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

LARUE R. LUTKINS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: October 18, 1990

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tokyo 1952-1954
- Japanese relations with Asia
- Embassy staff

Hong Kong 1954-1957
- Chief of political section
- China watch
- Interviewing refugees
- Chinese press
- Consul General Drumwright
- Washington mindset
- View of China-Soviet Bloc

Far Eastern Affairs 1957-1961
- Washington perspective of China
- Water Robertson
- China lobby
- Quemoy and Matsu
- Arrival of Kennedy administration

Senior Seminar 1961-1962

Ceylon 1962-1965
- Deputy Chief of Mission
- Frances Willis
- Cecil Lyon
- Madam Bandarnaike
- Political situation
- Nationalization and Hickenlooper Amendment
- Peace Corps

Inspection Corps 1965-1967

Personnel 1967-1969
- Director of Performance Evaluation
- Efficiency reports
- Pressure for openness

Johannesburg 1969-1973
- Consul General
- Relations with embassy
- Period of relative calm
- Contacts with black leaders
- American companies in district

Diplomat in residence 1973-1974
University of Arkansas
Senator Fulbright

International Population Year 1975-1976
Bland report on population problem

INTERVIEW

Q: I wonder if you could give me a little of your background before we get into the Foreign Service.

LUTKINS: I was born and brought up in the New York City metropolitan area, both in Manhattan and in the suburbs in Westchester County.

Q: Where were you educated?

LUTKINS: I went to a private day school as a youngster, both in Westchester County and in New York City, briefly, and then I had five years at a preparatory school in Massachusetts.

Q: Which one was that?

LUTKINS: Saint Marks School, Southborough, Massachusetts. Then went on from there to Yale, graduating in '41.

Q: It was a good year to graduate.

LUTKINS: Yes. Unlike most of my classmates, I didn't go immediately into the military. I took the last pre-war Foreign Service exams, which were given in September of '41, having studied through the summer at a tutoring school together with old friends like Marshall Green and others. Anyway, I passed both the written and the orals, which were given shortly after Christmas that year, having had a deferment from my draft board. Then after I passed, as was the custom in those days, the State Department requested my deferment, so that I entered the Foreign Service in March of '42.

Q: What led you to this interest in the Foreign Service?

LUTKINS: Well, over the years as a youngster I'd always been interested in the idea of public service of some sort, and my primary interest lay in the field of foreign affairs, which increased during my college years. At one time I was torn as to whether to go into business or law, and then perhaps enter the field of foreign affairs as an appointee later on, but I decided against that. That's really essentially it.

Q: When you entered, did you get any training before you went off?

LUTKINS: No, I didn't. Of course, ideally I would have preferred, if it hadn't been for the outbreak of war, to have done some graduate studies at Fletcher, Stanford, someplace like that, or even in Paris. But that wasn't feasible, so that I went immediately into the service in March of '42.

No, in those days you did not have any preliminary service. The system was that you were sent out immediately to a post. Most frequently in those days it was either to a Canadian border post or to a Latin American post fairly close by. And then after a year's service you were brought back to the department to go through what they call the Foreign Service training school. Since I didn't have it, I've gotten from hearsay that it was a period of about three or four months in which they put you through some of the ropes, building on your experience in that first year. Because of the war, that system was dropped, so I never had that schooling.

Q: You were sent to Cuba in '42?

LUTKINS: Yes, Havana, Cuba.

Q: And you served there for about two years?

LUTKINS: A little over two years.

Q: Where were you serving and what were you doing?

LUTKINS: I was initially posted to Havana, the capital. For a year, during the two years I was there, I was put in charge of a one-man listening post at a place called the Isle of Pines. I'll get to that later.

In Havana, it was primarily a training experience. There were quite a few other younger officers there at that time--Bob McBride, who has since died, I'm afraid, and Bill Crawford was there and others. They rotated us around. Did work in the economic and commercial section, writing up the traditional reports on business opportunities and that sort of thing.

Then quite a bit of time in the consular section, which was quite busy at that time. Because of the war, there were a large number of European refugees, who couldn't get directly into the United States from Europe, who made Cuba their transitional stopping place. They applied for American visas there, which made that section fairly busy and active. And then, it being wartime, there was a certain amount of economic warfare work.

Q: Could you explain what economic warfare work was?

LUTKINS: Well, as I recall it, I was not in it very long, but the basic outlines are very simple. We were trying to deny the flow of certain products to the Axis powers. And that involved, wherever one might be stationed, working with the local government to try and prevent business contacts and commercial contacts involving the shipment of scarce materials, metals and that type of thing to the Axis powers.

Cuba was not a particularly difficult post in that regard, in that in those days Cuba was really an economic colony of the United States. It was overwhelmingly dominated by the United States' financial and industrial interests, so that we never had much trouble persuading the Cubans to cooperate with us. I think we may have had more problems elsewhere in Latin America, where the Germans were a little more firmly entrenched, but in Cuba that wasn't a major problem. Spain was another example, being a neutral country, which was extremely important in that regard.

Q: Well then, you say you were a one-man post on the Isle of Pines. I'm always interested in some of these wartime experiences, because the Foreign Service is doing odd things in places.

LUTKINS: Yes. Well, it's one of those things that is done in wartime that in retrospect seemed rather unnecessary and unimportant. But I guess in the heat of war, precautionary steps are taken that seemed advisable at the time. I think the reason was that there were a number of Axis nationals-- Germans, Japanese, some Italians--who lived in Cuba when war broke out in December of '41. The Cubans, at our request, locked them all up, and they happened to put them in a federal penitentiary which was located on the Isle of Pines.

Q: Which is now notorious under Castro, isn't it?

LUTKINS: Right. The Isle of Pines is now known as the Isle of Youth, if I'm not mistaken. The penitentiary was a modern, up-to-date facility that had been built by a fairly enterprising Cuban military man a few years before, for other reasons. But in terms of penal institutions, it was modern and clean, well run. But in addition to that, there were a few Japanese farmers throughout Cuba, and some perhaps on the Isle of Pines itself, and they also were locked up and put in this penitentiary.

The idea was that they just wanted somebody on the spot, to make sure that the Cubans were doing what they were supposed to be doing in keeping these people locked up and not engaging in any hanky- panky. I guess some of the Germans and the Italians were fairly well heeled, and perhaps had money that they conceivably could have used to get special privileges. In addition to that, in the early days of the war, this was at the height of the submarine scare. There were numerous reports of German submarines appearing, and they just wanted to have somebody around to keep an eye on that particular area.

Q: Particularly in '42, '43, there were really tremendous losses.

LUTKINS: Oh, very much. That was a bad spring, yes.

Q: I guess there's a book out right now called Operation Drumroll *isn't it, or something like that.*

LUTKINS: Yes, it was mostly further north along the eastern seaboard, but I guess the Caribbean also had a certain amount, too.
This brings up an amusing anecdote.

You asked me various things I did at the embassy at Havana. (I'm sorry I'm getting a little out of order here.) It was only six months after I arrived in Havana that they sent me over to the Isle of Pines, where I stayed for a year and then came back to Havana and finished my tour. The reason they picked me to go to the Isle of Pines was because the young vice consul from Canada, who was coming down supposedly to do this, had already been in the service a year, and for some reason or other they weren't very happy with his performance in Canada, so they decided to keep him in Havana and send me down there.

When I came back to Havana after the year on the Isle of Pines, one of the jobs I did was to serve as the ambassador's sort of private secretary, scheduling appointments and so forth. In that capacity, I sat in on some of the staff meetings. One of them was attended by a very famous American who was a resident in Cuba, Ernest Hemingway, who had a home there for many years and whom I got to know reasonably well. You'll recall he was a great fisherman, and he had, I guess for those days, a fairly big, expensive fishing craft that he used to go out in. During the war, of course, gasoline fuel was rationed and it was very difficult for the layman to get hold of. But anyway, one of the items addressed in the staff meeting, which Ernest Hemingway sat in on, was to explain his proposal. In return for getting fuel for his fishing boat, he would go out and be a decoy to spot any possible submarine surfacings. This was taken very seriously, and the embassy actually went along with it and gave him the fuel, which I thought was a bit of a scam.

Q: In another interview that I had, one of our top Foreign Service colleagues spent a good part of the war out in the Gulf Stream in a sailing vessel, in the Navy, and they were just looking for submarines. They just sailed back and forth--sailing because they could do it cheaper and they didn't have to come in. And there they sat out there.

LUTKINS: We also had an airbase, Army airbase in those days, on the western tip of Cuba, in what is called Pinar del Río Province. I became quite friendly with some of the officers at that base. Their primary mission was to go out on daily reconnaissance flights, to keep an eye out for submarines and so forth.

Q: Did you have any problems sitting on the Isle of Pines? Sounds like you just went over and looked at the wall once a day and then...

LUTKINS: It was very hard to keep myself busy; I think I did a lot of reading that year. It was a very interesting little place. This is a historical sidelight, but at the end of the

Spanish-American War (for some reason that is a little hazy in my memory now), there was some reason to believe that this little island might be acquired by the United States.

There was, for those days, a sizable flow of American farmers, mostly from the upper Middle West, who went down there and started a citrus industry, growing grapefruit primarily, also limes, and winter vegetables like cucumbers to supply the American market. And it was a rather thriving little American community for awhile.

After awhile the bubble burst, in that the United States made it clear that they were not planning to try to acquire the island. Most of the settlers went back, but there remained a reasonably sizable little community of a hundred Americans or so, with their families, engaged primarily in agriculture.

It was like being in a typical midwestern agricultural area. Real salt-of-the-earth Americans; it was wonderful. Of course, they didn't get along terribly well with the Cubans, whom they regarded, with some merit, as a little bit backward and corrupt and so forth. But they were, of course, delighted to have an American official on hand, and I became good friends with many of them.

Q: Well, you left Havana. You enlisted in the Army or...?

LUTKINS: Not quite that. What happened was that in the early years of the war the State Department requested the local draft boards to defer all its officers, because it was a very small service in those days. I think we were 750 officers or something like that. Because we were expanding the service during the war to cope with new wartime demands, the department wanted to keep its officer corps. But the political pressures grew on the White House over those years. And the story was that, I think it was Judge Rosenman who was the counsel to Franklin Roosevelt, apparently he eventually prevailed, I guess it was in 1944, on the president or whoever made the decisions, to get the State Department to alter that policy of requesting deferments. So a compromise was reached whereby the department no longer requested the deferment of its younger officers, I think ones who were under 30 years old and particularly if they were unmarried.

There was also, from the Foreign Service point of view, a rather infamous agitation in the local press, in the old *Washington Times Herald* that Cissy Patterson published. At some point there, mid-1944, a whole page appeared in the *Times Herald*, with the pictures of about two dozen Foreign Service officers. And the headline said: "THESE FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS DO NOT CHOOSE TO FIGHT." The department was rather weak-kneed in its response to that.

In any case, the upshot was that, although the department ceased to request the deferment of quite a large number of officers, I think there were only about 30 or 40 that were actually drafted as a result of that--one of whom was myself.

Most of us ended up gravitating into being selected for work either in the Army, the Navy, or the Office of Strategic Services, which amounted to virtually what we were doing in the Foreign Service except that we were doing it for much less pay.

So what happened was that I came back to Washington. I applied to the Navy at ONI, but I was turned down for eyes, so I was inducted into the Army. Went partially through basic training, near here at Fort Belvoir. And then in the middle of that, I was pulled out by the Office of Strategic Services, which I had also put in an application for. That must have been November or December of 1944. And then I spent the rest of my very brief and inglorious career in the military with the Office of Strategic Services. Initially in Washington, and then I was sent overseas to Cairo.

I was attached to the African Bureau of what was called SI, Special Intelligence, I think, or Secret Intelligence, in the Office of Strategic Services. I was sent over as the number two man in the Cairo office of OSS, attached to but in a separate building from our Embassy. By that time, Cairo was very unimportant... everything had moved on to the Balkans and so forth.
And then the last few months I was there I was sent up to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where I think I had what might be perhaps the unique experience of being a Foreign Service officer who subsequently served as a Foreign Service clerk. I was assigned under cover as a Foreign Service clerk in the embassy. That again was very uneventful. It was interesting. I enjoyed seeing East Africa, and Ethiopia in particular, but I didn't accomplish anything of any real value.

Q: You left the service in '45?

LUTKINS: No, I was placed on military leave in the summer of '44 and then served in the Army until the end of the war. As soon as the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and the war ended in Japan, the State Department immediately asked the military to release the people who had been drafted. There was a time lag involved in getting back and demobilized and so forth. It was, I think, late November of '45 when I was demobilized from the Army and reported back to Washington.

At that point, I again expressed my interest to Personnel in being assigned to China. It was renewed interest, because I had done it earlier while I was in Havana. I had kept in touch with the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, particularly the Office of Chinese Affairs, about my interest. And they were interested, particularly after the war, in rebuilding their Chinese language officer strength. So when I got back to Washington, I guess it was in January, they put in a plug with Personnel to have me go into Chinese language training.

It was not my original thought. I had thought I could be sent out to one of our China posts. During the war in Havana, I had applied for such a posting and actually been assigned to Chungking, but I never got there because Havana wouldn't release me until my replacement came. By that time, I was in the Army.

So, as a result of the intervention of the Office of Chinese Affairs, Personnel agreed to post me to Yale University, where they were beginning to put officers through what amounted to eight months of preliminary Chinese language training, following which we went out to Peking, or Peiping as it was then known, for another year and a half.

Q: So you then went to Peking from '47 to '48?

LUTKINS: Let's see, yes. The better part of '46 was at Yale, and then I got out to Peiping or Peking at the Beginning of '47. The language program training lasted till mid- 1948. Had a couple of months just attached to the Consulate staff there, and then was sent down to Southwest China to head up the Consulate at Kunming.

Q: Were there any other Foreign Service officers taking Chinese at the time?

LUTKINS: Oh, very much so, yes. As I said, they were rather depleted in their Chinese language officer corps strength, so they were engaged in quite a program of building that up. At Yale, while I was there, in the term or class before me, there was Ed Martin (China Ed Martin, not the South American economic Ed Martin). He and another fellow, Jim Spear, were already there. Spear subsequently resigned. When I was there, there was a chap named Bob Rinden. We were in the same group. We were soon followed by others including Doug Forman, Al Jenkins, Ralph Clough, Oscar Armstrong, and Jerry Stryker group.

Q: I wonder if you could give just a little feeling about this. There's nothing like a group of relatively junior officers getting together and studying a language. I mean, they look at the society to which they're going and all. How did they feel? This was, of course, a tumultuous time in China. How did you all, or you particularly, feel about the Kuomintang, the Communist side, and Chinese society as a whole?

LUTKINS: Well, that's a big question. Sure.

Incidentally, that group of Chinese language officers (and we have remained very close, because we tended to associate throughout our careers and still see a lot of each other, at least those in the Washington area) came from different sources. But a good many of them, well, certainly Oscar Armstrong was brought up in China of an American missionary family. Both Ed Martin and Doug Forman were of missionary families, although their families had been in India, not in China. But Ed Martin's wife was of an American missionary family in China. I had, of course, no previous contact at all with China except general interest. Ralph Clough had been out there as an exchange student at Lingnan University. And then some of the older language officers like Tony Freeman had also been at Lingnan.

Well, to get back to your basic question. I think we all were very sympathetic to China, through background or reading and so forth, and had read a lot about what was going on there during the war. For instance, one of the books that was current at the time was

called *Thunder Out of China* by Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby. It painted a rather disillusioning picture of what was going on there, and so did most of the reports coming out of China. We also were, of course, aware of the problems that some of the older Chinese language specialists and Far East specialists had been facing. This was even before the McCarthy accusations, but they were already under attack by people like Ambassador Hurley.

Q: Patrick Hurley was a particularly vehement antagonist towards the Foreign Service, wasn't he?

LUTKINS: I never had any personal contact with him, so I couldn't comment on that too accurately. But certainly, from what I've heard from older colleagues who associated with him, they didn't regard him quite in the same sense as McCarthy. I think they felt he just wasn't terribly bright, and also that he was rather boastful and so forth, and sort of a loose cannon more than anything else. Many people thought that Roosevelt sent him to China to get him out of the way. In any case, after reading books like Barbara Tuchman's *Stilwell and the American Experience in China* and other books of the same sort, Hurley doesn't come off terribly well. Some of my friends certainly found him very difficult to work with. But in any case, this colored our general approach.

In addition to that, it wasn't too difficult for anybody with a reasonably open mind, when once one arrived on the spot, to see that the situation was a very difficult and unhealthy one. It wasn't so much that we were hostile to or critical of the national government, the Kuomintang government. They faced extraordinarily difficult problems. The war had weakened them badly. It forced them into the interior, where they lost their foundation with western middle-class roots and were forced back into the old China, depending on warlordism and this sort of thing. Inflation was rampant, which again was not by any means entirely their fault; it was just a wartime situation. The bottom line to all this was that the regime was very obviously weak, it lacked control over much of the country. There was the usual traditional Chinese corruption, both in the military and in the civil government. The regime really lacked the ability to do anything effective economically on behalf of either the middle class, to which it really owed most of its support, or to the peasantry around the country.

And then, contrasted with this, you had the Communists under Mao Zedong who, whatever their methods, seemed to have a real conviction and spirit, and to be, at that time at least, fairly self-sacrificing in making efforts to do something on behalf of the people and not merely being interested in enriching themselves.

So one couldn't help be rather skeptical of the claims of the national government that it was reasserting its control, and also a little pessimistic as to how things were going to go.

Q: Was there, within the Foreign Service family while you were in Peking, any what could be called a generational gap? I mean, the younger officers coming in and saying this is a mess.

LUTKINS: No.

Q: This happens in some other places, but it didn't happen?

LUTKINS: Well, it was a generational gap, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't true in Nanking. I didn't serve there, that was where the Embassy was. It most definitely was not true in Peiping. When we first got there, the Consul General was Tony Freeman, and then Tony went back to Washington. He was succeeded by Oliver Edmund Clubb, who was certainly a generation older than us, but he very definitely had the views of most of the Foreign Service specialists on China, and as a result got into trouble himself.

Actually, the only generational gap, in the sense that you were referring to, that I ran into, was really later. The man involved I met in Washington originally, and I was in a sense recruited by him, and then later he was my Consul General in Hong Kong, and that's Everett Drumright, who was a very staunch supporter of the Kuomintang and inclined to think that, whatever its faults, we had to support it to the end. Perfectly good argument to be made for that, but he was regarded by the other language officers as, I won't put it in terms of right and left, because it really wasn't that, but certainly more vigorously anti-Chinese Communist than the younger generation, and more inclined to feel that it would be a tremendous mistake to allow them to take over the country or, later on, to retain their control of the country.

Q: When did you finish your training and then what was your first assignment? Where did you go and what were you doing?

LUTKINS: Well, actually, as I said, there was a slight interlude there. I guess I concluded my training around June of '48 and was temporarily detailed to work in the Consulate for a couple of months. They were making arrangements for me to go down to Kunming in the southwest to head up the Consulate there. But in terms of the personnel shifts involved, it involved a brief delay. So I went down to Kunming, I guess it was...

Q: Kunming is where?

LUTKINS: Southwest China. It's the capital of the Province of Yunnan. The western border of Yunnan abuts Burma, and it became very important during World War II, because Kunming was the Chinese terminus of the Burma Road, also of the flights over the Hump. They brought their supplies in to the American and Chinese forces from India. So during the war it experienced quite a bit of development. It had always traditionally been a bit of a backwater in China, controlled by warlords and so forth. But during the war it spruced up quite a bit. Then after the war it reverted a bit. Not to the extent before the war, but as soon as the war was over, everything went back to Nanking and Shanghai. Incidentally, I might just mention, during the war, of course, as you probably know, many of the Chinese universities from the coastal areas were relocated, both in Yunnan and the other province to the north, Szechuan, where Chungking is located.

Q: What were you doing? Why did we have a post there?

LUTKINS: Of course, we had a network of posts in China, pre-war. I can't give you the exact number, but it must have been ten to fifteen, which were scattered all around.

Kunming (which in the old days was called Yunnan-fu, but Kunming's easier) was of some strategic importance, because it was really in a sense part of a French sphere of influence. They had a railroad coming up from Indochina to Kunming, so the French were always fairly important there. The British were interested in it also.

Just as we had Consulates in Chungking, which was really a more important place because it was on the Yangtze River, it was considered desirable to have a Consulate in Kunming. I couldn't begin to tell you when it was first opened, but certainly it must have been ever since the 1920s and possibly a little earlier. There were certain American commercial interests there, but it wasn't a major field of American commercial activity.

Q: So what were you doing?

LUTKINS: Primarily political reporting, because that was a very crucial period there, '48 to '49, when things began to crumble. First in Manchuria, where, incidentally, I had taken a language officer field trip in 1947. Got sort of marooned up there, because of one of the Chinese Communist offensives. Had to fly back to Peking since the rail line was cut. But, as I say, you had this gradual crumbling of the Nationalist position, first in Manchuria, then in North China. We left Peiping in October '48, and it fell to the Communists in December, if I'm not mistaken. I think it was Tientsin first and then Peiping, but I'm not positive. And then, of course, during most of '49 the Communists were sweeping southward. There were some climactic battles north of the Yangtze River, in the spring of '49, if I recall correctly. Then they took Nanking, and the government evacuated to Taiwan.

We were, of course, uncertain which way things were going, so naturally we wanted reporting from various parts of China. Canton was reporting on South China; Kunming was reporting on Southwest China; Chungking, of course, on West China; Hangzhou on the vital Yangtze basin. Those were the main Consulates at the time. So primarily, really, it was political observation.

Q: How was your area in Southwest China? It was pretty far removed from where the Red offensive was coming down. How were they reacting as this went on, as far as you saw it?

LUTKINS: After the end of World War II, the national government took the local warlord to Nanking as a hostage in effect. But another local military man, a man named Lu Han, became governor. He was more amenable to control by the central government. There certainly were no overt or evident pro-Communist sympathies in that area.

To begin with, it was a political backwater. Nobody really thought that it would ever play a vital role in the national picture but believed that it would really be a reactor rather than an active participant. As I say, the local government, headed by Governor Lu Han, plus whatever there was in the way of a political-economic elite in Kunming and in Yunnan, very strongly favored the central government against the Communists. But, of course, they weren't dumb; they knew what was going on and were a little worried about what was going to happen to them if the Communists succeeded in defeating the Nationalists and taking over. And they also, of course, were uncertain as to what the attitude of the United States would be.

As you know, even pretty much at the end we were ploughing considerable military aid and other aid into supporting the Nationalists, up until probably pretty late in 1949, when the famous China White Paper appeared. As the situation deteriorated in 1949, it was fairly obvious that the local people were going to have to start thinking about what was going to happen there. The only organized opposition to the central government and to the local government was in the form of local banditry. There were no Communist units operating in the area.

Q: This was the endemic local banditry?

LUTKINS: Right, yes. They might call themselves Communists, but they really weren't. I'm sure that it had never been established there was any contact whatever between them and the main Chinese Communist command. But the roads were a little unsafe to travel on over long distances, because you might be stopped by some of these bandits. In fact, one of my vice consuls was stopped on a trip, but all they wanted was medicine. And they always said that they had nothing against the United States in any case.

But, as I say, things deteriorated badly in the course of 1949. Nanking fell, and the government evacuated to Taiwan. In territory unoccupied by the Communists, that left three Consulates: Chungking in Szechuan; Kunming in the southwest; and Canton down in the south. We, of course, still had our Consulates in Communist-occupied areas, which weren't closed down until 1950.

But the department in Washington was, in effect, engaged in some soul-searching as to what the position should be with respect to Chungking and Kunming and Canton. I think part of the Embassy relocated to Canton briefly before going on to Taiwan. But for awhile, the decision was to hold on and keep those Consulates open--Chungking, Kunming, and Canton--and await developments. Later on, I guess it would have been somewhere around July or August...

Q: 1950.

LUTKINS: No, '49, because the Communists didn't complete their occupation of the whole mainland until the end of '49.

Later on, about July of '49, we got a message from Washington advising that it would probably come down to closing down the posts, and instructing us to start making preparations. One of the steps ordered was to evacuate all dependents. My wife and two young children and the vice consul's wife were sent out. I think that was early September of '49. And then we were told to go on a standby basis and make all preparations so that we could get out on short notice.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in China, the Communists were continuing to advance. And it became clear that the local government in Yunnan would have to decide what they were going to do. Whether they would turnover to the Communists or try to maintain some sort of resistance.

This was certainly classified at the time, but so much time has gone by I don't think it could be considered classified now.

Q: I'm not sure from that period that there is anything classified.

LUTKINS: I was approached by a leading local citizen, who obviously was speaking on behalf of the local power structure, including the governor, asking if they could count on American support if they tried to resist the Communists, and whether we'd be willing to put in any military forces and so forth. The expected reply came back that under no circumstances would we be prepared to do that. So when they received that answer, obviously they had to start thinking in terms of saving their own skins; I'm talking in retrospect here, because I had no pipeline to what was going on. In consultations between myself and my British and French colleagues, we all expected that some sort of deal would probably be struck.

Arrangements were finally made to close up the Consulate early in December. I and my vice consul were all set to fly out to Hong Kong. However, the day before our scheduled departure local Yunnanese power structure staged a coup against what remained of the rather limited national government force there. I guess it was mostly Air Force. They took over the city and the airport. There was a lot of firing going on, although I don't think there was much in the way of casualties. The city was under martial law and the control of the local forces.

I managed, through one of our local employees who had very good connections, to get through to the governor, who assured us that we would be allowed to leave safely. There were no commercial flights coming in any more, and we had to go out on Claire Chennault's Civil Air Transport, CAT. They happened to have a plane at the airport.

So the following night we managed to make our way out to the airport, through gunfire, and get out on the last flight out of Free China. It was rather exciting, a lot of turmoil going on. It turned out to be after dark by the time we actually boarded the plane.

It was an old C-46, bucket seats and that sort of thing, and very heavily loaded with machinery and whatnot. And I happened to notice something under the bucket seat. There was a man there. He turned out to be one of a group of Chinese Nationalist military personnel (I'm not sure whether it was Air Force or not), trying to stow away aboard the plane to get out. Otherwise, they faced a very uncertain prospect in Yunnan. They were bundled off the plane, the ones we could find, and we finally took off.

For those days, that was a very long runway, about 8,000 feet, built during the war for the Hump run. But I thought we'd never get off it. We made it with only a few feet to spare. It turned out we were very heavily loaded-- more than we realized. Because once we got airborne finally, more Chinese Nationalist personnel, 20 maybe, came up from the baggage hold where they had stowed themselves. All my baggage got lost; they must have thrown it out. Anyway, it was rather an exciting exit.

Q: While you were in Kunming, did you feel any constraints on your reporting? This was before the McCarthy era, but things were still getting kind of... Were you just too far removed, or were you feeling any pressures?

LUTKINS: No, I may have been naive, but I felt no constraints whatever. I wrote exactly what I thought was going on. Actually, I continued to do so subsequently, in Hong Kong, when I was in charge of the political section there. I think the constraints were felt more by people in Washington than they were in the field. At least that was my impression.

Q: But you didn't feel that you were getting gunfire from both sides, from Washington? There was no feeling of, well, here's a policy that's going down the drain and we're being stuck with it?

LUTKINS: No, I didn't. There was no effort, certainly from Washington, to dictate to us what we should be saying. And no complaints about what we were reporting that I recall. Certainly at the receiving end at the working level, in Washington, were people with much the same views. In any case, we weren't trying to be tendentious or anything, we were just trying to report what we saw.

Q: Well now, you got to Hong Kong when?

LUTKINS: From Kunming?

Q: Yes.

LUTKINS: Well, that was somewhere around December 10, 1949.

Q: And then were you immediately reassigned? Did you go back to Washington?

LUTKINS: I went back to Washington, because I'd been away for three years and I was due some home leave. The department very nicely actually let me take a little local leave, to have a chance to go down to Bangkok and Angkor.

After I got back to Washington, I was assigned on a temporary basis to the Office of Chinese Affairs. Normally speaking, Chinese language officers, after leaving their language training program, would have been assigned to various Consulates all over China. But this wasn't possible any more, because we had by that time severed relations.

So we were scattered around the periphery, with a view to keeping an eye on China from the perspective of the surrounding areas. As you know, there were very important Overseas Chinese communities, particularly in Southeast Asia, and that was also something we were supposed to be keeping an eye on and reporting. We were scattered everywhere, from Seoul, Korea, to Japan, Manila, of course Hong Kong and Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, even India.

And it so happened that it was decided that we were going to beef up our presence in what was then called Malaya before it became Malaysia. One Chinese language officer, Oscar Armstrong, was assigned to Singapore. And I was assigned to reopen a post in Penang, Malaya, in northern Malaya near Thailand. So I went out there in the summer of 1950, reopened the Consulate there, and served there for two years.

Q: Malaya was then still under British rule?

LUTKINS: Right. It remained under British rule until 1957, when they gave independence to Malaya.

Q: You went with your family, I take it?

LUTKINS: Oh, yes.

Q: What was your main job while you were there from '50 to '52? The Korean War broke out about that time. Relations were nasty. What were you doing?

LUTKINS: I'd say it was 90 percent political reporting. A couple of years earlier, around 1948, what they called, euphemistically, "The Emergency" had broken out with the local Chinese Communists in Malaya. They were not connected with the Chinese Communists on the mainland, but they were ethnic Chinese, part of the very substantial Overseas Chinese minority in Malaya, who had their own Communist Party. Actually, during the war they worked with the British against the Japanese, during the Japanese occupation.

Shortly after the war, they staged this uprising, killed a lot of British rubber planters and people in the tin industry, and made life very difficult. The British had quite a substantial military force there combating this emergency. It was a difficult period. At one point, the British governor general was assassinated on his way up to a weekend in one of the hill

stations. And then they sent out a really tough man, by name of Sir Gerald Templar, to head up the thing and bring it under control. There were various efforts made by the army and the police to cordon off the dispersed Chinese farmers, gather them together in secure, guarded villages, and keep them from contact with the guerrillas in the jungle. It was a long, hard process.

I'm no expert on Malaya, but in retrospect I think probably they were only able to really get on top of this once they granted independence to Malaya in 1957, and undercut the argument of the Chinese Communist guerrillas that the country was a foreign colony and should be liberated. And the Malays who dominated the country, both demographically and politically, certainly never had any love for the Chinese, so that they were then also able to collaborate a bit more with the British forces in bringing the thing finally under control. But it was a rather tense period.

Penang itself was not affected. It seemed to have been regarded as a rest area by both sides. With the exception of one or two assassinations of some rather staunch anti-Communist Chinese newspaper and academic people there, there really were no incidents on the island itself.

My area included the whole of northern Malaya. At that time, we had no embassy, of course. The main office, the Consulate General, was in Singapore. And we had two consulates: one in Kuala Lumpur, which is now the capital, and in Penang. Both Kuala Lumpur and Penang had rather fairly loose supervision from Singapore. So, from the point of view of a junior officer, it was an ideal situation. We had a big and interesting territory to travel around and report on, and only rather tenuous control from Singapore.

Q: It varied from place to place, but here, this was obviously an emerging situation, with the emergency on and all. Were you constrained because of British rule so that you couldn't talk to the other elements, particularly the Chinese or the Malays, or not?

LUTKINS: Not at all, no, no. I think they (the British) kept an eye on and knew what we were doing, but in fact they encouraged me. Having just come from language school, I was eager to try to continue my Chinese (although the Chinese spoken there was not what I had learned in Peking). So I did have contact, to a certain extent, with some of the Chinese leaders, who were really not very political. It was a commercial class. But I made one or two speeches in Chinese at some of the Chinese schools in Penang. The resident commissioner, a Britisher, congratulated me on it, even felt delighted because I was taking an anti-Communist line. They obviously knew what I was doing. I made it a point, of course, of working very closely with the British, obviously, because they knew far more about what was going on there than I could ever hope to know.

Penang happened to have been a place where the population was predominantly Chinese with almost no Malays. There were only a few Indians. The rest of the area, however, the provinces on the mainland like Perak and Kelantan, were the two main ones that I had supervision over. And I made a point of traveling to them and meeting the Malay officials

nominally in charge, although the British still held the reins of power. I had to work with them, too.

Q: Were you beginning to feel any of the heat from attacks on our China policy, because you'd been associated, or on your reporting? I'm talking about McCarthyism.

LUTKINS: No, none whatever. Never that I experienced. I was too junior, for one thing, and not in a very controversial area, for another. But I was certainly reporting freely and as honestly as I could.

Q: How did you see the situation there? What was the thrust of your reporting? That the British were eventually going to get out, or that they could keep it?

LUTKINS: I think I would have been presumptuous to have tried to comment on that. The main focus of British rule was in Kuala Lumpur, where my colleague, Hank Van Oss, was doing that to the extent that he could, plus Singapore. No, my main thrust was just interviewing and seeing the people who were in present control, the British, plus some of the leading Malays who promised to be leaders in the future.

It was impossible, at the height of the emergency, to predict when, if ever, the British were going to grant independence. I know many of the British certainly were resisting this idea--the usual idea that the Malays couldn't stand on their own, and that if they left the country, the Malays and the Chinese would be at each other's throats.

I had no vision that the thing was going to happen quite so quickly as it did. In fact, when I left there in '52, I was rather pessimistic, frankly, as to how things were going to develop. I felt fairly sure they would get on top of the insurgent problem, but I was pessimistic as to the future of Malaya in terms of the difficulty of the Chinese and the Malays getting along together.

There had been, of course, a long history of problems there, with the Chinese dominating the industry and commerce to the extent that the British didn't, and the Malays being rooted to the land and having some of the old traditional power of the Malay rulers, plus a favored position in the British local bureaucracy.

The Malays were very fortunate in getting a man as their first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who was on good terms with the Chinese, and who was enlightened enough to realize that it was important for the two communities to work together. So that even if the Malays have dominated the situation politically and militarily since independence, the Chinese have been willing to go along.

Interestingly, I think I was one of the first official Americans to meet Tunku Abdul Rahman, who came from the royal family of the State of Kedah, which is near Penang. I think I may have been one of the first American officials to entertain him after he was elected as head of this fairly new organization called the United Malay National

Organization. Most people regarded him as a bit of a lightweight and a figurehead, but he certainly turned out very well in the final analysis.

Q: Well, you left Penang in 1952, is that right?

LUTKINS: Before I go from Penang, there is an anecdote that I think is amusing. I don't know if it's any earthshaking revelation or not, but anyway.

In the course of one of the trips that I took around my consular district, I stopped off in Kuala Lumpur for a night or two, staying with my colleague, Hank Van Oss, who was the consul there. And it so happened that at that particular juncture there was a visiting congressional group, consisting of then Representative John F. Kennedy, his brother, Robert, who had just gotten out of Virginia law school, and one of his sisters, I don't remember which. They were invited to dinner by Hank Van Oss. I was staying with him, so I was there, too, and one of other members of Hank Van Oss's staff. His wife was in the hospital at the time.

It turned out to be a rather lively evening, because then Representative Kennedy (who was in Malaya after a trip that had started in England, I think, and came all the way around by way of India and various other places) was rather critical. He thought, if I recall correctly, that the only place that was doing reasonably well, among the places he had visited, was India. He had a very isolationist bent to his remarks. It reminded me very much of his father, Joseph Kennedy, during his years in London. So I got my hackles up arguing against it.

On the subject of Malaya, he thought we were paying too much for Malayan tin and rubber. He thought that they were ripping off the United States on this. And my argument was that it was better to let countries like this earn their way by trade, rather than have to be impoverished and then have to receive aid from us. He didn't care much for that line either.

But anyway, during dinner Hank Van Oss and I were arguing against him in certain respects. At some point during the dinner, he drew himself up short and said to Hank and me, "Well, it's obvious I have nothing further to learn from you." The rest of the dinner was rather chilly.

When he got down to Singapore (I'm told by my friends, including Oscar Armstrong who was there), he apparently complained about our attitude.

It was the year after that, in '52, that he was elected to the Senate. I was amazed to find out that he, all of a sudden, had become an internationalist, not an isolationist at all. I like to think that possibly something that we said might have influenced him, but I guess he found much more important reasons for changing his views.

Q: He probably read the political winds a little bit.

LUTKINS: And then, a very amusing follow up. It was when I was in the Senior Seminar, in '61-'62. At the very end of the session, as frequently happened in those days (I'm not sure whether it still does), we had a meeting with the President in the Rose Garden. As we were introduced to him, Kennedy said, "Lutkins, we've met before, haven't we?"

I said, "Yes, sir, at Kuala Lumpur."

And then he said, "And where is Van Oss now?"

He obviously had been briefed. But to the best of my knowledge he never held the episode against me.

Q: Well, you left Penang in '52. I have you in Tokyo for a relatively short tour.

LUTKINS: That's right, not quite two years. I think I was the first of the Chinese language officers assigned to Tokyo. It was considered important that we have somebody to liaise with the Japanese Foreign Ministry regarding their policy toward China, and our policy toward China, and also to keep aware of what was going on in Japan regarding views about China, both in the business world and in the academic world, press comments and that sort of thing.

Q: Things were pretty Cold-warish, weren't they, at that time? We had been fighting the Chinese in Korea, and the Japanese were profiting very much. But very much with us at that time.

LUTKINS: I'm not sure they were really even profiting very much, because this was just after the occupation. I got there at the end of '52. The occupation had only been over for about six months, if I remember correctly.

Q: I was there for a very short time in the Air Force as an enlisted man. I occupied the country for about three weeks, and then I was defending the country.

LUTKINS: But even though the occupation was ended, the Japanese were still very much under, I won't say control, but certainly they were strongly inclined to defer to any views that we had in the field of military and foreign policy. And as regards profiting from the Korean War, I'm no economic expert, but the Japanese economy was still very much in the doldrums. They hadn't really started anywhere near the process of takeoff. Now they may have been producing and supplying some material for us in Korea. I just don't know the details on that.

As the job evolved during that year and half or two years that I was there the focus of it broadened, so that I was following Japanese relations with Southeast Asia, not Korea, but Southeast Asia. That was it primarily, what their attitude was toward Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and so forth.

Q: Were the Japanese following things, or were they being rather passive at that point?

LUTKINS: No, they were beginning to emerge. They were certainly primarily passive, but they were beginning to show some initiatives. And they certainly had people on the ground who were following developments and reporting back to Tokyo, so it was interesting to find out what the Japanese view was.

Q: How did you find the embassy at that point? Did you find it a well-plugged-in embassy? I think John Allison was the ambassador.

LUTKINS: Bob Murphy was ambassador for about six months after I arrived, and then after that, John Allison. What do you mean by plugged in?

Q: In other words, that you had been in a relatively isolated post, and all of a sudden here you were with your first really large embassy. What was your impression of how it operated and the spirit of the embassy at that time?

LUTKINS: Yes, it was a very chastening experience, going from being in charge of two posts, with a lot of latitude. But, no, the adjustment was very easy, and it was a very high-class, high-grade, high-powered bunch of people at most levels.

Certainly in the political section we had outstanding people. The first section head was John Steeves, succeeded by Sam Burger. And then some of my colleagues were Bill Leonhart, Bob Blake. I'm trying to think of some of the others. Dick Lamb, Bill Sherman, who went on to a fine career in Japanese affairs, Dick Finn, Dick Sneider. So we had a very excellent group in the political section. And I think the economic section was equally strongly staffed, although I didn't have as much contact with that.

I really wasn't close to Bob Murphy. He was obviously one of our eminent ambassadors. I don't think he played probably quite as strong a role in Japan as he may have in some of his other posts. John Allison was a Japanese language officer and had a fine background.

Q: Then you went to Hong Kong, is that right? This was when and what were you doing there?

LUTKINS: This was in 1954, and it was late summer, early fall. I must have arrived in Hong Kong probably September, '54, and I was assigned to Hong Kong as chief of the political division, replacing Ralph Clough, who was going back to Washington to serve as the deputy director of the Office of Chinese Affairs.

Q: Who was the consul general then?

LUTKINS: When I arrived, it was Julian Harrington, but he was transferred after a period of three of four months. And he was succeeded by Everett Drumright, who was a career Chinese language specialist.

Q: Yes, we have an interview with Everett Drumright. What were you doing? What was the political section doing? After all, it was a large political section. What were your goals?

LUTKINS: Well, it was summed up under the term of "China-watching" and continued up until the time when the United States resumed relations with the People's Republic of China in the early 1970s. Hong Kong was *the* place where China-watching occurred and where all the China-watchers gathered. Whether they were governmental, in terms of the Foreign Services of the different countries, or whether it was academic, or the various press and media, that was *the* place to be to try to follow what was going on, interpret what was going on inside China.

But interestingly enough, even with governments like the British and the Dutch, Australians, I'm not sure about the Australians, but I know the Dutch, who like the British, had relations with the Chinese Communists and an office in Peking. But even in their cases, they thought it was helpful to have a specialist stationed in Hong Kong. Since their people in Peking were circumscribed in their movements, they felt it was useful to have somebody outside who could see the picture from there.

Q: Well, you talk about seeing the picture. I mean, after all, the refugees were mostly from one area around Canton, I would imagine.

LUTKINS: That wasn't entirely true. It's true that, if you're talking about the overall influx of refugees, they were very much of a lower class, usually peasants, small business and that sort of thing, who came in almost exclusively from the area adjoining Hong Kong, the Province of Guangdong. But certainly when I was there, in the '50s, you still had a trickle of other people coming out: American and other missionaries who had been detained after the takeover of the Chinese Communists who were being released from time to time; certain foreign businessmen who were operating there, not Americans but other businessmen who were operating in China, British and others who came out; and newspapermen from other countries who were allowed to travel there, European and otherwise. So that there was a small but constant flow of interesting potential sources of information who were coming through Hong Kong and who were eagerly grabbed on by the few people who wanted to talk to them.

Q: What other sources did you have?

LUTKINS: The Chinese press, of course, was a major source. We had organized, even before I got there, and further developed while I was there, a very substantial operation translating the China mainland press. Some of it was readily available, other publications that we obtained by a clandestine procurement program.

Q: Was this a joint translation service with the British?

LUTKINS: No, no, it was entirely American. The British, and others, found it very useful, but they had nothing to do with it.

Q: I'm surprised, because we had a joint translation service in Belgrade and, I think, in Poland, where we did it together. But there was no effort made to...?

LUTKINS: No, it was entirely American and a very large-scale affair. Among others who were in charge of it for awhile, Oscar Armstrong, whom you may or may not have talked to. I'm trying to remember how many people, we might have had twenty or thirty Chinese local employees who were engaged in this, under our supervision.

Q: Well, why would the press be useful? I mean, supposedly this was a tightly controlled regime where everybody was spouting the party line and all that.

LUTKINS: That is true, but you mentioned Eastern Europe and having contact with the Soviet Union, I believe there was a great deal of similar work done in trying to read fine nuances into what was being said in the press and if one paper differed slightly from another. Of course, you had the major organs controlled by the Chinese Party, but then you had one by the military, and then you had, theoretically, a youth paper and so forth, and you could pick up interesting little tidbits. And, in any case, we were relying on it not only for major trends but for factual information as to what the regime itself was saying in terms of statistical information on production and that sort of thing.

And then it was also extremely important when they were engaged in one of their major campaigns, such as one that occurred while I was there called "Let The Hundred Flowers Bloom," which lasted for awhile, and then the "Great Leap Forward," which also occurred during the mid-'50s. I sometimes have a hard time distinguishing the exact times, because I went on to work in the Office of Chinese Affairs in Washington where we were the recipient of a lot of this product. We used the Chinese press as a source of information in both cases, as a basic source to be analyzed.

Q: Well, here you were, and you had been dealing more or less with Chinese affairs, and you were really right at the center of where we were looking at it. I mean, it was the closest thing we had to an embassy in mainland China, really, at that time. How did you see China? Where were they going? How was the thing working?

LUTKINS: Well, that's a very good question. I haven't gone back to review the reports that I wrote during that period, and I wrote a good many. Of course, in addition to our Chinese press translation program, we had the small corps of Chinese language officers and others, including one Soviet specialist, who was sort of on loan. We were doing quite a bit of varied reporting on developments in certain different fields in China. But as the

head of the political section, I did the overview reports that we had to submit every three or four months, plus the contributions to the WEEKA and that sort of thing.

As I saw it at that time, and as I reported it (and this ran against certainly the wishes or the wishful thinking of certain people back in Washington, and even to that of our Consul General, Mr. Drumright, who wanted to really believe that the Chinese Communist regime was only a temporary aberration, a temporary phenomenon and that it wouldn't last) it seemed to me definitely that the new government had entrenched itself pretty securely. That by and large it governed with the support of the mass of the people. That it had brought some improvements, which were not necessarily due to Communism but to the mere fact that it did exercise authority over the whole country for the first time in fifty years or more, and therefore was in the position to take purposeful action in terms of preventing famine, in getting supplies from one area of the country to the other, in getting production back in shape after a period of the war years in which everything was disrupted. In other words, it seemed to be a fairly stable government.

And, what was possibly more important, the people in charge of the government showed no signs whatever of either disunity or lack of confidence in their ability to govern. This all pointed to the fact that they were there to stay for the foreseeable future. We couldn't look ahead to the 1980s, but at that point it seemed to be a fairly stable, secure government enjoying popular support. And we reported that, as such, to Washington. I guess, of course, in Washington we were still trying to deny that picture and to work for the undermining and downfall of the Communist regime.

Q: Could we talk a little about... I sound like I'm harping on the McCarthyism.

LUTKINS: No, no, no, that's very important.

Q: There's more than the McCarthyism. But you were a reporter during the period. Dulles was in command. Walter Robertson was a key figure.

LUTKINS: Yes, we can get to that when I get to Washington.

Q: When you were in Hong Kong, you had a man who had very fixed ideas about whither we should be going, as Consul General. How did you operate? What sort of pressures were on your reporting? How did you feel working in this atmosphere?

LUTKINS: By and large, completely free. There were only minimal constraints. And, although I disagreed with Mr. Drumright on his basic outlook, to his credit he never tried to tell us that we should report differently. He may have reported under separate channels himself. If so, I wasn't aware of it. I don't, frankly, think he did.

I remember one rather amusing little thing that involves a Chinese nuance between the two names for the Chinese city: one, being Peking and the other, Peiping. Traditionally it was Peking, which means, in Chinese, "Northern Capital." And during the Nationalist

days, in the late '20s and '30s, when they moved the capital down to Nanking, which means "Southern Capital," Peking became Peiping, because they couldn't have two capitals, so it was "Northern Peace," Peiping.

It was a corollary of our support of the Nationalist government, even after they moved to Taiwan, that when the Chinese Communists took over and restored the name of Peking, we refused to call it Peking. We called it Peiping. I thought this was a little silly, so when I got posted to Hong Kong, in charge of the reporting there, I started calling it Peking in our telegrams, which Mr. Harrington didn't object to. Washington didn't object to it. But as soon as Mr. Drumright got here, he said, "In Washington, we call it Peiping, not Peking." So we had to go back to the old method. As I said, it's not important at all, but it shows the Washington mind set at the time.

Q: Were you getting any private letters or visitors coming through, saying Come on, fellas, get on the team, you've got to take more of a line that this is a regime on the verge of tottering, or something like that?

LUTKINS: No, absolutely not. I'm not aware of anything along those lines whatever. You might want to ask Ralph Clough, if you haven't already, whether he did, because he was there for a year or two, in charge of the political section, before I was. But I'm 100 percent confident that there was never anything done like that.

There was one other thing involving policy, a very minor one which I was reminiscing with Arthur Hummel about recently. When I went there first, in 1954, he was in charge of USIS in Hong Kong. That was before he shifted over to the Foreign Service proper. It would have been at the end of '54 or early '55, when they were going to have a conference down in Indonesia, I think it was the Bandung Conference.

I think it was our own initiative. We felt that it would be desirable to give Washington the benefit of our views on what our attitude and position should be at this conference, particularly because we knew that Chinese Communists were going to be involved there. Art and I, I guess in a staff meeting, suggested that we send out a joint message from the Consulate General giving our views. And Everett Drumright nixed the idea.

But there are more ways than one to skin a cat, so Art Hummel, through his own channels, went back to Washington and had them send out a message requesting that we should send them a telegram with our views. So we were able to get one in to Washington as desired.

Q: At that time, how did you, and maybe the people around you, view the China-Soviet bloc?

LUTKINS: Very interesting. Good question. I think the answer is that we very much (probably unwisely as it turned out) saw it as a monolith at that particular point.

I guess we should have been alert. Maybe it was because not enough of us had been steeped in Chinese studies and Chinese history to remember that there had been very long-lasting and bitter relations between China and Russia that predated Communism, and that the Chinese resented the Russians taking over territory that they regarded as Chinese and that were, in fact, I guess, subject to Chinese suzerainty.

But, as I say, at that particular point, probably because of the Korean War and pressures on Vietnam and whatnot, we definitely regarded the Sino-Soviet alliance as a pretty firm and fixed thing. I don't recall, either during that period or subsequently when I was in Washington before the Sino-Soviet split, which occurred somewhere around 1961, any of us who had enough sense to have second thoughts and say, "Well, we should take a second look at this. Is this going to last? Are there really cracks?" They were not overt certainly. It would have taken a bit of imagination and prescience on our parts to realize the possibility that that would come.

Q: Looking at my own view, and others around me, I think we did tend to see everything in East-West conflict, and that somehow or another this Communism was a completely new phenomenon, which superseded nationalism. And even though our noses had been rubbed in it, for example, in Yugoslavia and some other places, we saw things as Communism in the Arab world, looking at it later on. I mean, this was obviously nonsense. I think of Arab... But it was a viewpoint.

LUTKINS: Sure, world communism, world spirit of... I seem to recall when Tito broke away, when was it, around 19...?

Q: '48, '49.

LUTKINS: '48, '49, that there were people who refused to believe that it was real. They thought it was a conspiracy to deceive us.

Q: What sort of reporting were you getting? What were your relations with our embassy on Taiwan at that time?

LUTKINS: Close. I don't know whether we did much official travel back and forth, except that Ambassador Rankin used to come over from time to time. I'm not sure whether Mr. Drumright went over to Taiwan. Of course, he was later to succeed Rankin as ambassador there. Most of us, for one reason or another, took trips over there, but for personal reasons rather than business reasons. But we were certainly aware of an exchange of information; we always received their reports and they received ours.

Q: But you didn't feel as though you were reporting with maybe a different view of China than they were reporting, because of local... or something like that?

LUTKINS: I don't think so. There was really no independent China-watching reporting from Taiwan. It was all in terms of what the Nationalist government believed and what

the national government was doing. Whatever some of the more junior officers in Taiwan may have felt, there was no independent reporting, or doubts about the Nationalist mission to recover the mainland and our commitment to help them do so.

Q: Obviously, this is an unclassified interview, and we are talking about thirty years plus. Were you getting good information or much information from the CIA? And how did you evaluate that?

LUTKINS: Again, I have a hard time separating what was happening then from what was the case when I went back to Washington. We did have, of course, a large Agency operation in Hong Kong. I'm sure we saw some of what was coming out of there. I don't know how much. Again, I don't know to what extent the chief of station reported to Mr. Drumright, and to what extent he operated independently. You'd have to ask somebody like Mr. Drumright about that, I just don't know. I have a feeling that they were pretty freewheeling, but I'm not sure. We used to see some of their raw reports.

Q: But you didn't have the feeling that they were reporting a whole different situation or that they were really plugged in. At least from what I gather, they were reporting more or less in the same stream that you were.

LUTKINS: I honestly couldn't recall at this point. I don't ever recall having been impressed that we were on different wave lengths.

I might mention another source of information we had. Of course, there were so few of us trying to pick so few tea leaves that we had a sort of informal group there. We were in very close contact with the representatives of other governments, particularly the British, French, Dutch, Australian, Japanese. Both on a day-to-day basis and in regular evening sessions, we would get together. And that included people from the press as well. There was quite a large press presence there. A certain number of academics, such as a fellow named Doak Barnett, whom you probably know of, a very eminent authority on China, who happened to be there part of the time. We were all trying to exchange ideas, pick each other's minds. And we did see some foreign government reports. Particularly I recall the British reports and, in their case, that they were ones written by their embassy in Peking, which they made available to us.

Q: You left Hong Kong in 1957 and came back to Washington, was it?

LUTKINS: Yes. Ralph Clough had moved up to be acting in charge of the Office of Chinese Affairs, and I replaced a fellow named Dave Osborn as his deputy. That was within the bureau of what was then called Far Eastern Affairs, now East Asian Affairs.

Q: Did you have any particular area that you were dealing with during this time up until 1961?

LUTKINS: No, I think the way it operated was that we had the director of Chinese Affairs, who, as I say, at first was Ralph Clough. He went off to Switzerland, and I was acting for a period of a few months. Then Ed Martin came in, was brought back from London to be the director, and I was deputy director. And then below that we had three or four officers who were working more or less on special areas and special projects. So mine was more or less like the director's, sort of an overall...

Q: Did you find a difference in perspective of China from Washington? You had been at the preeminent overseas post looking at China, now you were back at the home office.

LUTKINS: The perspective was different largely because of the people who were in charge back in Washington.

Q: Could we talk about that, please?

LUTKINS: Yes, sure. There was no question that the policy was very rigid, representing the position and views of Walter Robertson and possibly Secretary Dulles. I think possibly Robertson was more rigid than John Foster Dulles. But Dulles, for political reasons and because of general sympathy with his position gave Robertson a free hand on this and didn't try to buck him on it. There was no question in Robertson's mind that we should be 100 percent pro-Nationalist government on Taiwan and 100 percent anti-Communist government in Peking. There was no suggestion that he would be prepared to even consider the possibility of regularizing our relations with the Chinese Communists. He was certainly an intelligent man, a very charming man, too, and an able man. I don't know whether he ever, in the back of his mind, considered that at some point or other we would have to adjust our position. But as far as I could make out, the Communists would have had to have ceased being Communists to make him shift.

Q: Well, it's interesting, because I came in as a very mild liberal Foreign Service officer in 1955. And I actually was a Korean War veteran and had served on duty across a small island from the Chinese, so it wasn't as though I were wildly in love with the Chinese.

LUTKINS: Where was this then?

Q: This was up in northern Korea near Chong do. But my point is, that I came in, most of my group that came in, and we thought Well, you know, what the hell, China's there, we're going to have to recognize it. I mean, it was a fact of life. It wasn't through admiration, it was just, well, let's get on with it. And it always seemed like it took us an awful lot of time to get around to it. Was this the attitude of those who were dealing this?

LUTKINS: Yes, I think in terms of foreign policy or realpolitik the feeling was that this was a regime that was entrenched, it was going to be there for the foreseeable future, and that we were going to have to deal with it.

Mind you, I'm in contrast to many of the revisionist historians and still am basically persuaded of the accuracy and truth of the State Department position, as expressed in the 1949 White Paper, that we behaved, after the Chinese Communist takeover, in the traditional manner of keeping our posts open on the ground and being prepared to deal with the new power. And that it was not us, but the Chinese Communists who did not want those relationships and, in effect, forced us out. But, as I say, the revisionists dispute this.

Be that as it may, assuming that that is correct, I think those of us who were on the spot during the period recognized that it takes two to tango, and that we couldn't just automatically recognize the Chinese Communists. There would have to be some negotiations and some terms involved. But I think most of us felt that it would be sensible policy to start preparing for that, laying the groundwork for it, and perhaps doing some probing to find out on what terms it could be done.

Whereas the official attitude in Washington was that these people were beyond redemption, we couldn't possibly ever consider having relations with them, and that, in addition, we would be betraying our friends on Taiwan.

Q: Here you were, getting reports from posts saying China is going on, it's developing (I'm talking about the Communist side), it has control of the country, it doesn't seem near collapse. They may be doing silly things such as the Great Leap Forward and all, but, you know, there it is. And the reports must have been flowing in, speaking of the solidity of this regime. Now that you were back in Washington, was there any effort by Robertson to say cut this, get them to talk more, or did he look for all...?

LUTKINS: No, I think he just discounted the reporting. It didn't agree with his mind set and he just ignored it. But anyway, I think he thought it was of secondary importance compared to the need to combat Communism and to stand by our wartime allies and friends in Taiwan. And then I think you can't ignore the domestic political aspect of this, that the Republicans...

Q: The China lobby.

LUTKINS: ...and the China lobby had made such a big thing about our "losing" China--as if it were ours to lose. And so it had become a matter of political orthodoxy. I think that's why it's so ironic, it really took a Republican president to make the shift. A Democrat couldn't do it, because he...

Q: You're talking about Nixon.

LUTKINS: A Democratic president would have been immediately vulnerable on the subject of being soft on Communism. Actually, it's rather interesting (I think I had moved on to the Senior Seminar at that point), but it was very early in the Kennedy years, in '61, that very gingerly tentative moves were made toward opening up of relations with Outer

Mongolia, which, of course, then was very much still under Soviet domination. They didn't get very far on this. And part of the reason was that the Nationalist government on Taiwan, of course, had always regarded Outer Mongolia as Chinese territory that had been taken away from China. They and the Chinese lobby made their opposition felt, so that it just wasn't considered important enough by Kennedy to make an issue out of it, and they dropped it.

Q: Did you feel any particular pressure (once again I'm asking this question) on the reports that went out, or you just did you business and...?

LUTKINS: In Washington?

Q: In Washington.

LUTKINS: Well, of course, we weren't reporting.

Q: But you must have been making reports to Congress and to the president.

LUTKINS: Well, I can tell you something there. When I came back at the end of '57, Ralph Clough briefed me on the general situation. I guess I must have misunderstood what he said a bit, because I got the impression that perhaps the Department was a little more flexible in our thinking about the future than actually was the case.

I was up in New York on a visit, and my father, who was in Wall Street asked me to have lunch with a number of his friends and say a few words about China, which I did. About a week later I got called into Robertson's office and raked over the coals, because one of the people who had been present had the impression from what I said that our policy toward China was changing. And Robertson made it be known in no uncertain terms that it wasn't changing, and that if I wanted to stay on board I'd better mind my manners. I think I had said something along the lines that, "Well, surely at some point or other we'll have to probably make an accommodation with the mainland."

I don't know whether you've interviewed Jeff Parsons, J. Graham Parsons, yet.

Q: No, I haven't.

LUTKINS: He would certainly be very important. He lives up in Massachusetts. I guess he comes to Washington occasionally, might be willing to one day. He had a very eminent career. He'd been my DCM in Tokyo, then he went to Laos as ambassador and then came back to Washington as deputy to Walter Robertson. He was a very savvy guy, and I'm sure he must have found it difficult working under Robertson, and yet, being very professional, he adjusted and did his best at it. Then later, I guess during the Kennedy years, I think he went off to finish his career as ambassador to Sweden. He really had a meteoric rise in the service, a very fine officer.

Well, that's about it. I mean, we were very much under wraps as far as any suggestions of any changes in policy. We just had to operate within that framework.

Q: There were always a set of Quemoy-Matsu crises. Were there any when you were there?

LUTKINS: Oh, very much so, yes. In fact, I was acting in charge when that erupted in the fall of '58, because Ralph Clough had left and Ed Martin hadn't come back yet. I was working extremely closely with Marshall Green, who, really, Robertson had put in charge of a task force dealing with that problem. Marshall spearheaded the whole thing.

Q: What was the problem at the time?

LUTKINS: You had these tiny little pieces of territory, these two islands in the south, Quemoy and Matsu, and then a few others up a little closer near Shanghai. They were a thorn in the flesh to the Chinese Communists, having these Chinese Nationalist military outposts overlooking their territory. I don't think we were really ever given any reason why they chose that particular time, which probably was early September of '58, to start this campaign. But they started to bombard the two islands, and it became a cause célèbre.

I remember Secretary Dulles was up in the Thousand Islands on vacation at the time, but he came back shortly. And then there were all sorts of high-level discussions over a period of a month or six weeks, involving, of course, at a very high level, the Pentagon, Admiral Arleigh Burke, who I think was naval chief of staff at the time, or joint chief of staff. And there were discussions as to whether we might ultimately have to use nuclear weapons or not. It didn't come to that. It was a question of helping the Nationalists get supplies into these beleaguered outposts. I think it was on that occasion that there was the first use of air-to-air missiles called Sidewinders, which proved quite effective. We didn't have any of our own forces involved, but we were supplying the Nationalists with weaponry.

Ultimately, after several months, the Chinese Communists backed off, instituted a cease-fire, and proposed talks at an ambassadorial level.

There had been some earlier talks, held in Geneva, following the Geneva Conference in '55. I think Alex Johnson did the talking for the United States's side. And they had petered out, because they weren't getting anywhere; both sides just reiterated their grievances. We complained about the Chinese holding American citizens against their will. And they complained about our supporting the Nationalists and thus interfering in Chinese affairs.

As I say, at a certain point they broke off, but when the truce was reached in the Quemoy-Matsu offshore island crisis, we and the Chinese agreed to resume these talks. They were held in Warsaw, where their ambassador, who I think was Wang Ping-nan, talked to our ambassador, Jake Beam, who I'm sure you've interviewed. And Ralph Clough, who was DCM in Switzerland, used to go down to Warsaw and act as Beam's political advisor in

these talks. For a period of a year or more these talks dragged on, getting absolutely nowhere. Both sides repeating the same positions. We had to spend a lot of time in Washington preparing the talking points for the sessions.

Q: How did you personally feel about Quemoy-Matsu and then the talks? How did you see these things in relative importance?

LUTKINS: Well, I don't think any of us regarded Quemoy and Matsu of any overreaching importance. But, at the same time, they were Chinese Nationalist outposts, and we were committed to the defense of the Chinese Nationalists, so that we really had no choice but to help them resist the attack.

Q: Were you there when the Kennedy administration took over in '61?

LUTKINS: I guess I was there for the first six months, but then I went off to the Senior Seminar.

Q: So they came in, in January, and you went to the Senior Seminar in about August.

LUTKINS: August, September. Actually, there was a two-or three-month period there where I was asked to take over very briefly the Far East Bureau's Office of UN Affairs.

Q: How did you find the new team that came on board? The difference between the Dulles team and the Rusk team, in your area of responsibility?

LUTKINS: To my recollection, it didn't really filter down immediately to the bureau level. Jeff Parsons, who had been deputy assistant secretary in FE, succeeded Walter Robertson as assistant secretary. And then at some point early in the Kennedy administration, Jeff Parsons was sent off to Sweden as ambassador. He was succeeded as assistant secretary by Walter McConaughy. Again, I don't know whether you've interviewed him. He lives down in...

Q: He lives down in Sea Island, Georgia, or some place like that.

LUTKINS: Somewhere in Georgia, maybe Atlanta, I'm not sure. And John Steeves was the deputy assistant secretary. But my recollection is that there was certainly no abrupt visible change in policy. I think the new administration was feeling its way. And, for the reasons I mentioned earlier, the domestic political factor, it wasn't about to engage in any sudden, dramatic change in policy. It was still feeling its way.

And Walter McConaughy, who was a very experienced officer and held four or five chief of mission posts, from what I've been told by people close to him and others, was not a success as an assistant secretary. He apparently found it very difficult to delegate, and things piled up on his desk. If you'll remember the Kennedy era, particularly in the early days, top administration people were given to calling from the White House directly and

asking for an answer, even at a desk- officer level. And they reportedly found his very slow, methodical procedures and methods very time consuming and frustrating. So I don't think he lasted much more than about six months, and then Averell Harriman was brought in to succeed him. And by that time I was out and at the Senior Seminar. I think at that time there may have begun a change in our policy, but I couldn't speak to it.

Q: Well, then you went to the Senior Seminar, which, for the record, is the equivalent to the State Department's war college, designed for senior officers.

LUTKINS: We also had a smattering of attendance by representatives of the armed services and the CIA and Treasury and so forth. An outstanding feature of the Seminar experience was the amount of domestic travel that it offered. This was invaluable in enabling officers who had spent most of their careers abroad to reacquaint themselves with the broad diversity of American society and government. We were exposed not only, as at the National War College, to national security operations (Norfolk, Fort Benning, NORAD, etc.) but also to American industry (a steel plant in Pittsburgh, a Ford assembly line in Detroit, Boeing in Seattle), politics (a session with Mayor Daley in Chicago, the labor movement (Walter Reuter), the university scene (Duke), and a wide range of eminent Americans including Justice Felix Frankfurter, Walter Lippmann, and Henry Kissinger. In addition, since the Seminar was amply funded in those days, each of us was able to take a foreign trip related to a subject on which one was expected to write a paper. My subject being "Neutralist Trends in Pakistan's Foreign Policy", I was able to spend some three weeks visiting the major Pakistani cities (including Dacca, since the eastern wing of the country had not yet split off to become Bangladesh) as well as New Delhi, Tehran, and London. This provided a useful overview of a region new to me, South Asia, and coincidentally was helpful in connection with my ongoing posting to Ceylon as deputy chief of mission.

I had had my eye on and was more or less promised the job of the Far East liaison officer at the embassy in London. In those days, we used to have a man in London, a man in Paris and so forth. Which I would have loved, but Personnel came up with the DCM assignment in Ceylon, and career-wise it seemed more important.

Q: Well, it is. I mean, DCM is...

LUTKINS: So I was not unhappy at all about it. And, of course, Personnel saw it as a getting out of one's area and getting a little bit of broadening. And it was a very interesting experience.

Q: You had two ambassadors there, Frances Willis and Cecil Lyon. I wonder if you could compare and contrast their styles, how they operated, and how they used you as a DCM.

LUTKINS: Well, that's a very good question. And there certainly was a marked contrast there. They were both old pros. Frances Willis I guess was our first career woman ambassador. She had already served as chief of mission in Bern, Switzerland, and then in

Oslo, and this was to be her last post. But, as I said, she was a thorough professional, had come up from the ranks and knew the Service inside out and the regulations, and knew everybody's job in the embassy better than they did. But she was not a delegator. I don't mean to say that she didn't have a good grasp of the overall situation, but she couldn't resist immersing herself in every detail in every section of the embassy.

Q: That must have been a little bit difficult, being deputy chief of mission.

LUTKINS: It didn't leave too much for the DCM to do except carry out some of her wishes, naturally. I found her a delightful woman and a very intelligent, able woman, but the contrast with her and Cecil Lyon was very marked. I served with Frances Willis for two years and Cecil for one. Cecil Lyon's approach was that, after about three months of working together and sizing me up, he said, "The embassy is yours. I'll concentrate on the big picture, and you run the embassy."

Q: What was our policy and our interest in Sri... Was it Sri Lanka at that point?

LUTKINS: No, it had not yet become Sri Lanka, it was still Ceylon and a British dominion. And it had a governor general, who, although a Ceylonese, was appointed by the Queen. Under which there was an elected prime minister, who at that time was the widow of an assassinated prime minister, Bandaranaike. When he was assassinated, they brought his wife in, who had no political experience but was fairly shrewd. She was not too experienced and was rather subject to manipulation and pressures by some of her political associates and advisors.

Her government, if not Leftist, was Leftist leaning. It was allied with the Socialists and even the very minute Communist element there. In fact, they had two Communist parties: the regular Communist Party and a Trotskyite Party. It was rather fragmented. Her government had been preceded by and was to be followed by a conservative government.

But, as I say, at that time, in '62 and for another couple of years, there was this Left-leaning government. Left- leaning, not so much socially, because Mrs. Bandaranaike came from one of the leading land-owning families in the country and was basically fairly conservative in her viewpoint. But the foreign policy they were following pretty much tended to be a neutralist, Third-World-country line, allied with countries like India and Ghana and Indonesia and so forth. So that we were having some problems with them in foreign policy viewpoints and attitudes and positions.

It came to a head not long after I got there, because they put through a law nationalizing foreign oil companies: Standard Vacuum, Caltex, and, on the British side, Shell. Which wasn't earthshaking or anything, but it caused a major problem for us, because the Senate and Congress had recently passed something called the Hickenlooper Amendment, which made it incumbent on us to terminate any economic aid program to any country that had nationalized an American company.

Q: I think it was: nationalized and had not made steps towards compensation within six months.

LUTKINS: Not made proper compensation, right. Your memory is better than mine.

Q: Well, I've just been dealing with an oral history dealing with this major problem in Peru.

LUTKINS: Oh, that followed it, I think, yes. I don't think they ever went to the extent of actually implementing the Hickenlooper Amendment in Peru, did they?

Q: A long account by Ernest Seracusa of how they circumvented that, with the collusion of the president and everyone else.

LUTKINS: We were the guinea pigs in Ceylon, because they were bent on enforcing it. And, of course, it meant major tension in our relations with the government. We had endless negotiations at high levels, including the prime minister and the ambassador and so forth. I think they may have sent somebody out from Washington, too, but I can't recall.

But the upshot was that they wouldn't provide guarantees of what we considered prompt and effective restitution. So that we did close down our AID program. They retaliated by shutting down our Peace Corps program in the country.

And things were rather tense for quite awhile. I think they actually had some demonstrations. The ambassador and I and one or two others spent the afternoon playing bridge while she was burned in effigy outside.

There was a local election a year or so later, and the conservative government, which we were quite obviously sympathetic to, came back into power. I was gone by then, I don't know what was dreamed up in terms of a settlement of the oil company claims. Apparently it was sufficient for our purposes, so that we resumed relations on a normal scale.

Incidentally, I guess a year or two later, we sent a Peace Corps contingent back in again, which I thought was a great mistake.

Q: Why did you feel that?

LUTKINS: Well, it's interesting. It goes back to the beginning of why we had a Peace Corps presence there in the first place. That was, of course, a major initiative of the Kennedy administration. I thought it was an example of the American way of not doing things as well as they might.

What they did (and I wasn't there at the time, it was before I arrived), the Peace Corps sent out young emissaries to various countries and tried to persuade them that they needed a Peace Corps group. Well, some of these countries, including Ceylon, really couldn't have cared less whether they had a Peace Corps or not. But it was free and so they were prepared to take it. But they had no real idea what they would do with one when they got it.

It turned out, I think, and this may have been true in some other countries as well, that they were engaged almost exclusively, if not entirely, in English language training. I'd have to look at the records, but I don't recall there being any cases in Ceylon where they were actually working on village improvements, infrastructure. But I do know that they were teaching English.

To my mind, it's indicative of the general American approach, and not just in foreign policy, the idea that if X is good, 10X is bound to be ten times as good as X, and that therefore you want to get numbers. And the people back in Washington trying to, very crudely I suppose, build an empire, although I'm sure from a very idealistic point of view.

It may have been so in other countries, I think in Ceylon it was definitely a case of forcing this down their throats. And then when they pulled it out, I think it was a great mistake to go back and put it back in, but that's as it may be. I frankly didn't feel, in the year or two that they were there when I was there, that they were really accomplishing terribly much.

You can look at the Peace Corps in, I guess, three different ways. First, that it actually accomplished something on the spot. And I guess in certain cases it did. Second, you might say it was good public relations in persuading the foreign country that the Americans were pretty decent chaps after all, and really wanted to be of help, and were not like the hated colonials. Third, I think that the most useful effect of the Peace Corps was to give exposure to young Americans who then would come back and have some knowledge about the world. But maybe I'm overly cynical.

Q: Well, it was a good recruiting thing for the Foreign Service.

LUTKINS: Did we get many people?

Q: We did. I was on the Board of Examiners, and they were obviously a cut above somebody who had just gone through graduate school.

LUTKINS: Before moving on from Ceylon it might not be out of order for me to comment briefly on the country itself at that point in time in the post-colonial era Third World. It seemed to me, in retrospect, to exemplify the pattern of development (albeit on a small scale because of the country's relatively small size) of at least a number of Asian countries that were granted their independence following World War II. In Ceylon's case the new independent government inherited from the former colonial power, England, institutions such as a shared language of government, a bureaucratic infrastructure, and an

impartial judiciary, all of which cut across and blurred racial, religious, and language lines: Singhalese-Buddhist, Tamil-Hindu, Christian, Muslim. But after the restraining, moderating, and unifying lid of colonial overlordship was removed, gradually and at an accelerating rate the centuries- old ethnic and religious differences, mistrust, and animosities reemerged. This would have been difficult for any government, however strong and well-intentioned, to control. But Ceylon, like some other new, post-colonial states, was operating under a more or less imposed Western-style democratic constitution which provided for regular elections based on universal suffrage. It was simply expecting too much of the average Ceylonese villager or farmer, whether Singhalese-Buddhist or Tamil-Hindu, to abandon his society's age-old parochial beliefs and vote in terms of broad enlightened national interests. The result was that with each post-independence election one found in Parliament and therefore in the government more and more men representing and advocating views and policies which were conceived in narrow factional rather than broad national terms. Which has all led increasingly to the sad picture of modern-day Sri Lanka rent by bloody civil strife between Singhalese and Tamils and its once reasonably healthy economy in tatters.

Q: Well then, maybe we might move on. I don't want to overdwell on the time that you were an inspector from '65 to '67 and then in personnel and performance evaluation. When you were an inspector, were there any notable problems that you had to deal with that you think would be illuminating as how the system worked?

LUTKINS: More so on the departmental experience than on the inspection. The Inspection Corps was a very interesting experience. Of course, they have revamped the Inspection Corps since, from what it was then, but I always thought it was of somewhat marginal usefulness. I suppose it kept posts on their toes, but in many ways I think the most useful contribution of the inspectors in those days was to write individual efficiency reports, which perhaps gave a little bit of a balance to what was being prepared on the ground.

Q: This was my impression, and then they gutted that some years later. They came and you kind of wondered what they were doing.

LUTKINS: Yes. I have had no experience with it subsequently and I don't know what they're doing. I had heard that they were actually now to look at policy toward the country, which, of course, we stayed away from. We were no experts in local policy.

Q: Well, this sounds like a duplication, and at a low level, which isn't really going to be paid much attention to.

LUTKINS: But as far as the inspectors' efficiency reports, we were always told by the panels back in Washington that they relied very heavily on these reports, because they found them an impartial counterweight to what was written at the post. In fact, I always felt that as an inspector I was sort of playing God, on the basis of a very brief exposure to people, to try and write a report that was going to be taken so seriously in Washington.

Q: Well, speaking of that, from '67 to '69 you were the director of performance evaluation. Would you explain what this is, because this is a fairly interesting place, sort of on the pulse of the Foreign Service. I wonder if you could talk about this.

LUTKINS: Yes, it operated within the office of the Director General and the overall control of the under secretary for administration, who in those days was Idar Rimestad. The Director General was John Steeves, an old friend. It had the dual responsibility of, one, administering this whole system of efficiency reports. In the first place, preparing the report forms, seeing that they were prepared on time by the posts, and then reviewing them to see that there were no cases of obvious bias or injustice being done. Receiving any complaints from the posts about problems that might have arisen between personnel, reflected in the reports. And secondly, of course, the counterpart, of administering the annual review boards in Washington, assembling them, bringing people in from the field to serve on them and so forth.

Q: How did you find the system? Were you comfortable with it?

LUTKINS: No, I don't think anybody could be completely comfortable with it. I mean, there's no perfect system. You were always wondering. As you, a career officer, know, the efficiency report forms were being changed every couple of years, tinkered with. And because of that whole problem, the honesty of reporting would get watered down. If an officer was facing selection out, after a number of years without promotion in grade, there was a tendency on the part of reporting officers and senior reviewing officers to try to do right by him by...

Q: Being a little more fulsome, I suppose.

LUTKINS: To put it mildly. And so we were constantly trying to figure out ways to make the reports more meaningful. Though at times they were classified. We were under great pressure at that time to eliminate any confidentiality, because it was felt that this was unfair to personnel, who wouldn't learn about anything that was said adversely about them until they got back and reviewed their file in Washington. So, while I was in charge, we came up with a two-part system, which, as you may remember, was an unclassified section and a classified section, a confidential section. I think that lasted for about a couple of years.

Q: That didn't last long.

LUTKINS: There was too much pressure for openness. But, as I say, we constantly were studying methods of evaluation by private industry and other organizations, to see if there was anything better that we could come up with. I never felt that what we had was perfect, or that we'd ever achieve anything perfect.

The Foreign Service is an institution where, unfortunately, you can't have complete openness. If you have a small, two-man post, men working together closely day and night for a couple of years, it's very difficult for the fellow in charge to write a completely honest, unbiased report--and then tell the fellow about it. So I don't know what the answer is, but we were constantly wrestling with it.

Q: For your last overseas post, you went to Johannesburg as consul general. You were there from '69 to '73. As a China hand, how did you end up there?

LUTKINS: Well, that's interesting. I had always expected to go back to the Far East, my home area in the Foreign Service. And, actually, while I was serving in Washington, I got a chance to go back to Taiwan as DCM, which I would have liked to have done. But John Steeves, as the director general, felt I had only been in the job in Washington for one year and was loath to let me go. So I went along with that. Careerwise I should have stayed in the Far East. I think it's a truism that you do best if you develop a home base and stick to it, where you're known.

But, be that as it may, by the time I came up for an assignment in '69, there weren't many suitable positions available in the Far East. I was offered the Johannesburg job and took it. It turned out to be a fascinating post, although it was a dead end careerwise. But it was a very interesting period to be in South Africa.

Q: What were you doing? You were in Johannesburg, the embassy was still in...

LUTKINS: Pretoria.

Q: Was it Pretoria and Cape Town, or does it rotate?

LUTKINS: No, they divide the time each year. The administrative area of the government is centered in Pretoria, but the parliament meets in Cape Town. Which means that the senior elements of government, particularly the political side, move down to Cape Town for anywhere from four to six months while Parliament is in session. So that at that period of the year the embassy is divided, since the Ambassador, the DCM, and the Political Section go to Cape Town with the government.

The thing is complicated by the fact that Pretoria and Johannesburg are only about 40 miles apart. And whereas the politics is completely centered in Pretoria, and to a lesser extent in Cape Town when the government is down there, except for that, everything important is in Johannesburg. It is the center of industry and commerce, the leading educational center, the leading media center, etc. Except for politics everything is centered in Johannesburg, with lesser developments in Durban on the east coast and at Cape Town in the south.

Which makes for a rather complicated situation, because the staff in Johannesburg was really limited, and many of the functions there were really national in scope. For instance,

our chief commercial officer was based in Johannesburg; similarly the mineral attaché with national responsibilities and a labor officer with national responsibilities. So, in a sense, although they were part of my staff, they were also reporting to Pretoria. So it was not a very tidy situation personnel-wise, but it worked out.

Q: You got there more or less with the advent of the Nixon administration. And so you were in Nixon One period, I guess, weren't you?

LUTKINS: He came in, in '69. Yes, he was president the entire time I was there.

Q: What was the policy and how did it reflect on what you did? South Africa has been controversial for a long time, but what was our policy and how did you operate with it there?

LUTKINS: Incidentally, of course, policywise I was like the consuls general in Durban and Cape Town. I was completely, under Pretoria, but acting independently in my consular district. The only difference was that, being so close, I would attend the weekly staff meeting in Pretoria.

Our policy at that time was rather similar to that during the Reagan years, in that it followed a period, under Lyndon Johnson, when Soapy Williams was assistant secretary for Africa, and where the emphasis was very much on civil rights, and supporting the new African governments, black governments and so forth, and harshly critical of the South African apartheid regime. Under Nixon, while we remained hostile to the system of apartheid, it became somewhat the policy, as in the Reagan years, where we toned down our criticism of the South African government and tried to work with it by persuasion, to get it to adjust to changes rather than bludgeoning it. Which I personally thought was a very sensible policy. I've never been very much in favor of the later idea of sanctions, because I don't think it's the way to get South Africa to change, and because I don't think they have been all that effective.

But, be that as it may, it was a period of relative calm in South Africa. There was no major unrest. The underlying injustices and weaknesses of the system were obvious, but things were quiet. Following the outbreak of protests and disorder in the early '60s, they subsided, and the thing was not to flare up again until the mid-'70s, after I left.

Q: How did you deal with the South African government?

LUTKINS: Well, as a Consul General I had no connection with the South African government.

Q: I mean, with the officials of Johannesburg.

LUTKINS: Well, that's an interesting point. At the time and traditionally the Johannesburg city government was dominated by the opposition party and the English-

speaking business element, so that there was never any possible tension with them. And relations with the Afrikaner-dominated central government were handled by Pretoria. I had no reason whatever to come in contact with them. I would have been intruding on Pretoria's...

Q: And I suppose with a certain amount of relief on your part, in a way.

LUTKINS: They were difficult people to deal with, but, as I say, it just didn't enter into the picture. Although my consular district included Afrikaner-dominated areas, and I did travel around and talk to people, it wasn't up to me to be discussing policy with them. So it was really more or less courtesy calls whenever I spoke to them.

Q: How about contacts with blacks or coloreds?

LUTKINS: Very interesting. Fortunately, as I say, things were quiet then. And our general policy was to make contact to the extent we could with such black leaders, or embryonic black leaders, as we could identify, and to entertain blacks. And we went in for that in quite a big way, I think more so than Pretoria.

The South African government knew that we were entertaining blacks. They did not approve of it, but they didn't try to prevent it. So, for instance, when we had a Fourth of July party, they knew we were going to have blacks present and they would not send any white South African government official to attend. They would boycott it, which really didn't mean anything in the case of Johannesburg, because there were no South African officials that I would normally have invited anyway. But it did affect Pretoria.

But we were quite successful in this interracial entertaining. On many occasions, and particularly when we had visitors from the United States, congressional or from other fields, I would have stag dinner parties at which we would have a number of our black contacts present from various fields, and then have influential whites as well, from the business community, academic community and this sort of thing. And the latter were almost pathetically grateful, because this was, in many cases, the first time they had ever spoken to a black in terms of equality. It had always been a master-servant relationship, because that was what they had been brought up with and what the system involved. So that it was an eye- opening experience for them, which they appreciated.

And we also were able to go out and visit blacks in their homes, in Soweto, the huge black township area outside Johannesburg.

Q: Soweto, was this before or after the...? Wasn't there a major riot of sorts?

LUTKINS: That came later in the mid-'70s.

Q: Did you have a problem with your staff feeling uncomfortable in this situation? Or were you having to ride herd on them and say, "Well, our policy is not one of confrontation," or not?

LUTKINS: Are you talking about the American staff?

Q: American staff, yes.

LUTKINS: Oh, I see. No, I don't think there was major uneasiness on the part of any of the staff. I think most of them were very realistic. If anything, there were one or two who were more South African white than the South African whites. One of them chose, when he retired, to settle down there. No, I don't think there was any major agitation on the part of the staff, for a more activist, confrontational policy. And I don't believe that was true in Pretoria either. Everybody knew that the Afrikaners, and the Afrikaner politicians in particular, were difficult people to deal with. And I'm sure there was no great love lost on the part of the embassy personnel for them.

Q: The ambassador most of the time you were there was John Hurd?

LUTKINS: Yes, but for much of the first year it was Bill Rountree. He was sick a lot of the time at the beginning. He and his wife both got hepatitis. I guess he must have been there about maybe the first six months I was there, and then he was succeeded by John Hurd, who was a Texas oil man.

Q: How did that work out?

LUTKINS: Surprisingly well. He had originally been nominated to be ambassador to Venezuela. And then I guess the Venezuelans objected, because of his oil connections, so he was sent to South Africa. A very bright, personable guy, and I think he handled the job very professionally. He was certainly easy to work with. He didn't try to throw his weight around. He accepted the advice of his professional staff.

Q: Were there any major problems you had to deal with while you were there?

LUTKINS: From the administrative point of view, personnel point of view, I've mentioned the difficulty trying to run an office in which a lot of the officers had a divided responsibility to the Embassy and the Consul General.

Incidentally, most of my work turned out to be semi- political in the sense of reporting on developments. I didn't get involved, except in a supervisory capacity, in commercial work or in consular work. I got more involved, perhaps, on the labor side, because part of our policy was to try and encourage the American firms doing business in South Africa, and there was a very substantial, one- or two- billion-dollar American investment in South Africa, with many of the very large American companies represented.

One of our objectives there was to try and get the American companies to take the lead in introducing more open, liberal labor practices, as a contrast to the rather restrictive ones of the South Africans. You know, equal amenities and opportunities for blacks to improve themselves and this sort of thing. This was before the thing really came into focus in the 1970s. At which time there was a Reverend something Sullivan, who laid down some rules for American companies to follow. It was all involved in this agitation for sanctions and withdrawal of investments and so forth. But this was before all of that, and we were in the forefront.

The labor attaché and I would go around and visit many of the American company installations there. Not in a high-handed manner at all, but just inquiring about what they were doing and so forth. Also, not too subtly, we would let them know that Washington favored more enlightened practices on their part. That was quite interesting.

Q: You then left there in 1973, and you had one further assignment. What was that?

LUTKINS: Well, actually I had two, but neither one was terribly meaningful. One was as a diplomat-in-residence, which turned out to be at the University of Arkansas, in Fayetteville, Arkansas. I guess you know the diplomat-in-residence program. They tried to spread it around the country, in different years in different areas. At that particular point, Arkansas apparently had been asking for a diplomat-in- residence, and I was sent there.

It was rather amusing, because it, of course, was the old stamping ground of Senator Fulbright, who had been president of the university before he came to Washington. It was his hometown, also. I guess his family had run a newspaper there. The practice was, as a courtesy before going out to a state like that, to call on the senators involved. So I called on Senator Fulbright. He, of course, was notoriously suspicious of the State Department, and regarded this as a propaganda effort to sell the administration's foreign policy line. I don't think I was successful in my effort to convince him that we weren't out there to propagandize but to do something which I thought that he would be in favor of. And that was to try to increase awareness at the student level of what goes into the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. And, an important factor also, to get around the local community and create awareness of the State Department and its role.

Mine was a typical diplomat-in-residence year. The first term I just was a guest lecturer, and then the second term I gave a couple of courses, a general one on foreign affairs and foreign policy and also a seminar on Southern Africa.

Q: And then you came back and worked for about a year on the International Population Year?

LUTKINS: Yes, it was a sort of make-work job. It was a period when senior officers were walking the corridors. That was all they could offer me, so I thought it would be worth taking for a year and use it as an opportunity to see what might be available in the future.

Yes, well, 1974 had been called International Population Year. I'm not sure whether it was designated by the United Nations or by the U.S. government.

Q: Probably by the United Nations.

LUTKINS: I think so. But, in any case, as part of the United Nations' International Population Year, the administration, as I guess they frequently do, appointed a commission to make some input to this thing. I'd never had any experience with these organizations before, but I guess it's a typical political process, where they pick people representing different points of view so they'll be sure and come up with something bland.

It was headed by a man who had been secretary of agriculture under Nixon, Clifford Hardin. He had also been president of the University of Nebraska, and was retired, and was working for one of these big agro-industrial combines, Ralston Purina. And then there was a mix of people on the commission: men, women, Catholics, others. It was a very mixed bag.

We were supposed to study the problem of population and come up with a report. I was given a very small staff and asked to administer this thing. It proved rather frustrating. As with all these things, the end product is hardly worth the money put into it. Because we were so late getting started, we broadened the context to include food, because I guess the following year was to be International Food Year, with a conference in Rome. With the help of Edwin M. Martin and Phil Claxton, on the population side, we cobbled together a report finally at the end of the year, and did a few other activities, including an exhibition on the Mall.

The report was certainly nothing earthshaking, but we pointed out the dimensions of the population problem and the dangers and whatnot. It was just disappointing, because all our work, to whatever extent it was worthwhile, was completely undercut. The chairman, exercising his prerogative, wrote an introduction in which he completely pooh-poohed the existence of a population problem, and said, in effect, that modern technology, agriculture and otherwise, would take care of the problem and the world could feed any number of people indefinitely. As I say, nobody would have read the report anyway and it was probably just filed away, but anyway, the experience was mildly discouraging.

Q: Well, on that sort of down note, but this has been a fascinating discussion. You then retired, I take it?

LUTKINS: Yes. At that point, again, there were very few suitable senior positions going around, and I decided to take the opportunity and get out.

Q: Well, thank you very much, this was fascinating.

End of interview