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

ULRICH A. STRAUS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is December 11, 1992. This is an interview with Ulrich A. Straus on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Rick you could give me a bit about your background--where you were born, grew up, education, etc.?

STRAUS: I was born in Germany of German parents.

Q: Where in Germany?

STRAUS: In the town of Wurzburg, which is in northern Bavaria. I left there at the tender age of about nine months and went to Berlin.

Q: You were born in 1926.

STRAUS: Yes. 1932 was during the Depression and my father was most fortunate to get a job with a German record company to go to look at the possibility of an expanding market in Japan. So he took off for Japan in 1932. In those days you didn't travel with very young children and my brother had just been born so we waited until early 1933 to follow him.

Just before that Hitler came to power. So we were extremely fortunate. My father soon switched to a British company, British Columbia Records.

Q: Was it before for Deutsche Gramophone?

STRAUS: No, it was Polydor.

Then British Columbia was sold out to Japanese interests and became part of the conglomerate Nissan.

So I came to Japan at the age of six and entered initially into a German school and then in 1936, when it was very apparent at what was going on in Germany, I entered the American School in Japan. Again in 1938, as the war clouds gathered in Europe, and East Asia, my father had the foresight to apply for an American visa. That came through in 1940. In the summer of 1940 we all marched down to the American Consulate in Yokohama and got an immigrant visa to the United States.

Q: Had you learned any Japanese while you lived there?

STRAUS: Yes, but less than you might think. My first language was German and my second language was Japanese and my third language was American. In many respects, I think, I was already Americanized before entering the United States. In a way that was home. Certainly Germany wasn't home and certainly Japan wasn't home, although we felt very comfortable in Japan. But all my friends at that point were also leaving. I have often been asked whether Pearl Harbor was a big surprise. My answer to that is that by the spring of 1941, the American School in Japan had so few kids left that they didn't even

bother to open in the fall of 1941. This meant that practically everyone who could leave or felt they could leave had left.

Q: I must say by leaving Germany in 1933 and Japan in 1940, you must have the feeling that the sleigh was going just before the wolves jumped on you.

STRAUS: As an aside, my father left Seoul, Korea about three hours ahead of the Communists in 1950.

I went to high school in New York. During the war, I was a sophomore, I believe, in high school, a gentleman whom we had known in Japan, Paul Rush, who had been a kind of a teacher missionary and by then was Captain Rush, was going around the country looking up the relatively few Americans who had lived in Japan prior to the war to get them interested in going to the Army Language School when they became the proper age. Of course I was interested, all of my old friends are going to be there.

In 1944 I graduated from high school. At that time I was still classified technically as an enemy alien. But I set off for the University of Michigan where this Army Language School course was being given. I found out there that I couldn't take any civilian courses in Japanese because they had canceled them for lack of teachers. But they allowed me as a civilian to go to the Japanese Military Intelligence Service Language School, despite my enemy alien classification.

For almost a full year I did that. When I turned 18...you could draft aliens but aliens could not volunteer...I joined that group and went to basic training. While in basic training the Emperor decided to throw in the towel, in August 1945. I completed my military training and in January 1946 came back to Japan as a second lieutenant.

Shortly thereafter I was ordered to go to the Tojo trials.

Q: He was a military general who became Prime Minister in the middle of the war.

STRAUS: Before the war. He led Japan into World War II.

The reason I was picked was that I knew German and there weren't many people in Japan in those days who knew German because all of those had been shipped to Germany. I knew both Japanese and German. Along with some British Navy officers I went through literally tons of German Foreign Office files that had been shipped from Germany to us to go over for possible use by the prosecution against the Japanese who were charged with waging aggressive war in collusion with Germany and Italy.

We wrote many précis and after a while our British colleagues left and I was still there. Then I was working with the lawyers making full translations of these documents into the two official languages of the court, which were English and Japanese. In fact I certified as

to the accuracy of translation of those documents. It may well have been the most responsible job I ever had, and at age 19.

Q: It is interesting that you were a second lieutenant at age 19 without a college degree. Normally I thought you had to be the equivalent of an adult which in those days was not...

STRAUS: That's right. But I think before World War II it was much more common for even regular officers not to have a degree.

Q: What was your impression of Japan at this time? Were you able to look up old friends?

STRAUS: Tokyo was smashed. I think something like 60 percent of Tokyo just didn't exist any more. Other cities were burned even more to the ground. Seeing old friends, of course, came with a sense of relief that they were still alive but depressing the way they had to live in those days. I, along with everybody else, would take some rations to them and help them out the best I could. The people I knew generally were the lucky ones who had a place to live. But, what was impressive, I guess, was that discipline didn't totally break down. People had to go into the countryside to get food and bargain with the farmers. They would go out with large rucksacks containing what little possessions they had been able to save to bargain for food from the farmers. The farmers in those days were the kingpins. They did very well.

Train windows were smashed in because that was the only way people could get in and out of cars. But there was virtually very little crime even though people were literally starving to death. But there was a lot of sadness too.

The Japanese at that time were very grateful to us because they had feared the worse. The government had told them all the terrible things we were going to do...rape, pillage and burn. And, of course, none of that happened.

Q: Well, here you were and you had been accustomed to Japanese society, what was your impression as a young man of the impact between the American forces, who were basically a group of pretty young guys and not very sensitive?

STRAUS: First of all let me say that I knew very little about Japanese society. My parents' interaction with the Japanese was very limited. The number of times we had Japanese in our house I could probably count on the fingers of one hand in a period of seven years. I had one friend, who lived in the neighbor, but by in large my playmates were all from the American School and my whole life was directed at the American School. So I am not sure I can really answer your question. I was beginning to learn something about Japanese society at that time.

Q: What were your impressions from what you were getting and from others who were dealing with the Tojo trial, etc.?

STRAUS: The 28 class A war criminals were...I used to see them on the bench...were beaten men. They were totally disgraced men. I think there was none of the haughtiness that was demonstrated by some of the German war criminals.

One comment on the trial. I was a member of the prosecution and dealt with the lawyers The prosecution was very much aware of the fact that the law they were applying was largely ex post facto law. This is a charge that has been made subsequently. But I think there was a feeling that we had very little choice in the matter. We could not really do what the Russians probably would have preferred to do and possibly the Chinese...stand the designated war criminals against the wall and shoot them. We could not just let them go. We didn't feel we could just turn them over to a weak and untested Japanese government. That might not have been acceptable to the American public at all. So, I think, to the Western public's putting them on trial was perhaps the only reasonable political alternative.

And we hoped it would have two results. That it might provide a deterrent for future leaders and that it might provide education for the Japanese public, who of course learned a great deal about their then recent history for the first time.

Q: Did you get any feel for the dissemination to the Japanese people of what was happening?

STRAUS: Yes, it was disseminated through the radio and newspapers. We controlled everything so we could force the Japanese to do almost anything we wished. I don't think, to be very truthful, that the Japanese had a great deal of interest in it because they were interested in survival at that time. They didn't care very much about anything that was going on in the rest of the world.

Q: When you have lost, you have lost.

STRAUS: You are just interested in survival and getting back on your feet some how.

Q: What was the feeling within the American military towards General MacArthur?

STRAUS: Well, you know, MacArthur never had the adoration of the troops as let's say Eisenhower did. He was an aloof figure and a showman. My own feeling was that perhaps he was a better administrator of Japan than he was a General. There was a good deal of dissension below MacArthur. There were two most prominent political wings, one conservative, under Major General Willoughby, who was in charge of G-2 (Intelligence) and the other under General Whitney, who handled the Government Section, the more liberally inspired section. Things got so bad between the two sections that we were ordered not to talk to each other.

Q: You were in which?

STRAUS: After I left the war crimes trial, I was in G-2. But my best friend and roommate was with the Government Section.

Q: What were you doing when you left the trials?

STRAUS: For a bit I worked for G-2. The trials may have whetted my interest in the Foreign Service and G-2 did some more because I was working in something called G-2 Operations and our task was to put together what was known as an intelligence summary of the day's happenings in the Far East Command, which was MacArthur's command. Together with a number of other people, prominent among whom was Tom Shoesmith, who later was DCM in Tokyo and ambassador to Malaysia, we worked on the Japan part of that. So what we were doing was a kind of journalistic reporting job of what was going on in Japan, on the political, economic and social side of things. I contributed some writing to that. We were hampered by the fact that the folks in Government Section which played a behind-the-scenes role in Japanese politics would not talk to us and we could not ever acknowledge the fact that the Japanese government was not a totally free agent.

Q: Since the war was over, what were the intelligence concerns?

STRAUS: The concerns in Japan were that we just wanted to know what was going on. Of course, this was being read not just in Tokyo but by the commands below us. There were still at that time about 100,000 troops in Japan. The military concerns were largely outside. They dealt with some of the tense situations in Korea between North and South and the successful campaign of the Communists in China. There was also a great deal of interest about the communists in Japan.

Q: When did you leave Japan?

STRAUS: I left Japan in 1948 and returned to the University of Michigan and got myself an education. I had, perhaps, made a mistake when leaving the Service. I was asked if I wanted to stay in the Army Reserve and I said, "Oh sure." But then when the Korean war came, June, 1950, not too long thereafter they recalled me to active duty. I staved it off for a while but I finally decided there was no point in fighting it and in 1951 I was back in the military, having been gone only three years.

Q: What were you taking at Michigan?

STRAUS: I decided that unlike many of my colleagues I wouldn't take a course on Japan; I had had plenty of that. My undergraduate degree was in Japanese language and literature, simply because of all the credits I had accumulated during the war. But my Masters was in political science and I had just started work on a Ph.D. in political science. Actually I had decided at that point to get a law degree and was accepted by Yale Law School, but the next day I got orders to report for military duty.

Q: Were you concentrating on any particular area in your political science studies?

STRAUS: Not really. Eventually, yes, with my Ph.D. program it was Japan.

Q: So, all of a sudden you are back in the military.

STRAUS: It was clear the Army didn't have the foggiest notion what to do with me. Perhaps the people who called me back didn't realize that Japanese was very different from Korean. I couldn't speak a word of Korean. After languishing at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, I volunteered to go to the Far East Command while the war was raging and ended up in the same office I had occupied before in Japan, G-2 Operations. I remained there for another year and a half and eventually became a civilian and staying on for a while. Then I was doing the bulk of the reporting on Japanese political developments.

Q: Before we move to Japanese political developments, since you were in intelligence at the time...one of the major lapses in our intelligence operation seemed to be figuring out the intentions of the Chinese Communists. Would they enter the war or not? MacArthur came down very strongly that they would not. Were you getting any emanations from this thing at all?

STRAUS: No, that never concerned me. I got back to Japan after all this had happened, in the latter part of 1951.

Q: How were you reading Japanese developments at that time?

STRAUS: I arrived shortly after the peace treaty went into effect in the summer of 1952.

Q: How were we reading developments in Japan from your perspective?

STRAUS: At that time, I think we still viewed Japan as a country that we would be lucky to get off our backs economically. It is hard to imagine today. But if I had my wits about me that would have been the time to buy real estate on the Ginza. But I didn't, obviously. The Japanese were still confused. I think that there was a period after the war when in the Japanese mind everything Japanese turned out to be bad, everything American was great. They really had a 180-degree turn. It was excessive before and I thought it was artificial and excessive later. The fact that we went from an occupying power to an ally in 1952 really didn't make a lot of difference. It took almost a decade before things really changed.

Q: Were you seeing any political developments that were of concern at that time?

STRAUS: Yes, I think there were concerns. Japan at that time was sharply divided between a group of conservative parties at that time and a Communist Party which at that time was sort of swinging wildly back and forth between Beijing and Moscow in their

alliance. They had resorted to a certain amount of violence to support their North Korean friends.

Perhaps more worrisome then anything else, there was a Socialist Party which was strongly supported by a labor union movement, which in its outlook was hard to distinguish from that of the Communists. They espoused the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. They demonstrated none of the anti-Soviet attitudes that you were starting to find in Western Europe at that time. It wasn't very clear to us, and for some time thereafter, whether the Socialists, with or without Communist allies, ever could get into power legitimately and whether they could then be trusted to relinquish power. This was the kind of thing we experienced in Italy, too, I think.

In terms of domestic politics that was a concern. A second concern was that we wanted Japan to get back up on its feet and start contributing in a military sense so that we wouldn't have to spend resources to defend them, and perhaps in an economic sense.

Q: When did you leave Japan?

STRAUS: In 1953.

Q: Did you have any feeling that you had participated in something that later would be considered a model occupation, etc.? You had hit it twice. Did you feel that at least Japan was heading in the right direction and things were coming out better then could have happened?

STRAUS: I wasn't all that analytical at that time. I had other interests that I was pursuing. But I think that I was aware of the fact that given how fierce the war had been fought, how extreme the emotions were in both countries about each other, how often racists they were, on both sides, that we were awful lucky how well things turned out.
One reason of course was that the incoming troops, the first wave, perhaps more than the second or third wave, were very relieved to get to Japan. Japan, as bad as it was, once you got out of the big cities, was a lot better than what these guys had gone through.

Q: Some were sitting on horrible little islands.

STRAUS: Oh, fighting in New Guinea, the Philippines, the islands across the Pacific...everything was better in Japan. So that helped.

Q: Speaking from my experience, I came in in 1952, but there was a real fascination by that time with Japan by the troops. One, of course, was girls. This was a real delight. I recall that in my oral exam to get into the Foreign Service one question was what I had observed about the constitution of Japan. For me it was sex. There also became a delight in the architecture, etc. There was a marriage there that was hard to understand.

STRAUS: I think we got a whole generation, frankly, of Foreign Service officers, college professors, businessmen involved with Japan from the group of Army and Navy officers who had studied the language. They were particularly interested in Japan.

Q: You left Japan and what did you do?

STRAUS: I went back to the University. I had given up the idea of going to law school. It was a little bit daunting, perhaps, and I had been independent and I thought, "Well, I will get a Ph.D. in political science with the idea of getting into the Foreign Service." So that is what I did. I spent the next two years at the University of Michigan finishing up course work and doing some teaching there. Then I got a Fulbright and was back in Japan working on my Ph.D. The subject was the Upper House of the Japanese Diet. I was nominally attached to Keio University. I was one of the first foreign students attached to Keio University, one of the best private universities in Tokyo.

By then I was getting interested in Japanese society, but perhaps not interested enough because I had an interesting episode at that point. This was in 1955. I let it be known that I was interested in skiing and wanted very much to join the ski club. Predictably the members of the ski club were just delighted that a foreigner, an American, wished to join them. They were curious about me too. But then we started talking about taking a ski trip together. They were all enthusiastic and then a thought occurred to them and they said, "Well, it is very difficult. We sleep on tatami mats. We don't have beds, we stay in Japanese inns." I said, "That is no problem I have stayed that way many times. No problem." Great relief. Then, "But, we eat Japanese food. We eat raw fish." I said, "I love Japanese food. I eat it all the time." Great relief. Then a little more time passed and they said, "Oh, there is one other thing we want you to know. We get up every morning at 7:00 and about 7:30 we go out into the snow and have our exercises. Then at 8:00 we have our breakfast and at 8:30 we all wax the skis. We are out on the slopes at 9:00 and at 10:30 we have the first smoke break...."

Well, you get the picture. I regret very much that I said, "I just got out of the Army recently and I didn't really want to do that." But I got an interesting lesson on how the Japanese do things. This was not the ski team, this was the club!

I was in Tokyo from September, 1955 until early 1957. In late 1955 I took the Foreign Service examination at the Embassy. I was fortunate enough to pass it. In the following year I took the oral exam and got through that. I joined in 1957, in April. I was at that time 30 years old. Pretty long of tooth.

Q: Much more than today, most of the officers coming in were male and had the military experience which made them older.

STRAUS: Yes. I had had five years in the military plus many years trying to get a Ph.D., which I never finished.

Q: Did you get any training when you came into the Foreign Service?

STRAUS: I had the A-100 course and that is all. I didn't want to go right back to Japan so I opted to stay in Washington and ended up in INR working on Japan.

Q: Did you realize when you came into the Foreign Service that with your obvious talent in the culture and language that very few Americans had that this was going to be pretty much your concentration?

STRAUS: Yes, I did. But there were a lot of others, of course, who also had these war time language experiences, both navy and army, who were very good.

Q: You were in INR from 1957-59. How did INR work at the time? What sort of information were you getting and what were you doing with it?

STRAUS: I remember in particular two things. One was early morning briefings for the Director. We would come in around 5:30 or so and, not just on Japan, but East Asia in general, we looked at all the news that came in over night and briefed those things that were of possible interest to the seventh floor. That was one thing.

Then I worked interminably on something called the NIS, National Intelligence Summary, which was a CIA project. I became undoubtedly the world's greatest expert on middle schools in Okinawa, which, of course, was invaluable later on to my career.

Q: This was something that CIA sponsored that every one of us who served in INR worked on, which was to be the great treatise on anything, anywhere at anytime. So if we ever went to war we would know whether or not to bomb middle schools in Okinawa.

STRAUS: It was an amazing amount of money that went into that.

Q: A massive effort.

STRAUS: But I was so happy to be in the Foreign Service. I was gung ho.

Q: Did you get any impression of your Foreign Service class that came in? What was motivating them, etc.?

STRAUS: Oh, I think it greatly varied. But it was a sense of adventure and a sense of service for most people. And, perhaps, contrasted to today, I have the feeling that most felt this was something they would do for the rest of their lives. We had two women in our class, both of whom left within four or five years to get married.

Q: Yes, if you were a woman you had to resign if you married.

STRAUS: Yes.

Q: Were you married at this time?

STRAUS: I was not married. I married just before I left Washington on my first overseas assignment.

Q: When you were in INR did you have any connection with the Japanese Desk?

STRAUS: Yes. We used to go around and brief the Desks, also. So I got to know the people on the EA Desks. It was a big thrill in those days. It was all new and different. I guess I learned a little bit how to write Foreign Service style.

Q: Then you went back to Tokyo from 1959-64.

STRAUS: I was initially slated to go to Nagoya where we had a Consulate at the time. That was changed at the last moment and I was sent to the Embassy political section in Tokyo as the most junior of junior officers.

Q: Did you feel like you were back at home?

STRAUS: In many respects, yes.

Q: Were you given a particular slice of Japanese politics?

STRAUS: Yes. My job initially was to follow the newspapers and do whatever didn't fall into anyone else's bailiwick. I think to some extent it included things like the judiciary and court cases. I remember writing a report on a big typhoon. Sort of odds and ends. I did that for a year.

Q: How big was our political section in Tokyo at that time?

STRAUS: I would guess about 12 people. It was getting to be fairly big.

Q: What was your impression of the Embassy? At that time Douglas MacArthur II, a career Foreign Service officer and nephew of the General, was Ambassador.

STRAUS: Yes, he was.

I was in Japan in 1955 when he was appointed and I thought that it was a big mistake to appoint anyone with that name. But the Japanese saw it differently. He had been the Counselor in the Department, a man who obviously had the ear of the Secretary of State, one of the high and mighty and the Japanese were flattered to get an important person like that.

However, I found the Embassy was not a very happy place. In fact, compared to all the others places I have been subsequently, it was a very unhappy place. I remember one incident, for example, this was a time of turmoil in the spring of 1960 with a lot of demonstrations going on...
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Q: You were saying that you sat in on a meeting with Douglas MacArthur.

STRAUS: Yes, indeed. The Ambassador held forth for all but a minute of this 50 minute interview where he tried to persuade the president of a prominent university that these demonstrations against the security treaty, against Kishi, the Prime Minister at the time, were all wrong. And that it was his Christian duty, as it were, to oppose this kind of thing. At the end of that 50 minutes, he was rather summarily dismissed and thanked for contributing his views, which the man never had the chance to do. I think that was kind of the way MacArthur ran things.

At a later point we were asked our thoughts about the Eisenhower Presidential visit and it was clear to everybody, at least below the DCM level, that it needed to be postponed. But at that point I think the Ambassador's ego was involved in the visit and he wanted to continue it until finally the Japanese indicated that they were concerned about the safety of the Emperor as much as anything. Protocol demanded that the Emperor go out to the airport. So at their insistence it was postponed.

Q: These demonstrations were over a security treaty we were developing with the Japanese. How were we reading this?

STRAUS: Well, let me go back. As part of the peace treaty of 1952 we had negotiated with Japan a security treaty which allowed for the stationing of American forces in Japan. By 1959, with Japan starting to feel more independent, it was clear that the treaty that had been negotiated earlier was not adequate. It had to be revised because it provided for such things as the possibility of American forces interfering militarily in Japan. That wasn't appropriate any more. So it was revised really to provide more powers to the Japanese and to limit American powers. So there was nothing wrong with that except that the left wing force in Japan didn't want any security treaty. They wanted so-called unarmed neutrality and to rest their security on the tender mercies of the United Nations as well as non-aggression pacts with the United States, the Soviet Union and China.

Q: Those of you who were dealing with these groups, how were you reading these?

STRAUS: I think our reading was that these demonstrations in Japan, which were, I think, conveyed in the press to the American public as being anti-American demonstrations, were only partly that. That the majority focus, maybe 70 percent, was really directed against Mr. Kishi, then the Prime Minister. Kishi's background was that he had been a very prominent politician, a member of the wartime Tojo cabinet and got

within a whisker of being tried as an A Class war criminal. He was probably the most conservative of the post-war Japanese politicians. A very wily politician.

It was Kishi's somewhat Japanese idea that the revised security treaty should be a present for Eisenhower. It should all have been wrapped up by the time he came. But given the opposition to this treaty among the trade unions and the left wing in Japanese politics, it became impossible to get it through without ramming it through...what the Japanese call the tyranny of the majority.

Q: Rather than reaching the sort of consensus which was the normal Japanese way.

STRAUS: Yes. It was then that the anger of a lot of middle-of-the-road people also exploded. It was roughly 70 percent directed towards Kishi. Maybe another 20 percent against having the security treaty with the United States and 10 percent against the planned Eisenhower visit. I think maybe the Japanese were in a way disappointed that the President of the United States wouldn't come. So I think there was at least on the part of the press in the United States a misreading of this. I am not so sure that our reporting at that time carried the full flavor of what these demonstrations were all about.

Q: How did you find the reporting? Obviously as a junior officer...they tend to focus more on the opposition...this is sort of a traditional role that they always feel that the old guard at the top sits on what they have to say.

STRAUS: The reporting first of all was excessive. MacArthur had a way...he was an early riser and by the time he came to the office he had read the English-language Japan Times, which was his bible. He would mark virtually all the articles that dealt with Japanese domestic or international affairs for reporting. We were required to report them even if the articles turned out to be false. I remember I was told, "Well, then you say that the Times said this but on further checking it wasn't true." So it was excessive. I felt that the lower ranks, certainly people like Dave Osborn, knew the score exceedingly well. But the reporting that was done above the political counselor level was often slanted.

Q: When you say also excessive, were you finding yourself getting down to the county level? Were you learning an awful lot about Japan that you might not have?

STRAUS: Oh, yes. I learned and particularly...you see I did this job for one year and then I became the assistant labor attaché. For a language officer that was a fabulous job. My boss, the labor attaché, was Lou Silberberg, a very fine individual with a tin ear. Despite having been in Japan eventually for ten years, and getting along very well with the Japanese and learning a lot about Japan, never had the slightest facility for Japanese. Like most people he didn't particularly like to work through interpreters so his contacts were generally with the Labor Ministry and with the ILO office and the ICFTU office and left the labor leaders to me because there wasn't one who spoke any English.

That was great stuff, particularly as the labor unions were the bulk of the people out on the streets demonstrating against the government. That was a very exciting time for me.

Q: We have put a lot of attention into labor movements around the world, and the Japanese was one of the major ones. We made certain calculations early on that this would come out all right, didn't we? It was one of the big debates with General MacArthur...whether to have labor unions or not.

STRAUS: No, that was never a matter of debate.

Q: Wasn't there something about that?

STRAUS: Well, I think you are referring to the general strike which was called and which he cracked down on early on in the occupation.

Q: How did you see the labor movement in those days? This was in 1960.

STRAUS: Well, I learned a lot. I learned that the rhetoric was often very extreme and hardly distinguishable from that of the Communists. And that sometimes the private views of these labor leaders was much more moderate. Was that important? I got along pretty well with them. There was a difference between the government unions and non-government unions. The non-government unions in the private sector from the beginning were much more moderate because they often identified their interests with their employers. On the other hand, the railway workers, teachers union, etc. were implacable foes of their employer--the Government.

I do recall talking to a journalist friend of mine about the head of SOHYO, the then Japanese equivalent of the AFL-CIO, on the left side of the spectrum. I said, "Mr. Ota, the President of SOHYO said this and that." I rather took exception to his strong views on American policy, whatever it was at the time. I said, "Why does he keep saying these things?" "Ah," said my friend. "You don't understand. Mr. Ota really comes from the private section unions and his personal views are known to be very moderate. Therefore he has to take special pains to express radical views in public." So that was another lesson about Japan.

Q: This is always one of the hardest things. An officer who gets down and gets more intimate with labor and political leaders can often see what is going on underneath. Yet your masters at the top of the Embassy see a different picture because in a way they say, "This is all very nice but this is what their official position is." And this is what gets reported. Did you find yourself having a problem of translating this within the Embassy?

STRAUS: Yes, although I have to agree too that yes they may be moderate in the inner circles which usually doesn't get out. It is very hard in a society like Japan to figure out to what extent this alleged moderation translates itself into action or, as the case may be, lack of action. We never really know that. At least we certainly didn't then. We may have

a little bit more insights today than we had then about what was going on within the decision making inner circles.

Q: What was our attitude towards the labor movement at that time? Being the assistant labor attaché did you feel the heavy hand of the AFL-CIO and its attitude which is violently anti-Communist and anti-left because it was controlled by former Communists who were in...?

STRAUS: There was a great deal of interest in the labor movement. Many of them came to visit on exchange programs. We sent teams of labor leaders to the United States under the so-called productivity councils. It turned out that all these people who went to the United States took very extensive notes and learned a great deal about productivity in the United States which they diligently applied to their own workshops. I am not so sure, frankly, that the American labor leaders who came to Japan were as diligent in learning about Japan, with one possible exception. That was the Reuther brothers, Walter and Victor. They came to Japan repeatedly, especially Victor. They certainly stand out as being very serious people, not just being interested in getting entertained. They were trying to learn about the Japanese system.

Sure, elements of the Japanese labor movement were not with the ICFTU--International Confederation of Free Trade, headquartered in Brussels.

Q: This was set up as a counter to?

STRAUS: The WFTU, which was Communist. It was headquartered in Prague, I think.

The SOHYO unions were not affiliated with the WFTU, but they were very close to the WFTU unions, nevertheless. But again a fair number of these people on a personal basis were very approachable and would tell you a good deal of what was planned. They just shared the views of many Japanese at that time that a close alliance with the United States was not a good thing. It was seen that the United States would possibly lead Japan into a war not of its choosing, particularly against China. You recall we had this very bitter anti-Communist China policy at the time. We had literally forced the Japanese to recognize Taipei; otherwise they would not have done so. With bases on Japanese soil this was not totally a wild notion.

Q: Was Okinawa...at that time Okinawa was not part of Japan.

STRAUS: It was not. It was administered as an American fiefdom. John Foster Dulles came up with an interesting notion in international law that the Japanese retained sovereignty but we exercised sovereignty--residual sovereignty was what the Japanese had. I should say, of course, it was an interesting period. I wasn't involved with Okinawa at the time. At that point Ambassador Reischauer had come in with the Kennedy administration, replacing MacArthur. He had some problems with the Commanding General on Okinawa.

Q: What was your impression of Reischauer? Here was a man who was the guru of Japanese and Chinese studies from Harvard.

STRAUS: Well it was a major change from MacArthur to Reischauer. It was a more relaxed style of leadership. For example, the Embassy had a swimming pool which nobody other than the Ambassador and DCM could ever use. Immediately that was opened to everybody which greatly endeared the Reischauers to us. We got to know them as people and they were delightful. Politically his views were very close to what I felt about Japan. He, of course, was a graduate of the American School of Japan like I was. Haru Reischauer, his wife, was a graduate of that school as well. I had known her younger sisters. So they were very fine people. I think the views, particularly of Dave Osborn, one of the shining lights of the Foreign Service and certainly in the Japan and China service, were very much taken to heart by the Ambassador.

Q: Did we have a feeling after the abortive Eisenhower trip, which stands out as a real shock to Japanese-American relations, that we had to get this relationship back together?

STRAUS: Reischauer, of course, had written an article for Foreign Affairs which, I guess, Kennedy had read and decided to make him Ambassador. He spelled out a number of things that needed to be done. Immediately relations were established at a high level by the Ambassador himself with people on the left, which included much of the academic establishment, where, of course, his credentials were superb. And also with the left wing politicians, leaving aside the Communist Party, and the trade union movement. Sure, I and others had relations with them, but it was a different thing for the top level of the Embassy also to see them and invite them to Embassy functions. It was very different. It was very nice.

Q: Under the MacArthur and the Reischauer regimes, were there people that you could not deal with?

STRAUS: Yes, I think it was our view that we shouldn't deal with the Communist Party. And we didn't. That really didn't change, but I don't think there was much to gain at that time. They were still very much kept under either Moscow's or Beijing's sway. We weren't going to get anything that wasn't in the official newspaper, for example.

Q: At that time what was the feeling you were getting about how the Japanese viewed both Communist China and the Soviet Union?

STRAUS: There was a great distinction that the Japanese have always drawn between the Soviet Union and China. They were never, I think, as persuaded as we were of the unity of those two countries. There was always a feeling that some how or other they could get along with the Chinese; that there was a great deal of affinity between them. There was also a feeling of some shame and remorse of what the Japanese had done in China, and the feeling that they hadn't really squared accounts with them. They did not feel any sense

of threat like we did. Therefore there was a divergence in our policy, very clearly. There was a time when I think we feared the Communist Chinese more than the Soviets.

The Soviet Union was a very different matter. The Japanese did not feel any sense of remorse vis-a-vis the Soviets. After all it was the Soviets who attacked them, not vice versa and they attacked them at the very end of the war and then took a good deal of booty. Not only the northern territories and Karafuto (Sakhalin) but in Manchuria and the Japanese infrastructure there. Then, perhaps worst of all, they kept hundreds of thousands of Japanese in captivity. They were sent to work camps and many did not survive that. So there is a very strong negative feeling which survives even to this day in Japan about the Soviet Union. But, as you recall, our view at that time was that Communism was universal and undistinguished whether you were talking about Albania or Czechoslovakia, North Korea, or whatever.

Q: Did you ever get involved with our relations with the American military in Japan? Was it a problem for the political section?

STRAUS: Not at that time. There were people who dealt with that. Bob Fearey was one who dealt with that. And Buck Borg was the other. That was their main thing. It was usually things that arose out of the management of the security treaty and agreements that dealt with the utilization of the bases.

There was a problem throughout that period in the sixties, which I dealt with later in Washington, on pressure from the Japanese about wanting to get some bases back. But it wasn't something that we couldn't deal with.

Q: Well, back to being the assistant labor attaché, just to get a feel for the period within the Foreign Service, were you concerned that by being there, although you were part of the political section, that this would taint you as not being a regular FSO or not?

STRAUS: I wasn't worried about it that much. I didn't really want to be a labor attaché the rest of my life. But on the other hand I had not gone through any labor course. Whether it existed then I don't know. But I had no such concerns.

I might say one thing about the demonstrations. We used to have demonstrations in front of the Embassy. We had large demonstrations there. But unlike, I guess certain other countries, I never felt insecure. These were all well choreographed Japanese demonstrations with the police on one side and the demonstrators on the other. Both sides were careful not to step on the grass. Indeed I can recall leaving the Embassy and walking right through the demonstrators and not having any thought in my head that anything could happen to me. I don't think I would do that in certain other countries.

Q: How did we read these demonstrations? Who was organizing them?

STRAUS: There were different groups that were involved. The largest groups were always the trade unions. Indeed, I think it is fair to say that the Japanese government really didn't have much to worry about so long as only the students were demonstrating and even if some Communists were demonstrating along side. When the trade unions joined then it became a really serious matter and it became at least a threat that the government could be toppled by that. In a sense the demonstrations did remove Kishi from office.

Q: Looking at the students at that time. In some countries students are expected to be as radical as all hell. In Korea, students generally are anti-American but as soon as they get out they basically put on another hat and join the establishment. What sort of contact did you have with the teachers?

STRAUS: We had friends at the university level and some of whom said they used to go to demonstrations, it was the thing to do. Anybody who was anybody participated in the demonstrations. It was considered less as something anti-American but to get rid of this son-of-a-gun Kishi. It was also a sense of adventure. It was fighting the police, and that was a good thing. It was the "democratic" thing to do. For a Japanese at that time, I can understand that. To demonstrate your democratic instinct you fought against the government as your first chance to do that.

Q: Also there was more of a sense of participation. You put on a headband. You had kind of a uniform to demonstrate.

STRAUS: It was a phase in your life. And as you said, some of the business leaders had the wit to hire some of these people, the leaders even. They felt they showed leadership qualities that they wanted in their business. It was a little more difficult to get into government with that background and record, but not impossible.

Q: What about our analysis that you were seeing of the university system? Often it is sort of at the assistant professor instructor level who are the great instigators of this who haven't quite gotten rid of their undergraduate thoughts. Was that still true there?

STRAUS: Oh, very much so. You know the Japanese are not great individualists and certainly at that time the thing to be in the university if you wanted to get ahead was to be a Marxist. That was certainly true in the social sciences. Indeed some of the students were telling me at the time that if your papers didn't have a Marxist bias, you might as well forget about a good grade. And that was something that worried us.

Q: Did you find that there was much of a spill over into the thinking later on, or was this something that the people who were doing well could shuck very easily?

STRAUS: There was a spill over for a while. You did have even then in the large industries an element in their twenties who were rather radical, but gradually they turned. Some never did change. Some of the journalists, for example, and opinion leaders. So

Marxism in its rather strange and extreme Japanese form did persist in Japan longer then say in Western Europe.

Q: Then you left Japan...

STRAUS: No, I still had one more year in Japan. I was in charge of the Socialist Party.

Q: What does that mean?

STRAUS: Well, keeping contacts in the Socialist Party and reporting on it, the main opposition party.

Q: At that time did you see the Socialist Party presenting much of an alternative to the Liberal Democrats?

STRAUS: I am afraid we did. We thought that the economic basis in Japan by the mid-sixties, with rapid industrial growth and rising living standards was not all that different from Western Europe and that you would have a moderation of the Socialist Party, such as you had in Germany, France and England. And it didn't happen.

Q: Were we looking at them in a sort of benign way...this is the group that will eventually take over?

STRAUS: We tried to, but the party split and you had some fairly conservative elements which eventually formally split off and you had some people in the middle. Then you had the majority very radical elements in the Socialist Party, which for a long time prevailed and set the tone for the Party.

Q: I assume you were following the Party's strategic moves, did you think they were doing the right thing at the time? Or did it seem to be an odd socialist party as compared to some of the others?

STRAUS: Well, we probably exaggerated those occasional mild shifts to the center because through the sixties and the seventies not all that much changed. You did have some changes, but it was so much slower than what took place in Europe.

Q: Looking back on it today, were we missing anything that was happening with the Socialists as far as how we were reporting on it, because they are still not in power?

STRAUS: The right wing Socialists who in many respects were the easiest for Americans to talk to, proved singularly inept in getting themselves elected and staying in the Diet. So they have lost out. The centrist have done somewhat better. Perhaps they were seen as not really Japanese enough. I think we may have underestimated the LDP, the conservatives. They, of course, have presided over an unparalleled economic growth and prosperity and peace. That is a very strong prescription for staying in office.

Q: Did you have any feeling about the basic corruption or was that not much of a problem?

STRAUS: Oh, there was always some corruption and then, as now, it is less about personal aggrandizement and venality as it is about power. Being in politics requires a lot of money and the election laws are very strict, very idealistic, if you will. Then there is going to be corruption. It is very much part of Japanese society that you have gift giving. That smoothes entrees into difficult, personal relationships. You are required as a politician to go to a lot of weddings and funerals, etc. Every time you do it requires a gift. So it is not surprising, although I think it has been excessive in the last few years. At that time it was less. By and large, I think the Japanese were less corrupted then than they are today.

Q: How did it work within the Embassy? You were reporting on the Socialists and there was somebody reporting the Liberal Democrats...?

STRAUS: Yes, that is right.

Q: Would you have a joint meeting of what was going on and each would present your side?

STRAUS: Well, we jointly would attend the staff meetings of the political section. Obviously the person who reported on the Socialists was the more junior officer. I don't think we had any great differences of view, but I did get to know some of the Socialists and having been the assistant labor attaché and knowing the labor types...some of them had previously been in the labor movement. That was one way to get rid of more senior labor leaders, to send them off to the Diet.

Q: You left Japan in late 1964. How did you feel about whither Japan at that time?

STRAUS: By that time I think it was pretty clear that Japan was on the move. I don't think I or anybody else thought that their success would be as fast. I was concerned already then about Vietnam, about our growing involvement there. It was clear to me, perhaps because I was working for Reischauer, who was opposed to this adventure from the very beginning because it could cause a rift in our relationship with Japan. So I looked at it perhaps differently than my colleagues did later on in Berlin. Perhaps having lived in Japan I had absorbed some of the attitudes towards China...that China not being the unalterable enemy of the United States that it later proved to be.

Q: This is tape two, side one of an interview with Ulrich A. Straus. We are doing this on January 12, 1993. Rick we got you out of Japan in 1965 and we are sending you to Berlin where you served from 1965-67. What were you doing there and how did you get that assignment?

STRAUS: The reason I got the assignment was that I had been designated a labor officer and had spent three years in Tokyo as the assistant labor attaché. Berlin had had a close tie with the AFL-CIO. It had a tremendous impact there already from before the time the Wall went up, but particularly afterwards.

Q: We are talking about the Berlin Wall which went up in 1961.

STRAUS: I got there four years later. Berlin, as it had been for a long time, was a Social Democratic city with a strong labor union movement and the AFL-CIO saw the workers in Berlin as the backbone of the resistance against Communism. Jay Lovestone, who was the international director for the AFL-CIO, took a personal interest in that Berlin connection. So I was charged to go out there and be the labor officer.

Q: With the strong connection of the AFL-CIO in Europe did you feel that you were dealing with an extra force other than the Department of State when you came back and briefed, etc.?

STRAUS: Well, they were certainly major players at that time in anything affecting the trade union movements. At the time there was tremendous competition between East and West, between the ICFTU on the Western side and the WFTU on the Eastern side and Berlin, of course, was the place par excellence for competition between those two organizations and what they stood for. And Berlin, of course, was seen as the great citadel of freedom in the sea of Communism, which Jay Lovestone and others who were converts from the Communist cause tended to romanticize somewhat. Berlin, of course, was a very hard-line city. At the time I was there Berlin was a divided city, and West Berlin was the largest industrial city between Moscow and Paris.

Q: Did you come back to Washington before going to Berlin?

STRAUS: Yes, on consultation. I never had the labor course. I succeeded in avoiding that. But I did have my meetings with Lovestone and Irving Brown, who was his deputy at the time.

Q: How did these men strike you? These are very important figures in our policy.

STRAUS: Well, Lovestone, in particular, was a zealot. He had been a Communist zealot and then became an anti-Communist zealot. Coming from Tokyo it struck me as somewhat excessive and I had that feeling while I was in Berlin, too. I can talk about that later.

Q: Yes, I am just trying to get the feeling. When you were in the State Department and getting your briefing, I realize you were a relatively mid-grade officer. The Secretary of State wasn't exactly calling you in. But the point was that when you were going out as the labor officer, did the Desk officer sort of roll his eyes when you said you would be talking with Lovestone, etc.? What was the relationship?

STRAUS: I don't think there was any rolling of eyes, but it was made very clear to me that the AFL-CIO did have a particular interest in nurturing this relationship with the West Berlin union movement as a political statement and that it was very important to them, and to us.

Not long after I was there I had one of the really interesting thing happen to my assignment there. It was on the anniversary of the day the Wall went up, June 17. There was a message sent by the President and one sent by the AFL-CIO. The bearer of the message was the head of the NAACP. The rally was conducted next to the burned out hulk of the Reichstag which was right next to the Wall. There were about 350,000 people out there. My task was to translate this fairly brief statement of support from the AFL-CIO and the President into German. It was the only time I have ever spoken to 350,000 people. Everybody was there. It was something special.

Q: Well, what was the situation...we got you in 1965, you have been briefed and you were told to keep up the good work, I suppose...

STRAUS: To be the liaison with the trade union movement. I soon found out that there wasn't really very much to this job. The reason being was that the West Berlin union movement was really part of the West German union movement and that the trade union negotiations took place in Bonn and elsewhere in Germany, but not in Berlin.

One of my unusual jobs there was as follows. We had in West Berlin West German civil guards. The civil guards were not military but did have military training who were kind of an auxiliary force for the rather meager Allied military resources in Berlin. They were ostensively hired by us and we conducted the wage negotiations. We, being the British, the French and the Americans. But that too was a sham because the money was being provided by the German government and it was essentially the German government which decided how much they should get paid. So we fronted for the German government in this respect. That was one of my functions.

But things were going along rather well, so I didn't see where my predecessor could have spent so much time on these. But anyway, it was pleasant enough. Very nice people. There was a certain political significance in all this.

Q: How was the Mission in Berlin set up?

STRAUS: It was a State Department Mission headed by a somebody with the rank of Minister, who ostensibly reported to the American Commandant, who had the American Sector in West Berlin. And there were similar arrangements by the British and the French.

Under the Minister you had a political section and economic section. Then you had a section that dealt with East Germany. Since we didn't have any representation over there, they did all the reporting on East Germany. Of course, that was a very important part of it.

And then there was a consular section. It was set up like an embassy. There was a certain amount of natural tension built in between Bonn and Berlin because Berlin reported separately. It didn't report through Bonn although during my time I don't think there was any real conflict.

Q: Who was the Minister at that time?

STRAUS: Arch Calhoun was there the first year and then he was replaced by Brewster Morris, also a German hand.

I was in the political section. After about a year I was able not to change jobs but in addition to the labor job I had, which I didn't feel filled my time adequately, I became the Berlin access officer. That I found much more to my liking. It was much more interesting. That labor experience was the last of my labor experiences.

Q: What was the access officer?

STRAUS: The whole issue of access to Berlin by the Allies. This was air access, the air routes, barge access, rail access and autobahn access.

Q: Actually this was the issue on which many people, myself included, felt was the prime possibility for World War III. And this went on for 20-30 years.

STRAUS: Yes. The issues very often were as follows. We recognized the Soviet ability to exercise some control over the access. In other words they could check papers, but they couldn't inhibit us in any way. But we would reject any efforts on the part of the East Germans to exercise this checking facility. So we would show papers on the autobahn, for example, and elsewhere, to the Russian authorities, but not to the East German authorities. Many of the problems arose in the air corridors which was the most neuralgic point, perhaps, although the autobahn was too.

In my time there were no really serious incidents, but a lot of minor incidents.

Q: What was the feeling? Was this a fencing matter or was it really the local level people getting deciding to get a little more? What was our analysis at the time?

STRAUS: Things in Berlin at that time had a tendency to escalate very rapidly into the highest level of government. A lot of the issues, actually, were settled locally. But certain issues that struck people as dangerous, as a slippery slope...if we gave in to the Soviets on this minor little issue, then we could lose the whole ball game. You know things at that time were such that a lieutenant who was in his little jeep driving the autobahn was wired to communicate with the President of the United States, in case he had to make a decision of what to do.

I think a typical issue along those lines was the following one. One day the Russians declared to us that they were going to do some repaving of the road, or something connected with the autobahn and that would require that our convoys...we had these eight vehicle convoys ...would have to park just off the autobahn in a parking lot when processing papers. Well, we recognized their right to process our papers, but we felt that if they could tell us to get off the autobahn there, they could tell us to get off the autobahn everywhere.

This was a hot and heavy issue. The Russians said they needed to do this because there was a lot of increased traffic on the autobahn. And there was by the mid-sixties. This issues eventually went up to the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and was resolved in a classic fashion. We felt that if we kept one tire on the autobahn itself, we retained our rights. I don't know what the Russians felt about all this, but they were indeed concerned about traffic, it appeared, and never caused us any problems about this. It did seem a bit excessively neuralgic to me. I think I was perhaps unique in that sense.

Q: Did you find that people focusing on this really lost sight of the real world in a way?

STRAUS: Precisely. But, you know, there was a sort of myth of Berlin that grew up. And our rights on this autobahn issue as well as every other issue did not rest on international agreements. It just rested on custom and practice which had grown up since 1945. Everybody was afraid to change anything.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Soviets on this?

STRAUS: No, I did not personally. I wrote some protests on one or another issue, but we dealt through our military representative in the vast Berlin Air Safety Center where messages were passed back and forth about our incoming and outgoing flights. There was a Lt. Colonel Pothoff who I dealt with almost every day. He had the contact with the Russian authorities.

Q: What was your impression of the military there? I have done interviews with Pete Day...

STRAUS: He was my boss.

Q: In the interview done with him he felt our military was a bit pushy and doing some things that were unnecessary and which caused some problems. How did you feel about that?

STRAUS: I wasn't struck by that so much, perhaps because I didn't have the contact. We did have this other mission in Potsdam, which was a purely military mission, and they were there by right of an agreement with the Russians which gave them reciprocal rights in West Germany. That was a game of "catch me if you can" sort of thing. The job of these people was to find out how many Soviet military personnel were at any one point

and what they were doing, and the equipment they had. The Russians did the same thing. I think it provided a certain degree of stability, but this derring-do on their part energized everybody. It was great stuff. They had special souped up cars that the Russians couldn't keep up with. A lot of fun.

It was a very pleasant time in Berlin. Berlin was off the front burner and while this was good for everybody, the Berliners felt neglected by the world and I think really would have preferred to be in the center of world attention, even if it meant privation and hardship.

Q: Was this part of their nature to like wine and have people...?

STRAUS: We figured that Russian tanks, which we could see, of course, from the air, could be in our house in five minutes. I don't think we thought about it a great deal. We had two children there. We occasionally went over to East Berlin which was our right and duty to do. We were always urged to go over there. We were always a little tense leaving two infants back in West Berlin. I never drove as carefully in my life as I did in East Berlin.

Q: What was your impression of East Berlin?

STRAUS: It was a drab scene. I think the drabness of Berlin...it was the sense of lack of progress. It was as if it had been in a time warp and was still back in the 1920s in a way. That was particularly true on occasions such as New Year's Eve. We would sit home and flick the dial between East and West and the entertainment in the East was strictly 1930, nothing had changed.

Q: Kurt Weill would have been quite happy there.

STRAUS: Very happy. Everybody kind of looked the same. There was sort of one size, one color of raincoat. That sort of thing. But the arts were tremendous in East Berlin. That is where they put a lot of their money. Again there was this competition between East and West which made it very exciting.

Q: You left Berlin after two years and came back to the Department?

STRAUS: Yes. My tour was curtailed. I was asked to come back to the Japan Desk. I was a Japan hand who felt just slightly out of place in Berlin among all these old Berlin hands.

Q: Did you find that there was a Berlin clique?

STRAUS: Yes, a German clique. But I was familiar with that. So I was back on the Japan Desk.

Q: This was from 1967-70?

STRAUS: That is correct. I had two jobs. One was the political/military job and the other one was keeping track of internal Japanese political affairs. The last year I was also the deputy director.

Q: Well, this is the period of our great involvement in Vietnam. How was this being played out from your vantage point as far as with the Japanese?

STRAUS: If I could go back to Berlin for just a second. Since I spoke German fluently, I was asked on a couple of occasions to go meet with student groups and other groups and talk about Vietnam. I personally felt somewhat ill at ease because almost from the beginning I was opposed personally to our involvement in Vietnam. I thought it was the wrong war at the wrong time. I recall one individual putting it this way. You are saying that we are really defending Berlin from the Communists in Vietnam, but are you ready to equate Diem and Nhu with our Willy Brandt? Frankly I couldn't.

Q: Something that I never quite understood and I wonder if you could give me your perspective on this? I am talking about the German students. They seemed to be rather a unique group. They go into a lot of play acting. They seem to take their politics much more intensely, certainly than the Americans but even then most of the other Europeans. They seem to get into these things more. This is just an impression I get but bits of TV and all that. Did you feel that at the time?

STRAUS: The politicalization of the Free University in Berlin was just beginning at that time. When we arrived it was relatively minor but I think Vietnam more than anything energized these folks. And Berlin became because of its special status, a refuge for the left, interestingly enough, because citizens of Berlin were exempt from the draft. These people were, of course, very much anti-military, anti-German military as well. By the time I left in 1967 it was beginning to become a hotbed of anti-Vietnam activity. There was also a number of serious demonstrations. We had a young lady in our house who was a student there. She was a member of the SDS which was the student organization. Personally she was a delightful person and took very good care of our kids when we went away and we felt very comfortable with her. Her fiancé was in West Germany somewhere. He was much more active than she was.

So we had some good talks with them. But again I found them somewhat like the Japanese students that I was very familiar with. They were super idealistic While I didn't subscribe to our Vietnam policy, I thought they were overdoing it.

Q: Well, back to the Japanese Desk. How were you reading the Vietnam situation?

STRAUS: Our policy, of course, was to get the Japanese not to go off the reservation. To maintain our bases in Japan and to retain our freedom to use them, which meant, of course, not launching any combat operations from them, but we didn't need to. We had Okinawa to do that if we needed to as well as the Philippines.

There was, of course, a growing anti-war movement in Japan and the Japanese were concerned that our engagement in Vietnam would involve them, the Japanese, in conflict with the Chinese. I think many thoughtful Japanese said in effect, "You know your war in Vietnam is just like our war in China. We had all the military victories but we lost the war." I thought that was not that far off the mark.

Q: Did you find that being in the East Asian Bureau that it was difficult? Were there sort of true believers at the top and that you had to be concerned about the reporting that was coming out of Japan?

STRAUS: Not particularly. We had so many issues and problems to deal with Japan that were strictly bilateral that did not affect the Vietnam thing one way or the other. There was very little interaction there. We had much more interaction with the Korean Desk, the China Desk. Although I did have some good friends on the Vietnam Desk, some of whom were true believers and with whom I had some good discussions about Vietnam.

Q: What were the major issues that you were seeing that we had with Japan at that time?

STRAUS: One of the issues that arose that first fall was the issue of Okinawa. I think it was very clear to both of us that until there was some further progress on the Vietnam situation that it would be difficult for us to give up our unfettered use of Okinawa.

Another major issue was the seizing of the Pueblo off the coast of Korea. I happened to be in charge of the Japan Desk at the time because my boss, Dick Sneider, was at a conference. Of course, the Japanese Ambassador came in quite often on consultations on this issue. The Japanese were much concerned that we would launch combat operations from Japanese bases in retaliatory action. That increase of tension on the Korean peninsula, of course, did affect the Japanese government a great deal more than what was going on in Vietnam because Vietnam was further away.

Q: What was the feeling on the Pueblo business? This was when the North Koreans seizing a radio intelligence ship. Did the Japanese just want to stay out of the problem?

STRAUS: Yes. They wanted a peaceful resolution of this issue. They did not, I think, want to be in the position of having to authorize the use of bases in Japan for combat strikes against North Korea.

Q: This brings up a question. You know we had our troops in Japan, not major elements, but bases there with the rationale of protecting Japan. Looking at it how did you feel? Were we reaching the point of wondering what we were doing there? Did it make sense to be there?

STRAUS: Certainly the Japanese public opinion was strongly against any involvement of Japan in the Korean conflict. Nevertheless, the Japanese government did recognize that in

Korea, if nowhere else in the world, it was very much in Japan's national interest. While they certainly didn't think of sending combat forces or anything like that over to Korea...that was the last thing the Koreans would want...I think they were generally understanding that if there had been an invasion of South Korea by the North that of course there may well have arisen opportunities for us to use bases in Japan to protect our interests in South Korea. But I think something like the seizure of a naval vessel didn't qualify for that. We eventually backed off from retaliatory action. The Japanese were understandably nervous. There were a couple of meetings that I recall with the Secretary of State on this issue. The Japanese press was very much interested to know what was going to happen.

Another major interest was the increasing pressure at that time on the part of the Japanese to reduce our military presence in Japan, to withdraw our bases from downtown Tokyo and other cities. To move out into the countryside. The Japanese were prepared to a large extent to offer alternative facilities. To just consolidate our facilities.
By that point the Japanese economy was going great guns and there was growing pressure in Japan for us to return some base land, which they saw as being under-utilized. We did in a somewhat desultory fashion turn back bases and facilities at that time. As a matter of fact I recall one case where the military felt that it would be advisable to give up our big naval base at Yokosuka, which we on the Desk thought was the last place in Japan we should give up. We actually talked the military into keeping it.

Q: On the military side was it thought that Subic Bay would take care of it?

STRAUS: It was during Lyndon Johnson's presidency and his desire to avoid spending a lot of dollars abroad. It may well be that there was the feeling that Subic would be adequate for our purposes.

Q: How did you find the American military? They don't give up facilities easily.

STRAUS: I think they will never volunteer to give up anything because they don't pay the price for it. On the other hand, fortunately, I think they are very disciplined and if they get an order from above to get rid of something, they will salute smartly and get rid of it. There were times in our history when budgetary requirements have mandated such elimination of foreign bases.

A final issue and one which kept me very involved for a long time, was the issue of nuclear powered warships into Japanese ships. There I dealt with Admiral Rickover and his staff.

Q: Admiral Rickover was famous as the father of the nuclear navy and a power unto himself.

STRAUS: Yes and with direct access to the Congress where he had many friends. The Japanese at that time, again responding, I think, to public pressure, exhibited extreme

nervousness about the port entry of nuclear powered warships. The Japanese weren't the only ones at that time that were nervous, but perhaps as much as anybody they were nervous with this rather new technology. It was part of the Japanese nuclear allergy. We assured them that there was nothing to fear, but they had very strong doubts and insisted on their own monitoring. We had very little confidence in their monitoring. There were discrepancies between their monitoring and our monitoring. There were always demonstrations by left wing forces in Japan whenever nuclear powered warships...

Q: These were usually submarines weren't they?

STRAUS: Submarines at first, but later on there were also surface vessels. It took a lot of patient work. Of course Admiral Rickover really didn't want to make any concessions whatsoever. He was confident that his reactors didn't leak, had never leaked, were never going to leak, and whatever the Japanese saw on their instruments was of no interest to him. Our job was to keep both happy, a typical diplomat's task.

It took a long time and beyond the time that I was involved with it. The Japanese eventually recognized that these nuclear reactors really were safe.

Q: Did you get involved with the mega problem of whether our vessels were carrying nuclear weapons or not?

STRAUS: That involved the highest levels although I did do some writing about it. There were a couple of incidents when this issue came up. It came up periodically in Japan and was always resolved by a complicated terminology on both sides. We would not do anything without the knowledge of the Japanese government.

Q: Did you get involved in the recognition of China? We were adamant that nobody recognize China and a few years later we surprised everybody by doing it. I think the Japanese wanted to get going with this.

STRAUS: Very much so.

Q: Did this come up?

STRAUS: Well, it was one of the most important points of difference between us. I think the Japanese were good, if reluctant, soldiers on this thing and supported our position at the UN even while we were losing worldwide support for our China policy. But again this was a little before the time this China issue became very hot. As long as we were as heavily involved in Vietnam as we were in the late sixties, it didn't seem quite feasible that very much would happen there.

Q: Those were the major items you were covering at that time?

STRAUS: Yes, I would say so. Oh, one other issue was the reversion of the Bonin Islands to Japan. While a minor matter it was generally seen by both the Japanese and ourselves as the precursor of the reversion of Okinawa which was a bigger issue. It went rather well.

Q: This was Iwo Jima and...

STRAUS: Yes. And the symbolic significance of Iwo Jima. We were very concerned about our veterans. Actually our veterans were really ahead of the game, I think, and were supportive as long as the memorial on Iwo Jima was taken care of. They had already established sort of collegial ties with veterans associations in Japan and if anything I think they were rather helpful on this matter. It was taken care of by an administrative agreement with the Japanese rather than a treaty, but we, of course, did take great care that the Congress wouldn't give us any problems. We recognized, of course, the political significance of Iwo Jima.

Q: Speaking of the reversion issue which is a word we never use anymore and was almost strictly used in our political vocabulary to Japan, and mainly Okinawa, but also the Bonin Islands to begin with...the northern islands and the Soviets who struck me as an interested but not involved observer that the Soviets lost a major...they kept Japan permanently hostile practically, even to today, because of these little islands, where some compromise might have been reached. Were we thinking that with the Soviets doing their thing we could show some flexibility and they couldn't?

STRAUS: I think so. It certainly made the Japanese government's task somewhat easier in asking for increased appropriations for military expenditures.

I should also mention that in the time 1967-70, when I was on the Desk, we got real movement. With the onset of the Nixon administration in January, 1969, we got real movement on the reversion of Okinawa because we saw that a satisfactory resolution of the Okinawa issue was prerequisite for our ability to maintain the US-Japan Security Treaty, which underlay the whole relationship.

My boss at that time, Dick Sneider, who moved over in 1969 to the National Security Council, was highly successful in convincing the powers that be that flexibility was essential. Elements of the military held out until the last moment, but agreement was reached in 1970, or so, for reversion to take place in 1972. It was one occasion where the US government moved in the nick of time.

Q: What was your feeling sitting on the Desk about the Okinawa business, because if I recall the mayor of Naha kept being thrown in everyone's face because he was supposed to be a Communist?

STRAUS: Yes, he was a Communist.

Q: This was a slippery slope to ruin?

STRAUS: The mayor of Naha, the capital city of Okinawa, was Mr. Sanaga. Sanaga had been elected mayor of Naha and then the military had purged him from office under their powers there. This didn't necessarily endear him and other people to continued American rule. It was an expression not of their Communism, but Okinawans tend to be somewhat ornery against someone who is trying to run their affairs for them. I thought we had no good reason, frankly, to maintain rule over a million Okinawans. They needed to go back to Japan.

Q: What was the feeling? Was Okinawa considered part of Japan?

STRAUS: Yes.

Q: Was there any separatist movement?

STRAUS: Well, there was a very, very minor separatist movement and I suppose the Okinawans if they had their druthers in a perfect world would prefer to be independent. But they realized that they can't go it alone. To be a part of a rapidly more wealthy Japan wasn't half bad, and that, of course, is what it proved to be. So it was a very good move.

In the reversion negotiations I think we retained all the essential rights. One wonders now what all the fuss was about.

Q: Who were the key people in this whole reversion thing as you saw if, from our side?

STRAUS: I think Dick Sneider orchestrated the whole thing and later became the negotiator for the reversion in Tokyo. I think Alex Johnson played a major role. There was a fellow, a political appointee, over in Defense, ISA. He later was involved with the Pentagon Papers and is head of the ACLU now. I can't remember his name. At the time he was a rather young man, I think around 30, although he was a deputy assistant secretary. He helped swing part of the military around, although the military were never very enthusiastic about this. Until the very end, I think, the CINCPAC Commander, Admiral Sharp, opposed it. But the civilian authorities in Defense gradually swung over to the view that it wouldn't be the end of the world. We were also concerned, of course, of what Congress would say. In the end the Congress was much more sympathetic than we had thought. We were concerned about some of the economic arrangements involved in the reversion, but Congress seemed to be rather disinterested about the American business community and their rights.

Then, in the negotiations we got some good words from the GOJ on the use of Japanese bases in the future, particularly in the event of a Korean eventuality, and to a lesser extent, in the case of a Taiwan eventuality.

Q: This was the terminology, an eventuality?

STRAUS: Well, I think the word was contingency. It has been a long time.

Q: Then you made quite a change of pace and moved over to Arms Control from 1970-73. How did that come about?

STRAUS: For personal reasons we wanted to remain in Washington at that time. A job came open and I moved over there and worked for Jim Leonard and Pete Day most of the time. It was a very different kind of a place, but I must say I enjoyed it. It was the heyday really of ACDA. It was the time of SALT I.

Q: This is Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

STRAUS: Yes.

Q: And ACDA is Arms Control Disarmament Agency.

STRAUS: There was a section within ACDA which was called IR, International Relations, and that was staffed by FSOs. I had nothing to do with the SALT part. My interest was with CCD, Conference of the Committee of Disarmament, in Geneva at that time. We were, of course, a member of that. It was not the bilateral but the multilateral arms control negotiating instrument. There were a number of agreements that had just then been reached, notably the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. There were other agreements. There was the Biological Treaty, the Seabeds Treaty and other arms control ventures were talked about like a chemical treaty which is now getting on the boards. It was an interesting time.

I never went to Geneva. All my work was back here which meant negotiating with other agencies of the government. A particular interest of mine at that time was to do a comprehensive test ban treaty, or CTBT as it was known. It was a step forward from the limited test ban treaty of the Kennedy administration. There were endless negotiations on this issue, primarily with the AEC, Atomic Energy Commission, which was the major player and the Pentagon, which was also a major player but didn't feel quite as threatened by that as the AEC did. And, of course, the State Department was another separate entity. So it was generally a four power group, sometime with the participation of the National Security Council. I learned that on a number of these issues it was hard to get anything in the government that was as heatedly debated as these arms control things.

Q: Concerning these test ban limitations, this seems to be something that has become just an article of faith. What is it, is it jobs?

STRAUS: Well, its jobs. The ACE at that time maintained these nuclear laboratories, world renown. They wanted to test in order to try out new theories to get smaller and smaller weapons, or to get larger and larger weapons. To get more reliable weapons. They always maintained that once we abolished these laboratories...if you didn't have testing

they said the good people would all leave because they had to verify their theories. Once you dissolved the laboratories, then in our society, unlike totalitarian societies, you could never get these people together again if an emergency arose and you had to start testing again. So there were these endless arguments back and forth.

We also became quite expert on the whole question of detection of clandestine tests, which was a great concern because the Russians would cheat. And there was, of course, tremendous advances in that area, in seismology, that could differentiate between a nuclear test and an earthquake.

Q: How would you counter the AEC arguments on testing and how were they resolved?

STRAUS: Let me go to the second part first, how were they resolved. Essentially they were never resolved.

Q: Still aren't today.

STRAUS: They were not resolved because in the last analysis Henry Kissinger didn't want to resolve them. He didn't want, I think, to muddy the water. His focus was on SALT I and he felt that he had a difficult enough time with all the other players involved just to get SALT I through the Senate and approved by the American public. He didn't want any other issue along those lines to muddy the waters. I think there was a feeling that in due course maybe some of these issues would be seriously dealt with. But I think he probably felt that politically it was a good thing to keep these bureaucrats working on these issues. He could always show his interest in this type of arms control.

Q: I was getting some of the same picture from interviews I did including George Vest on the CSCE--Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Kissinger was basically undercutting this too, because he didn't want to solve this because it was detracting from SALT I.

STRAUS: That was certainly our impression. Of course, there was a certain amount of international pressure to get moving on some of these issues. The strongest argument we had for the CTBT was as a nonproliferation instrument...we saw countries like India and Pakistan and others as possibly getting into the nuclear game, but they wouldn't be able to do so if they were required to sign on to a test ban treaty. And I think even today it is still seen, at least potentially, as a very useful nonproliferation measure and eventually we may see that.

We were also trying at that time to...well working with State getting new countries, any country, signed on to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. I think we were hopeful at that time that this nuclear nonproliferation regime would last, and I think would have been perhaps surprised to see in 1992 how well it has lasted, with some defections, obviously.

Q: What was your feeling about Israel at the time?

STRAUS: I think we probably had our suspicions that they had nuclear capability, but we weren't going to do a great deal about it.

Q: Was this one of these things were we were essentially turning a blind eye because it was politically too difficult to deal with?

STRAUS: And given the situation in the Middle East at that time and our disinclination to come to Israel's aid ourselves for whatever might happen there. I think there was some sympathy for the Israeli position.

Q: India, Pakistan, was that...?

STRAUS: India, Pakistan were perhaps the most neuralgic point in terms of new nuclear powers and given their relationship, we could have that as a potential nuclear conflict. But there were other countries where we had hoped, and to this day haven't succeeded...Brazil and Argentina have never signed on. Of course, German and Japanese participation was of great importance to us. South Korean participation, and eventually North Korean, was important to us.

Q: Then you moved to...

STRAUS: That came out of the blue. I didn't ask for that job, but I was assigned to the NATO Defense College in Rome in 1973. A half year in Rome sounded just too good to turn down. After I secured an ongoing assignment, which I felt was essential, I consented to go. It was, to put it mildly, a very relaxed time of my life. We thoroughly enjoyed living in Italy, saw a great deal of the country. It was kind of disastrous in terms of the education of our kids...for a half year go off to somewhere where they didn't know anybody and leave again. But my wife and I enjoyed it.

Q: Any utility to it?

STRAUS: Well, I learned a little bit about NATO. We had some great trips. Drank an awful lot of Zambucca to cement NATO ties. Made some friends, although I really haven't kept up with any of them. Then I went, of course, to perhaps the only non-NATO country in the Western Europe, Switzerland. I guess it had some utility. Of course one never knows.

Q: You went to Bern from 1973-76. What were you doing there?

STRAUS: I had two jobs. I was the political counselor, but shortly after I got there my one assistant was cut and not replaced, which was totally legitimate. My other job was as the PAO, Public Affairs Officer. The United States and Switzerland really have no political problems. Switzerland, of course, was then not, and still is not, a member of the United Nations.

Q: So you didn't have the job of getting out the vote?

STRAUS: That's right. Nor was it a member of other political international organizations, which occasionally become the focus for little countries. Also the relationship with Cuba was handled out of Washington and not Bern.

Q: They were handling our interests there.

STRAUS: Yeah. So, I think the interest in Swiss domestic affairs in Washington was minimal, to put it mildly. Therefore, I found my interest really turned rapidly to all the public affairs work. And I thoroughly enjoyed that. Switzerland being the country it is with really four national languages has a number of interesting newspapers. The most important of course if the German Neue Zuercher Zeitung, which many regard as probably the best German language newspaper in the world. There is a German paper the Frankfurter Zeitung which is a rival, perhaps. But at that time it certainly was an influential paper.

I also thought that it could have been of some interest to have good ties with their Italian broadcasting companies, not knowing at that time where Italy was going. Their French press was perhaps not as influential as their German press, but nevertheless...

So I kept in touch with the media in particular and had some interesting connections with intellectuals in Switzerland. And the Swiss, if anything, are very well informed. I think I valued some of my ties with the Swiss foreign office. They have first rate diplomats and have, despite their neutrality, an immense interest in military affairs. Of course, all the Swiss males have a military obligation well into their middle age and had a keen interest in NATO affairs. In some ways you might have said they were better NATO allies then some of our NATO allies.

Q: One thinks of Switzerland of being the center of the spying trade. Did this intrude at all?

STRAUS: No, it is done elsewhere. I think that is a legacy of World War II and I am not sure there is any more of it there than anywhere else.

Q: You had two ambassador, Peter Dominic and Nathaniel Davis.

STRAUS: We had three ambassadors. We had Shelby Cullom Davis, the first Ambassador and a Nixon appointee. A strange man. I don't think he was ever interested in anything that either came in or left that Embassy. His main interest was holding parties. He was very good at that. Although he didn't connect it with any US policy issue ever. He was a nice enough man personally. It didn't really bother us because he didn't feel he should run the Embassy. His interests were elsewhere. He was an extremely wealthy man. Then when Nixon summarily left office, President Ford picked up Ambassador Davis'

resignation, which surprised him, I think, since he had been a major contributor to the party. I remember he was very reluctant to leave.

Then Peter Dominic came in. That was a very unfortunate appointment. Dominic was, I guess, a friend of President Ford's. Dominic was at that time inflicted with a rare illness and I think he wanted to come to Switzerland to seek a cure for this illness against the advice of his family. He was a sick man when he arrived. He took some medication, the effects of which caused some people to believe, who didn't know the circumstances, that he was drunk. Well, he should never have come. He left after less then a year and died not long thereafter.

Then Nat Davis came. I think he was under a cloud at that time.

Q: Because of Chile.

STRAUS: Well, he had also been Assistant Secretary for African Affairs and had gotten into a fight with Kissinger. Kissinger wanted to get rid of him. Switzerland came open and he went. Well, there wasn't very much for him to do in Switzerland.

Q: He was a big gun in the Foreign Service as far as being a very active ambassador. To all of a sudden dump him in Switzerland...

STRAUS: The major thing that happened to him, and I happened to be along in my capacity as PAO, was when we marched down to Lausanne to give a medal by the American Academy to Charlie Chaplin, who was then within a year of his death.

Q: I am surprised Charlie Chaplin got involved because he had essentially been persona non grata.

STRAUS: Well, this was essentially the American Academy.

Q: But presented by the American Ambassador. Was that a matter of any debate within the Embassy?

STRAUS: Not that I recall. The Ambassador was asked to do it, I think, and he was very happy to do it.

Q: That was a high point.

STRAUS: Yes, to see Charlie Chaplin once was really something. Chaplin was very gracious. I think he knew what was going on, but that was about all. He was a very ill man then.

Q: After this very challenging assignment you came back to Washington.

STRAUS: I came back to Washington without an assignment and it was a very rough period of time for me, personally. At one point I was supposed to go to an Africa DCMship and that fell through. The person who got the job was fired after about six months, which I thought was only fair. I walked the halls for a while. That was very rough because with children of school age you wanted to know where you were going to be settled.

Q: Having been there myself you begin to wonder what you have done wrong.

STRAUS: It was very unpleasant. But eventually I landed a job in the African Bureau as Deputy Director of the Office of Inter-African Affairs. Essentially this meant that you did whatever the Desks didn't want to do or get involved with. So it was a variety of things. Mostly it seemed to be involving the Horn of Africa--Ethiopia and Somalia. They were having a conflict at that time that involved refugee issues, arms to Chad...in order to justify arms to Chad we had to justify that Chad was a vital national interest to the United States. Everything was seen in terms of the East-West conflict of course.

Q: Where was Ethiopia in those days? Was Somalia our great ally?

STRAUS: No. We had made the switch, or the Russians had made it for us. They had captured the Ethiopians which irked the Somalis to no end, so we got the Somalis.

Q: It was one of two or three switches we went through in that period.

STRAUS: The job was okay. Again I had not dealt with African affairs in the past.

Q: What was your impression of the African Bureau being the new boy?

STRAUS: Well, it was kind of a mess. We had Dick Moose as Assistant Secretary at the time. He was a very political animal. My boss, who was not a regular Foreign Service officer got into a fight with Dick Moose and that wasn't always easy. I thought the personnel was somewhat more spotty. There were some very good people in it, obviously. But more spotty then I was used to in the European and East Asian Bureaus.

Q: That was a stepchild, but it had its moments. I think you caught it at one of the times when it was sort of political but also very much on the back burner.

STRAUS: Very much on the back burner.

Q: What was our feeling towards problems with South Africa?

STRAUS: I didn't get involved with it. This was during the time of the Carter administration...

Q: Human rights.

STRAUS: Human rights. There were some outstanding people on the South African Desk.

Q: In Inter-African Affairs did that figure much?

STRAUS: Well, it dealt with arms. I am afraid we were busy peddling arms to the Africans. Of course, they wanted the stuff. It wasn't that we were pushing it on them. But the Africans felt that it was part of their expression of sovereignty. It wasn't that these countries were getting very sophisticated things or a lot of it, but nevertheless we were providing arms to countries that had next to nothing.

Q: How did we feel at that time about the "Soviet threat" in Africa?

STRAUS: Well, I think it was rather reactive. We did see certain areas as more strategic then others, clearly. The Horn of Africa was perhaps the most strategic area in that it commanded part of the Red Sea portion of the Suez Canal in which we had a strategic interest, and it was close to the Saudi Arabian oil fields as well. Another area was South Africa. The South Africans never lost an opportunity to tell us how important it was. I was somewhat more skeptical of those assertions. This was also the time, I believe, of the first hesitant steps towards independence of Angola and Mozambique and there was warfare raging in those two areas. Not regarded, I think, as a major strategic threat to us. We were concerned wherever...there was Guinea which was a place where Russian planes could refuel at least in hops to Havana. I think we were nervous about any staging areas, any bases that the Soviets could manage in Africa.

Q: Did you have any impression of African governments? Did you have any dealings with any?

STRAUS: No, although after I had been in the Bureau for about a year, they kindly decided that I should go to Africa and I got a trip there, which was a bit of a boondoggle, but I learned quite a bit. I decided to go to southern and eastern Africa, largely because I had a whole bunch of friends in the area. I say southern advisedly, because I went to Johannesburg only to go to other areas. I didn't go to South Africa, itself. But even my stopover in Johannesburg turned out to be interesting. I was able to go to a meeting of some black leaders and members of the Consulate staff at a white restaurant. That was an interesting experience. I also went to Botswana and Mozambique and then moved up to Lusaka and to Kenya. I was then going to go to Ethiopia, but at that point there were mass executions in the center of Addis. They were throwing out members of our Embassy. It was just the wrong time to go there. I wanted then to go to Somalia instead but East African Airlines was breaking up so I couldn't go there. Since I still had a few days left on the trip I went to Sudan, which I thought was the very end of the world. I never felt so totally alien as I felt there. I did get at least a flavor for East Africa.

Q: Then after that you went where?

STRAUS: A job in Okinawa opened up.

Q: This was 1978-82.

STRAUS: Right.

Q: I assumed you jumped at this chance?

STRAUS: I did.

Q: The position was...

STRAUS: As Consul General. This was six years after reversion and Okinawa by that time was a regular part of Japan. The thing that makes Okinawa unusual and why we have a consulate there in the first place is the fact that we have somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of our total military forces in Japan on Okinawa. The time that I was there that meant about 50,000 Americans, including dependents, which translates to five percent of the population.

Q: It is not a heavily populated island then.

STRAUS: Well, a million people. Part of the area is jungle. Of course, the potential of problems are manifold. On my way to Japan I stopped off in Tokyo and had a memorable first encounter with Ambassador Mansfield. He was so gracious. He asked me if I wanted a cup of coffee, and I said, "yes." He goes out into the little vestibule next to his office and makes the coffee. I also, of course, talked to Bill Sherman, an old friend, who was DCM at the time. Bill in effect told me to do my thing down there. He didn't want to hear from me. We don't want any of the problems in Okinawa to escalate into US-Japan issues. And I think I was successful to the extent that during my time there I think I succeeded in doing that.

I think that having good luck is an essential part of effective diplomacy. And I was very fortunate. I was fortunate in the type of military officers I dealt with for the most part on Okinawa. I was also most fortunate in the Okinawan authorities that I dealt with. Within a couple of weeks of my arrival in Okinawa, the Governor of Okinawa, who was a member of the left, was stricken by a stroke, which forced him out of office within two or three months, and led to his untimely death. He was succeeded by the candidate of the Liberal Democratic Party, the center right in Japan, and he took a much more cooperative view of the American military presence in Japan then his predecessor had. It was a period of conservative resurgence. It was believed by the Okinawans that it was the left wing that had set the stage and effected the reversion of Okinawa. But now that they were part of Japan, it was more beneficial to have a member of the same party that was running the rest of Japan as governor. But it wasn't just the governor, it was a lot of other local jobs that went to the conservative party.

As I said, I found the military, particularly some of the Marines...in Okinawa it should be noted that there was a rather unusual situation. It is the only place abroad where it is the Marines that are the dominant military force. So the senior military commander was a Marine. You have about seven or eight general Marine officers. The next largest force is the Air Force, because of the huge Kadena Airfield there. Then the Army and Naval are minuscule, which is rather strange.

I guess my job was really to keep the peace. I had generally pretty good cooperation from the military. I never had to go up to Tokyo to ask them for anything. I had very good relations with the Japanese government authorities, as well as with the Okinawa authorities. We got constant harping in the Okinawan press, which plays a major role in Okinawa. We had frequent protest groups that came to the Consulate. We encouraged them to come to us rather than to the military because we felt we could probably deal with them better than the military could. We were fortunate that there were no really major incidents. I'm glad to say that during my time there was no murder on the part of our troops. All the really nasty stuff the military do in Japan really goes on in Okinawa. The nasty stuff involves live fire exercises which the Marines have to do to practice. Your typical Marine is a 19-year-old. The Air Force is very different. It is generally a 35 year old married mechanic who is the typical Air Force guy. If anybody is going to get in trouble off base it is generally a Marine. But most of the problems were not that type. There were ricocheting bullets, which hit a rock and would fly out of the maneuver area. Then there were accidents involving the Air Force like fuel spills and that sort of thing. Then the Air Force also, of course, were very noisy. They had these U2 type aircraft.

Q: These were high flying photograph type planes.

STRAUS: Yes, remarkable things. They had the most modern fighter jets at Kadena Airfield, one of the largest military bases in the world. Active 24 hours around the clock.

I used to tell the Marines and Air Force when they would complain about lack of Japanese cooperation, "What do you think an American mayor or governor would do in similar circumstances?" They were generally understanding. Particularly the Marines. Perhaps they lived close to the ground and had a particular understanding for the political problems. I also had that feeling with the Army, a much smaller group.

So it was a very interesting experience for me. There was nothing like running your own post. I did a lot of reporting on incidents and I think the way I reported them had an effect on perhaps decreasing the number of these incidents, making sure the military took all reasonable precautions.

Q: Did you work with the military to get them to adjust their operations to avoid problems?

STRAUS: Yes, exactly.

Q: It wasn't, "Well, get the damn civilians out of the way that is their problem"?

STRAUS: No, no. As I said, I found them generally quite accommodating and it was always a matter of individuals. You can't expect all of them to be that way. I think if they felt that you understood their problem ...When I got there in 1978, their problem in part was that the average Marine was a guy who was perhaps out of reform school who decided it would be better to go into the Marines then anywhere else at this point in his life. Many of them didn't have a high school diploma. By the time I left in 1982, that had changed. The quality of the people they were getting was much better. But we were still in the post-Vietnam period when I arrived. I had sympathy for them and I expressed that. I thought they were doing a remarkable job really of educating these young men and women.

I counted this as some of the happiest time I spent. I wasn't overworked, but on the other hand I had plenty to do and I thought I was very usefully employed.

Q: How did you find the Okinawans? They had now adjusted to being part of Japan, but did you find they were a breed apart and would sort of use you to find out what was happening on the mainland?

STRAUS: No not that, but I had the feeling that there were three actors, three players in Okinawa, whereas in Japan you only had two. You had the Okinawans who were sort of the landlords, the Japanese who were the treasurers, and then there was us. And any two were sort of playing off against the third and often badmouthing the third. But I think it was a well-understood game. And, as I said, largely thanks to the kindness and understanding of the Governor, who I thought was a very shrewd and effective politician and was there almost the entire time I was there, things suddenly worked a lot better in Okinawa and I was able to take the credit for it.

Q: What was your feeling about the Japanese officials or others who were down there?

STRAUS: Well, I think the Japanese were usually more sensitive to the situation in Okinawa than they are usually given credit for. The Okinawans, while they were under the Americans had a great deal of independence, and now they were just another prefecture. Not only that, they were a prefecture that was historically the poorest of the lot. In a sense they didn't like that. They liked to be more important. So they screamed and did a lot of yelling which resulted in the Japanese pouring a lot of money down there.

There were a lot of guilt feelings involved on the part of the Japanese because, of course, the only land battles fought on Japanese soil was in Okinawa. They were told that was necessary in order to defend the homeland. Well, it turned out the homeland then decided to throw in the sponge. The whole thing is, of course, an irony. Everybody, of course, knows about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the prefecture that took the heaviest hits in World War II, was none of those two, it was Okinawa. A quarter of the population of the

prefecture died. No place in the world had that kind of catastrophe. It was staggering. Historically they had been very pacifist. Then the irony is that they now host the largest concentration of American forces in Japan. So the Okinawan feeling is that you Japanese are getting the benefits of the American presence, but we have the Americans, thank you very much! So the Japanese say, "Yeah, but look what we are doing. We are subsidizing this and that." And they are doing that. And they were careful, at least during the period I was there, to restrain their business and not rush pell-mell down there and drive out less efficient Okinawan businesses. So there were no Japanese banks down there or department stores or construction companies. Okinawa really has no industry as such. Whether this has changed in the meantime, I don't know. But at that time I thought they showed commendable restraint and sensitivity. At the same time that they still tended to look down on the Okinawans as being under-educated, under-disciplined. Okinawans tend to be sort of southern people...a little slow, more relaxed...and that is not the Japanese. There is a difference.

But we appreciated the Okinawan culture. It is a different culture and it is remarkable what that little group of islands accomplished in history.

Q: Then you left this place where things went well and came back to...

STRAUS: I got the job on the Philippine Desk, I think largely because it was thought that I had taken good care of our military relationship in Okinawa. Of course, I hadn't known anything about the Philippines, but even before I left I did go down the Philippines...Okinawa and the Philippines are very close.

Q: This was 1982-84 when you were Country Director.

STRAUS: Right. The situation in the Philippines was a mess. I inherited a mess. It was a mess in the sense that the security situation was bad and getting worse. The NPA, the New Peoples Army, was getting stronger as the government of Marcos was becoming more ruthless. There were some assassinations that were rather gross, human rights violations, the economy was in a tailspin. So things were not happy there.

Q: When you took over the Desk. Again you were the new boy. What was our attitude at that time towards the Marcos regime that you were getting from the people you were talking to in Washington?

STRAUS: I think the general attitude was that we weren't very happy with Marcos, we saw a lot of the things he was doing wrong, but we could play ball with him and there didn't seem to be anybody who could topple him from power. There didn't seem to be any organization in the Philippines capable of doing that. This was certainly the feeling among many Filipinos as well. I had the feeling, particularly as we got into 1983, that if reforms were going to be made it was going to have to be Marcos who made them. And this was said by some members of the opposition as well. That was one thing.

I remember talking to Raul Manglapus, who was the Foreign Minister for Mrs. Aquino later on but at that time was in exile in Washington, and his line was essentially this. He said, "Rick, you Americans brought us democracy. Marcos has taken it away from us. It is your responsibility to restore it." It is very typically Filipino to say that and to mean that. My efforts to disabuse him of this and say, particularly after the Aquino assassination, "If you Filipinos took the initiative then I think American sympathy and support would not be lacking." But that was not really the Filipino way. It was on my watch that Aquino was assassination and that came as a real shock.

Q: Everybody knew about his going back.

STRAUS: He talked to us. My deputy, John Maisto, knew a great deal about the Philippines. He had served four years at the Embassy there and was the fellow most knowledgeable about domestic affairs in the Philippines. He had known the Aquinos. He had known Mrs. Aquino. So they had talked to him from Boston and he indicated that he wanted to go back. I think he probably wanted to go back because he had heard that Marcos was ill and perhaps more ill then he had been before and he wanted to be there when he died. He wanted our advice as to what might happen to him. We shared, I guess the advice of most people, including many Filipinos, that most likely he would be incarcerated again. And he was willing to take that chance. It really didn't occur to us...

Q: Well, it wasn't part of the modus operandi of killing people.

STRAUS: No. And I maintain to this day without any proof whatsoever, that if Marcos hadn't been ill, and apparently quite severely ill, that this would not have happened. This was somebody else's doing.

Q: This was at the height of the Reagan administration. Did you have the feeling that Reagan was a creature of the American right and the Marcoses had spent a lot of time and effort in cultivating this group. Did you have a feeling that one had to be a bit careful?

STRAUS: Let me say this. I think the first year of my work on the Desk was concerned with the renegotiation of the base agreement which was due every five years. The previous negotiation had been extraordinarily difficult and the Filipinos had asked for all kinds of things that we were unwilling to provide them. In this case, the Filipinos proved relatively accommodating, although there was a certain amount of quibbling over the price of what we would pay for the use of the bases. So the negotiations, partly because I think we worked reasonably well with the Defense Department, and partly because the negotiations in the Philippines, were conducted very well. It was a very smooth operation.

Marcos had ironclad control, I think, on their side. He wanted, I think, to retain Reagan's goodwill and they were concluded in less time then anyone would have thought possible. Everybody felt very good about it.

Then the next thing that happened was the state visit of Marcos. Now Marcos had been denied a state visit for quite a while, ever since he had declared martial law. He had lifted martial law but this was under the Carter administration, and they felt there were still things Marcos should be doing. But Reagan said yes...this was before my coming on board. The Reagans did this sort of thing with a good deal of grace and charm. Mrs. Marcos really put on the charm. I couldn't stand her, she was a terrible woman. This was the time when we were at the White House and everything was going smoothly. It was a beautiful evening in the spring and we were out in the garden...everything was lovely.

Then came the assassination. In fact, on the Desk, having polished off the Marcos state visit, which both the White House and Marcos were very happy over, and having polished off the negotiations for the base agreement in a way that people were quite happy about...because these base agreements always have an effect on other base agreements around the world, so we had to keep that in mind. We kind of looked at each other and said, "What's left to do?"

Marcos had staged this phony election, but he was going to be in power for quite a long time. There was no real hope on the part of anybody that he could be derailed.

And then everything started changing with the assassination. There was the beginning of some real pressures within the Philippine society. Although, as I said, they really felt that Marcos, who came in as you recall as a reformer and had a sort of Kennedyesque image not only in the Philippines, was the only guy to get them out of their troubles. We did all kinds of contingency papers.

After the Aquino assassination we started distancing ourselves from the administration of Marcos. We wrote some fairly tough human rights reports quite critical of the Marcos government. But at the same time he was the guy in power and there didn't seem to be any alternative.

Q: This is what you were getting from the Embassy too?

STRAUS: This is what we were getting from the Embassy too, yes. The Embassy was then run by Mike Armacost, who I must say...some of his cables were models, brilliant. Mike Armacost knows, as probably nobody else that I have encountered in the Foreign Service, how to write from the field a cable that is action oriented and suggests to the bureaucracy where we might do so. So, it was a moderate effort to move Marcos to better human rights.

Q: Were you feeling under pressure, that public opinion, TV, the newspapers, and all were pushing you into a position where we didn't know where we were going?

STRAUS: We knew where we were going, it was very clear. We also had pressure from the media. We had pressure from elements in the Congress...Steve Solarz and his staff...and we kept them very closely informed in what we were doing and thinking. We

actually worked very closely with Solarz and people in the Congress. We had to because Marcos always thought he really knew American politics and that he could play off his friend, Reagan, against the others. Of course Reagan was way up there somewhere and didn't concern himself with the minutiae of Philippine politics. I think, by and large, we avoided Marcos' maneuverings and his terrible brother-in-law ambassador here, Imelda's brother, a rather slimy individual, if I may use that delicate expression.

Q: Were there any Congressmen or Senators who were sort of in the Marcos pocket by having been lavishly entertained and all that? Was this a problem? This happened with us I know in dealing with the Dominican Republic under Trujillo for a long time when there were members of the Senate and the House?

STRAUS: The Philippines retained in the hearts of many Americans an unusual sympathy. I remember going to a farewell for Romulo, the grand old man at the UN. There was a gala dinner at one of the hotels and there were an awful lot of people who had a very warm regard for the Philippines because, I guess, of the historical relationship with us. It was a kind of paternalistic one. One that the Filipinos in a way invited. Yes, I think there were people, who were not in the pocket that I was aware of, who were very sympathetic.

Q: How did you read Mrs. Marcos.

STRAUS: I guess we will have to have another session, but let me just say a few words about the Mrs. She was an ignorant operator. She thought she knew things about international relations. She saw herself as a super diplomat. She saw herself as knowing a good deal about economic affairs too. She was shameless in her pursuit of money and power. She was a great flatterer, even somebody as lowly as a country director. I took an almost instantaneous dislike to her, which, I guess I haven't lost. Whereas I wouldn't say that about him. He was a man of some substance who I think went wrong.

Q: When we start the next time we will talk about the events in the Philippines as they reflected on you after the Aquino assassination and how the situation developed at that time.

Today is February 11, 1993. I remember I was with the Immigration and Naturalization Service Liaison Office at the time when they were talking about Aquino going back and what would happen. Did we have any role in his going back or trying to stop him?

STRAUS: No, we certainly didn't. We shared the conventional wisdom which was very widespread at the time that President Marcos would almost certainly allow Aquino to roam free. That he would be taken into custody and would be given some form of incarceration. Whether that meant prison or house arrest was uncertain. I think this is also what Aquino thought was going to happen. Before he left he called a lot of people to get their advice as to whether he should go back or not. I think he was certainly troubled as to whether he should go back or not. He called my deputy, John Maisto, whom he had

known in the Philippines. As I recall John told him just about what I told you. He would probably find himself in custody.

I remain convinced that one of the reasons for the timing of his return was the fact that Marcos had one of his periodic bouts with the medical folks, he had a bad kidney, and was once in a while put on dialysis. Apparently at that particular time that was one of the worst times for Marcos, medically speaking. There was even some talk in the Philippines that he might be near death. I think Aquino was certainly an ambitious politician and wanted to be inside the country, not in exile, when that happened. I don't think he, or anybody else, thought that he was going to be executed the way things happened. I also remain convinced, although I have absolutely no proof, that this would not have happened if Marcos hadn't been in bad shape physically and therefore not in full control of the government.

I was scheduled to go on leave at that time in the middle of the summer, and having completed a successful base negotiations and a state visit by Marcos, we felt there wasn't all that much to do. Certainly there was no better time to take leave.

Q: Going back again, later when things really got bad in the Philippines and the Marcos regime was on the verge, much was made of the special relationship between the Marcoses and the Reagans. Did you get a feel for this?

STRAUS: No, if there was such a thing that was way about my grade level, I guess. I thought that the state visit was very graciously handled by the President and Mrs. Reagan. It was Marcos' first state visit and sort of an award for giving up martial law and having a good base relationship. I didn't get the impression that the President involved himself all that much in the conduct of our relations with the Philippines.

Q: Well, the Marcoses were pulling at everything they possibly could.

STRAUS: Oh, yes, very much so.

Q: Were you on leave when the assassination happened?

STRAUS: I was.

Q: Did you get any feel when you got back about how the reaction was?

STRAUS: Yes. I think the effect was rather strong and a real shock because we were, I think, fairly sure that this kind of a thing would not have happened without somebody who was fairly high up having orchestrated it. We thought the Philippines, who were already in some trouble politically and certainly economically, would have some additional problems. And sure enough there was this massive outpouring for Aquino after his death. In fact it was far greater at that time than when he was alive. The whole thing was so dramatic and appealed to the Filipinos. Although there were a lot of dirty tricks

that had gone on prior to the assassination, there was a very clear sense, I think, to the Filipino people that this had gone too far. That was easy to pick up.

Q: What were you getting from the Embassy as the situation unraveled?

STRAUS: That despite everything Marcos was very much still in control. And that the opposition who obviously sought to capitalize on this event was still weak and very much divided and not all that effective. I got the sense in my travel over there, as well as from some of the reporting, that even people in the opposition felt that real reform in the Philippines could come only with the cooperation and under the leadership of Marcos. That was kind of the weird thing that was going on.

Q: Were there any leaders in the opposition that were sort of bandied about?

STRAUS: Oh, sure. One was Raul Manglapus, for example, who was in exile in the US and whom I used to see. Later he became the Foreign Minister for Mrs. Aquino. I guess that what I recall most about Manglapus, when I met him on one or two occasions and discussed changes in the Philippines, was that he was want to say, "Rick, the United States brought democracy to the Philippines. Marcos has taken it away. Consequently it is your responsibility to restore it." I tried to disabuse him of that and said, "If the Philippine people would take some required action to move towards democracy, he would find the United States in support of that."

But there was, to my taste any way, too much of an overwhelming feeling in the Philippines that nothing happened there without the United States having willed it. Not a leaf fell from a tree without usually the CIA having orchestrated that. I found that rather discouraging. I thought it required a fundamental change in our relationship to bring that about, although I didn't see how that was going to happen anytime soon.

Q: Did poor Corazón Aquino raise any blips on your radar at all?

STRAUS: No, she did not.

Q: Just the grieving widow.

STRAUS: Yes. And in the beginning that certainly was what she was.

Q: Can we talk about how events develops, particularly as you saw them from the Desk, and how you felt the Embassy was responding to these events?

STRAUS: Yes. Well, it was clear both politically and economically that the Philippines were in a growing malaise. The one, of course, was feeding on the other. The Philippines, say in the 1960s, in most respects was the leading country in Southeast Asia, and had become by the middle 1980s probably at the bottom of the heap. And that had been

through an accumulation of Marcos policies. There was widespread corruption. This is all quite aside from the assassination, which just added another dimension to it.

So, how to get out of this mess? There were all kinds of scenarios that were being written back here to which the Embassy contributed. Mike Armacost was the ambassador at the time and I don't think I have ever seen an ambassador write messages which were as adept in understanding how to get from point A to point B in the bureaucracy. Absolutely superb. Extremely intelligent, goal oriented. He had some excellent meetings with Marcos where he tried to move Marcos to a better position on human rights, which, of course, was a great concern of ours. But it wasn't easy because Marcos' main goal by that point was to remain in power at all cost. And he still had most of the levers of power.

Q: Were you feeling greater heat after the Aquino assassination from Congress and the media?

STRAUS: Oh, yes. I think there ensued after that what I thought was rather a remarkable coincidence really, or unity, of both Democrats and Republicans, of the bureaucracy and Congress, of State and Defense. There were hardly any serious arguments with the view that we really should try to move Marcos into a more politically acceptable position...acceptable both here in the US as well as in the Philippines. We spent a good deal of time, particularly with Solarz who chaired the Asian subcommittee in the House and took the greatest interest in this matter...Solarz, himself, had spent a good deal of time in the Philippines and was personally acquainted with Aquino, so was personally affected by his loss. I thought that there wasn't any real gap between us, which was important because, of course, the Marcos forces were attempting to exploit any gaps in the American front at that time.

Q: Were you getting any feel from the White House on this?

STRAUS: Not particularly. I do recall that the NSC staff was represented at these strategy sessions that we had periodically. They were also brought in on testimony that we were required to give from time to time on the Hill. We were all in accord really. But it was difficult to know what to do. There were so many scenarios that were written, but not one, of course, anticipated what would happen.

Q: What did develop? How did Mrs. Aquino end up going to the Philippines? Did we play any role?

STRAUS: Much of this happened after my watch there.

Q: You left in...?

STRAUS: I left in the summer of 1984.

Q: When did Mrs. Aquino go back? Do you remember?

STRAUS: I don't remember that. I think she went back when I was still there, but it wasn't a major event.

Q: So, as you left we were pulling every lever we could think of to get Marcos to do something, not getting rid of Marcos particularly.

STRAUS: He still had the power. The opposition forces didn't impress us that much. They certainly were divided. There was a problem, of course, that there was a major Communist insurgency in the Philippines. The military felt a continued need for the bases, particularly for Subic which was seen as a counterweight to the increase of the Soviet presence in Vietnam. Nobody really wanted us to leave in the Philippines, not even the Philippines neighbors in southeast Asia, who were also unhappy with Marcos.

Q: Did you get any feel that the Philippines were sort of unique in not being part of any other group? They were part of ASEAN, but yet they weren't.

STRAUS: They were and they weren't. Formally, yes they were. But one always had the feeling with the Philippines that far more important than the relationship to ASEAN was their relationship with the United States. That in the last analysis it was always going to be the United States that would bail them out. And there was, of course, a special relationship. I recall a testimonial dinner I went to when Marcos was around and Ramuelo was around, he was president of the UNGA and was tremendously beloved by all manner of Americans. He was most impressive. There were scores of American businessmen, media people, stars, etc. who attended the event.

Q: When you left that job you left it with sort of...?

STRAUS: Well, things were not going well and we knew it. There didn't seem to be a very clear way out of it.

Q: Who took your place?

STRAUS: My deputy, John Maisto, who had spent a lot of time in the Philippines.

Q: Then you went for your last assignment over to the National War College?

STRAUS: That's right. I had decided at that point that I didn't really want to go abroad again, because of family reasons and also because I felt that if I was going to do something else with my life I had better do it soon rather than later. I thought the War College would be a good transition. And it was.

Q: What were you doing?

STRAUS: I was one of two State Department officers to be on the staff of the War College. My responsibilities were twofold. One, to participate in the teaching of international relations which occupied at that time a substantial chunk of the academic curriculum at the War College. That is to say that every day when we had a chief speaker, and we probably had the most glamorous accumulation of speakers there...it is one of the attractions of the War College. After he or she gave their talk and had a Q&A, then the students would get together again in smaller seminars and the staff would have another opportunity to go over the same materials. That was one aspect.

The other aspect was that in the afternoons we had so-called electives where the students would concentrate on one area of the world for special study. That was generally the same area to which they were then encouraged to go on their two-week trips which took place in the spring and was one of the highlights of the War College year. Of course I did northeast Asia--Japan and Korea. I put the course together and taught it and had a lot of fun with it.

Q: What was your impression of the men and women on the military side who were passing through the college in relation to international work?

STRAUS: Well, there was a wide range of interest and capability, which was very interesting to me. We had some absolutely superb officers and then there were some who were not, frankly, all that interested and wondered why they were chosen to come. There were some from the State Department like that. However, three-quarters were military.

One point about the military that struck me then as throughout my career and that is that when it comes to the conduct of foreign relations and the study of international relations generally, I found that it was, perhaps surprisingly, the Army and the Marines who were the most knowledgeable and interested. The Air Force and the Navy had less interest. I wondered about that and then came to an answer to that. The Army and the Marine folks, by virtue of being on the ground, come into more contact with the civilian communities, whether here or abroad. Whereas the Navy and Air Force tended to be somewhat isolated where they are stationed. That is one reason. But perhaps an even greater reason is that the Air Force and Navy have now become, of course, super mechanized, super technological and the kinds of people who are attracted to them are people who are scientists or engineers, not social scientists, which perhaps is more what appeals to the people-oriented rather than the thing-oriented.

Q: How did you feel the State Department people fitted into the War College?

STRAUS: Oh, very well, I think. I think it is useful to have some good State Department representation there because of the personal relationships that are created. When you go off on a subsequent assignment after such an experience and can have these personal memories of classes together it makes all the difference, I think. Unfortunately, when I had that kind of experience at the NATO Defense College, I went to Switzerland afterwards.

Q: You retired then in 1986?

STRAUS: At the end of 1986, yes.

Q: Then what did you get involved in?

STRAUS: My objective was to remain involved with Japan and not to get another permanent job. If possible to do a variety of things and I have been fortunate in being able to do that. For a while I was doing the declassification of documents but it wasn't really my bag. I enjoyed teaching much more. Right after leaving the War College, I continued to teach my Northeast Asia course there. Then, over the years I taught, again on Japan, at George Washington University, William and Mary, Johns Hopkins and now very happily at Georgetown as well.

In addition to that I have sporadically done some work for an organization called Business Council for International Understanding where I brief American businessmen going to Japan. And then for the last two years, ending in the fall of 1992, I was running the Japanese and Korean language programs at the Foreign Service Institute. I kind of enjoyed that, although the teaching of language itself has not been my main interest. But I enjoyed the experience and working again with Foreign Service officers and I think I made a contribution. When that came to an end I was asked to stay on and I still have a contract with FSI. I have now gotten involved with devising a new program for advanced training for the superhard languages--Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Arabic--with Japanese, perhaps as the model. That got me back to Japan last fall, which was fun.

Q: Oh, that is great. Well, thank you very much.

End of interview