relationship, to stabilize a marriage and a family unit even though those who had their families in Bangkok could get over there much more readily than those who had their families in the States.

No, I think you can't emphasize enough the kind of stresses the Foreign Service puts on families. It is a really tough profession for spouses and children. This periodic uprooting is a hazard for kids that was never acknowledged when I was in the Foreign Service. Children need stability and they don't have it in the Foreign Service. The family has to be really well put together. The wife and husband have to be very dedicated to one another and to their children to overcome that kind of periodic uprooting. I think it is a great handicap for kids who come out of that background and I am saying that not just as a Foreign Service officer but also with my other hat as a clinical psychologist. You may recall that after I left the Foreign Service I became a doctoral level licensed clinical psychologist and I had a much better appreciation in that role of the kind of penalties that are involved in the uprootings and the absences of the Foreign Service spouse who is posted without a family. So, yes, my marriage to Jean, who I don't think you ever met, was in many ways a casualty of the Vietnam war. I think that marriage might have survived otherwise.

Q: You arrived in January 1966 in Vietnam. As you saw the situation in 1966 was there a difference from when you served there in 1963?

HEAVNER: Oh, yes. There certainly was. The American presence was very big in Saigon in those days because the military was increasing by leaps and bounds and we had not as yet moved the major part of them out of Saigon. They were still bivouacking in hotels and other arrangements to a great extent in the city itself. When I arrived I did not go immediately to my housing but was in the Rex hotel. I have this memory of watching the aircraft crews leaving in the morning for their raids draped with machine gun bandoliers and elephant hide boots. It was a real wild west kind of scene in many ways.

The Tu Do, which in 1963 was ostensibly off limits to American military personnel, was a nightclub on the main street there in Saigon and had become something to see to be believed. If it was off limits there was no evidence of that.

Another big change in the physical scenery was the unbelievable number of motorbikes that jammed the streets. There were torrents of motorbikes that would jam the streets during rush hour. It was worth life and limb to try to navigate, certainly not on foot. Even in a car I remember being hit midship by one of those guys whose motorbike stopped when it hit my car but he went right on over and landed on the far curb.

Q: What about the political/military situation as you saw it when you arrived in 1966?

HEAVNER: Let me explain my own situation there first because my optic was probably distorted to some degree by my situation. I had been called back because, as I said earlier, General Ed Lansdale, of Philippine fame primarily then although he had also been in Vietnam during the early Diem years and was not stranger to that country, was back in Vietnam I think mostly under the aegis of Hubert Humphrey who was a great fan of his. Lansdale needed or thought he needed a Vietnamese language officer. Dan Ellsberg, by the way, was one of his group. The guy who subsequently leaked the Pentagon Papers. He was very hawkish in that time period, totally different from what he was later. The former French Foreign Legion officer who had been the contact with the Vietnamese military at the time of Diem's overthrow and assassination, Lou Conein, was a member of the Lansdale group. There was a guy from USIA, a very tall man who looked bizarre among the Vietnamese, and a couple of other people that Lansdale had assembled for this mission which was sometimes phrased, "To win the hearts and minds of the people." They had, as far as I could make out, absolutely no plan and no notion of what it was they were there to do. The embassy, as far as I could make out, and particularly Phil Habib, regarded them as an unattractive nuisance.

Q: This was basically a force that was put in there at the behest of a political figure in the United States, Hubert Humphrey?

HEAVNER: I think so. I was never very clear about that, but that is my impression.

Anyhow, I was detailed to that group and spent the first several months of my time back in Saigon trying to figure out what in the world it was that I was supposed to be doing. In fact, the whole group spent a lot of time talking to one another about what it was that they might be doing that would be useful.

I decided at one point that I would go back to my old stamping ground in Hue and talk to my old contacts there and see what they had to say about the situation. In the interval of having left Vietnam in 1961 and coming back there, of course, had been the whole Buddhist uproar under Diem with the "Buddhist barbecues," as Madam Nhu called the immolations, and all the subsequent Buddhist pressures which gave great impetus to our desire to get rid of Diem, as you may remember. One of the leading figures, if not the leading figure in all that was a man named Thich Tri Quang, a Buddhist monk, who nobody had ever heard of in 1961 but who was certainly there. When I went back up to Hue, the doctor in charge of the hospital, who was an old contact of mine, had become very much oriented towards the Buddhist political stance, very anti-government, and he wanted me to meet with Tri Quang. I thought that was a good idea so I said, "Sure." I did meet with Tri Quang, had a long conversation with him which I wrote up in a memo, and Phil Habib was livid. I did not know, no one had told me, that Tri Quang was off limits. We weren't having anything to do with him. We weren't talking to him and weren't going to be talking to him except that Ted Heavner went to Hue and did talk to him. Phil Habib didn't know me then. That was the first contact he had had with me. Thank God Tom Corcoran was his deputy and I had known Tom for many years. Tom was able, I think, to calm Phil down and explain to him that I had no inkling, as usual the Lansdale group was off on a tangent, and it wasn't Ted but the Lansdale group. Well, Phil didn't send me out of country although I think he had that in mind to begin with.

At that point I made a big pitch to Tom that I wanted to get the hell out of the Lansdale group and go to work for the political section which was what I was really meant for anyhow. Tom somehow persuaded Phil that that was a good idea. I think Ed Lansdale also concurred because it was pretty clear that I was not his kind of guy. So, after four or five months back in Saigon, I was put back into harness, so to speak, in something that made sense to me, i.e. the political section in Saigon.

Q: Ed Lansdale gained renown early on by a book by Bill Lederer and Usher Burdick called "The Ugly American," as sort of being the answer, a grassroots real American who can get down and solve problems, etc. And, he made a name for himself in the Philippines, particularly Magsaysay. What was your impression at this point of Lansdale, his outlook, how he operated and how clued in he was to the Vietnamese scene?

HEAVNER: Lansdale had been in Vietnam before and he had been reportedly quite close to Diem, although I am kind of skeptical about that. So, it wasn't that he was a stranger to the country, but certainly Vietnam is not the Philippines and the Philippine people, I believe, are very different. What may have been effective in the Philippines was certainly not effective in Vietnam. Part of the difficulty may have been that the mission generally was hostile. I know that the political section was not entranced by Lansdale and what they perceived as his methods. I suspect that nobody else was either. Although Lansdale

had a background in CIA, I don't know how well plugged in he was with the CIA mission at that time. I never saw any evidence of it one way or the other even though I was a member of the group. That in itself may tell the story, maybe there was very little contact or virtually none. As far as I could make out Lansdale was almost completely ineffective there. I didn't see anything accomplished during my time that was of any value.

Q: Did he come in with any preconceived ideas or was he trying to push anything?

HEAVNER: I don't know, I wasn't there when he arrived, so what he came with is quite unclear to me. At the time I arrived it seemed to me the group was in complete confusion. They spent a great deal of time talking about what they should do that would be useful, what their mission ought to be and it never gelled, at least not while I was there. I don't recall when Lansdale left, although I not sure he was there much longer after I switched over to the political section. Anyhow, that was a bad beginning but a good ending in terms of my own experience.

Q: You were in the political section essentially from 1966 to 1969. When did you leave in 1969?

HEAVNER: March.

Q: What was your area of responsibility?

HEAVNER: Opposition political movements and in particular, later on, the Buddhists were my responsibility. I remained in contact with a number of Buddhist leaders and also with the major then opposition leader who subsequently became prime minister and vice president of Vietnam, Tran Van Huong. Opposition parties were never more than cliques in South Vietnam. My job was to keep tabs on the major opposition leaders and talk to them regularly. I never saw Tri Quang again, incidentally, but I certainly saw a lot of Tam Chau and Mai Tho Tien, who were important Buddhist leaders. Those people were always quite willing to talk, by the way, unlike some Vietnamese. Maintaining contact with them was not difficult. They always saw the Americans as a potential route to power so it wasn't hard to maintain contact with opposition political figures and Buddhists in South Vietnam in those days.

Q: The Buddhists were sort of well known to have a pretty good understanding of public relations, particularly with the Americans and how to play the press and all.

HEAVNER: They did up until the time of the military takeover. After that, the military was very firm with them and as far as I could make out they lost a lot of their cachet with the populace generally. Certainly they were not able to get the kind of popular support they seemed to have during the Diem regime. I am not sure what the reason for that may be but they were never an important threat to the stability of the government after the military took over or at least not when I got there in 1966. We were afraid of them. We thought they could be an important threat and that was one of the reasons that the

embassy was so anxious for me to talk to them and keep tabs on them and in particular to hold hands with Tam Chau, who prospered mainly by playing a sort of cooperative game with the government. He was a northerner who had ties to Ky by the way.

Q: What was your impression of embassy reporting?

HEAVNER: Well, I did a lot of it so I guess I thought it was okay. I did a lot of reporting on my contacts with Huong. I remember vividly Ellsworth Bunker sending me to somewhere on the coast because Huong and all the opposition figures who were going to run for president in the election on which we had pegged such great hopes as at least an image of democracy, had pulled out saying it wasn't going to be a fair election and they weren't going to run. Bunker told me to go up to Huong and see if we could persuade him to get back into the race because all the others would follow suit if he did. I did talk to him and I evoked Bunker's name, which I think was a powerful incentive, and he did get back into the race and the others did follow suit. Huong, I think got something like 19 percent of the vote, a very respectable showing and subsequently, as I said earlier, he became prime minister and then the last vice president of South Vietnam before the North came in and took over.

The embassy was doing a lot of reporting, not just what was happening with the military and Nguyen Cao Ky, but also what was happening with the Buddhists and opposition figures. We had good connections with them. I guess that we were pretty well aware of what was happening in South Vietnam aside from the communists. We had intelligence on what the VC were up to. That wasn't my bailiwick, but we did have intelligence. Obviously it was less than perfect and in the case of the Tet attacks a monumental failure. I think we had pretty good information on what was happening on our side.

Q: How about out in the provinces?

HEAVNER: We had people all over in the provinces, including Foreign Service officers. In fact the provincial reporters, which we had in almost every province, reported regularly. I think we had a pretty good notion, again, of what was happening from the optics of our side.

I wanted to mention something that I did in the way of reporting. I did some of the central stuff because I drafted, initially it was every week, a report which Lodge sent directly to Johnson and then Bunker subsequently sent to Johnson. In drafting that I incorporated not just the provincial reporting and my own knowledge of the political situation, but also reports that we got from the military on the military situation and from CIA, and tried to make a picture of it. That was my central function in many ways.

Q: Did you feel you were to present a picture, were people sort of leaning on you from up above?

HEAVNER: They didn't have to. I was a hawk. I thought we were going to win that war. No, nobody leaned on me and as I say they didn't have to because I was at that point very

much in support of what we were trying to do. I thought our policy was right. I was also very encouraged and exhilarated by the fact that what I was doing seemed to be so central to our foreign policy. There are a lot of LBJ stories and maybe this one was apocryphal, but I believed it then. The story was that when LBJ got this weekly report he would go around with a pair of scissors and cut out parts of it and hand it to various of his subordinates and cabinet members for action. It is said that he informed his staff that whenever that report came in he didn't care where he was, if he was in the can, he wanted it shoved under the door as he wanted to see it right away. So, it seemed to me that I was doing something that was very rewarding, and that has its own hazards. I don't think if I had been able to step back and see the picture whole, I might have had the foresight to predict the disaster that ultimately overtook us there, but certainly I might have been a little more restrained in my enthusiasm.

Q: What was making you particularly optimistic?

HEAVNER: Well, things were going quite well. As I said earlier I think we won the war several times and our opponent raised the ante on us each time. The strategic hamlet program worked pretty well for a while and then the Viet Cong started attacking in bigger units and it collapsed because the hamlet militia was no match for an organized unit with good weapons and discipline. Subsequently, in 1967, as I said, the indications were that militarily and certainly politically things were going quite well. The Tet attacks reversed all that and not just in Vietnam. Actually the Tet attacks from a military point of view were not successful, they lost a lot of their infrastructure throughout the South, lost a lot of people and while they took and held Hue for 25 days they were not able to hold anything else of consequence for any length of time. In every case they were ejected and the government remained in place, etc. It was a massive effort on their part with 75,000 troops attacking simultaneously. What they got out of it, of course, was the conviction in the U.S. that this war was never going to be won. The American public thought those people are going to go on forever. It was that, I think that turned the tide. I see the Tet attacks as a critical, pivotal point. It was at that juncture that it became evident that we were not going to be able to stay the course and at that point the whole thing started to go down hill.

But in 1967, we were thinking about a negotiated settlement in which the South Vietnamese would compete politically with the communists and in which the communists would be at a considerable disadvantage because while their preferred instruments, which were essentially military, and terror would be used to some extent, we thought it could be arranged so that that kind of political power could be minimized. Going head to head in a peaceful political confrontation, balloting, they would be at a great disadvantage because it seemed to us, and I think this was true, that in a free election the people of South Vietnam were not going to opt for a communist regime. I don't think that would have happened. We said then it wouldn't happen and I still believe that it wouldn't have happened. We thought that was where it was coming out. We were going to negotiate a settlement in which there would be a political conflict continuing but not an armed conflict.

When they had the big meeting in Honolulu in 1967 that Johnson went to, I helped Phil Habib get ready for it. We were talking about positioning ourselves for the upcoming political conflict. We were quite sanguine about how the outcome of that would be. Now, you may be right if you were to say that we were hoodwinked by our own military and their very favorable reports of the military situation. Maybe so to some extent, but I am not really persuaded that the military was lying like the press said frequently and often. I am not really persuaded that that was the case. They may have put a rosy gloss on a lot of things, but I do not believe they were consciously misleading the press, or themselves or us in the embassy.

Q: What was your impression of the reports you were getting from the CIA?

HEAVNER: To be truthful it is hard for me to remember and subtract those reports out from the reporting we got from our own people. I certainly don't remember being critical of it. I also don't remember any really crucial insights from it. But, my job was to paint a picture using everything available and I am not sure that I can in retrospect sort that out at all. I knew many of the CIA people there. I had great respect for them. Many of them were in the provinces, as you may recall, doing some very tough jobs. I knew Colby personally and had great respect for him. I think he is a very honest man. I can't believe that he, for one, would ever have sent in reports which were in anyway biased to his knowledge.

Q: Can you describe where you were and what happened during the Tet business?

HEAVNER: Oh, yes. I do remember that. My first inkling that anything was going on was very early that morning. As it happened, that was the morning when I was in the habit of going into the embassy around 4:35 a.m. to draft the weekly (by then it was biweekly) report for the President. So, I was up very early anyhow. I heard gun fire before I got up and thought that something might be amiss. I called the embassy and couldn't get any response, so I called Colonel Jacobson, whose house was right next to the embassy. He was mission coordinator and was a retired colonel. Unbeknownst to me, of course, he was in the middle of it by that time. I remember this telephone conversation and it was really bizarre, thinking back on it, because I am in my house about half a mile away and hearing a lot of gun fire and some heavy explosions and Jake picks up the phone and suddenly the gun fire is much louder. I said something to the effect, "My god, Jake, what is going on?" I don't recall what Jake said but I said, "Well, it sounds as though you don't need me to interrupt you, I think you are pretty busy." Well, he didn't want me to hang up, he wanted to talk. I told him that I was planning to come into the embassy to do my weekly report and was that all right. Jake said, "No, Ted, the report has been changed." I guess he then told me the embassy was under attack, although I don't have a clear memory of that. I was struck by how nonchalant and how unhurried he was in talking to me. We did hang up and I sat there and turned on the radio which gave no information. There was martial music if I recall correctly.

At dawn I decided I was going to find out what was going on so I got into my car. During my tour there I had acquired one of these little Triumph two seaters, which was a lovely

little car, but more a toy than a car. I must have gone across Saigon pretty fast that morning because I didn't draw any attention from anybody, neither government troops nor Viet Cong. Actually it was probably a pretty risky thing to do, but I didn't know that. When I got to the embassy things were finished, but only just finished. The bodies were still in the courtyard. Our people had driven out or destroyed the few VC who were there. It was a pretty small operation as we found out subsequently. Things were still smoking. Jacobson had finished off the VC in his house. He told me, because he was still there, that they had tossed a 45 up to him on the second floor where he was ensconced and the last of the VC came up the stairs and Jake shot him two or three times before he stopped the man. That was the end of it as far as Jake was concerned and he was going on as to how this was not part of his military specialty because he was retired, now a cookie pusher, and he went to cocktail parties and was no longer in this shooting business. He was all very calm and humorous. There we are in the courtyard there with the embassy's doors blasted and three or four VC bodies. All of that and Jake is telling me how this is no longer what he should be doing, that he is supposed to go to cocktail parties and be a cookie pusher.

About 10:00 that day I was back in my office. Subsequently, whether it was the same day or a day later, my office was distinguished by being the site of the detonators for claymore mines which were put around the perimeter of the embassy in case of another attack, which never came. The wires came in at my office level and the detonators were there. They weren't activated during day hours when I was there.
Q: What was the reaction at the embassy to all this? What type of reports were you sending?

HEAVNER: Our information was pretty spotty at first. Most of what was reported initially, I think was reported by phone. We were in phone contact with Washington, of course. In fact, I think the duty officer, who was in the code room throughout the attack, was on the phone to Washington the entire time.

Q: Actually, he was. I have interviewed him, but have forgotten his name at the moment.

HEAVNER: He was a junior officer who had a terrible experience at his first post.

Q: Yes. He was an economic officer and later was ambassador to Slovenia. He said he was able to get through to Washington beautifully but when he kept calling the military, they said they were too busy. Finally the special troops arrived landing atop the embassy. The only way you could get into the embassy itself was through doors which only opened from the inside. They wanted to blast each door, but he went down with them and opened up the doors for them.

How was the embassy, particularly the political reporting, acting?

HEAVNER: I think it was the next day before we really realized the full dimensions of that attack. How literally a hundred, maybe several hundred, cities and towns and district centers had been attacked simultaneously. Hue had been taken over lock, stock and

barrel. The military and our top people were pretty busy that day in making sure that we were intact there in Saigon. I can remember Bunker being furious with the military because they used aircraft in the outskirts of the town in Cholon and at one point they brought in some close air support. Bunker was very upset about that. He didn't want any bombing of the city.
My recollection of the report of what was happening? I would guess, and I haven't seen the reporting, although working in the freedom of information office these days one probably could, that it was pretty fragmented. I imagine Bunker was on the phone directly to Johnson. He used to be on the phone, God knows, to Johnson in the middle of the night because Johnson would call when it was daylight in Washington and, of course, it was the middle of the night in Saigon. Bunker having been locked in talks with Thieu and Ky trying to bend their arms to get them into the peace talks in Paris would then have to deal with LBJ on the telephone in the middle of the night. I don't know how he did it. And, I expect that was what was happening in those days immediately after Tet. Bunker would be on the phone half the night, and probably Westmoreland as well. That is how I would guess a lot of the reporting was being done. I don't know when we got back to doing our regular biweekly reports, we did. Probably it was a month or so later.

Q: As you were dealing with this, was there the feeling that this was a victory or a defeat? What was the feeling within the embassy about what was the meaning of this Tet offensive?

HEAVNER: Initially it was very unclear what it meant. I guess the first impression was "Wow! We have really been taken. There was a lot more to them than we thought and we have had a terrible intelligence failure." An almost immediately second thought was "But, hey, they have given us their Sunday punch and we are still very much in charge, plus we have knocked out a lot of their infrastructure." We spent a lot of time subsequently convincing ourselves and trying to convince the press that, in fact, Tet was a military failure for the other side, which it was. That it was a tremendous public relations political success was not lost on us. I think from the beginning, Ambassador Bunker ... well, I mentioned how angry he was at the implications of our having to bomb Saigon. That it was a political concern, a public relations concern as much as anything else. I think that part was pretty clear to him and probably to Phil Habib as well, because Phil was a very, very astute man and he would have seen clearly what that might entail. I don't remember exactly when we first came aware of that terrible picture of the police chief, Loan, executing the VC with his pistol. It was probably pretty quickly after it happened. I remember that our leaders were enormously exercised about that. For that matter, I remember subsequently, when Huong became prime minister of him saying that Loan had to go, and indeed he did.

Q: Last I heard he was running a restaurant out in Arlington. In fact I ate there one time. As a Hue person, did you get involved in what had happened in Hue and take a look?

HEAVNER: I was certainly interested and concerned by their reports and in particular by the reports of the massacres that the communists inflicted after they took over the cities. There were thousands of bodies found subsequently and that got almost no play in the

U.S. press. It was totally overlooked as far as I can make out. But that black list the VC had and which they used to execute any number of people was very real. We didn't become aware of that, however, for some time. They held the city for something like 20 days and it was quite a while after the city was retaken that the dimensions of the atrocities there became clear to us. So, yes, I was very concerned and very interested. Frankly, I never went back to Hue because I didn't want to see what had happened to the old city which was very beautiful. I gather that it was essentially destroyed because that was the only way our people could get back in and they did what they had to. They had to blast the VC out of there apparently. So, I haven't seen Hue since I left in 1966.

Q: In the sort of 1966-69 period was there a change in attitude in the reporting?

HEAVNER: Oh, yes. Increasingly we were having echos of what was going on in the States and feeling the force of public opinion there. Indeed, some of the new officers coming in were of the mind that we needed to get the hell out. One of the things that I did towards the end of my time there was to informally get the political section together and talk about what kind of peace could be negotiated at that moment under the then prevailing situation where it was evident that we were not going to be able to continue that level of military support. I must say we were not able to come up with plausible scenarios and we were right. When I left Saigon I went home via Paris and Phil Habib was there by then talking to the North Vietnamese. I said to Phil that without American air support I didn't think there was any chance the Vietnamese could hack it. Maybe their ground troops could manage it if they continued to have very forceful American air support, but not without it. I don't know if this came as a surprise to Phil or not. It was always difficult to be sure what Phil was really thinking. But he acted as though he was surprised and asked why the embassy hadn't told him that. It turned out to be very true as you know.

Yes, the handwriting was on the wall. I didn't like to read it and for a good part of the time I succeeded in not letting myself read it. But, the fact that the war was lost was becoming evident by the time I left at the beginning of 1969. In fact, I had said repeatedly that the VC were never going to win politically, the only way they were going to come into power was with tanks rolling into Saigon. I said that long before it happened just that way.

Q: What about the relationship with the press before and after Tet for you and other members of the political section? Was their any change?

HEAVNER: Well, I avoided the press as much as I could. I didn't like to argue with them and I didn't like to agree with them. The press, by the time I left, was almost unanimous in its view that we were losing and what we had to do was to cut our loses in some fashion, to get out and end the bloodshed. So, I had minimal contact with press, especially the last year or so. I think that was not true of the political section in general. I remember John Negroponte had continuing friendships with some of the reporters. He was a friend of Stanley Karnow and they used to spend a lot of bull sessions talking about the situation. I am sure that John did not entirely agree with Karnow, or vice versa, but

they did have a relationship. I did not have a relationship like that with anybody in the American press.

Q: You left there in March, 1969. Where did you go?

HEAVNER: I went to, of all places, Guyana. This was a function of GLOP, global outlook, created because Kissinger thought we were too parochial and as Foreign Service people we should be assigned out of our areas of expertise. I was sent to Guyana as DCM [deputy chief of mission], following of all people, Paul Kattenburg, who had been DCM there just before me.

Q: Okay, next time we will pick it up when you are going to Guyana as DCM in 1969.

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Ted, we are at 1969 and you are off to Guyana. You were there from when to when?

HEAVNER: From 1969-71.

Q: You went as DCM.

HEAVNER: Right.

Q: Did you consult with your ambassador or were you just sent there?

HEAVNER: I was just sent there. I consulted in the Department before I went out, although my recollection is that there was less than a burning interest in briefing the new DCM before he went out. I suppose I shouldn't say that. I think that was the function of the country director, John Hill. Evidently he had a lot of problems, which I didn't know anything about at the time, but he clearly had no time to see me and talk to me. I subsequently learned that he left the Service under something of a cloud. I don't know the details but I think that may have accounted for the fact that I didn't get much of a briefing.

Actually, I think the interest in Guyana was out of all proportion to the importance of that country in any objective way because we had seen this as indeed I think the British did, as a potential Cuba. There was a very strong communist party there with the support of the majority of the population. The communist party leader, Cheddi Jagan had been elected repeatedly as prime minister during the British colonial period and after independence he expected to be re-elected. This was a concern here because of our chagrin about Cuba, our concern that a second communist country in this hemisphere would spell dominos and the beginning of I don't know what. Consequently, going to Guyana was not quite as much an exile as it might have sounded otherwise.

It is a very small place with a very small economy and of no great interest to us even though a number of American and Canadian bauxite companies were there extracting

bauxite. Bauxite, as you know, is very widely found throughout the hemisphere and indeed throughout the world. Later on the Guyanese leaders and others in the Caribbean thought they could do what OPEC did, but bauxite isn't like oil.

It was a good assignment and I wasn't displeased by any means. I did not get much of a briefing here, but that was okay. Delmar Carlson was the ambassador there. He had been there as consul general at the time of the switch to independence and contrary to our usual practice he had been kept on as ambassador thanks in large part to the plea of Forbes Burnham, who while still under British rule had managed to get the prime minister's job. Cheddi Jagan, I'm sure, thought Burnham's tenure would be short term.

That was funny. I don't know if Jagan made a miscalculation or whether he didn't understand what was being asked, but he agreed that before independence it could be decided by the governor general that there would be an election and that the results would be decided by proportional representation. Of course, the governor general decided in favor of that because the British government did not want Cheddi to be prime minister in an independent Guyana any more than we did. So the governor said that they would have the election before the British left so it would be all fair and square with no rigging and it would be by proportional representation. This meant that the Forbes Burnham party and a third party led by a Portuguese politician by combining together could form a government. That turned out to be the case after the pre-independence election as well as before. So Jagan was pushed out and independence took place under Forbes Burnham.

Q: When did independence come?

HEAVNER: In 1968, just a year before I got there. Burnham was still fresh in the job and Jagan was still waiting in the wings expecting to be elected at the next election and not unreasonably so since he was the undoubted leader of the Indian population in that country. As you may know, the Indian population, Indians from India, is the majority group and he had virtually l00 percent support from them. He was a very charismatic figure in the Indian community. Burnham, however, in power was repeatedly able to arrange that the elections didn't come out that way. They were rigged and we knew they were rigged and that was fine with us. In those days, we thought we could not risk having a second communist country in our own hemisphere.

Q: When you arrived in Guyana, what was the situation there, political and economic?

HEAVNER: There had been a lot of violence, and we were concerned that that could happen again, but it didn't. The balance was racial, blacks versus Indians. The blacks had been primarily urban, interestingly enough. They were descendants of slaves but when the British abolished slavery, they left the fields in droves and came into the city and became shopkeepers, politicians and a variety of other things. The British then brought out indentured servants in droves from India to work the fields, the rice and sugar cane fields. They remained on the land, and I guess still are. Guyana exported both rice and sugar and I suppose still does today. The biggest source of foreign exchange, however, was bauxite. Alcoa, which I think was the biggest, was there. Reynolds was also there

and I think there was another American company there as well. All of them were subsequently nationalized under Burnham, I think in 1972. That didn't really matter in terms of our sources of bauxite, because as I said bauxite is a widespread commodity and Burnham was not able to hold it back, apparently as he assumed he could do, for higher prices.

When I arrived there we thought there might be more racial violence, there certainly had been. We were concerned about Jagan essentially taking over by violence. He had been trained and was patronized by the Soviets. He went regularly to Moscow where he was lionized. He was clearly at all times following the Soviet line on all questions of any international importance. He seemed to be almost a rubber stamp for the Soviets. His wife was probably the more astute politician there, Janet Jagan, who was an American and lost her citizenship as a result of being a Guyana cabinet officer and then was subsequently given it back. This was after I left. I am not really sure what those circumstances were. She is a very interesting person and I think the brains behind Cheddi in many respects. She is still there. He died a few months ago and I believe she is leading the party. I am not sure how that will work out because I wouldn't have guessed that she was that popular a figure in the Indian community. She wouldn't have had his charisma, that is for sure.

Q: To follow through on the Jagans, what was our policy towards them? Were we talking or dealing with them?

HEAVNER: When I arrived the answer was no. Carlson had no connection with them. He didn't even invite them to national day. I don't know if he told us we could not talk to them, but certainly that was clearly the idea that they were totally unacceptable as leaders. Of course, Burnham himself rapidly moved to the left once he was in power. He adopted a very militant third world stance, got very cozy with Cuba and ultimately became almost the same kind of bete noir for us that we had feared Cheddi would be. I recall that when that Cuban airliner went down, around 1972-73, they blamed, as Cuba did, the U.S. for the bomb that knocked it out of the sky. Kissinger was so angry that he pulled our ambassador out and our relations went into a deep freeze for quite a while. I was country director by then for the Caribbean. But, Burnham, even while I was there, had begun his move away from essentially a pro-West stance, which had put him into power, and became increasingly hostile and not too long after I left nationalized the bauxite companies. He did a good many other things, especially siding with Cuba in the UN.

Q: As you were sitting there looking at this, what was the reasoning, as far as the embassy was concerned, about why Burnham was doing this?

HEAVNER: Burnham was an intellectual, a very, very brilliant man. He read constantly, going through a couple of books at night after he had done all of his other stuff. He would sit up reading and devour all of the books and talk about them. He was Oxford educated. This is a man who would have been a successful leader probably anywhere. It was his fate that he was born into this small inconsequential country. Nevertheless, he had

enormous ambitions and I think that he did it because he saw it as a way to become prominent on the international stage, playing a really important role in world affairs that he otherwise wouldn't have had if he was just a friendly U.S. satellite. This is I think his motivation, but he was such a complex personality that you could probably explain it in many ways.

Q: I was wondering whether he had come out of the London School of Economics. Nyerere in Tanzania and others had picked this up there and I wonder if this was behind it all?

HEAVNER: I don't know. Another factor there was he was undercutting Cheddi by adopting this stance. I don't think the Russians trusted him, with good reason, but he did go to Moscow and talked a great deal about getting Russian aid. I think he subsequently did get some. He talked about getting a Russian mission there, but I can't recall if he ever managed that or not. Certainly this was one of our concerns because we thought of it as another potential place to run agents throughout the hemisphere. I think the Russians really were not that interested and besides they had their guy there, Cheddi, who they probably expected would become prime minister at some point. Cheddi actually became president because Burnham had changed the system and made himself an executive president on our model. Burnham left the Commonwealth and Guyana became a republic while I was there. One of the interesting consequences of that was that on leaving the Commonwealth, they had to choose a ceremonial president. The question, of course, was whether this new president would be black or an Indian. A thorny question which many believed Burnham would resolve by finding a tame Indian. He had some in his cabinet, but he didn't do that. He found a Chinese for president. He was a citizen of Guyana and an attorney there and had been a justice of the supreme court. Arthur Chung was Guyana's first president!

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the embassy itself. How big was it and can you talk a little bit about Carlson and how he worked?

HEAVNER: Well, the embassy was fairly big because of our concerns first of all about this being a second Cuba, and secondly we had a big AID mission there and we wanted to support the free democratic system versus the Cheddi Jagan model of the communist system. The AID program was large given the small population and lack of any strategic position of that country.

Q: What was the AID program doing?

HEAVNER: They were doing infrastructure, roads, schools, and water systems. We had a very independent AID director who did not want any input from the embassy or any meddling, as he saw it, and Carlson left him pretty much to his own devices and obviously then so did I. Therefore, I can't give much detail of the AID program except that it was pretty big given the size of the country.

Q: Did we have Peace Corps there?

HEAVNER: Yes, we did. That was one of the groups that felt the switch Burnham made after he was secure in power because he threw the Peace Corps out. They did that while I was Chargé actually. I think this was quite deliberate because they didn't want to deal with Carlson on it, whom Burnham regarded as a close friend. In fact, Burnham had requested very strongly that he stay on as ambassador and I guess it was that request as much as anything that caused the Department to change what seemed to be a policy of not keeping on consuls general when countries become independent.

Q: How did we react to the Peace Corps being thrown out?

HEAVNER: Essentially we turned the other cheek. Our options were Burnham versus Cheddi and we still thought Burnham was a better bet. We thought he was making a lot of mistakes. We certainly didn't like the militant third world stance he was taking and especially his gestures to Cuba. It fell to Spencer King to try to moderate Burnham's increasingly leftist behavior. I don't think Spence had much success. First of all Burnham never regarded him as a personal friend the way he did Carlson and he increasingly felt, with some justice, that the U.S. was a paper tiger and wasn't going to do anything very difficult for him regardless of his own stances and statements and behaviors. So, Spence had a pretty tough job there. Spence wasn't an intellectual like Burnham either. Burnham was one of these people who had ten ideas a minute and talks about them in paragraph sentences. Spence was a taciturn man. He was slow of speech and judgment, never jumping to conclusions and very diplomatic, which didn't suit Burnham at all. He wanted somebody to joke with. He and Carlson, believe it or not, had a kind of vaudeville act that they did. It was just inconceivable that Spence would have done anything like that.

Q: When King came in did they change the attitude towards contact with the Jagans?

HEAVNER: Yes, because King did invite them to national day and he did permit me to see Jagan on a few occasions. We still kept him at arms length though. It was still clear to us, or so Washington still thought, that Burnham was preferable to Jagan. I don't know when that changed, probably after Spence left, although it was only after Burnham died that Jagan was able to win an election there. Not because of us, I think, but because Burnham was able to rig the elections so successfully as long as he was on the scene. He died in surgery in Cuba, by the way.

Q: I would have thought he would have preferred somewhere else. Guyana became notorious later on because of the Jimmy Jones thing. Was Jonestown in existence at that time or was Jones making any effort at that time?

HEAVNER: No, they weren't there then and in fact, my recollection is that Jonestown only really got underway about 1974.

Q: It wasn't there very long was it?

HEAVNER: No and I had left the country desk, thank heavens, before Jonestown blew

up. That was such a mess. Looking back it seems to me that there was no way it could have been handled so that things would have come out differently. I can't imagine anything that John Burke, ambassador then, might have said to Congressman Ryan, who was killed there, which would have deterred him from going out there. It was just a terrible mess. Fortunately for me they were not there while I was DCM and not there essentially when I was country director.

Q: One has the feeling that Georgetown sits on the edge of an almost impenetrable jungle. Is this true? Were you able to get out and around much?

HEAVNER: It is not much in the way of jungle, it is scrub mostly. There is a thin band of cultivated land along the coast and the only road that amounts to anything in the country is the coastal road which goes down to Surinam. You could get into the far reaches of the country where there were some cattle ranches, believe it or not. There were prospectors back there prospecting for diamonds and gold and they brought quite a bit in. It was a respectable kind of prospecting country. There is a famous falls there. Kaieteur Falls is twice as high as Niagara, very spectacular. The only way you could get there during my time was to fly there. I remember very well flying up the gorge to the falls and I was with one of the secretaries who had taken flying lessons and was quite knowledgeable about flying small planes and she was terrified. She said that he was not going to make it as we approached and was gripping my hand so hard it hurt. I was innocently looking around and taking in all the scenery. The falls were above us. What she hadn't thought of, and I wasn't even concerned until she panicked, was that the falls created a tremendous updraft and it was like an elevator and the plane shot right up and over.

But the back country was essentially unpopulated, you are right, except for the areas where the bauxite companies were located. They had built roads into their operations. You could go up the rivers. In fact, a great excursion for embassy people was to rent the mail boat on Sunday, a day it wasn't delivering any mail, and go up the river and swim off the boat. There were pirana in the river but they never bothered us and we never heard of anyone having any difficulties. The other thing you could do was to visit the forts the Dutch had built there in the 1600s. They evidently did nothing in the forts but drink and would throw the bottles off the fort so that in the sand there you found lots of these 17th century black glass, hand blown bottles which are collector items here. I still have three of them.

Q: Were the British sort of number one diplomatically?

HEAVNER: Yes, very much so. The elite in Guyana almost to a man were educated in Britain and had a very English point of view. There were British business establishments there. There was a book once called, "Bookers' Guyana," and for good reason because Bookers was the controlling commercial interest there.

Q: Bookers being a?

HEAVNER: A British firm. Their big department store was the place to shop and about

the only place for any luxuries that you might want even at the time I arrived. So you had a very strong British influence and the British high commissioner was at least as influential as the American, but they worked hand in glove, were very tight. Del Carlson had as good a personal friendship with the British high commissioner as he did with Forbes Burnham. Again that changed when Spence came because he didn't know the British high commissioner and then the high commissioner changed. He was a bright young man whose view of diplomacy and personal connections was a little different. It was very chummy, almost a family situation, when I arrived. Carlson had been there a long time and knew everyone and was on good personal terms with most of the leaders, except of course for Cheddi and his group.
Q: Did the Cubans have a presence there while you were there?

HEAVNER: Not while I was there. I think they did subsequently.

Q: We are talking about 1969-71 and the Nixon administration had just come in and Henry Kissinger was national security advisor. Did you get any feel about the Nixon White House and their interest in the area? It would have been very anti-communist.

HEAVNER: I think that was reflected in the fact that we couldn't even consider Cheddi as a leader. I don't think the White House was paying much attention to Guyana.

Q: How about the CIA?

HEAVNER: I really don't know. My predecessor was on the outs with Carlson. Kattenburg and Carlson were oil and water and it got so bad that Carlson distrusted Kattenburg, thinking he talked too much, and wouldn't let him see any of the sensitive cables even though he was DCM. The code clerk was instructed to show them only to Carlson. For a while, that was also the case with me but it wasn't long after I got there that Carlson decided I might be okay. By the time he left we had a good relationship. I got along very well with Spence, too, by the way, who was a much more traditional Foreign Service officer and who used the DCM much more than Carlson did. Carlson was pretty much of a one man show and he could do that because he knew everyone and was on close personal terms with many of the leaders there.

Q: Paul Kattenburg gained some prominence, and still does today, with his dealing in Vietnam. Do you think he had been sent to Guyana with the idea of getting him away from Vietnam?

HEAVNER: Paul never told me that, but that may be true. He was certainly not supportive of the administration's Vietnam policy. When I left the Vietnam Working Group, Ben Wood was already gone, Kattenburg came on board to be the man in charge and for a short time I was his deputy. So, I knew Paul a little bit. My recollection is that he hadn't then yet decided that what we needed to do was to get out at any cost. When I came back to the States en route to Guyana, Paul was here. I'm not very sure what he was doing then, but I did talk to him about Guyana and got a lot of interesting insights. Paul is an interesting personality, again an intellectual, and not your traditional diplomat.

Q: He is a professor and has been for some time now.

HEAVNER: I think that is more his role. He was also an extremely active sort of person when I knew him. He had so much energy he was bouncing off the wall. He couldn't sit down and talk to you, he had to pace around. When I had dinner with him before going to Guyana he was out of his chair more than he was in it. As a psychologist I subsequently wondered if Paul was a little manic. Some very successful people are, by the way.

Q: Did you feel, while you were there, part of Latin America?

HEAVNER: Absolutely not. It was English speaking and their connections with neighboring countries were mostly with the Caribbean English speaking countries, Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados. Trinidad being perhaps the one that they had the most connection with. There was a Brazilian embassy, but the general who was there was not fluent in English and I think, himself, was in exile.

Q: The Brazilians have done this from time to time.

HEAVNER: He played really no role. His DCM was a very likeable young man who has subsequently become an ambassador in Europe in one of their important posts. He did all of their reporting and whatever needed to be done. The ambassador was just sort of there.

Q: What about Venezuela?

HEAVNER: It was the other big problem for the Guyanese, not Brazil so much although they did worry about that border. They had a boundary dispute with Venezuela which predated independence and which was carried over and there were even hints that the Venezuelans might use force to take that stretch of territory. It became especially of concern when it looked as though there might be oil there. I don't think they ever did find any oil there. It was while I was in Guyana that they finally worked out an agreement, I think, basically disagreeing but leaving the thing pretty much unresolved. The issue then sort of disappeared and as far as I know has never resurfaced, perhaps because there is no oil there.

Q: Were there any major incidents while you were there or problems with Americans in trouble?

HEAVNER: Not really. The movement to militant third world stance was of most concern to us, Burnham's leftist thrust. But that was a gradual process. I guess while I was chargé between ambassadors what exercised me most was American in nature when our Peace Corps people decided that they needed to demonstrate against the Vietnam War outside our embassy. They wanted to see me as chargé and deliver their sentiments. It all seemed to me quite inappropriate that they should be doing this in a foreign country. In any event, to answer your question, not a lot happened while I was in Guyana. Well, personally something happened. I met a woman who was working at the British embassy

and at the end of 1970 we got married. That was a big deal for me.

Q: The Peace Corps was demonstrating all over the place. How did one deal with this? Did you have instructions?

HEAVNER: I don't recall that we did have instructions. I dealt with it by having the consul meet with them and accept their petition which was sent to Washington and trying to down play it as much as possible. I was concerned with the impact on the local scene rather than with their attitude towards Vietnam. I had come out of Vietnam and thought they were talking about something that they didn't understand, had no first hand knowledge of the situation. History would say they were right and I was wrong, but at the time I thought they were way out of line. I felt they had every right to demonstrate in the U.S. and every right to express their opinions wherever they might be but to make an issue of it in a foreign country when they were in fact a government agency themselves seemed to me very inappropriate. Of course, the Peace Corps was always a special beast in that regard. Whether it was or was not official was not very clear.

Q: Was the concern a petition or did they want to demonstrate out in front?

HEAVNER: Oh, they did demonstrate out in front of the embassy with placards, etc., which seemed to me ludicrous as though a demonstration in Guyana could have any impact on anything except Guyana and secondly, that it was inappropriate given their role as an agency of the U.S. government.

Q: This was obviously before they were kicked out?

HEAVNER: Yes.

Q: Did you find yourself in discussions on Vietnam with Forbes Burnham at all?

HEAVNER: Initially, when I arrived, Del Carlson brought it up in a meeting between the three of us and we did talk about it. It was clear that Burnham did not have a great interest, but that in any event he certainly didn't agree with the stance that I was taking and the official American position, but he wasn't going to argue about it at that point. Carlson had most of the contact with Burnham. I don't think I ever saw Burnham alone while chargé. Sometimes he would lead the diplomatic corps to projects in the countryside and I would see him then along with all the other diplomats, but to see him one-on-one like Carlson did, I don't think I ever did. It wasn't he who told me the Peace Corps had to leave; it was his minister of health, whose husband then was a minister and who married my wife and me and who subsequently became the UN representative up here.

Q: Were there any efforts to get leader grants?

HEAVNER: Yes, we had leader grants, sure. We had a USIA director who was very much concerned with that and involved in choosing and arranging for those. We had a

USIS library which was heavily patronized and I thought was very successful. The Guyanese were increasingly American oriented, I think, although the major cultural influence there continued to be British.

Q: You left there in 1971 and went back to what?

HEAVNER: To be country director for Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. I was in that job for three years, 1971-74. Then I went to the Senior Seminar. I didn't have any overseas assignments after that. I didn't expect that, but that is the way it worked out.

Q: In 1971-74 you were in Southeast Asia affairs.

HEAVNER: Initially it was just Malaysia and Singapore, but then Marshall Green decided that he was going to add Indonesia to the list. Indonesia had a separate desk when I arrived and I was country director for Malaysia and Singapore. But, after six months or so, Green wrapped them up into one office and I was country director for all three.

Q: This was Marshall Green?

HEAVNER: Right, who had been ambassador in Indonesia when I was in Medan. By then he was the assistant secretary for East Asia.

Q: What were the main issues in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore when you arrived there?

HEAVNER: There weren't very many problem issues at any time that I can recall. Relations with all three countries were pretty good. You may recall that Kissinger and Nixon had a very close personal relationship with Lee Kuan Yew, who came to this country sort of informally and spent time with both Kissinger and Nixon on a "pals together" basis. He especially liked talking to Kissinger. They were intellectual equals and loved to go over things privately.

In Malaysia, the relationship was more arms length. The Malaysians weren't sure about the Americans and they had something of a look-down-the-nose British attitude toward Americans, but they certainly weren't unfriendly and we didn't have any problems really with them.

Indonesia, of course, was settling in for the long haul with Suharto, and our major connection there was in terms of assistance. There was an aid consortium chaired by the Dutch that had twice a year meetings in Amsterdam with all of the donors. I used to go to those. In December Amsterdam was dreadful, but in the spring it was lovely. The tulips were in full bloom and I greatly enjoyed that.

Indonesia as an oil producer was of great interest to us because this was during the period of OPEC and Indonesia was one of the countries that really was much more oriented

toward our point of view on this commodity and basically on our side in terms of making sure that there was an adequate supply at a reasonable cost. That has never really changed. Their big oil government corporation was run by generals who were quite friendly to the U.S., then as I guess even now. George Benson, who had been in the embassy as a military attaché subsequently went to work for the big corporation that runs the oil industry in Indonesia. George was again very influential because he knew all the generals and had a very close personal relationship with them. He would come to the Department many times and talk with us not just about oil but the political situation and how he saw it. He was a very useful contact in many ways. He never forgot that he was an American, by the way, and never lost sight of U.S. interests in his own interests of being employed. I don't know where George is now. He was a very interesting and important personality, it seems to me.

Q: What was the relationship with Suharto at this point?

HEAVNER: I think it was pretty good. I think Marshall Green initially established a good relationship with Suharto and Galbraith certainly carried it on. During the time I was there, David Newsom, who subsequently became Under Secretary, became ambassador. Newsom was quite annoyed with me because I had the temerity to suggest that inasmuch as this country was profiting from oil revenues maybe the AID program could be reduced. I don't think he ever forgave me for suggesting that. But that was the kind of issues we had at that time. They were economic issues. We weren't dealing with an Indonesian effort to crush Malaysia or anything of that sort. We were not dealing with anti-Western posture or a pro-communist leader like Sukarno. The generals and the army in Indonesia were essentially pro-Western, pro-U.S. and that was fine.

Q: We were withdrawing somewhat in Vietnam and had come up with sort of a peace. How did that play in the area?

HEAVNER: I think all the countries in the area were quite concerned about how that was going to play out, Lee Kuwan Yew in particular, but also the Indonesians. They had a very strong anti-communist posture and with good reason. They saw the threat not so much coming from Vietnam but from China. They saw Vietnam essentially as a pawn of the Chinese. I think they felt that the ocean between them and the mainland of Southeast Asia was a considerable barrier to encroachment by China or Vietnam, but they were still worried, particularly about their Chinese minority and what they might feel or do vis-a-vis mainland China.

As far as our withdrawal, I don't think they would have liked it. I don't think they would have agreed with it. I think they felt they could do nothing but acquiesce, however, and put the best face possible on it.

Q: Did the authoritarian government of Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore concern us at all?

HEAVNER: I don't think so. We talked about it. We were aware that it was something less than a full democracy. Lee Kuan Yew's use of economic success which became even

more pronounced later on, seemed not only to us but to his people justification for a pretty strict regime. And, as I said, there was a strong personal connection there. Both Nixon and Kissinger knew him and liked him immensely. There was, of course also, some justification in terms of tensions between Singapore and Malaysia, between the Chinese and Malay populations. You could argue as Lee Kuan Yew did that you had to have very firm control to guard against ethnic upheavals and communist subversion, his feeling being that the mainland Chinese potential for subversion was a very big and real threat and he had to be completely in control in order to fend that off. I don't think we disagreed with that.

Q: At this time were we thinking the unthinkable of what would happen if South Vietnam fell and what would be the role of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia?

HEAVNER: Well, we were certainly anticipating that the communist role in Southeast Asia was going to be much augmented. Whether any of us foresaw the tanks rolling into Saigon, I don't know. I don't think I did, although I had often said that was the only way they would take control of South Vietnam, which certainly turned out to be true. What we did do was in any way we could support the genesis of ASEAN and the development of those countries, particularly Indonesia, by all kinds of assistance programs. We saw them as needing more integration politically and economically and even perhaps militarily in order to guard against a communist wave spreading throughout the region. So, although we overtly kept hands off, we certainly were saying that ASEAN is a great idea and you guys ought to get even closer and build it up. SEATO's role there was something of an anomaly. The Thai, Philippine and Australian role in SEATO were seen as kind of a back drop, but we never thought, I believe in extending that to involve, for example, Indonesia. I'm not sure that we thought any less about the domino theory than we had before. That is, it was not less in our thinking but we didn't have a military response to it that seemed very effective once Vietnam was down the tubes.

Q: Were you in East Asia when the Nixon opening of China came about?

HEAVNER: I must have been, what was the year?

Q: I'm not sure but think it was close to the time you arrived, 1971 or 1972.

HEAVNER: I can't recall if that was on my watch or not. Why do you ask?

Q: The reason for this is that much of our policy in Vietnam and in Southeast Asia was based on the premise that we are taking about an expanding China and communist influence. In a way the opening of China, not completely, but sort of, lanced that boil. In other words, here was a China which is no longer as far as we are concerned a rogue elephant, but an animal with which we could deal. I was wondering if that had any effect on our thinking.

HEAVNER: Yes, I think it must have done. I don't recall discussions about it but certainly that would have bene important.

Q: How about Brunei? Did you have it, too?

HEAVNER: Well, it wasn't independent then, but I did go there once and had an audience with the sultan. We gave him a book about guns, he was a gun collector. He was delighted with the book which USIA had provided. Brunei was still a protectorate at that time and, of course, oil rich, so we were interested but not concerned in those days.

Q: Were we actively have leader grants and other things too in Indonesia?

HEAVNER: Lots of them. The relationship with Indonesia was pretty tight and I guess still is, despite some difficulties about human rights.

Q: Did East Timor play any role?

HEAVNER: That was not an issue during my time. The Indonesians decided to take over East Timor considerably after I left the desk. West Irian had been resolved quite a long time before. So there weren't boundary disputes or extra colonial leftovers during the time I was on the desk.

Q: How about West Irian? There was a lot of concern about it. The Indonesians just took it over and it just disappeared from consideration.

HEAVNER: My recollection is that there was a negotiated settlement over that and that Bunker was involved.

Q: We weren't concerned about what the Indonesians were doing there or anything like that?

HEAVNER: There wasn't much of anything there except some copper mining. The native population was pretty much untouched. The Papua New Guinea side was more developed. I may be wrong but I essentially thought of the Indonesian side as essentially a headhunter territory, except for those mining operations.

Q: Was Marshall Green the head of the East Asian Bureau then?

HEAVNER: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of how he ran the place?

HEAVNER: Well, I was a great admirer of Marshall Green as Ambassador to Indonesia and that didn't change when I came to the Department and he was assistant secretary. He was a very active, quite brilliant man whose views of things coincided with my own, so I guess that helped too. I can only say that all my contacts with Marshall were quite satisfactory from my point of view.

Q: You left East Asian affairs in 1974 and then we joined up together in a Senior Seminar from 1974-75.

HEAVNER: That's right.

Q: What was your impression of the Senior Seminar?

HEAVNER: It was such a varied fare that it would be difficult to sum it up. I didn't need all that much exposure to the U.S., perhaps, since I had been there for some years. It would have been more useful, perhaps, if I had spent more of my career abroad in terms of getting to know the U.S. and its issues more intimately. A lot of the Seminar was devoted to that and certainly was interesting, but I'm not sure how profitable it was. I guess I enjoyed it a great deal. I had the feeling it was too long. A full year away from active duty was a bit much for me. I used the latter part of the Seminar to do a study of the bauxite industry in the Caribbean in preparation for what I anticipated would be my next assignment, the country director for the Caribbean. I picked up some of the threads again in Guyana, I actually went back there and talked with the foreign minister. I don't think I saw Burnham that time. That was certainly useful in terms of my next assignment.

I also used the tail end of the Seminar to get my French up to 3, 3 level by having instruction on a part time basis there anticipating that I would get another overseas assignment where I might finally actually use French. I had been fully trained in Vietnamese and Indonesian and wanted a world language at the 3, 3 level, so I got that out of the Senior Seminar.

I guess a sharper focus might have been better. It's a good program though. I certainly enjoyed the personal connections there, meeting officers who were at the same stage of their career and exchanges with them. It was a good year, but maybe a bit too long.

Q: Had you been told you were going to go back to ARA to be the country director for the Caribbean?

HEAVNER: I knew that maybe half way through the Seminar. I was hoping to go out to Jakarta as DCM. Newsom had sort of said that that was in the works, but I think he never forgave me for suggesting that AID really wasn't that important given their oil income. I didn't get that job.

Q: You were in ARA from when to when?

HEAVNER: From 1975 to 1977.

Q: What were your major concerns during this period?

HEAVNER: We were very concerned about Jamaica and the possibility of another Cuba just off shore. Otherwise the Caribbean is not an area of great interest to policy makers generally. The main thing was just to try to connect with people who might pay attention

enough to assist those countries. The Caribbean is a very poor area. When I say Caribbean, of course, I am not talking about Central America, which is Caribbean geographically. Our bureaucratic designation included Haiti and the Dominican Republic and the rest which were mostly English speaking, Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana...

Q: Surinam and French Guinea?

HEAVNER: Yes, they were included. Martinique, of course, and the smaller Dutch islands. But the main players were Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Guyana. We had an interest in Antigua, because we had a military facility there as we did in Barbados. The most interesting thing that I did while I was on Caribbean affairs was to try to negotiate a renewal of those base rights. I was in the negotiating team that went down to Antigua where I thought I had an agreement with Bird, who is a fascinating character. He must be seven feet tall and a very big man. He had been in charge for a very long time and his sons, who were almost as big as he, were his cabinet ministers, or at least two of them. After the initial pleasantries, which were very jovial and pleasant indeed, Bird said he wanted to see me privately. He said could we not offer a little bit more. All he wanted was a trip to the States and a little bit more. I said that I thought that could be managed because I had authority to offer a little bit more, and offered the trip. I thought we had an agreement, but the next day when the two delegations met and I made this proposal, Bird sat back while the cabinet ministers raged at the inadequacies and humiliating poverty of our offer. I thought at the time that Bird had lost control of his cabinet. Subsequently, I decided this was just a clever ploy because he used it again with a successor delegation which went down, but they learned from my experience. Having to pick up the pieces we said, "We can't agree on the money, but what about the other provisions of our agreement?" We had a very favorable one there. Our people were not subject to the local laws and regulations. They were completely outside the legal framework and were not controlled in any way by the local government. "So, could we arrange to agree on all of the other aspects of our previous agreement and just leave open the question of compensation?" "Oh, yes," they said, "that's fine." So, we did come back with that in hand which I think was not inconsequential given what we ran into in Barbados where they were convinced our installations were so critical to our defense against the Soviets that we would have to agree to complete control under their laws of all our personnel and pay an enormous compensatory package. They never were dissuaded from this and didn't believe us when we said that technology had marched on and we probably weren't going to need these bases much longer. In fact, we closed it. I don't know how much longer we had it in Antigua, but I think it must have been closed there as well.

Q: On the Barbados bases were we telling them we would probably be getting out?

HEAVNER: We told them it was no longer of any great importance to us. I don't think we ever said that we were getting out. I think we held that back. But, we certainly let them know that although we would like to have the base, we could certainly live without it. We were willing to offer a reasonable package but if that was not satisfactory, we could move, and we did. We always wanted the Antigua more than the Barbados one anyhow because it was located better for our purposes.

Q: Did the closing out of the base on Barbados happen on your watch?

HEAVNER: I don't think we actually closed it out on my watch but it was clear that we were going to because we hadn't reached an agreement and the old agreement ran out. I was only on the Caribbean desk for two years and I think that happened after I left.

Q: Was Cuba in your bailiwick?

HEAVNER: No, that was a separate desk, country director and all. It always has been as far as I know. It was regarded as far too important to be melded into the rest of the Caribbean.

Q: You mentioned that Jamaica was a concern. What was the problem with Jamaica?

HEAVNER: Our major concern there was where Manley was heading. He looked as though he was going to do a Forbes Burnham on us. We were very pleased when Seaga was elected. We didn't anticipate that he would be, but were delighted when he won the election. Then the question was how to support his regime which we regarded as friendly and not likely to turn communist on us. The only way that we could support it then in a meaningful way was to have a substantial assistance program. However, we were so busy pouring our money into Egypt and Israel and other places like that, that there wasn't any money for Jamaica, not even a little money. This caused me a lot of heartburn because it seemed to me that that country so close to us and with a friendly government, certainly deserved more attention and more of our resources than we were giving it. I was never able to get much of a hearing.

Q: Was Haiti a problem then?

HEAVNER: Well, the fact that they were so desperately poor was a problem. The fact that the regime there was so totalitarian in nature was of some concern. But, it was very low down on the horizon for our policy makers. I don't think the seventh floor was aware that the country existed.

Q: Were we concerned with a Cuban penetration in these areas?

HEAVNER: We were always concerned about what the Cubans were up to. We saw, as I said, Manley moving toward a much closer relationship with Cuba and that really was a concern. The Haitians and Dominicans were very much pro-U.S. and opposed to Cuba and saw the Cubans as subversive elements that might try to unseat their governments. We were of one mind in that respect with the Dominican and the Haitian governments. The Haitian government was so reprehensible... It was not that clear then because our concerns with human rights were not as paramount by any means as they are now.

Q: There is a whole series of embassies there and this has always been a happy hunting ground for political appointees.

HEAVNER: Yes.

Q: Was this a problem?

HEAVNER: It was a problem in Barbados at one point. The ambassador was black, a banker and a Republican. He got involved with a local woman and got her pregnant. He was quite racist in his behavior with the embassy staff which was almost entirely white. We had a terrible time with him. The Barbadians, by Caribbean standards, are very proper, very British, very stiff upper lip, and this guy was just not their kind of man. Even though racially he was the same kind of person, otherwise he was just wrong for that country. He was wrong for probably any embassy. Ultimately he did leave. I don't know whether he left before his tour was up. He left some very unhappy Foreign Service officers in his wake down there, who felt their careers had been blighted and that they had been mistreated. There wasn't much that I could do about it and certainly there wasn't anything that Bill Luers felt he could do about it. He was the deputy assistant that I reported to.

On the other hand, we had in Jamaica, Sumner Gerard, who was a political appointee and was quite open about the fact that he got the job because he made a big contribution. But he put a price tag on it. He was a good ambassador, did a fine job. He was just right for Jamaica. He made good connections with the leaders there. He had a good political sense and used his staff well. So political appointees in the Caribbean were sometimes terrible and sometimes pretty good. I myself very much wanted one of those jobs and expected to get it and never did.

Q: In 1977 you left. What happened?

HEAVNER: A couple of things happened. As I said, I was hoping and Bill Luers certainly encouraged me to hope, that I might go to one of those countries as ambassador. It became clear that that wasn't going to happen. Also, I was quite chagrined with my failure to get anything done that was meaningful, in my opinion, about Jamaica. I had the option open of staying on for a third year, but I wanted to move on. I wasn't offered anything in the way of a good DCM job. In fact, I wasn't offered anything. I talked to Bill McAfee who had a job open in his operation of essentially liaison with CIA. I said, "Bill, I would like to do that job. Hopefully I wouldn't do it very long, but I would like to work with you for a period." Bill said, "Well, I don't want you here today and gone tomorrow." I said, "Okay. How about if we agree that I will stay at least a year?" He was agreeable to that. As it turned out I stayed there more than two years and then retired because nothing ever did come up, although there were a number of possibilities that seemed to be gelling but nothing ever came of them.

Q: Obviously this is an unclassified interview, but what was this liaison with the CIA about?

HEAVNER: Every week, CIA would send officers over to talk to the assistant secretary

in each of the geographic bureaus about their operations and essentially get State Department approval of what they were doing. In some cases, of course, the assistant secretary would ask what could we do about this, that or the other. INR had a coordinating kind of role here, and still does as far as I know, in that we follow up on this and talk to the Agency. We sat in on the meetings. I would sit in on the meetings concerning ARA and was suppose to sit in on the meetings for East Asia, but the East Asia assistant secretary, who is now quite famous for his Bosnia exploits, did not want anybody from INR in those meetings. So, although he kept agreeing to it, we never got there.

When ambassadors came through and were seen at CIA, on some occasions INR would have someone along as an institutional memory, as a coordinating and kind of follow up mechanism. I did some of that.

Q: You were in the INR bureau?

HEAVNER: Yes.
Q: This would have been from 1977-79?

HEAVNER: Yes, 1977 through 1979. I retired on the second day of January, 1980.

Q: What was your impression of CIA operations during this time?

HEAVNER: I am not sure that I ever knew about their most sensitive and most important operations. An awful lot of it was agents of influence and not very exciting, operations which were peripheral it seemed to me. Part of our coordinating role was simply to help them to provide cover for their agents. I wouldn't want to put too high a gloss on this job. But it was highly classified and involved not only CIA but also to some degree the military because the military were the surveillance arm. We maintained liaison in a variety of ways with our military as well as with our CIA people. Once a month we went to the seventh floor, usually to the under secretary, with what was being proposed by way of military surveillance.

Q: Are you talking about satellites?

HEAVNER: That job was very sensitive and highly classified and interesting and was coordinated by INR and the seventh floor at a very high level. So, I did some of that. But, basically my job was not substantive. It was not to say, "Hey, this is a dumb idea, CIA. You really shouldn't do that." Or "Hey, why don't you pull an operation here with your assets?" Occasionally maybe an assistant secretary said that something like that was not my role.

Q: You retired in the beginning of 1980. What did you do?

HEAVNER: When I retired?

Q: Yes.

HEAVNER: I went back to school and got a doctorate in clinical psychology at George Washington and subsequently became a clinical psychologist at the Alexandria Mental Health Center. I am still licensed to practice in Virginia, but I'm not practicing. I was in that field for close to 10 years and then retired from that.

I also continued to work at the State Department, part time, in the Freedom of Information Office. I did that in the summers while I was in school and never stopped, even when I was working full time at the Mental Health Center. I did most of my work at the Center in the evenings so had time during the day when I worked at the State Department part time and I still do that.

Q: Great. Why don't we stop at this point.

HEAVNER: Sure.

End of interview