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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERVIEW

Q: Chet, I would like to have you start out by giving us a brief background on your activities, what your education was, what your origins were and so forth. Follow that with a short statement of how it was that you got started in the information work for the federal government, and after that you take it from there, start discussing your various assignments and what you were doing.

OPAL: Before I begin I would like it understood that I reserve to myself all rights to the reuse of all the written or recorded text of my remarks to you during the course of these interviews. The Alumni Association is not to be held responsible for anything I say. Writers, speakers, or researchers using any of these remarks will require my approval as long as I am alive. I shall not charge for such use, but I shall insist on approving each use made. I do this because I am a professional writer and may myself use some of these remarks.

BACKGROUND

I am a Chicagoan by birth, breeding, and force. I was born in 1918. I was educated in Chicago public schools and the University of Chicago, where I majored in philosophy and mathematics. I spent four years as a newspaper reporter and freelance writer. I also had spent a couple of years before that as a writer of historical guides in the Federal Writers Project for Illinois. For two years I was director of press relations at the University of Chicago, and was spokesman for Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the university.

APPOINTED TO STATE DEPARTMENT, 1946

In the spring of 1946, I received a letter from William Benton, who was assistant secretary of state for public affairs at the time, and who had been a vice-president at the University of Chicago when I was there. The letter asked me whether I would like to go to Europe for the State Department. In my ignorance, thinking there were planes and flights out of Chicago immediately taking me to Europe, I went down at once to find out whether there was ocean passage for overseas. I didn't know where I was going or anything. I discovered there was nothing but freight that you could arrange passage for from Chicago.

At any rate, it was six months before I took my oath of office. That was in November of '46. I received the usual briefings in the State Department about desk officers and from press, radio, motion pictures and other media divisions.

One of the first persons I saw when I got to Washington was Arthur Bliss Lane, ambassador to Poland now preparing for the upcoming Yalta elections of January, 1947. Lane was a stiff, cold type about whom Jonathan Daniels had written in his Frontier on the Potomac, the man never sweats. Lane said to me, "I understand you know something of Polish and Russian." I said, "Well, very little, really. I do know that in Polish you put the accent on the penultimate syllable, but in Russian you put it on the first syllable and run like hell." A laugh started in him below the third button of his buttoned-down coat and went up to issue in a great roar of merriment.

On a hot day in November I was called over to the old State-War building which is now part of the Executive Offices. It always struck me as neo-moribund in architectural style, and had those large ceiling fans overhead that figure in antebellum mansions in the south. Greeting me in one of these rooms was Charles Hulten. Charlie said, "I've just been appointed a special assistant to William Benton. I'm very worried and don't know what I'm to do. You see, we're about to move over to New State over in Foggy Bottom. It's air-conditioned over there. I'm having a helluva time keeping up with Mr. Benton's flood of ideas over here, under the ceiling fans, but what will I do when he has the benefit of a cool environment and there's nothing to slow him down? I understand you worked with him at the University of Chicago. How did you manage that?" I said, "Oh, that was easy. Benton has a hundred ideas a minute. You just grab one of those out of the air at random and not worry about the 99 others; you work from that. He's so busy producing a hundred more that he has no time to remember old ideas anyway: if he sees you're working on something that looks like an old idea of his, he's perfectly satisfied. Anything else is impossible anyway. The man dictates ideas even when he's floating on his back in his Arizona swimming pool." Charlie thanked me and apparently never forgot the advice; he always was a pal.

One, to me unforgettable, moment was Keith Adamson laying out something that has stuck with me because of its implications. Keith, who was in the motion picture program,

you may remember, told me that Moscow had sent a telegram saying that the embassy was all excited. An American newsreel which showed American policemen billy-clubbing workers who were on strike in the United States was being shown all through the Soviet Union. What could the State Department do to overcome this or prove that this was not so. While the State Department was meditating this matter, a cable came back quickly from Moscow saying forget the whole thing. It developed that the Russian government found that the Russians weren't at all bothered by police hitting the workers over the heads. What impressed them was that all of the workers had shoes on their feet. The Soviet Union decided this was not good propaganda.

I've never forgotten that because, oddly enough, later in Poland, we had a film called "Date with West Virginia" and it showed wide roads with no sidewalks on them and the Poles used to come to us after the screenings and say, "All those beautiful wide roads and nobody walking on them." They had gone through the war with refugees marching down the crowded roads. How clean, how pure, how without tragedy the whole American experience was to the Poles. This story of Adamson's always came to mind.

Anyway, I had the usual briefings at the Voice in New York City and in Washington.

INFORMATION OFFICER IN POLAND, 1946-49

I went to Poland as an information officer and press attaché with reserve officer status. I arrived at the time of the phony Yalta elections when most of the opposition candidates were in prison or sequestered one way or another, so that they couldn't bring any kind of influence to bear, and this was a part of the process of Sovietizing the country. This was, of course, during Stalin's time.

The operation was a rather strange one. We had a library, in fact, all of USIS was in this library, a Quonset hut, which was set in the middle of what had been a graveyard during the uprising of 1944. Their were ruins all about us, of course. There are many pictures which I sent to Washington showing the establishment and showing also the vitrines that we had on the streets which we plastered with photos that were supplied by IPS and ICS, the exhibits people.

Q: This graveyard to which you are referring, was this from the massacre that took place when the Russians held up their armies outside?

OPAL: Right, a quarter million Poles died in 63 days of fighting in August-September, 1944. The Russians had held up on the opposite side of the Vistula, after calling for the Poles to rise. The purpose that we now assume that the Russians had in doing this was to have the Germans wipe out the Polish Home Army, which was composed of the underground fighters and the people who were on the side of the pre-war government in exile in London. It was a very deliberate act.

Until the very last days of the rising, the Americans couldn't even fly any aid in except in the last days when they flew round trips from Bari in Italy to drop some supplies. In fact, when I was in Warsaw, I went to a ceremony in which they transferred the bodies of the slain American airmen back to Germany and then to the States. That was when the peasant leader, Mikolajczyk, disappeared and everybody believed, especially in Warsaw, that we had smuggled him out in a coffin. Whereas, it was not so, as Stanton Griffis in his book Lying in State tells. We got him out by way of a ship in a northern port.

I got to Warsaw, as I say, in January '47. The setup was as I described it. The embassy itself was in the abandoned pre-war Bulgarian embassy. Our own pre-war embassy was a complete ruin next door, which was only partly refurbished during the time I was there. Stanton Griffis, who came as the ambassador in July of 1947, set up a theater there and USIS used it for screening for 35-millimeter films.

The first film we showed there was Gone With The Wind. Margaret Mitchell's novel had gone around in cannibalized sections among the populace, devoured in sympathetic adoration because the burning of Atlanta and the burning of Warsaw, so vividly present, were identical experiences in the Polish mind. Stanton Griffis invited even Communist government to the premiere showing. As a Hollywood mogul, he could get a print.

When I got there, Arthur Lane was the ambassador. He resigned in protest over the phony Yalta elections and left the post in February. In the summer we got Stanton Griffis. The interesting thing about Stanton Griffis was that he knew before he ever presented his letters of credence in July of '47 that the Iron Curtain had come down--with a bang. We in Warsaw felt it almost as a tangible event because the Poles summarily turned down the Marshall Plan. Now their excuse was that Bevin, who was the foreign secretary in the Attlee government, was dominating all the Europeans organizing the Marshall Plan, and the eastern Europeans were not going to get any of the benefit of it. Of course, the line came down from Molotov. The Czechs had already said they were going in, the Hungarians said they were interested. All of them suddenly reversed gear and they said they wouldn't go into the plan. This was an indication that Gleichschaltung, which was the ordering of events and societies under Stalin, was proceeding apace in eastern Europe.

In light of that, our own activities were pretty much inhibited. We had the full and fair picture doctrine at the time in which we had no anti-communist posture as such in our propaganda but simply one of presenting the American portrait, warts and all. You may remember that this was what prevailed until the 12th of March of 1947, when President Truman laid down the new order of our priorities. He would give aid to Greece and Turkey, and take over responsibilities in the Middle East from the war-impoverished British.

As I mentioned, our activities had to do with culture. Walter Schwinn was the public affairs officer. We had a cultural program, the library, very little in the way of exchange of persons. We issued bulletins at first in quite a number of copies, later in only about

200. In fact, we wouldn't even put our return address on them so that people would not be identified and the secret police would not be on to them.

Q: In the early days, when you had a larger distribution, what kind of people, and to whom did you send them?

OPAL: We sent to the ministries, to the press, periodicals, and individuals who wanted it. Later we were restricted just to the ministries, to the press and to pick-ups at our library center. Everybody who came into our library, where we showed films and distributed books and issued these bulletins, was watched all of the time.

Q: Did you feel that any of these people were under Polish police surveillance when they came to your library?

OPAL: Yes, it was well known and they were all brave for doing it and many of them came back, even so. Of course, among our patrons were also secret police who were spying and obviously looking around to see who was in the library and making sure that they had their eyes on them and they would watch them. The Americans were, of course, under secret police surveillance too. I took a villa out in the country where I was away from the Americans. I wanted to be among the Poles, I wanted to learn the language. The secret police were not so plentiful there, except that I know they were watching me. I used to show USIS films in my garden and I'd befuddle the police by playing the Hymn of the Nations at the end of my program always because it ends with the Red International with Toscanini conducting it and everybody singing. They couldn't understand what I was doing promoting Red International, which they knew was a communist thing. The police must have guessed I was pulling their legs.

Q: I'm surprised you didn't get picked up by the McCarthy people back here for doing that!

OPAL: Yes, this is interesting. I don't think they knew about it. We lived out in this countryside and we became so identified with the people that when I took my first vacation, a year and a half after we arrived in Poland, and went to Italy, the peasants for, I think, nine kilometers around assumed that war was coming and that I would not have left them without telling them. Since war was coming they planted their farm implements underground to wait for the coming of war and for the destruction of everything. Then they would dig everything up. I've never understood whether I was welcomed back or greeted with great sorrow when I returned.

Every 15th of August, Assumption Day, they assumed that there was going to be a war. It was interesting about the Poles, they didn't give a damn whether there was going to be a war because that would be their only liberation. Of course, they assumed that the United States would win. Atomic war didn't bother them. I don't think they had any conceptions of atomic war but war was their only hope. They were marvelous in that sense.

We found, for example, because we were pioneers somewhat in USIS, that my boss, Walter Schwinn, spent a good bit of his time just buttering up the old line diplomats. But the younger ones who came in, like Dick Davies, who was later ambassador in Poland but was also an area director for eastern Europe in the agency, and Malcolm "Mac" Toon, who was ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Dick Tims, who was a political analyst, and had been a former history professor, and Ralph Jones, who worked with me in USIS, were all friendly toward the program and friendly toward its objectives.

Griffis was there for about six months, but he had no understanding of the program and no real interest in Poland because he was cut out completely. He once suggested to the Polish Foreign Minister: "Look, why don't we just exchange our cables. You let me read your secrets and I'll let you read mine. I have nothing, I'm not hiding anything from you." Of course, they all laughed at him but he was an old financier and had very little interest in the program. He later wrote the book, Lying in State, which contains some of my own prose, but tells some indiscreet things about his time in Poland. Waldemar Gallman, a career officer, succeeded him. He was great.

These people I've named recognized that the communists had shown as early as the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, that they believed in the revolution of people, that people and governments were inalienably alienated from each other, and the communists did everything to encourage popular dissent, revolts and uprisings. Whereas, the West never adopted the idea of propaganda as a valid instrument of foreign policy. Trotsky, at the treaty negotiation with the Germans, appealed over the Germans heads to the German people, calling for a revolution, and this was going to solve everything. Of course, they were wrong, but they have always adopted this practice. We developed only after the second world war the uses of things like information and exchange of persons--public diplomacy.

Before I went to Poland, I was briefed by Czeslaw Milosz, who was working in the Polish Embassy as assistant cultural officer. He later won the Nobel prize for literature. In 1951, after he broke with the Polish regime, I interceded on his behalf to get him to this country. It was some years before he came. Also, I was the first to get him published in English through my literary agent. He had written a essay that became a part of The Captive Mind, still the best book on the double think under totalitarianism, next to what George Orwell wrote in 1984.

Milosz's list to me, given to me in December, 1946, and which I still have, by the way, is of contacts I should make among editors, writers and cultural leaders. The best of whom vanished afterwards, I must say. When I would contact these people in Poland, I discovered that their interest was not in politics, but rather mainly in catching up with the western world. They felt that they had been cut out of scientific development, etc. I've often joked that they were more interested in the genitalia of male orthoptera because actually I got a request once for an article on the genitalia of male orthoptera.

They were most interested in the extrasensory perception phenomena (ESP) experiments conducted at Duke University by Professor Rhine. This has been prevalent throughout the Soviet Union, too. The reason for this is that with their materialistic bias, they believe that if there is telepathic communication between individuals, it has a materialistic base and therefore it can be recorded, quantified and studied scientifically.

I'll tell a little bit more about the program as we go on, but the government itself became increasing communist. I think in the winter of '48, there was a merger of the Socialist and Workers (Communist) parties and this is when it was definite that it was all communist now and that the Soviets were never going let it be anything else, and the trade unions were only government trade unions. Until Solidarity around 1980 we had really no free trade union of any sort.

People mysteriously disappeared. Our translators disappeared. Our librarian was put in prison at one time and another. Friends I had in the countryside, simply for having been in contact with me, disappeared. Late in my stay, one man that I helped had half his head was blown off by the secret police, because he stuck his head out of the window, simply because he was known to consort with me. I was in a terrible dilemma because I could not bring drugs in for him to help him in his plight and eventually he died. This would have compromised him and his family all the more. I thought that if he survives, fine. But there was nothing I could do.

Q: When these people disappeared, did you have any indication as to whether they were executed or whether they were just imprisoned or what?

OPAL: Some probably were executed but most, I think, those who worked for us directly in the embassy, just were put in prison for many years, some for 10, 12 years. I heard our assistant librarian served over 10 years, at least. There was no stinting of the punishment for them.

All our people, we felt, were brought in by the UB, the secret police, and were told to spy on us. I used to tell my Polish assistants to report anything they wished to the UB and not to feel bound in any way. Those who said, "I will not do this, this is betrayal of my country and betrayal of everything I believe in," were those who eventually wound up in prison. They just refused to do it. Others, we assume, were doing it. This had to be all right with us.

I had a safe in my office for secret documents. And every month the security officer from the embassy would come over to change the combination. I said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "You remember, the new combination."

I'd say, "Okay."

I never memorized the combination. I never opened that safe until I was leaving Poland because I never put anything into the safe. But I was curious to know what was in the safe because my predecessor had something in it. I called the security officer and said, "I don't remember the combination any more and would you open the safe."

He did. And we took out, I think there was a million dollars in pre-war zlotys, which were absolutely useless. That was in my safe. Who put it there, what it was doing there, I have no idea. But I knew that money just multiplied out of itself, out of boredom.

The business of surveillance was a tricky one. When Poles would come to my office to communicate with me--and this mystified me for a while--they would take the phone off the hook and put it beside the pedestal. Then they would talk freely. I thought, "This was strange." I asked my security man, "What does this mean?" He said, "Well, the phone did not become a communicator. The diaphragm of the taps that the police put in don't work if the phone is off because it's picking it up but it's not conveying it through the pedestal of the phone and therefore they can't pick up on their recorders."

We were warned about this. I was told once that the Germans had perfected photography so that they could photograph a piece of paper through a window from 200 feet away and then they would enlarge it. I said, "Well, I have no worry about this, why are you telling me this?" He said, "Well, just so you know." I said, "Well, look around, there's nothing but ruins. There's no place for anybody to put a camera around me." Because they were just walls standing, they were no rooms, nobody could possibly stand up in these things.

Light bulbs also were a source of intelligence for them. In Vienna later, we had little radios put in our embassy offices and when I had anybody in for conferences, we would put the radio on so it would play music. This was after it was discovered in Moscow that Ambassador George Kennan's office seal had been tapped and our security boys were upon the roof once and they heard Ambassador Kennan dictating to his secretary. They were able to pick it up there and that's how they discovered also the only way to defeat is to put a radio on so that there was other sound in the room and you would get a mingling of sounds. This was in the early '50s -- '52, I guess.

Of the USIS program itself, I have no idea whether it was effective. We felt that our chief purpose was to establish the fact, one, that we had not forgotten the Polish people. And two, that we had our eye on the regime and we knew what was going on and if the boom ever fell we would know what the situation was. As part of this awareness program, I started a daily cable which we sent from Warsaw to Washington, in which I reported on the weather in Warsaw, for example, or tell of men who were now walking the streets with their little party buttons on their lapels so the secret police wouldn't bother them or in anyway frighten them. It was little items like this that I would report to Washington and they would come back over the Voice of America as a regular broadcast of news.

This was intended to show to the Poles that we had eyes everywhere in Poland, we knew very well what was going on in that country and the regime wasn't going to get away with

anything. In fact, once I turned on my security policeman with a little Rolleiflex camera. I had nothing in the camera but I was carrying it. I snapped his picture, and I said to him in Polish, "We also have records. Now I've got you in my records." The man was so frightened, he ran away. Because, again, if the war ever came we had him in our archives, and he thought for sure he was going to the gallows. This was the only thing you could do to these people.

The oppression was bad. We had people who broke down mentally. We had a fellow who came as a cultural officer and we finally had to get him out of the country because he would turn on people behind him in queues and bat his head against theirs. He said, "You're spying on me." These were just normal Poles, they weren't doing anything. But our man had turned paranoid.

The sense of oppression which we all had was rather heavy on a lot of us. When I left Poland for an Italian vacation after 18 months in the country, I actually wanted to bat together the heads of the two agents who were following my wife and me. I was in front of the Metropol Hotel in Wroclaw, the former Breslau in Lower Silesia. I had stopped at the first of the peace conferences that the Soviets and fellow travelers were carrying on, the one at which Picasso was present. (In fact, he and his peace dove dominated. In the restaurant one day he was stripped to the waist and somebody asked him what he was doing stripped to the waist and he said, "Well, they came to see Picasso, let them see Picasso.")

This, as I said, was the first of the so-called peace conferences. I made a joke about it, which was later picked up by the media. I said, "The Soviets are using peace as a continuation of war by other means." Because this is what the peace conferences were. I had reported on that Wroclaw conference briefly as my wife and I were on the way out of the country.

I didn't realize how heavy the weight of oppression in Poland was until I stood on the banks of the Arno and was looking at a newspaper kiosk and there beside the Oservatore Romano, which was the Vatican paper, was L'Unita, the communist paper, on one kiosk, right beside each other, and I didn't realize tears were coming down my face. This was such an emblem of freedom to me, and I hadn't realized how deeply I was feeling it. There was nothing of that in Poland in the previous year and a half. I had wanted to bash the heads of my UB followers in Wroclaw.

The Poles could be very funny. They had many jokes. When they talked about the Soviet trade, they said, "You know, the Soviet idea of trade: they steal our coal and in exchange they sell us their caviar."

Their feeling about the Soviets was very intense. They had a story that was in some ways horrible, but they said, "You know, the 21st-century encyclopedia is going to have the following entry for Hitler's biography: 'Hitler, Adolf: a petty adventurer in the age of Stalin.'" This is how they saw Stalin. How I kept my sanity - jokes.

The terrible thing was the communists, being puritans, until Brezhnev and his cronies recently, were very strict on honesty and righteousness and economy. The Poles are not used to this. When the Germans were there the Poles felt they could bribe anybody. They could find out where people were imprisoned or they could buy arms from the Germans, for example. You couldn't find out a thing from the communists because every communist was afraid of every other communist around him. So nobody ever told anything. This was more distressing to the Poles than anything. This was counter to the Polish spirit. God, you should be able to bribe somebody!

I used to drive one neighbor from my villa, which was 18 miles out of the city, to Warsaw and back and he was great fun. He was incarcerated for about six months once for non-payment of taxes. He had no income, he didn't know what the tax was about. But they sat him in the hoosegow anyway. In spite of this he would start out a sentence saying, "This is the most miserable country in the world, you can't make a penny here .." And before he would come to the end of the sentence, he had convinced himself that he and I are going to go into business together and become millionaires and die in extreme luxury a the beach in the Riviera. I mean, one sentence would traverse this whole spectrum of feeling and ambition and oppression and everything else. This is why I felt the Poles would never really be repressed and I was not surprised at all by Solidarity and I still think they are going to beat the game.

I learned something else when I wrote a novel about Poland in 1952-53 in Vienna. That is, that it is presumptuous of the West to feel that it has to free the people of the captive world. Those people are going to free themselves. The feeling that I very definitely had and it was interesting because there were the riots in Berlin in, I think, '53 but the Budapest thing started in Poznan, at an international fair, in 1956. I asked Cy Sulzberger of The New York Times once, I said, "Didn't it seem strange to you that the uprising in Poznan started when the whole free world was present and watching?" He said, "No." It had never occurred to him. I said, "Yes, these people were demonstrating to us that they were going to do it themselves."

THOUGHTS ON THE LIBERATION POLICY: AN ASIDE

I've never worried about the liberation policy. I remember Jim Hoofnagle of USIA coming to visit the National War College when I was there in '56 and voicing the fear that the Budapest uprising had been encouraged by us, by our intemperate language and by our calling for a rising in eastern Europe. I said, "You mean to tell me that Dulles' clamor caused a poor guy who was at one end of the street in Budapest to march right into the mouth of the Russian cannon because he thought that the United States would liberate him before he ever got to the mouth of the cannon? This is silly. These people simply had had it up to here. This is the first limited war that has been fought behind the Iron Curtain. These people rose themselves, this was a lesson for Moscow which they learned to their own sorrow, I'm sure, but it's going to have to go on like this. We alone are not going to liberate these people and they know it."

This was of interest to me because in the early '50s, this was not our assumption at all. In fact, I learned this writing this novel. Because I had a situation in which I could not understand why my goddamn Polish characters were behaving the way they were. Until one of the women, who was a heroine, wrote a letter to a western diplomat who was a Frenchman in this instance, because I was writing it as a French diplomat, explained this. This fact was came as a revelation to me in the very writing of this novel.

And what was it? The Budapest rising was just a rising from the Poznan thing and this was an expression addressed to the rest of the world that you can help, you can come in, but this is in our hands. And we have to recognize this fact. Now this was sad for me to acknowledge to myself, but it's a fact. We don't have the world in our hand. These people have it themselves and we can help, we can encourage these things and this is really what we were doing in Warsaw, except that in those days we actually expected to liberate these people. And of course, we can't and we won't.

Early in '47 when we were still relatively free, and I emphasize relatively free, we were able to work up a concert in Katowice using the services of the resident orchestra and Wiktoria Calma, the prima donna of Poland, in presenting American music. We had a Walter Piston symphony but Calma sang Negro spirituals. This was an innocuous kind of introduction to our culture that we hoped would pave the way for more of this sort of thing, and it did give us an entre into the musical community that we thought would be useful to us. Well, all of this was quickly closed down. The prima donna left Poland early next year and nobody else would dare undertake anything like this and it became increasingly difficult to just do anything of that kind.

THE VOICE OF AMERICA IN POLAND AND BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The one thing I do want to say something about is the importance of the Voice of America in Poland. We used to broadcast--it was not jammed at that time--and I have mentioned the cable that I used to send and the other items that they would pick up from our reports from the post. One thing that didn't occur to me then but should have been evident, was something that I brought out in Vienna in '53 at a meeting that was conducted by Chris Ravndal, who was the Minister to Hungary. At the time we were discussing Voice of America policy and there was an awful lot of discussion of the reputation of BBC for fairness and how we are thought not to be fair and unprejudiced.

I listened to this for almost a day as they went around the table and I had no real interest in the Voice because of the post that I was at, which was Vienna. But I said, "I served behind the Iron Curtain and I can tell you there are people who sit in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, who will turn on Radio Ankara and Radio Madrid, every morning of their lives to hear that there is going to be a revolution in their country and that they are going to be liberated the following day. Now nothing occurs to this society they inhabit, but the next morning they turn on Radio Ankara and Radio Madrid because they want to hear how they're going to be liberated the next day and they're going to be

free men. Nothing happens that day and the following day they do the same thing. Their temperament demands it.

"There are people in these countries and in Poland, which I can speak for, who listen to Voice of America and who listen to BBC. BBC was the channel by which they received their instructions from the government in London and by which they sent instructions from one sewer in Warsaw to London, back to men in another sewer in Warsaw, during the uprising of '44. Britain had a reputation then for being sympathetic with the Poles, they had gone to war because of the invasion of Poland in '39 and therefore, it was fine.

"Their feeling about Britain, that it was neutral in its broadcasts, is, I think, an index of the proportion of assumed British involvement. Britain no longer controlled their destiny and I think if you will go around the world and find out where the British are still exercising power one way or another, the people will say that they are not neutral to the degree that they exercise actual or potential power.

"The Poles believe that we have power in the world, therefore, everything we say has some meaning in relation to our power. The British no longer have any power; therefore, they can be neutral. And whether they are neutral or not they are going to be thought to be neutral because, what is the point of their not being neutral? They don't control power, they don't have the capacity to free these people or to oppress them or anything else. Therefore they exist out there and since they are not as incendiary as Radio Madrid or Radio Ankara, they are obviously neutral. The America does exercise power. It is the dominant power in the world"--this was in 1953 remember--"and therefore the assumption is that the Voice of America is implementing this power, one way or another, either actually or potentially. Therefore, it can't be neutral. I say I don't know why we exercise ourselves over this question."

I carried this idea to Washington later and to Henry Loomis when I wrote a charter for the Voice of America. This was the thing that I brought out in Beirut, that I remembered yesterday, that struck Director Leonard Marks. Because there still is this concern about the British neutrality and BBC objectivity. I don't care how much we try to present it but I think we should be true to ourselves, be true to our own ideas of truth and honesty. I think we should do this and we should hold to this. But we shouldn't worry about imitating the British and their kind of "objectivity" because we will never pull it off. Until we arrive at the British world position which is nothing now. This was the point that I made.

Apparently the point had some effectiveness because the meeting in Vienna in 1953 immediately disbanded and we had no further discussion. I remember someone said, "I don't know how he got into this meeting but he sure messed it up." At any rate, I still believe this. I believe that as long as we're thought to have some influence and power, our "voice" and everything we do will be thought to be prejudiced in favor of our power and it's natural for people to make this assumption. I don't think we should worry about that. We should, as I said, be as true to ourselves as we can, which is what I said in my culture paper too. Be true to ourselves and not worry about the impression we make because we

cannot think for others and then try to outthink them because you wind up at the same place anyway, which is with yourself and that's what you have to live with.

In the early winter of 1949 I worked out of our consulate in Poznan. We also distributed some of our materials and I had a lot of contact with the theater groups which we were still able to meet with because they were sort of flaky anyhow. The government didn't worry about them and they had the Marxist from pre-war times, named Iwaskiewicz, who was the leading playwright of Poland. So the regime felt the theater was quite safe. But my work remained in Warsaw.

The development in Warsaw was, of course, increasingly restrictive. The embassy was restricted. My family was forced to move in out of the country, into an apartment building, which also housed the military and naval attaché. The embassy, in its infinite wisdom, chose this apartment house, which was across from the secret police headquarters so everybody who came into my house and left it was seen by the UB. I must say this did not bar people from coming. They were brave all the time. Perhaps they were smarter than our housing officer.

Humor was my chief devise to keep myself from going batty. Typical of my silliness were these incidents. Harold Stassen, the boy governor of Minnesota and perennial presidential candidate, visited Warsaw and wanted to meet the press. I managed a press conference for him. We sat on one side of the table and I proceeded to point across the table at the various correspondents on hand. "There, I said, is Agence France, and there is Associated Press, and there, right across from you is the Russian from TASS, and right next to him is the man from demitasse, PAP, Polska Agencja Prasowe, and there--" I never finished because I had been overheard describing the PAP man, who never lived down the sobriquet. Everybody, even the TASS man, was laughing. And then there was the time I was utterly disgusted with the campaign in the local press that said Americans, those capitalist decadents, smoked opium-saturated--opiumowane--cigarettes. At a cocktail party I offered a Polish journalist one of my American cigarettes while I went on smoking my most conspicuous vanity--a pipe. He inhaled deeply, gratified. "I want you to know," I said, "that in America opium is the religion of the people." Being a good Pole, he took another drag and laughed. So much for gleichschaltung!

DECLARED PERSONA NON GRATA, MARCH 1949

I was put in charge of the program early in '49. The day that I was declared persona non grata was the day that the Yugoslav information center was closed down in Warsaw as a follow-up on the break with the Cominform that had occurred the year before when Marshal Tito broke with Stalin.

I had been warned for some time by Anna Christina, an aide to General Grosz, the government spokesman, that some way would be found to get me out because the General thought I got around too much, and since I'd learned Polish by this time, I was dangerous to be loose in the countryside. I didn't pay any attention to this warning until my wife told

me our Polish friends were saying that the fortune-tellers and gypsies on the Warsaw streets were predicting that I would leave Poland suddenly and that we would go to a warm climate--this for two whole months before I was actually kicked out.

I had had some interesting debates with General Grosz, a prewar Communist who made his living in the underground by translating the books of Jack London and James Oliver Curwood, among others. Once we discussed the idea of alienation as presented in some early economic writings of Karl Marx. The idea was that man created out of himself the materials that became the instruments of his alienation from himself. The General got incensed because I told him I found the whole idea scatological. He never caught on. Another time, he asserted that Jack London was killed by the capitalist system. On this I finally compromised, but not to his liking, I fear. I said, "Okay, I'll give you Jack London if in exchange you give me Mayakovsky!"

Anyway, on the 19th of March, 1949, after a Wireless File story (gotten from UPI by our IPS people) appeared in which reference was made to a vote in the United Nations at which all but Poland had approved, and the second sentence began, "The Soviet satellite...," referring to Poland, my goose was cooked. They chose this item, which was issued in Polish by our embassy, as the grounds for expelling me from the country.

Q: They fabricated the fact they you were responsible for that statement?

OPAL: Yes, I had distributed it, the embassy had distributed it therefore. It was interesting because there was a press conference before I left the country. The French journalist said, "Mr. Minister, you mean Poland is <u>not</u> a Soviet satellite?" There was absolute silence.

The Poles were very generous in a way when I did leave. The Czechs were more strait-laced and they gave me 24 hours to get through their country. Our embassy in Prague had to put men with diplomatic passports all down the line of march through Czechoslovakia, because if we strayed from the road I would wind up in prison or disappear or something. When we came through a Czech custom guard looked at my passport, looked at the large portrait of his President Gottwald, turned his back on it, spat elaborately, and gave me back my passport with a smile. We got through all right.

The fact of being PNG was much played in the Voice and in all the papers and my name, which is, of course, O-P-A-L, was assumed to be O-P-E-L, and for years afterwards I would receive on the anniversary of my expulsion, letters from people who claimed to be related and some who thought that they were probably my heirs because they though I was an heir to the Opel Motor Company fortune. So much for fame.

I was the first western diplomat formally expelled from behind the Iron Curtain. It used to be a statistic in the U.N. journal. The fact, of course, was that they had other ways of getting people out: they wouldn't renew their visas and so on. So you couldn't come back after your two years were up. That's how Joe Kolarek, a year or so later, I think, was

gotten out of Prague. They didn't declare anything; they just didn't give him a visa because while he was out of he country they linked him into the ring at one of their phony spy trials. I was never linked with anything like that although they were free to do it and I guess, they just assumed that nobody would believe it, in Poland, at any rate. There were stories in my case about reprisal for the Gubichev case in the States, involving the Treasury girl, Judy Coplin, I think, but I don't know how much credence to give to that.

SERVICE IN ITALY, 1949-50

Then I was transferred to Rome--the "warm place" of the Warsaw soothsayers, no hell for me yet at least. I was regional officer for our seven USIS branches in Italy. The position had been established under Maurice Rice, who now took my job in Warsaw. I was in the Rome office for about six months. That was mainly representing the branches in the home office.

The program itself was a large one. It was under Orville C. Anderson, old Andy Anderson, whom you know. My job was getting guidance and services support to the branches. We had them in Genoa, Milan, Turin, Venice, Naples, Sicily and so on. The program was geared pretty much to promoting the Marshall Plan objectives, and was quite extensive in Italy. Andy Berding was chief of the Marshall Plan information program, worked with us in Rome too. Andy had written the memoirs of Cordell Hull and later was deputy for policy in USIA and an assistant secretary of state for public affairs.

He and Andy Anderson had really pulled a coup in '48 when the communists were expected to win the general elections and probably take over the government. Actually they were found to have less of the percentage vote that had been assumed for them--a little over 30 percent, in fact.

Q: You were saying that they really were mounting an effort to defeat the communists at that time and they were very successful in doing so? It was really a coup for the information program.

INFORMATION IN A FIFTH COLUMN ENVIRONMENT: AN ASIDE

OPAL: Yes, and of course, it was something that the Christian Democrats, who were the government in power, wanted, and this was my first indication of something that I've laid down as a principle and that I think applies. And that is, if the local government feels that there is second external power that is attempting to subvert it through a fifth column, such as the communist party, it will allow the US government to conduct anti-communist propaganda. We had complete freedom. Not as simply Americana, but to engage in real polemics with communists, with anti-communist materials. A neutral government won't permit it.

Q: This is in contrast, for example, to our experience later in Chile, where we were castigated for intervening indirectly?

OPAL: Yes, we were criticized by the Chileans and criticized here by the American people, who felt that this was interference. It's considered to be interference because in that case the Allende Government didn't sanction this. This is the point that I am making. If the government hadn't sanctioned our working with the parties that we were working with, the press, etc., to give them some support, which was anti-Allende, then this principle is still invoked but it's in reverse.
This is why in France we were able to do it--because there was a fear when they had a crisis of confidence occurred in the early 50's, and they thought war was coming, that the communists might take over in France, too. The anti-communist propaganda was permitted to us, openly, we could carry it out.

In neutral countries like India, we were just permitted to talk about the United States but not about the Soviet Union or of India itself. In Poland we could not talk about communism at all. We could not talk about Poland at all, except through the Voice of America, which they couldn't touch. (That's why they jammed it.) But on the ground you could not talk about Poland and you could not talk about the Soviet Union. This is the principle that I am asserting.

I had these two contrasts, one where you could not speak about Poland, about communism about the Soviet Union in Poland. In Italy, where we had complete freedom. Why? Because the differentia was the fact that we had an anti-communist government in power who needed our support because they feared a fifth column which represented a second external power, namely the Soviet Union. We had it there.

We had enormous film production. John Secondari, for example, who wrote the novel on which the movie, "Three Coins in a Fountain," was based, was head of motion picture production for the Marshall Plan. I remember one thing they turned out which had a musical tract called the Carousel Concerto. All it concerned was the opening of a long-closed factory in an Italian town, and they just showed the unlocking of the gate and then the factory with people pouring in and then all the lathes and so on working. It just had the sound track running through it and every once in a while the logo of the Marshall Plan would flash across as a box was carried in.

Q: Subliminal advertising?

OPAL: Absolutely. This was the original subliminal advertising. This was the whole message. It was one of the most popular programs that we had. Even if the Italians saw this, they were nevertheless grateful because of all the things that we were doing. The Italians were very odd. For example, one of the things they objected to was our delegating so much of the power of the running of the program to Italians. They said, "Why, we're all dishonest. You Americans run it and it will be run well, but if you give it to us it's going to be terrible." They objected to this because they knew what the hell had happened. As most people do, they distrusted themselves and they wanted somebody from the outside to administer this thing.

The audiences were very sharp. We had an Italian documentary film called "Clean Windows." It was produced by USIS and showed a window washer arriving in front of a New York skyscraper, and staring up at this huge building with all these windows that he was going to have to wash. He had an unlighted cigarette in his mouth. He struck a match, lit it and looked up, took one puff, and threw it down. When he threw that cigarette down all our audiences, and I was present once, just let out such a groan, they didn't believe the windows, the skyscraper, anything. All of this was eradicated. This was a phony picture because nobody in the world would take only one puff from a cigarette. We just defeated ourselves completely.

Just as we discovered, for example, in Indonesia you could not have George Washington on a horse and have a black man on the ground. I mean, you could not have a black man standing below George Washington. These are things that we discovered over time. These little subtleties. I was reminded again of Keith Adamson's story about the Soviets and our strike-breakers.

But this was phony, this was propaganda. They didn't care about the huge windows and skyscrapers. “These Americans are exaggerating their own thing.” The Italians had come out of the fascist period where there was a certain lack of pride in themselves.

This is my definition of what happened to Italy during Mussolini's time. If I was standing on a corner talking to somebody and I walked across the street and talked to another Italian, he would say, "In Mussolini's time, nobody would stand on a corner and talk with you and waste his time, Mussolini's time. That man would have been doing something, he would have been working."

If I asked the first man that I talked to on that corner about this man who had just jaywalked across the street, he's say, "You see that guy? In Mussolini's time that man would never have jaywalked across the street."

I came to the conclusion that all fascism was, was a system that was chosen by every Italian for every other Italian. He thought he could beat the system but everybody else needed fascism. This is my definition of it anyway.

When I was transferred to Naples, I had this huge palace, out of which Mussolini, when he came to Naples, would talk--he would go on its balcony and harangue the people. It was the Palazzo Fondi and I'll tell you about it later, when I'm transferred down there.

The Italian program was a saturation program in every sense of the word. All our publications were in Italian; they were widely distributed. We even had different translations because the people of Florence, who think that they have the classic Italian tongue, deriving from Dante, never accepted the translations that came out of Rome, because these were Romanos, what the hell did they know about Italian. They would never take anything out of Naples. Sicily was outside the pale. This partisan spirit, which

is completely provincial, existed all through Italy. So we took a ton of these things and even issued different editions of things in order to accommodate these special interests.

It was saturation, pure and simple, which was increasingly cut back after this great victory in '48 and after the Christian Democrats had established their power and the communists proved to be much weaker than anticipated. Most Italians will tell you that the communists were like radishes, red on the outside but white on the inside. And in fact, Togliatti, who was head of the communist party, and the party itself became so bureaucratic: it was really a recruiting office for workers for Milan, the chemical plants, and less of an agitating party.

So the party was less an agent of the Soviet Union and more indigenously dominated in terms of its own objectives and its own needs. In fact, was the basis of in later years that opted for a decentralization of communist control.

The operation in Naples where I later had Branch PAO responsibility covered the southern peninsula, with its 12.5 million people.

Our cultural officer in Rome, old Charles Rufus Morey, carried on a cultural exchange program of his own. He was a professor of medieval art. He was a great character. He was an expert and writer on medieval art and had catalogued the Vatican library. He had academic links throughout the country. If he couldn't get an exchange scholarship for somebody through the State Department, he just wrote to some president of a university, "I've got a fellow here who's bright. I can't do anything with these bureaucrats." And he would place him in an American school. He had a separate program of his own. Andy Anderson, the Country PAO, voiced only token objections, but it was perfectly fine because it meant that we got that many more people out to the U.S.

The up and coming Italians passed through our system. Jim Moceri, who was studying with philosopher Benedetto Croce when I met him in Naples, entered our program and was PAO in Florence in the '50s. He had a man who was later president of Italy go through an exchange program; Jim had selected him as a young intellectual, somewhat leftist, if I recall.

Q: Up and coming politician?

OPAL: Up and coming politician and definitely a patriot as far as Italy was concerned. There were many people like this. The Italians who worked for us were first rate, intelligent and hard- working, from all classes, although there were also countesses and marquesses, we even had secretaries who were Italian marquesses. Cipriana Scelba, who worked in the cultural office, knew everybody in the cultural world. She had been a professor. Her father was minister of the interior and he had a heavy hand that he could readily apply. These people laid out a program that was as powerful as any that I've seen in government service. It was all under the wise and genial hand of Andy Anderson, who had entered Italy as a major with our troops.

Of course, our ambassador was James Clement Dunn, who was a great statesmanly character. Steven Zellerbach, who administered the Marshall Plan program and later went back as our ambassador, was lavish not only in the funds that he directed into information and propaganda work but in his praise of it, because the whole program, I would say, was effective. The 1948 program was effective only because of Marshall Plan efforts and USIS, which were all meshed and lavishly funded.

Q: You mentioned Zellerbach. I gather from what you say that Zellerbach was a great supporter of the information program. He was a wealthy man. Did he divert any of his own personal funds?

OPAL: No, I don't think so. The only wealthy man that diverted his funds--and he did it anonymously--was Stanton Griffis. Stanton Griffis hated Poland. He hated his service there and he always complained of it, but he had a second secretary, an FSO, who administered his private charities and I discovered that--and this was only when I was writing something on Stanton Griffis for the Saturday Evening Post--he had distributed a third of a million dollars in drugs and auto tires and other things as charities, completely anonymously. How he did it, I don't know whether the government knew about it or not, I have no idea, but he did this on his own and he didn't allow me to publicize it. He was known as a terror and a bastard, and he wanted to be known as a terror and a bastard, but he did this privately.

Zellerbach, what he did later when he went back as ambassador, I don't know. I wouldn't be surprised. He was from Crown Zellerbach, and he supported many charities. He wanted to be ambassador in the worst way apparently, but James Dunn, who was the ambassador, made sure that Zellerbach, for all his money as head of the Marshall Plan, did not have equal status with him. This was a cardinal point with Dunn. Zellerbach was an administrator. He did not have ambassadorial rank or anything. He was number two in the country all the time.

Dunn, with those sharp, far-seeing eyes, would go to parties, he would spend, I'm exaggerating of course, but I always said, "James Dunn has the capacity to spend 18 seconds at a party, eye it with the sharp Irish glances of his for the full 18 seconds, depart with his wife, and so go from party to party, and everybody afterwards will tell you he had been there all evening." He was a superb diplomat and he had been assistant secretary for Europe during the war. He was old line, with the independence of being married to an Armour heiress.

The minister was Homer Byington, who was a sweet gent, whose dream was to end up his career as consul general in Naples.

Q: Which he did?

OPAL: Which he did. He had gone to school there. He had been a boy in Naples when his father was in the Foreign Service. He had a lot of friends there. He wound up in Naples. He was very proud of it, when I saw him in 1963.

There was only one other man that I know of who was proud to have ended his career as a consul general, and that was Alfred Tyrrell Nester. He was a man who should go down in infamy. He hated me. The moment he met me he tried to get me out of Naples. I stood up for him at once when he came to my office. He sat down, I sat down, he stood up again and I refused to get up again, he sat down, he got up again, and I refused to get up until he said goodbye. He hated me for this, I'm convinced.

We had a misunderstanding on the American flag. There was a strike and people were lying down in the streets of the city before the trolleys. Nester came to my office in the palazzo just before lunch. All the staff was out for lunch, with the library closed for the siesta hours. Nester told me to take the flag in to avoid attracting demonstrators. I did. I went out and took the flag down myself. Unfortunately, I had an office at the back of this palazzo, with most of USIS ahead of me toward the entrance, and I couldn't see what was going on there and there was nobody there at the moment anyway.

So I took it down myself, I pulled the flag in. This was a day when I had brought a sandwich for lunching in the office. I had no occasion to witness what happened. I got a call two hours later. Nester was shouting on the phone: "You defied me, you ran that flag back up, I want you out of here. I'm going to get you out of here." I said I'll investigate it and find out what this is all about. I did investigate. The flag was up. The librarian came back after lunch, had seen from the street that the flag was down and, knowing people knew the library was open only when we had the flag up, she ran the flag up herself. I didn't know it because I was in my back office. I never explained this to Mr. Nester. I said if he didn't believe that I didn't know about this, my explanation wasn't going to help me now either.

Q: What was Nester's position?

OPAL: Nester was consul general. He had been a minister in Lisbon. When the telegram came from State, "Would you like to go to Naples as consul general?" He wired back, and he was proud of this, "Yes, repeat, yes." So here he was, in Naples.

He resented the fact that I had my own chauffeur-driven car. Well, I had this vast territory and I was always in the car, and besides, I was the unofficial mayor of Naples. This was an inheritance from Joe Cotanzo, who was my predecessor, a fifty year-old man who was a good 20 years older than I. He had come in with the occupation forces and dispensed drugs and food. He was a hero to the Neapolitans. I came along and I inherited all this good will. But I also had a chauffeur-driven car. I needed it. Nester could not understand why the PAO had a car.

Nester probably resented also the fact that an Italian placed in my hands the whole syllabus and class notes of his course on subversion at the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, where he'd been trained for commie activism while a prisoner of war. This was quite a coup, and Nester couldn't understand how I had acquired it. My superiors in Poland had never cared if such stuff came into my hands, although I never solicited it or considered it my real business.

Anyway, I am happy to report that Alfred Tyrrell Nester was surreptitiously drummed out of the Foreign Service, allegedly for some sort of irregularity in his personal or official life. The security people descended on him one day (after I left the post), barred him from his files, and they directed him out of the office. There were hearings and he was allowed to retire. Nester made sure by the way, that the handsome villa which he had occupied in Posillipo as consul general became his. He simply bought it.

In 1966, at a farewell meeting in Beirut, I joked that I could see myself finishing a very honorable career either as an ambassador to a little country in Africa or "even higher," as consul general in Florence. Everybody at the table laughed, not guessing the Nester background.

The purpose of the program in Italy was largely anti-communist. There also was a lot of promotion of American ideas and democracy, because we were trying to establish a democratic system. We had the Christian Democrats in power, so that was no problem. The Italians, who had lost a lot of pride in the '20s and '30s, had much need of encouragement. We encouraged them mainly through exchange programs. It was a well-rounded program. It covered all the purposes of the State Department.

Q: What were the techniques that you used? Did you have access extensively to journalists?

OPAL: Yes. We had the Italian citizen, Dr. Sam Eisenstein, who is now a psychoanalyst in Los Angeles, who has remained a close friend. He headed the science section of our press service. We had so much scientific material to get into the academic community and to the press. The journalists we would send back here on exchanges and seminars.

Andy Anderson was famous for having organized the Italian press service, ANSA. This stemmed from the time we had an Allied High Commissioner after the war. He had all these people. Some were even communist. Andy knew one man was a communist. The Communist Party wanted the man trained as a journalist. Andy said, "Put him to work in my office." And that's what happened. This man remained his friend all the time he was in Italy. He became an editor of L'Unita; they promoted communism but made sure that nothing was said against the United States.

Andy, who lateraled in as an FSO in 1950, was asked about this by our State Department security people. In fact his promotion was held up for at least two years in the mid-1950s because of the ANSA business in his personal dossier.

Q: I wanted to get this particularly on the record. As you know, we were often castigated in the congressional hearings when we made any kind of statement to the effect that USIS had been responsible for getting certain programs and for being very effective in their operations. I remember one instance, when Ed Murrow was claiming credit for something that happened in Europe and a senator--I wonder who was our great enemy anyway--said, "Oh, come now, Mr. Murrow, you don't mean to imply that..." And Ed stopped him and he kept fiddling his knee and said, "Mr. Senator, I meant to say exactly what I said." Period. Long silence.

But because of that fact, I wanted to get all of these evidences on the record. What the agency program was really supposed to be.

OPAL: The terrible thing about many of these evidences of our effectiveness is that you can't detail them publicly. Because one way or another they had to do with deep psychological factors. They had to do with the relations that that man has with his confrère, even if they were on the left. You just don't want to expose that stuff. Also you can't mention even the subtle influences. You can't take public pride in them but there are subtle influences.

For example, when I was in Beirut, many years later, I had standing beside me a young Foreign Service officer who later complained to Ambassador Armin Meyer--Meyer put this complainingly into his advisory efficiency report on me--he said this man was so assertive, meaning me, when he talks to journalists that "I don't see how he possibly be an effective Foreign Service officer." This was the incident, and it instances our effectiveness. There was an editor of an Arab paper in Beirut that I was talking to with this young FSO standing beside me. I said, "Why do you people assume that the US government is going to espouse a policy that you would consider beneficial to your own cause, if you never, never, support anything that we do? Now you have no personal or political interest in what happens in Vietnam"--this was when the Vietnam war was heating up--"yet look at your press. You never say anything. We might be fighting for freedom, we might be fighting for our mothers, we might be fighting for god knows something <u>you</u> even believe in. You'll never say anything about that. You want us to say something favorable to you on Israel and because you're Arabs, you all have this unified posture that you have to present. You're anti-American because Israel is in the area. It's in the area, you say, because of the Americans."

I went on, speaking in English, which the journalist knew well, "Why don't you say something that will make us respect your point of view because you respect our point of view. But you show no respect for our point of view in world affairs at all. Why should we show any to you? If there is some evidence of it I think you would get some sort of response. You have people in the United States who aren't selling your line either. You're so determined that we are outside your purview and outside your interests and outside your friendly circle that all you countenance is anti-U.S. policy and anti-U.S. statement. Why don't you come forth and say it."

Well, he looked at me, he was astonished, and Norman Anderson, this FSO was standing beside me, standing there. Next day there was this scathing article, and this was a typical journalistic trick to write of a foreign visitor and then the foreign visitor was supposed to be saying all the things that I had said. I can't talk on the public record what happened two days after this man wrote the article. All I say is later he entered into cooperation with the U.S. government. He did a complete turnaround because, he told me, when he thought about what I'd said he realized he had never heard a diplomat who had spoken so straightforwardly.

Q: You mentioned that Armin Meyer put this in your record?

OPAL: Yes, he left the post to go as ambassador of Iran. He left an efficiency report which he gave to Adrian Middleton, who was the DCM, and the only person who ever heard me talk as directly as this was Norman Anderson. Norman Anderson was Meyer's regular interpreter for Arabic. I can think of no one else who could have heard me, and I was rather aggressive in this instance. But I felt a resonance away back in the journalist and it turns out my instinct was right.

Q: Meyer was ambassador when you first arrived. And he was replaced by Dwight Porter, who remained ambassador for a number of years.

OPAL: Yes.

Q: Let's get back to Italy for the time being.

OPAL: We were free to implement the full spectrum of our objectives because it was a free environment.

Q: Were you able to get into their radio program too?

OPAL: Yes. We had radio scripts which the Italians would broadcast. We had people placed in their studios and materials placed with them. We didn't have Italian VOA. We depended completely on the local radio, which was very effective, because there was no television at that time.

I had a housekeeper who was a great Roman-dialect poet. This poor gal had been raped 40 times when the Greeks came into Italy in reprisals for what the Italians had done to them during the war. She was Lidia Valentini. She used to write poems to our little boy, who talked Italian before he talked English. Saturdays I would be listening to these Vivaldi concerts and they would have an intermission and there was Lidia Valentini, winning another prize for her dialect poetry. She earned 50 times as much from her poetry as she did working for us. She was blind as a bat, she would never wear glasses. Virginia McGonigal later went there as executive officer and inherited her, after we left Italy. She was great.

The friendliness of the Italians you can assume existed. The only ones I found the Italians disliked more than each other were Italo-Americans, Italians who returned from the States. The Italo-American soldiers lorded it over the Italians, loved to give them candy after the liberation and buy their woman. But any other American was fine to them. We had a friendly reception. They had these peculiar attitudes and you had to take them into account. We insisted on making as much of the administration of the aid program as possible an Italian thing. It worked out and as you know, they had great economic recovery.

I had this contrast between an open and closed society. This opens your mind a little bit. It was at the beginning of my career. Within three years I had run the spectrum. This was very healthy for me.

ON THE PLANNING STAFF IN WASHINGTON, 1950-52

In April, 1950 I went on home leave. In spite of Mr. Nester, I was expected to go back to my post. I even left my apartment and furnishings in Naples. I suddenly got a call from Washington and my leave was interrupted, permanently. Andy Anderson was now in Washington and was heading up the information end (IIE) of the program in State--Johnstone headed the cultural side.

Q: At that time it was not USIA, of course, but it was USIE, U.S. Information and Education Program administration within the State Department.

OPAL: Andy said he had a problem on field reporting. After six months of wrestling with it, they weren't getting anywhere. Maybe I could come to Washington and attack the problem. I did. In a couple of days I looked at what they did. I came up with this idea of separating the evaluation part from the statistical part. We used to have the statistical analysis and evaluation all in one report. I said, "Separate these two things and make the evaluation part a statement of goals and then the analysis of how or to the degree we reached them. Keep the statistical part which the media need, IPS need to know how many pieces went out, how many pieces were placed, the exhibits section needs to know too." Andy clapped his hands and said, "Why didn't this occur to anybody here?" So I wrote a new field instruction on reporting. While I was doing this the Korean war broke out. The Korean war, in retrospect, taught me something that I may do a paper on. That is, man, for all his capacity for imagination, cannot imagine reality, although much of it is produced out of his imagination. Let me explain this. If you had canvassed opinion in Washington before June 25 of 1950, asked the policy people what we would do if there was a crossing of the 38th parallel, the impression you would have gotten would have been as expressed in the public statement by Acheson, which placed the whole Korean peninsula outside the pale of U.S. security interests. This was the basis on which the communists had actually acted. If you had asked the people in Washington, "Yes, right, we wouldn't defend up there."

But if you took a canvass the day after the crossing of the parallel, there was absolute unanimity that we have to go in there one way or another. As a police action, what have you, we had to defend. What I learned from this as a young government man was that all the planning in the world won't prepare you for the event. There is something inherent in the actual fact that is far beyond all your scenarios, all your games playing, everything else that you cannot envision before the act itself. The atom bomb was such an act. The world has been different since then. But why? Because it had to happen. The holocaust, the destruction of the Jews, imagination could not have conceived this thing except incrementally in day-to-day action by Nazi crazy men. This thing had to happen in its total instancy for imagination to comprehend it.

My article would go into the use of the atom bomb, which my work at the University of Chicago related to under one of my hats at the university. I might address the business of the atomic bomb in the light of this business about the imagination. You remember we had a personal correspondence relating to the U-2 incident of 1960? I told you how I would have this peculiar heating of the body, something like a religious illumination, and that's what happened at the time of the U-2. This I certainly believe.

The Korean war came. We were all working on a six-day week at the time. I was tasked to take on a job on a newly established program planning staff, which was one of the offices under Andy Anderson. There was another one, policy advisory staff, which was under Walter Schwinn. Heath Bowman was running it for a while.

Anyway, I had the responsibility there for the European area program and for the Voice of America worldwide. The Voice thing meant a good bit of contact with the people in New York. That was in the days of VOA Director Foy Kohler. The planning staff itself was pretty wide ranging. We had to establish different budgetary parameters for the various information and cultural operations.

The things I worked on especially I can recount. There was an Annex 5 of the national policy paper, NSC68. Now, The Wise Men, a book by a couple of Washington news reporters on Harriman, Acheson--you probably have read the book--goes into NSC68 which was the new cold war policy, which Paul Nitze was working up.

Annex 5 had to do with the Ring Plan. I worked with John Devine on that with the outside advisor, Jerome Wiesner, the physicist at MIT and later MIT president, and a science advisor for our President. The Ring Plan was devoted to the problem of getting transmitters placed around the Soviet bloc--in the Philippines, Germany, and so on. We would surround the bloc with powerful transmitters to get the Voice in, in spite of jamming that had begun by this time.

There were jokes going around about it. I think Edward V. Barrett, the assistant secretary for public affairs, was asked once, "What the hell good will this thing be?" He said, "Listen, we get this thing working, we're going to be able to turn on the lights in Moscow

and anybody with a metal filling in his mouth is going to be able to pick up the Voice of America."

Well, this is a fact. If you have that much power you can, you can pick it up in your bed springs. This was the intention. It's been built since and that was part of the Voice apparatus.

I wrote two field directives based on the new Truman Doctrine, and these were the directives that really shaped all our program policy toward anti-communism and away from the full and fair picture idea. This flowed out of NSC68.

Q: Now that was financed by a supplemental appropriation which was given about February or March of 1950. I remember that we went up on the Hill to justify this and met with the usual skepticism. We only got about half of what we were asking for but still it enabled the agency to do a great deal more than it had ever been able to do before. I remember that Campaign of Truth when it was in its incipient phase and then when we finally got the money.

OPAL: This was a part of it. It was an exciting time to be back there because we really were working. I wrote a paper, "Thoughts Concerning the Dark Side of the Moon", which was a paper on the eastern European satellites. I sent it over to the policy people and I said, "Look, we need a new policy on the satellites and you boys should come up with something. Here is what I think we should be taking account of."

Lew Revey wrote an excellent paper. It took him months to get it out. We were both commended for the work. But the policy paper was his. The prose was his. He took some phrases out of mine--like "youth should be made nostalgic for a past it never had"--but very little. This was a new statement.

We also issued a new statement on our objectives vis à vis the Soviet Union. I worked on that with policy people. I was always going back and forth anyway between State at Foggy Bottom and our building at 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue. That was when I met Joe Phillips. He took over the policy advisory staff and then later was deputy assistant secretary of state for public affairs. Joe was in charge of that project over in State. Whatever papers we turned out on the USSR we would send over for comment to George Kennan, who was over at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton.

I worked on the terms of reference for separation of objectives between VOA and Radio Free Europe. RFE had a much more aggressive approach, whereas VOA had to be was more diplomatic. The interesting thing is that when we talked to the satellites, we still thought of the possibility of a war. Once Senator McMahon came up with a statement that he wanted to issue as the conscience of Congress or something similar to that, in which he was going to enunciate, "We have no objection to the little man in Russia. We have only the memories of great cooperation with them in the second world war and we love the Russians, it's just their government that we don't approve of."

The draft of it got over to us and Joe Phillips got me and a few other people together one day. He said, "I have a little memo here from a colonel in the subsidiary group for plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I want to read it to you guys."

He did and it was enough to make us kill the McMahon Resolution. The fellow from the Joint Chiefs said, "It's all right for us to be saying we love little Ivan, but if we go to war tomorrow we're going to have to be killing little Ivan. And the last thing we want the American people to be believing is that they love little Ivan. We don't want this psychology prevailing. I have no objection to Ivan, we have none, but in terms of war this is a serious flaw in this resolution."

We discussed this and we agreed that the military had a point and we didn't go around saying we love you if we're going to be forced to shoot you tomorrow. This was putting it baldly. The resolution was killed. There was still this sort of feeling there.

Lew Revey and I did a study of the incendiary potential among the satellite states and the Soviet nationalities, if a war or a revolution broke out. There was always war or revolution or they would start a revolution and we would have to go in and that would be war. We wouldn't start it but they would invite as we almost got into Germany because of that business in '53. We had troops there and everything. It wasn't a question of our will, it was a question of our not being able to avoid it. When I say we talk of war, this is what the guy from the Joint Chiefs was talking about too. We may not want to but this is what may come, so we have to be careful.

We listed the countries where there would be most likely to be an uprising. The Ukrainians, who hate the Greater Russians, cooperated with the Nazis in the first war until the Nazis in their stupidity turned on them and did all sorts of oppressive things. The Ukraine was at the top of our list. Number two on our list was Poland. Number three on our list was Hungary. So we were prepared, at least psychologically, within our government. We had studies made of the different people for background and psychological purposes.

One idea I had once--I said, "I keep hearing around here that the caciques run governments in Latin America and you have the chieftains in the Far East, who control everything, and so it's silly for us to appeal to the countries. Our programs can't possibly affect them. We have to get these caciques in our pocket. All this is fine, but what do they appeal to even if they appeal hypocritically? What values and what traditions do their leaders appeal to in their societies?"

Everybody in the room looked at me. Mel Ruggles was there from the Office of Intelligence Research in State. Mel said, "You know, that would be interesting. Let's do it."

They commissioned this on the outside from a woman social anthropologist. The first study was, what lip service do the leaders of Indonesia pay. Our politicians pay lip service to everything. Hart pays lip service. He may go fooling around but he pays lip service to what he thinks are our values. Whether it is hypocritical or not, the fact is that these things exist in these societies and the leaders have to appeal to them. In the eastern societies, as I discovered later, the leader of the government has a mandate of heaven. When he loses that this is when he falls out of power. This is a mysterious thing. If somebody shoots him he's out of power because he's lost the mandate of heaven. While he has the mandate of heaven he goes enunciating these values.

One of the great influences on me was Guglielmo Ferrero's book on power--I made many people in State read it and I later had it in my long culture paper which I'll talk about later. The support and allegiance that people give to their leaders and institutions, even when these are foisted on them in one way or another, if they prevail it's because they have this traditional support among the people. They may not know what it is, it might be moral, it might be spiritual, but this does exist, this supports the leader and the institutions. Legitimacy comes from this support. This is how I differ from Kissinger and I once discussed this with him once when he came in as a consultant. He talks of legitimacy in purely diplomatic terms: this is the government in power, it's legitimate and we recognize it. But this is not the kind of legitimacy that I was talking about. I was talking about what Ferrero was talking about. He got this idea out of Talleyrand's memoirs. This is the internal support of the people for their leadership in terms of their history and values. What are the leaders appealing to to maintain power? They may do all kinds of skullduggery to maintain power and they may be hypocritical about these things, but if we want to talk to these people we've got to know this. Whether this leader is there tomorrow or not, we don't know. But if we're going to have any kind of appeal, we've got to find this out so that we know whether we have benchmarks, whether we have tally points, whether we have some sort of reciprocal resonance, and if it doesn't exist we have no insight into these societies.

Q: Which is precisely what Hitler was doing when he was in power. He was finding what appealed to the psyche of the German people because they had felt defeated after World War I. He had spotted it.

OPAL: Yes. They had many reasons for being unhappy. The Versailles Treaty. This reminds me of a discussion I had later with Ed Murrow. I think we'll get around to that. This is a deep thing in society and unless we have an awareness of it, we're really talking to the wind. We really don't know what we're talking to and it seemed to me in my early days in this work that this is something we should know if we're going to have any kind of real communication and intercourse with these people. It was interesting. It was what Sukarno was appealing to. And what the man who overthrew him, Suharto, was appealing to. These are all values. They may come out of religion but they are also considered to be moral and ethical.

I had a peculiar exercise once in which I went to New York and met some publishers. This was in '50 to '52 when I was on the planning staff. I worked up some special projects. I don't think I'm free to discuss them. In fact, I'm so unfree to discuss them that when I turned them over to Ed Barrett. He went before Congress and called for $5 million dollars in expenditures. They said, "If we give you this money what would you do with it?" He said, "Well, I would turn it over to another agency, of course."

That's the sort of stuff I was working on. Why the hell I was doing it I don't know, but this grew out of a meeting that I had with a man named Davidson from the Rand Corporation. The projects just seemed to suggest themselves. Since they did suggest themselves, I worked it up. It was an easy exercise because it was an exercise in imagination and some awareness of what was available to us in the government and therefore, I just made projects. I limited myself because I simply no time to go on with it. The ideas apparently were useful, but not for us.

On the planning staff, we had the geographical areas broken down and then we each had one of the media; in my case, I had the Voice of America. Somebody might have exchange of persons, somebody else might have exhibits, and so on. We had a fellow named Ben Gedalecia, who came out of the academic environment. He was a social scientist who was in the evaluation work, setting up evaluation projects. Bernie Wiesman, who was a labor man, since we were obviously interested in labor everywhere, would work on labor worldwide. He had no area as such and he had old duels going on in the American labor community. All of these were useful to him because he was able to pick up what they were doing and we were able to promulgate things and actually publicize events and developments which were useful to us.

One of the things that I did regularly was meet with the people in Voice of America and with Bertram D. Wolfe, who wrote Three Who Made A Revolution, and Howard Mayer, who were both in the ideological section of the Voice. Their copy went through me, but these were old-timers.

Bert Wolfe--I don't know if he was called upon to or just resigned on his own at the time of the McCarthy business--had been a communist and had broken with Stalin back in the '20s and he was a favorite interviewee for security people of various branches of our government who were infinitely curious about his personal conversations and his personal break with Stalin. They all wanted to know every word that had been exchanged between them.

COMMUNISM IN WARTIME: AN ASIDE

Wolf had predicted during the war that the line would go down central Europe, just as it did along the Elbe, and that the Soviets would have everything on that side and we would be free, if we could, to operate on this side. During the war, the self-censorship of the American publications was so great that he was not able to get it published. He showed me his letters of rejection. He said, for example, when Trotsky's book on Stalin was ready

for the press, they found that Cass Canfield, head of Harper's, had buried it in his vaults because he assumed the U.S. Government did not want this material published. Bernard Malamuth, who was also writing on Stalin, had these problems where people were just sitting on things that would be anti-Soviet, anti-Stalin, simply because the war didn't seem to permit adverse publicity.

Of course, Mission to Moscow, that foolish thing written by Ambassador Davies, they later converted into a movie, was part of this. It was not a pro-communist conspiracy at all. It was just a pro-Allied policy, really, and people were just interpreting in this way.

WORK ON THE ATOM BOMB; A DIGRESSION ON BACKGROUND

I was at the University of Chicago during the Manhattan atom bomb project--the so-called metallurgy project--and I found the press very restrained. We had events occur, for example, an autoclave broke apart in one of our chemistry labs, and it had to do with the project. The press found out about it because the fire department was called. I would 'phone the newspapers and say, "Don't report it, please." And they never broke faith.

We had Niels Bohr, the Great Dane as we called him, coming to Chicago. I knew every time he came and what kind of protection we gave him so that nobody would find out about it. But the press would find out one way or another. I'd call them up and say, "Look, lay off." They did. Because if you put together all of these visiting scientists, you would know what the heck was going on there. Of course, we worried about it. The security people would meet in my office to study Buck Rogers, the space comic strip, to see whether some secret stuff was being infiltrated there and gotten out. The Soviets had spies all the time. They had Klaus Fuchs doing a great job, as we now know. But we all were very sensitive about it. The basic research was done at the University of Chicago, and that's the first place we had a self-maintaining nuclear chain reaction, in December, 1942. Since we're going a little bit into the background, I might mention that I wrote the only press release that I know of that had footnotes in it. Colonel Considine in General Grove's office flew in--I got it 2:00 o'clock one morning--the Smythe Report before it was distributed to the media. This was the famous report on the atom bomb. My wife and I sat in our garden all that Sunday making an index for it so that I could refer to it as I do to this and some books and articles by Stranahan and others on pre-war physics and nuclear fission. There was an awful lot already known. I talked to our own Professor Dempster, who discovered U-235. I got out this press release with all these references, I gave reference Smythe Report, page so and so, reference Stranahan, so and so. The wording we placed on the plaque over the Stagg Field site of that first chain reaction came out of that press release: this was the birthplace the atomic age. So I was not entirely ignorant of this security business.

MORE ABOUT THE VOICE OF AMERICA

Leo Lowenthal, who was from the Frankfurt School of Social Analysis (like Herbert Marcuse and Otto Kirchheimer over in State), had an evaluation program which turned

largely on the kind of reactions we got from people behind the Iron Curtain. This was the only real evidence we had. This was the only evidence the Hill was interested in. If we had ten letters from people in the Soviet Union saying they listened to the Voice of America, I think this was effective as a public opinion survey in Germany. We needed some evidence. This was all that we had. Leo provided it and he didn't fudge any of this although this work was somewhat of a come down for him because he was a well-known European social scientist.

I would gather this information for our own evaluation purposes and budget support. I wrote the presentations for Acheson and Ed for Barrett. (I wrote a message on most favored nation treatment for Yugoslavia which fell flat in Congress! Me and then later George Kennan!) All this came under our staff, too.

THE PAPER ON U.S. CULTURE ABROAD

Because it appears to have had some influence on government and general thinking in this country, my paper on U.S. culture abroad perhaps deserves mention.

One weekend, in late '51, I was just angry with the statements I had gotten from an assistant cultural officer in Paris, who told me how he went into the provinces and the mayor was always there and our man had to make some presentation. He said, "I spend the first five minutes talking about his great culture and then I can talk about ours. That's fine. As long as I flatter him about his I can say anything I want about us and about this program."

He talked in this manner and I said, "You talk about their superior culture, but do you believe it?"

"Of course it's true, they do have a superior culture. This isn't phony."

I said, "Well isn't it phony of you just to cotton up to him that way?"

He said, "No."

I listened to this and I went home and I wrote this paper, I had heard so much of this kind of talk from returning field officers. My paper was written in white heat out of my head and without research; it went to well over a hundred pages. Later it was distributed to every PAO and CAO going abroad and also out into the field. It was Andy Anderson, who had been a respected editor of an architectural magazine, who saw to that. Andy Berding told me later this was the basis of his policy statement on culture that he sent out when he was deputy for policy for USIA four years later.

I felt, as I said earlier, that the worst thing in the world for us is to worry about our standing culturally. Be ourselves and not worry about it. Of course, I wrote this in '51, before American art exercised its worldwide influence.

I felt that the Europeans, especially the elites who had set the tone of their society, had lost their influence after the war. They no longer had control. They resented our coming in. They resented the Americans. I said, "We should accept this. This is something that is part of the nature of the beast and we shouldn't try to overcome it or anything. You cannot argue matters of culture anyway. These are things that are indigenous to you and germane to what you believe in, what you think, and it's not necessarily transportable as such and you simply don't worry about it."

When I wrote the thing, I wrote this I also had this addendum. I discovered that there was a survey made in Germany after the war. Somebody made comparisons with before the war. It was interesting. The Germans were asked about the culture of various people, like the French, the Americans, Japanese, what have you. After the war, in their eyes we were right on top. We had the greatest culture in the world. I said, "What the hell does this mean? This means a confusion of culture and power. They see us as powerful and therefore we have the greatest culture. They had had a great culture, that's why they had the power. They've lost it now. To worry about this is silly. We shouldn't."

The whole tenor of the paper was to stop this comparison business and to go about our work and not worry about attitudes toward culture. I said, "The work of the world has nothing to do with it. You talk to the Italian workman, he doesn't worry about the Moses in Florence and so on. He's worried about his bread and we're helping bring him bread. Talk to him about his bread and talk to him about the bread we're helping bring him, but don't talk about our culture. It's insulting, first of all, and it's most insulting to tell anybody that we're superior in any way."

I instanced the case of the Poles. Why is it that the Poles accept American culture and our products, our films, Hollywood films, and everything else. Why? They accept our culture because they don't feel they are threatened by our culture. This is the only thing that should concern us. Since this is so, I think we should pursue a normal and unworried course where we expose what we have, it's visible to everybody, but not to try to establish guiding lights or superior standards or anything that you could consider standard-setting as such." This was mainly the tenor of it.

Later, I boiled it down into a few thousand words, took the policy recommendations out of it, and sent it for publication in The Yale Review in 1956. It apparently was an eye-opener. It was just refreshing and necessary, I felt. It was selected as the outstanding article printed in U.S. periodicals that year. I wrote this was just before I left the planning staff to go to Vienna.

I did another thing that never paid off then, mainly because I wasn't around to pursue it and it probably couldn't have been pursued. It was done partly and I'm sure independently when Tom Sorensen came in to head up policy in the agency in 1961.

I designed statements, either of definitions or of declaratory judgments, "We stand for freedom" or "Promote an international environment favorable to U.S. policy interest," or indictments of the communism, "communism involves the repression of freedom", for example, or whatever. These were statements that were never to find their way into the product as such but simply different conclusions that you wanted your audiences to come to on the basis of the information product which would evolve from these informing notions.

What this meant was that after I had all of these definitions, beginning with the goals, I would go through each of the media along; if this statement could be a message that could be presented through a film, I would put a check, either could or could not. If it was a highly abstract ideological statement, which could not be presented through a film but could be presented through a press article or radio program, each of these things would be checked. Some things would lend themselves to exhibits but couldn't lend themselves to movies or they could lend themselves to movies and they were best presented as movies but not as press items because you wanted to dramatize its content.

You took all of these statements, bounced them, in effect, against the media that you would use to convey them, in either a film or article or radio speech, and all of these statements that evolved from the original goals, objectives and supporting subheading items, as you came to the end of it, you had all of your media on your chart and all of these statements and a decision as to how all of the media would lend themselves to all of the statements which are part of the general statement which all lead to the national objective. I'm putting it very roughly.

For example, Tom Sorensen picked up this thesis from Walt Rostow's The Stages of Economic Growth; The New Manifesto, and took up development in the developing countries as an item that we should be promoting. If the medium lent itself to it, that idea could be advanced through that medium. The men on the policy staff would analyze the content and decide the use of our various media, doing it in terms of these ideas. If you talked about the meteorology, for example, it had to be something that would enhance the developmental process in the societies that these messages were addressed to. This is exactly what Tom Sorensen was trying to get the agency to do. He had several ideas that he wanted to get all our media worldwide talking about because these were essential ideas and "development" of social infrastructure, which was one of Rostow's concepts, was one of them.

In the '50s exercise, I had several things, not just development, it might be a topic under the communist side or under the Americana side or the freedom side. I had several statements that I took through all of the processes of analysis as to which of the media would best lend themselves to their advancement. What you wound up with eventually was a definition of the priorities among the media in relation to priorities among the policy objectives or the ideas that you wanted to convey. All of this was done in terms of the terminal unit which was the idea that an audience would get from our materials, our film, lecture, exhibits. I don't know how clear this is but it was started and then we got

several other people to work on it and we found in different areas, because of different levels of communication sophistication, we had to have different charts.

This was never implemented. It called for a kind of program development that not all of the programs could not possibly support. Since we didn't produce dramatic films, only documentary films, we had to be rather blunt. (Andy Anderson later spent months in Hollywood trying, unsuccessfully, to get producers to take account of our worldwide propaganda needs.) A sophisticated moral argument had to be argued in prose, so to speak. An ideological argument could only be presented in language. It didn't lend itself to films. But these ideas were very important for us to present because these were ideas that we wanted people to derive from the materials that we were producing. This was a rather complicated notion and it was greeted with a certain amount of enthusiasm, but nobody really could enforce it.

Unfortunately, our programs in Washington were blunt instruments, they were not so refined, they couldn't always give a special message for a special program. A film had to be produced for worldwide distribution, an exhibit was pretty much worldwide and so on. In some degree, we were able to adapt different things for different countries. Specifying the audience, specifying the kind of message to go to it. This was why when we specified this in the Task Force report you headed in 1962-63, I was still back in that damned 1951 exercise. We decided, you'll remember, that the thing for us in Europe is person to person contact with the most sophisticated officers in the Agency. Not a big program, let's cut back. What we wanted were sophisticated officers who could meet with their counterparts in European society and exchange ideas with them. This was the heart of our report.

During these 1950-52 years on the planning staff, I had a lot of personal ideological debating going on. I've mentioned to you Herbert Marcuse, who was a Marxist-Freudian guru of the American and European students of the '60s. His colleague from the Frankfurt school was Otto Kirchheimer, also on the research staff in State. Dick Tims, my pal from Warsaw, was researching Czech and Polish matters there too; he would produce a lot of materials which were useful to us, especially for playing back to the area.

The interesting thing about these people was that they were in State and this was a State function as well as an information and propaganda function. This we don't have any more. When Henry Loomis took over the intelligence operation in the agency, he tried to have some of this but we never had it because State had a special need which was anchored in policy formulation in State which had its offshoot in our materials and we never had that afterward when we became separated from State. Now whether you can argue that this was a great loss or not is another question but it certainly it something perhaps worth reviving.

This was a very important part of my period there because we were in a car pool together and we used to chat all the time. Otto Kirchheimer was a legal expert. He wrote a book on judicial politics in the German Republic under Hitler and he was really a world authority on canonical law. These were very interesting types. Among them were Mel Ruggles and

Charlie Tayte, the son-in-law of my former philosopher mentor, Bertrand Russell. There was a lot of stimulation that came from exchanging ideas with people like this. We were in one car pool, you see.

Going back to the policy goals exercise, I felt that we never reached the level of sophistication, as an agency, with output that was required by these needs. I think in some respects we did, however, and I think what Tom Sorensen tried to do was commendable in a way, but it led to something that we felt was inherently dangerous to the whole process itself. That is, in talking within agency or within State, about our products and what went into our products, we would tend to drive the ideas under these rubrics so that if a fellow was involved in the weather in his own country, we said "Weather, now that had to do with meteorology. This is a developing country, it's important for them to have good meteorological information, therefore by very artful manipulation of our own minds we come to the conclusion that this man was in development. That this was all developmental and therefore this was justified." And this is what happened in Sorensen's time.

I remember he would send up a man whose name will go unmentioned who came up to the television service and say, "Well, what is that doing to promote development?" I'd look at him and improvise like crazy. He'd say, "Yes, I see the point, I see the point." He'd agree completely, making a complete turnaround, and I'd wonder what I'd said to convince him.

This was the terrible thing about it. There's always this danger that you out-sophisticate yourself because you're out, so to speak, to sophisticate your poor materials, which are innocent. All you're doing is designing. As an exercise as such, it could be very healthy and what it did do was tell you that certain things were impossible because of the nature of the medium and certain other things were possible. Which is where we came out again in the Task Force and in my 1950's exercise, but it was necessary to do it.

SETTING UP THE NATO INFO SERVICE, NATIS

In those years on the planning staff, I worked on the group that wrote the terms of reference and then later went to Paris to set up the NATO information service, which still exists. It was something that we had to sell to our people in Paris and in the London headquarters. We had to consult with Ambassador Spofford and Ted Achilles, who wrote much of the NATO Treaty, both in London.

ON NEGOTIATING WITH THE SOVIETS: AN ASIDE

Before I went over that time, I was on the planning group for the Philip Jessup-Andre Gromyko meetings in Paris which met for 63 days and didn't agree on even the first item of the agenda. Negotiating with the Soviets, I always said afterwards, was beautifully demonstrated between Gromyko and Jessup. My view of negotiating with the Soviets representative is, He comes in one morning and he says, "How can you say that is a hundred miles from A to B when the whole world knows it's a hundred miles from B to

A?" The next morning he comes in, "How can you say it's a hundred miles from B to A when the whole world knows it's a hundred miles from A to B?" If they decided they are not going to do any negotiating, this is what they do. They don't negotiate.

This was something that Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson knew about the Soviets. He negotiated the Austrian peace treaty. The word came that the Soviets really wanted a treaty. He had been meeting for 15 or 18 months with them, on and off. He wasn't getting anywhere with them. He would yield and they would yield and so on. A month later it would go on and they would yield on this point or they would backtrack. He determined in '55 that they wanted a treaty, there was no question they wanted a treaty. What it was is that they wanted to cut off our lines of communication between Bonn and Leghorns and they wanted to cut us out of Austria. They were really interested in getting a treaty and getting out of there. Thompson decided, "I'm not going back to go to the last position."

The next time he met with them, Tommy Thompson went in, with all his initial requests. He went in with a bag full of things that he had brought with him to the very first meeting, all the things we had been yielding on. He demanded all of them. He got all of them. Neutral Austria. We didn't care whether Austria was neutral. Dividing lines, Russians out, we get out. That was fine. We get out, we clear out the state, I lose my high commissioner hat--which was the thing he wanted to lose all the time. He just determined by the way they conveyed their information to him that they wanted a treaty and they would go to any length to get the treaty. Just as we've discovered now that they want to cut back in forces. They'll do it. We can take any stand practically, unless you want to make them ridiculous and you don't.

WRITING FOR ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, ETC.

I wrote a paper on the Russian-language Ameryka for Eleanor Roosevelt to present to the U.N. (For some reason, I also used to get her crank mail to answer, stuff on ways to penetrate the Iron Curtain.) This was through a steering committee which I sat in State under the chairmanship of Charles "Chip" Bohlen. I also wrote a position paper on radio spectrum allocations for the World Broadcasting Conference. Don't ask me why I was doing these things. They would say, "Would you do this?" I would say, "Okay, let me do some homework."

I would go out and learn as much as I could and come back with a piece of paper. They thought this was great. (I also wrote the answers for Eleanor Roosevelt's crackpot mail.)

Then I spent several weeks in Germany on a three-man oral examining panel for recommending people for the permanent career service among the officers in HICOG, then involved in the various occupation activities. There were a couple of hundred who came before us. This was the first of the committees as selection panels. We took all the people in information and cultural and land government areas. Our group passed many of the officers into State who later also worked in the agency, including Hans "Tommy"

Tuch, Pat Van Delden, Gordon Ewing, Edward Schechter, Fred Taylor and a lot of others. This was in the spring of 1951.

The other two panel members, Bob Cowan and Bob Ryan, were foreign service types. We were unanimous on all choices, something people did not expect. I was there representing Charles Hulten who was then general manager of the information and cultural program. The thing we insisted on, aside from their knowledge and experience, was the availability of these people for service anywhere in the world. Even though many of them were refugees from Germany and Austria and Europe generally, they now were U.S. citizens--sworn in in 1943 because they were serving in the military.

Nevertheless, they had to show some understanding of America and of our traditions and above all, they should not show the contempt that many Europeans turned on America. Oddly enough, this came up in our examination of people who were refugees from Hitler but nevertheless displayed these attitudes of contempt for Americans as barbarians. Ferreting out these cultural questions was thrown on me. These people were rejected. We felt that they could not serve abroad as representative Americans. We didn't give a damn about their accents. Ed Schechter was one. He has a horrible accent, worse than Kissinger's, as you know, but he had an understanding, appreciation of things that many Americans probably don't because they don't think about their roots.

INTEGRATING INFO MAN ON STATE'S PLANNING STAFF, SP

As I said, I wrote the culture paper and then a question came up about me. Joe Phillips, who had become deputy assistant secretary of state after he had taken over the policy advisory staff, wanted me as a full-fledged member of SP, the policy planning staff of the State Department which had been started by George Kennan. It was now run by Paul Nitze. I was to have a slot on the staff but I and every representative after me was to come out of the program of information and exchange appropriation. Joe Phillips felt that the long-range planning in the State Department should have ingrained in it considerations of our image abroad. He wanted me for this job. He set it up for me. But it was to be a GS-15, like the others on SP. I was in a job like that on a planning staff, but I was GS-14, having resigned my commission in the foreign service reserve. Thurman Bernard was general manager of the program after Charles Hulten. He had no 15 slot to spare and thought it should come directly out of SP's allotments.

While they were wrangling over this, Walter Roberts, who was in the European program on the public affairs side, had this job which he cooked up as "just perfect" for me. It was a public affairs slot in Vienna. He wrote its terms of reference and got cleared. While the wrangling over the SP thing went on, I said okay, I'll go to Vienna. The terrible thing about the SP thing is that it was never done. Our own Abe Sirkin was put on State Department planning sometime later. Whether he was a full fledged member paid for by State or just an observer from the Agency, I don't know. It was only in the '70s that they were doing that. We had a man over in the Defense Department. I think Lew Revey or Abe Sirkin was there, but I'm not sure.

A PAO IN VIENNA, 1952-53

The job in Vienna was as a public affairs officer but with a wide and undefinable range of operations. I operated under Charles Moffly, the Country public affairs officer, and later under William Harlan Hale, who was a historian, novelist and biographer and who had been a psy-warrior in World War II, famous as the operator of Radio Luxembourg. His German was perfect; mine, alas, was a rusty memory. His father had been a correspondent there, so Bill was quite familiar with German-speaking areas.

One of my jobs was to work on the political secretariat of the Allied Control Council, which was under the Allied Occupation. Bill Stearman prepared my materials for that work, but my main work had to do with policy coordination between the embassy, the public affairs division and CIC, counter-intelligence. I used to chair a weekly policy meeting of this group. The public affairs division was one of the largest in the world at the time. We had a radio network--Red White Red--which was under Fred Taylor who'd come over from Germany. We had the Wiener Kurier, which was the daily German language newspaper under Henry Reinert. Hale had first been information officer and later became PAO. Later we had Larry Dalcher there as information officer. We had a general manager, Sandy Marlowe. We had original motion picture production under an Austrian-born former child actor and protégé of Max Reinhardt, contacts and exchanges with the theater which he also handled, and a photography section which supplied our publications and the Wiener Kurier, under the great Yoichi Okamoto, who became Lyndon Johnson's presidential photographer.

Yoichi had an infamous picture of me at my desk with my feet up on it, a typical insouciant posture of mine. He said, "I'm going to make you famous." He made me very infamous, but I was proud of the picture. I have it somewhere here. He was very imaginative and had many, many things that went out into the Austrian community that weren't devoted completely to USIS, but it endeared him to the Austrian people.

Bill Stearman, son of the aircraft inventor, handled peripheral reporting, which was set up within my office for reporting on developments in Eastern Europe. We studied the press and the FBIS reports on the Soviet satellites, and synthesized this stuff to get it out into our radio, into our press, and back to Washington for use there, too. It was called the peripheral reports program, which continued for a time after I left.

We had an evaluation program which had two purposes; one was simply to report on things that we were doing and to analyze them; and secondly, to run public opinion surveys, which were worked up professionally by Leo Crespi and his people in Bonn, with guidance, of course, from Washington.

What occupied me for a long time, though, was working with Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson not only on things pertaining to the political secretariat but also to matters like the restoration to the Austrians of our radio service network and the liquidation,

eventually, of the Wiener Kurier. If we ever could end the occupation, our feeling was that if we got a neutral Austria, which is what we wanted, and we got the Russians out and we got out as well, we would have a standard USIS operation without any of the massive investment in men and materials that we had. When I was there, there were 55 Americans and 900 locals. It was an immense program. This was uncalled for. The only reason we had it there was that the Soviets had a huge program and the country was still occupied, even though it was considered a liberated country. The eastern half was where the oil was, and that was taken out by the Soviets.

We had several objectives in Austria: one, to promote positive American values; second, to counter Soviet propaganda, but not so stridently that there would be Soviet reprisals against our people or friendly Austrians. Also, much of the work we did with the Austrians was for restoration of their own pride and confidence. They had bought Hitler, and although we said they were forced to--and many certainly felt they were indeed forced--for all the pro-Nazi sentiment that existed before the Anschluss.

We had an interesting occupation policy. Unlike Germany, in Austria, unless everybody disagreed with an Austrian initiative, then it was possible. Only one approval in the Allied Control Council was necessary. In Germany all had to be for it or it was not permitted. This was the difference between liberation and conquest. In Austria, the Austrians could do anything, as long as one of us supported them. So the Russians were not able to veto their actions on press and so on, so we got a lot of free press kind of activity out of the Austrians. If we objected to something--and there were many times we did, although I think we tended to be liberal--it would be on the question of revival of neo-Nazi doctrine. In east Tyrol, around Innsbruck, and in parts of the Austrian that were occupied by Britain, Graz for example, there was some neo-Nazi sentiment. We expressed our objection to it, but we never put it down entirely, because we felt they would sit this out and eventually come to some sort of resolution. There was an awful lot of Nazi-like thinking still in Austria, but we felt that we should free them, let them find their own way.

The Soviets had absolute control in their zone, not only economically. In terms of dollars what we put into Western Austria, they were taking out of Eastern Austria. This was figured out by Hans Morgenthau. I remember going to a meeting, long before I came to Vienna or even knew I was going there, and Hans Morgenthau was head of a Marshall Plan study group, and this is the conclusion they came to, that we were putting in almost equivalent amount in dollars to what the Soviets were taking out of the Eastern Zone. So we were keeping things alive there. Eventually, the treaty came in '55, which was a year after my time.

Many of the things that I was doing were in preparation for that day when these things would go. These were tricky negotiations, and I must say they let me pursue them. We were considered diplomats like anybody else, and as diplomats, we could negotiate. So there was a good bit of that sort of thing going on.

MY NOVEL ABOUT VIENNA AND MCCARTHYISM

The activities in Vienna are the kind that I describe in my pseudonymous novel about Vienna, Men of Career, which was published by Crown publishers in 1960. I suppose I might as well mention it, since it gives much of the atmosphere of Vienna at that time. The problems that we had are the kind that I've just been talking about. Turnover of radio facilities, liquidation of the daily newspaper, and so forth, are part of the action around which some of the novel turns.

The chief thing, from the standpoint of American public interest, that I thought was of concern, therefore of concern to me as a novelist, was the effects of McCarthyism in these years of '52, '53. We even had meetings in the embassy about this. Walter Roberts from EUR in Washington came for one of them--I told you he objected to our reporting "We shouldn't even be discussing McCarthyism," he said. I said, "I'll report it." I put this incident in the book, I might say, although I never named Walter.

We also had the visit of our facilities by Cohn and Schine. These were the two men who were called "junketeering gumshoes" by Ted Kaghan, who was deputy in Bonn. Ted went public with that and left the program shortly after that. It was an absolutely obscene show and should have been conducted in a water closet. People are saying now, with the two biographies of Roy Cohn, that nobody dared say he was a homosexual, nobody had the guts to say it. Read one paragraph of mine, you could easily derive this inference. I talked about how they had to have rooms next to each other with open connecting doors, and how they quarreled with limply wrapped newspapers. If anybody reading that didn't know what the hell I was saying, there was something pretty obscure about it. For one of the ironies of my novel--which, typically, the reviewers never picked up--was that a main character dies from motives having to do with repressed homosexuality, which was one of the weights upon his conscience because of Department security considerations, and the oppressors of the State Department on alleged security grounds were themselves "tainted". Incidentally, in the last pages of the novel, an eloquent tribute to the career service--it's been cited as the best there is--I take a view of homosexuality that in some respects was more than thirty years ahead of its time.

In the case of Cohn and Schine, I deliberately stuck very closely to exactly what they did when they were in Vienna--in the event that I was ever sued for libel. I couldn't imagine these guys suing me for libel, but in case they did, I deliberately kept to the facts. William Harlan Hale, who was a fine writer, wrote a dispatch on the visit which he was told was too good to send in. His DCM, I think it was Walter Dowling, refused to sign off on it as an embassy dispatch. He said, "This is too good." Also, frankly, I don't think he wanted to be identified with it. This is Walter Dowling, who was later ambassador to South Korea and Germany. At any rate, Hale did this report and sent it under his own signature.

I based what I did, made sure it was on the record somewhere so that it was in the State Department, so that nobody could say that it was not true. Cohn and Schine went to our library, of course; they were greatly interested in the books that we had. As I commented

afterwards, until somebody discovered that General Eisenhower was a great literary critic and thought Hammett was a great writer, this scourge was tolerated, because Dashiell Hammett was a literary favorite of Eisenhower's. This whole business was thrown aside and said, "How could we tolerate this?" But until Ike said that, nobody dared oppose these McCarthy aides.

Another thing that I said in the book, which I know is true, McCarthy, like Rooney, would send over to the Department outside complaints that he didn't intend to act on, but he thought we ought to know about. This was stuff that was anti-McCarthy. I mean, this was evidence. It was, in a sense, inviting the Department to attack him if they wanted to. This was a kind of fair-mindedness that was backhand. It's the only thing I can say. I do mention that somewhere in the text of the novel. (I haven't looked at it in years). But it was there.

This was the peak of our reaction to McCarthyism, which completely, in terms not of its meaning to America--although one of the fictional PAOs, who is a historian, does voice objections to it as an American--but mainly because of its effect on how our missions operated abroad, our fears, and also because of the image of us that McCarthy created, that we had to overcome, and we were too afraid to overcome, most of us.

This was a terrible thing. I think the idea was to make the State Department explode from within. We had people spying on each other. If McCarthy had any purpose, I mean, it was as evil as that. I don't think he had any other purpose, except publicity.

Q: I don't think he was smart enough to be that subtle.

OPAL: At any rate, this was enough of an incentive to start me off. When I was in Mexico those 30 months in '54 to '56, for a long time at the beginning before the post of Country Deputy PAO was created for me, I had no representational function vis à vis Mexican society. I had to keep a low profile because I was working on a regional basis. I was free in the evenings. That's when I wrote the novel. But it took four years to get it cleared for publication.

I think I've pretty much covered the operations in Vienna. Again, as I was in the previous two years, I was all over the place. The job was free-ranging and put me into everything. It was most educational, probably as educational for others, who had to tolerate me, but the position died when I left the post. I guess there was just nobody to do it, that's all.

OPERATING REGIONALLY IN MEXICO, 1954-56

I left Vienna in '54 because a similar position had been cooked up for me by Bill Clark, area director for ARA, and Andy Anderson, Country PAO in Mexico. This was the job of regional public affairs officer, of which there has never been another. This, again, was a special job description written in terms of me and my assumed usefulness.

I had the briefest of home leaves in '54, and got to Mexico and worked immediately out of Mexico City, where my objective was a simple one. I framed it to myself as trying to isolate the Arbenz government, which was left-leaning, and which had been found to be importing arms from Czechoslovakia, to isolate that government morally from the rest of the Americas, so that in the event a revolt occurred, and an attempt to take over his government followed, Arbenz would not be able to call upon the rest of the countries in the Americas for help. This occurred in May and June of '54, and that is precisely what happened. Castillo Armas went in from a neighboring country and brought him down. No plane came to help Arbenz and he went into exile. This was how my role was envisaged.

In order to accomplish this sort of thing, it meant working with the facilities available in Mexico. I had the seven PAOs to Panama, working and weaving a kind of network around Guatemala. Later it became entirely different after the revolt took place and the government fell. The purpose then was to shore up the government that was there, and to work against the spread of leftist influences.

Q: In creating this sort of moral isolation of the Arbenz Government in Guatemala, were the other countries of Central America aware of what you were trying to do, or was this completely under cover?

OPAL: Part of it, of course, had to be under cover. Since I didn't work directly, I worked through all these PAOs, I had these seven PAOs and their resources, but mainly, for example, for regional radio work, for regional publications, we used the resources that were available only in Mexico. The governments themselves weren't aware of this. There were governments that objected to this, but they weren't aware that the U.S. Government had any kind of program.

For example, I visited the United Fruit plantations. I wanted to find out how much truth there was to the leftist charges of what United Fruit was allegedly doing. This was quite a revelation to me. I discovered--and I give it to you for what it's worth--I found the United Fruit plantations were frowned upon in the countries where they were located, because the native fruit growers didn't like the enlightened policies of the Americans. The Americans had scholarships to the States, they had schools, they had high salaries and so on, and by example, they were forcing these native growers, who were big plantation owners, to set up scholarships to send people to the State too, to compete with them. The Americans were disliked. A lot of the propaganda which was fed by the leftists was fed by the banana-raising competitors of United Fruit. This was a revelation to me!

Q: It's a revelation to me now, because you always heard that United Fruit was riding roughshod over the desires of everybody in the country where they were operating, and they were contemptuous of the local citizenry and the local government, and riding like kings.

OPAL: Yes. I tended to believe there was some truth in this. It's possible, and this I will grant. I think early on they were playing along and bribing local politicians, there was a

good bit of this. But when I came there in '54, these were enlightened people who were running these plantations. The natives who worked for them were happy to be working for them. The contrast between their working conditions and any working conditions in the rest of the country were scandalous.

Q: They were more enlightened and so far ahead of the rest of the operators that they were providing an example for the rest, which the rest didn't want to live up to.

OPAL: They didn't want to live up to--that's right. Eventually, increasingly they probably did. I think as revolts and democratization and so on advanced in these countries, the more imitation of that development is something we'll find. How the United Fruit people adapted these policies vis à vis their employees and local country, I don't know, except that I'm sure there was some resistance to their being there. But I think they felt that in the long run, this was the most enlightened thing they could do--to stay there, to help these countries, and to establish a base for acceptability in later years. This is precisely what they were doing. It was a revelation to me. I'd fooled around in these jungles, you know, and God, I thought, "What am I getting into?" It was absolutely refreshing. Absolutely refreshing! It's something. You have to hand it to the American managers, who were not so numerous. They used natives all the time. I mean, to live in these conditions was terrible. I was very, very much emboldened by the whole thing, I must say.

I did that sort of thing, and then I talked to the United Fruit people to get more of this out, "Don't keep this to yourself, and don't just tell the people that you're hiring. Get this message out! You've got perfect examples here to compete with the communists you're talking about."

Q: Did you in any way attempt to use the United Fruit people and what they were doing as part of your effort to isolate the Arbenz Government in Guatemala?

OPAL: Let me put it this way. You're talking about using other Americans on the scene as instruments of our own policy.
Q: Yes.

OPAL: I think the best thing for me to say is no, and to enter a proviso that what I did was to encourage them--not only I, but other American officers--to look upon what was happening around them and to do certain things. This meant we made available to them--and this was part of our private enterprise cooperation--a good bit of material that went back. For example, I talked to you about the memo I typed myself that I didn't send via my own secretary. But a lot of these went back to Washington to work with the private enterprise people to get the home offices of American companies to filtrate materials back to their own people in the field. There was a good bit of that that came out of Washington. So I wasn't working only directly.

The local people didn't quite see this. They weren't of the level of political sophistication that would have accepted this and done something about it. First of all, they probably

didn't have the means to do it. With the home office behind them, supplying material, and we supplying material, they were able to do this. But this had to be a real end-around play, because I was not going to dictate, and none of us was. But to make them aware of the problem that they were facing. They tended to be insular. Guatemala was this; Costa Rica was this. These people thought in terms of the local societies. This is understandable, too, because this is where they worked, these were the governments that they worked with, and so on. So they tended not to see beyond this. This was my function, to make them see this was a regional problem and this was important.

So I served that intangible kind of function as much as anything I did from within the embassy. From that point of view, it probably was helpful.

Then the Guatemalan revolution was over, and Henry Loomis, who was in charge of intelligence analysis and research back in Washington, asked me whether I'd come back to Washington as his deputy. I declined but agreed to start a research program down in my region, along with my other duties.

Among these regional responsibilities, I started up--this was the inspiration of Andy Anderson and Ben Stephansky, our labor attaché and later ambassador to Bolivia--a local Spanish language labor publication which appeared weekly for distribution in the area. It was produced in Mexico because the facilities for printing and also the writers were available in Mexico City--and Ben's guidance was essential. Much of the material came from the labor materials that were supplied by IPS. IPS would supply an awful lot of stuff from the trade union movement output of what was happening in American labor, but also what was happening in labor elsewhere. I got the local PAOs to report to me so that I could cross-report in this labor publication.

Ben was an old labor man out of my own university, Chicago, and he had taught at Wisconsin. He knew a lot of people in labor circles and was close to the Mexican government. He put me in touch with a man who was most useful to me, and that was Luis Alberto Monge, who was later president of Costa Rica. This was in the fifties. Monge was very active in the ORIT, the regional organization of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU, which in turn was the free trade union movement that was formed after the pull-out from the WFTU, which the communists had taken over. I had a lot of APRISTAs, too; these activists from Peru who formed a liberal leaven throughout the area.

Again, this was a time when we were able to meet with these people, supply them with materials that they could use with their own materials, not necessarily where we had to use a 1,000-pamphlet distribution, but where they had means of getting this focused, pointed material out. So having a man on the scene--in this case, myself--made this possible, whereas I think the standard USIS procedure might not if you didn't have somebody who was specifically interested in just that. We had the regional responsibility, because unfortunately, our country USIS people have to think in terms of their own assigned country. In this case, I had seven countries. This was one of the devices.

ON THE VISIT OF VICE-PRESIDENT NIXON

I might say, and this has a remote relationship to Panama, when I was in Mexico, we had a visit from Richard Nixon, then vice president. Bill Snow, put me in charge of preparing a briefing book for him. And later also reported on reactions to the visit in the post's WEEKA. I devised a WEEKA style that became a model for some or all our posts abroad. The WEEKA, as you know, is the weekly summary of press and public reactions to events of interest to the U.S. The report I turned out on Richard Nixon had no references to media sources at all. What I wrote instead was a distillation of reactions from public and media, without singling out any particular example. I got a request back: "How do you justify all this?" I had all the supporting material, so I sent it in. They said, "This is the way it should always be written. If it's an honest reporter and an honest officer, and he's reporting true, as things are, why do we need all these cluttering references to the press? And how better to get what opinion leaders are saying?"

This was partly done, one, because I felt I could do it, the prospect excited me, and Bill Snow accepted it. He said, "I'm going to have my people do this now. It's the easiest thing for my people to do in terms of writing. I don't have to defend every statement that they make."

Q: Was Bill Snow the DCM in Mexico?

OPAL: Yes.

Q: He later was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin America, where I had a lot of dealings with him.

OPAL: Yes. He was a wonderful guy. How could I not say so?

Q: This trip that Nixon made to Mexico, as VP, was not the same trip he later made to South and Central America and ran into all this anti-Americanism?

OPAL: The autonomous universities and so on?

Q: This was not the same?

OPAL: No, no, that was later.

Q: This was an earlier trip.

OPAL: Yes. This was the most artful man I ever saw. He would go to a meeting, let's say, of union people. We would have these questions for him, and he would brief himself before he went in. But he was marvelous. He could improvise. He never used a phrase that he found in his briefing book or anything else. He was before groups that were

inimical to what he stood for, what he stood for in the States, what the policy of the government was. He handled them beautifully. He took whatever they had, gave it back, but very subtly. He wasn't argumentative or anything. He showed a superb intelligence. I was amazed at the guy.

Q: I'm glad to hear you say that, because for all the derogatory things that are said about Nixon, I also felt this man was a great absorber of information, and then he could analyze it, put it together, and he would regurgitate it in a way that was really a very remarkable performance.

OPAL: One other thing. I don't know whether this belongs in the record. I came away convinced, admiring this man, but the fact that he could adjust to any situation and still accommodate the interests of those people and say to them what they wanted to hear--and there were many diverse groups which I won't enumerate--suggested to me that he had no moral center, that this was a man without a moral center.

I had the same sort of experience with Adlai Stevenson in Vienna. He came there. This man was himself all the time. You always felt he was improvising from a strong central moral principle. Richard Nixon was not. He had all the intelligence to make him melt into the landscape, to emerge from the landscape, to adjust to everything that was going on, but he himself stood for nothing. All the people said, afterwards, that they were charmed by him. "Oh, we misjudged this man. We misjudged this man." Well, when everybody from every point of the compass says he's misjudged this man, you wonder what kind of man was in the room! This is what I mean. It's a kind of image. I don't know how sound it was that there was no moral center; I suppose I shouldn't talk that way, but there was no center from which he was extemporizing, it seemed to me.

There was with Stevenson always some central point that you know that you could go to, and from which he was speaking, and he would never suggest a belief that he was expressing to you that he felt you wanted to hear him express. There was a difference. He was always himself in a way. He was also a politician, I realize that, and part of this may be a bit of a deception, but he existed. When you were in a room with Adlai Stevenson, he existed. Nixon, unless he was in a position of power, did not. As an intelligence, as a feeling medium, he did not exist. This may have been his strength, too, because he could use all the things around him.

Q: From what you say, he did exert a favorable impression upon the people.

OPAL: Yes, that's what I say. This is the point. People from all parts of the spectrum, right, left, however you wanted to define it, from labor, from management, or the commercial community or academia, and so on, all of these people, you would think, would have taken a different view of him. They didn't! They said they had all misjudged him, that he was a great man. What he said with them was such as to convince him that this was so. A man cannot convince that many different people. He's got to alienate somebody if he believed something. He didn't alienate anybody. He was a master.

This point that you made earlier about his absorbing materials, these materials were fresh to him in many cases. This was new stuff. He absorbed it beautifully, he converted it into his own machinery, and brought it forth as Richard Nixon. But who was Richard Nixon? This is what I used to wonder about.

MY MYSTERIOUS HELICOPTER JOURNEY TO PANAMA: A NON-EVENT

In Nixon's entourage was Ralph Hilton. Ralph Hilton told me a story that I hadn't heard before. It concerns Panama. He said, "Did you know that there was a plot to take you off your ocean liner in the middle of the Mediterranean in 1950 and fly you to Panama?"

I said, "No, I never heard this. What for?"

He said, "Well, Secretary Marshall had been down there and there had been riots. It was suggested in Washington that you were the man to organized counter-demonstrations, organize counter-communist demonstrations and propaganda in Panama."

I said, "I never heard this!"

He said, "Oh, yes, it was very definite, and you were all set to go. A helicopter was supposed to take off from Gibraltar or somewhere, to pick you up, put you on a plane at one of our bases, and fly you to Panama."

I said, "This is all astonishing to me."

He said, "Yes, but it was all stymied because there was a fellow (I don't remember his name now, whether it was Rogers or what) in EUR, who was the executive officer." They always had one management type in each of the bureaus. This fellow had been there for years, and he had important contacts on the Hill, and they knew it, so he was useful to them. He said, "Nobody consulted me. Nobody asked me whether this could be done," and he stopped the whole thing. The Secretary, nobody could do anything about it. This man stopped it. He put enough gimmicks in it so that it didn't occur.

Anyway, Ralph Hilton told me the story, and it was intriguing, the one event that I never knew about--so far as I can tell! Of course, it would have been silly. What the hell could I have done down there?

Q: The description of this man that you're talking about sounds to me like Graham Martin.

OPAL: No, it was not Graham. I know Graham. It was 1950, and Graham Martin was in Paris. That's where I met him. Anyway, that revelation came out in Mexico, too.

MY STUDY OF THE FAMILY OF MAN EXHIBIT

One of the things that got me into a little hot water was a project relating to the Family of Man Exhibit in Mexico City. It was a study of reactions before and after the visit to the exhibit. This exhibit, unknown to me, was a darling of Abbott Washburn, deputy director of USIA. I wrote a terrible report of criticism of this whole thing, and asked what this had to do with the agency, what it had to do with our policy. I questioned its usefulness. This was at a time when we were trying to introduce tactical atomic weapons into Western Europe, and here's this Family of Man exhibit showing the ultimate destruction of the world, with the great nuclear mushroom cloud as a blown-up photo at the piece de resistance at the far end of the show. What were we doing spreading this around the world--it was going to India next--when we were trying to make tactical nuclears acceptable.

It was a very forcefully but very condensely written document that I sent to Washington. It's the only document that Washington officially criticized. That is, Abbott Washburn wrote a letter to the post criticizing this critique, explaining why the exhibit was done, and how this was a generous, humanitarian gesture, showing what the Americans were made of. I thought, "Well, I'm in hot water with Washington." But it amused me to find out that old Mark May, who was chairman of the Advisory Commission on U.S. Information, came down to Latin America on an inspection tour, and he took me into a side room in the Mexico City embassy, and said to me, "I think I should show you this. When I left Washington, they told me there were two documents I should take with me when I go into the area, and this is one of them." It was all the budget breakdowns for the posts. "Here is the other one." And here was my dispatch on the Family of Man. (Laughs) Who had forced this on him, I don't know. No comment or anything. "These are the two documents I was told I should have."

QUARREL WITH TED STREIBERT, DIRECTOR

Then I had a quarrel with Ted Streibert. Ted Streibert was the first director of the independent Agency, you remember, and he came down to Mexico and was touring the area. We got into an argument. It was fairly noisy, because Andy's office was right next to mine, and he shut his door. Eventually he went out. Most of the secretaries and so on, including my special secretary, went away. We had raised our voices, either I or Streibert, and I don't remember what we were discussing anymore, but Streibert was furious. He was just furious! I thought, "Well, this is it. I've had it." But I didn't care. I stated my positions. I thought, "Well, this is the end of me."

Q: Did anything ever come of it?

OPAL: He never forget it. He never really forgot it. He's dead now, bless him. He probably remembers up there. This was a quarrel, and probably a very unpleasant thing in his experience. In the fall of 1956, he sent me to a military school--no doubt for disciplinary training, like a naughty son. He sent me to the National War College. Abbott Washburn is one of my great friends in Washington. I've never understood this. He

apparently was challenging me on the Family of Man thing. Maybe Streibert was challenging me and just wanted to bring out more. He was satisfied at the end of it.

Q: I don't know whether Streibert sent you there as a disciplinary move.

OPAL: I just said that as a joke. No, it was not.

Q: That was considered a rather honorable tour.

ASSIGNED TO NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE, 1956

OPAL: Of course it was. This is just a joke. Where do you send your recalcitrant son? To the military academy, to learn some discipline. Of course not. It was a great compliment. He was proud to have sent me, and he told everybody how he did it, and how he sent the Agency's Personnel Director, L.K. Little, there, because I was younger than the traditional 40 year minimum age, to show Admiral Woolridge, the commandant, that if I didn't, my wife certainly belonged socially among the wives there, for my dossier contained many letters about her services from my ambassadors in Poland and Italy. This maneuver was a matter of great pride to Streibert, but I never understood it.

Q: One of the things I never understood about Streibert, he was a very paradoxical man in many ways.

OPAL: 1956 to '57 was the year that I was sent to the National War College, and this was the year of the Suez Crisis and the Budapest uprising, which was the topic of many discussions and many lectures. This was the year, also, I think, McCarthy was fading from the planet. We even had a visit of William F. Buckley, Jr., who'd written in defense of McCarthy, and I thought his high-blown lecture on the cosmos wove some cloudy gobbledygoo--repeat goo--for the class. Some people just loved him; others just threw up their hands in despair--or secretly threw up period.

You were at the War College, and you must remember the huge map they had in back of the stage.

Q: They had taken that down by the time I was there.

OPAL: When we were there, there was this huge map of the world, the whole physical expanse, not a real projection, but a flat map showing the world. The upper part was all the Soviet Union, the whole land mass of the Soviet Union in flaming red, one-sixth of the land mass of the earth in red, the Soviet Union. It used to hover over us, there behind the speakers on the stage. I would think of this as some brooding presentiment. All year long, it was hovering. It was always overhead, always something to look toward, and it was just hung there like a huge, evil cloud of some kind, dominating our thoughts and haunting our imagination. No question about it.

We had other things haunting us. We had a faculty member who was a SAC general, and who had "SACitis," as they say, down to the toes. He was insistent on presenting the committee problems that had to do with nuclear exchange, the real nuclear war, and the scenarios for invasion and knockout blows and so on. We used to study the Defense Mobilization Office figures on numbers of dead that would be left, these classified things. It used to frighten us. I tell you, we wore hang-dog expressions. We had literally descend on our spirits the greatest kind of gloom you can imagine. It was undefinable because it was unlocalizable. We didn't foresee precisely what would happen, but it was just a sense that there was a kind of doom hovering over us.

Part of it came from this feeling, too, that it wasn't in our hands. These were colonels and later ambassadors and so on in the class, including the Air Force man who later chaired the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and these people were going to have our fate in their hands. Also, these people were just as moved by this as we civilians were. Why would they pick this? I don't know. I think this is what "SACitis" is. It was the idea of preemptive strike, it was the idea of hitting them before they hit us. At any rate, this dominated a good bit of the committee work that we did that year. Because of this, we had a large number, unusually large, as I understood it, of suicides of the wives of officers in my class. I'm sure, since it is an inordinate amount compared to other years, the only explanation I could bring forth for it is this feeling that we all--I and others--carried this sense of doom into the house, and the wives probably thought we were having affairs or mid-life crises or something.

You could take the year--I think the year of menopause is a myth, and I've always said it was "the pause that refreshes"--but if you take all of this and the change of life and this doom, the husband coming in wearing the end of time on their faces, you're bound to have consequences. I don't know. I'm trying to explain this, but this is a fact! It was very, very depressing, so much so that the State Department man who was on the faculty moved off campus. He would not stay in this atmosphere with the general. This was the year when the great hero who came before us was General Curtis LeMay. As to LeMay's attitude, our Alabama friend had to put a curb on him when he was running as vice president in Wallace's presidential campaign.

These were incendiary, bloody topics. At any rate, this made a very strong impression during that year.

Then the Suez topic was interesting, because we had General Slessor, I think his name was, the man who commanded the RAF out of Malta. He came and spoke to us. He astonished us because the British and the Israelis and the French had this Suez thing that they conspired on together, that Ike finally told them to stop. The British had no idea what would happen in Egypt. I or somebody else asked him, "What was your plan if they got rid of Nasser? Who were you going to put in his place?" He hadn't thought about that. They just wanted to get Nasser out of there. How foolish can you be? You usually have somebody in the wings. You have three governments in exile or something in history. Chacun a son gôut, you know. (Laughs) You'll always find these governments in exile.

They never make it to the next stage, but there they are. But the invaders seemed not to have anything, nobody! And this was Eden's government, you know. Cuckoo. This occupied our minds.

Then, of course, the interesting thing, but I think it's worth saying: the Budapest uprising. We had many speakers from the Department and from Defense. It was interesting. The second- and third-rank speakers were all unhappy that we didn't do anything in Budapest, that we didn't go in. I said, "It would be interesting to hear the top men. I think the under guy is always a little more aggressive, a little more flamboyant, a little more interested in action. I bet you the top guy, who has to meet the future in history, has to meet his people as the man who is responsible, will be more moderate." And sure enough, when we got the Secretaries talking, they had hundreds of reasons why no action was taken in Budapest. But the second rung and third rung people were all for it, feeling that we had let down the Hungarians.

THE DULLES LIBERATION POLICY; COMMENTS

Q: Did any of them express what was somewhat of a widespread impression at that time, that Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe and perhaps even the Voice had instigated this rioting in Hungary by giving them the impression that the U.S. felt they should do it, and perhaps would come in and assist them?

OPAL: Oh, yes. On the American side, these second- and third-rung people that I'm talking about felt very much that the betrayal came from the fact that we had expostulated a policy of liberation--this was Dulles' liberation policy--and that therefore we hadn't lived up to our own best traditions, our best interests in the long run either, and that therefore, we should have done something. As you know, some of the American press said the same thing about the liberation policy at the time.

When Jim Hoofnagle, USIA Administration Officer, and the Voice people came over for lunch once at the War College, I said, "Why are we castigating ourselves? Why are we mea culpaing all over the place? You mean to tell me that when a Hungarian started on one corner and ran with a Molotov cocktail in his hand up to the mouth of a Soviet tank, that he expected us to liberate him before he ever got there?"

They didn't understand what my question was. I said, "No, these people had had it up to their ears. It's possible, way back in their consciousness, they felt that if they rose and if the people rose generally, and it was their own people they wanted to arouse, and not just in Budapest, then the U.S. would have to intervene one way or another. But meanwhile, this was not to be. A man who is calculating his own individual chances does not expect help before he lays down his life before a tank." This was indicative to us that we can blame ourselves all we want to; this was a stupid policy, you might say. But I don't think we should blame ourselves for the death of these people. These people simply had had enough of their system."

I said, "This is the first limited war that's been fought behind the Iron Curtain, the first limited war in history, perhaps, as far as we know, and I think we've won it." Look what is happening. The communist government was reimposed, they got rid of Nagy. But I felt that we should not feel guilty. I did feel the policy of brinkmanship, however, was stupid in its own way. In fact, I got into trouble once because I joked, "You can lead a nation to war, but you can't make it brink." This was a takeoff on Dulles' brinkmanship. I didn't think Americans will stand for it.

However, I think if Dulles had managed to make a coherent world according to his own vision of it, Dulles would be justified in history. He never completed his work.

It's interesting, because the disintegration of SEATO and ANZUS came after the successful resists of inimical forces. One might fault us on the Geneva Accords, but we never signed the Geneva Accords, not even the protocol. We just accepted the spirit of the protocol.

So from one point of view, he is not to be faulted. NATO, which he inherited, of course, and believed in, still exists. Without it, who's to know what would have happened in Europe?

I think we learned very definitely ourselves that there's a line beyond which your saying cannot go, and that line is the line that commits you to an action. If your action can't go there, your policy line is not going to. I think we learned a lot of moderation from that. Frankly, I was happy that, apart from individual tragedy, this arose in Eastern Europe, because I think a lot of the changes are still proceed and, of course, Hungary is the freest of the countries because of this, even though the Soviets had their tanks. This was a necessary development.

Look at what happened. It's interesting. Austria was then neutral during the uprising in 1956. They'd gotten their treaty in '55. They helped the Hungarians in every way, and they were never punished. They opened their borders to them; they were completely free. People could flee to Austria and so on, and they showed their basic pro-Western and pro-U.S. orientation. I think this was a great tribute to us.

ON DISCUSSING OUR EUROPEAN POLICY WITH LOCAL EMPLOYEES

Another thing that's interesting perhaps, when I was in Vienna, I took a policy paper that had been prepared by the Department, and I held it up before our Austrian staff. (I was called in by the security people afterwards.) I held it up and took the classification off, and I said, "I'm going to talk from this paper. This is a confidential paper. I'm going to tell you what the substance of this paper is, and then we will discuss it."

Q: To whom were you speaking?

OPAL: I went to the various branch offices we had in Graz, to Innsbruck, Salzburg, and Linz, and talked to the local employees. "This is the policy you are implementing as employed by the U.S. Government. This is what you are implementing." Then I talked above the policy. I said, "If the European people and governments eventually thumb their noses at the United States, do you realize this is not a failure of American policy? This is a success of American policy, because our whole point here is to make them independent, to make them stand on their own feet, but to make them part of a cooperative scheme where all of them together are strong, but each of them has a certain pride and independence, which is what we're trying to develop in Austria."

The reason I was called in is that I reported on it and our security man said, "What are you doing running around with a classified document?"

I said, "I just cut off the top and bottom of a piece of paper. What document? What are you talking about?" He couldn't prove I had done anything. Of course, it wasn't a cable or encrypted message; just a straight Washington document.

You were with me when I went to Bonn on '63. Later that year, after I'd been named area director, I wanted to talk to all the local employees, and I wanted to thank them. I said, "In a way, you are the greatest proof I have, or any of the Americans that are working with you have, that we are doing the right thing, because you are doing this thing. Every one of you sitting here would be a betrayer of your country if you didn't think this was the right thing. Not a one of you would work and do these things for money alone, because many of you are alienated from your own people because you work for the Americans." At the beginning, this was so. Maybe later on it wasn't.

But I said, "The fact that you do persuades us that there's more than what we're doing, that we are working with you on behalf of something that is bigger than either of us," something in that vein. But I always felt this, and I always felt I should get to the locals that way, because they do work for us and we depend on them. There's no question about it. They convey our message. They have the greatest contact with their communities. In Beirut, we had an Armenian who worked with the Armenians, we had Druze, we had Shias and Sunni Muslim. All these people, they had contacts. We depended on them because we Americans couldn't do everything.

This was the War College business about the Suez and Budapest, but I'm glad you raised that question, because it was something. I think we learned a little bit of moderation from that, but I didn't feel that we should go around and be as severe on ourselves as the American press was being on Dulles simply because they were anti-Dulles. I didn't feel that we should feel guilty about what was done, because nobody will respond to an outside call like that unless indigenously the forces are at work to support that call. This is the thing we always depended on--what was there, what was wanted there, and how it would express itself eventually. This is the thing that I mentioned earlier.

At the War College, you work in committees. One of our committee exercises was considered the chief one, on which we set forth policy objectives for the next ten years--policy objectives and an estimation of how the situation would be during that period. I had the good fortune to write the paper that was selected for presentation to the Joint Chiefs, to the trustees of the War Colleges, and to the students of both the National War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. The paper itself then became the basis of studies that were conducted in the various areas in the immediately ensuing spring. I think they probably had this later on, too. You worked from a paper, and then you went out into the area for three weeks. Then you came back and wrote an analysis of how this met the accepted policy requirements as you saw them, on the basis of your inspection.

Q: They call it a national security policy.

OPAL: Yes.

Q: I don't know whether this man was on the staff when you were there, but I think his name was Duffy. He was a colonel in the Army, and he was obsessed with this idea of getting everybody to write a national security policy. Every committee had to write a national security policy.

OPAL: I suppose that's probably standard.

Q: He was really sold on it. He just lived to have that national security policy.

OPAL: That's interesting. It's possible that it's a traditional thing every year. That's why I ask. Did they use this, then, for the spring tours, too?

Q: No, because we wrote it after we came back; not before.

OPAL: This was before, and you wrote your later report in its light of that. I remember our Agency's Al Harkness, who was in my class, coming by my house one Sunday and saying, "What are you doing, writing the prize-winning paper?"

I looked up to him from where I was sitting by my window in Chevy Chase, and I said, "Yes, I am." I had no idea whether I was or anything. (Laughs) But I did. He was so mad. The paper that I wrote and the policy that I wrote has stuck with me since. I think you will find some of it in the European Task Force paper from years later, too. It was a good exercise for me, a good intellectual exercise.

MY PAPER ON TOTAL DIPLOMACY

The best exercise that I performed at the War College concerned my individual research paper. I got a special dispensation as to length because I knew I'd go longer than traditional length. I was developing some material and said to the faculty members, "You

don't have to consider this for presentation or anything. Just let me write it as long as I want until I've exhausted the subject." They were kind enough to allow it. I wrote on what I called "total diplomacy," which was a phrase that came out of a speech of Dean Acheson's. This was the detailing and analysis of the historical background of propaganda, as such. Then I went into all the avenues we have for expressing national consciousness, national tradition, national need, national policy, what have you, through all of these means which are international in scope and in address. Now you call part of it public diplomacy, and you have many instruments that are much more modern than we had in my time. After all, I left 23 years ago.

But one thing that most of us felt, one way or another, but had never really formulated, was the need that we were responding to. We felt we had come into a Cold War atmosphere to begin with. We were milked on Cold War; we had to be. This was our historical period, and this was the time in which we lived. Many of us, whether consciously or not, were responding to conditions which were established by the communists themselves, by Marxist leaders. They used all of these instruments, and we were trying to use the same instruments, but legitimately, openly, honestly. We were not in black warfare, we were not in black propaganda, we were not really in gray propaganda, although we did get into it with book translations and so on.

Our whole quarrel with ourselves--and this is it, a quarrel with ourselves, with our own ethos as a free people, this was what kind of propaganda we can make and still live with ourselves. This is what we have to live with. No matter what we do in relation to the rest of the world, we have to live with this, and it has to be something we come to honestly. I think in one way or another, we wrestle with this problem all the time and we've always adjusted to it. We have terms of reference, we have charters of positions on the Voice, on IPS, and so on in the Agency. But a lot of these things are responses to this need for us to justify to ourselves what we are doing that we never did before--or we think we never did before--that we are doing in response to a demand which we never really faced before, because this revolutionary power has been placed in history, in this century, since 1917.

The whole paper was on this and went into a discussion of Soviet diplomacy, and it went into the discussion, especially, of the kind of personnel we need. I found myself, at the end of it, really writing about diplomats and what kind of personal character we need to take account of this phenomenon in history and to adjust to it, to address ourselves to it, and to serve our own society as well as we might in the most honest way we can.

In the course of this paper, I analyzed some things that Kissinger had written up to 1957. He believed that government bureaucracies were parasites. It was interesting. Every time I analyzed a paper of Kissinger, I'd wind up with clouds in my hands. There's nothing in these papers. They are either self-contradictory or they fade into nothingness. He had a prejudice, and it comes as part of a temperamental prejudice, which he expressed when he was in government, of arrogance, of cunningness. Men like this are very artful in diplomatic ways. Metternich came from the Rhine, but he served the emperor of Austria.

Kissinger is a man from there, but he was here, serving dispassionately in the American cause. Look at Talleyrand. He survived all the governments!

Anyway, Kissinger's feeling about government was rather general condemnation, in a way, and yet in one sense, I felt--and I said so in the paper--that government, by its very nature, is parasitic. Governments take from society the creative ferment that goes on in society. We use what society around us creates in ideas, in philosophies, in whatever we want to say, and we use it, but in government you can't really create it. By nature, a government does not come up with original ideas: only with ideas that refer to a limited sphere comprehended by government itself. This has nothing to do with whether people in government are stupid or bright; this is the nature of the beast.

Dean Rusk called the State Department a "fudge factory," which in a devastating sense it is. But I think one of the great virtues of this republic is the infinite capacity of the State Department for passive sabotage against any spoils system, any overly ambitious, aggressive, imaginative president. If we didn't have this in-built passivity . . . But the spoils system is necessary, too, to introduce fresh blood and new ideas into government every four years.

Q: We'd have Oliver Norths running around!

OPAL: Yes, yes! The device that you know, as well as I do, is committee work. This was an early discovery that astonished me. Maybe I'm stupid, but I used to go to a meeting that I'd sent a paper to, in advance. I remember this especially when we were working on the NATO Information Service. I sent the paper in advance. I'd come in, "A great, great paper," they'd say. "Oh, we loved it!" There were 20 people around there. The chairman, after all these compliments, would say: "Does anybody have any objections? Is this okay? Shall we approve it?"

One fellow down there, some guy I didn't even know, would timidly say, "I have one little thing. I think we ought to change the wording in this section here. I think this could give the wrong impression, and it seems to imply a little something for follow-up by my people."

Everybody's in a great humor, and they agree. Somebody says, "We agreed on that. But doesn't that have implications over here in Paragraph Five? This seems to me to have serious implications. I think we should change this here." Well, this goes on.

Somebody else says, "Wait. That has implications. You agreed to that change. What about here? This is going to impact on this area." This might be defense, this might be an aid program, this might be propaganda; this might be anything, you see.

You go around at a meeting, you've hammered out a piece of paper which everybody accepts. But in the end, there isn't a single word or a single phrase of your awesome

genius in it. (Laughs) You go out and eat humble pie and it's ordered for you on your way out, and you've done good work.

This is the more awesome genius of committee work. This in the Mormon Church is a revelation to the elders of the church. In Islam, it's sent as the spirit of God into a little circle of mullahs who have gathered together. This is what the Pope is selected out of at the college of cardinals. This is the same thing. This is the nature of committee work. I think it is marvelous! There's no way you can duplicate this process. This is government. This is committee. This is government.

So when Kissinger talks about committees and so on, he's disgusted with them because that sort of thing doesn't permit a Kissinger. A Kissinger cannot exist in a committee! You see my point.

My paper at the War College went into a good bit of that, and I had a lot of fun with it. (Laughs)

COUNTRY PAO, SAIGON, 1957-60

I opted for Far East on my spring trip in '57: it was a new area for me. George Hellyer was the area director for Far East in the Agency and learned of my interest in the Far East. Since French was one of my languages, he thought he had somebody. So he asked me to take the country PAO job in Saigon the upcoming fall. I tentatively agreed, and I visited the Vietnam on my War College tour. It was good that I did, as I learned on the very first day I was in charge on October 22, 1957, a month after I reached Saigon to take over my duties.

I spent from 1957 to 1960, 30 months, in Saigon, as country PAO. USIS was one of the larger posts in the world, with over 220 locals and some 20 Americans and actually some other contract employees. We had operations in Hue and, during my time, in Can Tho and the peninsula. With the help of facilities in Manila, we produced a weekly newspaper, a newsreel under Alan Fisher, and a monthly illustrated magazine. We originated radio programs for the Saigon government and operated an information center in Saigon itself.

On October 22, 1957, during the Colombo Conference there, the communists targeted the Americans for the first time since the Korean War. We couldn't believe that the Viet Cong were doing this--in fact, our first surmise was that the French were doing it. A couple of years before, when some bombs went off in flower pots and under car-hoods around American homes, we found the French were doing it. They hated us. They didn't want us taking over the country. So you assumed it was they. But it was a little dangerous, what they were doing, and we found people with maps, routes, and everything, and it was the Viet Cong from the north. They had me targeted, and they had two generals, General Williams and Meyer of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), and Wesley Fishel, who was head of Michigan State Advisory Group, which was training the police and the civil service in Saigon.

I escaped because of a fluke of timing. My language tutor was late that morning, and so we left my house a little after 9:00. I would always have my language lesson just after breakfast and between 8:00 and 9:00. We were a little late. We came to the palace, and there was a wooden horse in front of the street leading in front of it, because they were doing some repairs farther down the street. We took a route on a side street.

My bomber, it was later learned, was waiting about 20 feet beyond this on the palace street, behind a tree, and he was all set to blow me up as I came by. The generals just took diversionary routes because they always did; they never took the same routes. Wes Fishel had the flu, so he was safe. Anyway, they bombed a bachelor officers quarters billet, and made an attempt against our men at the airport. Then because I had been to the post just that one day in the spring of '57, when I'd asked someone to take me over to the library center, I found an American librarian, Nance O'Neill, working at her desk, and it was during the siesta hour. Here she was working at her desk, and it was terrifically hot. I thought, "What a terrible thing." It was a Sunday, and she worked there all the time. She was a work horse.

Well, I remembered this, and when the bombings went off on the MAAG billet, and they got the bachelors' office quarters, (I didn't yet know they were after for the generals and me), and as soon as I got to the office, I said, "Call our center. Call the library." They couldn't get through. So I sent Walmsley, my executive officer, across town with the words, "Get everybody out of there!" It was approaching noon. I said, "Get Nance O'Neill out of there, too. I don't want her to even have lunch there or even hand around." So they got her and everybody else out.
I went home and took a siesta. I was wakened from my nap by some fellow from the security office. He said, jokingly, "Okay, what other prediction do you have?" The Viet Cong had bombed the center. The bomb had been placed in a book and put on a shelf. It blew down the whole wall right over Nance's desk, and it destroyed the tables. What was terrible about this thing was that the local employees who worked in the library slept on the tables during the lunch hour, the siesta hours. They slept on the tables during the siesta hours, and she worked in the back room. All of this was just avoided because I'd been there in the spring and seen this woman working on Sunday. I thought, "This woman has no gift for time. Time doesn't mean anything to her." And I was right. Of course, she was always grateful.

I tried to turn it into a joke. A couple of days later, they had the South Vietnamese Independence Day parade in Saigon. They had chiefs of staff and General "Big" Minh, who was later head of the government after Diem fell, came by standing in his tank, and General "Little" Minh right behind him, and the troops marching. We Americans officials were in a little stand, sitting up on benches. Behind us was the Saigon harbor of the Saigon River. Wham! Pow! Rockets or a cannon or something went off behind us, and it was just a salute. The president was about to come, and this was a salute. Everybody was tensed up because just a couple of days before we'd had these bombings. So I, with great to-do, stepped down from my seat, stood in front of everybody in the stands, and I said, "I

regret to say I have but one library to give to my country." All laughed, and this broke the tension. (Laughs) It was a gay, gay ceremony. But I was as tense as anybody, I can tell you.

After that, I had a precede car and a follow car and a security man riding shotgun in the front seat. I lived in what had been the home of the French admiral of the French Government, their imperial government. It was a huge house, and I had a Sikh guard who slept all the time. He was not really a guard. I told the security people, "Why don't you tell him to stay awake? He's not guarding anything." This was an enormous place. I had rooms for 15 people--servants, monkeys. They had monkeys back there and everything! In fact, anybody had access. I knew that my number-one gal was a concubine for the cook of the acting Defense minister, a great pal of mine. I knew that. This is not security; the cook could come and go any time during the night.

Somebody in the embassy dreamed up this business of locking the gates every night, with the Sikh still as the guard. So we locked the gates every night. So this damn thing had to be opened and closed all night long for the concubine! (Laughs) Well, this was not security. But I did discover, too, that there were men on pedicabs, the Saigon pedicabs, who were security police, and they were planted all over the place, watching. But nothing happened to me, thank God.

Continuation of Interview: January 12, 1989

Q: Chet, why don't you pick up your discussion from the January tenth interview.

DIGRESSIONS ON PEOPLE'S CAPITALISM: MEXICO: MINORITIES

OPAL: I'd like to go back to Mexico. There were a couple of things there that probably bear mentioning. You will remember in the late 1960s, Jim Moceri proposed a kind of living memory, which is really what you are doing now, where ex-officers or active officers would have a chance to recall past events--this kind of oral or written memory. This was also an outgrowth of a dispatch mechanism which I set up in Mexico. I proposed that USIS would report interesting techniques of operation, either in the way we contacted people, the way we used our media, and so on. These would be reported to a central office in Washington, which would then select from our and other posts, if they would do the same sort of reporting, for worldwide distribution of these techniques. This was an ongoing kind of reporting function which really had nothing to do with the evaluation of the post operations as such, but which would provide a useful cross-fertilization of ideas. This was implemented for a time by USIA.

The second thing I want to say about Mexico is that this is where the People's Capitalism program, which was originally conceived, I think, by the American Advertising Council, was started. Andy Anderson, who was the PAO, came down once from the ambassador's office, and he said, "I had an idea. Ambassador Francis White was going to be talking to a dinner meeting of lawyers and businessmen in Mexico City, and he wanted to talk about

American law. I said, 'No, why don't we talk about something else instead. Why don't we use this as an opportunity for promoting something that we're really interested in?'"

He and Bill Snow, the deputy chief of mission, decided on this idea of People's Capitalism which Washington was pressing upon us. Andy came down and asked me, "Do you think you could write a speech overnight?" I said, "Well, the only materials I have other than what's in my head is the extensive stuff that we've been supplied by IPS and by the exhibit service." So I distilled all this stuff, sat down one morning, and wrote this speech, which ran to an hour's length. Well, Andy was excited. He showed it to Snow, Snow showed it to the ambassador, and they agreed it was fine. The ambassador then delivered it before the Business Council in Spanish, because he spoke Spanish fairly well. This was the first actual promotion of the theme. I don't know, this is so ancient in our Agency history in some senses, and I don't think we've ever revised it except in one of its aspects or another, but this was the ownership by 7 million Americans of stock in American corporations and the trade union investment in pension funds, which was also enormous and involved capitalistic enterprise, as well. At any rate, this was done, and we later were commended for it by Barry Bishop, who had gone back to Washington as the IPS Latin American chief.

AMERICAN MINORITY RIGHTS: AN ASIDE

I want to go back to the 1950 and 1951 years in Washington, because this had an effect on operations and people's attitudes towards America. On a November day in 1950, it occurred to me, looking at the calendar, that it was four score and seven years since Abraham Lincoln had said "four score and seven years ago" at Gettysburg. I wrote this not under any kind of stimulus except this inspiration: it was a report on the development of the black problem in this country, with emphasis on the role of minorities in our country, and even the old idea of concurrent majorities, that revolutionary notion of Calhoun's which everybody seems to have forgotten. I'm not going to go into it because I don't even remember the round-robin memo much, but the one idea that I tried to emphasize--the greatness of the American system lies in the fact that a minority can become a majority with time. But while it is a minority, regard has to be paid to minority thinking.

This had some implications later on. In the 1960s, from '60 to '64, I sat on the panel which gave oral examinations to candidates for the agencies. I used to chair these. On one of these panels, I asked for one man to be thrown off as an examiner. I said I didn't want him anywhere in the room with me. He was a special assistant to the Deputy Director. I will state it for the record. It seemed to me that he was using the panel to investigate candidates from what might be taken as a political test. I don't think that he was aware that he was doing this or anything, but he obviously was carrying an ideological bent of mind into the panel room. Where this most came out was on this question of blacks. He would pose a question to a candidate, "Don't you think it was right for the Army to go down there and knock together the heads of these people who were objecting to the integration of the blacks?" I felt very strongly--I mean, whatever my own personal views

about this is--that this is almost to challenge a man, if he was from the South--he might have been a decent if biased individual, but he came from a society where this had long been a tradition one way or another, and they were just coming out of it, as they have come in the last 25 years. At any rate, this gave the impression that the Kennedy Foreign Service was giving political tests, and I just felt this was wrong. Especially since it was only one of the types of questions that man had a habit of asking. This sensitivity on my part came
from this 1950 paper that I had written, which it seemed to me everybody accepted, and this man did not.

BACK TO THE SAIGON OPERATION

Now I'll go back to Vietnam. I think we were covering a little bit of the objectives of the program when we were talking last. When I came to Vietnam, we needed a new country paper, and I had great difficulty getting one that the ambassador would approve. The problem in Vietnam was that we had to sell Diem to his own people. We were not selling the United States, we were not really selling American objectives, except tangentially and coincidentally, if they matched those of the Diem government. This struck me as a legitimate enterprise in the light of our policy, although this is just the sort of policy that burned us in Iraq when Nuri Pasha fell in 1958, as our ambassador there, Waldemar Gallman, later recounted in his book. It's the same all-our-eggs-in-one-basket policy that hurt us in Iran, too, later on.

We had a weekly newsreel that Alan Fisher produced with a Filipino staff, which would be processed in the regional production center in Manila. By this newsreel, which was mainly to promote the U.S. aid program in Vietnam, we hoped to cement Diem's own relationship with his own people, to give him identification with his own people, because in Saigon and generally in the Cochin China part of South Vietnam, there was a feeling that Diem was not one of them simply because of his Annamese accent, and he spoke French whenever he could, even to his own people, because this was the second language of the country, thanks to the ninety-year French colonial influence.

We Americans also faced this problem where we had a state within a state. There was a secret state, actually, like Chiang Kai-shek's Koumintang relation to the Chinese people. There was a certain amount of control of the population which was not at all the kind of control that was exercised in the north. I used to say the difference was that in South Vietnam, if a man wanted to study the color of flowers, he could do it. In the north, if he studied flowers, he had to work in the message that the flowers had this color because they served the Party interest. There's a great difference in a positive statement. In the south, there was that kind of freedom, relatively.

As a consequence, we had many of the products of USIS which were indigenous in their appearance, at least. These were not black propaganda, but they were obviously promoting Vietnam. We talked much more of Vietnamese developments and Vietnamese tradition than we did of American or worldwide events. This made for a different

program, too. This was all necessary. Diem was our choice, he was anti-communist, and quite vigorously so.

Madame Nhu and I had a strange relationship. I was believed by the palace to be unfriendly to their interest. Madame Nhu, who had a negative view of the Minister of Information, Tranh Chan Thanh (Diem's own choice), never felt that he was her man. Once she invited me to the palace and I went. She designed a whole interview, if I may put it so, such that we went from big reception room to little reception room, and wound up behind closed doors in the room adjoining her bedroom. Her intent, obviously, was to create an impression that I was her lover. I later wrote a dispatch on this. We conversed in French the whole time. I had one little cup of tea on my lap, which I carried from room to room as it got colder.

I never got to drink the tea, and I assured everybody, including the ambassador, that I had it the whole time that I was in the palace. Well, nobody believed me--it's like the question, are you still beating your wife?--and the reason they didn't believe me is that Madame Nhu made it a point in front of my wife, at the palace, at ceremonies and so on, to make sure that she cavorted before me in her latest gown or dress. She used to pirouette before me. All of this was a deliberate act on her part. In the States, as you know, she was known as "the dragon lady." She was the power behind the throne, and her husband was the brother of President Diem. This was to frighten anybody who had close relations with me and would therefore be a little more circumspect because they would then believe that I was in her pocket, so to speak, and therefore they couldn't be as confidential with me, they couldn't be as intimate with me in their relations. I'm referring to the other ministers, the nominal Minister of Defense, who was a close friend, and also Tranh Chan Thanh.

I might parenthetically say that after Diem was deposed and there was a great purging going on under "Big" Minh, one of the generals--I don't know if this was in the time of Nguyen CaoKhi or whoever--but at any rate, in 1964 or 65 I received a wire from Mim Johnson, who was a gal of ours in Paris and had been in Vietnam while I was there, in which she asked whether I would please say something about Thanh, whose life was in danger. She'd been in Saigon and knew that I had worked with him, and could I say something in his support? I sent back a telegram supporting him and saying that he was an honorable man, and that he hadn't been difficult in the way others in the Diem government had been. As I understand, this and other statements of this kind managed to save his life. He later headed the constituent assembly in Vietnam that wrote a new constitution. Of course, this was all in the sixties, after my time.

The use of law by Madame Nhu to get a Catholic family bill passed in a country that was 90% Buddhist or animists was a violation of social tradition. This was typical of her attitude toward her own people, which was expressed very horribly years later when they were taking to the streets, and Buddhists were burning themselves, and she said, "Let them barbecue themselves."

The new gospel of Personalism which derived from Mounier in Paris, a combination of a kind of socialism and Catholicism based on the person, was a new ideology which the Ngos were trying to graft on people to whom this was, for the most part, quite alien. This was part of our difficulty.

One thing I felt very strongly, and I used to impress this on Wolfe Ladejinsky, who was counsel to President Diem, and who used to come and put his feet up and "flirt", as he put it, with my wife during all my years in Saigon, and who was running the land redistribution program. I believed that it was important for Diem and Diem's government to have the support of the American people. The support could only come when, whether wisely or unwisely, the American people felt that there was some democratization going on in Vietnam. The more the South Vietnamese government seemed to be imposing restrictions, the more Brother Nhu was seen as the power behind the throne and so on, the more the American journalists would report with a very critical eye--which was in fact the process that prevailed through the whole Vietnam War. This went on from the very beginning of our time there.

I tried to impress this upon Mr. Orem of Orem Associates, who were handling public relations for President Diem in the United States. I said that unless the American people saw South Vietnam proceeding in a democratic line, eventually the Diem government would lose support in this country. This, as it turned out, was what happened. I remember telling our Agency deputy, Don Wilson, in 1964 that I felt that the Vietnam War would be fought on the streets of New York, and he said, "What do you mean--troops?" I said, "No. The demonstrations." I didn't foresee the free speech movement at Berkeley [California] or anything else, but I just felt the American people would not countenance any kind of war in which they felt they were supporting an oppressive government.

We remember very well how every step was taken to impress the American people with the fundamentally humane government in the Soviet Union during the war when they were allies. I've talked earlier about how Bert Wolfe, for example, couldn't get published because he was critical.

At any rate, Orem took this to notion to the palace, where Diem and his tribe accepted this as proof of the fact that I was out of sympathy with him. One local Vietnamese girl, who remained anonymous, wrote a letter published in The Washington Post, with the help of one of our American staff photographers in Manila. It was critical of conditions in South Vietnam. The palace was convinced that I was behind it. Our photographer had visited South Vietnam for purposes of developing materials for a Vietnamese language publication which was distributed in Vietnam. (This publication, I might say, was the currency used in barter in the provinces, it was so well dressed up and "permanent".) He had been distressed by conditions there, and he had talked to this Vietnamese girl. He had given her the address of the editor of The Washington Post, and they assumed, since the photographer nominally was under my charge while in their country, that this was somehow my idea. It was not. But at any rate, because the girl was critical of the Diem

regime, I was felt to be critical as well. Whatever I may have felt about the regime, I certainly never stated it publicly, and I was very careful about it in that respect.

THE SPECIAL SECURITY INVESTIGATION OF MYSELF

However, I will say that while I was in the post in Saigon, there was a full-scale security investigation of me because of views that I had expressed under classified circumstances to a member of the faculty of the National War College that had come on a Far Eastern trip in 1958. Anthony Bouscaren, who was said to be the leading McCarthyite in American education, was the temporary faculty member involved. Bouscaren was at my table when I gave a dinner for several of the War College class who were visiting, and I told him, in a way which was meant to be taken ironically, that the North Vietnamese had a "more democratic" constitution than we did; why, they even quote the Declaration of Independence. He never understood that I was just being ironic in that sense, and he took everything that I said as the literal, serious truth. I said, "There is a lot that is going on here that could be better from the standpoint of acceptability to the American people, but I'm not sure your briefings tomorrow are going to elaborate on them." Just as I had talked to Orem, quite openly, in a frank discussion between men on the same side of the struggle. At any rate, this with Bouscaren was a closed meeting, with only men cleared for highest security. I think there were three people. William Kehoe, of my staff, was one of those at my table, although I never thought I'd need a witness to this.

At any rate, when Bouscaren got back to Washington, he met with a Catholic group. One member of the Catholic group was Edward "Ted" Heffron, who was our public affairs officer in Malaysia. Heffron denounced me to the Agency, and started this security inquiry on the basis of which I was said to be out of sympathy with U.S. policy and godknowswhat else.

Q: Ted Heffron was on the staff in USIS-Brazil when I was deputy and then acting head of the program. He was noted for his far-right-wing views, and he was a devoted Catholic. Jack Vebber was the PAO. He warned me to be very careful about saying anything in Ted's presence that might even remotely be construed as left-leaning. Ted later proved on several other occasions that he was capable of the kind of thing you mention.

OPAL: This is interesting, because let me tell you what the upshot was. Of course, the inquiry was held and reported also to CINCPAC, and the admiral there sent an admiral to the post, and he talked to Ambassador Durbrow and me. Durbrow couldn't have cared less. I mean, he thought all of us were woolly-eyed liberals--and that "included those guys in the Department." USIS and Washington was full of woolly-eyed liberals, you see. I don't know where this "woolly-eyed" came from, but he certainly believed that. That was one of the reasons I had difficulty getting my country plan approved. He couldn't understand why I should worry about democratization in Vietnam.

Also at this time, the time that the security question arose, I was asked to come back to chair a promotion panel. I had just had about five months before come down with a sciatic attack. The sciatic was a very serious one. I used literally to crawl up into the embassy elevator, lie on the floor, crawl to my desk, and lie on the sofa, working. I did this for three months. I conducted my affairs. I didn't lose a day in the office that I can remember, but this is how I worked. Durbrow, perhaps to get me off the scene or even out of personal sympathy, was very happy to take this occasion when the telegram appointing me to a selection panel in Washington came through, and he said, yes, Opal could take the relief from the post, that I wasn't in good health and so on. I'm sure he wasn't without some sympathy for my condition either. He always was civil to me, and I admired his hard-working dedication and his hard-headedness.

But because the security investigation was on, this became germane to our whole program in a way. This is the only time that I have seen where the fact that the Agency is independent of State had a meaning. George Allen was Director of the Agency at the time. He sent a telegram, and he said, "No, we've decided to keep him at the post and let him serve out his time." As a matter of fact, I served two and a half years instead of the regular two years at this hardship post. Allen, instead of bringing me back, decided that Durbrow was trying to get rid of somebody, and this was his way of doing it. Whether this was so or not was beside the point; the point was that the Agency could not have done this if I had been part of the State Department. He knew Durbrow, he knew what type of person he was, and decided that this was the whole point. He wanted me to go through the whole security thing, which cleared me completely. Bill Kehoe was called and couldn't remember the conversation very well, but it was obvious that this was a hatchet job.

I must say, then, in 1959, I was at a PAO conference in Baguio in the Philippines, and at the end of the week's sessions, Ted Heffron came over to me and said, "I've had my eye on you."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "Well, I want you to know that I have never heard anybody talk about the Cold War and about the menace of communism as eloquently and as wisely as you have. I have a confession to make to you. I am the man who denounced you. When I go back, I'm going to write a letter to everybody that I wrote my original letter to and tell them that I was absolutely wrong, and that I regret it. I'll meet with anybody and tell him why I was wrong to do this thing."

I hadn't realized it was Heffron. I had no idea what had started this. I thought it was purely Bouscaren writing a letter, but it was not. It came out of this Catholic group--and me, a one time Catholic! Heffron told me about the Catholic group. Another man that they denounced was Bob Clarke, who was PAO in Hong Kong. What was Bob's curse? Bob had said--and many of us believed this--we would never really have any kind of standing and thorough diplomatic relations with Asia until Red China is recognized. After

all, when Ike tried to surface this idea at West Point once, the press and the lobby in Washington just castigated him, and he pulled in his horns. So there were many people who felt this. This is true.

In fact, at that conference in Baguio, I presented a paper which I called "The Porcupine Theory of Chinese-Soviet Relations." I said, "They should be driven so close together that eventually China will draw apart," which is precisely what happened. It was interesting, because the shaking of heads, and even the puzzlement of George Allen, who was at this meeting, was strange to behold. I thought, "What have I proposed here?" But I felt that this was something. I said, "This is the Schopenhauer theory of porcupines. Their gregarious instincts draw them together, but their quills drive them apart." At any rate, it's things like this, I guess, that made some sort of an impression on Heffron and made him confess. That's the only background of it that I ever discovered. It was all a mystery. This is a strange thing, too. It was a mysterious denunciation, and I had to answer in the dark, unable to face my accuser.

At any rate, I got a letter from our security people saying that the security clearance that I'd had at such and such a date had been renewed. No reference to the inquiry or anything else. But this was a distressing thing in many ways. It could only have come because of this Catholic group and because of Bouscaren. I think they were connected somehow with the Maryknoll Fathers, with whom President Diem lived as a recluse while in the States and who sponsored him. Diem was really a defrocked priest at heart. He was a very pious, very chaste man. So this was the thing that I ran into there.

Also we had programs that were addressed principally to the 1 million Chinese who lived mainly in Cholon, who were being wooed by Red China. Diem had policies toward them which were cruel, in a way. He banned their language, he made sure that they were integrated into Vietnamese society without their own native customs and so on. Chiang Kai-shek, over in Taiwan, even objected to these policies, but he had no effect. Diem proved right, because the Chinese, who were great accommodators, accommodated themselves to this thing. Working among them for an anti-communist cause were Belgian and Chinese priests who had come out of China and who felt very strongly about the Red Chinese and the communist government there. So it was not hard to work among these people and to get them at least seemingly on our side.

I don't know how the Chinese behaved during the war itself. I left Vietnam in spring of 1960. The Viet Cong were attacking in battalion force, and in the provinces they would rob the cashiers of the plantations, which remained French still, destroying village elders, beheading and killing village elders, probably 50 a month by that time. But it was not a big engagement in the sense that it became later.

The MAAG group, our military assistance advisor group, had only 660 people in Vietnam when I left. They had 300 people on the equipment recovery mission and 300 training the Vietnamese military. I felt--and most of us, even in the military--that we were training--and it was probably reasonable under the circumstances--for a 1950s-like invasion from

the north, crossing the river by the North Vietnamese, and there would be that Korean War kind of warfare, not the deep engagement of guerrilla forces in caves and using the Ho Chi Minh Trail that later developed. But there was nothing we could do about that, and the USIS program was mainly one to make Diem and what he stood for a part of the culture and the society of the time.

While I was in Vietnam, one of the public affairs meetings we had in Baguio, under George Allen also (this is the one where I presented my "porcupine paper"), I made a crack which George Allen took umbrage at. We had just had the written exam which was given to people in our reserve programs to make them career officers, and several of our people took the exam and apparently did very well. But I said at this meeting, "You know, we talk about cultural shock and so on, how our officers go overseas and have culture shock. I don't think our Agency en masse has ever suffered the kind of cultural shock that our officers did when they faced that written exam. This was the greatest cultural shock they ever experienced of their life." Of course, everybody laughed, but they knew very well what I meant. It was a serious document which called for a lot of knowledge and a lot of understanding of America, and I thought in many ways a good exercise.

Among the other programs we had there was an English-language center, where I had a succession of madmen in charge. I had more madmen in Vietnam. I would have madmen on my staffs everywhere, but I had really a concentration of them in Vietnam. We had people breaking down in Poland, and I've had them elsewhere. But in Vietnam, they came cuckoo. We had one fellow, Joe Flickop. He provided me with a lesson in personnel management. When we had our bombings in October, he got a call from Boston. His mother had seen headlines about Saigon bombed. She telephoned Saigon and asked for her son. He answered the phone but she thought he was a ringer. He said, "Mama, this is Joe! This is Joe Flickop! No, I'm not a ghost. I'm not a substitute. Mommy, this is Joe! Remember Uncle Willie? He's my uncle. Remember the sled I hid under my bed? I'm alive! This is Joe! I'm alive!" I went and summarily hung up the phone, he was tying up my line. I had no idea what was going on, that the whole of Saigon was wiped out in the Boston tabloids.

Anyway, Flickop, whom I loved, was slightly kooky. He manufactured a ghost family of three children and two wives and nobody got on him until he started to talk about the spooks. Then there was some objection to him.

Well, he'd settled down when I discovered, by a little bit of staff work, that he went around into local taverns with a billfold, which he took out for everybody to behold the photos of his imaginary wives and imaginary family. So I called him in one day and talked to him. He calmed down and stopped all this business about the spooks, which was what had brought him to my attention. I told him I used the word "the enemy" and nobody knew what I was talking about when I spoke of "spooks." I advised he do the same. It was my patented word, used by another man in the embassy, too, I learned. Then because he was just a Junior Officer Trainer (JOT), he was going to spend the major part of his two

years abroad in Vietnam. For his last nine months Personnel was assigning him to Laos, to Vientiane. I remember telling him--and I've used this line ever since--I said, "Joe, you're going to Vientiane. Laos is the end of the universe! This is like being assigned to Siberia or Aden or Tegucigalpa. Do you realize, from now on you're going to have a career in which you're going to be able to confront a personnel officer and lean down to him, and say, 'No, sir, I've already been to Vientiane!' You're going to be able to say that the rest of your career!"

The reason I cite this is that once I was questioned in Washington in the sixties, when I came back from Saigon, on how I felt about men who had had no foreign service experience heading up Agency personnel. I said, actually I didn't object to it if either the director or the deputy had no foreign service experience. It didn't bother me. I think one of them should, but if the director or the deputy did not, it didn't bother me, because I think what happened with personnel people who have had too much foreign service experience is that they get autobiographical about it and personalize it. They will not listen sympathetically to complaints about posts. They say, "Well, when I went into the Service, it had all those horrible places. I went there, by God, they sent me there, and you're going to go there." And the more you protest for one reason or another because of your family and so on, the less response you're going to get from them. It seemed to me that a personnel officer who took that autobiographical view didn't necessarily enter anything meaningful into his analysis of personnel needs.

At any rate, a little bit of less of that, I felt, would be helpful. For this reason, once I was asked by Bill Weathersby, who headed Personnel, how I felt about this, and I told him I had no objection to a domestic personnel man having to do with foreign personnel. Somebody said, "That's interesting. Would you give me a memo on it?"

I said, "No, I won't give you a memo. I'll let you quote me and I'll back you up."

He said, "That's not the general feeling." This, oddly enough, got to Mosley some way or another when he was appointed Personnel chief in spite of having no foreign service experience, and he said that apparently this had become doctrine, but was probably descended from God, they probably found it written on the tablets on Mt. Sinai or something. It's no longer attributed to me, by which, I mean, it became authoritative. At any rate, it was a point. But Joe Flickop, bless him, was the man who started this little chain of thought in my life.

The use of the Manila Regional Center, which I think was started up by Earl Wilson a long time ago, was marvelous from the standpoint of operations throughout the region. It was a very sophisticated outfit with a lot of excellent facilities available. In fact, I think our film and our radio unit also had people who had worked there and were working on scene in South Vietnam, who were marvelous. They were such superb professionals, and also very wise. In all the time I was there, I never had any flak on policy or anything. I used to try to communicate policy, but I had to rely, just because of the size of the operation, on the common sense of Alan Fisher and our radio officer, Hunt Downs, who

later wrote a novel on Vietnam which I titled for him, The Compassionate Tiger and got published through my agent. These people were just given to feeling the atmosphere and communicating it. But the main thing was the locals who could handle it because of the language. Except for one man I assigned to open our facilities in Can Tho, none of my people knew the language. Without the locals we were lost.

Q: By the way, the man who ultimately became the chief local editor, Filipino, in the Manila center, is now in the United States, and I think he's a citizen now. He's publishing the only Filipino newspaper in California.

OPAL: In the Filipino language? In Tagalog? In English?

Q: English.

OPAL: English is their lingua franca, really.

Q: It's a weekly, and he puts it out. It's quite a newspaper, about 36 or 40 pages, and he puts it out weekly. When I was president of USIA, he sent me several copies of it, and I got a little note about him in the last newsletter, saying that here was this man who had been trained by USIA in the center, made an editor, and now he was in the States running this paper.

OPAL: That's wonderful. You know, it's interesting that the fellow who ran the press section, a Lebanese, is in Washington now as the head of something in our Near Eastern IPS. George Shehade is his name. He's from a very distinguished family. He was a wonderful person and the kind of person who absorbed your own feelings almost by instinct, took your own coloration, and you could trust him implicitly in his motives and in his expression of views. George was one of my tutelary spirits in Beirut. These people helped us educate ourselves. These were great people.

In 1960, I got on board the S.S. Vietnam of the Messageries Maritimes. Maybe this story doesn't bear repeating. Anyway, there was a delegation that came aboard the ship as it lay in harbor in Saigon, as I was getting set to return with my family to the States on home leave. This was after 30 months in the hot-house of Vietnam. This delegation, General Williams' wife and his staff, I think his chief of staff, marched aboard and presented me with a plaque. The plaque said, "C.H. Opal, Corporal (simulated)," and cited me for intrepidity and all sorts of silly virtues that made up the acronym, USIS. At any rate, this was a great tribute to me, because I was being promoted right there in my name. It showed that something that had happened years before at the National War College was somewhere remembered, and had preceded me to Vietnam.

At the War College in 1956-57, General Patch, who was the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, delivered one of those special two-hour lectures, at the end of which for 20 minutes we would question him from the floor. I came from lunch that day, I suppose sleepy and from too many martinis--two, at least--and I was sort of groggy. An Air Force

colonel on the faculty grabbed my arm and said, "Why don't you ask the general what the Marine Corps does that volunteer groups in the other services can't and don't do." He said this as I was passing by and I proceeded to my seat. I sat there, and then when the general was soliciting questions from the class, I sort of tentatively raised my hand, and sure enough, they called on me. So I stood up and heard myself repeating the colonel's words, "General, sir, can you tell me what the Marine Corps does that volunteer groups in the other services can't and don't do?" With that, I sat down. General Patch, who'd been in trouble with the press recently because he'd forbidden wives from joining their husbands in Japan, turned on me waspishly and said, "Young man, will you tell me what volunteer groups in the other services do do?"

I stood up, all befuddled. I was still sleepy and thoroughly groggy. I said, "General, sir, there is nobody in this class that is more civilian than I am. I have the rank of private first class (simulated). I have no idea what the volunteer groups in the other services can and do do." With that, I sat down. Of course, he never answered the question, and the class broke up in laughter.

This preceded me, and this little plaque that I received in Saigon Harbor in 1960 was, in effect, a promotion. I'd been promoted from private first class (simulated) to corporal (simulated). At any rate, this was General Williams' doing, and I still have the plaque and am very proud of it.

RETURN TO WASHINGTON, 1960

We proceeded to the United States, but by way of Paris, where I received a telegram from the Agency saying that Henry Loomis wanted me on his staff. When I got to Washington, I found out that it was as policy implementation officer under the program director. This, of course, was on the Voice of America, which Loomis now headed. The program director was Barry Zorthian. I think the deputy director was Jack O'Brien. I gathered from the rather random and convoluted talk with Henry Loomis when I consulted him about this, that he had some plan eventually where Barry would go to the field, and I would become deputy director when O'Brien went out. This all was hinted at, but never could be said because all of these officers involved had "big ears" and anyway, it depended on too many contingencies. (Henry did offer me the deputy director job a couple of years later.) I thought, "Well, okay, thank you." I went out and had surgery. I had a "Jeep seat," as they call it, a polynoidal cyst. That meant sitz baths for months. Henry had had it, too, and he was sympathetic. So I got out of that job and avoided the political maneuvering.

I was in Washington without an actual assignment. Personnel would send me out on things. I went to the West Coast for lectures at the universities from New Mexico all the way up to Washington and Oregon, on decision making in the U.S. Government, and I interviewed actual and potential candidates for the Foreign Service, both for State and for USIA, and reported back to personnel.

In the winter of 1960-61, I was on a three-man panel with a member from SP, the planning staff in State (it was Henry Ramsay, my old pal from Warsaw days), and Bob Lowe, the chief of plans for AID. We went to Fort Bragg to help set up the nation's first counterinsurgency program. This was partly derived from a special forces program they had down for the Caribbean area, but it was expanded to include counterinsurgency worldwide. The impulse for it came out of Bobby Kennedy's and General Maxwell Taylor's group in the White House.

Then I headed up a USIA-State study on language priorities for the Voice of American over the coming ten years. While I was on this study, Henry Loomis, who had set it up, borrowed me to turn out a statement of mission for the Voice, which I did. Then I finished up the work with this group. The heart of our study on priorities really was my recommendation to separate the English-language part of the Voice from the other languages. This was my inspiration. There had been an attempt always to set up a priority for the English program of the Voice in relation to the others, and this was largely George Allen's doing. He believed in the English language and cultural programming. I felt that English language should rise and fall according to the interests of the director, and not by any real needs in the world. Our needs were of a different kind. While the education function and English were important, it was important for us to maybe compete with BBC in that respect, but it should not be considered as an evaluation problem in relation to Voice of American broadcasts in Russian to the Soviet Union or Ukrainian to the Soviet Union, and Polish to the Poles, Hungarian to the Hungarians, and so forth. I felt that, therefore, this should be an honorable exercise, a real policy priority, whereas English language did not involve our own strategic objectives around the world.

Part of the Voice study turned on the question of the sun-spot cycle and its effect on the ether spectrum, and the Voice was interested in what repercussions there would be from this. At any rate, this was projected over ten years.

From State we had Richard Davies among our consultants, although he was not the State Department representative as such. I mention Dick Davies, who was a very knowledgeable guy and who had been a young FSO in Warsaw when I was there. He was later area director for Eastern Europe in the Agency, and was later also ambassador to Poland for five years. He was immensely helpful, especially on the Eastern European languages.

APPOINTED DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF TELEVISION SERVICE, 1961

I was appointed deputy director of the television service in late 1961. Romney Wheeler, who'd been a vice-president at NBC, was director. While there, with the writer and lawyer Walter Wager, who later wrote Telefon and The Rocket's Red Glare and other rather satirical novels, we turned out the first original productions out of our studios at the television service. There was "Focus: Berlin," on the Berlin Wall in the summer of 1961, "Focus: Infinity," which had to do with the first orbital space flight of John Glenn. In working with him I would lay out what I wanted to do. Walter Wager, who was a

Harvard-trained lawyer, oddly enough, got into writing somehow and was just superb at it. I would talk to that man for ten minutes, and he'd come back with a perfect script. I never had to change a line of it.

Of course, I worked with producers and writers in New York the whole time, too. We had contacts there through Howie Mayer's office. Howie had been on the VOA staff and was from my days on the planning staff in the '50s, an old, streetwise pal. His office would get the newsreel footage we often needed.

In the television service, we turned out the Panorama-Panamericano in both Portuguese, with Portuguese speakers, and in Spanish under the narration of the brother of Ricardo Montalban, who was our man. I would check the scripts in Spanish. I had no competence in Portuguese and didn't pretend to, but I would check the scripts and lay out the lines for the scripts. I was the chief liaison with the policy advisory staff under Sorensen.

It was a large operation to which I don't think I brought any special technical competence. I knew nothing about television. In fact, I had some illusions about it which George Stevens, Jr., who handled our motion picture service, tried to set me straight on all the time. George, who was gentle and accepted my ignorance--I always used to say at face value--was always helpful and did a kind of advisory service to me on the sly when there was an interim when Romney Wheeler was on his way out, and it was before Chuck Hill, who'd worked with Murrow at CBS, moved in as TV director.

PAPER ON SECOND-STAGE REVIEWS AND APPOINTMENT AS SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO MURROW, 1962

While I was on the television staff, thanks to this period that I spent at Fort Bragg on counterinsurgency, I wrote on my own initiative a memo which I sent to the Deputy Director, Don Wilson. It was on second-stage revolutions in Latin America and the third world. I argued that there was a tendency not only in Latin America, but elsewhere, for the second stage of revolution to be taken over increasingly by military men who would administer their countries' affairs. Since this was so, it seemed to me that we had an opportunity here to graft some American principles on these people who, at field grade level and higher, came to the United States and trained in our various colleges under our military training programs. What I suggested was a collateral benefits program. I suggested that while the military men were here, they should be exposed to American institutions, live in or visit American homes, and that USIS or USIA should have access to them, and that USIS should follow up on them when they return to their country. But they should see our institutions in action, they should see our Congress and our legislators wherever they might be, and they should be exposed to our press and let it be interpreted for them. Let them see. So that little by little, there would be some seepage of our own values and our own institutions into their thinking. While they couldn't institute them immediately, they might be predisposed favorably toward ideas like this when they ran their own country. Eventually, this would all work for creating an environment which would favor our own interests generally.

At any rate, I wrote this memorandum, and Don Wilson passed it to Murrow. Murrow took me out of ITV and named me his special assistant. My first job was to work out a program for the Defense Department. Murrow said he seldom wrote a memo to any Cabinet officer, but this one he did. He took my memo, struck out one paragraph from it, and under his own name, he handed it to Secretary McNamara at a counterinsurgency meeting, which was chaired by General Maxwell Taylor in the White House.

Then I was in a very peculiar position later, because another assignment that Murrow gave me was to work out of the White House on counterinsurgency, and I was on the first task force set up. It was for Venezuela and Guatemala. I was on that, over in State one day being briefed by people in the State Department, when this delegation arrived from Secretary McNamara's office and said, "We've got this memo from your boss, Murrow, and McNamara has given us the task of answering it. We're told you know the most about this. How do you think we ought to answer this?"

So I looked off in the corner and said, "Well, it seems to me that what you could say is so and so." And I dictated a reply to this memorandum, which they took notes on, and this is precisely the memorandum that came back, accepting Murrow's proposal. This was fine. Ostensibly, I'd had nothing to do with one and nothing to do with the other. They didn't say, "We know you wrote this for Murrow," or anything. Really, it was very brief, it was very succinct. This is how we did things in government. At any rate, here I was in a position of answering my own memorandum. But Murrow really believed in it and tried, I guess, to implement it however we could. This involved follow-up with books and other publications and with further visits and so on. The idea seemed to have some merit.

Then there was this White House task force that Murrow put me on, with its State, ECA, CIA, and FBI members. This was high level, chaired by Ambassador Byroade. We reported to President Kennedy. This had to do with every facet of operations in Guatemala and in Venezuela.

ON THE SCHMIDT TASK FORCE ON EUROPE, 1962-63

Then I was sitting on a promotion panel, the third promotion panel that I'd been chairman of. One way or another, I was called back from the field to sit on it. I'm sure I had a lot to do with personnel at the Agency one way or another over those years. At any rate, I was sitting on one when you, Lew Schmidt, called me and asked me whether I would serve with you on the task force Ed Murrow was sending to Europe. The others besides you were Pat Van Delden and Robert Benedict, the deputy chief of personnel. Jody Derry was to be the secretary.

I don't know whether you want me to tell this, but I told you that I would not go with you unless you let me write the terms of reference. The reason I did that was that you had already sent out into the field something that I thought was already prejudicing the whole thing. You were asking them where they could cut, and the whole instruction sounded

negative. I said, "We should go out there positive. It's the most important area in the world, strategically the most important." You agreed and said, "Well, okay, write it." So I wrote it. You took it in to Murrow, he approved it, and there I was. So I was with you on the task force. It was January, I think, when we were sufficiently briefed to go into the field.

We visited many of the posts and talked with the staffs, all of them, and came away with a report on what we thought was necessary as a new look on the European program. The heart of your report, which Murrow accepted, was that we recognized that Europe strategically remained of primary importance, largely because of NATO and the forces in NATO and the common interests that we had with NATO nations, but that we didn't need saturation programming, we didn't need massive programming. What we really needed for Europe was the most sophisticated officers in the Agency, to meet with their counterparts in local society, press and academic people and so on, simply to give them the kind of data that we proceeded from to arrive at our own policies. If we had common interests, then all we needed was the same information, because we went through the same mental processes to arrive at our goal, and we couldn't change the interests.

I don't think we changed the interests of anybody anywhere in the world, but I think where we had shared interests, then we had a shared goal and then we had to share information, in a sense, and this was really our primary purpose there. This meant some cutting back in some places--Germany, which was too large, France, which was too large and was unnecessary. In Germany, Germans themselves were supporting our Amerikahaueser, in fact, in this way, conducting their own policy vis à vis the Americans.

Murrow gave me some other projects as his special assistant. One he had me look into because reports were coming out on the American turncoats during the Korean War and the American GIs who cooperated with the communists in the prisoner-of-war camps. I am afraid I sort of frowned when he asked me to look into it. I had no idea what he was interested in. But we had a psychologist in the Agency who happened to have written papers on the people who had cooperated with the Koreans in propaganda statements on bacteriological warfare and on other charges that they made. They had lied, of course. His conclusions were that they were just erratic and unstable people, and obviously did things to benefit themselves personally and didn't have any high regard for their fellow prisoners of war.

I went to Murrow and said, "If you want to create a society that will not produce people like this, you'll have to brainwash the society." I went on in that vein. I said, "These are aberrations from standard types, from the normal Americans. Most Americans don't realize what they stand for. They don't know what an American is. They don't know about values. They can't recite the Constitution, they can't recite the Bill of Rights. They'll die for the Constitution and die for the Bill of Rights, but they can't enunciate these things for you. I don't think you want to promote the idea of brainwashing our society."

He said, "No, no! God, stop! Stop! Don't worry. I won't make a speech about it." That ended that. That was the only other thing that I did, other than these special task forces.

ASSIGNMENT AS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE, 1963

I was again on a tour on the West Coast doing some lecturing on decision making, early in 63. There wasn't any recruiting or anything. I got the call from Murrow, which you know about, that assigned me as Assistant Director for European Affairs. I've always said that the Schmidt report was the guidance, really my charter of operations, as Assistant Director for Europe, and this is the program that I tried to implement. I don't know whether there was much opposition to it. I think one aspect of it betrayed itself very quickly, and that was the opposition to the idea of delegating the brightest officers in the Agency to the EUR program. Once when Murrow called me in, he said, "How's the implementation of the Schmidt report going?" I said, "It's fine, except Personnel is acting as though it never heard of it." He said, "I'll call them and tell them." But the idea of getting these officers was becoming very, very difficult.

The program's detail itself was spelled out in an article on the front page of The New York Times by Hedrick Smith. I don't know the date of it. It was a story inspired by our Lowell Bennett. You talked to Smith yourself, and then I did, too.

At any rate, our feeling was that the old-style program, the saturation and so on, wouldn't apply, but that while Europe was still central to our thinking, what we needed was a small program with the best officers who would work directly with their counterparts in the media and culture. Since the Europeans shared our basic interests, it was our job to provide them with the data, to arrive at the same decisions we in the American government were making on the basis of this data. We couldn't change their interests, and we had no intention of doing that.

I'm sure the outline of intentions and our plans for Europe did not receive full support by others. I'm not sure that Don Wilson, for example, who seemed to favor Africa and Latin America, shared the new Agency interest in Europe. I'm not sure that the man who came out of the Middle East mainly, Tom Sorensen, shared it either. As later developments showed, they expressed their views very well.

The delicacy of the sort of thing we were doing was indicated by one incident. Kai Uwe Von Hansel, who was the German Defense Minister, came to Washington to arrange for the purchase of several hundred million dollars' worth of offshore procurement. Yet he took the time, when he was over in the Pentagon, to ask me to come over to talk to him because he was disturbed that we were closing out American participation in the America House in Kiel. What he said to me was, "This is my hometown. During the Hitler years, we had no real contact with the West. I don't want that to happen again. Our problem in Germany was that we were cut out from contact with the West and influence from the West. I don't want that to happen again." He was very adamant about it.

The decision had been to cooperate and supply materials to the America House, which was completely locally supported now, with materials from USIS, but not to do anything else. So I had a brainstorm and improvised a compromise with him. I said, "All right. I'll agree to send an American official from Hamburg or Bremen or wherever for two or three days a week so he's on the scene and can supervise Kiel. Would you accept that?" He said, "Yes, this would be fine. I just want them to know that there's going to be an American around, looking over their shoulders, and examining them." So this was fine.

I later got a call from U. Alexis Johnson, who was Under Secretary of State, who was so happy about this. Von Hansel had forthwith signed this off on this three-quarters of a billion dollars of American military goods. This was a great thing. Johnson later wrote a statement on behalf of the European program for Fulbright, who was chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Senate, supplanting a thing which our Counsel, Stan Plesant, had worked up to send to the Senator. Johnson said, "No. I'll write a new one and send it directly over," and he did, which was a real insult to Plesant, because Stan was writing on the Agency generally. Anyway, this was Johnson's demonstration of appreciation all around for a little gesture in relation to Germany.

The Germans presented a special problem to us, of course, and I think it was on the German question that I finally had a real misunderstanding, or a failure of understanding, with Ed Murrow. Ed Murrow--quite understandably--his youth was invested in World War II, and his fame rested on it, and his beliefs remain invested in it also. The Second World War was dominant in his thought, and he was still fighting the Second World War in his heart. I think he had an attitude toward the Germans that stemmed from this philosophy. As a consequence, he picked up in the White House, (which was anti-State Department all the time, and which for some reason I was identified with, I found, in Tom Sorensen's eyes, at least)--Murrow picked up this feeling at the White House that some accommodation with the USSR probably could be made in relations over the heads of the Germans.

Murrow called me down to a meeting. I had no idea what it was about, except that he wanted to talk about Germany. This was after his lung operation, when he was in a very weakened condition. I had no idea of the purpose of this meeting. Present were Lee Brady, area director for Eastern Europe, Bernie Anderson, deputy for policy, and Bob Evans, Murrow's speech writer. Evans took notes all the time I was speaking. As I said, I have no idea what this was about. What I gathered from the tenor of this discussion, which was introduced by Murrow, and not amplified in any respect by anybody else present, had to do with preparing the Germans for a change in U.S. policy. What kind of change and how we would have to prepare them and so on wasn't indicated at all. I had no idea what was going on in relation to Germany. Apparently this was derived from some high policy decision somewhere, most probably in the White House. I had to improvise to the occasion.

I just had a feeling that if there was going to be some change of policy, the Germans would have some say about this. I didn't care what we thought, but it was silly to presume

that we could control the Germans in relation to their own destiny. I remember pointing out to Murrow that Stresemann had made Germany strong so that it could break the Versailles Treaty, it did not break the Versailles Treaty in order to become strong, and that Hitler came out of this bent of mind and out of this development, and that the Germans were far more capable of making a deal, as they demonstrated with the Stalin-Hitler Pact, than we were in making any kind of a deal over their heads.

At any rate, all this was vague, and I wasn't sure that I was even talking to the subject. It was in this way that I feel that Murrow more and more withdrew into himself and felt that I wasn't responding at all, and yet he couldn't tell me what was on his mind, which struck me as rather strange. The only thing I could think of was that this was something that was in the process of development, he had been aware that it was going on, and was trying to be anticipatory in his action. Therefore, we should be prepared, too.

At any rate, it was a very unfruitful meeting. I was riding in the elevator with Lee Brady and Bernie Anderson afterwards. I said, "Well, how do you think the meeting went?" They both said, simultaneously, one to the other, filling out the sentence, "You didn't give him what he wanted." Since I didn't know what he wanted, there was no way in the world I could give it to him.

I discovered long after this event, in an article that appeared in The New York Times, under Sulzberger's byline, when the Kennedy book of Schlesinger's, A Thousand Days, was being published serially in the newspapers, that there was a chapter in which John Kennedy tells Averell Harriman, on his way to Moscow, to work out some sort of a deal. He said, "Don't worry. I've got a lot of capital in the bank over in Bonn," meaning, "Don't worry about whatever happens in Bonn. We'll take care of it." The implication of this, to me, was that there was an attempt, or a hope, that there would be some deal, and that the deal would be over the heads of the Germans, and if this is so, then this is what Murrow was talking about. He could not say so because it was as vague as we thought, but that he was talking about it indicated that he would have been happy if this was so, and that we should be prepared for it. He felt that I was not responding enough, and apparently was not responding to policy. I don't know what policy he was asking me to respond to. At any rate, after that there was nothing but coolness between us, and it was a very definite time in our relationship.

Of course, Murrow was sick. He came back only on a part-time basis. The European part of the personnel office for EUR was not supplying any people. My deputy, as you know, had, for a long time, an undiagnosed ailment, and then found that he had a rare disease. I didn't feel morally I could ask him, when he was in this low psychological state, to take a transfer, because, if anything, keep him there, give him hope, and he stayed. I never put this in reports or anything else, but it was, I thought, known. He was a fine man and would have been of tremendous help, but he couldn't be at that time.

Also, there were echoes of fairly recent events. When I was doing the Voice language study in '61, Tom Sorensen asked me to come over. This was after he was named deputy

director of the Agency for policy. He said, "I've been told there's only one guy who's right for the job that I want to propose to you."

I said, "What's that?"

He said, "I want a long-range policy officer for the Agency."

I said, "Well, that's very flattering, but there's only one place you can do that job from, and it's occupied."

He said, "Who has it?"

I pointed the finger at him, meaning, "You." Whether he took this to mean that I wanted his job or that I wanted this job at all, I have no idea, but my relations with him were not very great after that either. (Laughs) At any rate, I didn't turn it down or anything. I had other things to do. In effect, I did, I suppose, turn it down.

The last months of my tour as area director were rather difficult. Murrow could only be in part-time. I was sort of at the dead-end of a limb because he had not wanted me to report to anybody else, because he said, "They don't know anything about Europe, anyway," which left me in a bit of a bind, because I hadn't kept them informed at all. I mean Wilson and Sorensen, his deputies. So that when he was more and more out of things, even as he moved back in more and more after his operation, I felt that there was this relationship that was somehow tainted, and my relationship with others had never been cemented. So there was nothing to do. Yet in the winter of 1964, on a Saturday, he called me in to see him. This was the day he was going to submit his resignation to President Johnson. (There's a forlorn picture of Murrow taken by our old pal Okie Okamoto outside the White House after Ed had re-submitted his resignation.) Murrow called me in specifically to apologize for his behavior toward me. Apparently he had reconsidered everything that had happened, and he said, "I should have never have made decisions. I should never have even tried to work during this period when I was not myself. I made a lot of decisions that were wrong on the influence of my advisors, which was more aggressive than it had ever been, and I regret that."

He said some very complimentary things. One of the things he said was that the most pride he had was, in fact, that he had appointed me, at your suggestion, as area director. But by this time, the damage had been done, and although he reported the tenor of his remarks to me to Reed Harris, his executive assistant, I don't think Reed ever passed them on to anybody else where they did me any personal good. Reed, who had been one of my strongest champions as early as 1950, had other fish to fry: he disappointed me in the end.

But I asked Ed, in this farewell thing, whether I should continue with plans for the regional PAO conference I was scheduled to have in Paris in January of 1964, and he said, "By all means go on."

I did have this meeting, where two events occurred of such minor significance, really, but probably in my case, of major significance. While I was conducting this conference, Carl Rowan was appointed Director of the Agency as replacement for Murrow. He came to Paris. It probably was a mistake on my part, but I had been conducting the meetings from a sitting position. When Ambassador Bohlen addressed them, he sat beside me. We talked, and I introduced him from a sitting position. When Ambassador Finletter talked, I introduced him from a sitting position. And they talked from sitting positions.

However, when Carl Rowan entered the session, I said, "I'd like you to meet our new director," and so on. He was sitting beside me. But unlike the others, he stood up, and said, "If you don't mind, I like to talk from my feet." I shuddered. He was the first man to do it, the first man to embarrass me. I probably should have risen to introduce him. I didn't rise for the others. You remember Ed Murrow used to conduct from a sitting position; we all used to. This was informal. We'd call each other by our first names and so on. I felt, "Uh-oh. This is my fault, and I've offended the man. That's too bad."

Then when we were leaving the meeting that day, the limousine came up. Rowan ran down quickly and got in. As he closed the door, I grabbed the door and said, "I'm going, too." And he said, "Oh, you've been invited, too?" I nodded.

The fact was that we were going to the home of Cecil Lyon, who was an old friend of mine from Warsaw days. He was minister in Paris and had invited me to lunch with Ambassador Bullitt and the son of the diplomat-playwright Paul Claudel, Richard Goodwin of the White House. I had called afterwards and said, "The new Agency director is coming in from Helsinki." He didn't know that Mr. Rowan was coming through. I said, "Why don't you invite him, too? He's here." He said, "By all means, have him come." So he came. The limousine which had been scheduled to come to pick me up was there for me, and Rowan, of course, stepped down and took possession. I didn't care whether he got in before me, but the fact that I got in was offensive to him for some reason, because he assumed the limousine had come for him. I never told him that I had arranged for his going there or anything; it would have been embarrassing to him if he had known. It was pure accident that he arrived so late.

At any rate, my two introductions to him in Paris as director of the Agency were most embarrassing. He had been ambassador to Finland during my time, and I got rid of a PAO for him, who was, he said, not performing very well and, as I gather, was not. I got a replacement for him. So I knew of his work and I knew of his interests. I knew, too, that he wasn't interested in the Agency job; he was much more interested in ambassadorial things. But he took this as a gesture to President Johnson, whom he honored.

At any rate, this was stepping off on the wrong foot. He asked me to come in and discuss the European program because in Paris he had asked the PAOs to come in and talk to him during the course of these meetings, and they did. He took extensive notes. In the period after I returned to Washington and he was preparing for his confirmation hearings and so on, I never went in. I never wanted to bother him. At any rate, when he called me in in the

spring, I was already scheduled to go in for a couple of glaucoma operations. It was discovered I had narrow-angle glaucoma, and I was to have an operation on both eyes. I'm sure Rowan didn't know about that. When he called me in, he said that President Johnson wanted changes in Europe, and he knew that I was not in sympathy with his desire for cutting back in the European program, and therefore he would have to make a change. I had in my coat pocket a list of some of the cutbacks our Task Force had considered in Germany, but I decided to hold it back. (I later gave it to Bob Benedict, so that boys could make a great showing with their new director.) I offered to resign from the Agency, but he said I should not. I subsequently had the operations, and in the fall I went to Beirut.

At any rate, I'm convinced that Johnson probably was critical of the European area, as he was critical of all areas of USIA, simply because he felt that he had not been well served when he visited these areas, and he had visited the European area the year before. He just blamed everybody for his treatment by other governments. The sad thing was, of course, he behaved like a exuberant bumpkin in many cases. He got out of his car, he gave out pencils and other things, which rendered him somewhat ridiculous. It was too bad, in the eyes of rather sophisticated and arrogant Europeans. This was unfortunate. Whatever kind of flak there was, he just put it on USIA, that this was all our fault.

At any rate, this is what Rowan told me. I'm sure there was something implied, too, in a question-mark which was raised by Congressman Rooney when I went up to present the budget that year, when I pointed out the importance of Europe to U.S. thinking. Rooney said, "You mean President Johnson believes this?" with great skepticism. So I think I knew which way the wind was blowing. At any rate, that ended my period as area director, which was sad in some ways, and quite exhilarating in others. If I were still interested in educating myself, I would say I received a dishonorable education.

BEIRUT, 1964 - 66

It was in the spring of 1964 that I was reassigned. Before I left, Tom Sorensen, who had served as an information officer in Beirut, told me it was his favorite post, and suggested I sort of keep my eye on the area, as a sort of an area officer, and report back. I decided this was just sop being thrown at me, and I never did report back on regional affairs.

One of the things that I did that was off the beaten track in Beirut was to use our press service for distributing refashioned items of news that we got from American airplane manufacturers like Douglas and Boeing, in order to convey both the technical advancements in American aviation and info on the products of American aviation. I wrote back asking approval for this, and there was no disapproval ever voiced by the Agency. I felt that promoting American products was a legitimate enterprise of ours if we didn't overdo it and didn't get ourselves involved in sponsoring products, but where, overseas, sale of aircraft, for example, is important to our exchange of balances.

At any rate, in the early seventies, Arthur Hoffman, who was then associate director of the Agency and had served as my regional officer in EUR, and with whom I discussed

this commercial reporting, wrote an Agency instruction calling for just this sort of thing on a more extensive basis. It is part of the Agency charter now, so far as I know. This is just something that struck me in Beirut because of the nature of the post and the highly commercialized kind of thinking that went on in Beirut.

Except for a language center which we had, which was the most effective, I don't think the other parts of our program were of any special real significance. The English-language center taught English, which Lebanese were interested in for commercial and not cultural reasons. (French was their culture!) We had the Kennedy Youth Center, the library, which was later attacked, of course.

Our press section was apportioned along sectarian lines. We had an Armenian, a Druze, and a Greek Orthodox on the press staff, who served the different sectarian organs in this primarily sectarianly powered community. The community was governed by the sects who had blocs of seats in the Parliament and special seats in the government. For example, a Sunni Moslem had to be prime minister, a Maronite Catholic had to be president, the general of the Army had to be a Christian, the foreign minister had to be Greek Orthodox, and so on. All of this was distributed around under a system whereby the feeling of participation in government and in society as a whole could be felt by all members of these sects.

It was a very good thing until 1967, when it broke down with the Israeli War and then, later, with the Sunnis and the Shias beginning to fight each other on the Muslim side. What it did, finally, was bring out the fact that the country had now become primarily Muslim, and the old distribution of power according to an assumedly Christianly-dominated Lebanon no longer held. When the French left in 1943, the census was taken and showed that 50-some percent were Christian, and the rest were Muslim. After all these years, there was never a new census, and the Muslims, of course, have outgrown the Christian population.

The press, on the whole, was distributed also in a sectarian way. You had organs of the various sects. We had over 30 daily newspapers in Beirut. My best friend in the press was Kamel Mrowa, who, oddly enough, was a Shia, but was more Western oriented. He published an English and an Arabic daily newspaper, and I got a fellowship for him for an editors' seminar at Columbia University. When he came back, he found that he had had a useful experience. He was a very prominent man, both in the Shia community and among the press generally. At any rate, not long after he came back, because I guess we became identified, Nasser sent a couple of assassins to knock him off, and he was assassinated in his office. One of the killers was caught and put in prison, but never tried because he was considered political. The other one fled to the Egyptian Embassy and under Nasser's protection, was spirited out of the country. After that, there was a considerable amount of self-censorship that operated among the press generally because of Nasser's tactics. He was anti-U.S. at the time.

We knew--at least I did--all the heads of the various groups, because they all had their own armies and all had their own politics. It was necessary to know them. (I sat down to dinner once with every one of these heads of assassin armies--the chiefs of the Druze, the Falange, the Muslims in Tripoli, Lebanon, and so forth, and it was weird to think of those murderers politely breaking bread together.) We had an exchange program, of course. We had the center, where we had exhibits and books. We had a library also in Zahlah, over in the Bekaa Valley, which I thought useless and turned over to the local populace. The press operation wasn't any kind of press publication as such, but there was press output. The influence that we exercised was minuscule, if any. I don't think the Arab press said anything but what the Arabs felt was wise to express vis à vis the American Government and American policy, which they felt was identified too closely with Israel. The French press was expressive of the old French imperialists' interests. There was a general feeling that what we stood for, the Americans, as such, had no meaning to them because of their primarily Arab and area interests. Therefore, we really didn't make much of an impression upon them. Yet privately, in the kind of materials that they doctored themselves, in which they depended upon us to have to doctor, they were basically friendly. This is particularly true of the Christian community, which was grateful to us for our military intervention in 1958, when we brought the Marines in and stabilized the condition there after the revolt in Iraq, when Nuri Pasha fell and Qasim came in.

So while we felt strong undercurrents of friendship, not only among the Christians, but among some of the Muslims too, it couldn't really express itself. I would try to impress upon editors or writers that I met, "If you express some sympathy for U.S. Government, let's say you have no interest in Vietnam, but if you can understand and show some support for us and our Vietnam policy or our Far East policy, we might be inclined to show some interest in what you stand for." This somehow had never occurred to them. In fact, as I recounted earlier, I was attacked once as a so-called "foreign visitor" by a newspaperman for suggesting this line to him. He recanted a couple of days later and became a great friend of the United States. I've told of this earlier, but it was sad, because they didn't look beyond themselves. For all their ability to deal, to negotiate, and so on, they never saw that they would not compromise themselves by assuming, on our behalf, a favorable posture on problems that were of importance to us, but not necessarily to them, because they would lose nothing from espousing these positions. They could gain something in exchange from us, because we tended to favor parties espousing views of that sort.

On the whole, however, I felt that I was wasted in Beirut. The area became less and less strange to me, of course, because I read everything in the world that I could find, and even passed it to my ambassador, who welcomed any kind of enlightenment--he confessed to equal ignorance. It was, nevertheless, of such a limited and such an impotent kind of operation, essentially, that I felt somewhat stymied. Certainly it was not anything that inspired any great effort on my part. While we worked, as we all do, it was nevertheless, I felt, a kind of come-down for me.

Q: There also was a Regional Production Center in Beirut. Did you have any connection with that, or any occasion to use their products? If so, how did you rate them in terms of the Manila operation?

OPAL: When I came there, there was no regional operation as such. We had a book-translation program and a book-translation officer who operated, oddly enough, out of Egypt. There was some translation production in Beirut, but there was no film production. We had no regional film production. We had the Voice of America regional radio officer, who prepared a daily telegram which became the basis of a text of policy for Voice Arabic broadcasts, and that was done out of Beirut. But he might go to Egypt, as well. The Voice cable, as such, always originated in my office. I never had any problems discussing this with the VOA man: his understanding of the Arab world was just fine. We had Telly Savalas' brother as one of these people. They were fine types who knew the area, but as a production center, as such, I wouldn't say we had anything like that in Beirut, and nothing like the one in Manila or Mexico, later.

Q: It never reached that size, but they were producing an Arabic-language magazine out of that center.

OPAL: Yes, this was run by Dick Barnsley. It was a vast printing plant. But none of it originated locally. They were independent of our local USIS, and took their orders, so to speak, from the other posts in the area by way of Washington, because I think everything was done there. Yes, this was a very sophisticated printing plant for a magazine and other types of publications. But the origins of it were never there, and I had nothing to do with that in the way of guidance or anything else. This was outside my purview. It was a fine show, and it was not of the size of Manila.

Q: I think Manila is a prime example. It always was the really big center, and it had its own editorial staff and everything else. I think you're right, probably, that the Beirut operation really didn't do a great deal of originating any material; they just reproduced what was sent to them by European posts and the Near Eastern posts. I know that they did operate.

OPAL: Yes, like Ameryka, which went to Poland and for which I wrote an article, by the way, after I left government. Those publications were done really in Washington. The post didn't do them. Whereas the ones that we produced at the regional center in Manila were products of the post. My people decided on the article, with materials from Washington, materials that we ourselves developed, and then it was printed in Manila. But this is not what happened in Beirut. In that sense it was quite different.

When I was in Beirut in 1966, we had a PAO conference under Director Leonard Marks. We had a PAO from Israel there and people from the Arab countries, and it was interesting. I suppose this is the way the Arabs and the Israelis are divided, too. There was a good feeling. We knew what we were about, and none of us voiced any prejudice,

although Arabists, as such, are supposed to be prejudiced for the Arabs. I never detected it there.

As a consequence of that meeting, I spent a week in Israel later as a VIP visitor. The foreign office worked out a very elaborate trip for me. I enjoyed it, and I got a lot out of it. While I was there, I might say, an emissary came from Leonard Marks' office and asked how I felt about returning to Vietnam with a ministerial rank, replacing Barry Zorthian in the public affairs sector. Barry, I guess, was due to be transferred.

By this time, I had had a spinal condition diagnosed, and I had a pinched nerve. I thought that under medication I could probably survive for two years without too much tension, but I did not know what the long-range health consequences would be. So I said no. I was rather depressed about having to say no, because it would have been fascinating to go back at this stage in early 1966.

When I came back to Beirut, I told Dwight Porter, who was my ambassador, that I was going to resign and leave government because I could perform at full power. Since there were things that they wanted me for that I didn't feel I was up to, I couldn't perform at the level I wanted, and I shouldn't stay in government. I just wasn't feeling well enough.

He said, "Why don't you put in for medical disability?" This hadn't occurred to me. So I did it. I put in my papers, including reports from the medical offices at the American University of Beirut, my X-rays and so on, and sent them to Washington. The approval came back so fast that I was convinced I was dying. (Laughs)

At any rate, I was asked to stay on until September, when my replacement could come. I did. I sent a cable thanking the Agency for educating me during my second adolescence, and I left government. I was 48 years old.

Q: Who was your replacement in Beirut?

OPAL: Ed Savage.

Q: I thought it might have been Jack Hedges, because he was there as PAO when I left Thailand in 1970 and came through Beirut.

OPAL: Ed Savage. I understand that he and Adrian Middleton were disasters. Both were disasters. Adrian Middleton was the DCM who came back to Washington and was killed, unfortunately, on the Virginia highways. I will not talk about Adrian, poor soul. Nobody thought much of him, including Dwight Porter. But he was trying hard.

Savage came in. We had an overlap of a couple of days. I had known him when he was information officer under Rowan in Finland, and he was scheduled to go to the Army War College, I think, and he wanted to be appointed PAO when Lew Mattison left. I refused to appoint him. I said, "Go on with your college. You'll always appreciate this." I

found somebody else for Mattison. Well, apparently Savage didn't forgive me for that. When he came to Beirut, he was really a cold fish. Then I understand there were all kinds of staff problems under him; I received all sorts of letters, asking for help, but I was out of government and couldn't interfere. What happened to him eventually, I don't know, exactly. It was a personal disaster, which is unfortunate, except that Beirut post was of a kind where disasters could probably be absorbed very easily, without doing any kind of great disservice to the U.S. Government.

It's increasingly become so, because the local situation there is so mixed up, there's so much confusion, so much hate, so much terror, so much blood. There's very little we can do to affect anything, except to keep our presence there, keep up the hopes of people who hope that some day there will be something in that country that's worth preserving, and to the degree that we intend to stay and that we have an interest, we gain, but nothing else really remains for us. This is probably what I felt was my only mission there when I was there. It's a minor one.

END OF GOVERNMENT CAREER, 1966

I wrote, as I say, for Polish-language America when I came out, one article after my retirement. Also, in 1972 I was called in as a consultant on the bicentennial of the American Revolution. Henry Loomis was deputy director of USIA; he was on safari in Africa when the idea for the conference came up. He wired back that he would OK it if the Agency could get me to come in as consultant. So I came. This was supposed to have as its takeoff a discussion of a paper by a Yale University historian, formerly our cultural affairs officer in London, on the use of "comparability" of our societies as a theme. I wrote a paper in advance for presentation in Washington. I dismissed this thesis as a non-starter, as questionable at the very least, and in fact we went on from there and never considered his thesis. The group that met consisted of a former president of Wellesley College, the acting president of the University of Rochester, Cleanth Brooks and a Wilcox and other former CAOs, and people from USIA, State, and Bruce Hershenson from the White House. Mildred Marcy, from USIA, informally hosted the meetings. A guidance paper for the bicentennial was prepared.

In 1965, I received a request from an American publisher who said that the Agency had recommended me as the man who had the integrity and the ability--all these flattering things--to do a real book on the U.S. Information Agency. This was for a series of books being published on various departments and agencies of the government, and this was going to be the first of the books published. They would appear in a series, and would I be interested? Since the Agency had, in a sense, selected me, I felt duty-bound to reply. So I said yes. I wrote an outline which was accepted, and they said, "Fine." They negotiated in advance through my literary agent, who now came into the act. There was a considerable advance. But I didn't work on it until after I left government. The book eventually was written by an ex-FSO. This is the Prager series on U.S. government.

What happened after my outline was accepted was that a man named Griffiths, who had been director of the Legislative Reference Service at the Library of Congress was called in as a consultant for this project. He had an entirely different kind of format in mind for the whole series of books, which was a legitimate thing, anyway. The whole concept had simply changed.

Meanwhile, after I left government, probably in the first year, I wrote several thousand words, and they sprung this new format on me. "Do you want to do it in this format?" I said, "No, I could never write in this cold format." Meanwhile, I discovered how it came that I'd been chosen to do this darned book. ICS's Lou Fanget told me there would been consultations in the Agency, and then "We told Prager that you were the only one who had the integrity to do an honest job while you were still in government, and who had the ability also to write it."

By now I knew this background, and I said to the Prager editor, "No, what you want is a good, cold straightforward analysis. You don't want or need any real writing ability. These things which I've given you here, which are intended for this, I'm not going to deliver as lectures." The editor had said, you see, "Go around, deliver them once as lectures. We'll publish them as a book. We'll give you the whole advance, and then you can write the USIA book according to Griffith's outline meanwhile." I said, "I'm not going to go out and deliver this as a lecture, and I'm not going to write your book either." I went home and I returned the whole check, including the 10% my agent had got. I just didn't want anything more to do with it. I didn't want to discuss it anymore or anything. They had changed signals on me. I was not going to put my name on this type of book. At any rate, Griffiths' concept was a perfectly acceptable good one, and there was a book written by some FSO--I never heard of him--on the Agency and on other things.

In any event, I had a project out there if I wanted it, if that was what my interest was. The retirement, as such, was mainly just recovering my health and going back into myself.

Robert Hutchins, my old boss at the University of Chicago, was head of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, and if Santa Barbara was good enough for him, it must be good enough for me, because Hutchins, like Robert Frost, always had a lover's quarrel with the world. And here we all are.

REFLECTIONS ON GOVERNMENT SERVICE AND U.S. SOCIETY

You've made me talk a lot. It reminds me of the story about the great Russian pianist, Anton Rubenstein. Once, after a recital, a patron breathlessly addressed him: "Oh, maestro, you play so wonderfully fast!" And he said, "Madame, I could play another recital with all the notes I left out!"

Q: Why don't you give a brief summary of your viewpoint of your career and any other things you think about in connection with the Agency as you knew it during your time.

OPAL: I feel that the Agency has advanced with techniques as advanced as there are new ways of communicating now. I think, on the whole, the population of this country is producing much more civic-minded and internationally-minded citizenry, so that the choice of people for our Agency is far better and far greater potentially than it's ever been. I have a feeling probably that the people who are getting into the Agency and into the Foreign Service generally are superior all the way around from what they were. We who came in, came in without any special techniques. I came in because I was a writer, published in a short story anthology when I was 14 years of age. I'd been a newspaper writer, I'd free-lanced, I'd written fiction, and I happened to know Bill Benton. That's how I got into it. This is how many of us did.

Increasingly, as we worked and as I myself participated with these selection panels, oral examining, and so on, I could see we were getting better and better candidates all the time, because people were coming out of foreign service schools, diplomatic schools, either coming into State or coming to us. But even just coming out of graduate schools, generally there was a better educated class of people. Also, as a whole, the population has become expert in international affairs, has become knowledgeable about the world. This is simply because our role has changed in the world, and even though some may argue about our predominance, this is not relevant, really, because we <u>are</u> involved and we <u>are</u> everywhere. So from this great pool of manpower and of intelligence, we're drawing what we can. I think we're drawing increasingly improved personnel.

I think this has all been a fact of change, inevitably. It isn't anything that anybody has created, but I think everybody who has been in it and who has worked with and on the system, can take some sort of credit for whatever has become of it, whether directly or indirectly. This has always been a gratifying thing.
I felt, myself--I don't know about others--that I don't know what would have happened if I had gone into the political side. I was asked in to become an FSO in 1954, when I came back, or it may have been 1950, but I think 1954. I was in to see Joe Green, who was the head of the Foreign Service selection group, Foreign Service personnel, and we had a long talk. He said, "We'd like to have you in the Foreign Service."

I said, "Fine. I think I'd like to come in."

He said, "Would you accept a bottom grade of the next lower class in the Foreign Service?" That was the standard procedure for people integrating under the Manpower Act.

I said, "I already took a 100% income cut when I entered the State Department. Why should I take any more?" I think I was a FSR-3 officer. I would have gone down to the bottom of 4. I said, "No."

He said, "Looking at your age, you're nowhere near to the median or anything." He pulled out a chart to show me. I said, "I'm afraid I'm not interested in the chart, and I'm not that interested in the career service."

The irony is that my Vienna novel ends with what has been described as the best paean to the career service ever written.

If I had gone into it, I probably, in some way, would have enjoyed it, but I don't know. I think my abilities were more general. My interests certainly were more general. I think I might have felt restricted in some ways, and I think we have a lot of people in our Agency who have what looks like a kind of random or wild discipline, but do have an inner discipline that allows them to stretch themselves much farther than people who are bound by an external discipline which they feel very consciously all the time, as they have to, relying on caution, the officers in the Foreign Service. But people who can express themselves and bring something to the Foreign Service of the United States that is unavailable otherwise, have much to give. I think this is the great thing about our country, and I think our country is most blessed for having this type of person. In that War College paper on Total Diplomacy, I quoted the French philosopher, Henri Bergson. I said we must think like men of action, and act like men of thought.

The importance of information, as such, I've never taken this comparatively and put it beside the other. I think analysis and policy are important, and I know, for one thing, that policy is something that is expressive of both the spirit of the people but also of the spirit and of the potential of government itself.

I was struck, I remember, when I entered the War College, to find how much power the Chancellor of the Exchequer had in Britain over policy and over the development of war. I remember very vividly the first statement that President Johnson made about preserving the value of the dollar. What meaning does this have? So I know that policy is bound to all of these factors which are now so much in prominent play in the American mind because of Paul Kennedy's book On the Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. But I think all of us understand this. To say one thing is more important than another is silly. There are times when war, war materiel, war production, the productive capacities of society, are predominant. There are other times when morale, the spiritual engines of society, are more important than anything else you can bring to them. Without the spiritual engines, without the spiritual things, all these other things are irrelevant anyway, simply because of how we value the universe.

I think it's silly to be superior or inferior to anybody, and I've carried this through in my culture paper. This is what I promoted. This was the idea I said we should insist on ourselves and always, as Americans, we should be true to what we are, and the system itself should choose people that are representative. Representative of what? I don't think we can always name what we are. But I think we recognize it, just as Americans recognize each other when they're abroad. They know
they're Americans. They don't know why, and they don't know what an American is, and they may not know the names of anybody else, but they recognize that this is an American, not an Englishman, not anybody else.

I don't think we're greater or wiser or anything than anybody; I think this is a foolish attitude. I may have secret feelings about this because of I think our society is wonderful, I think the system is wonderful. The fact that we come from so many immigrant lines is a great enlivener, the great alembic at work in this society, and we're unique in that sense because we don't have any single ethnic line or any single anything else that has colored our life. I think this makes for sadness for every old-type immigrant who comes here, who is worried about the new life, but it's from within in that process in this country that everybody has benefited.

It's the process that I've always been interested in when I was at the War College and elsewhere. As I told you, my objection to that American University speech of John Kennedy's was that it didn't stress the process. I think everything is procedural. This is a good old Anglo- Saxon law--equity--that everything is procedural. Peace comes from this; everything comes from procedure. Nothing is frozen, nothing is defined, nothing is institutionalized fully, finally, and completely. I think this is the whole secret of our country.

Q: Thank you. I consider this interview one of the best that we have had, if not the best. Thank you for participating.

OPAL: I welcome this opportunity, old friend.

End of interview