

KOREA

COUNTRY READER TABLE OF CONTENTS

Richard A. Ericson, Jr.	1945-1946	U.S. Army, Wome Do
Donald S. MacDonald	1945-1946	U.S. Army Military Government Specialist, City Unspecified
William G. Ridgeway	1946-1948	U.S. Army and Civilian Armed Forces Radio, USIS, Chon Ju
David E. Mark	1946-1949	Political Advisor, U.S. Forces, Seoul
William C. Sherman	1946-1949	Instructor to South Korean Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Chinhae
	1948-1950	Performance Review Section, Economic Cooperation Administration, Seoul
Mary Chiavarini	1947-1948	Assistant to the Advisor to the Commanding General, Seoul
Fred Charles Thomas, Jr.	1947-1948	U.S. Army, Korea
Howell S. Teeple	1947-1949	Radio Broadcasting, Seoul
Donald S. MacDonald	1948-1950	Political Officer, Seoul
Everett Drumright	1948-1951	Political Advisor and Deputy Chief of Mission, Seoul
Morton Bach	1949-1950	Economic/Financial Officer, Seoul
Philip H. Valdes	1949-1950	Consular/Economic Officer, Seoul
Harlan Cleveland	1949-1952	Director, Far Eastern Aid Program, Washington, DC
Theodore Achilles	1950	Acting Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Washington, DC
William J. Cunningham	1950	Personnel Officer, Seoul
Ray E. Jones	1950	Economic Cooperation Administration,

		Seoul
Philip W. Manhard	1950	Vice Consul, Tientsin, China
William G. Colman	1950-1951	ECA Mission, Seoul
Ralph N. Clough	1950-1954	Political Officer, Hong Kong
Gerald Bache	1951-1953	Economic Officer, Pusan
Samuel T. Williams	1952-1953 1953-1954	Command of 25 th Infantry Division, Korea Command of 9 th U.S. Army Corps Group, Korea
Fred Charles Thomas, Jr.	1952-1954	Political Officer, Seoul
William G. Colman	1953	Economic Mission, Seoul
Roy T. Haverkamp	1953 1953-1955	Motion Picture Officer, USIS, Pusan Political Officer, Seoul
Niles W. Bond	1953-1954	Political Officer, Seoul
George M. Barbis	1953-1956	Economic / Political Officer, Seoul
Kenneth MacCormac	1954-1956	Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS, Seoul
Donald S. MacDonald	1955-1958	Political Officer, Seoul
Fred Charles Thomas, Jr.	1956-1958	Political Officer, Seoul
Edwin Cronk	1956-1960	Economic Counselor, Seoul
William C. Sherman	1957-1958	Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
Bernard J. Lavin	1957-1966	USIS, Seoul
Erland Heginbotham	1958-1960	USAID, Seoul
Irving Sablosky	1958-1960	Publications Officer, USIS, Seoul
Howard B. Schaffer	1958-1960	Political Officer, Seoul
Thomas P. Shoesmith	1958-1960	Political Officer, Seoul

William Watts	1958-1960	Visa/Political Officer, Seoul
Robert Pringle	1959-1960	Public Information Office, U.S. Army, Korea
Marshall Green	1959-1961	Consul General, Seoul
James A. Klemstine	1959-1961	Korean Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Frank D. Correl	1959-1962	Commodity Import Program Officer, USAID, Seoul
Robert G. Rich, Jr.	1959-1962	Political Officer, Seoul
Frank N. Burnet	1959-1963	Korean Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
James T. Laney	1959-1963	Methodist Minister, Yonsei University Campus, Seoul
Lane Holdcroft	1960	Advisor to National Community Development Program, USAID
Donald S. MacDonald	1960-1962	Political Officer, Korea Desk, Washington, DC
Isabel Cumming	1960-1964	Secretary, USIS, Seoul
Daniel A. O'Donohue	1960-1964 1964-1966 1972-1974	Political Officer, Seoul Korea Desk Officer, Washington, D.C. Political Counselor, Seoul
Philip C. Habib	1962-1965	Political Counselor, Seoul
Edward Hurwitz	1962-1966	Political Officer, Seoul
John P. Leonard	1963-1964	Army Intelligence Officer, Korea
Vincent W. Brown	1964-1967	Assistant Director for Program and Economic Policy, USAID, Seoul
Melvin R. Chatman	1964-1967	U.S. Army Officer, 1 st Cavalry Division, Korea
Princeton Lyman	1964-1967	Program Director, USAID, Seoul

Roger Ernst	1964-1968	Deputy Director, USAID, Seoul
Madison Broadnax	1964-1968	Office of Rural Development, USAID, Suwon
	1969-1970	Assistant Chief of Agriculture, USAID, Seoul
Richard A. Ericson, Jr.	1965-1968	Political Counselor, Seoul
Charlotte Loris	1967	Executive Officer, USIS, Seoul
Walter L. Cutler	1967-1969	Political Officer, Seoul
Russell Sveda	1967-1969	Peace Corps Volunteer, Seoul
Mark E. Mohr	1967-1969	Peace Corps Volunteer, English Language Instructor, Taegu
John Allen Cushing	1967-1970	Peace Corps Volunteer, Wonju
Cyrus R. Vance	1968	Presidential Emissary, Seoul
Morton I Abramowitz	1968-1969	Staff Member, Senior Interdepartmental Group, Washington, DC
James F. Leonard	1968-1969	Country Director, Korea Desk, Washington, DC
William Clark, Jr.	1968-1969	SEATO Desk, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
Edward W. Kloth	1968-1973	Peace Corps Volunteer, Seoul
Miles Wedeman	1968-1971	Deputy Director, USAID, Seoul
Kenneth Yates	1968-1972	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Kwangju
Nicholas Shapiro Lakas	1969-1972	Economic & Commercial Counselor, Seoul
John P. Leonard	1969-1973	Consular Officer, Seoul
Marcus L. Winter	1970-1972	Agricultural Economist, USAID, Seoul
Edward L. Rowny	1971	Commanding General, I CORPS, Korea

Paul E. White	1971-1972	Internship Training, USAID, Seoul
David Blakemore	1971-1974	Economic Officer, Seoul
Francis T. Underhill	1971-1974	Deputy Chief of Mission, Seoul
Philip C. Habib	1971-1974	Ambassador, Korea
Stanley Zuckerman	1971-1973	Press Officer, Seoul
James G. Lowenstein	1972	Staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC
Norman W. Getsinger	1972-1974	Commercial Counselor, Seoul
David T. Jones	1972-1974	Korea Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
Daniel A. O'Donohue	1972-1974	Political Counselor, Seoul
George E. Lichtblau	1972-1975	Labor Attaché, Seoul
Robin White	1973	Economic Policy Officer, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC
Donald P. Gregg	1973-1975	CIA Station Chief, Seoul
Richard A. Ericson, Jr.	1973-1976	Deputy Chief of Mission, Seoul
Paul M. Cleveland	1973-1977	Political/Military Officer, Seoul
Edward Hurwitz	1974-1975	Political Officer, Seoul
Donald McConville	1974-1977	Economic Officer, Seoul
Morton I Abramowitz	1974-1978	Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command
Ward Thompson	1975	Political Officer, Seoul
J.D. Bindenagel	1975-1977	Economic Officer, Seoul
Donald S. MacDonald	1975-1977	Executive Director, U.S.-Korean Joint Committee on Status of U.S. Forces, Seoul

Philip R. Mayhew	1975-1977	Korea Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Russell Sveda	1975-1977	Rotation Officer/Staff Aide to the Ambassador, Seoul
John E. Kelley	1975-1978	Political Officer, Seoul
Bilha Bryant	1976-1977	Spouse of Commercial Officer, Seoul
Edward Hurwitz	1976-1977	Korea Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Elizabeth Raspolic	1976-1978	Vice Consul, Seoul
John T. Bennett	1976	Economic Counselor, Seoul
Thomas Stern	1976-1979	Deputy Chief of Mission, Seoul
Charles Stuart Kennedy	1976-1979	Consul General, Seoul
James A. Klemstine	1976-1980	Economic Officer, Seoul
Edward L. Lee II	1977-1979	Regional Security Officer, Seoul
Aloysius M. O'Neill	1977-1979	Consular Officer/Staff Aide to Ambassador, Seoul
David Blakemore	1977-1980	Korea Desk Officer, Washington, DC
William Clark, Jr.	1977-1980	Political Counselor, Seoul
Maurice E. Lee	1977-1981	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Seoul
Robert G. Rich, Jr.	1977-1981	Korea Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Katherine Schwering	1978-1980	Consular/Commercial Officer, Seoul
William H. Gleysteen, Jr.	1978-1981	Ambassador, Korea
Anthony Geber	1979-1980	Economic and Commercial Counselor, Seoul
Louis P. Goelz	1979-1980	Consul General, Seoul
David Blakemore	1980-1983	Political Counselor, Seoul
Thomas P. Shoemith	1981-1983	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of

		East Asian Affairs, Washington, DC
Walter A. Lundy	1981-1984	Economic Counselor, Seoul
Paul M. Cleveland	1981-1985	Deputy Chief of Mission, Seoul
Bernard J. Lavin	1981-1985	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Seoul
Edward W. Kloth	1982-1983	Consular Officer, Seoul
David Lambertson	1982-1984	Korea Country Director, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington, D.C.
Thomas P. H. Dunlop	1983-1987 1987-1989	Political Counselor, Seoul Country Director for Korea, Washington, DC
Isabel Cumming	1984-1985	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Seoul
George G.B. Griffin	1984-1986	Minister-Counselor (Commercial), Seoul
Donald McConville	1984-1987	Economic Counselor, Seoul
Andrew F. Antippas	1984-1988	Consul General, Seoul
Donald M. Bishop	1985-1987 1987	Branck Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Taegu USIS Policy Officer, Seoul
Hugh Burleson	1985-1987	Deputy Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Seoul
David Blakemore	1986-1987	Director, Office of Korean Affairs, Washington, DC
David Lambertson	1986-1987	Deputy Chief of Mission, Seoul
Edward W. Kloth	1986-1988	Korea Desk Officer, Washington, DC
William Clark, Jr.	1986-1989	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington
James R. Lilley	1986-1989	Ambassador, Korea
Gaston J. Sigur, Jr.	1986-1989	Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington,

		DC
John M. Reid	1986-1990	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Seoul
Aloysius M. O'Neill	1988-1992	Political Officer, Seoul
Edward H. Wilkinson	1988-1992	Consul General, Seoul
Theresa A. Loar	1989-1991	Consular Officer, Seoul
Donald P. Gregg	1989-1993	Ambassador, South Korea Chairman, The Korean Society
Edward W. Kloth	1990-1993	Political Officer, Seoul
John E. Kelley	1991-1993	Deputy Director, East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C.
William Clark, Jr.	1992-1993	Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Washington
John Ratigan	1992-1995	Chief Consular Officer, Seoul
Edward W. Kloth	1993-1995	Principal Officer, Pusan
Walter F. Mondale	1993-1996	Ambassador, Japan
James T. Laney	1993-1996	Ambassador, Korea
David G. Brown	1995-1996	Director, Office of Korean Affairs, Washington, DC
Kenneth Yates	1995-1996	Overseas Mission, International Atomic Energy Agency, Seoul
Stephen Bosworth	1995-1997	Director, Korean Peninsula Energy Development Corporation, New York City, NY
David M. Schoonover	1995-1997	Agriculture Minister-Counselor, Seoul
Mark E. Mohr	1997-1999	North Korea Desk, (WAE), Washington, DC
Anthony C. Zinni	1997-2000	Commander-in-Chief, CENTCOM

Stephen Bosworth	1997-2000	Ambassador, South Korea
John Allen Cushing	1998	Economic Officer, Korea Desk, Washington, DC
	1998-2000	Korea Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence & Research, Washington, DC
Greg Thielmann	1998-2002	Chief, Office of Analysis for Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs, INR, Washington, DC
Mark E. Mohr	1999-2005	Department of Energy, Washington, DC
John Allen Cushing	2000-2001	Korean Language Studies, Seoul
	2001-2004	Political Officer, Seoul
Donald P. Gregg	2002	Visit to North Korea

RICHARD A. ERICSON, JR.

U.S. Army

Wome Do (1945-1946)

Ambassador Richard A. Ericson, Jr. was born in 1923. He enrolled in Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1941, but did not graduate until 1945, due in part to being drafted in the U.S. Army in 1945. In addition to his service in Japan, Ambassador Ericson also served in England, Iceland, and Korea. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 27, 1995.

ERICSON: I got to Korea in October, 1945 and because I was a good army brat and signed the wrong agreement -- I signed the agreement to stay in 18 months after the cessation of hostilities -- which, unfortunately, they held me to. I had a good experience. I was an instructor for various kinds of weapons and IRTCs. When I got overseas, they lined everybody up on the dock and told every fifth guy to step forward and I ended up in the Corps of Engineers as adjutant of the boat battalion of the 592nd Boat and Shore Regiment, which was the outfit that ran the boats in the harbor of Inchon. So I spent all of the time in Korea living on the island of Wome Do -- "Do" means island and "Wome" means moon tail -- located in the port of Inchon.

When they broke up the battalion and transferred everybody I went to the Corps of Engineers in order to get a promotion and then they broke up that battalion and turned us all into a transportation port company. I ended up commanding the whole thing the last eight months I was there. Anybody with any points went home and we weren't getting any experienced boat people so I had a nice little fiefdom out there on Wome Do.

We were on an island and our looks were always to the sea. We operated lighters to and from the

shore. We were on duty 24 hours a day and you may recall something of the tide problem in Inchon. They later built the big tidal basin of which Wome Do is actually now part. Inchon when I was there was the port with the second highest average rise and fall of tide in the world, next to the Bay of Fundy, and you had to operate strictly in accordance with the tides. You couldn't get in or out of the tidal basin unless the tide was correct. You couldn't even get up to Charlie Pier in Inchon harbor for much of the day. You would look over the area one hour and see nothing but shining water as far as the eye could see and six hours later it was nothing but shining mud as far as the eye could see. But we operated LCMs and LCTs, which the Navy had left us. All of the supplies at that time for Korea for the 24th Corps were coming in through Inchon because the railroads were broken to Pusan. Pusan was more or less inoperative anyway and the troops were all up towards the 38th parallel.

Anyway, how did the Americans operate? Ignorantly, I would say was my impression of the American occupation of Korea. Of course, the decision to go into Korea was made at the last minute and the 38th parallel was an arbitrary and not well chosen demarcation line. We were totally unprepared. We had a plan for governing Japan. We had military government people who theoretically had done some homework on their business and we had some policies and plans in motion. We had none of that for Korea, nor did any of the distinguished civilian or military minds, in my opinion, get much applied to Korea. I think we were there primarily to keep the communists, the Russians in particular, from coming any further south at that point and threatening Japan. We were there to do what we could to stabilize that situation as quickly as we could and then get out of it, which is basically what we did. But I have often thought trying to create a democracy out of a country as Korea was then, or even as it is now, is a difficult task at best and in the face of military tensions, etc., it gets to be damn near impossible. Anyway, we were not set up to try even.

I took my Foreign Service exams while in Korea because they had advertised in the "Stars and Stripes" that they would let people who hadn't graduated but who had military experience at a certain level, become eligible to take them and they were going to be given in Tokyo. Of course, I had no idea that I would pass, but I did want to go to Tokyo. So I signed up for them. Apparently everybody in Korea with a like mind did the same because they gave them in Seoul, so I never got out of Korea for that purpose.

When I took my oral exams, one of the examiners was the former political advisor to General Hodges, the commanding general of the 24th Corps, and a Foreign Service officer, of course, was on my panel. He started asking me questions about Korea and I spouted off pretty much in the same vein saying that if we weren't any better prepared to do right by the country than we had been then we had no business going there. Well, he passed me. Maybe he thought the criticism was valid, I don't know. I didn't know who he was at that time.

I had limited contact with Koreans when I served in the boat battalion. A boat shore regiment has two elements. It has a boat battalion which runs the boats and keeps them repaired and then it had a port battalion which furnished the beach people. In our situation it did the stevedoring both on board ship and in the tidal basin. The ships would come close to the harbor. They couldn't come into the tidal basin because that couldn't take any more than a LST. A Baltic class freighter, the kind of thing the "Pueblo" was, could get in. Most of the supplies came on Liberty

size ships and everything had to be lightered ashore. We ran the lighters and the port battalion provided all the stevedore troops. They, the port battalion, after the big exodus of World War II veterans, began to hire fairly large numbers of Koreans as stevedores, primarily. We used some of them for our maintenance operations. We had some wooden hull boats, some command boats, and the Koreans were very, very good shipwrights, good boat carpenters. I will never forget the first time I saw a Korean shipwright drive a long screw through the outer planking of one of our things and into the hull member with a power driver. He had a look of beatification on his face like nothing you ever saw. It would have taken him hours to get that thing in. We also hired them for kitchen help, for barrack cleaning, the donkey work in the motor pool. We didn't hire very many skilled ones and didn't come in contact with very many educated ones.

I thought at the time that Korea was hopeless as a society. It was this curious mixture of more or less 20th century and 15th century. You could smell it forty miles at sea -- the so-called honey pits -- the only fertilizer they had was human excrement. Honey wagons were all over the place. Our places were serviced with honey wagons. The agricultural tools that they used were all out of the remote, remote past. If you went up to Seoul you saw street cars and relatively modern buildings and that kind of thing, but in the countryside between Inchon and Seoul why agricultural and other methods were ox carts and that sort of thing were way, way out of date. The people were not excessively friendly. I had a house on the side of a hill in Wome Do in what had been an old Japanese complex and summer resort. Our club had been the governor's mansion. There were four hotels out there; we managed to burn them down. Each of our companies was billeted in one of these hotels which was joined together by wooden passageways with a long passageway out over the water to join a square pavilion where they had their parties, etc. But I lived on the hillside in one of the separate cottages which they also maintained. But we let the Koreans live in all of the others. But they were very aloof and there was no fraternization, which we respected mightily. If a man was looking for a woman he had to go up to Seoul, possibly because most of Inchon was off limits. Up to the time I left, there was no inter-marriage, no real fraternization of any sort.

But, these were obviously a society totally alien to us young Americans. We had no comprehension of it. We heard mutterings of various political difficulties. There were times we were under arms against sabotage and that sort of thing. There were trouble with the communists down south and there were skirmishes, etc. But nothing ever untoward ever happened.

One lasting impression of anyone who served at that level and in that kind of work, was in terms of pilferage at which the Koreans were quite adept. They used to steal the dunnage (wooden braces, cargo separating devices, etc) -- when we were unloading the cargo we would take the dunnage off the ship and pile it on the shore, and of course that was sacrosanct as American property, even though it was probably worthless, but Koreans desperately needed housing materials. Third class lumber for which there was no use in the United States, very raw. It was on the ships to protect the cargo. We would have fairly good size piles of it and Koreans would come over at night in their boats and try to make off with dunnage, which we permitted to a certain extent. We didn't really want to be stolen blind, but we did permit them to take that kind of thing.

I might just mention one famous episode that took place in Inchon. When the army arrived in

1945 we had no winter equipment and the 1945-46 winter was a bitter cold winter. My people on the island got through that winter in tropical barracks where the screens had been sprayed with plastic. That was the winterization. Down the center of each barracks was a coal stove and they kept it red hot all winter long, and still it was freezing. Anyway, they determined they were not going to have that happen the next winter so they sent over winter uniforms, blankets and stored them in big old Japanese warehouses off the highway at the entrance to Inchon and put guards, dogs and machine guns around them. They went to open them that fall and found that the center of the warehouses had been eaten away by people digging in from across the highway underneath the warehouses and up through the floor and into the boxes. They had just about taken everything in one warehouse. There were lots of people wandering about wearing GI blankets and coveralls that winter.

Anyway, I did not conceive any great love or liking for the Korean people at that point. I really didn't know any other than those we hired. My job didn't put me in contact with any.

DONALD S. MACDONALD
Military Government Specialist, U.S. Army
City Unspecified (1945-1946)

Donald S. MacDonald was born in Massachusetts in 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from MIT in 1938 and a Ph.D. from George Washington University in political science. Mr. MacDonald served in the US Army from 1942-1946 and joined the foreign service in 1947. His overseas posts include Korea, Istanbul and Geneva. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 25, 1990.

MACDONALD: I have a Ph.D. from George Washington University in political science. I started as a chemistry major at MIT, but moved into other areas. My contacts with Korea began with World War II. I volunteered for a tour of duty with the military government with no thought of Korea and was assigned to the Japan occupation forces. Then MacArthur decided that he didn't want a large military government and a number of us were sent to Korea. I arrived there in October, 1945 with virtually no knowledge of the country, spent the next year trying to compensate for my ignorance and since then I have spent much of my life trying to learn what I should have known when I first got there.

The occupation began on September 9, 1945 when General Hodge and his XXIV Corps landed and took over from the Japanese, who had occupied Korea since 1910. We began with elements of three divisions which were assigned to various parts of South Korea. As the military government specialists arrived, they were assigned to cities and districts of Korea, initially under the command of the three divisions and then beginning in January, 1946 they came under the direct command of the military governor of Korea, who in turn reported to General Hodge.

The military government operations in the Army had a program which consisted of an initial six week training period at the School for Military Government at the University of Virginia,

followed by six months in the Civil Affairs Training School which were located in various parts of the country. They trained people in German and Japanese primarily and the training was specifically aimed at controlling occupied territory behind the fighting lines. As one of the trainees at the CAT School at Harvard, I studied Japanese intensively for six months and had a fairly good crash course in Japanese history, politics and culture. Had I gone to Japan, I would have been moderately well equipped for a beginner, but as far as Korea was concerned, I knew absolutely nothing about it except for a fragmentary recollection of one section in a text-book that I had used at MIT. I arrived on a troop-ship in Yokohama in early October, 1945 and which was subsequently rerouted to Inchon. On the way, a few of us dug out of the ship's library a book entitled "Terry's 1905 Japanese Empire" which had a few pages on Korea. All of the cities had of course Japanese names. We copied that on the ship's typewriter and then mimeographed it. That was the total of our knowledge about Korea when we arrived in Inchon.

We didn't know much about Korea in those days. However, in the first few days, we all recognized that Korea was a friendly country and not an enemy. We realized this because 90% of the Koreans were friendly. There were a few who were committed Communists, who viewed the occupation askance. We had some problems with them, but generally speaking the atmosphere was very friendly. It is ironic, of course, that the Japanese, who were the defeated enemy, governed themselves under the general direction of MacArthur and his headquarters, whereas the Koreans who were our friends were governed directly by an American Military Government, with Americans directly in charge down to the county level in the beginning.

As I look back on it, I am not sure the issue of whether to have a military government -- as contrasted to the Japanese pre-war model -- was given much thought. I was strictly at the working level and had no policy responsibility, but we must have recognized that someone had to run the country. Once the Americans had decided not to accept the People's Republic which had been proclaimed two days before we arrived, then who else except the Americans? The process then established was that the military government would be imposed as a transitional phase. The Japanese who had governed the country were sent home. They were to be replaced at the lower levels by Korean bureaucrats who had worked for the Japanese. That was a poor decision, but at the American working level it seemed sensible at the time.

I was first assigned to Kwangju -- the capital of the South Cholla province. When we got to Kwangju, we found the Japanese provincial government rivaled by a local Korean government, manned by volunteers operating just down the street from Japanese headquarters. We didn't know at the time, but found out subsequently that the Japanese Governor General, in the last days of occupation, recognized that his life and fortune and those of his people, would be at risk once the surrender had taken place. So the Japanese Governor General invited a Korean nationalist leader of leftist persuasion to organize a security group, which within a couple of months became the self-proclaimed People's Republic, nominally created by the local committees. In Kwangju, the committee ran a security apparatus with the acquiescence of the Japanese. The Japanese didn't realize how far they would go. The Koreans were after all amateurs at government since they had been ruled by the enemy for forty years. The situation therefore in Kwangju was confused, but not personally threatening. We all arrived with Colt 45s on our belts, although I would hardly have known which end to fire, if I had to. A curfew was imposed which the Americans assisted the Korean police to enforce. Within a very short time,

the Americans reconstituted the police force established by the Japanese. We used many of the same Korean personnel who had worked for the Japanese and they did maintain order in their own fashion.

The first month or two were a learning experience for all of us. We began by interviewing our Japanese ex-opposite numbers. My most hilarious experience came when I was made the interpreter between the American provincial public safety officer and the Japanese chief. The latter quickly recognized that my Japanese was inadequate, so he brought in a high school principal to do the interpreting. But the public safety officer couldn't understand the principal's English. So the police chief would speak to the high school principal, who spoke to me and I would interpret his English to the American public safety officer.

The big unresolved question in the minds of all of the Americans in Korea, including those of us in Kwangju, was whether the People's Republic was an indigenous movement or one supported by an outside power such as the USSR. It was a burning question because the people's committees, which were the grass-roots organizations which produced the People's Republic, were in control of many parts of the province -- in fact, most of it. The only thing that was left under Japanese control when we arrived was the provincial capital itself and the immediate surrounding areas. The question of what to do with people's committees had to be faced. Should they be brought into the occupation governmental structure and if so, how? Some of the committees were allowed to operate for several months, but because of orders from Seoul or because of local decisions, they were eventually abolished, some by use of considerable force. The last one that was abolished in our province was in Mokpo in January, 1946. These "eradications" were performed by running in armored personnel carriers in a big show of force, informing the people's committees that they had been abolished and arresting some members as necessary. This decision was largely based on Seoul's appraisal that these committees were largely communist dominated. In fact, they were not. Bruce Cumings' book, "The Origin of the Korean War," for which he did a thorough research job, more or less demonstrates that although the communists were probably the best organized element within the people's committees and may have inspired such ideas as the name "People's Republic", actually the people's committees were associations of local notables in the various communities. They were not necessarily communists. As Cumings points out, the American method of dealing with them was based on a firm anti-communist position. "He who is not for us, is against us". Or since the committees had communist elements in them, they were therefore subject to communistic subversion and manipulation. They therefore were to be abolished and the military government would work with people in whom it had confidence as good anti-communists.

In retrospect, I am absolutely appalled not only by my initial lack of information about the political situation, but also by my insensitivity to it during most of the time I was there. Things were going on, but I did not really learn about them until much later. But at the time, I was almost blissfully oblivious to them.

The first step we took in establishing a government in Kwangju was to interview the Japanese. Following that, the Americans took over what the Japanese had been doing, as provincial governor and heads of the six major subdivisions and of all the police. The next step was to dismiss all the Japanese and to install Korean personnel who had worked in the Japanese-led

Korean government. This resulted in a continuation of the structure established by the Japanese Governor General with Japanese-trained Koreans in positions of authority. Then we, at least in name, turned the authority over to the Koreans. The Governor of South Cholla province, who was initially named, was a moderate physician who had been associated with the People's Committee. He was soon displaced by a Korean landowner who was famous for his conservative anti-Communist views and who spoke English very well and who was therefore attractive to the anti-Communist Americans. Under him, and a few other top people brought in from outside, continued all these ex-Japanese Government General Korean employees. What was done in effect was to continue the Japanese structure.

There were some protests from the local population which were sometime very vigorous. There was a major strike in a large coal mine near Kwangju, at Hwasun, which was something of a national cause celebre. It was believed that the Communists had fermented the strike to make trouble for the American Military government. They probably did encourage it, but that was only one factor. There were parades and counter-parades, demonstrations and counter-demonstrations. There was not any mass violence that I could see. Kwangju, although tense with big demonstrations, did not at that time have the upheavals that took place in Taegu -- the third largest city in South Korea -- in 1946, which was repeated in Kwangju in 1980.

In the first three months, while under divisional authority, we were left pretty much on our own. The commander of the 6th Division which occupied our province, did not have his mind very much on military government. He left the management of the province to the military government people. Beginning in January 1946, that changed when Hodges took over the military government function. The first thing that happened was that the police, which had been decentralized to the provincial level, was re-centralized, as the Japanese had it. We in Kwangju did not really support this change. After that, the Navy Commander who became senior political advisor to General Hodges because he spoke Korean -- he was the son of missionaries -- came to Kwangju and called a meeting of American officers to brief us on plans to hold elections for a legislative assembly throughout South Korea in 1946. Increasingly, government administration became centralized. This posed a problem because instructions would come down through Korean channels from the Korean civil administrator in Seoul to the Koreans in our province. We didn't read Korean. Other instructions would come down in English from the military governor to the senior military government officer who was by then considered an advisor to the Korean provincial governor. These sets of instructions didn't always mesh. That created a great deal of confusion in an already confused situation.

Our first priorities were to maintain order and restore public services. The situation was dreadful at the time. One of the first acts by the American military government with its blissful faith in free private enterprise had been to abolish all of the Japanese control on markets, which led to the hoarding of a bumper crop of rice by speculators which resulted in a massive rise in the cost of rice, which is the basic Korean staple. All other commodities were also in short supply. There wasn't any soap. In the first weeks of occupation, we were typing our reports to Seoul on Japanese toilet paper -- we didn't even have American supplies. Just to provide the bare essentials under these circumstances took a lot of ingenuity, which was applied generously and with some success. Incidentally, there is an almost forgotten set of articles on this period in a book published by Carl Friedrich and Associates called "American Military Government

Experience in World War II". It has a couple of chapters on Korea -- one which I wrote. When our performance is measured strictly in terms of day-to-day coping, we did fairly well. But in terms of over-all policy, Americans are open to a great deal of criticism.

One of the things that happened -- I was assigned to the Public Safety Office staff along with two other American officers -- was that the Korean police would brief me from time to time and give me a complete "snow job". I loved them. I did occasionally inspect what was being done. I never saw anything out of line. I can't personally testify to any human rights abuses, but in the light of what I learned subsequently about Korea, I have absolutely no doubt that abuses were committed every day right under my nose. Of course, what Americans and Koreans viewed as abuses were quite different.

My first tour in Korea ended on October, 1946. I stayed one year. Before we finish with that part of my life, let me mention one episode, which I find revealing. The commander of the military government in charge of Kwangju, as distinguished from the provincial team to which I was attached, was a Major Dillon who had no doubt about the superiority of Americans over all others. He was sitting in his office one day -- this comes to me from a very good second hand source -- and a delegation of Koreans came in, unannounced. They had a nominee for the Korean mayor of Kwangju. Dillon drew himself up to his full five feet, five inches height and said in a firm tone: "Mayor? You must be kidding. We came here to kill all you people!". There was a complete spectrum, of course, in the American representation. Most of our people who occupied Korea were people of basic good will and good intentions but certainly ethnocentric. I can remember very clearly that my political belief at the time was that man was by nature democratic, as we were in the U.S. All that was necessary to provide democracy to Korea was to remove the Japanese. Once they were gone, the Koreans would of course be democratic because that is the essential nature of man. It wasn't until considerably later that I realized that it wasn't quite that simple.

WILLIAM G. RIDGEWAY
U.S. Army and Civilian Armed Forces Radio, USIS
Chon Ju (1946-1958)

William G. Ridgeway was born in 1926 in Pennsylvania. He joined the Army in 1946 and served as a motion picture officer until he joined the USIS in 1953. His postings included Manila, Bangkok, and Seoul. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in February of 1989.

RIDGEWAY: I arrived in Korea in late January, 1946 as a U.S. Army PFC. Subsequently, I was assigned to our military government, and designated the Public Health and Welfare Officer in the 44th MG Company, located in the province of Chon Ju. The company was located in the town of Chung Up.

It was the first time I had ever had any experience working with foreigners, or supervising anyone. I was assigned two GIs (no more knowledgeable than me) to fight a very bad cholera

epidemic. Apparently, the cholera was brought to Korea by refugees returning from China. That gave me my first taste of dealing with foreigners. In that summer and fall of 1946, we cared as best we could for nearly a half million people, afflicted, or at risk to cholera.

Our three teams of medical students, headed by a Korean doctor, inoculated everyone in the province twice. We chlorinated wells, sprayed homes with DDT, and buried the dead. Road blocks to curtail travel, using the Korean police, were set up. In this time of great misery I expected everyone to work together. My eyes were quickly opened to the real world. To my amazement I learned the doctors were selling fake stool exams (to allow travel), and the police were easily bribed. I grew up that summer. It was quite a baptism for a very green kid from Honesdale, Pennsylvania.

In my off time I developed photographs for the men in the company and repaired their radios. Parts were hard to come by, and scrounging was a way of life. I needed a certain type of radio tube, so on one of my official trips to Group Headquarters in Chon Ju I went to the Armed Forces Radio Station to scrounge. (That trip, as it turned out, was the beginning of my Foreign Service career.)

When I went there -- this was late in the fall of 1946 -- I discovered their transmitter was off the air. The Army radio engineer had rotated back to the States, leaving them in dire straits. The civilian program director asked me to see what I could do. Fortunately, I was able to repair the transmitter and get the radio station back on the air. The "boss" was quite happy with my work; he told me that there was a spot open for a civilian engineer. I had never really thought of staying in Korea or taking on a civilian job there. I filed the offer away in my memory and went back home with my radio tube. A month or so later I was shipped to Seoul for return to the States. There the radio job offer became more attractive. I was assigned to the replacement depot located in Inchon. It was a terrible place -- a former Japanese army barracks without windows, without hot water, heat or anything. Food and coffee were frozen on the mess hall floor. And, worst of all, no sign of a ship! After living under these circumstances for about six weeks, I went into Seoul to see the major in charge of Armed Forces Radio. They were quite happy to see me, and said they had been expecting me -- I don't know why, as I had never indicated any interest. They immediately signed me up to take on the radio job (and made glowing promises about the rapid promotions I should expect). They gave me the appropriate papers to have signed, necessary for discharge in Korea. I returned to Inchon and went around and obtained all of the signatures and clearances necessary for discharge. I was probably one of the first few GIs to be discharged in Korea. I received my discharge, to be effective that night at midnight. I hitchhiked a ride into Seoul on a Korean truck with all my worldly belongings in an Army duffel bag. I checked into the civilian billet -- it was the first time I had seen a bed with sheets and had hot water in a very long time. Three days later I was on a train back to the radio station in Chung Up. I stayed there for eight or nine months, and then the station was closed and I was moved to Seoul as assistant engineer. My duties, more or less, were to take care of the equipment, and now and then to assist with some of the control board work. The next important turn in my life was when I met the young Korean girl I eventually married. I met Tongsuk during a remote broadcast we were doing in Ewha Women's University during Christmas week. We began to see each other, which, needless to say, was quite difficult for her in those times. The impending move of the radio transmitter I was responsible for to the boondocks would have doomed the romance. But I was

able to have myself transferred from AFRS to the motion picture section of the Army's Information and Education division. I am not sure what it was called at the time. It was under the Department of the Army, that I do remember. Again I was involved in the technical aspects of taking care of all of the equipment used by Motion Picture Distribution. In January 1949 my organization was taken over by the Department of State from the U.S. Army. At that time my own personal problem of trying to obtain permission to marry improved. Under the Department of State, unlike the Army, it was possible to apply for permission, which I did -- and, incidentally, including a copy of my resignation. If I was turned down, they would accept the resignation and I would be shipped out. Four months later we received permission to marry. (The letter of permission included the warning that I could not expect advancement in the Service, being married to a foreigner. Fortunately, things changed.) We were married on June 8, 1949. A year later I was still doing the same sort of work, assistant to the motion picture officer, Chuck Tanner. (Still no promotion.) We left on June 10, 1950 for the U.S. -- my first home leave and my wife's first visit there. We were in New York City two weeks later, when on June 25, 1950, the North Koreans invaded the south. We lost everything we owned, which had been left in our small government-supplied house. I think it was located east of the Capital building in a compound called MG-II. There had been rumors for some time of an impending invasion. Tongasuk had been asked by the director (PAO) to monitor the North Korean radio. In the last broadcast she listened to, the communists boasted they would celebrate Liberation Day (August 14, 1950) on the steps of the Capital building -- in Seoul. They did! So we became refugees in the States. My pay had been stopped because my pay card had been lost during the invasion. Eventually, we received a small temporary allowance to tide us over. I went to work in our New York City office and worked there until October, when I was given the assignment to return to Seoul as motion picture officer. Chuck Tanner apparently refused to return to Seoul because he couldn't bring his wife. No dependents were allowed at the time. So I went back. The city, needless to say, was quite different from the one I had left. My wife could not accompany me, although later that policy was changed. At the time I returned it was in October 1950 and the city was quite a mess. The PAO -- Jim Stewart -- was quite busy, so I went to see him and asked him, "What am I supposed to do?" So he said, "Well, try to get what you can together, and get the movie thing going." My original staff and the motion picture production staff were able to find out where the North Korean communists had stashed our raw film stock and pre-print material. We literally went around and picked up all of the staff that they hadn't taken north. Fortunately, we were using 16 mm. film exclusively with our mobile units, not 35 mm. They had left the 16 mm. and taken the 35 mm. stock and prints. So fortunately they only used 35 mm. raw stock. They left great quantities of our 16 mm. raw stock, and had not taken too much of our pre-print material. The equipment, which really was nothing to brag about, was recovered. So we got the operation going. Our first production was a three reel, or thirty- minute, film on the progress of the war. Then the roof fell in. The Chinese communists got into the act and started the next round of the invasion. By this time it was in the dead of the winter -- mid December. We were faced with the problem of finishing what film prints we were making and at the same time starting to evacuate. I used seven bottles of whiskey to obtain seven boxcars from the U.S. Army sergeant in charge of boxcar assignment. At the railhead we loaded the boxcars with all of our equipment, the employees and their dependents -- a total of 350 people. One by one they were shipped off to Pusan -- final destination was Chinhae. I shuttled back and forth between Seoul and Chinhae, hitchhiking on military aircraft. When everything was on track, I left on the final trip out of Seoul sometime after Christmas. The city fell to the second invasion in a few days. We went to

Chinhai because we had a small Information point (Center) that was to serve as our new studio! The building was the former Japanese naval officers' club of Chinhai -- typical Japanese construction with sliding paper doors -- a real fire trap! We put all of our stuff in the building and tried to place our people around town, wherever they could find room for their families. By this time headquarters had evacuated from Seoul to Pusan. I went to see the PAO to report that we were down, etc. He asked me what did I need? I said we needed to fix the place up and make some rooms light-tight, and bring in water and electricity. I already had made some preliminary estimates of what it would cost. The plan was to do the work ourselves. All of the Korean staff members had other skills, because in those days almost all of the people in motion picture production started off as floor sweepers in commercial theaters. There they were able to work their way up through the ranks, so to speak. Most of them had little or no formal training in any of the arts. To have been a bricklayer earlier and a scriptwriter today was quite normal. Consequently, we had a large reservoir of talent in the organization. I had a staff of about eighty-five people at that time. I told the PAO I would need about \$7,000 or \$8,000 -- something in that neighborhood. He said okay and gave me a chit for the Budget and Fiscal office. I was given a duffel bag of Korean currency and a carbine with a magazine of ammunition and was told, "Here you are." I put the money in a bank in Chinhai and we started to fix the place up. It took about six or seven weeks and we were back in business again. It worked out quite well for about a year. We were producing a weekly newsreel, and I think by that time we had even started to produce Korean adaptations of American films.

The Chinese and the North Koreans came very close to Pusan. Our studio in Chinhai and later Sangnam was just on the other side of Masan, looping north to just the other side of Pusan. The Pusan perimeter was the closest point that the Chinese and the North Korean forces came. It was quite close. One of our mobile unit drivers was shot in the butt when he and a USIS American, being happily waved on by South Korean forces, went past the front lines. Pretty soon they discovered where they were. As they went around a bend they were fired upon, the Korean driver being wounded. The newsreels that we turned out were designed to support the efforts of the Korean government and the U.S. in fighting the war. It was clearly propaganda. We called the communists just about every vile name you could think of, and used all kinds of statistics and facts that would bolster morale. It was the Korean government's policy to foster hatred of the communists. I questioned some of this myself at the time, because the most dangerous communists, outside of someone coming at you with a tank or a gun, were the ones you could not identify. The most dangerous ones were the ones working under cover, and there were a number of them. The Korean government totally ignored that concept, at least as far as their own propaganda went. My attempt for a different approach in anticommunist propaganda, began with a script written in collaboration with our Korean writer. We produced a full-length black-and-white anticommunist feature film called "Boxes of Death." It was a story showing how the communists used an agent in the guise of a young wounded veteran. He came to the village carrying the ashes of a young man who was from the village. He had been allegedly killed in combat -- actually it was a cover. The audience was able to understand this -- that was how it was scripted -- to see how the communist undercover operative was able to turn one faction of the village against another. The agent's purpose was to disrupt the Korean government's operation behind the front lines. To use the ashes of a dead hero for cover was considered by our audience quite vile of the communists (this was the reason I used it). That was the first time, as far as I know, that this particular approach was used in trying to point out that a communist could

look just like you or anyone else. The Korean government posters would show the communist as a bloodthirsty monster, with a knife clenched between his teeth and a knife in each hand.

As I said, the "studio" was a fire trap. We insulated it against sound the best we could. We built a soundproof booth using rice hulls for insulating material between double walls. For the glass in the window of the soundproof booth we used jeep windshields. It was all improvised. We also scrounged a lot of stuff from the air base that we were able to use. I worked out a deal with the U.S. Air Force at the Chinhae air base, a few miles away (which used to raise havoc with our recording sessions) to borrow a 16 mm. automatic film processing machine. None of the equipment we were using at the time was automatic. The machine was very helpful to us because we could produce our 16 mm. prints faster. We also used it to process their gun camera film. Normally they were shipping their gun camera film back to Japan and not getting the film back until the following day. By processing the film the same day, the pilots could see the effectiveness of their strikes, before the next mission. The base had the equipment but not the know-how. They had no one who could run it or whatever. So we scratched their back and they scratched ours. It gave them almost immediate access to their gun camera films after a strike in the north. The pilots were well served, as were our own needs. You may wonder why a film processing machine was such a prize. All of our film was developed in two hundred foot lengths on curtain stretchers dunked in wooden tanks by hand, with no temperature control of any sort. In the winter, the soup (developing chemicals) literally was put in large GI aluminum pots and heated over a GI gas stove. It was then dumped back in and stirred around to bring the temperature up to the approximate degree it should be. In the summer it was the same thing -- the pot was floated in cut-off fifty-five gallon drums of ice and water to cool it off. We ran three eight-hour shifts and worked seven days a week. As I said, we had no modern equipment. It was all done by hand. The film came out of this mess coated with a very thick scum. We hired young girls who did nothing more than scrub every inch of film with a mixture of ammonia and alcohol. Every inch of film was scrubbed that way. Since the film was broken down into two hundred foot lengths for developing, it had to be spliced together for the next step. When your sound is on one piece of film and your picture on another, little bits and pieces were always missing. To correct this, we went through the horrendous mess of sound matching which would take a week or more to do. All of that to complete a ten-minute reel of film! The actors were local, both amateurs and professionals. What we would usually do would be to go into a village and talk to the head man and explain what we were doing -- sit and drink some sake, tea or something, and discuss the film and point out how it was helping the war effort. This would take quite a bit of time. We would get his cooperation and the cooperation of the villagers. We would usually pay a little bit, not too much -- pay them as laborers, but really for the services of using their house and their village or whatever. I spoke enough Korean to carry on such conversations -- not having had any training at all. I had only two people on the entire staff who spoke English moderately well. The next phase of our development began due north, over the mountain from Chinhae. There I found this fantastic empty building, 150 foot by 50 foot wide, two stories of solid reinforced concrete. Prior to the Korean war it had been looted by the local people for all the stuff they could recover from it -- wooden frames from the windows, wiring, pipe, whatever. But it was very well built. I saw this shell as a potential fireproof studio. In those days such a building was an extreme rarity, especially un-occupied. The war was still going on. This was, I guess, in late 1951 or early 1952. On my next trip to Pusan I extolled the virtues of this new site to the powers that be. Everyone thought it was a great idea, but really a dream. It was assumed

we would win the war and move back to Seoul. The idea to have film production located permanently, so far from headquarters, was not looked upon favorably. I took 22 visiting officials from Washington through, including Herb Edwards, who was head of IMV at the time. He saw the potential for the building. To my surprise, at the end of the fiscal year I received a hurried call from Pusan saying, "You now have \$25,000 to fix the place, and all the contracts have to be let within ten days!" Needless to say, we did it and we moved in. The facility was a thousand percent better, and this time, besides much better security, we were off by ourselves. We had a country locale where we literally could build sets right on our own property, with our own rice paddies and everything. We did a lot of shooting in the studio -- now we had a real sound stage for the first time. It was well soundproofed. All the pieces began to fall together. We began receiving the modern automatic development and printing equipment that I had ordered from the U.S. For the first time we were properly equipped. My serenity was soon shattered. All of the lab chiefs went on strike when the new processing machine arrived. They thought they would lose face in not knowing how to operate it, so consequently they quit. I don't know what they really expected us to do, but anyhow I was able to train their assistants in on the new machine. That was the end of the old lab chiefs and their strike. They all had their own special formulas which were closely guarded, even from each other. It was assumed we would be helpless without their know-how. The film that we processed by the old system was terrible. A particular scene would go from white highlights and pure black shadows to absolutely flat gray because of the difference in processing the film at different times. So, finally, for the first time we were now able to turn out reasonably good quality, consistent photographic material -- and, best of all, at the same time, at a much greater pace.

The new equipment included sound recording equipment that used magnetic film. We no longer had the problem of matching two hundred foot lengths of film together -- everything was done on one big one-thousand foot roll, what an improvement! The staff absorbed the new techniques. We literally hired young girls from the rice paddy and trained them in how to run the film printers. They were much better than the men. First of all, they followed instructions and didn't have to unlearn anything like some of the older movie people. A good two-thirds of the staff were originally contract employees. I had placed them all in Foreign Service Local positions when I took over, as the contracting was a dodge, and a convenience for graft. Their former boss, the contractor, was now chief local. He did not like it at all, because he no longer was making a lot of money. He was a constant problem, but necessary, as his age and former position insured staff loyalty. Korean society respected age and position -- both went hand-in-hand. I was twenty-seven at the time, my authority a conundrum to the Koreans -- and resented. (We Americans often ignore the cultural traditions of the host country, a legacy we pay for later.) The new people we hired and trained followed "clean room" rules carefully and were much better employees.

I returned to the U.S. for home leave in December 1952 to pick up my wife and daughter Janet, who was born in the U.S. I was given permission to bring them both back. Tongsuk was the only other dependent besides the ambassador's wife -- Mrs. Briggs -- to return to Korea at that time. We returned in early 1953, while the war was still on.

One day, the Ambassador came over to visit the operation. (Now it is a humorous story; it wasn't then.) He came over with his wife and, I think, his daughter. They were coming over to visit the

studio, and then were driving over to Chinhae to look at the cherry blossoms. You may remember that Chinhae during cherry blossom time was a sea of pink and white. It was quite beautiful.

I knew the Ambassador liked very dry martinis and insisted on mixing them himself. Fortunately, in the things we had brought from the States we had included the usual Foreign Service necessities -- glassware, silverware and other stuff for fine dining, of course. We had just arrived at the studio in Sangnam only a week or two before and everything hadn't been unpacked. So while the Ambassador was on the way (I had not been notified he was coming until he was on the way), I was busily unwrapping martini glasses we had in a cabinet.

Then I put them out -- I don't think my wife had even noticed that. So after the Ambassador arrived, the first thing he wanted was all the mixing. I brought the glasses out and my wife was making funny waving motions at me. I didn't realize what it was, but apparently the glasses were very, very dusty. You know, I had too many things on my mind, and the last thing I would notice was the condition of the glasses, I suppose. So I put them out for the Ambassador -- if he noticed it, he ignored it. A real diplomat!

They had lunch with us. The kitchen stove had blown up just before he arrived and we had black soot slowly filtering down all over everything. These things would only happen when you have a VIP like that. It was quite funny, but not at the time. Briggs was a very fine man. I drove him over a terrible mountain road in one of the original mobile units to the cherry blossom festival. It rode like a tank. The women and my baby daughter Janet rode in his staff car. The Ambassador asked me many questions about my operation, and actually briefed me on the political situation. He seemed very pleased with what we were doing. I was the only American there and everything was running well. The studio site was a great bargain. I had arranged to lease it from the Korean navy for ten years without charge -- a free lease hold arrangement. We paid no rent or anything, so it was a very good deal -- and we were able to extend the lease indefinitely. Ambassador Briggs had that wonderful ability to make one feel they were part of the team and important. It was a day I shall never forget.

The original mobile unit was a jeep that some contractor in the States had built a body on. They were extremely heavy and very cumbersome. The whole thing was not terribly well done, but it was better than nothing. The built-in generator gave us power to show our movies throughout the country.

I finally left Korea in 1958. For all practical purposes during my whole tour, I decided what went into the reel and its contents. The finished prints would go up to Seoul each week. It wasn't practical to review a weekly reel. Communications were very poor, and certainly not secure for classified discussion. We only had one of our newsreels held up by the Korean government -- censor. We were telling the exact unpleasant truth, and the government did not want to have it shown. It was about a political rally by the opposing party, and the government had said in the media they controlled -- the press and radio -- that only a few thousand people showed up. In our film you could see people as far as the eye could see. Obviously there were far, far more than five thousand people. They just held it up. They just held it up. They held it up for a week or two and then they allowed it to go out. The National Assembly voted to lift the ban.

Outside of that one time we had no real problems. I would receive program direction, so to speak, every month or so when I would go to Seoul. It was no big problem. We developed a slogan after the war -- after the truce started -- "We will work together as we fought together."

It wasn't until the last two years, I think, that we were in Sangnam that we finally were able to obtain a single side band radio. We were able to link up with the other field posts and Seoul. But of course, you couldn't discuss anything classified. We did not have a classified courier service, either. Also, it was just plain common sense what we were saying and doing.

I believe that Sangnam validated the viability of the concept and the need for facilities to produce on-site informational film material, and to do adaptations of films about America. It provides the immediacy and the current local language being spoken at the time. Most of the films we received from Washington, voiced in New York, were with the wrong accents, and described things with words that were long out of date. It also was far cheaper. American films contained concepts that were complicated or difficult to get across; so I started an introductory series for use with such films. We used an actor to play the role of "a grandfather" -- you know, the chap in the black horsehair hat and with the long bamboo pipe. The character was called --"Halibaji" -- grandfather, an authority figure that would command respect and would be listened to. This character would introduce a film live, in a setting appropriate to the subject, and explain something about the content that was not apparent in the original. We used his live sound along with the Korean soundtrack of the original film. His explanation would put it in a context that the people could understand. That was much easier for us to do than to re-edit. That was impractical to do anyhow as we wouldn't have access to the pre-print material. This was cheaper and easier to do and much more effective.

We would have a little -- maybe a three-minute introduction, and then at the end of the film he would come back on again, with about a minute or two. He would reiterate, "This is what you should have understood or learned from what you have seen." An example would be, explaining something as complex as the United Nations, or a film about the United States.

We made several hundred of those. In fact, the actor who played the part became quite famous in Korea for his role as "Halibaji," the grandfather. There were a number of things we did that were not normally done in the film business, but we had a war going on and then we had the reconstruction period after the war. The important thing was to get the material out in a form that could be assimilated by the people.

To insure that our films were communicating the intended message, we would have an interlocked screening for a typical audience. (An interlock is when you run edited picture on a projector and the matching sound is on a different machine. The effect is similar to the finished product.) We would invite people from the nearby village. They would come and look at it, and when the showing was over we would question them to see if they understood the points we were trying to get across. If they didn't, we would change the script, and/or change the cut. Sometimes we would do that two or three times. It allowed us to produce a product suitable for our target -- the villager. This way, we were able to come up with a product that communicated the ideas we were trying to get across, about reconstruction, health, sanitation, or whatever.

In the reconstruction period, our films tried to tell the story of what the government was doing, particularly at local levels, and to make sure that the peasants would maintain loyalty to the government, and, of course, support for the U.S.

The documentaries that we made, or the American-produced films that we made adaptations of, would cover a wide range of things on government, education, agriculture methods, the United States -- not necessarily always appropriate for Korea, but at the same time they would convey the idea that the government could help the farmer. We were trying to point out that the government was the people's friend -- "the Korean government is your friend" -- because, after all, there was a tremendous amount of very bad press that existed before the war. And, of course, the communists left no stone unturned to paint the government in the worst light possible. The Syngman Rhee government had a pretty poor, well-deserved reputation from the beginning, making it easy for the communists.

We had the big POW breakout when the Koreans let the North Koreans who were in south Korean POW camps go. It was that sort of stuff, and then the prisoner exchange. Those were the main points of friction at the time between us and Syngman Rhee. They just went into the woodwork throughout the countryside. Allegedly the reason they all were released was because they turned anticommunist and all wanted to stay in the glorious south. That was the reason the Korean government gave for releasing them, rather than to "force them to go back," against their will. (The U.S. position was displeasure, unofficially ...).

Finally, I should say that it is very interesting to look at the progress the country has made. We are talking about a major industrial power that has gone from an ox cart economy to supertanker construction -- in a few short years. During the time we were building our studio the ingenuity of the staff became quite apparent. We could make almost anything, and often we literally did. We constructed a film printer for an example. We obtained scrap aluminum from the air base and melted it down to make castings. They were machined in our own machine shop, where we made the parts and created a piece of machinery that would cost \$10,000 to \$15,000. We did it in our spare time for a few thousand dollars -- most of that spent in the U.S. to buy the parts we couldn't make. We could keep almost anything running. There was always something going wrong with our Delahaye truck. We modified it with cannibalized parts from U.S. trucks -- it eventually ended up half or more an Army three-quarter ton truck.

The Koreans, I suppose, because of necessity were great improvisers. They seemed to be able to understand how things work quite well, so I am not at all surprised to see how they went literally from an ox cart society to four lane superhighways. Almost anything you buy there is made in Korea.

I want to get back to a film that we were working on. We wanted some visual examples showing people working together. We did a lot of research and the only thing that we could come up with in Korean society, traditionally, historically, that people collaborated on was only one thing -- the distribution of irrigation water for the rice crops.

In those years, weight-lifting, tennis or any of the individualistic sports were common. Sports that depended on teamwork were quite rare. Apparently this has changed. They have instilled the

same group work ethic they have had in Japan.

DAVID E. MARK
Political Advisor, U.S. Forces
Seoul (1946-1949)

Ambassador David E. Mark graduated from Columbia University in 1943. Shortly after completing a year of their law school, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Ambassador Mark has also served in Korea, Germany, Romania, Switzerland, Burundi, and various other post at the State Department in Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Henry Precht on July 28, 1989.

MARK: There was a day, probably around November, maybe late October, in 1946 when we were all notified where we were going, and I was told that I was going to Seoul, Korea. And I said, "Oh, my God. I'll never learn that language."

And someone, who, I guess, had looked into it, said to me, "Don't worry. They have an alphabet." Well, it's true. The Korean language does have an alphabet, which now is used much more than it ever was in those days. But basically it is an East Asian language, structurally, syntactically very close to Japanese but with a totally different vocabulary.

I was in a little two-man Office of the Political Advisor to the Commanding General of U.S. forces in Korea; I was to be the second man. I didn't know it at the time I left. There was a third man, a captain in the Army who had been loaned to the Office because he had been a Foreign Service auxiliary at an earlier point and who later on became a Foreign Service officer himself -- I think ending up as our consul in Perth, Australia many years later.

But in any case, my chief was William Langdon, who was one of the real old-time heroes of the Japanese language service; he had served at various posts in Japan and even in China during the war at one point. I think he was, until the Japanese came in, Consul General at Mukden. But, in any case, at this point he was in Korea and trying to influence the course of Korean politics, which was difficult because our military was in control and it was not particularly interested in the subtleties of Korean politics. They were much more concerned about the fact that the Soviet Union had occupied the northern half of the country.

We were installed in what had been the Consul General's house. Seoul had been one of the consulates general under Tokyo before the war, and we had a nice compound in the center of the city with a lovely old-style house that I believe is still used by the American ambassador, plus a little office down near the gate to the compound. That is not used as an office now. There is now a big embassy building up on the main boulevard. But in 1946 we were the only diplomatic establishment -- just the two of us. The head of the Office did high politics and told me about them. I began to learn. I was engaged in everything else, which included a little bit of administration, such as it was. We had one very faithful, loyal Korean employee, who had held out even during the war under a lot of pressure by the Japanese. There was a good bit of consular

work from people trying to emigrate to the United States -- in those days under the Oriental Exclusion Act. No Koreans could hope to go as immigrants, but there were a lot of white Russians and others in Korea at the time.

Indeed, that got me into a most traumatic personal incident. One white Russian lady, maybe in her late twenties at the time, wanted to emigrate to the States and was trying to get on the quota which existed for non-Orientals who were born in Korea. That quota was substantially open, and she brought me some documents indicating her birth in Korea. But, evidently, a female rival of hers said, "Well, that's not true. Like the rest of us, she was born in China."

I didn't know what to do about this since the documents were inconclusive, and I thought, as an ex-lawyer, that the best thing to do was to bring both of them together in my office and have them confront each other, which I did. The shouting deteriorated to the point where one of them fainted dead away on the floor, so I decided that was not a proper tactic to use.

I also began to get into a little bit of what is now USIA work, but all of this was peripheral, as I say, to learning about what seemed to be the most interesting, namely the politics of the occupation and how the State Department and my boss, Bill Langdon, were really trying to prevent a right-wing victory among the Korean groups as we moved toward independence which occurred in August 1948.

The military's first interest, as I said, was the Soviet Union and their forces, and second was our efforts to create a unified government for Korea, North and South. I think it was the December 1945 meeting of the British, French, American, and Soviet foreign ministers that had laid down a plan for a joint commission on Korea. The joint commission, American and Soviet, was to meet either in Seoul or Pusan, or both, to try to work out a unified government for the country under some form of very tenuous, unspecified trusteeship that was to be operated by the two super powers. The trusteeship was to cover the whole country, because it was to be a unified regime. The problems of convening the joint commission were fairly serious, but that actually happened in 1946 at some point.

In any event, the problem was that, in order to form a united Korean regime, we had to consult with various Korean groups. The Soviets immediately laid down a condition that consultation should only take place with those Korean groups which supported the Allied plan, including the indefinite trusteeship of Korea. There was a very small Soviet liaison office in Seoul, because that was to be the headquarters for the joint commission. Well, in any case, the thing broke down essentially, because all of the South Korean groups -- virtually all of the South Korean groups, particularly those on the right, and therefore favored by the Americans -- were against trusteeship. They said, "We want to become an independent country, and we don't want to have the United States and the Soviet Union telling us what to do after we become independent." And the Soviets, as I said, indicated that you couldn't deal with such people because they weren't accepting the plan laid out by the Allies. So the thing broke down.

Nevertheless, the American-Soviet negotiations continued to try to get the thing started again. And, I think early in 1947, they agreed on a new formula that was going to get around this difficulty. The formula had some words that did not allow the rightist groups in the South to

express what they felt about trusteeship, but did say that they were adhering to an understanding reached by the Soviet and American governments, thereby leaving unclear just how they felt about trusteeship, even though everyone knew that they were against it.

The next meeting of the Soviets and the Americans in the joint commission, which took place in the spring of 1947, these groups began testifying before the joint commission as to what their aspirations were for Korea and how they hoped a government would be set up. But the Soviets immediately began challenging them again saying, "Well, deep down in your hearts you are still against the trusteeship agreement." And, although we tried to work out modifications of the formula, the thing definitively broke down at that point.

Of course, the Soviets had been developing the North along their lines very assiduously from the beginning, and they even set up a provisional government there in February 1946. When we arrived in Korea in September 1945, the Japanese were still there and had been there for three or four weeks after the surrender of Japan. The Koreans, in the meantime, or some Koreans, had begun to form groups of one sort or another to fill the political vacuum.

The most prominent group was, as it turned out, a sort of center-left grouping that had formed something called People's Committees, and the People's Committees in different places added up to some sort of central authority. It was very amorphous, tenuous, but, nevertheless, when our military came in, it immediately disliked the name People's Committees because that was what the Soviets were implanting in Eastern Europe, and it sounded suspiciously as if these were communist entities.

Now, the People's Committees existed in the North, too. The Soviets found them when they got there. What the Soviets did was to keep the People's Committees, but purge them of all of the non-communist elements. What we did in the South was to argue against the legitimacy of these groups, and we gradually forced them to dissolve or forced them to transform themselves into a political party of some name, while we set up a government which essentially used the sort of structure that the Japanese had had. We, in contrast to the Soviets did not purge these groups of anti-Western elements because we made the political groups become a party, rather than keep them on as a semblance of a government or authorities. As I said we set up authorities along the structure that the Japanese had left behind.

There were communist or left-wing groups in South Korea until the Communist Party itself was outlawed sometime in late 1946 or 1947 because they engaged in a lot of trade union activity and incited a large number of strikes, including even a general strike in the country. So we -- the military government -- just outlawed the Communist Party. In the meantime, our forces had set up a full fledged military government along the lines of the Japanese structure, as I have mentioned. That made even our right-wing friends in the government, in effect, only political parties. But since our military government had to rely on Koreans to staff the basic functions of the government all over the country, we tended to turn to these right-wing groups, and many of them were people who had flirted with the Japanese in one way or the other, or at least sympathized with them.

We didn't actually employ at that time people who had been Japanese police officers, although

they were Korean ethnic groups. But, nevertheless, we got further and further off to the right side, and, of course, we brought back from China -- I guess he had been in China, I think, at the time, although he'd been in the States for a long time, as well -- Syngman Rhee, who became the first president of South Korea later on. But he was a man who had an impeccable anti-Japanese record from about 1919 when he had a little revolt against them and then he had had to flee, but his leanings were all on the right side. When he came back to the country, he was welcomed literally with a red carpet at the airport by the American generals. That gave a signal very clearly that this was a guy we wanted to support.

The State Department was rather disturbed at the US military's partiality toward the rightist side, although I suspect that the American military in its own mind probably didn't consider itself partial to anybody. They just wanted to keep the place orderly initially until they got a united Korean government, and after that until we got some sort of independent government for South Korea. They supported the groups that would make the least trouble for the U.S. Army. They didn't want any communists there for sure. The State Department, and particularly my boss, was trying to promote a middle-of-the-road group. I remember a luncheon we had at his house not too long after I came there -- it must have been in the spring of 1947 -- to which was invited a man who was center-left, but not a communist. He had been extremely prominent in the people's councils -- the People's Committees -- earlier on, and he was there to lunch to be persuaded that he ought to be an activist -- the political activist of the center.

I remember that we served cornbread muffins for lunch, which was very important because Korea was short of food at that time, and instead of handing out rice, which is what they wanted, we handed out corn. The left accused us of feeding animal fodder to the Korean people; we wanted to show them that, indeed, we ate it ourselves, so we had cornmeal muffins very prominently on the menu.

We also got hold of some of the State Department's confidential funds to send this man, and a couple of other centrist people, to the first meeting of representatives of Asian countries -- countries that were independent or had just become independent or were about to be independent, which was held in New Delhi. We got the money to send this group of Koreans so that people would know Korea was indeed a country and was participating in Asian politics.

There was no sense of regional identity at the time. There's precious little of it right now, in spite of the Japanese kind of economic hegemony, but there's still no kind of political identity to the region, and there certainly was not even an awareness of who the players were back then when we promoted these people into the group.

When the second round of the US-USSR joint commission failed in the summer of 1947, it was clear that Washington wanted to get some indigenous authority established in our part of Korea. So we then began moving toward legitimizing elections that could be held in the South to create a South Korean government. Indeed, we even got a U.N. resolution passed. The idea of going to a separate government in South Korea had a little independent evolutionary history as the alternative left over when the idea of creating a joint government for the North and South collapsed.

Of course, all through this period we were debating in Washington about whether we should maintain a long-term interest in Korea. This was argued out in what was the predecessor of the National Security Council, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, and the decision was made not to include Korea in our security periphery. And I believe it was later in 1947 that Dean Acheson made a speech in which he clearly indicated that the mainland, including Korea -- all parts of it -- was not going to be in effect defended within our security perimeters. But, of course, Korea soon came to be part of our general strategic of our interest zones in the Far East. The idea of not including Korea within our security perimeter made it all the more urgent that we at least leave South Korea with some kind of independent government, independent regime.

We had already had so many disappointments in Europe that were much more prominent in the minds of policy makers in Washington that the idea of a third round in Korea seemed most unpromising. Besides, the Berlin Airlift started. In other words, the blockade of Berlin started in the summer of 1947, and therefore the idea of collaborating with the Soviets became even more remote.

We, to jump ahead a little bit, by 1948, when this new government came into being on August 15, 1948, we had made the decision to pull out of Korea altogether by the end of 1948. Indeed we had reduced our forces to what they called "the reinforced regimental combat team", which was sort of like a brigade, but with different structural elements and different equipment elements. We were going to be out of the mainland militarily by December 31, 1948, but events postponed that.

The Department considered Syngman Rhee a stubborn older man living in the glory of his 1919 revolutionary attempt, who showed no flexibility, who was inherently authoritarian, who was pretty ruthless with any opposition groups or people who wouldn't cooperate with him, who behaved like a politician to be sure, which he had to be, but, nevertheless, one not in the democratic mold. His years of living in the West, despite acquiring an Austrian wife, had not imbued him with the ideas that we would liked to have seen implanted in South Korea, although we were probably unrealistic.

After all, South Korea had been formally a part of Japan since 1910; it had really come under Japanese influence in 1905 when they defeated the Russians. The Koreans had been citizens -- maybe somewhat second-class -- of Japan. They had lived in an empire that was only nominally democratic even in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s. Japan became increasingly a militaristic dictatorship. To expect them or the Koreans to suddenly understand what democracy was all about and to embrace it was probably very unrealistic.

Syngman Rhee, at least having been exposed to the West and to democracy, might have been about the best that you could realistically hope for, although the State Department kept trying, and it also was the policy of the military government for a while, to promote centrist options.

Elections did take place; Syngman Rhee was elected. He had outmaneuvered some rivals on the right, and he was inaugurated as president on August 15, 1948, which was Independence Day. I'm not sure it was Inauguration Day. The democratic center-left groups that the State Department favored faded from the scene. There was no way in which they could actively

participate. The Syngman Rhee government was very tough on anyone suspected of communist leanings, and while our centrist people were clearly not in that category, they had no base, no resources and no sort of enthusiasm on which to build. Moreover, it should be remembered that less than a year after the inauguration of the government, the North invaded the South. I believe that the center and center-left groups ran candidates in the election, because an assembly was also elected at the same time; there may have been a small number of centrists members in the National Assembly. A few of them disappeared during the war. I mean, they never showed up again. Whether they were killed is still not very clear. Syngman Rhee did not have substantial American help in winning the election; I don't think he really needed it. He had gotten the signs of American approval when he was allowed to land in his own DC-4 at the airport and a red carpet was rolled out, with representatives of the American command there. He had many visits with General Hodge, who was our commander, and with the military government. I think people who were drawing conclusions saw that the Americans were friendly.

In October 1948 -- two months after the inauguration of the government -- there was a communist military rebellion fomented by people who had infiltrated down the central mountain spine of Korea. They also had infiltrated in Sung constabulary unit of the South. It was a communist-inspired rebellion that broke out. When the revolt broke out, the infiltrators really seized control of some areas in the South. I happened to be traveling at the time by embassy jeep. We had begun to form a Korean constabulary back in 1946, but the Soviets had begun to form a Korean army -- a North Korean people's army -- which was far larger, better equipped and trained than our constabulary. We recruited untrained people to be the troops. But we used some officers who had been Japanese army officers; that is, they had been military trained by the Japanese. That was a source of some complaint but they were the only people with skills.

The constabulary was deliberately kept under-equipped. When I left Korea, which was April 1949, I remember some Korean officials, who were friends, pleading with me to speak in Washington about getting a supply of artillery shells for them. And I said, "But you have a six month's supply." And they said, "No, that's only for training purposes. You know, it would be used up in a couple of days if we ever had to fight, and here the North is building up a very sizable army."

On August 15, 1948, we established an Embassy. I became the acting political counselor, even though I was only a third secretary, because I had been there the longest. We had an Ambassador, who was John Muccio; we had a DCM, who was the senior Chinese speaker, Edward Drumwright, who later on became ambassador himself.

Let me just return briefly to that jeep I was using when the Communist rebellion broke out. Back in 1947, we wanted a jeep for our little advisory office and the military said, "We don't have any extra equipment. We can't give you a jeep." We finally got it cleared in Washington and they sent a telegram back saying, "Purchase of jeep for military is authorized for X dollars." Of course, it was signed, as all cables are, with the name of the Secretary of State, who had that time was General George Marshall. So when we took that cable around to the military, the military said, "Good God. If General Marshall wants you to have a jeep, you will get a jeep."

But anyway, I was traveling around in early October 1948, on the east coast and in the south --

these were very, distant, isolated, cutoff places. We didn't even have troops there. We did have small stations of military counterintelligence corps around; they lived in old Japanese houses that we also used. I had just moved to the south just about the time the rebellion broke out. It was really a guerilla operation that had taken over large areas of the country near the spine of the mountains that run down the whole peninsula. They had not gotten into Pusan, the number two city down in the South, but they had been close by. I stayed in the south for a couple of days and then went into one of the first towns that the South Koreans had been able to recapture from the communist rebels. It was a pretty gruesome sight in this area -- this main combat area -- because the rebels had taken 200-250 people who were prominent in the South Korean government or in the community whom they had marched out of town, along a road. Then they tied their hands behind their backs and just mowed them down. I saw about 200-250 prominent dead people along the road. When our people, that is either the South Koreans or the Americans, but this was mainly a South Korean recovery operation, got hold of some of the communist rebels, they were not dealt with kindly, either. It was pretty rough on both sides after what had happened.

When I got back to Seoul about four or five days later, I went to see the Ambassador and said, "You know, the communist strength, their military strength, is obviously a lot stronger than we had thought, and if we pull out all our forces, which is now scheduled for December 31, we are soon going to lose this place." I was urging that we stay on and change our policy about pulling out. I mean, from my point of view, even though Japan, of course, was included in our security perimeter, it would have been much difficult to retain Japan if we had lost South Korea, and it would have been demoralizing to the Japanese really to find Soviet back forces right along the Korea Straits of which separates Korea from Japan.

So the Ambassador said, "Well, draft a telegram and we will send it in." I did that. It was tinkered with as usual, but essentially those were the recommendations that went in. By this time our military was essentially not involved any longer in policy formulation; so they were never consulted on our telegram. We had already cut down two regimental combat teams, you know, and the total number of forces was somewhere probably 5,000 to 10,000 at that point.

The response from Washington was that they weren't going to change our policy, but since, obviously, conditions weren't settled and the South Koreans needed sort of more support, at least in a morale sense, Washington would agree to let the regimental combat teams stay until July 1, 1949 -- six months longer. I left in April. During my last days in Korea, I wrote a paper that tried to outline what had happened in a political sense in the development of the South Korean government and how U.S. policy had changed. I ending with my views that I thought we were endangering our position in Japan by pulling out of Korea and that that our Korean policy should be reviewed in this broader context. The Embassy sent the thing in from the Ambassador saying, "Here is an interesting paper from our departing acting political counselor. The Embassy takes no position one way or the other." I don't have a copy of that paper, although a professor who is a revisionist historian at the University of Washington in Seattle, has gotten it out of the archives. He told me that he has used it to some extent in a book that he has written about the history of those years in Korea.

In early 1949, we in the Embassy had no sense that an invasion from the North was a real danger. We had had this one episode in October 1948, but nobody could know that this was part,

or maybe a feeler, for a larger effort. In retrospect it's easy to see why. The Cold War was heating up all over. The Berlin Airlift was going on. The Soviets were facing the problem of how to deal with our airlift. In Europe they clearly did not want to start a war over it, and ultimately passed messages in March or April 1949 indicating they wanted a face-saving way out, which came in the summer of 1949. They had lost face by it. But clearly they were thinking of other places in which they could show that they were able to conduct a cold war and indeed gain successes.

Korea must have been a great temptation, particularly after we had announced our intention to pull out and had excluded it from our security perimeter, without even voicing any words of conditionality or contingency in that regard. They had built up a force in the North -- an indigenous force that was much better than the one in the South and had active Soviet Red Army backing. The North is about half the population size of the South, but that wasn't very important because it had mobilized a large part of the population and had equipped it well. We had not done that in the South. The South was not a totalitarian state. The government was authoritarian to be sure, but there were still dissident elements in the South. The North probably felt that it had latent support among groups that had originally been pro-trade union, pro-general strike, pro-communist, and therefore they may have expected a major Southern uprising. Objectively, the North could not have had basis to fear that it would be invaded from the South. But rhetorically, yes. The Syngman Rhee government was totally hostile to the North. Kim Il Sung, the venerable leader who is still there, had already made his appearance. The talk in the South was, of course, that this was a usurping communist government and in the North that the ambitions of the South were very clear. But objectively speaking, the South forces were not ready and the United States was still present.

I should say that the Soviet army pulled out of North Korea, I believe, in 1948, but it had, in its several years there, built up this very strong force which was a lot stronger than the South. I don't remember what the Soviets may have said about their security backing for the North Korean regime. We were well aware of Soviet supplying military advisors, if not de facto commanders, down even to the company level in the North Korean forces. There was not a Chinese role at the time, because the Chinese had just concluded their own civil war in 1949, but the Soviets and Chinese were cooperating at the time. The frontier in the North was a friendly frontier for the Chinese, but they had their hands full with their own problems.

The State Department office in Seoul was reporting directly to Washington, even before an embassy was established. General Hodge, when dealing with political and military government questions, reported directly to Washington, with a copy of every telegram sent to General MacArthur's headquarters. When dealing with any troop matters, he reported through General MacArthur in Tokyo. The distinction was not always easy, and I'm sure given the nature of MacArthur's command that Lieutenant General Hodge, only three stars, was duly deferential to his boss in Tokyo.

When the invasion actually happened in June 1950, the American response was totally unanticipated. It shows that Harry Truman had a gut reaction that made a lot more sense than the sophisticated deliberations of the cabinet departments in the previous years. He instinctively knew that a challenge from a Soviet-backed state could undermine our entire position in the Far

East and, more specifically, our position in Japan. It was becoming clear even then that Japan was going to regain its status as a very major voice in the Pacific.

WILLIAM C. SHERMAN
Instructor to South Korean Coast Guard, U.S. Navy
Chinhae (1946-1949)

Performance Review Section, Economic Cooperation Administration
Seoul (1948-1950)

William C. Sherman was born in Kentucky in 1923 and raised in Pennsylvania and Ohio. He attended the University of Louisville until he joined the U.S. Navy in 1943. His career included positions in Korea, Japan, Italy, as well as other State Department positions in the States. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on October 27, 1993.

SHERMAN: So I went to Korea. When we reached Korea, we found that the program to which we had been assigned had never been started. The idea had been to send Japanese language officers to Korea as staff aides to military government officials who worked in the various Korean ministries. It was a U.S. Army run program. The concept called for a rotation of these junior staff people going from Ministry to Ministry, learning about military government. Thereafter, we would be ready for some senior position in that military government. As I said, the program never came to fruition. When we arrived in Korea -- there were about fifteen of us -- we had no jobs and were left to our own devices to find a job. I found that Dick Petree, who was a classmate from the language school, was in Chinhae working for a U.S. Coast Guard detachment which was training the Korean Coast Guard. When we occupied Korea, in accordance with an agreement with the Russians we did not allow the formation of an Army or a Navy; we permitted only a Coast Guard and a constabulary to maintain order and tranquility. We were still negotiating with the Soviets in an effort to establish a unified Korea, which of course never came to pass.

So I ended up at the Korean Coast Guard Academy. I was the advisor to the Superintendent of the Coast Guard Academy. I was supposed to be an alter-ego to him, but in fact I established an English course to teach the cadets our language. Many of those students are by now retired senior military officers; there were a couple who became company Presidents. I have seen some of them during trips I have taken to Korea during the course of last forty-five years. At the Academy, I used Japanese; in those days, most of the students spoke better Japanese than Korean. They had been raised during the Japanese occupation of Korea and learned Japanese in their educational system. It was the official language and although many spoke Korean at home, that was not true for all of them. Although Koreans had bitter feelings about Japan and its people, they had no trouble using Japanese with me when I told them that I didn't speak Korean. They had no problem in using our mutual language, so communication was not an issue. The Korean Commandant spoke excellent English which he had learned in missionary schools in Manchuria where he had been raised. I also helped the Academy develop a curriculum. There

was another American assigned to the Academy -- Bill Shaw -- who had been at language school with me. He belonged to a missionary family which had connections with Korea as long as those of the Underwoods.

We lived in housing which had been part of an old Japanese Naval base in Chinhae. The houses are still there. It is close to the Naval Academy. Of course, in those days, the twenty miles of paved road between Inchon and Seoul were just about all that existed in Korea. It used to take five or six hours to travel by jeep over the mountainous dirt road between Pusan and Chinhae.

As I mentioned before, the U.S. Coast Guard was training Koreans so that they could establish their own Coast Guard. The U.S. Army was training the constabulary. The U.S. Coast Guard detachment consisted of approximately ten officers, twenty Chief Petty Officers and four or five civilians (Bill Shaw, Dick Petree and myself and a couple of others). We were actually U.S. Army civilians, assigned to the Coast Guard detachment. There was a Coast Guard Captain in Seoul who was the overall commander. There was a training group in Chinhae, headed by an officer who had headed the seamanship department at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. In addition to the Academy, there was a shipyard in Chinhae also run by the Coast Guard.

Q: What was Korea like in 1946?

SHERMAN: It is hard to imagine for anyone who knows Korea today. We landed in Inchon and were bussed into Seoul, where we arrived late in the afternoon. We came in through the South Gate plaza. It was a big city even then by standards of that time -- about 1 million people. It had no electricity because the North Koreans had cut off the supply -- the North had all the power generation capability. My first lasting impression was the smell of the acetylene gas coming from the lamps that had been placed on the tables that filled the South Gate area. These tables were made of 2x4's on trestles. The lamps' flames illuminated only about a circle of two feet and also filled the air with the odor of the gas. We would see these spots of light all around the plaza where people were selling cigarettes and bars of soap, called Luck, which were packaged similarly to Lux soap bars. Of course, Lux was in much greater demand, but also much scarcer. People were clothed in old Japanese army uniforms. Nobody wore anything that was not tattered, torn and patched. That was true of shirts and ties, if anyone had them. This was true even of the upper middle class; they too were shabbily dressed. Rice was rationed and scarce. Creature comforts were not in existence. The few cars that did run were old, Japanese made Datsuns and Mitsubishis (nothing like those of today) and were often out of commission. The Koreans have a great knack for making things out of nothing. If something could be held together with bailing wire, they would make it work. Taxis had open hibachis in the back seat for heat. Streetcars and busses were always over-crowded.

The military government was making valiant efforts to cope with the situation. It kept the country going by importing food stuffs and other basics. It brought in fertilizer and fuel. It brought in two huge power barges loaded with generators which eventually became the basis of a power grid for South Korea. But for most Koreans it was a very marginal existence. People lived in old-style Korean houses which were essentially mud walls holding up a thatched roof. There were some who had to live in caves in the hills around Chinhae. These were left over fortifications that the Japanese had constructed as coastal artillery sites during their occupation.

Families and groups of Koreans lived in these caves. Trucks were sent out each morning to provide food and sometimes to pick up the dead.

Q: In retrospect, how successful was the U.S. Military Government in Korea during the period you were there?

SHERMAN: I don't think the Military Government was terribly successful. It was thrown together on the spur of the moment. No plans had been made for Korea. It didn't know what its goals were. I don't believe it had a coordinated, thought out plan. It certainly did not have the same caliber of personnel, either military or civilian, that were assigned to the military government in Japan. There we had a central guiding thesis; MacArthur was directly and personally involved in the management of the country's affairs. Korea, both from the policy maker's point of view and that of the logistician, was the end of the line. There were no language or area specialists. We did not have adequate supplies. The American personnel, in the main, were either people that couldn't be used in Japan or second raters. So the Korea Military Government was not a very successful operation. Moreover, the Koreans had no desire to have a military government. They considered themselves liberated and they were very anxious to have us go home so that they could begin the self-government process.

Once an Embassy was established and once a Economic Cooperation Administration Mission was started, we had much better feel for what we should be doing and that certainly improved our inter-action with the Koreans, despite the fact that the Korean government was fairly chaotic. Almost all of the Korean independence leaders, were living in exile during the Japanese occupation of the Peninsula. Syngman Rhee was probably the loudest voice among them; he was the most hyped of the refugees. He had lobbied for the Korean cause in Geneva and in New York. He had a substantial group of Americans, led by John Staggers, who supported him and his cause financially and morally. He was Elaine Lady's father. Korea. Elaine and her husband Harold (who died some years ago) came back to Korea when Rhee was elected the first President of the new Republic and served as advisers on his personal staff. The Ladys and Robert T. Oliver, a publicist, and some other Americans were part of the Rhee machine sometimes called the "kitchen cabinet". In addition to Rhee there were other exiles who returned to attempt to play roles in the new Korea. Kim Ku, who threw the bomb in Shanghai that maimed Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu, and, who had lived in China and Manchuria was an active contender. Dr. Philip J. Sohn -- Sohn Jai-pil -- was persuaded to come back from his medical practice in Hawaii to participate in Korean politics. US military government officials were not persuaded that Rhee was the right person to lead Korea and they wanted to have a few other potential candidates in order to make the eventual elections more credible. Not all of the returnees were pro-Rhee; some had their own political constituencies. Various members of the Korean government, which had been established under our Military Government, were attaching themselves to one political candidate or another. The Coast Guard, for example, supported Kim Ku, although in the end Syngman Rhee won all of the political power.

The proliferation of candidates made for a lively political scene, although somewhat dicey at times. People were really fighting with each other. Kim Ku, for example, was assassinated in the Fall of 1948, right after the elections, and that was quite a day. The alleged killer was identified, although there were many stories that the suspect was taking the blame for one of Rhee's

henchmen. We did not get very much involved in this internal political struggle. There was a section of the Military Government that was responsible for liaison with the various political factions. Captain Leonard Bertsch was very much involved in the political maneuvering. I was down in Chinhae for much of this period, pretty much isolated from the activities in Seoul, but we would hear some of the stories.

Q: In 1948, you left the Coast Guard and went to work for ECA in Seoul. How did assignment come about?

SHERMAN: Bill Shaw and I were the only two American civilians left at the Coast Guard Academy in Chinhae. The Military Government was in its last days; the American Coast Guard detachment was being transferred back to the States as was the 6th Artillery Division, which provided us with logistic support. There was no reason for any American presence any longer.

At that point, Bob Kinney, who was then the special assistant to Dr. Arthur Bunce, came to Chinhae. He had known the Shaw family from missionary days. He picked up Bill and myself and said that he would find spots for both of us with the ECA Mission in Seoul. So we moved to Seoul and became members of the Performance Review section of the Mission which was then run by J. Franklin Ray, who had been a professor at Harvard. An advance group of FSO's had come to Seoul earlier in 1948, augmenting the staff of the U.S. Consulate General which had been the State Department presence operating throughout the occupation. Mr. Landon was the Consul General; David Mark was the Vice-Consul. It also had a few American support staff personnel. They lived in the old Consulate General residence and worked in a nearby building.

Gradually, the civilian American presence began to beefed up. Donald Macdonald, Gregory Henderson and Curt Pendergast all of whom had been given some Korean language training in the United States joined the staff when an Embassy was established on August 15, 1948. Each of them then headed up a section of the CG. John Rozier (another FSO) did the administrative work, Pendergast did the consular work and McDonald started an economic section. Then ECA arrived and that greatly expanded State Department's presence. Some of the ECA people, like me and Bill Shaw, were recruited from the Military Government. A Joint Administrative Services Section was established, headed by Lewis Benjamin, a real administrative wheeler-dealer. He unfortunately was killed later in an automobile accident in Spain. Harold Noble, Greg Henderson and others started a Political Section. We had no USIA this being the days before that organization was founded. The ECA group was amalgamated with the Economic Section.

Q: What was ECA's main objective?

SHERMAN: ECA's main objective was to put Korea back on its economic feet. The plan was a phased operation. The immediate goal was to re-establish the power grid by constructing hydro-electric power facilities, bringing in two power barges, and attempting to construct or rehabilitate thermal powered plants. Korean coal was mined to fuel these plants, but it was of such poor quality that it didn't help very much. Once the power grid had been restored, the next step was to reconstruct of the industrial base. We also imported large quantities of fertilizer to boost farm production, particularly rice. That rice was supposed to be of such high grade that it would serve as an export commodity to other nations in East Asia -- Japan and Southeast Asia. where it was

said to be in great demand -- and provide foreign exchange to the infant republic. This was before the days of the green revolution.

The earnings of the rice exports were intended to enable Korea to earn sufficient foreign exchange to buy foreign manufacturing equipment and thereafter theoretically become a self-sustaining economic entity in the modern world. Unfortunately, ECA and Syngman Rhee did not see eye-to-eye on economic policy. Rhee had spent many years in Hawaii where land was treasured square inch by square inch. He therefore focused on reclaiming land around the Han River. He had grandiose ideas of what could be done; he had grandiose idea of how much the foreign market would pay for Korean rice. There was constant tension between ECA Mission and the economists in the Rhee government. The central problem therefore became how to talk a very stubborn old man into doing things he didn't want to do.

In addition, the Embassy was faced with the political problem of dealing with North Korea. Rhee wanted to immediately enhance Korea's offensive and defensive capabilities because of the threat from the North. He demanded our assistance to provide him with those capabilities. There was a lot of enthusiasm among some Korean military for a push North, but Rhee managed to keep those impulses in check. No one has ever seriously accused Rhee of desiring an invasion of the North. We had an 700 man American military advisory group under Brigadier General Roberts. Those personnel were stationed alongside their Korean counterparts, practically down to the company level. They kept an eye on the Korean military. They were essentially there as trainers, but they also monitored what was going on.

Q: Can you describe the coterie which surrounded Rhee at this time?

SHERMAN: I'll try, but you have to remember that I was a very junior officer at the time -- 24 or 25 years old. I was certainly not an experienced political analyst, but I watched the game with fascination. Rhee maintained his contacts with those he knew before and during the war. He was still close to John Staggars, who was represented in Seoul, as I mentioned earlier, by his daughter Elaine and her husband Harold, who were cast as international lawyers. They served as advisors to Rhee and served as important intermediaries between Rhee and the Mission and the Embassy. The Ambassador could see Rhee any time he wished, but the rest of the staff often used Elaine and Harold Lady as transmission belts. They often served as the actual Korean action officers on a number of issues. Harold particularly was often involved in working out certain deals.

Robert T. Oliver came out and founded a newspaper -- *The Korea Herald* -- in English that was published in Seoul. That paper was published regularly and contained adulatory editorials about Rhee and his activities. Oliver had written a book "*Syngman Rhee: Prophet and Saint*". So you can well imagine what he had to say about Rhee in his editorial columns.

There were a number of American educated Koreans who served in Rhee's governments. Lincoln Kim headed up the Korean Office of Planning. The Foreign Minister was Ben Limb -- Yim P'yun-jik -- Lousie Yim was the Minister of Commerce and Industry, which was a rather unusual job in Korea at that time. Ho Chung , then the Minister of Transportation later became a prominent figure in Korean politics. All of these people were old friends and associates of Rhee's. The Cabinet could hardly be described as balanced. There were no other factions

represented; the Ministers were all Rhee allies.

I started at the ECA Mission as a special assistant to the Director, Professor Ray. There wasn't enough work for all of the special assistants, so I moved to the Statistics Section, which was part of the Program Review Office. We published a monthly publication on Korean economic statistics -- foreign trade, production, etc. Each member of the staff compiled data for one economic sector or another. That statistical base was absolutely essential to the development of an economic program. The Koreans were not keeping any statistics at all or at least were not making them available to anyone. So our monthly publication was the basis for all economic projections.

I worked on oil imports and distribution. I got the raw material from the American and British oil companies -- KOSCO (The Korean Oil Storage Company). That was the consortium that handled all oil imports, basically formed by CALTEX, STANVAC and SHELL with some minor Korean participation. In addition, there were a number of Americans that worked in Korean power plants; they had been in the Military Government as members of its Department of Commerce. They had stayed on. They provided us data on power production. We had advisors at the Korean Exchange Bank and the Bank of Korea, who would supply data. Our Mission had a Commerce and Heavy Industry Section, who had liaison responsibilities with Korean firms and the government and they provided some information. Obviously, it was not very systematic way to capture statistics, but it was the best that could be done under the circumstances. We did not at the time have advisors attached to any Ministries, but we had sections in the Mission responsible for following the activities of each economic Ministry.

Bill Shaw was working on foreign trade. He and another guy kept track of the port records kept by the Ministry of Commerce and Trade. I had my doubts about the statistics that we generated, but they were better than the Korean records. After doing this compilation task for six months, I developed on my own a handbook on the organization of the Korean Government. I tried to standardize the names of the Ministries and the various independent organizations, like the Board of Audit and the Office of Planning. I found the original decrees that set up these various institutions and translated them into English. The product of all this effort provided the best picture of how the Korean Government was supposed to look. The names of the governmental leaders were written in Korean, Chinese letters and English. I summarized the responsibilities of each Office in each Bureau of each Ministry. It took almost a year to complete this effort. When it was finished, it was the only manual in existence on the Korean government, and used widely both in Seoul and in Washington. It was a labor of love. I never believed that every section of the government did what the law said they were supposed to do, but at least it was an attempt to put the organization down on paper.

Q: I gather that we did not provide "advisors" in such areas as public administration, for example.

SHERMAN: We did not. The only American "advisors" were attached to the KMAG who provided advice to the police. They trained Korean military policemen and worked as liaison with Korean officials responsible for internal security.

Q: Tell me a little about your living conditions.

SHERMAN: The Mission's policy was not to take over Korean housing. So we occupied abandoned Japanese housing. We purchased what is now known as Embassy Compound 2, which consisted of old Japanese houses. We rehabilitated them and used them. Some, like the so-called *Finance House* were rather large. That was run by Al Loren, who headed the Finance Section of the ECA Mission. It was sort of a bachelor officers' quarters. People were invited to live in the *Finance House*. It had many rooms because it had been an old mansion. The house also contained a fancy mess hall. The other houses were assigned to families in the usual basis -- size of family, rank, etc. In addition, there were several hundred Japanese railway houses westward out Ulchi Ro near the so-called *Old Queen's Palace*. That area of town was known as *The Gold Coast*. These houses, even by modern Japanese standards, were good sized and in fair condition, since they had been occupied by Japanese railroad workers. Mary Jane and I lived there.

When we first arrived in Seoul, there was no electricity. That lasted for the first few months we were there. We ate and read by Coleman lanterns or candles. We cooked on wood-coal ranges. In their zeal to modernize the housing, the Americans put in modern plumbing in lieu of the old fashioned baths which had fires under them to heat the water. We had running water coming out of taps; unfortunately, it was all cold. So to take a bath, we had to heat the water on the stove for about a day. The large bathtubs were made of terrazzo, which meant that when the hot water was poured into the tubs, only about two inches would be in the tub and that would turn cold very rapidly because the walls of the tub would absorb the heat of the water very rapidly. It was very primitive.

I used to watch carefully for visitors who came to Seoul to see whether it included any friends who might be staying at the Chosun Hotel. We would invite the friend to dinner and when he accepted, I would volunteer to pick him up and sneak in a shower in his hotel room first. Finding a location which had hot water became a major achievement. The Chosun was functioning and had become the center of social life in Seoul. The other major hotel, and perhaps the only other hotel in town, was the Bando (known as the "Peninsula" during the occupation). When we opened the Embassy, the Bando was deeded to the U.S. government in perpetuity by the Korean government in gratitude for the assistance we had provided in freeing Korea from Japanese occupation. The Embassy occupied the first five floors; the remaining three floors were made into small efficiency apartments for staff and single officers. On the top floor, the Bando had a dining room.

Q: What were our objectives in Korea when you were serving there?

SHERMAN: We had hoped to achieve unification. There was a U.N. mission in Seoul, which had been opened even before our Embassy began operation. It was trying to negotiate with the Soviets and the North Koreans, but neither of those parties were interested in any negotiations. A Joint Committee consisting of US and Soviet representatives met more or less regularly in Seoul at the Duk Soo Palace during 1945 - 47 but spent its time arguing over detail, exchanging recriminations and achieving nothing -- the usual stalling tactics that the Russians used in those days. The U.N. and we made various attempts to open serious negotiations to arrange country

wide elections, but there was no response at all from the other side. The 38th parallel became a firm and fixed dividing line. It was a ridiculous arbitrary line which even left parts of South Korea accessible only by sea because the land entrances were in North Korea. The border was heavily fortified with heavy military concentrations on both sides, particularly along the mountain passages which permitted access on a north-south route.

Beyond the unification goal, we were very interested in stabilizing the country economically. Once the Rhee government was elected, we then were anxious for a democratic constitution to be written and approved. We had a lot to do with the drafting of that constitution. An American -- a German refugee -- Dr. Ernst Frankel was a constitutional legal scholar and a wonderful man. He had been employed by the military government, but stayed on after Korean independence as part of the legal section of the ECA Mission. He worked almost exclusively on drafting that constitution working closely with the Korean provisional government.

I think we must have had about 200-300 in the Embassy itself, including a large administrative support staff. That number included also probably 30-40 political and economic officers. The ECA Mission had another 150-200 people. The Military Advisory Group must have had 600-700 officers and staff. So there was a large American presence in Seoul by the end of the 1940s.

Seoul had a "frontier" atmosphere about it by 1949. People dressed well, but there were no passenger cars on the streets for example. There were jeeps which were the common mode of transportation. There may have been one or two private sedans, but they couldn't be driven outside of Seoul because there were no paved roads in the countryside, no repair facility and probably no gas stations either. The trains were not entirely reliable. When I first arrived in Korea, those trains had to stop frequently to clean out coal clinkers from the engine boilers; the coal was that bad. The windows were all broken out of the coaches. There was supposed to be a daily Seoul-Pusan run; it wasn't necessarily so and if the train did run, it may have taken 24 hours. For me, it was then another six hour Jeep trip from Pusan to Chinhae. It was "frontier days" in Korean in the late '40s.

We operated our own commissary so that we could get adequate food supplies without having to rely on the Korean market which could barely supply enough food for its own people. There was nothing available on the market -- no goods, no souvenirs, no artifacts, no available art. We supported that country for many years, not only in economic terms, but also culturally by assisting in the rehabilitation of museums. We helped to get Seoul working again. Progress was very slow. I would not consider that economic development of Korea was successful while I was stationed there. There was visible improvement, but there was a long way to go.

The Koreans worked very hard and were very creative. Their ability to make something out of nothing was a daily revelation. They put things together with bailing wire, string and faith. It was remarkable. Strangely enough, all of this misery was not depressing. The Americans were enthused about the challenges. We worked and played together very well; there were a lot of community activities. We staged some theater productions -- Mary Jane and I were intimately engaged in those. We put on the old standards like "George Washington Slept Here" and "You Can't Take It With You". We used Citizens' Hall for the performances. The President and Mrs. Rhee came to opening night.

I spoke both English and Japanese to my Korean contacts. They did not resent the use of Japanese once it was established that I couldn't speak Korean. It was the easiest way to communicate. I could speak a few words of Korean, enough to introduce myself and indicate that I couldn't really speak the language. I used to ask whether it would be alright to speak Japanese; no one ever refused to speak Japanese with me, even though all Koreans were unrelentingly hostile to Japan and its people. They were also upset by their perception that the Japanese were getting more assistance from us than they were. Rhee was particularly bitter because he felt that we were coddling the Japanese and not giving enough assistance to his country.

In the fall of 1949, after we had moved to Seoul, Mary Jane and I, accompanied by our good friends, the Sloanes, went back to Chinhae for a week's vacation. We had arranged to stay with some American friends who were still there as civilian advisors to what had become the Korean Navy. We arrived and moved in with our friends. On the first night of our visit, we were visited by a delegation of Korean officers. We overheard our host trying to explain to the Koreans that he had guests in the house and couldn't possibly move. The Koreans had come to ask that our host make room for a few days to accommodate President and Mrs. Rhee who were arriving at Chinhae the next day for an important and secret meeting with Chiang Kai-shek. (That meeting was supposed to conclude a Korea/Taiwan anti-communist pact). The Koreans explained that they did not have an adequate house for their President and therefore had to ask for our host to put up the Rhees. When we learned what was going on, we volunteered to move next door to the Navy BOQ so that there would be room for the President and his wife. So indeed that is what happened. Chinhae was completely sealed off. No one could enter or leave the town both for security and secrecy reasons.

The meeting almost coincided with the issuance of the US White Paper on China, which to say the least, did not give very strong support to Chiang Kai-shek. That event delayed the Chinese delegation's arrival and the Rhees were therefore in Chinhae with nothing much to do. I called the Embassy and was told by Everett Drumright, the DCM, that I shouldn't be in Chinhae at all, but as long as I was there, he wanted me to keep my ears and eyes open (the Embassy had not been aware in advance that a meeting was to take place). Those were the instructions that I followed. Madame Rhee noted at one stage that there were no photographers around to record the event. I became the official photographer for the meeting and I still have some shots of that historic event. I took the pictures of the Chinese delegation as it arrived on a C-47 and deplaned. They landed on a small landing strip that probably never had anything as large as a C-47 land on it.

Madame Rhee was very gracious. She recognized that we had been displaced and so, every evening, she would invite us over for drinks at the house they were using. I got a chance to explain to President Rhee the work I was doing on the organization manual of the Korean government. I think he was impressed that something was being done and urged me to finish it. I had an opportunity to listen to Rhee reminisce about his past. He became a very human figure during those moments, and I realized just what an important leader in exile he had been and how passionately he was committed to the rebuilding of his country. The House that the Rhee used in Chinhae also became the site for the bilateral meetings with Chiang Kai-shek.

The Chinese delegation included Chiang Kai-shek, K.C. Woo, who had been the Mayor of Shanghai, the Chinese Ambassador and some Taiwan government Cabinet members. It was quite a group, and very heady stuff for a twenty-five year old junior member of an American mission to be on the fringes of

I sent Mrs. Rhee copies of all the pictures. She graciously then invited us to the Presidential Palace. The Rhees came to see a performance of "George Washington Slept Here" and invited the cast for tea. I saw the President and Mrs. Rhee on several occasions after the Chinhae episode. That chance meeting at the Academy became very useful from my point of view. I called on Madame Rhee much later in 1985, when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary in Far East Bureau. Dixie Walker was then our ambassador in Korea. At that time, Mrs. Rhee was close to 95 years old. I don't know whether she remembered the events of approximately 35 years earlier, but if she didn't, she pretended that she did. On that same trip to Korea, I returned to Chinhae to see my old stamping grounds. I drove down the Peninsula, through Taejon and Kyongju to Pusan and Chinhae. The same two houses -- the house that the Rhees stayed in and the BOQ -- that were important part of my story about the Rhee-Kai-shek meeting were still standing. Rhee had never been to Chinhae before and was charmed by the place. The navy compound is on a sugar-loaf peninsula that juts out into the harbor. The American government had a house in Chinhae which was occupied in the late '40s by Major Granrud. He had lived there when the military government was running Korea and had stayed on after independence. Rhee saw the house and said that he would like to have it a summer house. So it was cleared out and spruced up and the Rhees used it for their vacations. It became the Korean equivalent of Camp David and remained that way at least through the Park Chung Hee's regime.

When I visited Chinhae in 1985, I went to that house, which was being treated as a holy shrine. The guide told me that that was where Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek had held their famous meeting in 1950. He said that the Speaker of the Korean Assembly, Shin Ik Hee and General Hodge were in on the meeting which was held to discuss the future of the Pacific. There were several other new myths included by the young Korean CPO who led the tour. He, of course, had not even been born when the events he was attempting to describe happened. I knew the truth: the meeting had not been held in that house, General Hodge had long left Korea, Shin Ik Hee was not at the meeting, etc. It was the first time I had ever been in a position to contradict what had become history. I didn't do it there because I didn't want to embarrass the guide.. But when I got back to Seoul I made my views known about the revision of history to which I had been a personal witness. I told Madame Rhee what I heard and she was mystified since there wasn't any rational explanation. She knew the truth, but obviously no one had ever asked her about what had happened in Chinhae in 1949.

That 1949 episode is one of the reasons I decided to take the Foreign Service exam. In those days, you had to take the orals in Washington. The written portion I took in Seoul along with three others. The written then was a two and half day exam which included questions that required long essay answers. It was quite different from today's exam. I passed both the written and the oral, but in those days there was an interminable period between passing the exam and being offered a job. I was going to spend that time at the Yale Graduate School where I had been accepted. We left Korea in April, 1950 staying a couple of days in Japan and a couple of days in Hawaii on the way home.

MARY CHIAVARINI
Assistant to the Advisor to the Commanding General
Seoul (1947-1948)

Ms. Chiavarini was born and raised in Massachusetts. After Secretarial training, she worked with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington DC before joining the Foreign Service in 1944. During her career with the State Department, Ms. Chiavarini served as secretary to the ambassador and other officers in Naples, Tirana, Manila, Seoul, Prague, Rome, Singapore and Warsaw. After her appointment in 1957 as Consul and Secretary in the Diplomatic Service she served in Palermo, Monrovia and Paris. She also served as special “trouble shooter” in Nicosia, Dublin and Riyadh. Ms. Chiavarini was interviewed by David T. Jones in 2007.

Q: But this was only for one year and then you moved.

CHIAVARINI: Well, I was called to go to my ambassador in Korea. He asked for me. And they sent me.

Q: That was certainly a pleasant experience. Showed how appreciated you were. I can tell.

So, the record has you going to Seoul in June, 1947. Can you describe how the embassy was operating?

CHIAVARINI: It was like nothing I had ever seen. But I know the ambassador was appreciated by the Koreans. The Koreans were very nice to me. I had no bad experiences there. But then, I was the ambassador’s “pet” you might say. They were very good to me and I always liked them. I don’t remember their names.

Q: This is the Korean staff?

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: How was the embassy working?

CHIAVARINI: It worked fine as far as I could see and as far as I knew. The ambassador wasn’t complaining about anything.

Q: Were there any problems that you could see at that time developing in the North?

CHIAVARINI: Well, yes. We all saw that. It was no surprise that they blew the place apart with their new bomb in Pyongyang. I never got to Pyongyang myself.

Q: Did you travel into the North at all while you were there?

CHIAVARINI: No, I didn't. I had a boyfriend – he was a general's aide - who had a jeep, and we went outside Seoul on the weekends. We'd go to one place that was on the water. It was charming. I don't remember the name of it.

Q: Did you travel further into the South? I served in Korea in 1965-66.

CHIAVARINI: You probably did a lot more traveling than I did.

Q: I doubt it. Young lieutenants didn't have a lot of time off.

Did you get to Pusan?

CHIAVARINI: Yes I did. Another girl and I took a trip to Japan. We had to go to Pusan to transportation to Japan. We went there for our vacation.

...

Q: Did you take a boat then to Japan?

CHIAVARINI: We took a boat. Unfortunately, my traveling companion is dead now.

Q: Do you remember her name?

CHIAVARINI: Oh yes! She was Bessie Miller. I knew her quite well because we lived in the same house in Korea. She lived in Florida although she worked with us.

Q: What was Ambassador Jacobs doing with the Korean government?

CHIAVARINI: Well, he was very close to them and worked with them closely. He was always satisfied with what they were doing. As far as I could see it was what he wanted. And, he was always trying to get the State Department to recognize the Korean government.

Q: Do you remember any other members of the embassy? The political counselor or the deputy chief of mission?

CHIAVARINI: No, I don't.

Q: Was there a sense that it was a very professional staff?

CHIAVARINI: I think it was professional because my boss was professional. He demanded that. And they gave it to him.

Q: You were in Seoul until the end of the year in 1948, and then you went to Prague.

CHIAVARINI: Yes. And Ambassador Jacobs went to Prague. He was ambassador there.

FRED CHARLES THOMAS, JR.
U.S. Army
Korea (1947-1948)

Fred Charles Thomas, Jr. was born in Arizona in 1927. He graduated from Bucknell University in 1951 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He served in the U.S. Army from 1946-1948. He joined the Department of State in 1948. His overseas posts include Korea, Pakistan, China and Germany. Mr. Thomas was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

THOMAS: It turned out that ship was going to Korea. We landed in Inchon, Korea sometime in January of 1947. And it was colder than hell; I nearly froze to death. Anyway, I was due to be sent to an engineering construction group headquarters, at a place called Yung Dung Po, Korea. It was pretty bleak. The present ambassador to Korea, Jim Laney, and I were bunk-mates. He was a native of Arkansas and a Yale graduate. He later became a missionary out there and more recently was President of Emory University. The present administration appointed him Ambassador to Korea. But then we bunked next to each other and became very close friends.

I had only been there a month or two when a call came from 24th Corps headquarters in Seoul for me to report to the sergeant major of the Corps. Verbal orders. I went up there and I said, "Well, what's this all about?" He said, "Your name came out with two other names when we ran the computer..." They had these punch cards. "With a very high AGC score." He said, "We need somebody like you to be attached to the United States-Soviet Joint Commission, which is reopening. He ordered me to report to Brigadier General Weckerling at the Duksu Palace. The Duksu Palace was just across and down the street from the Bando Hotel, and inside a big compound.

I reported to General Weckerling, who was a brigadier general directly assigned from G-2, Washington, intelligence. He took my stripes off and put U.S. on my collar and said, "From now on, you are Mr. Thomas, and you will eat and be housed with the special troops for the 24th Corps; they will give you a room out there. I will send a car for you every morning." It was the damndest thing. My company commander had a Jeep to run around in, and I was being picked up by a fancy sedan. Anyway, that was my introduction to political work.

Korea was so backward in 1948; it reminded me of China of the 1930s, when my father and I visited China. Beggars everywhere, filth. You would come to work and go through that gate, and here you would be people dead in the gateway, in the wintertime -- corpses. The smell of feces everywhere. The dust. It was just backward Orient at that time. It was the worst of the worst.

As a matter of fact, during the interim between when I was assigned this job, when I was sitting out there at Yongdungpo, this fellow Laney and I dreamed up a scheme to get out of Korea by enlisting in the paratroops. Neither one of us was very big, about my height (5'10"); I was pretty skinny and so was he. There were no paratroopers in Korea. The closest units were in Japan. We went to this recruiting sergeant where they were looking for paratroopers, at 24th Corps

headquarters in Seoul. Well, this paratrooper looked at the two of us and told us, "You don't belong in the paratroopers. You guys are much too little." So that ended that.

I did not immediately have contact with Koreans, but did so later on in that job. I started out with Weckerling, and I was doing sort of "gofer" work with the command, but intelligence command work, digging up information.

The Draper Report -- I remember that was a big report at the time. The Draper Commission Report. It was all top secret. Draper was Under Secretary, or an Assistant Secretary of Defense, who was visiting various places around the Far East. The Defense Department's instructions indicated that the report concerning the situation in Korea was to include many multi-colored charts to make quick reading and comprehension possible.

So I was given the job of arranging the publishing of these many multi-colored charts and getting the job done in a hurry. It was done by a topographical unit located on the outskirts of Seoul. I went out there and introduced myself. General Weckerling called ahead and said I would be coming, "Mr. Thomas." When I arrived, they said, "What do you want? We will do anything you want." So I had this group of young people there working about 24-hours a day, with shifts going, putting out these top-secret charts, in color, of everything that you could think of, economic data, etc., to get it done in time for this Draper Report. I can sort of remember falling asleep in the big, fancy room, trying to get it all put together, because I would be working long hours through the whole three-week period.

Once it was together, General Weckerling gave me some money to buy a few cases of beer and some snack food to give these guys a party. As I was leaving this beer party, they handed me an envelope, and they said, "Don't open this until you get back to your room." When I got home, I learned the great advantage of first-class documentation. It turned out this unit not only made maps and charts, but also made all the documentation for everything we did in Korea. In this envelope was a mess pass for every mess in the command, with my name on it, including a pass for the general officers' mess, and every other officers' mess. Several extra PX ration cards were included so I could get extra cigarettes, everything you needed. It was a real education on the value of good documentation.

Out of this, I began to notice these guys when I would go to the PX. There they were with duffel bags, repeatedly going through the cigarette line and filling the duffel bags. They could buy a carton of cigarettes for 90 cents, and they could sell it for maybe \$5 to \$10 dollars in military scrip. They were all making a quick profit. But you couldn't move this money out of the country because you couldn't account for it; it was that funny money. They would take this money and buy the fanciest things in the PX, like fancy cameras. They all had lockers full of fancy stuff.

By then, Jim Laney, who had been with me at the engineering unit had become an agent in Army CIC. As an agent they make you a "Mister." CIC agents worked for us. They came in and we gave them their orders of what we wanted collected, and they collected it. Jim and I were sitting in my office, which was in a vault in the basement of the museum building there. It was an actual vault. It was a weekend evening, when suddenly the fire engines alarms went off. You could hear it all over town. The fire was out at the edge of town. We were fire chasers and we wanted to

find out what was going on, so we jumped in Jim's Jeep and rushed out there. This same topographical unit was burning to the ground. All these guys lost all their loot. They never profited from it all.

As I said, later on I had contact with Korean military. Then I was moved to another job because Weckerling went on to something else. I became the Boy Friday to a man named Dr. Ernst Frankel(PhD). Ernst Frankel was later among those who founded the Free Berlin University. He was a noted scholar on constitutional law, and he helped write the Korean Constitution. He was a GS-18 or equivalent in those days. But he was a typical nice man who didn't know how to handle the military. He didn't know how to use his rank. He and his wife had no children. They treated me as a son, in a way. I was invited for Sunday dinners. I worked for him for a couple of months, and then he was off to something.

There was a group there that was doing the legwork for the POLAD. It was called Political Advisory Group. It was made up of ex-State and -Foreign Service types who had been in the military when they joined the group. Some of them had been with OSS, who had left State during the Second World War. The head of group had been a State officer, had his doctorate in Chinese studies and was the son of missionaries to China, named Clyde Sergeant. He got to know me there on the Joint Commission because we were all working in one area. He asked me to join his group as the biographic officer. I was to set up the biographic files for Korea (they didn't have anything like that), with the idea that these would end up being the embassy's biographic files.

When I started doing this, I quickly realized that if you tried to do this the normal government way, with a lot of liberal people around, especially in many of these government departments, you would get nowhere. This was "spying." So I was not above a bit of prevarication, if I had to, to get my job done. I remember going into the Ministry of Health, in this military government, and I would deal with, let's say, the advisor to the deputy minister. The Deputy Minister was a Korean, but the advisor was the guy you talked to, because we were running the place. And so I would say, "The Ford Foundation is planning to give medical scholarships here; however, we want to know the level of medical education of all the doctors in the country." I wanted help to make up a proper form, both in English and in Korean, that would give me that data. Then I asked that it be sent all over the country, filled out, and returned. With the police force, it was a similar approach. With the military, it was a different form; everyone was given a different story.

The only person who ever questioned me, who ever said, "Hey, is there any truth in what you are telling me?", was the colonel who was the advisor to the military -- the Korean Constabulary, they called it. He wanted to know who the hell I really was. So I gave him Mr. Sergeant's number, and he called Sergeant up. And after he got it straightened out with Sergeant, he agreed to go along with what I was doing.

I collected, in every profession, in every area, masses of files. I was then in the process of getting them translated and put into some organized fashion, because everything was Dewey Decimal System. I had clerks working for me.

I was still a sergeant, but with a "Mister," status; then my enlistment was up. My boss said "We

want you to continue here; the State Department wants you to continue. State is willing to put up a P-1 slot," (Bertsch was the lowest professional grade) "for you to become a professional here." So I took a discharge. But I had to get my parents' permission, because I still wasn't 21. I became a P-1 in the State Department and continued to do just what I had done.

I then began to work with a man named Leonard Bertsch. He was sort of the senior political officer for the command. I would go to meetings with him with Koreans, and we would meet with people such as Kim Kyu-sik, Kim Ku and other leaders of the Korean Independence movement. I would listen. We had interpreters, because neither one of us spoke any Korean, to speak of. Bertsch was a Holy Cross/Harvard Law graduate, who had arrived in Korea in either late 1945 or early 1946 and had been with the Commission from the beginning. He was the action officer for the State Department on what had then been the policy of supporting the coalition effort for a coalition government. This effort was very anti-Rhee. Rhee was considered a right-wing extremist, and the State Department looked on him that way. Now General Hodge didn't. Hodge was a very right-wing guy.

"Hodge, Bertsch, Lurchie" -- they used to say. Hodge was the commanding general of XXIV Corps, a lieutenant general; Lurch was the military governor of Korea, a major general; and Bertsch was a first lieutenant. He was later a P-5; he took a discharge there. He was the guy who was managing this whole coalition effort. I got to meet many Koreans, moving around with him, during my last six months there; that is after I became a civilian and worked with him.

But the whole thing blew up. After that article by George Kennan in Foreign Affairs under the pseudonym, Mr. X, Sources of Soviet Conduct, you could just feel it in the Commission; you could feel there was this complete change in attitude about this whole effort of ours to work with the left and to try to get the left and the right to work together for a unified Korea. We had been trying to do this.

Somebody had to be the scapegoat for this change in policy. Bertsch was very bright, but also irritated the hell out of some of these older officers, who couldn't keep up with him. He had a photographic memory. He would read something and he would remember it. Anyway, he ended up having to take the fall for this coalition effort. By then, they had closed the US-Soviet Commission down. And they had pulled those of us who were over at the Soviet Commission, who had been with Political Advisory Group, the few of us who were left. Sergeant had left by then. Most of them had gone back to the States, gotten out of the military, that type of thing. I was given a desk in the G-2 bullpen, along with all these lieutenant colonels. Bertsch was made my assistant. They were really going to knock him down, until they could ship him out of there. So, for about three weeks, he ended up working for me. It was very degrading, because I felt he was a first-class man and what they were doing to him was unfair. He was being accused of mollycoddling Communists and all of this.

There was an awful lot of corruption going on among some of the officers there -- stories that you heard within the intelligence community. There was a fellow named Goodfellow, who had gotten in trouble. Even the CIC was selling stuff on the black market to obtain extra-operational funds. This spilled over and had a detrimental effect on intelligence operations that were going on at that time. They tried to implicate him in currency exchange corruption.

But it was years later that some Koreans talked to me about Bertsch and those meetings. I was asked to do some research about this period. The grant, which had come from Koro University, suddenly was canceled because a new dean had been appointed. I just didn't have the money to go running around without some support. Bertsch's widow offered to let me see all of the personal letters that he had written about that period to her, which nobody had ever seen. They concerned the first year of the Joint Commission and all his efforts working with the Korean political leaders who were on the Coalition Committee. Maybe later, when there are fewer financial demands on family resources, I will be able to do this on my own.

I felt that the Joint Commission was a very frustrating thing. The Soviets were not about to compromise. That was very obvious. This was all an exercise in futility. I felt we were dealing with people, as a country, that were much more sophisticated, in terms of double dealing and all these things that were going on, than we were. Compared to both the Soviets and the Koreans, who had lived through the Korean provisional government, where they were killing each other and fighting the Japanese through assassination and all that, we were sort of babes in the woods. I felt this, in terms of most of the things we attempted. And a lot of the information we were obtaining was colored by our own perceptions of what Asia was.

I can still remember the night of the Korean election to elect the National Assembly of Korea. It was to be overseen by the U.N. All American troops were under curfew; they weren't allowed out. I was put on detail to UNTCOK to observe that election. There was this group of people including UNTCOK delegates and staff that was allowed to act as observers; I was one of the observers. There was an awful lot of shootings and fighting at the polls. But the election went off. And it was a very adventurous day for me.

That evening, I went to an early-evening movie. Because Jeeps were stolen, we had a parking lot that was guarded; my Jeep was parked in a parking lot. As I was going to get it, the lights of a car flashed on a man whose face was bloody and he was staggering. His coat flew open, and here was an American .45 hanging on a lanyard underneath his coat. I knew civilian Koreans (he wasn't in the military) weren't supposed to be armed. I wasn't armed, but I started to follow him. We went down one of these little back alleys, where it was blacker than hell. I could hear the click of this thing. When it stopped clicking, I would stop. Every time I did, I backed against the wall. One time, I backed into somebody. It was a policeman back in there.

By the time we got things straightened out (he spoke some English -- I spoke practically no Korean), we went to a police station outside of there. There was somebody there who spoke good English, and I explained what I had seen. So we all went back together.

I can still remember being back in there. They gave me a pistol. On the ground, they found this guy hidden behind a log with his pistol. In the end, they talked him into backing out. He came out with his hands up, and they hit him. I never saw somebody beaten up so badly in my life. I felt sick about it. They took him to the police station.

The next morning, I can still remember, Colonel Watlington, who was the G-2, called me in and said, "Well, we got somebody out there doing his own arresting. You shouldn't be doing this type

thing. You will get yourself hurt."

But I can still remember that was the election day, that first election. There were a lot of problems on both sides. I couldn't say it was a completely fair election.

A lot of the people I was working with were what you would call "bright guys." The enlisted men in a headquarters engineering battalion had to be somewhat educated even to be there except for the truck drivers. The professional people at the Commission were all very bright. Among the troops I was living with, you had the band living out there, but I didn't get to know them. You had one or two other people who had come for the same reason I had come, with high AGC scores.

One fellow, Charles (Chuck) Allen, was out of Swarthmore. His father was a medical doctor in Swarthmore, Pa. He was assigned to write the nightly intelligence newsletter for the top officials -- the general officers -- that came out early every morning. He had access to all the intelligence going on in Korea -- everything. He was a liberal guy, and he saw an awful lot of this as being crap, as being unfair. You know, right-wing extremism. He felt that some of these people we would throw in jail were being falsely accused, and he didn't like it; so he started writing letters to these people in these jails down in the southern part of Korea. Suddenly, when the authorities realized this guy, Allen, who was responsible for writing and had access to all the top secret stuff, was the author of these letters, they canned him. Allen was not happy with the Osu Rebellion and all those things that went on at the time and how it was handled.

I got to know people who were working in the information and the education end of the command, they were soldiers who worked for STARS & STRIPES. Someone in the U of Maryland program there asked me to teach a course in analytical geometry which I did for one semester. Fellows such as these were in the educational program. Therefore they were much more liberal in their outlook. They didn't think too much of Hodge and the whole approach to how we were handling Korea or the Koreans.

Hodge did go to Koreans who spoke some English; he went to the extreme right-wing landlords who had participated and worked along with the Japanese. He looked on them as being Western educated and they could do the most good. Out of my experience there (and not just out of this first tour there, but I was there a good many years over the period, off and on until 1959), I came to the conclusion that the Japanese, as imperialists, were really probably better in some ways than the Brits, the French, or the Dutch, for this fundamental reason: they took all the good jobs for themselves -- the president of this, the president of that, the head of the bank, but they also felt that if Korea and Taiwan were to be properly exploited, you had to have an educated work force. So they pushed basic education. That, along with the Confucian value system that pushed education, made it so that the Koreans, when we went in there, had a 90-percent literacy rate. This was true also, I understand, in Taiwan. With that as a background, even though these people didn't have experience as head of the bank, you could create leaders more quickly in that situation. Whereas, in India, where I later served, you had a few top people and then the rest; the few at the top became the new domestic imperialists which creates a wholly different situation.

The people who had fought for Korean independence and who had been in all types of troubles

were such as a man named Cho Pong-am, with whom I later got very much involved; he had been in prison and been tortured by the Japanese; he became the first Minister of Agriculture in the first Rhee government in 1948 and later ran against Rhee; I was the American who had the closest relationship with him. They were not asked for anything or talked to -- to any extent.

The only time we were involved with those types of people was this Coalition-Committee effort on the part of Bertsch, where I got to know Kim Ku. If you know the history of Korea, Kim Ku was a revolutionary who planned the assassination of one of the Japanese princes -- by his assassination squads in Shanghai. Kim Yu Sik was a gentleman-scholar type who was sort of the scholarly Confucian who headed the Coalition Committee. And then you had Yo Ung-hyong, who was another one of the leaders who was somewhat left and a scholar anti-Japanese type. They were all in this thing called the Coalition Committee. Kim Ku and Yo Ung-hyong were both assassinated with Rhee's sponsorship.

When the Coalition Committee was ended, when Bertsch and that whole effort was shot down, that effort, (which the State Department had been pushing up until then) went out the window, with Bertsch taking the fall.

I was just young enough and junior enough that I didn't get hurt in all this. But I could see people above me who were getting hurt, and very unfairly hurt. And this went on for years. I was the head of a group assembling biographic data. Sergeant ran the whole political intelligence effort of which this project was just one part.

It was my impression that we were at the most basic level of trying to understand Korea and the Koreans. That is why I was involved in the more bureaucratic aspect of assembling this basic form of data. It took some doing, and it took a lot of organization, a lot of forms and a lot of time getting them printed. I knew I didn't know the right questions to ask for a doctor's form, but I knew where to go to get it. So I was managing this thing.

Along with this (because that got to be dull at times), I was going with Bertsch to these meetings and listening to all this stuff. I would be reading all the latest minutes from what was happening, and the fights over the political parties and whom we were going to recognize as a political party, and the registration of political parties.

You can say the whole period there, in terms of what I was doing, was a mixture of things, with biographic form collection as my base. But people would come to me and say, "Can you find out..." I remember a lieutenant colonel of military intelligence (MI) coming to me and saying, "I hear you have a connection into Khabarovsk, Siberia. Can you find out so and so." Well, my connection there was a connection with a Korean, whom I knew, had some connections there. So I went and threw the question at him. I don't know how he got his answer, but he got me an answer. It was that type thing. So, in time, you got to know people, and people got to know you.

After this many years, I don't remember the names of some of these people. I can remember some of the people who were on the Commission, like Monegan and Paul Sturm, who was a Foreign Service officer. Some of them were economists, some of them political types. Some of them had been with OSS, but they had previously been with the Foreign Service or State. So you

had a real mixture, a mixed bag.

We had an operation running above the 38th Parallel -- a big operation, being run by a Korean Colonel Ko. He was running this for G-2 XXIV Corps, in terms of order of battle. He had a whole slew of agents, and this thing developed over the years. But it was going back then, and I knew about it. And it was probably the most effective low-level-order of battle intelligence operation going.

The highest-level thing going that I got wind of -- and I didn't get wind of this in terms of North Korea. Some of this -- it is hard for me, in telling stories, to keep it all exactly chronological. But this happened in a period that I wasn't there. You see, I left right before the government was formed. After the election, I was offered a job in our embassy, but I had gone back to school. But after the government was formed and the first cabinet appointed (and this has to do with North Korea), Rhee was looking around for people who had the capability to be cabinet ministers. He had a limited number of educated people to call on. One of the people he had heard about was a captain in the British Royal Navy (Reserve), Captain Shin Song-mo, who had commanded merchant ships, but under military control, during World War II. Of course, how many Koreans get to be a captain in the British Navy, even as a reserve? So the word got back, somehow, I think, through the British Embassy, that they had this captain who was an educated man. And then they had another man who was educated, named Yi Kuk-no, who had been to school in England -- I think to the London School of Economics. They thought that they might be helpful to the Korean government in forming a new government.

In my research on what was happening, after I got back there in 1952, I started noticing that Shin Song-mo was no longer in the cabinet, but he had been the second Minister of Defense, just as the war was breaking out. There were all sorts of stuff in the files, and from people I talked to, about the fact that he had been accused of corruption in smuggling between North and South Korea.

When I started looking a little deeper, I found out that he had been on a ship coming out and had bragged he was working for MI6, British intelligence. Here he was no longer anything, but he was still around there. While reading these older files that we had in the Embassy, most of which we had gotten from US CIC, and trying to fit pieces together in terms of what had happened while I was away, in terms of cabinet personalities, the files indicated that this friend of his, Yi Kuk-no, who had been mentioned by the British, instead of coming south to help in the government, had gone north. And he became Minister without Portfolio in the North Korean government.

It also was strange to me to find that the two ends of this smuggling route, one had Yi Kuk-no on it, and the other had Shin Song-mo, the Defense Minister. So I started thinking double-think. I thought there might be more to this than just smuggling, especially since MI6 is maybe involved here. There were some files that indicated that Shin Song-mo had been warning the command and everybody else that there was a war coming with North Korea.

After I retired, I went to the Archives and pulled some files on Shin Song-mo because some of that stuff had been declassified. These files clearly indicated that Shin was predicting the coming

of the war constantly during the spring of 1950. Embassy reporting indicated this fact. However, much of it was discounted as scare tactics to obtain more military aid. My guess is that if we were to just try to find out where we had the hardest information that said a war was coming we should look at what we were obtaining from the British from their clandestine sources via CIA liaison with them.

Because, as I have learned since, the Armed Forces Security Agency failed to predict the Korean War. I was the first one at the Archives after they opened these files, and they showed them to me. They said, "We just opened this stuff up, so you can see it." And they gave me these documents that showed that NSA was created because of the failure of AFSA. And the failure of AFSA was that nobody was allowed to put any requirements on them but the military. We, in the State Department, had been saying, "Look, Korea is a problem." But they weren't listening. If they had been listening to their radios out there, they would have known this thing was coming.

But you can tell a war is coming if you are told to do it and you are doing it in any depth, because you get tactical stuff. They knew what was wrong, and that was why, according to these documents, NSA was set up. They said, "You boys failed, and the State Department wanted you to do this." When they set NSA up, State became one of the organizations which could place requirements on NSA. This change came out of the Korean War.

HOWELL S. TEEPLE
Radio Broadcasting
Seoul (1947-1949)

Howell S. Teeple was born in Texas in 1921. He received his BA from Louisiana State University in 1943 and served in the US Army from 1943 to 1945 overseas. His assignments abroad include Seoul, Manila, New York, New Delhi, Adana, Tripoli, Monrovia and Cebu. Mr. Teeple was interviewed by Earl W. Sherman in 1999.

TEEPLE: So in September of '47, I went to Seoul, Korea, which was under U.S. occupation at that time. General Hodges was the commanding general, but the military occupation was being turned over to Korean civilian control. The Department of State was to open an embassy in Seoul and take over from the military. I remember taking the train from New York City to San Francisco on my way to Seoul, Korea, in September, '47. Then I flew in Army aircraft - this was before the separation into the Army and the Air Force - to Hawaii. I stayed there for a while waiting for the next plane to go to Japan. We flew to several small islands - Johnston Island, Kwajalein Island, and Guam - to get to Japan. So that was an extensive flying experience, flying in a DC-6, four-motored transport planes. We finally got to Japan and stayed awhile observing General MacArthur's military occupation. Eventually, I flew to Korea to take up my assignment.

Q: Were there any indications at the time you were there of the struggle that was to come in '51?

TEEPLE: Actually 1950, the war broke out, in June, June 25th, 1950. The Japanese had occupied

Korea since the early 1900s and they only left at the end of World War II. Korea was a poor country, and it was divided at the 38th parallel. We were very conscious of this because the north part of Korea at that time generated all the electricity for the whole country and quite often the North Koreans would turn off the electricity in Seoul and other South Korean places, just to let us know they were in charge up there. If some ripple happened to their dislike, they would turn off the electricity for three or four hours, and we were in a fix. We were very conscious of the Russians, who were occupying North Korea, while the Americans were occupying South Korea. I never got to North Korea, but we did have a United Nations [UN] mission in Seoul, whose members went up to Pyongyang periodically. I knew those UN people and got to talk to them and heard about the northern part of the country.

Q: In your work, was the language problem severe? Did you have interpreters there?

TEEPLE: We had interpreters, and I had a Korean language tutor. I had to learn Korean on the job. Every morning, from 7:30 to 9:00, I studied Korean with my tutor and I got somewhat conversant in it, although never learned to read or write the language. I was working right at the Korean Broadcasting System advising them on how to operate a radio station, because they had little experience. The Japanese had run all radio up until World War II ended. I had four or five other Americans working for me at that young age, so it was an enviable position. We set up a program schedule, and, of course, we had certain propaganda programs that were beamed to North Korea, special commentaries every night.

Q: I see. This would resemble in some aspect a Voice of America [VOA] approach?

TEEPLE: No, it wasn't like the Voice of America at all. The Voice of America was broadcasting from New York to Korea at that time, and the signal wasn't good. VOA had a completely separate operation, which was under the State Department. Then on January 1, 1948, we opened the American embassy in Seoul, Korea, and I was asked to join the embassy group there, along with three other information and cultural types in our previously Army office. The PAO [public affairs officer] was a wonderful man, Jim Stewart. He was my mentor and taught me so much. He'd been a *Time* correspondent in China. He was born in Japan of missionary parents, both he and his wife. The first ambassador was John Muccio, an outstanding Foreign Service officer. The DCM [deputy chief of mission] was Everett Drumright. One of the distinctions of the embassy at that time - it was mostly all male, except for some secretaries, and mostly all bachelors. The ambassador was a bachelor; the DCM was a bachelor; Jim Stewart, while he was married, his wife wasn't there - she was in California; and I was a bachelor. But after the McCarthy hearings of that period, when the Senator was commenting on homosexuals in the State Department, suddenly all of us got married. I actually got married some years later, but I remember the ambassador married a year or two after I left the post in 1950, and so did Drumright, the DCM.

Q: That's interesting you mentioned Mr. Drumright because he has been a member in the past of the retired Foreign Service group that we know here in San Diego.

TEEPLE: Yes, until he passed away a couple of years ago. I used to see him at our Foreign Service luncheons in San Diego, and I met his wife there. I had never met his wife previously.

Q: Yes, and when was it that you completed your work there in Seoul?

TEEPLE: I was scheduled for transfer in January of 1950 but was first sent down to the Philippines, to Manila. Being a bachelor, they sent me there to fill in for some chap in the information program who was on leave.

Q: This was to Manila?

TEEPLE: Yes, this was in Manila, and then I went over in a similar position to Hong Kong, where we opened the first American Library in Hong Kong in 1950, in an old movie building there on Nathan Road. Then I went on home leave. I was then assigned to the Voice of America in New York, which pleased me very much. I joined VOA in April, 1950 in New York, where they were broadcasting on 57th Street and Broadway in three different buildings.

Q: And for what length of time did you stay there?

TEEPLE: I stayed at the Voice of America quite a while, because this was my field, interest and my liking. I stayed in New York from 1950 to 1954. The Voice was transferred to Washington in 1954. I was the executive producer for the Far East Division. At first, we only had only Chinese and Korean language broadcasts when I joined, and then we added Southeast Asian languages. We added Vietnamese, Malay, Indonesian, and Thai and I was the chief of production for all VOA programs in those languages.

Q: Well, it would seem to me that the wonderful experience that you had in Korea, having gone from New York City earlier, across the country, and then flying through the islands over to Seoul and then having that wonderful experience of working there with the South Koreans and setting up in broadcasting, must have been invaluable when working for VOA.

TEEPLE: It was. And I was one of the few people at the Voice who had had any Foreign Service experience. They were mostly local people in New York who were experienced in radio. Of course, all the broadcasters, the people on the air, were native-language employees. We didn't have any Americans broadcasting in Far East languages, but Americans were in charge in the production and the writing of programs.

Q: I see. In your work, and in setting up all of this variety of programs and in the variety of Asian languages, was it difficult to obtain people? How did they screen them, for instance?

TEEPLE: When they enlarged the Far East Division to include Southeast Asian languages, they sent a recruitment team to Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, with an FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agent. They went to the local radio stations in the countries and hired on contract employees from the local radio stations to come work at the Voice of America on two- or four-year contracts. The FBI man cleared them on the spot. That was the way VOA hired Asian broadcasters. Later on, some people living in the U.S. would apply - Chinese and Koreans and South Vietnamese - to work at VOA, but they had to have broadcast or journalistic experience, usually, to qualify. All had to go through the usual security clearance. This was right after and during the McCarthy hearings, and the State Department was extra sensitive about

security clearances.

Q: Did you feel that, from your experience in Asia and in South Korea where you were in daily contact with the language, that once you were in New York and in Washington working in the VOA programs, that you had some control of Asian languages that gave you some rapport with the people that you worked with directly?

TEEPLE: I had a limited speaking ability in Korean, but there were Americans on every language desk who were fluent in the language. They had to check the translation of all scripts and check the broadcasts as well.

Q: You were working probably more directly with programs?

TEEPLE: I was working in the studios putting on the broadcasts, yes. We had to get the news together. Every broadcast started with the news. We tried to be objective with the news. Then we would usually have a commentary and then features. And this was in the days before tape, so we recorded everything on disks.

Q: Isn't that interesting. That's a rather rudimentary time.

TEEPLE: We even put on dramas and had to record them on disk. You didn't have the beauty of being able to edit very often, or not at all, so you had to rehearse extensively.

Q: You were live, and that was it.

TEEPLE: The news was always live, but features and commentaries were usually recorded before broadcasts.

Q: I see.

TEEPLE: Later on we did get tape at VOA. First it was wire, and then the regular tape we are still using. Productions became very adaptable with tape, after when we moved to Washington, after 1954.

Q: Well, from those very early times, working with VOA, it must be interesting to look back and see what magnitude of increase in the VOA's range and magnitude of its influence worldwide.

TEEPLE: VOA has always been popular in Asia, I'm glad to say. We had good signals into China, especially, and into Korea. We had many listeners there - we know because we got a lot of mail. Even during the communist period in China, we got mail, and also from North Korea as well. VOA had a large listening audience, especially in Korea and China.

Q: Well, as a part of that, it seems to me when I had heard VOA from overseas in posts that I enjoyed, VOA would have listener letters. Was there any recognition of people sending in, by person, that is, recognizing the person's name and saying, "We have a letter from..."?

TEEPLE: Yes, there were programs like that. They had programs where they acknowledged a listener's letter and encouraged people to write in. And sometimes VOA had contests where they would give away radios or calendars. We got a lot of mail, and there was a section that dealt with the mail, did research on mail and tried to analyze the mail.

Q: From that time you spent in Washington and with VOA, you were working with programming. Can you remember any particularly incidents related to that critical time and the war in Asia?

TEEPLE: Yes, one of the most critical times was shortly after I joined VOA in New York at the outbreak of the Korean War. That happened June 25, 1950. It was a Sunday morning, I remember, when I heard the news on the radio. I rushed to the studios immediately from the Brooklyn Heights place where I was living, and arranged immediately to go on the air with a Korean language special program, mostly news, of course. That was a critical time. There were others, too, similar, during the '50s. The outbreak of the Korean War was the one crisis time I remember so distinctly.

Q: Did you have any TDY? For instance, did they send you back to Asia for any particular special-

TEEPLE: I didn't go, but we did send people from the Far East Division out to Korea as correspondents. A chap who worked with me, Bob Lasher, I remember, volunteered immediately to go to Korea as a correspondent for VOA during the war period. He had never been overseas before, but did well as a foreign correspondent.

DONALD S. MACDONALD
Political Officer
Seoul (1948-1950)

Donald S. MacDonald was born in Massachusetts in 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from MIT in 1938 and a Ph.D. from George Washington University in political science. Mr. MacDonald served in the US Army from 1942-1946 and joined the foreign service in 1947. His overseas posts include Korea, Istanbul and Geneva. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 25, 1990.

MACDONALD: I took the Foreign Service entrance examination on the troop ship coming home. I never thought that I would pass it. When I was accepted in the Foreign Service, I did volunteer for Korea because at the time the Department was looking for people willing to go there. I felt my ignorance acutely and I was interested in returning. I loved the country; I had enjoyed my year there very much. It turned out later that this Korean training program had been set up by George McCune, who was at that time in charge of Korean affairs. He was a historian - the son of missionaries. He had successfully argued for at least a pilot program for Korean language officers. Against considerable opposition, he managed to get three positions. So when they asked for volunteers, I was one of the three and received about eight months of Korean

language training, returning to Korea in Summer, 1948. It was primarily language training. George McCune, who was by then at the University of California and in very poor health -- he died shortly thereafter -- and his wife gave us a course on Korean history, along with the language program. So I did have a better feel for Korea when I returned for a second tour. Even then, I was still terribly ignorant not only about Korea, but also about politics in general. After all, my MIT training had been in chemistry and business administration, and except for the one year in Korea, my horizon had been the trucking business and civil engineering.

It wasn't until I returned to Korea as a rotational junior officer that I had the opportunity to do political reporting. It was only then that I began to find out what was going on. By June, 1948, the political situation was still very confused. It was marginally better than what I had left. Politically it was complicated by the split between the right and left. There were many demonstrations. There had been a couple of major assassinations. But the situation was not so dire that one had to fear for life and limb. We moved around freely. The bulk of the population was friendly. A lot of people were complaining about what they thought we were failing to do.

I arrived right after the May 10 election which took place under UN supervision and which set up the Constituent Assembly. Therefore there was a certain amount of hope in the air along with fear of events in North Korea. One problem was that the North Koreans on May 15, 1948 had pulled the switch on the electric power -- the north being the primary source of power for the whole peninsula. In terms of creature comforts, there were some difficulties. Living was poor particularly for the Koreans.

I arrived in Seoul before Ambassador Muccio -- our first post-war ambassador to Korea. The US military was still in control. The Military Governor, General Dean, had two advisors: Joseph Jacobs as political advisor -- a dyed-in-the-wool arch-conservative -- and Arthur Bunch as economic advisor -- dyed-in-the-wool New Deal liberal. The two of them hated each other and were giving more or less contradictory advice to General Dean. The State Department was a presence but not an authority. The only thing it really did was consular work.

Before independence came, Muccio arrived in April, 1949. An American mission to Korea was then established with four sections: diplomatic, economic (including aid) section, a military advisory group and a huge administrative service group which in effect ran a small city because we could not rely on the Korean economy for anything. My impression was that Muccio ran this mission quite well. He was ably assisted by Everett Drumright. They didn't see eye-to-eye politically, but they were a good team to run the ship.

The Muccio-Drumright split was similar to the Jacobs-Bunch differences. Muccio was a Truman appointee, a life-long Democrat from Providence, R.I. and Drumright was a China hand who had been very much in the anti-communists camp. He had come from Drumright, Oklahoma. They just had different political perspectives.

The US military really did turn over its authority. The Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1947 had decided that they were going to pull out all troops out of Korea because they were needed in Europe. The military, in a sense, could not wait to get home. There was nothing in Korea that was attractive for them. Technically, although the Koreans achieved independence on August 15, 1948 and the

Republic of Korea was proclaimed, the initial and property settlement, which transferred the real authority, was not effective until September. There was considerable bargaining over that settlement between the two sides. The U.S. Army Forces in Korea headquarters pulled out in January, 1949, leaving a regimental combat team at the insistence of the Koreans. That team pulled out at the end of June, 1949. After the first few months, the military had no official role in representing US views. It is true that President Rhee enjoyed playing the military against the civilians. He could frequently get US military sympathy for his diatribes against the State Department which he considered a bunch of communists. In that sense, there was a slight dual line, which really didn't count for much until the Korean War because the military presence was so small.

By the time Rhee took over, he had made most of the Americans mad at him. He had a propensity for making all who had worked with him mad at him. It was extraordinary. He had a single minded conviction that with his own unique attributes and qualifications he would be able to do anything. This was by no means un-Korean, but he exceeded most Koreans. It was he actually who had insisted on a separate government for South Korea when the Koreans were still hoping for a unified government of the peninsula. Rhee knew how to manipulate Americans and did so. He was stubborn and mule-headed; he had an aura as the leading nationalist patriot fighter for Korea's independence. He made Americans quite miserable. None of us liked him although we had some respect for his ability. Furthermore he became increasingly dictatorial. This turned off the junior members of our staff, particularly. I remember vividly trying to include all the criticisms I had heard in my dispatches, which Drumright took out, saying: "Young man, it is your business to report what happened, but not to pontificate".

The missionaries returned to Korea beginning in early 1946. But the first one that did return to Kwangju was more a property custodian to save missionary property. The missionaries had been expelled by the Japanese in 1940. There was an Irish Catholic priest who had been in a concentration camp during the War and who returned to Kwangju to take over the Catholic parish. It was he who recommended to the US military government the Korean who was named Police Chief. At the national level, although I didn't observe it personally, it was quite clear from my reading since then, that missionaries played a very important role in influencing the military government's decisions on which Koreans were trustworthy and what policies to follow. When I returned in 1948, there were a number of missionaries back in residence. They had mostly picked up where they had left off and they were an important aspect of the American presence. They controlled some aid through private channels; they were assisting in the reorganization of the Protestant and Catholic communities; they were reopening educational institutions which was important at a time when the public educational system was just restarting. Their role in the 1945-50 period, although significant, was not a deciding one.

Once I started doing political reporting, I was in touch with some government people, but I tended to work through the Embassy's Korean political assistants more than by direct contact. For one thing, my Korean was still inadequate for conducting business. In any case, we tended to distrust the government anyway. We preferred to go to newsmen, opposition politicians and others to try to get information on what was going on in the country, leaving government official contacts to our seniors. The contact with the government was carried on by more senior officers. The junior officers tended to be in touch with other sources. A considerable number of the

government officials spoke English and therefore had contacts at social occasions. The clearest evidence that the Americans were not captive of Rhee's government was the episode of April/May 1950 when the Americans under Washington direction and on the recommendation of Ambassador Muccio, issued an aide-memoir to the Korean government informing them that unless they improved their financial management process and unless they held the elections, scheduled for May 1950, on time, the United States would review its economic assistance policies.

The outbreak of hostilities in June, 1950 came as a complete surprise to us. It was not that we didn't believe that war could break out. There had been elaborate emergency plans drawn up, which were actually followed when the fighting began. But we were encouraged by our military advisory group to over-estimate South Korean military capabilities. We also underestimated the capacity of the North Koreans. Although the threat was obviously there, it was discounted. Also President Rhee had been crying "wolf" for so long that when in May, 1950 he and his defense minister began citing movement of tanks and troops north of the dividing line, we dismissed it as an effort to get more military assistance. In fact, we were more concerned that Rhee would move north; after all, he was always talking about it. Even though we recognized the threat and were planning for the eventuality of a war, when it actually happened it was a total surprise.

The first word that I received about the war was a telephone call on Sunday morning, June 25, from Everett Drumright. I was in bed asleep. He said: "Macdonald, we have a little emergency. You had better get to the office". I went and never did get home very much thereafter. The first matter to attend to was to determine whether the invasion was for real. There had been many skirmishes at division level at the front since 1949; it was never completely clear which side started these incidents. Therefore we had to establish the veracity of the reports of the North Korean attacks. It wasn't until Monday that we actually heard gunfire. Events progressed more or less according to plan for the first day. We started to segregate classified documents for destruction. We organized people in civil defense ways by designating air raid shelters, appointed wardens, arranged communications and so on. As it became increasingly clear that the South Korean Army was not going to hold, then the pace got increasingly frantic. We were burning classified documents on the roof of the Embassy steadily for two or three days. Some of the Marine guards and junior officers were assigned to that detail. Meanwhile, we still had to write reports.

Ambassador Muccio personally had to hold the hand of the Korean government. The first group to be evacuated consisted of dependents -- women and children. They left Sunday night and were put on board a fertilizer boat which had just been ordered to dump its cargo overboard to make room for them. That group left for Japan. The next group consisted of non-essential employees and finally everybody left except a group of volunteers that the Ambassador had requested. I was one of those. I wasn't a personal witness, but there seems to be no doubt that there was a disgraceful episode at plane-side Tuesday morning when some of our senior officials were elbowing each other out of the way to get on the plane first with their hunting rifles, their electronic gear and whatever other things that they had taken fancy to and had therefore had to go along with them. It was a mess.

I got home long enough to help my wife pack up one foot locker and got her off. After that I

returned home once before I left with Ambassador Muccio. My last act was to go back to the Embassy on Tuesday afternoon to check it out to make sure that everybody had left. The only person that was left was Victor Loftus, the finance officer, who was responsible for \$10,000 in gold bars that he couldn't find. I don't know when he left, but he did get out eventually. By Tuesday afternoon, the gunfire was clearly audible. That afternoon, around 4 PM, I drove out of Seoul in the Ambassador's car. He was driving it because he didn't want to leave it for the Communists. We drove to Suwon, where a temporary headquarters had been set up, both for the small Embassy team and the military group that was being assembled for assessment purposes.

In Suwon, we were essentially supporting the military and trying to report the situation to Washington using "one time pads" -- a coded tear-off pad. These were the days before sophisticated electronics. I remember making a bed for General MacArthur to sleep in case he decided to sleep overnight, which he did not. We set up our headquarters in a former agriculture school that had been built by the Japanese. I can vividly remember General Church, who was the leader of the first reconnaissance party from Tokyo, after looking at maps and listening to reports for several hours, saying: "No one knows where anybody is!". It was in that climate that on Thursday or Friday someone yelled that the North Koreans were coming. One of the communication technicians threw a thermal grenade at the communications gear to destroy it and thereby set fire to the entire building, which had been built with well seasoned wood. It burned immediately. We then set off in the middle of the night for Taejon, where the next temporary headquarters was established. In Taejon, there was little need for normal Embassy work. So I typed intelligence reports for the 24th Division G-2 until I was asked to make a trip through the rest of South Korea to make sure that all the missionaries had been evacuated. General Dean asked me also to find two missing soldiers who he had heard had been in Kunsan -- a very touching example of his concern. I ascertained that soldiers had gotten out. I did a "Paul Revere ride" around the various missionary headquarters and told them to leave. I finally found my way to Pusan. I never returned to Taejon because in the meantime the 24th Division was defeated and had to fall back to Taegu. Eventually, I found myself in Taegu where Drumright was in charge of a forward Embassy echelon. Muccio was in Pusan in charge of a rear echelon. Drumright spent most of his time checking up and reporting on the military situation. Muccio was spending his time calming President Rhee and doing what he could to stabilize the situation there.

I should emphasize that history has not been fair to John Muccio in recognizing what he did single-handedly to hold the situation together between June 25, when the war started, and June 28, when the Security Council called upon the North Koreans to withdraw and the Americans began to get involved. In that period, the Koreans were left in total doubt about American intentions. It became quickly clear to them that their Army was not going to hold. Muccio managed somehow to instill enough confidence in the Korean government so that when American assistance arrived in the form of air cover and eventually ground troops, what could be saved was saved. It was very difficult, but had Muccio not taken that firm positive reassuring stance, based on very little evidence, the situation would have been much worse.

Harold Noble has published a book, called "Embassy at War" which chronicles day-to-day what happened, and he cites one hilarious staff meeting in which I announced that I wasn't doing enough in this perilous hour and if the Embassy couldn't give me something to do, I would volunteer for active military duty -- I was a reserve officer at the time. Partly because of that,

they sent me on a mission to North Korea just after word of the Chinese intervention had reached us. They wanted me to stand on the railroad track running down into Sinanju which was then close to the fighting. I was to interview refugees to see whether they were really refugees or "fifth column" troops being sent to the rear of the UN command. I spent a few very cold days doing that.

Somewhat later, just before the fall of Pyongyang, a team from the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the State Department, headed by Richard Scammon, arrived to go to Pyongyang for interviews and examination of captured documents. This was an effort to understand how the Soviet Union had operated in North Korea. This led to a Departmental report called "A Case Study in Communist Take-over". I was sent along as a hat-holder and logistics officer. When the team left, I decided to stay for a while because there wasn't much else to do, and the commander of the American military government team in Pyongyang was an officer for whom I had worked before, during my military government training. I joined him until orders to evacuate were received. The colonel told me to leave first because he didn't want to take responsibility for me. Actually, we spent a night in a school house on the way out. An ammunition dump, which was right next door, exploded and dumped the wall of the school right on us. That is the closest I came to being a war casualty.

There wasn't much an Embassy staff could do in a war. Furthermore, once the American military arrived, they virtually took over Korea again. The 1947 situation was almost reconstituted. Now it was called the "Korean Civil Assistance Command". To a considerable extent, it displaced the Korean government in key areas, with the exception of education and social affairs. Even in these areas, there was American involvement. Therefore, there wasn't much that the Korean government could do either. They were reduced to a small pocket of South Korea. The rest of the country was under communist control. It was really a holding operation until the fortunes of war changed, which eventually they did.

I left Korea on December 17, 1950 on the last commercial flight out of Seoul. I was assigned to Istanbul as a rest tour where I stayed until 1953.

EVERETT DRUMRIGHT
Political Advisor and Deputy Chief of Mission
Seoul (1948-1951)

Everett Drumright received a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Oklahoma in 1929. His Foreign Service career included positions in China, the United Kingdom, Korea, Hong Kong, India, Taiwan, and Washington, DC. Mr. Drumright was interviewed by Mr. Lee Cotterman on December 5, 1988.

DRUMRIGHT: I was not even settled in my job in Tokyo when one day we got a telegram saying that Drumright would be needed in Korea, where a Korean Government was coming into power. There had been an election, a pretty free one, and Syngman Rhee had been elected

president and was going to take power in August, 1948. So we needed to establish an office -- a mission -- in Korea, and get going, because we had a lot to do. Our part of Korea had been a military governorship since 1945. We had pretty much run the south of Korea with some help from some topflight Koreans. But now they were going to be taking over and assuming the government.

My position was that of the deputy head of the office. I really had no definite position. I took the place of Joe Jacobs -- later our ambassador to Czechoslovakia -- for a month or two. Jacobs had been a China language officer, like myself, many years earlier, but hadn't served much in the Orient in the preceding 15 or 20 years. But he had been sent out for that job and had served there for a couple of years, and had done an excellent job with the military. The main show in Korea at the time was the US military. We were really in an advisory position, much like Sebald was with MacArthur in Japan. But we had a different title.

Very shortly after I arrived, Jacobs left and the consulate more or less closed down. We had a little consulate there, with the thought that we would eventually open a mission which we did. I started it up, looking for buildings and things, and John J. Muccio followed as special representative of the President, probably about the end of September. Muccio acted as special representative for a number of months before we had the official recognition and then Muccio became the ambassador. That also allowed the official establishment of an embassy. I was assigned as counselor of embassy, or later we started calling it deputy chief of mission. Eventually we established a large mission in Korea. We had quite a few people there before the invasion. We had a 500-man military advisory group; we had 100 or more people in our economic AID mission; and we had 30 or 40 people in our embassy.

We had close contact with the Koreans. For one thing, we had gotten to know Rhee even before he became President, and we got to know some of the other principals; e.g. the man who became prime minister, some of the chief legislators, etc. Rhee was an old-line revolutionary. He, as a young man, had come out of North Korea -- what we know now as North Korea -- and started agitating against the Japanese occupation. His activities eventually became so open and forceful that he was exiled. After that, he made some headway. It wasn't hard to stir up Koreans, who hated the Japanese and their occupation, and wanted to be free. He made enough headway to come to the Japanese attention and to be thrown out. For a while, I think he spent a few months or maybe a year or two in the Shanghai area of China, after which he went to the States, and he continued his revolutionary work, either from Hawaii or the mainland here, I think mainly in Washington, where the political power lay. He was always working for a free Korea, but with very little chance of any success until World War II. After that, I think his hopes were immensely lifted and were realized, of course, when the Japanese were defeated and had to withdraw completely from Korea.

I think we must remember that Korea, from its inception, was a country of dynasties, ruled by a powerful king. That was true right up until the Japanese took it over. If anything, they ruled the Korean people with even more rigor than their own rulers had in the past.

As for Syngman Rhee, he was an educated man. He knew about democracy in America; he had studied it there, and had been elected basically under a democratic process in Korea. He took

over as president to establish an entirely new government. It perhaps took a little autocracy at the time to get something going in a country that had never known democracy, that had little in the way of education -- few people had been educated. There were a few, but not many, and most of those had been educated in Japan. So they had to start from square one.

As I look back on it, I wouldn't say Rhee was terribly autocratic in those early years when I was there. He managed to establish a government. I think it was a government that was operating during the years I was there. He, I think, expected more help from us than he got. We had a fairly good economic program. I think it was beginning to show dividends after two years. We had a program of about \$100 million a year. We helped the Koreans to develop their economy, develop their banking system, their economic system. They had some good men in the Ministry of Finance and in the Central Bank; they had some knowledge about Western economics. Progress being made.

There was only a very small private sector economy. A good part of the economy was operated by the government. It had taken over the railroads and some of the big businesses at first which had been incorporated from Japanese ownership. So things were moving along, as I think we felt in the Embassy, not too badly. There was hope that something could come out of this.

As I said, Rhee, I think, was disappointed, particularly in terms of our military help. We left some stuff when we removed our forces from Korea. Our two last divisions left on June 30, 1949. That was about a year after Rhee took over, and a little over a year after we arrived there. We had opposed it. We said it was premature. By "we," I mean in our Embassy -- the Ambassador and the rest of us. We opposed the withdrawal of our military forces. We said it would make a dangerous situation much more dangerous. We also advocated a much stronger rearmament of the South Korean Defense Forces, which was poorly equipped. The position in Washington was that we would help them in establishing a little more than what we might call a constabulary, perhaps a combination of police and military, to take care of the law and order in Korea, and provide defense against the North if needed. Evidently there was a strong feeling in the United States that the World War was over, that we had done our bit, and other than keeping forces in a few places like Japan and Germany, we should bring the "boys" home. Unfortunately, Korea was not added to that list. We pulled out. The proof of the pudding there was that within about a year, there was a major invasion. By then we had pulled our forces out, leaving very little to oppose a North Korean invasion, and we had not supplied the South Koreans with the arms that would be required to put up a strong defense against a very strong North Korean military. That was not done. Washington felt that the World War was over, and we that we had provided adequate arms and advisory force to do what was necessary.

As I said, we had a large military advisory mission in Korea helping the South Koreans organize and train their forces, which amounted to about 100,000. The North Koreans had several hundred thousand men fully armed with tanks and heavy artillery. But our withdrawal was virtually an invitation to the North Koreans and their backers, the Soviets and the Chinese communists, to invade. Added to that was the fact that Dean Acheson, in an address in January of 1950, placed Korea outside the limits of our strategic interests. All in all, we drew a defense line that did not include South Korea, we withdrew our forces and pursued a policy of arming lightly a force of only about 100,000 South Koreans. That was the policy.

The State Department obviously was pursuing -- and perhaps the President and his staff were pursuing -- a policy that was very contrary to what we had recommended from the Embassy in Korea. Rhee was naturally quite unhappy with our policy. The upshot of all that was the invasion. I would have to say we were constantly worried about the possibility of an invasion, and the South Koreans, especially their military, were even more worried. They kept telling us and saying that the North Koreans were on the move and were preparing for something, but I have to admit that we didn't take it quite as seriously as we perhaps should have. But I am afraid that in light of the mind-set in Washington, we merely reported that it was an extraordinarily dangerous situation; perhaps we should have pushed harder to take some action to reduce tensions, but we didn't.

That is, up until the invasion, whereupon President Truman took charge and did quite a job of backing up. But by then, of course, the invasion had begun and the South Koreans were doing the best they could. They fought valiantly, but they had to retreat. We all had to retreat.

We finally ended up in the so-called Pusan perimeter -- about 60 miles long and 40 miles wide -- which we managed to defend, largely because by that time we had brought in some fairly strong forces -- part from Japan and some from the States. After the invasion, we had a better inkling of what was going on and what we had to do. Ambassador Muccio moved to Pusan with the Korean Government and tried to hold President Rhee's hand.

I recall going south to touch base with Rhee after we had to withdraw from Seoul. I was instructed by Muccio to make contact with him. Rhee had left Seoul without even notifying us, which I didn't really appreciate. But I did get in touch with him in a town about 100 miles south of Seoul. We had a long conversation one afternoon after I arrived. Rhee was extraordinarily bitter and critical of the U.S. I couldn't say very much. I felt considerable sympathy for him, and I wasn't able to give him any assurance at that time that we would be doing anything to help or whether he would be kicked out. Certainly if we didn't help, he would have been forced to leave Korea altogether in about two weeks. So it was a bitter experience which I subsequently reported to Washington.

That night I went home. I was very tired. We hadn't had any sleep for a couple of nights. I went home, went to bed at a place we were staying in this town. During the night, a couple of my subordinates were listening to a portable radio I had brought with us. They heard the message that Truman had ordered U.S. forces into Korea to assist the South Koreans. I was given this message early the following morning, and I immediately trotted over to see Rhee, to give him the good news. His reaction was, "Well, I haven't seen anything yet, planes or anything." But a little later, we had planes flying over the country. Washington took steps to put our war machine into action, with the result that the offensive was well under way when MacArthur made his play at the Inchon landing. Things reversed rapidly.

I was in Seoul when the Chinese "volunteers" came to the assistance of the North Koreans. We had a big to-do with Washington over whether we should cross the 38th parallel. After our forces had defeated the Chinese and North Koreans and driven them out of South Korea, the question then was: do we go north? Do we pursue these people? And there was a considerable opinion

back in Washington, apparently, that we should let up on it there and stay at the 38th parallel. Our feeling was to go on and drive them all out of Korea and unify the country. That's what we had gone there for in the first place. We believed that the UN forces should cross the 38th parallel and go on into North Korea, which they finally did. Washington gave its assent after some reluctance, and MacArthur then divided his forces. He was in favor of it, of course. He wanted to hit them hard and drive them out and bomb the Chinese forces, when they entered about a month later. So for a month or so, or five or six weeks, we went on north with very little resistance from the North Koreans, who were withdrawing as best they could into Manchuria. They were not putting up any substantial resistance anywhere, so we had virtually occupied most of North Korea by the time the Chinese came in.

I understand we had been warned of that possibility. I believe Zhou En-lai had told the British or somebody, "Would you kindly inform the Americans that if they keep this up, we're coming in." But nobody took it very seriously. The Chinese communists themselves had been in power only about a year when this took place, and they really hadn't got their feet much on the ground when they went in. I assume they must have been given some assurances by the Soviets to help them out if they joined the Korean war. In that invasion, they used a lot of the old-line Chinese Nationalist troops -- put them up as cannon fodder. Plenty of them got killed.

I was there. I was there when General Walker, the first commander, was killed in a jeep accident, unfortunately, and then was replaced by General Matthew Ridgeway. Both of them were fine generals. They kept up the fight. But in the face of this avalanche of Chinese forces, the military, MacArthur and Ridgeway, decided the best policy was to withdraw a reasonable distance, regroup, and then resume the offensive against the Chinese. Well, it would be mostly Chinese. The North Koreans had been pretty badly broken. So that's what happened.

Starting about March of 1950, our forces went to the attack and gradually drove the Chinese out. They could not support their forces that far down in Korea. Obviously they could not do it, especially with our complete command of the air and our bombing of all lines of communications and that sort of thing. We moved back rapidly and reoccupied Seoul, I think by about the first of April. I went up there, took a look around, and came back. Then a short time later, I was reassigned to Washington. So I left Korea in the latter part of April, went to Japan and got a ride on a plane with John Foster Dulles, who was then a special advisor to the State Department. He had been in Japan for some negotiations. I went back to Washington.

The attitude in Washington, as I saw it, was, "Well, let's try to wrap this thing up and get it over with." There was an armistice. The Soviets came around about July of 1951, and proposed an armistice and discussions. Of course, the U.S. was tired of the war as well. But I was one of those who said we should go on and clean the Chinese out of Korea; then we could talk if they wanted to discuss this situation. The Soviets had come around obviously because they were being defeated. But the Soviets were not coming in. We had the atomic bomb, and they didn't quite have one yet. So they weren't going to stick their noses into the Korean war. My advice was to carry on with the war and eliminate all resistance in all parts of Korea. Then we could discuss problems with the Chinese and Soviets if they wanted to. That was not the sentiment that was adopted. The position was taken that we would agree to an armistice, which is still in being today.

MORTON BACH
Economic/Financial Officer
Seoul, (1949-1950)

Morton Bach was born in New York City in 1904. He worked with the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Corps from 1942, and afterwards was posted in Bern, Seoul, The Hague, Vienna, Luxembourg and Brussels. Mr. Bach was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

BACH: You went to Seoul in 1949. You were there until you were evacuated in the summer of 1950.

BACH: It was about a year and a half.

Q: You went to Seoul as what?

BACH: I was an economic financial officer. There is an interesting story in that when I returned from Bern, the then head of the Foreign Service called me and said, "Mort, you've had five years of the pearl of the Service. You are not married (I was engaged at that time.). Careerwise, why don't you volunteer for a hardship post?" So, I said to him, "The army always taught us one thing. Don't volunteer." He said, "This will be different. I will give you five post reports for hardship posts. Take them home, study them, and let us know which one you think is of interest." I took them home. We went over them and selected Saigon. This was the beginning of 1949, a good post, speaking French. So, I made our views known. So, they said, "We'll telephone you." About a week later, I received a telephone call that invited me to come in. When I walked in the door all smiles, an officer said, "Congratulations. We have transferred you to Seoul, Korea." Life in the Foreign Service!

Q: What was Seoul like when you got there?

BACH: Now I will describe Seoul. I had really visualized hardship posts being the type that one saw periodically in pictures in the newspapers and on television. But Seoul was concrete buildings and hardly a tree standing. During the Japanese period, the Koreans had just cut down anything that would make for firewood or heating in the embassy. The timing was such that as it turned out, we were a small Foreign Service enclave surrounded in depth by the big American aid program that was there. I was covering financial, economic matters. Alongside me was David Baine, who you may know, who was later an ambassador. He was covering the political. There was a movement of officers out of China to Seoul at that time in anticipation of what developed subsequently.

In Seoul, we were a relatively small Foreign Service enclave. Mindful of the ECA, best efforts were made to strike a balance in reporting political, social, and economic development, which in 1949-1950 were negligible given limited resources available to develop, grow, and sustain

institutions or to spur economic activity. Reports reflecting the realities, the warts and all, were difficult to clear past our ECA colleagues.

Q: ECA later became AID.

BACH: Yes. And our reports only found their way to Washington through back channels. In fact, Niles Bond, who was the head of Northeast Asian Affairs, who I knew from Switzerland, came out on one occasion. He hand-carried some of David's and my reports back to Washington. Later on, Ed Doherty, whose wife was matron of honor for my wife at our wedding, who was later the head of NEA, on a similar visit carried reports back. That said, a somewhat different picture evolved following visits to Seoul of the senior senator from California, Bill Noland. He would arrive in Seoul from Japan on Saturday afternoon, meet with South Korean President Syngman Rhee at the Blue House, dine at a local kisaeng parlor, and depart early Sunday morning. Upon his return to Washington, he would take to the floor of the Senate to report to the American people about the remarkable progress he observed on his recent visit to Seoul.

Q: The progress was negligible.

BACH: Paraphrasing Yogi Berra: How can you observe a lot if you just happen to be watching?

Q: Noland, of course, was called the "Senator from Formosa."

BACH: Yes, it was the China lobby at that time. One day, to my surprise, the administrative officer called to report that my car had arrived in Inchon. Apparently, Legation Bern had overlooked my instructions upon departure to stow the car there. What to do with a three year old grey, red leather upholstered Buick convertible in spic and span condition? The only car of its kind in a country having paved roads only between Seoul, Kimpo Airport, and in Inchon. The car arrived in a wooden shipping box up to the highest Swiss construction standards. I gave this box to a South Korean family of five who enjoyed one of the best new homes in Seoul at that time. Months later, at a reception, a South Korean cabinet member drew me aside to express interest in purchasing the car and offered me the tidy sum of \$7,000. The car when new had cost around \$2,800. Needless to say, I declined, given regulations at the time, in part of which I was administering prohibiting American personnel from selling cars on the Korean market. Not that I didn't fantasize seeing his honor seated in the rear of this chauffeur-driven open car passing through Seoul's teeming traffic of carts, humanity, and jalopies, with a machine gun mounted Jeep leading and a similar one bringing up the rear eliciting comments of "Isn't that Mort Bach's car?" The car probably went to Pyongyang after the 1950 evacuation sporting a big red star on its port and starboard side, unauthorized American and foreign aid to North Korea.

A few comments during the time professionally going down to the ministries. Yes, there were South Korean officials, but right behind them or alongside were some of our ECA colleagues. It was sort of "Do you do it or do you not do it" type of achieving your objective or eliciting the information that you wanted for the type of reporting that was required.

Q: Who was our ambassador at the time?

BACH: John Muccio. He was a well-known in the Far East... One week before the evacuation, John Foster Dulles, who had not become Secretary at that stage, was in Japan tidying up some negotiations and he came over. He had with him the then-assistant secretary for Information, a former editor of "The Philadelphia Inquirer." They were there for about five days. As with all VIPs, they were taken up to the 38th parallel. The assistant secretary came into my office, put his feet up on the desk, and said, "Would you please explain to me because I cannot get any answers... We went up to the 38th parallel. We stood behind the South Koreans pointing their guns north. Undoubtedly, the North Koreans in the distance were doing likewise, pointing them at the south. But in between, there were the South Korean farmers peacefully doing their rice paddies. Where is all the crisis?" The Dulles mission left on a Wednesday and hostilities broke out on Sunday.

Q: This was prior to June 25, 1950, what was the feeling you were getting about Syngman Rhee?

BACH: He was the man who made everything work and everything had to be cleared. I am not familiar with how the interrelations worked between the head of the ECA mission and John Muccio. Probably, they went down together whenever they had occasion to raise an important issue.

That leads up to the famous June 20th. A group of us went up to Mass at the cathedral. I think it was a 10:00 am Mass. Somebody said there were reports of activities at the parallel. So, we went back to the embassy. I think I described that it was a former hotel called the "Banto." On the top floor was a big restaurant facility and there was a roof garden. One could order soft drinks and sandwiches up there. Many of us went up to the roof and looked into the distance. One could observe clouds of smoke as the YAK planes were hitting petroleum facilities on the outskirts. My wife came over to me and said, "I am going to pack." She went down and started packing some things. Nothing developed further until there was an announcement later in the day that everybody should stay in place. I am aware that the assistant military attache and our administrative officer went out to Inchon Harbor. There were only two freighters in the harbor at that time. One was a Chinese coal scow. They eliminated that as a possibility. The other was a Norwegian fertilizer freighter that had not offloaded its cargo. We placed 830-odd women and children on that fertilizer freighter and they departed shortly before dusk on Sunday night. In other words, it took place quite rapidly. I can tell you that this was one of the outstanding tragedies of my career in the Foreign Service. My wife was pregnant and to board that freighter, she was obliged to climb a rope ladder. Inchon Harbor has these huge tied drops. I can't remember whether it was up or down at that time. But there was no facility to walk out onto the boat. She lost the baby and there were complications. I won't talk anymore about that.

We came back to Seoul, all of us who had been down to watch the boat go off, and we were blacked out. They enforced it. In fact, they had people going around shouting out "Apartment so and so, turn out your lights!" The next day, there was little that was done in the office. Of course, everybody waited for reports. Most of us went to bed that evening, but were awakened early in the morning. The emergency airlift, which had not been available at the beginning, which necessitated using that freighter... MacArthur found some planes. I turned in photographs of personnel as far as the eye could see standing in line at Kimpo- (end of tape)

They must have gotten into the hands of Congressman Gross of Iowa, who every time the State Department request for reimbursement for losses took the floor and under unanimous consent said, "Why were there so many people out there with the U.S. government?"

To bring that story to a close, five years afterwards, we were reimbursed around 35-40 cents on the dollar and yours truly had the largest claim because of the Buick convertible. The military [and] oil people had funds. At that time, State did not have a budget item to reimburse people.

Q: Shocking.

BACH: That ended Seoul. We were airlifted not too far from Kyoto to a military facility. We learned that the women and children were in the south of Japan. We were sort of in the center. The question of getting together was a problem.

Q: You eventually all got together, I assume.

BACH: Yes. An aside: after we arrived in Japan, there was a report that the Great White Father, MacArthur, said, "Get those damn refugees out of here. I have a war to fight!" This went down very well with Foreign Service officers and their families. Then there was a procedure wherein State cooperating with MacArthur that all personnel who did not have transfer orders were evacuated back to the States. I was immediately assigned to Bangkok. So, my wife and I were in Tokyo. We were making preparations for going to Bangkok. Then the Department changed its mind again. I was assigned to Rangoon. At the same time, the medical people (All of us were subjected to examination.) discovered that I had a touch of tuberculosis and I went back to the States.

PHILIP H. VALDES
Consular/Economic officer
Seoul (1949-1950)

Philip H. Valdes was born in New York in 1921. He received both a bachelor's degree in 1942 and a master's degree in 1947, both from Yale University. He was a 2nd lieutenant overseas in the U.S. Army from 1943- 1946. Mr. Valdes entered the Foreign Service in 1947, serving in Chungking, Seoul, Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, Bangkok, Berlin, and Munich. He was interviewed by William Knight on July 11, 1994.

Q: So then you went to Seoul?

VALDES: After that I went to [the Embassy in] Seoul.

Q: What year was this?

VALDES: 1949 to 1950. I was in the Consular Section for three or four months and then went

down to [the Consulate in] Pusan as the first Vice Consul there, where I did some consular work, including shipping and a little citizenship work. There weren't that many [American] citizens there. [After this] I went back to Seoul and was in the Economic Section for about three months. Then, [in May, 1950] I went on home leave and never got back.

Q: Ambassador Muccio was there, wasn't he?

VALDES: Yes, he was there.

Q: I served under him in Iceland, later. I guess you didn't cross paths with Bill Stokes.

VALDES: Yes, I did. When I was in Pusan, Bill Stokes, [Consul General] Angus Ward, and the whole crew from [the Consulate General in] Mukden [Manchuria] arrived on an American freighter after they were released from house arrest in Mukden. They were being repatriated to the United States. Pusan was the first free stop they made [after their release]. I went out on the pilot boat, climbed aboard the ship outside the harbor, and greeted them. It was the first time I met Bill Stokes.

Q: Bill Stokes, Marshall Green, and John Holdridge are writing a book for DACOR [Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired] House. The title is to be, "War and Peace with China." Very interesting. You'll be interested in reading it when it comes out.

VALDES: Yes, I will.

Q: The book makes it clear that the Chinese were involved in the whole attack on South Korea, even before it started. They had infiltrated units, individual soldiers, and so on and so forth. It's not as if they were just responding to General MacArthur's forces approaching the North Korean border with China.

Well, do you have any other comments on that phase of your Korean experience?

VALDES: I can't think of any.

Q: So you were on home leave when the [North Korean] attack came [on South Korea].

VALDES: I was at home when the attack came. I was still at home when Seoul was recaptured after the Inchon landing [by MacArthur's forces]. I was still at home when the Chinese came into the war. Then, as I said, I got into Russian language and area training, which I'd been fairly interested in ever since I'd had a course as an undergraduate taught by [Professor] Vernadsky at Yale, before [our entry into] World War II.

HARLAN CLEVELAND
Director, Far Eastern Aid Program
Washington, DC (1949-1952)

Ambassador Cleveland was born in New York City and raised in the United States and Switzerland. He was educated at Princeton and Oxford Universities. During World War II he served on the Board of Economic Warfare, after which he held a number of senior positions dealing with Italian economic recovery, US and UNRRA assistance programs in China and Taiwan and NATO issues. He also served as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations and as US Ambassador to NATO. Ambassador Harlan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

CLEVELAND: On the basis of those hearings, without any further legislation, we took a hundred million dollars of our China appropriation and diverted it to the Philippines which had a small program already, also Indonesia, Burma, and the three associated states of Indo China as they were then being called, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were included. We also put some more money in the Korean aid program which was already a big deal. This happened before the Korean war started, but there was already a sizable economic aid program in Korea, in South Korea. So the far eastern aid program was formed. It included the China-Taiwan responsibility and for these others as well. I was assigned to start these other programs and continue to manage the China program, so I became head of the Far Eastern aid program.

Q: You were doing that from when to when?

CLEVELAND: Well, it must have been from probably late '49 to sometime in the fall of 1950. Until after the Korean war started.

Q: It started in June of 1950. Was there any sort of priority for where the money would go? I mean when you were looking at this to help?

CLEVELAND: Well, the priority, of course, the biggest part of the money was going to Taiwan and Korea; particularly after the North Koreans had rumbled across the 38th parallel in their Soviet made tanks, it became very important to shore up the event as a security matter, to shore up the South Koreans with economic aid.

The result of all these efforts in Taiwan was to make Taiwan almost a cameo case of successful economic development. Even the yields of rice in Taiwan in some places were better than Japan's. We had the advantage of an educated population because the Japanese had been willing for the Chinese on Taiwan to be educated even into higher education. Whereas, in their Korean colony, they were not willing to have them get anywhere beyond elementary school. What happened in Korea was that the government, as soon as they found themselves in the middle of this big war, realized that it was a technological war full of military technology; the generals in charge figured they had better get everybody educated so they could handle this stuff. So they decreed universal education for everybody up through high school and some help even for people getting into college.

Two or three years later, I was no longer involved in it directly, the Korean government of the day which was still dominated by the military decided they really didn't need to spend all this money on education now because the war had tapered off. So, they tried to turn it off. By that time the parents in South Korea had unanimously come to the conclusion that all their children were going to go to college, and it was just politically impossible to turn off. The result of that mandated universal education was like the result of a similar policy in the early 19th century in the United States. We became a great country not because of the amber waves of grain so much as because we were an educated population.

Q: The land grant colleges and all that.

CLEVELAND: The land grant colleges, the extension services, and all that. It was an information revolution before its time anyway. In the same way in Korea, South Koreans went from being a very underdeveloped country. My deputy in the far eastern program was a man who, as it happened, had been born in North Korea of missionary parents. He used to kid us saying if they were going to give us half of Korea to work with, why didn't they give us the decent half, the iron and the coal and all that wonderful stuff up there. It turned out that it wasn't the iron and coal but the people's minds that were the real development resource. Less than 50 years later, 47 or 48 years later, after the war, Korea became the first really developing country to become a member of the OECD, the club of rich countries. Education was the key to that extraordinary development.

Q: I take it the university [University of Hawaii] probably had more orientation towards Asia than most other American universities do.

CLEVELAND: Yes, and a lot of that was natural to the situation. Again I pushed it very hard. One of the things I said in the prospectus was we were already the Korean study center of the nation. If you looked around, you found at Harvard that one person's full time job was full-time research activity on Korea. I think at Columbia there were two such people, and that was the highest number in any place. We looked around and found we had 15 people whose whole life was studying Korea, some of them Koreans, but not all of them. We managed to develop the idea that we should have a Korean study center for we were the Korean study center. So then, I made a trip to Korea with the help of a guy we had hired from I forget where, Tulane or somewhere. We wanted to carefully calibrate it between the Korean government and business and so on. There was a lot of trouble between the government and everybody else there at the time. I visited several of the universities, and we raised quite a lot of money from the Korean government for a building. Then we came back and raised quite a lot more from not only the Korean community, which is relatively small, but really from all the Asian communities to have one building on the campus that would clearly be an Asian style architecture. We finally built a really spectacular building with curved roofs and painted tile and so on, the whole, and it was the Korean studies center in a place that was right near the East-West Center which was also part of the university while I was there. It was our tenth campus in effect though it was on the main campus.

THEODORE ACHILLES
Acting Assistant Secretary for European Affairs
Washington, DC (1950)

Theodore Achilles was born in New York and educated at Yale University. His particularly distinguished career took him to a variety of European capitals including London and Paris, where he served as Chief of Mission and Minister. While in London at the beginning of World War II, Mr. Achilles served as Chargé d'Affaires a.i. near the Governments of Poland, Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands. In Washington, he dealt primarily with European Affairs. Mr. Achilles served as Ambassador to Peru from 1956 until 1960, at which time he was appointed Counselor of the Department of State. Mr. Achilles was interviewed by Richard D. Mc Kinzie, Harry S. Truman Library in 1972.

ACHILLES: In the spring of 1950 Livy [Livingston] Merchant and his wife and my wife and I went to a Saturday night dance at the Chevy Chase Club. Livy was then Acting Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs and I was Acting Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. We went home about 12 o'clock. We lived near each other. Shortly after I got home the telephone rang, it was Livy saying, "North Korea has just invaded South Korea, I'm going down to the Department."

He went down and didn't emerge for the next 48 hours. As it was not in my area, I didn't go down that night, but I went down the next morning and didn't emerge for a good many hours. At first the State Department, the Pentagon, and the White House were all in a quandary as to what action the U.S. should take if any.

At first there was considerable doubt that we should take any. Dean Acheson had inadvertently stated publicly that South Korea was not of essential strategic importance to the United States, and the Russians had taken that as giving a green light to the North Koreans to move in. At first we sent small units from Japan to Korea to assist in the evacuation of the Americans. Their orders were gradually extended.

All of us in the Department were called upon to study what the effect of drastic U.S. intervention would be in our respective areas. I polled our various Division Chiefs on Europe, being rather hesitant about it myself, and found them agreed that a bold course would have a much better effect in Europe than a timid one.

A few nights later Dean Acheson, Livy Merchant, Jack Hickerson, who was then in charge of United Nations Affairs, and myself, had dinner at the Metropolitan Club before Dean Acheson went to the White House to advise the President on what course to follow. At that point we all agreed that full American intervention was desirable. It was also agreed that Jack Hickerson would bring up the case of North Korean aggression in the Security Council on the following day.

He did so, denounced the Russians, and the Russians made their great mistake of walking out of the meeting. In their absence Jack secured approval of a vetoless resolution for the United Nations to resist the aggression by armed force.

Shortly thereafter I went to London as number two on the NATO delegation under Ambassador Charles Spofford. When we set up the permanent organization, the theory was that the members would be Deputy Foreign Ministers, able to speak as Foreign Ministers in the NATO Council. At that time we were expecting to designate Averell Harriman, then a Special Assistant to the President as well as the head of the Economic Cooperation Administration, and the Europeans also expected it. Averell turned it down. So did various other people, and we ended up with Charles Spofford. Charles Spofford was a very able New York lawyer and made an excellent Ambassador, but unfortunately none of the Europeans had ever heard of him. Consequently, they downgraded their own representation in the Council, and the Council never became one of Deputy Foreign Ministers as it was supposed to be.

Three of us went over together: Spofford, John Sherman Cooper, representing Senator Vandenberg, and myself. I got to know John well in those days and developed a fondness and respect for him. He was an odd Senator; he never made speeches, he only asked questions. He was always helpful, he was always wise, and he was a great asset to us.

The Korean war helped us in NATO because it succeeded in scaring the Europeans considerably. We tried hard to get them to increase their defense budgets, to increase their terms of conscription, and generally to upgrade the military effort. Largely thanks to Korea, we succeeded in getting them to make substantial advances.

Q: When General Eisenhower was appointed in December of 1950 it took a little while to get things off the ground, but do you think maybe the existence of the Korean war made it easier to get things off the ground militarily than it would have been under other circumstances?

ACHILLES: Very definitely. The Korean war had the Europeans sufficiently worried so that we were able to get them to increase their defense budgets; in quite a few cases to increase the length of their military service; to take measures to improve the quality of training that they were giving their forces; and provide newer equipment. It had a very, very good effect. All of which helped Ike when he became Supreme Allied Commander, "picked up the ball" and in his persuasive way got them to make further improvement.

WILLIAM J. CUNNINGHAM
Personnel Officer
Seoul (1950)

William J. Cunningham was born in California in 1926. He received both a BA and an MA from the University of New Mexico and served in the U.S. Navy

overseas from 1944 to 1947. After entering the Foreign Service in 1949, his postings abroad have included Prague, Paris, Seoul, Tokyo, Sapporo, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Taichung and Taipei. Mr. Cunningham was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

CUNNINGHAM: After a couple of months I was shifted from the budget section to the accounting section of the embassy where my boss was a woman by the name of Jessie Hairnet. We were under the general supervision of Joseph A. Dagenhart who was the chief disbursing officer at the embassy at that time, and also the chief disbursing officer for all U.S. Foreign Service posts in Western Europe.

During the time that I was in Paris the war broke out in Korea and the embassy in Seoul of course was evacuated, but in great disarray. The government fled to Pusan. MacArthur staged his landing on the west coast at Inchon in September of 1950. A short time later the government moved back to Seoul after it was retaken, and the embassy moved back with it.

That led to my transfer two months later from Paris to Seoul. I'm told I was assigned to Korea solely because I was a bachelor. This is a story which I've been told was true although I've never seen the documentation on it. The ambassador to Korea at that time was John J. Muccio and his deputy was Everett Drumright, an old China hand. Muccio and Drumright at that time both were bachelors and it is reported that they sent a message to the Department of State saying this - - i.e. bachelor status - - as the primary staffing requirement for the embassy, which of course was going to be greatly enlarged in view of the war effort. There was a lot of economic assistance and other things going on. According to the story I was told their cable said, "This is a war zone and it is dangerous. No women or married men should be sent. Send only bachelors to fill all of these positions." In any case, no families could be sent to Korea, that was for sure, so that was the idea of sending only bachelors.

I was in Paris and I was a bachelor. On the second of November, Patricia Mostosky, my former colleague in Prague who had by now been assigned to Paris also, and who worked in the Embassy personnel office, called me up and said, "Guess what?" I said, "What?" She said, "We have orders transferring you to Seoul, TM-7." I said, "Come on, you are kidding me. What's going on here?" She said, "No, come on down here and I will show them to you." I went down there and sure enough there they were, depart in 10 days.

I thought it was awfully nice in Paris. I had absolutely no background in Asia. I had not studied Asia. I knew no Asian languages. I had no special interest in it. It was not in my vision to go out there when I joined the Foreign Service, at all. I knew nothing about it. There was no personal or professional qualification or interest that would take me there. I thought about this thing and pondered it a little bit.

Joe Dagenhart, who was the supervisor of my boss at the time, said to me, "I hear you've got orders to go Korea. That's a war zone. I'm a World War I veteran. I was in Chateau Thierry, Belleau Wood and all those other places. That's dangerous out there. You are a young man. I'm not so sure you ought to do that." That was really what convinced me because I realized that promotions come faster in war zones than they do elsewhere, and I was anxious to get ahead. So

I said, "Well, Mr. Dagenhart, thank you very much. I appreciate that but I believe I should respond to a call of duty." The idea of going to a war zone did not frighten me.

Q: You were young. Hell I volunteered.

CUNNINGHAM: Sure. I had been commissioned by the navy. I had gone through the navy officer training program so I wasn't a neophyte so far as military affairs were concerned. Off I went on something like the 10th of November, as I recall, or the 12th. I made the ten day departure. I guess it was the 12th of November that I left Paris for Seoul via Rome where I had to pick up a British Overseas Airways Corporation DC-4 all the way out to Tokyo. That trip was an adventure in itself because we stopped at various places. We got stuck in Bangkok because the plane fell behind schedule. Night landings were not permitted in Hong Kong, our next stop, in those days, so we had to stay over for a while. A bunch of us who were dog tired by then and hadn't had any sleep for three days on the DC-4 boarded a bus and went down and took a night tour of Bangkok. We came back and got on the plane at something like 3:00 in the morning and flew off to Hong Kong. I was getting a real introduction to Asia.

I arrived in Tokyo after dark on the evening of the day we left Bangkok at 3:00 A.M. So here I was in Tokyo; now how do I get to Korea? Of course these were Occupation days. I suppose I had a Transportation Request for my onward travel to Korea, but I had no idea how to get there. Nor did I have a hotel reservation. I asked for the American embassy but there was no American embassy while Japan was under Occupation. Here I've got these orders and I'm supposed to go to Korea. I haven't got a ticket that takes me there. Where do I find some place to sleep? How do I find a hotel? The Occupation was running everything in Japan at that point and so I ended up at the Provost Marshal's office in downtown Tokyo and somehow or another got myself righted around. It took me about a week to finally to get a booking on a Northwest flight into Seoul.

I'm not sure what I did during that week in Tokyo. Most of it I spent trying to get to Korea. What I do remember is that somebody got a hold of me and said, "Now listen, they are very strict about things over there. You are wearing civilian clothes and that's a military zone. You had better go down to the PX and get yourself outfitted with a uniform. You've got to be in a uniform if you go over there." I said, "But I'm in the American embassy." "It doesn't make any difference. MacArthur (who in addition to being the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in the Pacific Theater also was the Commander of United Nations forces in Korea) says everybody has got to be in uniform in Korea. You don't want to get shot or arrested as a North Korean spy."

I went with my meager travel allowance down to the PX, which was located in Ginza in what is now Mitsukoshi Department Store there on the main corner. The interesting thing I remember is that afternoon Claude Pepper, at that point U. S. Representative from Florida, was in the PX and he was on his way to Korea. He was being outfitted completely. Of course he had a very generous allowance so he was getting the whole regalia. I bought a pair of khaki pants or something, and a shirt. They kept telling me that this was not enough; I needed more than that. I think I bought a warm jacket.

Off I went to Korea eventually and I was put into the personnel office of the embassy there. Louis Benjamin was the chief of administration. We were busy as beavers trying to get things

lined up to ship more Americans in and staff this embassy, which was at that time located in the Banto Hotel in downtown Seoul; that is where it had been before the North Korean invasion in June 1950. The top three floors of the hotel were quarters for the embassy staff so I was roomed up there. I had a room to myself and I was fairly comfortable. The officers club was on the top floor of the building. We used to gather up there in the evenings at 6:00 to listen to the AFRS, Armed Forces Radio Service news broadcast from Tokyo. It was a 6:00 p.m. broadcast and was our main source of information about the progress of the war.

I arrived in Seoul about a week before Thanksgiving and I remember the Thanksgiving edition of Stars and Stripes. The banner headline was "We Stand on the Yalu" and that was the point. That was the high tide of the U.N.-U.S. military campaign into North Korea. They had gotten all the way up to the Yalu River, the border between Korea and China, about that time. We stood there for about 24 hours and then the Chinese came in and the whole retreat began. As I said, I spent the first two weeks in this personnel office trying to get things set up to ship people into Korea and staff the embassy. After the retreat from the Yalu began, things turned around and I spent the rest of my time in Korea shipping people out as fast as I could.

I remember from that time, and it was quite a traumatic experience, seeing truckload after truckload of U.S. army trucks of soldiers coming through Seoul, right through an intersection about one block from the Embassy, headed south - - across the Han River. You have to understand that the ground freezes by the end of November in Korea. It is a cold place. These soldiers were standing up in open trucks being moved from the north of Seoul, through Seoul, and across the Han River. These poor fellows were dazed. Here was the great victorious American army and they did not know what had hit them with the Chinese coming into the war in the north. It was a very disturbing experience to see this happening.

The main Army post exchange was right across the street from the Embassy, and it was having sales all the time because it was collecting stock from all the post exchanges that were closing down elsewhere up in the front echelons and selling it off as fast as they could. There were all kinds of bargains. Finally about the middle of December the Post Exchange itself closed down and they pulled out. I remember quite vividly the last Sunday that I was in Seoul, the chapel where the military chaplains held Sunday services was located on the floor above the post exchange. I went over to I guess 9:00 mass or something like that to the chapel. At the end of mass the priest said, "The mass is ended, go in peace. We are leaving right after this service. I don't know where you guys are going to go to mass next Sunday but it won't be here." I thought to myself, well if the Post Exchange is gone, the army chaplains have pulled out, the American embassy is still here. What's going on? By this time you could hear gunfire in the hills at night around the city.

The Koreans were trying to get out. We evacuated a lot of our Korean national employees. Being in the personnel office I helped with part of that too. I went out one morning, I think it was a Saturday morning, to the rail yards where they were going to have a train to take our people south. I was expecting passenger cars to take our local employees (they are known nowadays by the title of Foreign Service Nationals) many of whom were very well educated people, cultured people. What they brought in for them was a whole string of cattle cars. I thought this is just unacceptable. There was manure all over the floor of these things. It was frozen hard, caked, but

I thought we can't let the people in there. I grabbed a shovel and started shoveling it out. Somebody said to me, "No, no, no. Leave it alone. That is insulation. It will keep us warm going south." Recently in Texas I met a Korean woman who was a child of one of the local employees of the American embassy staff and she had a recollection of that evacuation that Saturday morning in 1950.

Q: Was there a concern in personnel to get rid of all the records of anybody associated with the Americans because I understand when our embassy left in June of 1950 there were a lot of records still around which brought very nasty things on those people, like visa applicants, or people associated with the embassy. We hadn't realized how awful it would be. I was wondering whether this was hanging over your head at this time?

CUNNINGHAM: The part of the office that I worked in dealt with American personnel only. Now that you bring that up, that rings a bell of some kind. I do remember hearing of those incidents although in what connection I can't really recall. I can't say. I just cannot certify as to whether there was an organized attempt to do that in the embassy. If there was, or if there wasn't, either way, I am not aware of it particularly.

This brings up another point. We had many male employees and the Korean government was unwilling to allow men of military age to leave the city. There was only one bridge operating across the Han River. On this particular evacuation train that I was speaking of, as I recall, it was women, children, and older men beyond military age. I do not recall any men of military age who were in that group. That is not to say that there weren't any but my recollection is of older people and women and children being in the evacuation group. There was only one bridge operating across the river and there was a very strong effort by people in the city to get out before it fell. I made many trips out to the airport in connection with the evacuation of our American staff and every time I crossed the river there were boats that were ferrying Koreans across the Han River. There was a big crowd on the north bank of the river, and on the south bank of the river there was a solid file of people, practically all women and children. In many instances, it was a woman with a child on the back, another by the hand, and the household belongs balanced on the head.

That scene of those young women and little children marching south across the treeless mudflats on the south bank of the Han River through the mountain passes to head south and get away is an indelible impression in my mind. Again, it was like the people that I knew in Czechoslovakia who were fleeing tyranny and oppression. These people were doing the same and I remember very well being told at the time that many of them would not make it all the way south; they would freeze to death at night in the mountain passes overcome by fatigue, hunger, or whatever and perish. I was only there until the end of December.

There was another experience that I had with regard to the evacuation of U. S. personnel. One man had been in Seoul before the attack in June, I think with U.S. Information Agency but I'm not sure. He came back of course when the embassy returned. He had developed very strong ties to Korean society and I think he had a fiancé who was a Korean, and all the rest. The rumor was that this fellow was going to try to stay after the city fell. We wanted to get every single American out; this was towards the end. This was the last week before the city fell at the end of

December and he was finally evacuated. It took very strong persuasive effort. A couple of people, I was among them, escorted him out to the airport. All the way out to the airport we kept saying, "You have to go," and he kept saying, "I want to stay. I have my fiancé here and she has all her relations." We kept saying, "It is going to be harder on her if you do stay." Finally, very reluctantly, we got him on the plane. This was a night flight on Northwest Airlines. It left about midnight that night. I was out there on the tarmac helping to get people loaded onto the plane. I think it was more or less the last, or the next to last batch.

Q: We're talking about Kimpo airport.

CUNNINGHAM: Kimpo Airport outside of Seoul. It was a cold, cold night and we kept loading people and baggage onto this plane. The Northwest Airlines man was there next to me. This was either a DC-4 or a DC-6, which was standard at that time. We got this plane loaded up and it was about 11:30. They buttoned up and taxied off to the end of the runway. That plane made the longest takeoff run of any that I have ever seen. It went on, and on, and on, and on, and finally the Northwest Airlines manager standing next to me who realized how heavily loaded that plane was said, "break, break," hoping it would. Finally it lifted off just short of the end of the runway. We all heaved a sign of relief that it had gotten off safely and the people had gotten off to Tokyo.

Q: Were we trying to staff a new embassy down in Pusan?

CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

Q: But most were being sent off?

CUNNINGHAM: Yes. What happened was a field office had been set up in Tokyo for the American mission in Korea. Some of the staff from the embassy were sent to Pusan where we had a consulate and to where the government was going to retreat again, and the rest were sent to Tokyo to staff the field office over there. I was among those designated to go to Tokyo.

My evacuation was very unusual from Korea. Late in December I started feeling feverish, nauseous, ill, and so on. I didn't know what was wrong with me. For some reason in those days we wanted to stay away from the military hospitals so I turned into the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Seoul. The head of it was a man by the name of Dr. Roux who had been a long time medical missionary in Korea. They examined me and they were rather concerned. Finally they did a spinal tap on me and they said, "You have symptoms that resemble meningitis and the cell count in your spinal fluid is up. We think you should be evacuated to Japan." Of course the North Koreans were closing in on the city at that point so I was evacuated via marine hospital aircraft to Osaka. The ride in the military ambulance to the airport was just an agonizing experience because those things had no springs and all the roads in Korea were rutted. I really felt sorry for wounded men who have to be evacuated in military ambulances after that experience. I got on the plane. I was kind of woozy and feeling very strange.

I flew to Osaka and we were met and taken to the Osaka military hospital. Here I was with a whole bunch of guys who were war wounded coming back from the front and I was a State Department civilian. I was put in this military hospital. I began to feel much better and whatever

it was began to pass and fade away. They looked at me and said, "Why are you here?" I explained the symptoms to them and they said, "Yes, yes, okay." The first thing I knew, they put me in the psychiatric ward of the hospital. At this point, I began to get kind of worried. I said, "I belong to the Department of State and I'm sure they want to know where I am by now," because things were getting pretty confused in Seoul by this point, "and I want to speak to the American consul in Osaka." "Oh, yes, yes, that's all right. We will take care of you here."

I protested and I finally got a hold of the American consulate in Osaka. They got in touch with Tokyo and the first thing you know I got a telephone call from Donald McCue, who was in charge of this field office that had been set up in Tokyo for the administrative services for the American mission in Korea. He said, "Cunningham, where in the hell are you and what are you doing there?" I explained the situation to him and he said, "We've been looking all over for you. We've lost you for 48 hours. Nobody knew where you were. We thought you might be in North Korea." I said, "No, don't worry about that." He said, "All right. We'll get you out of the hospital. You get on a train up here to Tokyo as quickly as you can."

I arrived in Tokyo on Christmas Eve, 1950. I had been two evacuations in one year in the Foreign Service. By this time I had been through three posts in my first year and a half in the Foreign Service. I was then assigned to this Field Office of the American Mission in Korea and continued to work with the personnel people there. It was located in the San Shin building in downtown Tokyo not far from the Dai Ichi building where MacArthur had his headquarters. As a matter of fact it was very close to the Provost Marshal's office where I first checked in the previous November.

I enjoyed working with those people very much, but the office was shut down then at the end of February, as I recall. The question was, what was going to be done with these Field Office people? Some were going to be sent to Korea. I wanted to be sent back to Korea because that is where I had been assigned. No, they couldn't use me in Korea. They were reducing staff at this point because they didn't have room for them over there in the Embassy, again located in Korea and reduced from the size it had been in Seoul a few months previously. They didn't want to maintain this office in Tokyo any longer either. Things had stabilized somewhat. I was then transferred to the office of the Diplomat Section of SCAP, which was run by William J. Sebald, career FSO, Japanese Language Officer and with the rank of Ambassador at that time.

Q: This was the Supreme Allied...

CUNNINGHAM: The Supreme Command for Allied Powers, Japan, Douglas MacArthur's headquarters. Japan was still an occupied country. MacArthur was still in the Dai Ichi Building down the street. The Diplomatic Section was what passed for the American embassy. Japan did not have foreign relations. In fact all of the other countries had missions that were accredited to the Diplomatic Section of SCAP and it served as kind of a conduit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This time I was assigned there to the general services section of the Diplomatic Section. We were trying to recapture some of our State Department property from the grip of the occupation forces and to acquire additional property for the eventual American embassy in Japan. I worked

on some of that with the property manager and did various things that were not particularly interesting to me.

RAY E. JONES
Economic Cooperation Administration
Seoul (1950)

Ray E. Jones attended the Lafayette Business College. After a year in Washington, DC working for the Department of Interior, he entered the U.S. Army. He served overseas as a court reporter in 1945. In 1946, Mr. Jones went to Berlin, Germany with the Department of the Army. His Foreign Service career included positions in Korea, Germany, Switzerland, Vietnam, Liberia, the Netherlands, Sudan, and China. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on August 23, 1994.

JONES: Well, I should say that after Berlin, I was with, I guess it was ECA at that time, three months in Korea in 1950. I was evacuated from there in June 1950.

Q: How did you get to Korea? Did you go with the Department of the Army?

JONES: No, it was the Economic Cooperation Administration.

Q: Oh, the ECA, I'm sorry, which today would be known as AID.

JONES: It's AID now. After Korea, I came back to the States.

Q: Excuse me, Ray, but tell us a bit about Korea. Those were fantastically exciting days in Korea in 1950.

JONES: Tom, I was only there three months.

Q: Before the attack?

JONES: I arrived in March and in June, the communist onslaught came on, or the north Koreans. I was there when it happened. I was evacuated from there to Japan.

Q: Was there panic at the Embassy at the time? What were the conditions like?

JONES: I can't say it was really panic, but most of the time was spent on destroying documents before word came to evacuate the place.

Q: Ambassador Muccio was there I believe?

JONES: Ambassador Muccio, yes.

Q: And you were evacuated first to Tokyo, then to the States?

JONES: To southern Japan and I finally arrived in Tokyo. I decided not to go back to Korea. I resigned and came back to the States.

PHILIP W. MANHARD
Vice Consul
Tientsin, China (1950)

Ambassador Philip W. Manhard was born in Massachusetts in 1921. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California in 1943. He served in the US Navy (1943-1944) and the US Marine Corps (1944-1966). His overseas postings include Peiping, Tientsin, Pusan, Seoul, and Tokyo. Ambassador Manhard was interviewed by Marshall Green on December 1, 1988.

MANHARD: Finally, what was to me almost a 007 kind of affair, one night probably in early April 1950, I had a memorable experience. I used to live in a very large house with six bedrooms, designed obviously for an officer with a family. I was a bachelor, but I was occupying the house because it was owned by the consulate. Diagonally across the street was another house which was in the former German concession in the days of territoriality during the period between World War I and World War II. They were foreign houses, very large, private compounds, walls all around, but in a was a sparsely settled area with lots of empty lots between the houses, on the outskirts of Tientsin.

My house was constantly under guard, as were all houses occupied by foreigners; we had an armed guard outside our gate 24 hours a day. In my case, I was followed. I guess they used me as the example -- bad example, perhaps. I was followed wherever I went by a car with Chinese Communists. So they knew where I was at all times, and I think they pretty much knew where everybody else was, too.

Howie Boorman and I were old friends because we had studied Japanese together in the Navy in World War II. He and his wife and their little baby son were staying in my house waiting for the hoped-for exit permit. One night about 9:00 p.m., a Chinese young man knocked on my front door. He was dressed in civilian clothes, which was unique in itself. I had never had that happen, because the guard would always prevent people from coming in, unless it was an American or someone had business with me. He said: "Could you please come to dinner tonight at my father's house right across the street?" All I knew about his father was that he was an official in the Chinese Communist export and import corporation. He dressed in the Mao jacket and cap uniform of the dark gray-blue, which was Chinese Communist civilian uniform for government officials. I didn't really know anything about him, but I had seen a lot of Chinese people, going in and out of his house from time to time. I had paid little attention and had no business dealings with him. He said: "My father would like you to come to the house for dinner."

I said: "But it is 9:00 already and we have had supper. I must decline your invitation. Thank you."

He said: "It's very important that you come anyway, whether you've had supper or not."

So Howie and I looked at each other, and I said: "You realize there is a guard out front who watches everybody coming. Do you really want us, terrible people like us (I was kind of joking with him) to come to your father's house while this guard is watching?"

He said: "If you will just delay about ten minutes before you leave your house to come across the street, he will be gone." That had never happened up to that point.

So we said: "All right, we'll come." Ten minutes later, we walked out. For the first time in all the time I had been in Tientsin, there was no guard anywhere to be seen.

We entered our neighbor's house and found a very strange scene in the dining room. As a concession to the Chinese tradition, there was a large dining table with a lazy Susan in the middle, and there were approximately eight or nine people sitting around the table, none of whom we had ever seen before in our lives. There was all kinds of the debris of a large Chinese meal lying on the table, people picking at a few things, but obviously they had long finished their supper.

We exchanged a few pleasantries -- small talk -- and we allowed that we had had supper, so he pressed some tea and something on us. All kinds of other people came in and out while we were there. In the first ten or twenty minutes, I think perhaps three people came in, apparently very urgently. They would go to our host, hand him a little piece of paper, and he would look at it and write something on it, or shake his head, or nod his head, give it back to them, and off they would go. So all kinds of messages were running in and out of the house at the same time we were sitting there. We still didn't have the slightest idea why we were in this Chinese household, but we had had some difficult experiences already in China, and were always mindful of Angus Ward's and his party's experiences and what could happen if things went wrong.

Finally, our host turned to us both and said: "When are you leaving China?" We said: "We don't know. We have been trying to leave for months but we have no exit permit."

He said: "Oh, well, don't worry about that. You will have one very soon." This came as quite a surprise, because here was someone that we didn't know had any particular authority in this field telling us that we would be getting an exit permit, after we had done everything possible for months, with no result. He repeated: "Don't worry about that. You will get one very soon. Where are you both going? What is your next assignment?"

Howie had received an assignment -- a direct transfer to Hong Kong -- and I had been transferred to Washington. So then our host devoted his attention to me. His next comment: "You know the war in Korea is about to start. This was two months before the war actually started, which began on June 25th. He said: "I hope you are aware that the war in Korea is about to begin." For months, I had seen in the Communist press in Tientsin, articles which frequently described the

valiant efforts of the People's guerrillas in South Korea resisting and fighting against the "terrible tyranny of the Syngman Rhee regime in Korea". But I took this as largely propaganda without much substance to it. So I didn't pay much attention to it, plus the fact that we were too busy with the things we were trying to do in managing our own daily life and getting out of China. Korea was pretty much over the horizon as far as we were concerned. I paid very little attention to those articles, but I had seen them.

He said: "Don't you realize how important that is?"

Both Howie and I had kind of frozen faces and didn't say anything. Finally, without a chance to cross-reference with each other, we both looked at him and almost simultaneously said: "We don't know anything about Korea."

Later, after returning to our house, I compared notes with Howie and our thought processes were exactly the same: that the invitation was a setup; that all we had to do is say was: "Yes, tell us all about this very important matter of intelligence," whereupon the guard would come in, grab us as spies, and off we would go. That is what I thought was going to happen next at that point. I thought it was a setup, and so did Howie. So we played as dumb as possible. In retrospect, I don't believe it was a setup because of what happened afterwards. I don't even believe that our host's comments were government authorized or sponsored.

Before we walked over to our host's house, I said to Howie: "Who is this guy? Did you know anything about this guy in Peking, for example?"

He said: "Yes, he did talk to Tony Freeman up there,". Tony Freeman, in the meantime, had returned to the United States before the Chinese Communists came into power in Peking. So we knew that our host had talked to Tony Freeman in Peking, but didn't think that anything of any great significance had been discussed. I said: "I don't know anything about him." Howie had no direct knowledge or sense of him either.

Our host added that: "You should pay attention to this. It is very important." He turned to me, having found out, as I said earlier, that I was going to be transferred to Washington, and said: "When you get to Washington, will you please tell what I am going to tell you to Tony Freeman?"

I said, "All right, I will do so."

He said: "Do you ever go from the East Station, the railway station?"

I said, "Yes."

"You must have seen two weeks ago (or something very recently) the first movement of Chinese troops." They were going north for the first time through East Station."

I said, "No, I didn't see any such thing."

He kind of looked at me suspiciously, as if I must have seen it but I was not willing to admit it. I hadn't actually seen it. He gave a date, two or three weeks earlier, on which allegedly one entire division of the Chinese Communist Army had moved north through Tientsin on the way to Manchuria, northeast China. He said: "There will be very soon, we don't know exactly when, an all-out offensive against South Korea. There will be more Chinese forces coming through Tientsin en route to Manchuria." That was the main rail line in that direction. "We don't know whether they will participate in the initial offensive against South Korea with the North Korean troops, whether the North Korean troops alone will end conduct the initial offensive with the Chinese troops in backup positions within North Korea, or whether the Chinese troops in that case would be held on the Chinese side in a back position in the case of need. Please tell my friend Mr. Freeman."

We finally took a slow boat from Tientsin to Yokohama which broke down, started going backwards to China, finally got to Yokohama, took another boat, along with everybody else who had been evacuated from China, to the West Coast, saw my family very briefly in Los Angeles, on to Washington, and got there on the third of June 1950, finally. If I have my dates straight, it was on a Monday morning, the fourth of June -- boiling hot -- when on opening of business, I went straight to see Tony Freeman. I had a little hard time getting him to listen, because he wanted to tell me about my next assignment. I said: "I think this is more urgent." We were good friends, but he finally got off the personnel business, and I told him the story. He said: "Phil, what do you think of this man?"

I said: "Tony, I don't know the man from Adam. I thought you did."

He said: "I know him slightly, but I don't really know what kind of credibility to give him or this account that he has given you."

I said, "Well, I don't know." At that time I was just starting out in the Foreign Service and had no influential friends of any kind in Washington; I didn't know anybody here. I considered Freeman to be the most senior Foreign Service officer I had ever met in my life, and a very fine person. I said: "Tony, you must have ways that you can check this out."

He said: "Okay, I will check it out. If I hear anything about it, I'll let you know."

So off I went to the basic officers' training course at FSI to learn how to become a Foreign Service officer, which I found a little bit boring and artificial. In any event, I didn't hear anything from Tony. Finally, about a week later, I went back and said: "Tony, what have you heard about this?"

He said: "I checked it out with the Korean desk, and they said there was nothing to that because there is no indication of anything happening in North Korea, and our main problem now is to prevent Syngman Rhee from marching north. That is our main problem in Korea."

What could I say? What could I do? I felt that maybe you get prejudiced about your source, even though you don't know them very well, but I felt that maybe something might happen, but I had nothing more to go on. All the people in Washington, the few that I met who seemed to know,

INR, said: "Oh, no, there's nothing to this.

Two things happened when I was in Korea later -- my next assignment was in Pusan, Korea. I was assigned by the personnel division in the State Department to be junior political officer in the embassy. At the same time, INR gave me orders to go interrogate Chinese prisoners of war in our camps in South Korea, which got me in a lot of trouble with the Embassy, which seemed to be often the case in my career.

In my experience in the 1951-53 period with the Chinese military prisoners captured by us in the Korean War, the Chinese were a low level, mostly illiterate, uneducated, peasant people, for the most part -- many of them had been in Chinese Nationalist units captured by the Communists, converted and integrated into the Chinese Communist Army after they occupied the mainland. Many of them had been stationed with units in the lower Yangtze River area, Jangshee province and nearby. They had been told -- this is just shortly after the Korean War started -- that they were going on training missions, including landing craft practices going across the Yangtze River and so forth, in preparation for the liberation of Taiwan, and that was what they thought they were getting trained for.

But suddenly, without any preparation or warning, they were told: "Get on a train. Your unit is going to the Northeast." When they got to the Northeast, they crossed the Yalu River, and they realized that they were going to fight in Korea. It came as a great surprise to these young men, they said. It seemed to me that from reactions I got from some of the Chinese prisoners in the Korean War, that the Chinese Communist priority at the time was occupying Taiwan and eliminating, presumably forever, any competition from the Chinese Nationalist Government anywhere. They had no more territory to claim. That was their priority; Korea was not. When some decision at some level was made to go and pull the fat out of the fire in Korea, it was, in my opinion, more logically a Soviet priority than a Chinese priority.

Alan Whiting's book -- China Cross the Yalu was based in part on some of the things I discussed with him, as well as others discussed with him, about the Chinese prisoner experience. Some of the distillation of Chinese prisoner reports in the Korean War was part of his book. I can imagine that it would be rather upsetting to the Chinese to see the Russians having a dominant influence on the Korean Peninsula. One of the things that dismayed me -- it is always easy to look back and say: "I was right," and that is kind of sterile -- but when I got back to Washington and had my conversation with Tony Freeman and went off to my little FSI basic officers' training course, I had talked to a number of people I knew -- mostly junior officers around Washington. I got the impression from INR and others who had made a specialty of studying, analyzing, and researching China, that at that time the possibility of war was an absolute fantasy -- ridiculous, absolutely impossible -- and that it was inconceivable that there might be any difference of view between China and the Soviet Union. The conventional wisdom at that time all over Washington, as far as I could make of it -- military, civilian, State Department, CIA, etc. was: "It's a monolithic Communist bloc," and anybody who had a different opinion was way out in left field. I had a different opinion and found nobody who agreed with me.

Also I think we need to remember that Tony Freeman, and many of the China experts, shortly after I had that conversation with him, was entangled by the McCarthy attacks, and that he had to

have two-thirds of his stomach removed for a bleeding ulcer -- from I suspect the emotional stress, of what he was accused of.

I would like to make one footnote here about my conversation with Tony. I certainly don't want to leave any implication in anybody's mind that he was not interested in my report. He was interested. He just didn't know how to assess it, and he tried to find out from others in terms of what was going on in Korea, and that is the answer he got. In my opinion, I think it was a very honest reaction on his part to try to check it out.

WILLIAM G. COLMAN
ECA Mission
Seoul (1950-1951)

William G. Colman studied Public Administration at the University of Missouri and the University of Chicago, and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. His assignments abroad include Athens, Tokyo and Seoul. He was interviewed by Mel Spector in 1996.

COLMAN: I was with the Technical Assistance Division from 1949, when I entered it, to the fall of 1950 when I was recruited by Edgar Johnson, the head of the Korean program in the ECA to go over with Chief Meyer, the newly appointed chief of mission as his deputy. I would like to ask Marge a question here. Was Chief his proper name?

MARGE: No, his name was Clarence. (Marjorie A. Van Auken joined the ECA mission in Seoul, Korea as a secretary shortly after its establishment, and, along with most of the ECA staff was evacuated from Seoul to Japan, within a few days after the outbreak of the Korean War in June, 1950. A small core staff was set up in Pusan, as the China-supported North Korean army moved through Seoul and occupied most of the peninsula. Within Japan she was transferred to the ECA Field Office in Tokyo and became secretary to the Director. Upon the arrival of a new Chief of Mission and the decision to conduct the downsizing and eventual liquidation of the ECA Mission in South Korea from the Tokyo office, she became secretary to the Acting Chief of Mission. She and Colman were married in 1954.)

COLMAN: Clarence and they called him Chief.

MARGE: It was because there was a baseball pitcher in the big leagues named Clarence E. Meyer and they called him Chief Meyer.

COLMAN: Well that was his usual name. The reason that you were thinking I spent time over there and so on and how I managed to forget the name of this person. Well in World War II he had been captured by the Japanese at the outset of the war. He was an oil industrialist and...

Q: You are talking about Chief Meyer?

COLMAN: Yes. He was running a big oil operation in the far east and he was captured and held in a Japanese prison camp for about two years. The prior Chief of Mission over there, and I have forgotten who that was Marge, before Meyer came over there. Who was the big boss? Do you remember?

MARGE: Arthur Bunce; but the mission largely scattered, upon its evacuation from Seoul early in the war.

Q: Now this is before the Korean War broke out?

COLMAN: No. I arrived in Japan/Korea shortly after the second allied retreat from Seoul. What was the name of the river up there at the border?

Q: The Yalu?

COLMAN: The Yalu; the retreat from the Yalu was going on. Chief Meyer and I went over to Seoul, Korea. No, we didn't go on the same plane, but we got there roughly at the same time. We went over to have a session with John Muccio, the US Ambassador to South Korea. The Chinese and North Koreans were getting pretty close and Chief Meyer went into Muccio's bedroom and saw that all over the Ambassador's bed were valises packed, leading Meyer to think he was ready to get the hell out! Meyer recalled his prisoner period with the Japanese. In the meantime there was a big row going on in the U.N. about the critical military situation in Korea. Meyer said that he was not willing to undertake this assignment and would I be willing to stay in and run the show?

Q: Wow!

COLMAN: I said all right, provided that Edgar Johnson and people back in Washington would okay the arrangement. They did and Chief Meyer left in a few days.

Q: When you say, "run the show," what was the Economic Cooperation Administration Program doing at that point?

COLMAN: On the point of partial liquidation because it looked like South Korea might very well be, if not defeated, occupied. We had all kinds of contracts out for raw materials and various other things. On the logistical side we worked hand-in-glove with the G4 part of the military establishment of MacArthur's. The US Military occupation of Japan (SCAP) was still in existence. MacArthur was still "God Almighty," and Japan hadn't yet formed its own government. That didn't come for a year or so later. We had to reduce our personnel. We had to cancel contracts. We had to divert shipments headed for our Mission in Korea to Manila, Hong Kong, Taipei and other ECA missions.

MARGE: Bill, you are forgetting that meeting in Manila right after you got there. You went down to Manila and met with the Mission Chiefs and everybody wanted cars. They didn't care about two by fours. They all wanted cars.

COLMAN: Yes. That was both an information and deal making conference. We had the Mission Chiefs from the Far East in there. We explained the situation to them, "Here are our orders and here are the personnel and so on, and who wants what?" Then about a month or two or three or four after that we had a similar meeting with the Mission Chiefs in Tokyo, to wrap up some more things. Essentially it was to protect property and to get out of there in an orderly way and get the personnel redeployed. Of course there were some ongoing things in which part delivery had been made and where it could be made by getting into the Pusan Harbor. That was the only way you could get it over there. The Japanese were very cooperative in some respects. They would transfer funds over there via the Japanese and Korean banking systems.

My time was about two thirds in Tokyo, maybe three fourths, and the rest over in Pusan. The dozen or so staff members in Pusan were under the immediate supervision of Allan Loren, who reported to me. There was a get-away plan that if Pusan got overrun, Korean military and civil personnel would go to Chegu.

Q: This was an island off of Korea obviously.

COLMAN: An island off of South Korea. I saw it in the paper, reading about it the other day. The plan was for the officials and the records and so on, both Korean and US in the office over in Pusan, to get on this ship. One of the staff people took me to the ship and I've got a picture of it. In fact I've got a whole album of pictures of these countries that I'm describing. Anytime your curiosity gets overpowering I imagine I have a picture of the get-away ship and many other things and people.

Q: Okay.

COLMAN: We've got a picture of departure day for MacArthur en route to the airport, having got his butt kicked out of SCAP leadership. Well, pictures that you would naturally take at exciting times. Edgar Johnson wrote me a highly complimentary letter about how well the liquidation had been executed. I ran onto the letter, I had forgotten all about it, here yesterday or the day before, when I was going through these papers.

Q: May I interrupt you? Harlan Cleveland wasn't associated with the program anymore at that point. Is that right?

COLMAN: Harlan ran the China program.

Q: China. I see. So he had nothing to do with the Korean?

COLMAN: He had nothing to do, at that time, with the program. Now when I went back with Ty to help set up a new mission in South Korea Harlan was in a position up, I think, in Bissell's earlier post of Assistant Administrator for Program. During my first tour in Tokyo and Korea, Paul Hoffman had been succeeded by William Foster and ECA changed to MSA--Mutual Security Agency.

Q: That's right. I didn't mean to get you off your stride here.

COLMAN: I remember writing a letter to Harlan in that capacity that he was in from over in Seoul about some things that I thought were going badly wrong in the Far Eastern setup, mostly political, stuff about Chiang Kai-shek and so on. Harlan was not in the picture at the time of my first tour. Edgar Johnson was, you might say, the equivalent of a State Department Desk Officer for Korea, and the Far East was in the charge of Allen Griffin.

MARGE: Harlan was with UNRRA.

Q: Before that, yes.

MARGE: ...in Shanghai because that's where I first ran across him and then he went to the, what we called the "Gravy Train," in China--the China Program. He was over there in a civilian capacity.

COLMAN: He was running the China program when I was in the Technical Assistance Division, I think.

Q: I see. So when you finished...

COLMAN: Harlan was in a back and forth situation with UNRRA and running the ECA aid to China.

RALPH N. CLOUGH
Political Officer
Hong Kong (1950-1954)

Ralph N. Clough was born in 1917 in Washington. He attended Lingnan University in China from 1936-1937. He graduated from the University of Washington in 1939 with a B.A. He received his M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1940. In 1941, he joined the Foreign Service. His postings included Toronto, Tegucigalpa, Puerto Cortes, Kunming, Peiping, Nanking, Hong Kong, London, Bern, Taipei, and Washington D.C. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

CLOUGH: I had home leave and consultation, then went back to Hong Kong, where I was in charge of the political section of the consulate general. We reported primarily on events in mainland China. It was our only remaining nearby post where you could get information about China.

They took Kuang-chou in, I guess it was late 1949, and they were moving south in May 1950. They took Hainan Island. They were at the border of Hong Kong, and nobody knew whether or when they might cross the border, because there was no way of defending Hong Kong militarily. The British couldn't defend it. So we had a rather tense period there in which American

dependents were advised to leave. The British did not advise their people to leave, but the American Consul General, Walter McConaughy, made that decision. The most immediate question was whether the Communists would stop at the border of Hong Kong.

We also focussed on the Korean War. The Korean War had just started in June, and I arrived in Hong Kong about July or August. The next question, of course, was: What would happen in Korea? Would the Chinese get involved? We had reports of the Chinese moving troops from south to north, toward Manchuria. These were rather persistent and rather well-established. So that was the main question coming at us from Washington. They wanted any information that we could get on what the Chinese attitude toward Korea was. We scrambled around to pick up every scrap of information we could, bearing on that issue. That was our prime directive at that time.

You may recall that in late September, Zhou En-lai made a speech in which he warned that they couldn't tolerate the destruction of a neighboring country, or something to that effect. At about the same time, we got a warning through Ambassador Pannikkar, the Indian Ambassador in Beijing, from Zhou En-lai, to the effect that we should take this seriously. And there began to be reports then of an occasional Chinese being captured in northern Korea.

The question then was: Were the Chinese serious? Were they going to come in, in force, or were they just trying to intimidate us or deter us? MacArthur decided, on the basis of his intelligence, that it was the latter, and he issued his famous statement about getting the boys out of the trenches by Christmas. The Chinese of course did the opposite and went ploughing full steam ahead over the 38th Parallel. The Inchon landing was September 15th, and then we moved north quite rapidly over the 38th Parallel. The question was whether we should go all the way to the Yalu. I remember I had one White Russian informant in Hong Kong, who had connections in Manchuria. He had lived in Manchuria, and he would get messages from time to time. I remember once he told me that the Chinese were having people put tapes on their windows in the event of bombing, a suggestion that perhaps they were expecting to get involved in the war in Korea.

The most notable incident was when a Chinese, who came down from Beijing, came to see us. He was known to the Consulate General, particularly to Howard Borman, who was in my section in charge of translating Chinese materials, the Chinese press and magazines. He had known this man, and the man had given them some information about developments in Beijing before the Consulate General there closed down and we pulled out. He turned up one day in Hong Kong, and I had him, with Howie, up to my house (didn't have him come in the office). He told us that there had just been a very important meeting in Beijing at which all of the members of the Democratic League and the other so-called democratic parties had been called in, and they had been told that there was a new slogan: "Resist America. Help Korea." He predicted that there was going to be a full scale campaign on this all over China. This was the first word we had of it. So we reported this. We didn't know whether this man was a hundred percent reliable, but we had some confidence in him, and we reported it on that basis. He turned out to be accurate. He went back into China and was never heard from again.

I should say that that message from Pannikkar, the Indian Ambassador, was not taken as seriously in Washington as it should have been, largely because of Pannikkar's own views. He

was known in Nanjing as being very pro-Communist, and he wasn't regarded as an entirely reliable intermediary. I have often thought afterwards that if Zhou En-lai had given that message to, say, the Norwegian Ambassador in Beijing, instead of the Indian Ambassador, it might have been taken more seriously.

The Chinese press continued its usual attacks on the United States, but it was very hard to interpret from that what the Chinese might do in Korea. I remember (you could probably find this telegram in the file somewhere) from time to time we sort of added up the pros and cons as to whether the Chinese were planning to come on a large scale. And we came down on the side that they probably weren't.

I think that was based on a misreading of the Chinese. We felt that, after all, the "New China" was less than a year old (its Communist government having been established just about a year earlier). The Communists were still in the process of consolidating their rule in China. They were poor. They had a long road ahead of them. Was this really a propitious time to get involved in a full scale war with a country like the United States, which had the most powerful military force in the world? There is an article, which will be coming out in the latest issue of the *China Quarterly*, written by a couple of students at SAIS -- PRC Chinese students -- based on interviews that they had with senior Chinese officials and some materials that have been written since then, about the decision to enter the Korean War on the part of the Chinese. Apparently there was a big debate in senior circles in China about whether it was wise to do this. And finally, Mao Zedung made the decision. He had been convinced, ever since 1948 or 1949, that sooner or later the Chinese would have to fight a war with the United States, because the latter was such an implacable, imperialist enemy. The thought was that if the Chinese were going to fight such a war, Korea was the best place to do it. [Hao Yufan and Zhai Zhihai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited," *China Quarterly*, 121 (March 1990), 94-115].

GERALD BACHE
Economic Officer
Pusan (1951-1953)

Gerald Bache was born in New York in 1920. He received a BA from Yale University in 1949, his LLB from Harvard in 1954, and served in the U.S. Army from 1946 to 1947. After entering the Foreign Service in 1951, he was posted in Pusan, Munich, Abidjan, Stockholm and Bonn. Mr. Bache was interviewed by Theresa Tull in 2004.

Q: Now, let's take a more detailed look at the Foreign Service Career itself. Your first posting, 1951 to '53, was as a junior officer in Pusan, Korea. That must have been an interesting time to be there.

BACHE: Yes. As you know, that was during the Korean war and the embassy had been forced to retreat from Seoul to Pusan, because of the military operations. I served under Ambassadors

Muccio and Briggs. The Deputy Chiefs of Mission (DCMs) were Alan Lightner and Niles Bond.

As a junior economic officer, I was doing reports on subjects like the Korean government's budget, under the supervision of our financial attache. I also handled east-west trade matters, which included investigations of suspected violations of U.S. export control regulations.

In addition, I helped our agricultural attache do a couple of rice crop surveys; the latter assignment offered an opportunity to travel throughout the country. I remember that, along with the rice crop survey, we would do a livestock census. The Korean government offered us the services of a mid-level official of the Agriculture Ministry as an interpreter; I knew enough of the Korean language at that time to recognize that, for example, every time the village chief would say they had ten goats, this official would say eight goats. I reported these discrepancies to the agricultural attache, who would make appropriate corrections in his numbers. More than a year later, after I got to know this mid-level Korean official quite well, I asked him why he did that and he said, rather apologetically, that he was following orders of the Minister of Agriculture, who wanted to give the Americans the impression that conditions were bad, so we would increase the amount of U.S. economic aid to Korea.

During this first experience for me in East Asia, I quickly learned that Koreans considered it impolite to say "No" in answer to a question, so I learned not to ask a question, which required a "yes or no" answer. Along these same lines, I believe that many current misunderstandings between the U.S. and China, for example, have been caused by this cultural difference. One case in point is the fact that China, in joining the World Trade Organization, has signed many complex agreements, promising many things in areas like intellectual property law, without intending the kind of serious commitment that Americans would consider implicit in the signing of such agreements.

For the first year and a half of that two-year tour of duty in Korea, I got to know the people who worked with the Finance Minister. Then the Finance Minister became the Prime Minister, so, for the last six months of my tour, I was moved over from the Economic Section to the Political Section of the Embassy, because I knew the Prime Minister's entourage and was able to help with that kind of reporting. That experience gave me a brief introduction to the work of an Embassy political section.

Q: Did the war encroach on the mission there physically? Was Pusan, while you were there, a scene of military action?

BACHE: No. The Second Logistical Command of the U.S. Army was at the port of Pusan, where a lot of military freight came in and out of the port, but otherwise, we didn't see much of the military. The primary military activity was up in the north, near the demarcation line between North and South Korea. The really active part of the war was pretty well over before I got there in September 1951. I did take field trips and I would see abandoned American tanks in the middle of rice paddies. I would see what was left over from the war, but the war itself did not interfere much with what we were doing.

Before the Korean War, Pusan had been a city of 300,000 inhabitants. During the war, 900,000

refugees arrived, swelling the population to 1,200,000. The result was conditions of the most abject poverty, with refugees living in the depth of winter in corrugated cardboard boxes. There were open sewers surrounding our house and a smell that was ubiquitous.

Q: Any particular highlight of your Pusan experience that you would like to mention?

BACHE: Yes, there were several things. There was a group of junior officials in the Korean Foreign Ministry, who asked me to teach them some English, at an advanced level. I used some material from my Yale courses in American and European diplomatic history, in order to give them some of the vocabulary they needed. When I was getting ready to leave Korea, they wanted to give me a very generous gift, which, under State Department regulations, I had to refuse. It was a difficult thing to deal with, because I didn't want to hurt their feelings, but eventually we found a token gift that I could accept.

I mentioned that I had always been interested in music, so I took my cello with me when I went to Korea. Many members of the Seoul Symphony Orchestra had joined the Korean Navy and there was a Korean Navy Symphony Orchestra, in which I was invited to play. An example of the war conditions was the fact that, in the cold winter weather, there was often no heat, so we would play with our overcoats on, even in concerts. There was often no electricity, so we used candles, and there were other problems from war conditions, but we persevered with our music.

Later on, during my tour of duty in Korea, there were many Korean music students who came to me, trying to get to the U.S. to study. So I wrote to a professor I knew at the Yale Music School, and asked if he could offer a music scholarship for a Korean student and he said yes. In order to be fair about offering the scholarship, the American cultural attache and I, together with the conductor of the Korean Navy Symphony Orchestra, decided to have a competition for the scholarship and to be the judges of the competition. One contestant, named Nak-ho Paik, whom we had never seen before, was head and shoulders above the rest, so we awarded the scholarship to him. He went to Yale Music School, and then on to Juilliard, and later became a professor of music at Seoul National University.

Nak-ho has kept in touch with me and, over the years, he has given concerts around the world, some of which I have attended. In fact, I played in an informal concert with him in New Jersey just a couple of years ago. So that was a memorable experience with music in Korea.

Q: How were relations within the embassy? Did all the sections get along well? Were the Ambassador and the DCM well regarded?

BACHE: Yes, I would say it was a very close-knit group. You remember, this was during the war and living conditions were harsh. Married officers were not allowed to bring their families. We were mostly bachelors and single women, until - shortly before I left - Ambassador Briggs was allowed to bring his wife, but none of the other members of the Embassy staff had their families with them.

There were very warm feelings among all of us and we had quite a few social activities together. I shared a house with two bachelors, who worked in the political section; one was a Chinese

language officer and the other was a Japanese language officer. The Chinese language officer was Philip Manhard, who later on was captured in Vietnam and spent many years as a prisoner of war.

One other social and recreational comment: I mentioned earlier that I had learned to sail various sizes of boats under various conditions. Vincent Brandt, another embassy officer in Korea, and I jointly purchased a sailboat and sailed it along the Korean coast. Frankly, we enjoyed being out on the water, having some fresh air and getting away from the smells of Pusan for a brief period. We had to navigate difficult current conditions at the mouth of the Nakdong River, but we succeeded in sailing as far as the island of Koje-do, which some people will remember was the site of the main camp for Chinese prisoners-of-war.

Q: It sounds like it was a good experience, despite the hardships that the embassy experienced for a long while.

SAMUEL T. WILLIAMS
Command of 25th Infantry Division
Korea (1952-1953)

Command of 9th U.S. Army Corps Group
Korea (1953-1954)

General Williams, a Texan, had a long and distinguished career in the US Army. His military service included assignments in the United States and abroad. Among his foreign postings were: Command of the 25th Infantry Division in Korea; Command of the 16th US Army Corps. in Japan; and Command of the 9th US Army Corps. Group in Korea. In the course of the war in Vietnam, General Williams was a member of the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). General Williams was interviewed by Ted Gittinger in 1981.

Q: General Williams, what had been your assignments in the four or five years prior to your going to Vietnam in November of 1955?

WILLIAMS: Well, I can answer that specifically. In 1950 I was with Headquarters Army Field Forces at Fort Monroe, Virginia, as deputy G-3. The commanding general was General Mark Clark. A most outstanding officer. I went to Korea from there in 1952 and took command of the 25th Infantry Division. General Van Fleet, one of the best in our army was 8th Army commanding general. I stayed with that elite division and that assignment up until the time I left Korea, which was shortly after the armistice in July of 1953. However, the last couple of months of that assignment I was on duty with the 2nd Korean Corps, actually on loan. I still retained command of the 25th Division and [was] assigned to the 25th Division. But I turned command over to my senior general officer in the division, an artilleryman by the name of Louis Heath, while I went over and acted as deputy corps commander for the 2nd Korean Corps.

Q: Was that General Kwon, General Chung Il Kwon?

WILLIAMS: Yes. He later became chief of staff of the Korean army and I think later became an ambassador to the United States, though I'm not too sure about that. Later when I was in South Vietnam he came down and visited me there. Yes. There should be a picture here someplace on my wall. There's Chung Il Kwon right there and General Le of the Vietnamese army and myself and I forget who that admiral is-

Q: The admiral from Thailand.

WILLIAMS: Thailand, yes. Looks like four big fat frogs there. We were having a dinner party in Saigon when that picture was taken. From Korea I went to assignment in Sendai, Japan to command the 16th United States Army Corps.

Q: Those were occupation troops.

WILLIAMS: Yes. After about six months General [Maxwell] Taylor, then the 8th Army commander, asked that I return to Korea to command the 9th U.S. Army Corps Group. So I went back to Korea to command the 9th Corps Group. Then near the end of my second Korean tour, shortly after that, although still retaining command of the 9th Corps Group, which was three or four American divisions and one Korean corps - Korean 5th Corps if I remember correctly - I went up to General Taylor's headquarters as his deputy 8th Army commander. 1954 I came to San Antonio as deputy 4th Army commander.

The commanding general 4th Army at that time was Lieutenant General I. D. White, Armor. When White was ordered to Korea to become commanding general of the American forces in Korea and to get his fourth star, I became the commanding general of the 4th Army here at San Antonio.

In 1955 I received a message from General Taylor, now chief of staff, U.S. Army. He wanted to know if there was any cogent reason why I shouldn't go to South Vietnam to relieve, or to replace General Mike, or Iron Mike, O'Daniel.

Q: Excuse me, Sir, you called him Iron Mike.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: And I have heard you called Hanging Sam.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me why or how you acquired that nickname?

WILLIAMS: Yes. I was stationed at Camp Swift, Texas, in command of the 378th Infantry, the 95th Division, and a soldier, a truck driver, picked up a nine or ten year old girl that lived in Bastrop - Camp Swift, Texas is outside of Bastrop, or was - and he raped a child and in doing so

was so vicious that he tore her body about six inches. We were all quite perturbed about that because we had some colored troops at Camp Swift, and Bastrop was not used to colored soldiers and we were all on edge about that, being fearful the rapist might be black. Frankly, I was quite relieved when I found out he was a white soldier out of my regiment and not some Negro soldier.

But anyway, he was quickly apprehended. We had conclusive proof that he was the man who committed the murder. A court martial was convened and I was a member of the court. We heard all the witnesses pro and con, and then they brought in two men to testify that the soldier was insane. After the defense had put up these two psychiatrists to testify that soldier was insane, the prosecution brought in two other psychiatrists to prove that he was sane. Well, we were dragging on there and wasting time. Then pretty soon they brought in two more, which made six psychiatrists, and I asked, "What are these two people for?" I wasn't the president of the court, I was merely a member of it. The president should have asked the question. They said, "These two gentlemen are going to tell us what the other four meant when they were testifying here." And speaking too quickly and probably not very smartly I said, "Well, we don't give a damn what the psychiatrists say, the man is proven guilty and we're going to hang him and we might as well get this trial over as quick as we can." So we got it over as quickly as we could and we sentenced the man to death.

The news got out, and people started calling me Hanging Sam. Terrible nickname. But by God, it's been in the army for an awful long time and to some a name of endearment. Now, a lot of people thought it was because I was at Nuremberg and had the Nuremberg Fourth Enclave at the time of the execution of the war crime criminals. But I had that name long before I was at Nuremberg.

Well, now to come back to finish your question, Taylor sent me a message and wanted to know if there were any cogent reasons why I shouldn't go to South Vietnam to relieve Mike O'Daniel, who was due for relief. Mike had already retired once, he was on retired status then, and he had been out there for a couple of years and Department of the Army thought there should be a change. I said there was no particular reason I shouldn't go, except for the last ten or twelve years I had spent most of my time either in Europe or Korea or Japan and outside the United States. The Department of the Army came back and said that I would go on such-and-such a date.

Q: I want to come to that. What was your general impression after all of your briefings? What kind of an assignment did you think this was going to be?

WILLIAMS: Hell, of course, I left Washington with mixed feelings, but I had no apprehensions about the job at all because I had served with, or had had contact with, a lot of foreign people. I had not only fought the Germans in two wars, I had been in the army of occupation in 1919 also, and I didn't leave Germany until 1949 or 1950 after the last war. I had been used to getting along with the Germans, both civilian and police and with the Red Army and the Czechs. I had had quite a bit of experience with the Koreans, and I had a good rapport with them and President Rhee. When I would go in the lines in Korea with my division, if there was a Korean division on

my right or on my left I made it my business to cultivate the division commanders and the regimental commanders of those Korean units, and so I got to know them pretty well. I got to know many of them damn good as a matter of fact, and that's one reason undoubtedly that when the 2nd ROK Corps got in trouble in June and July of 1953, General Taylor called me on the telephone about five or six o'clock one morning, at my CP, and told me to go over to the 2nd ROK Corps. I had gone over there and stayed a couple of weeks. That was in June. One day when he came by the 2nd ROK Corps I told him, "I'm not needed here any longer. These people can now take care of themselves." He said, "All right, you go back home." So I went back to the 25th Division.

Then one morning in July, again along about daylight, he called me on the phone and he said, "Your friends over to your right are in trouble. Get over there as fast as you can go." I said, "I'll take off in five minutes." I did, going by helicopter. I took my aide de camp, Lieutenant by the name of George McBride, and started him out with my "shotgun" man and a Korean sergeant I had as an interpreter. They went by jeep and I went by helicopter immediately to the 2nd ROK Corps. The 2nd ROK Corps was under heavy attack and pretty serious situation, not too bad initially, but - well, there's no use going into that last big Chinese offensive, I don't think you want to know about that.

Q: Was that the Kumsong salient?

WILLIAMS: That's right, that's right. They hit the 2nd ROK Corps with a Chinese army, and we had an awful hard time. That wasn't so much the fault of the 2nd ROK Corps, but on the left of the 2nd ROK Corps was the United States 9th Army Corps. 8th Army had assigned some Korean divisions to the 9th Corps and one of them happened to be on the 9th Corps' right flank, which made them on the left flank of the 2nd ROK Corps. Knowing the danger of boundaries in situations of that type, I was careful to see I had that left boundary tied in tight as it could possibly be. On my right flank, the 2nd Corps' right flank, was Lieutenant General I. D. White with the 10th U.S. Corps. I had no particular fear there because we had an enormous big river that separated us and the 10th Corps and I wasn't too apprehensive about anyone coming around through I. D. White's sector.

Each morning along about four-thirty or five o'clock I made a habit of checking these different ROK divisions of the 2nd Corps. There were four or five. I did it by telephone. This particular morning I called the CG of the 6th ROK Division, which was my left division, and asked him how things were on his front. He said his division was all right. Now, I had caused him to have his left frontline regiment - now, you can understand this because you've had military service. However, some people listening to this are going to get confused, but anyway, they shouldn't. The very left ROK division in the 2nd ROK Corps had sent over into the American 9th Corps a small detachment, I think a squad or a little more, and the same way with that division over there in the 9th Corps, which if I remember correctly was the Capitol ROK Division; they had sent over a light detachment into the 6th ROK Division. So I had those people interlocked. I asked the division commander how he was getting along, he said all right. Because we were under constant attack, but the Chinese were making little progress. We were holding. I said, "What about your left regiment?" He said, "Okay." I said, "Your contact with the Capitol ROK Division okay?" "Yes, Sir, it sure is." That was all there was to that conversation. I then phoned the G-2 and G-3

of the 9th Corps and got an all's well from them, also.

I bring this out though for a particular purpose, because later that morning, not too much later that morning, one of the ROK division commanders in the 2nd ROK Corps reported to me, "There are some Chinamen back in my artillery." That didn't perturb me at all, because our 2nd Corps lines were intact. I said, "Well, some of those Chinese have infiltrated. Get a couple of patrols back there and scoop up the infiltrators and get them the hell out of the way."

Shortly after that, General Max Taylor sets down near me in a chopper. He had found out from corps headquarters where I was and he came to that particular place and sat down in the field there in the chopper and asked me how things were. I said, "All right, we're holding. A few Chinese showed up back in our artillery this morning, but they'll be taken care of." He said, "I'm not too sure." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "That Capitol ROK Division" - I think it was the Capitol ROK, now it could have been the White Horse Division, but it doesn't make any difference, it was the division under the 9th Corps. He said, "They gave way during the night and there's no ROK division there now. There's not just a few Chinese in your artillery. The Chinese are now marching in strength where that ROK division was. They're marching through there in columns of four. They will attempt to turn the left flank of the 2nd ROK Corps." Well, hell, that presented an entirely different situation, a serious one.

But finally we got out of that all right. They drove us back five kilometers on one flank and fifteen kilometers on the other before we could counter-attack. It was a tough battle and the Koreans were most appreciative of my help in it, but I don't think you want to go into that. You're talking about Vietnam.

FRED CHARLES THOMAS, JR.
Political Officer
Seoul (1952-1954)

Fred Charles Thomas, Jr. was born in Arizona in 1927. He graduated from Bucknell University in 1951 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He served in the U.S. Army from 1946-1948. He joined the Department of State in 1948. His overseas posts include Korea, Pakistan, China and Germany. Mr. Thomas was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

THOMAS: I was shipped off to Korea as a staff officer, and I didn't know the difference. The State Department was always sort of Greek to me. I knew what these "P" ratings were, but I got to Korea and assumed I was no different from these young officers who were all FSOs but some of them weren't about to give me the time of day. I got to Korea in May 1952. I had been told in the Department that Ambassador Muccio soon would be transferred out of there but that was not known in Pusan -- at least publicly. Pusan was the city where our Embassy was in 1952. Our troops had gone back into Seoul, after having lost it, but had gone back into Seoul. But we weren't back in there as an embassy.

I was the biographic officer, because that is why they had hired me. I set up the biographic files, plus I did some domestic political work. We had a chief of political section named Rolland Bushner. Rolland was a first-class officer, but he resigned later and went with FOREIGN AFFAIRS magazine. We didn't have any American women in Pusan when I first got there; it was terrible. There were no women clerks; you couldn't find anything in the file room. It was a mess. The Embassy was in an old bank building. Lightner, who was the DCM, was a breath of fresh air compared to Muccio. Muccio was dour, in a way. I tried to make a joke the first day I arrived, and he said, "Well, if you don't like it here, get on an airplane." It was just a joke. But he wasn't there that long until he was called back for a consultation.

I got there about May 20th. We were in the middle, or soon thereafter, of one of the biggest political crises that had ever occurred, in terms of President Rhee wanting to make sure he got reelected President of Korea. Soon thereafter, we put Chang Myon on a hospital ship, to hide him from Rhee's goons. We were manipulating a great many things. I was involved in this, with the rest of the Political Section.

First of all, let me tell you, the Political Section was made up of, I think, four or five officers. I had been hired because I knew something about politics in Korea and people in the Department knew about my moving around with Bertsch and the Coalition Committee. So I knew some people in Korea, and I knew my way around. This place didn't floor me. They had a fellow named Walter Drew, who would read newspapers all the day long -- translations of newspapers - - and then write up political stuff. It was pretty dull stuff, but he wrote well. Drew had spent many years in Korea in the military government. He was very introverted and didn't get to know people. Another officer was Phil Manhard, who was a first-class collector and people person. He and I hit it off.

He was a Chinese-language officer. He had been down on Koji-do, or one of those islands, with a general, looking after the Chinese prisoners of war. But he and I became sort of buddies in the Political Section.

I shared a house with the head of the Economic Section, a fellow named Gordon Strong, who was a State officer and the labor attaché.

It became pretty obvious to me that there was a group of women in Pusan called the Nak Nong Club, which was basically an intelligence organization being run by Rhee's people. These were Korean "grass widows" -- upper-class types, whose task was to latch on to lonely American senior officers. Gordon Strong had a live-in girlfriend, who spoke pretty good English, and he was telling her everything that went on in that Embassy -- every night.

I reported this to Lightner. From then on, at our staff meetings, nothing of importance was discussed. Then there would be a rump staff meeting, with Bushner, Lightner, Drew, Manhard, and myself, around Lightner's desk. We only had one staff room we could all get into. If you went in there, everybody knew it. So the only way you could have a meeting without the rest of the Embassy realizing you were having a meeting was to go up to Lightner's office, which was next door to the Ambassador's. By then, I think he had taken over as Chargé and taken over what had been the ambassador's office, which was no great shakes either.

But that is how we ran the place. We each had assignments, picking up stuff. I would be out talking to people. I knew some Korean military officers that I had gotten to know before, both in the Navy and in the Army. And politicians I had gotten to know.

I can still remember a funny story, if funny stories have their place in this. I was out one night, and I had a Jeep station wagon which I had taken out there so I could get around. With me was the labor attaché, and we were out visiting a Korean politician in the National Assembly. It was out in one of these back districts where you had to crawl up a mountain-side and go into a shack, because that was the way everybody was living. I parked my car down here, but on the telephone poles were these big signs, in yellow, saying: OFF LIMITS DISTRICT. NO AMERICAN TROOPS. Since it was raining hard, I said, "No sense both of us getting wet." Our car was parked where it was somewhat protected; I pulled up and parked right below this area to wait for him to come down. As I sat there, parked, there was a bang on my window. I looked up and there was a big burly American MP sergeant who said, "Don't you know you don't belong here? This is off limits."

I looked at him and I said, "I don't think you understand, sergeant. You have no jurisdiction. I enjoy diplomatic immunity."

He looked at me for a few moments, and said, "I don't give a damn when you got your shots. Get the hell out of here."

The Embassy was very anti-Rhee -- the whole group of us were; Muccio hadn't been. Muccio had gone with Rhee out of Seoul -- he and Don MacDonald and a few other officers.

Mac Donald was one of the best Korean specialists in the Service, and a very fine man. He should have been made ambassador there. They had gotten out of Seoul and stuck together. So they had been through the hard times together, with this fellow Shin Song-mo, the then Defense Minister, and many in the cabinet; they all went south. They suffered together, so there was a certain amount of camaraderie there. But Muccio was pulled out of Korea and sent back to the States. He had been trying to protect Rhee and had done everything he could, but Rhee misread what was going on. Rhee felt that Muccio had done him in, and went after him, using money, because Rhee understood the system of using money with politicians in the U.S. Congress. He had his connections with the extreme right wing of the American government, including Senator Styles Bridges and others. Many of these names I don't remember anymore, because we are talking a long time ago. But at the time, I knew pretty much. There were people I knew of at that time within the government whose names I don't remember now.

Let me preface this, in terms of my approach to a country like Korea. If you paid for much information, you really didn't get what you really wanted. You had a lot of intelligence agencies there, of all numbers and stripes, collecting information, most of them buying it. I could go into war stories about various ones and stupid things. I will give you one as an example a little later.

Anyway, because of this, I came to the conclusion that most of what they were furnishing was either concocted or was manipulated, because these people were much more used to

manipulating others, in terms of the type things they'd been involved in, especially Rhee. Rhee was manipulating our government back in Washington. I was trying to find out all I could about that, for my own protection and our Embassy's protection, because I knew that we weren't going to be popular due to the fact that we were not siding with him in his fight with the National Assembly. That was very obvious.

Rhee suddenly turned to a person named Lee Bum Suk. Lee Bum Suk was a Korean general in Sian China who had been commander of Kwangbok Army under the OSS -- Eagle Project, I think it was called -- in China, which had a youth corps connected to it. (Later known as the Northwest Youth Corps.) He had been the first Minister of Defense in the Rhee government. The Kwangbok Army had worked with our OSS against the Japanese. Clyde Sergeant, my boss in the Political Advisory Group, had been the American OSS officer in charge in Sian. I had gotten to know Lee Bum Suk through Clyde Sergeant back when I had been there in 1948, and I knew his background. He was another Chiang Kai Shek, sort of what I call a Christian fascist. You know that type? He was very straight and reminded you of Chiang Kai Shek, very military in his bearing and very black and white. Well, he was brought in to be the hatchet man for Rhee.

The National Assembly, in the past, had elected the President. The President, by this time, had come to the conclusion that there was not going to be any presidency for him if he had to depend upon that damn National Assembly. So he believed that he had better get the Constitution changed to make it a popular election for President. The whole issue was to change the Constitution. This took a good many votes, a lot of arm twisting and bully-boy tactics. We were trying to protect the majority of the members of the National Assembly, including Chang Myon and others that we considered democrats, against this pressure.

We had all this stuff coming in from every intelligence agency, but it was all paid for. In a country as poor as Korea, you could hire anybody. Agents for intelligence services were cheap, and you could have hundreds of them, but it didn't mean you were learning anything of any importance. So I decided that the best thing to do was to read their stuff with a grain of salt, but to really get to know the players as best I could, and get to know people around the players, who would have reason to truly know what they were talking about. I soon realized that, in a place like Korea, there is a loyalty on the part of the Koreans to Korea. But there is no loyalty to a government. Governments come and go, and it is politics. So if you could get the Korean you were dealing with to feel that your interests were the same as his, as it related to their country, but maybe not the government in power, you could learn a hell of a lot, and they would tell you anything you wanted to know. So this was the approach I took.

Most Americans equate government and country. Therefore, if you feel that way, you would treat a guy who was telling you things out of school as a traitor. But you just can't do that. If you do that, you are hobbling yourself, and that is not the truth of the matter. I mean, who in the hell could be, in a big way, loyal to Mr. Rhee, except a few of the hangers on of Mr. Rhee?

Out of all this, I wanted to find out what he was up to, so I got to know people who were on his staff -- male secretaries on his staff -- the people in politics.

I didn't mess with the Foreign Office. I soon realized that the Foreign Office was not in the

power loop. And yet I couldn't convince my fellow Foreign Service officers who were used to that. They thought they had deal with the American desk chief. I remember Bill Jones; I had trouble trying to convince him. He later became chief of the Political Section, and he wouldn't listen to me. He was a State officer who came out there -- first post.

I used to say to anybody who wanted to know anything about Korea, "You don't deal with the Ambassador from Korea, ever, if you really want to know what is going on, in terms of a feedback from their own government. The guy who counts is the DCM. The DCM got his job because Rhee put him there to keep an eye on the ambassador. The ambassador is a Foreign Office front man to go to parties, but he doesn't have the power." This was the way that government operated. I could talk to a guy like Manhard, because he understood this. But you would go to a lot of these people who came out of Europe, they didn't have a clue. And it was very hard to tell them.

Out of all this, we were trying to protect ourselves. So I was getting information from talking to various people (it was so long ago, I don't remember who). But I was getting a good deal of information on Rhee, because he was mad at the Embassy. He was mad at Muccio because he thought Muccio was screwing him back in Washington. Muccio was not but he wasn't willing to accept that; at least that wasn't what he was hearing. He was going after Muccio and going after us; I was collecting all the data I could on that. And it was all sensitive, because we are talking about American politics, and money going to American politicians, and who and what and when.

When I got it all together, there was a chief of Political Section there -- Rolland Bushner -- and he and I got along great; my function was basically the biographic function and to get all this data on people together and to find out what was happening and to also liaise with the intelligence organizations that were in Korea, for the Embassy, like INR does it back here. I would go to the CIC chief and talk to him, get their stuff, and they would send stuff over, and the military intelligence people, and the CIA had a big station there, and they would send stuff over, and NSA people would come in with their little satchel. It was still AFSA in those days.

Anyway, out of all this, we got to know an awful lot about what was happening. And if you knew who you were talking to and could sort of cull this information, cull the good from the bad, you could come up with a reasonable picture.

But just at this point, we got a new Ambassador -- Ellis Briggs -- and a new DCM -- Niles Bond. Briggs took a dislike, immediately, to the chief of the Political Section, Bushner. Bushner could feel it, and so could I. He didn't take a dislike to me, but he took a dislike to Bushner. Briggs seemed to like me, but it was still too early to know. But we could feel that we were going to get a new political chief, even though Bushner hadn't been there that long.

So I said to Bushner, "What are we going to do with all this information?"

He said, "You know we are not going to get it by Briggs. He is not going to want to put all this stuff down and send it in. But you know you have got the right, as biographic officer, to send biographic reports. And nobody even bothers to read them."

So we sat down and put all this data in a biographic format, using the names of people. But it was really what was going on there, including who was buying whom and where the money was going and all this. An update on Rhee, an update on this guy, anybody who was involved, in a batch of these biographic reports. We got it all typed up, and I made up a pouch, directly to INR, for this stuff. Didn't even take it to the Ambassador -- it was just biographic reports. And we shipped it all out. Didn't say a word.

Within two weeks of getting it all out of there, Bushner was out of there himself. As we were going to the airport, he was dictating to me the last of this stuff that he knew, so I could use it later.

Anyway, it got to Washington. And Bushner, in the meantime, who was better known (because this was my first post and I didn't know my way around Washington, to speak of), wrote somebody in the Department that he knew, saying, "Go over and get your hands on those bio reports in INR." Well, they went over to INR, which I think was in Annex I, that brick building on the corner, and got in. The reports were Top Secret, but they got to them. Well, here all this data was. It told exactly how they were going after Muccio, etc., and this stuff was put away. This will come up later in my story. That is the reason I tell it, because it helped save an ambassador's career later.

Anyway, they kept going after Muccio, and they were after Lightner. But, a guy like Rhee, didn't know who we were; we were just little lieutenants. But the whole system was against him.

In the end, Lee Bum Suk, using strong arm methods, was able to bully the National Assembly into changing the Constitution. And Rhee got reelected president.

But in that election, a popular election, a man named Cho Pong-am had the audacity to run against him. Cho Pong-am had been a real patriot. He had joined the Communist Party and then left the Communist Party. But all during the 1930s he was thrown in jail, beaten, starved, tortured by the Japanese. He was Rhee's first appointed Minister of Agriculture, and got himself fired for trying to look after the agricultural interests of the poor farmer. Of course, they were out to rob the farmer of everything they could; he fought them, so they ended up getting rid of him.

Cho Pong-am comes along in my story later. I didn't get to know him at this point. I got to meet him, but I didn't get to know him. We met and talked, as diplomats talked to people at parties. I can still remember the first party where I met him, an UNCURK party. But it wasn't until a few years later that I got to be his friend although we were acquaintances; he knew who I was, and I knew who he was. That was in the summer of 1952 -- the year Rhee was reelected.

Ellis Briggs and I got to be friends. Very few Foreign Service officers know how to shoot a gun; I was brought up around a cavalry post, so I could hunt. And Ellis was a great hunter. He had expensive shotguns and he liked to hunt. When I hunted with him, I had to dress like a gentleman, not like a... you know. Anyway, I arranged for hunts for him. He had a daughter and a wife who came out there. I think his daughter was sort of interested in me, and the Briggs family liked me. So I was a favored fellow there with Briggs. I found his daughter charming, but she didn't turn on my chemistry, so I wasn't going to get involved. I would take her out to parties

and that type thing. Briggs liked to drink martinis. He had been in Czechoslovakia, and he didn't believe in big embassies; he disliked them. When he first got to Korea, he announced that although he couldn't cut the embassy, he was going to cut it his way. In other words, he would create a circle of people, and the rest of the place could just float. I was one of the favored few in that circle. Our staff meetings were usually held at the residence. It was in Pusan; he moved to Seoul before I did. and made me the political representative for our government in Pusan and gave me his house and his chauffeured car. I was living pretty high on the hog. I had this big place that was an embassy residence in Pusan for a few months, while he was in Seoul. All the official guests had to come through Pusan to get to Seoul. I can remember I had Bill Bullitt as a guest. He came through. I can still remember him. The first evening he was there, I had a dinner for him and he asked me my background. I told him. He said, "What are you doing in the Foreign Service? You have no money. To be a Foreign Service officer, you have got to have some money. You don't belong in this business." Well, he took off one night and went to Seoul on a train. When he came back, he became ill with the flu. I ended up having him for a week. By the end of the week, he decided I was all right, but he was a bit of a snob. He and many other conservatives were all pro Rhee. By then, the Republicans were in; the Eisenhower crowd had taken over.

Another such guest was Mrs. Robert Low Bacon, whose house is now the home of DACOR. She was a lot of fun and saved a fancy table cloth, which had been used at the dinner in her honor. Some red wine was spilled on it. She went to the rescue with the salt shaker -- she emptied it on to the stain so that it couldn't set and be permanent. Later in the States, she had me to a small luncheon in honor of Eisenhower's chief of staff who got in trouble over the fur coat. She proposed I join the Cosmos Club and lined up a invitation to join but I wasn't a joiner. She was called the Perle Mesta of the Republican Party.

We had had G. David Schine and Roy Cohn come through. And, boy, did that sicken me. When they came through, I can still remember Lightner calling me. It was Sunday. By then, something had happened and I had moved out to a place called Hialeah Compound. We were still in Pusan; Briggs hadn't arrived yet, and Lightner was still Chargé. This whole thing was on against homosexuals and corruption in the system, but basically it was big on "going after" individuals. I got this call asking me and the consul, Charlie Borell, (the consul and I lived in the same house) to come for an emergency staff meeting at the embassy. Charlie Borell was well connected. He was the consul, but his brother had been best man at one of the Rockefeller's weddings, and another one of his brothers had been chairman of General Motors. So Charlie was sort of the little guy with a family that had a lot of power. Anyway, it was Charlie and me. The security officer didn't live out there with us, but I remember he was there. The political chief was there and the economic chief. I don't think they had anybody else, because it was a meeting to talk to Cohn and Schine about what they were supposedly interested in. Well, I just wished I had had a tape recorder. These guys sat there and told stories that just sickened you. I can't remember them now, but they were so sickening. I said, "Oh, for a tape recorder." And these guys are investigating us! They were talking about what had happened in their previous posts. And everybody was running scared. They were being given VIP treatment. They didn't want to read anything. They didn't want to look at any files. They just wanted to sit around and shoot the bull for a couple of hours, and then they were on their way. A complete waste of time.

I would hear these terrible men. And we looked at each other, but nobody was going to say anything, because we knew these men were there to play hatchet jobs; so we just listened. It was only later that we learned that they were homosexuals. In retrospect, the policies concerning homosexuals adopted by the administration were terrible. Many fine and capable people were ruined by those policies. Over the years, I learned of several persons, whom I had known, who were forced out of the Foreign Service because they were considered a security risk.

The worst security risk I had observed was Gordon Strong who drank too much and told all to his Korean mistress while in bed with her. Because I didn't procure prostitutes along with the other young men then in Korea, I was placed under surveillance by the embassy security office. When I realized what was up, I invited a young pretty Korean girl to my home one evening. I kept her there late looking at slides and then spirited her out of my house in a suspicious manner. The surveillance of course was meant to see it all. They did and I was not bothered further. Years later, after our marriage, that same security officer and his wife came to dinner at our home. After dinner, when we were alone, I kidded him about his false suspicions.

A story I forget to tell you in terms of this, because of what was happening, is the corruption had gotten worse. At this time we were negotiating an economic agreement. I was not a person who really took much interest in the economic agreements; I had my hands full doing what my job was. But I did know that there was a lot of hanky panky going on in it. I got word that there was going to be a sellout of American interests at a meeting -- a clandestine meeting, off the record. And this came from some Koreans I had talked to. I mentioned it to Lightner, and he said, "If you can find out more, do so." Well, I found out when and where this off the record meeting was to take place. This retired American admiral, who had been sent out from Washington to negotiate this agreement, turned out to be a very corrupt guy, one of those right-wing types. The details are lost from my memory at this point. I had gotten this from Koreans that he was going to sell out the American side, and there was real, personal corruption involved. This clandestine meeting was between him and a man named Paek Tu-chin who was at the time the Finance Minister. He had been stealing us blind. It involved the American AID program. The only American present would be the admiral, but there would be some other people there, because this admiral didn't speak Korean.

Somehow or the other, somebody there had been able to get the use (and this was very strange) of the kitchen of the U.N. mess hall in Hialeah compound. Around a big working kitchen table, on a night that the kitchen was empty and there were no cooks there. It was a summer evening, not cold or rainy, and they had these steel windows that opened up. I went and planted myself outside the windows of that kitchen. I lived a block away. I sat there on a little stool. It was dark and nobody could see me, and I could hear what was going on inside. Once again, I said, "Oh, for a tape recorder here." In those days, you didn't have something like this, you had these big things, you had to have a power source; so no way. The day after hearing all this and taking a few notes, I went in to talk to Lightner. And he said, "Well, it's your word against his, and you know where this is going to go. If we try to say this, why, it is going to cause all hell a poppin' and what have we proved?" It was terribly corrupt, and there was nothing I could do. I was there alone; it was my word against this man's word.

Out of that experience, Lightner decided that since I was learning things and keeping him

informed, I would handle any of the hot items that came along. I remember one item came along that Lightner asked me to take care of, and I said, "Well, why don't you ask the security chief to do this?"

He said, "Because the security chief has got a problem of his own." Which I didn't know. The security chief was a bachelor and was womanizing in a big way.

Anyway, it turned out that the Defense Department came to the Embassy for support; a cable that went directly to Lightner which he showed me, asked the Embassy to look into what was wrong with the American Military Police unit in Pusan. They thought something was wrong there, but they had to have outside opinion. They gave some clues. They said they knew some of these people were involved with an American there who was in the foreign-trading business, who had a big house there and a yacht. And they gave his name and who he was.

I started moseying around; I got in with the crowd and got to know him. and was invited to his house. There were girlie parties pretty much every evening there. And here was the whole Military Police unit, of all levels and ranks, at these girlie parties, at this man's house; it went on constantly. It was a bit like a nightclub, really. He was smuggling all types of stuff in and out of Korea.

I wrote up my report about what I had found and who was at these parties. I said, "I can't prove anything, but it would indicate that he has got them all bought off with booze and women."

The Embassy suddenly got a cable, a couple of weeks later, asking me to arrange for Embassy trucks (we had a whole fleet of trucks there of our own) to be at this military airport outside of Pusan. To tell no one, but to be there with this many trucks. I got out there, and off these military aircraft came a whole company of MPs, including their commanding officer. I was in a staff car, and the company commander got in with me and said, "Take me to the MP headquarters. We are going to arrest everybody right now, on the spot!" They turned the place over, and that whole MP unit went out on the same planes, that same day. It was the fastest thing I ever saw.

I was in Korea when Rhee released the prisoners. I was in my office the morning that happened in the summer of 1952. I was in my office one morning, and it hadn't happened yet. The military attaché for Korea was a colonel named Anderson, a very fine man. I liked Anderson and I had developed a good relationship with him. I had obtained his permission to photograph his military biographic files for the Embassy's biographic files, so we would have a set down there. I had come to know him when I had go up to Taegu, because his offices were not in Pusan but in Taegu. He would come down to visit regularly. He had a light plane that could take him in and out, so he could get around. I had been out the night before and had talked to some people I knew and had been told that this was going to happen. I was weighing what letting these prisoners loose was going to do, what the significance of this was.

To understand the total background, right before this happened, which tipped off some of us that something was going on, Rhee created a new command (The Provost Marshal General Command) outside the regular command which was under the U.N. commander, an American general, which meant that every military unit in Korea, including the ROK Army's Military

Police (ROK Army MP's guarded all prisoner of war camps), was under his command. So then Rhee decided to create a new command, outside of the U.N. command, which was a political command responsible only to him. He appointed a man, a lieutenant general, Won Yong-dok, who was a physician by training, to be the commander of this national provost marshal general command, which was completely separate from the ROK (Republic of Korea) army. Suddenly, with a stroke of the pen, Rhee, on one day, announced he had transferred all military police units in the ROK army to the new provost marshal general command.

A big fight occurred; "you can't do that; we need the military police." They were fighting over this issue. What Rhee was doing was giving cover to his ROK Army MP officers, who had been taking orders from General Won.

When this happened, some of my Korean friends who were involved in all this said, "This is a way of getting the military police out from under the U.S. command so that when they get their orders to let the prisoners go, they will get them from General Won Yong-tok, who is only responsible to Rhee. Then, when it is all over, they will transfer the military police back. But it gets this little dirty deed done, and everybody is home free."

I listened to all this and thought; this is a very interesting little maneuver that is going on. It was early in the morning, (ambassadors didn't come in until later) and in walked Anderson into my office. My office was on the same floor as the Ambassador's, but down the hall. He said, "Have you heard anything about this letting prisoners loose?"

I said, "Yes, I was told that last night."

I told him my story, and he told me his -- the stories coincided. I said, "Let's see if the Ambassador is in."

We called his secretary. "Yeah, he just got in."

We went down to see him, and he said, "Have you gentlemen put anything out on this? Have you written a cable yet?"

I said, "I haven't had time, sir. I am telling you now because Col. Anderson came in. I was going to write a cable for you."

He said, "This is one of those things I would like to handle myself if you two gentlemen don't mind."

Anderson said, "No, we don't mind. You are the ambassador."

We went on our way. We figured he would probably report it, by his own closely held channel.

Suddenly, the prisoners were loose, and Washington went wild. I ran into the Ambassador that morning, and he winked at me and said, "Oh, the Communists aren't going to do a damned thing. You watch." He knew what he was doing. In other words, we knew, but he sat on it. Briggs'

analysis was right. Rhee's move got those prisoners free and it solved the problem. Briggs said that communists would threaten, but they weren't going to block this peace agreement, and they didn't. But Washington was all upset.

I might add, for the researcher, that we had North Korean prisoners of war. And there had been tremendous, excruciating negotiations going on at Panmunjom over how to separate the ones who wanted to come back from the other ones. And Rhee just opened up the gates, and almost all of them ended up staying in the south. It was a *fait accompli*, but it was felt at the time that it would blow the whole peace thing. Of course, there was a man named Kenneth Young out in Korea, who was later an ambassador someplace else. He was deputy to the fellow, I think named Arthur Dean who was sent there as the negotiating ambassador for the U.N. Young was his deputy, and they were there to negotiate in terms of this. Young was so mad, he said to me, "You know, I have got a good mind to go out to JACK and see if they can do something about..." JACK was the "Joint Advisory Commission Korea". That was the CIA unit there. He said to me, "Do you know anything about JACK?"

I said, "I know some of their people, because they bring intelligence into the Embassy. But most of their interest is in North Korea." They had a policy where their people served six months and then departed. So, people rotating through every six months, what the hell. They were just buying information. They didn't know what they were buying.

He said, "I would like to see them get rid of Won Yong-tok." Because Won Yong-tok had done this deed. "See if we can have them blow Won Yong-tok away."

I said, "That's crazy. Won Yong-tok is not a sadist. He did what he was ordered to do. The guy that did this was President Rhee. So quit blaming the action agents."

Briggs told me some war stories about his career, being sent off to China and his fight with the Rockefeller's. He said to me, "You have been here a long time, relative to most people. You know all these..." Because I knew a lot of names. I mean, when you deal with biographic, you are meeting a lot of people. He said, "You know that we cannot, as a Political Section, do what was done under Lightner. But we can do some things. I think the first thing I would like is for you personally to get to know this man Cho Pong-am."

I said, "Well, that is going to cost some money. I have never spent any entertainment allowance. You haven't given me any. I spend my own money. Do you know what a *kisaeng* party costs in this country?"

He said, "No, but you go find out."

I asked an interpreter who worked for me, to find out what a *kisaeng* party in Seoul would cost. He came back with the word, "Two or three hundred dollars," which was pretty big money. I went to Briggs and said, "Can we afford two or three hundred dollars?"

He said, "Yes, I will get you two or three hundred dollars. You just set yourself up a *kisaeng* party; I want you to get to know this Cho Pong-am who ran against Rhee".

I was still living in Pusan at the time. So Mr. Shin and I went to this kisaeng party at a small kisaeng house in Seoul. Present were Cho Pong-am and maybe two other people, friends of his that he brought along. We just had a good drinking evening. Cho Pong-am was a heavy drinker, and he could hold his liquor well. He had a great sense of humor, was bright, and had courage galore. We talked about his career; it was just a get-to-know-each-other evening.

I went back and told Briggs what I thought of the man, and wrote up some stuff for his biographic file, which is, I am sure, in files now. I said, "Well, I am going to try to do what we can to make sure he doesn't get into any trouble."

Every time something would go wrong, I would go to the head of the USIS, and I would tell him the Ambassador was interested. I would say, "I want you to interview this man on Voice of America." Nowadays we don't have Voice of America there any longer. So I would get Cho interviewed. Then they would back off. Soon the then chief of police, Choe Chi-hwan, apologized for suspecting me of tipping Cho off that they planned to arrest him; he had learned that it had been one of his drivers -- well, I had also been guilty. This was years later, after Briggs left there. But I kept this up for many years, looking after him. I would see Cho on occasions; he would see me, but not too often. He would keep me informed of what he was doing.

I wrote a response to a questionnaire from a Korean magazine named "MAL"(which means language) -- I can furnish a copy to you. This monthly political journal in Korea, two years ago, asked me if I would be willing to be interviewed. I said, "Yes, on paper. I want to see the questions on paper and answer them on paper." It all had to do with my relationship with Cho Pong-am. I answered the questions in English. I had been reasonably fluent in Korean, but I have forgotten it all. I can't remember any Korean now. I remember Chinese now, but not Korean. Anyway, I shipped it out there along with some pictures they wanted, and they published an article all about my, and some other people's involvement with Cho Pong-am. It took a while before FBIS got around to translating it. It was sent to me a year later. Of course, I read it. They made a few mistakes in what I had said. They kept calling me an intelligence officer rather than a political officer. They wanted to make my relationship with Cho appear to be a clandestine one. (It sells magazines!) I wasn't so worried about that as I was worried about the fact that they indicated in the article that my analysis of U.S. policy was in error as to American interest in Korean unification. During that period (1958-59) I had indicated in my response to their questions that American policy interests were not focused on Korean unification. Since I was the closest person in the American government to Cho Pong-am, I had known about his interest in the reunification of Korea. They quoted other Korean sources whose stories contradicted mine. According to this source, named in the article, he and Cho had met with Political Counselor Phillip Habib at the Ambassador's residence and discussed the unification issue. I later sent them proof of the fact that Habib did not arrive in Korea until two years after Cho's execution.

Another thing, Briggs also told me, "You run the Embassy's limited involvement in the Korean domestic political situation. Just keep me out of trouble. I am going to keep the Political Section busy on Japan relations, North Korea's problems, and the international problems. But I'm going to keep all these other political officers out of the domestic scene, because it will just get me in

trouble with all those right wingers like Walter Robertson back in the Department."

I said, "Okay. I am going to do everything I can to ameliorate what Rhee is doing here."

It came time to elect a chairman of the National Assembly. The chairman was third in line to take over the presidency in that country, after the Vice President.

Lee Bum Suk, I always felt, was on CIA's payroll, but I can't prove that. He had had this long-term connection with OSS, and he ran this bully-boy youth group (Northwest Youth Corps); he had been a general, and the first Minister of Defense in the first Rhee government. I always had a suspicion that U.S. intelligence was behind him. After he had helped save Rhee, because he had been the hatchet man in the 1952 political crisis, he was running to be the chairman of the National Assembly. The assemblymen had to vote, and it looked like he was going to win it because he had Rhee's anointment and all that stuff.

There was another man there named Yi Ki-pung. He was Western educated, he had a Western-educated wife, and he was a Christian. He was a nice man, a decent man. He had been in the National Assembly, and he had been part of Rhee's entourage. But he was one of the moderates in Rhee's entourage. So I decided that he was a better choice for the American government than this Lee Bum Suk, even though I was up against maybe other aspects of the American government.

The night before the election was to go off in the National Assembly (I by then had moved to Seoul and was living in the smallest house in Compound I; the DCM lived in that compound), I held a cocktail party, and Yi Ki-pung was the guest of honor. I invited all the power brokers from the National Assembly to that cocktail party that evening, and I flattered Yi Ki-pung. The Ambassador dropped over for a few minutes, from his residence, to the party. The next day, Yi Ki-pung was elected chairman of the National Assembly.

Yes, we were involved. But it was low key, not in a way that you could get in trouble in Washington, and Rhee couldn't accuse us of going after him.

Recently I got into a conversation with somebody on the war and what I might know about prisoners and who I knew in the way of people who might be able to tell him. Then he got to talking about people he had already talked to who had been there at the time, including a man named John Hart, who claimed he had been chief of station there, over a 500-man CIA station. When he brought it up, I remembered John Hart. Hart had brought up a man named Haney, who had been his predecessor. And Hart had said to this guy that Haney had been more or less pushed out of there for being ineffective. I said, "Well, I can understand that." (Hart was a breath of understated competence after the colorful hyperbole prone Al Haney). That brought back an incident of importance in terms of the history at that period. I didn't know Haney until this event occurred, but I got to know him out of it because there was so much noise made.

During the summer of 1952, the Embassy got a lot of intelligence from the CIA and from the MI units and from U.S. Army CIC. The people they had there were on six-month rotations. This chief they talked about, Haney, whom I met later, was a big, affable Irishman who tended to be

an exaggerator, and I never took him too seriously. He always bragged about how many agents he had. But I knew, from looking at reports, that he had bought into what I call the professional intelligence network that had been there for years, and he was paying people who were either controlled by Rhee or controlled by the other side. There was a lot of that with intelligence, and you had to know it. But you still had to get along with those people, because if they had something you were interested in, you didn't want to make enemies of them.

It was mid-summer 1952 when we got a report in the Embassy, from three different intelligence units, talking about a possible coup d'état -- top secret. These reports all read about the same. You would have thought they had come out of the same printing mill. But they came from, supposedly, three different agencies, with different sources.

The majority of the political people there at the time were new, but Lightner wasn't new, and I had been there and knew what the score was. But Lightner, who was DCM and Chargé, wasn't sure of me, because I was new, as far as he was concerned.

This whole situation, I think, solidified my position with Lightner. This report had come in, and we had all seen it. They used to bring all these things to my office, because I was the INR guy, as the biographic officer, and had the responsibility of liaison with the various intelligence units there; then it was distributed throughout the Embassy. I got to know all these people who would come in with these reports. Generally, they weren't high-level people -- they were liaison people. I never commented on this stuff, because it was better not to, even though you thought it was crap.

Lightner read this report. We hadn't discussed this. He read it and I read it, separately. I looked at this thing and I thought, "Jesus, this is baloney. This is a feed." But I didn't make any more noise about it than that, and Lightner didn't either.

Major General Herron had just taken over what was known as KCOMZ, the communications zone for the rear area in Korea; he, of course, was very interested in this report. He was an old friend of my Dad's. I didn't know him, but he had heard about me through the Army grapevine, that I was out there and knew something about Korean politics.

He came in to call on Lightner, as a courtesy call to get to know the Chargé; at the same time, he brought up that he had read this report and was worried about it. He knew that there was a man named Fred Thomas on Lightner's staff who had been in Korea and knew something about Korean politics. Would he mind if Fred Thomas wrote him a memo giving his views on this report?

Lightner sent for me, and in front of Lightner, because we had never discussed it, the general said, "What do you think of it?"

I said, "I think it is a feed."

Lightner had the same opinion, which I didn't realize.

Then the general said, "Would you mind if I have young Fred here write me a letter, telling me why and detailing all this, so I can study it?"

Lightner said, "No. You go do that."

I wrote the letter and sent a copy to Lightner first. It went off, under my signature, to General Herron, explaining why this report was full of crap.

Lee Bum Suk was the at the center of this. In other words, he was one of the coup plotters. Remember the British guy who took Lee Bum Suk's job as Minister of Defense, named Shin Song-mo? The report had the two of them in bed together. When you start plotting a coup d'état in a place like Korea, you don't get two enemies together plotting a coup. There is just no way. This was the fundamental flaw in the report.

This was all explained in detail, with a lot of stuff at the time that we knew and which I can't remember at this point. Anyway, I sent it off to General Herron.

Suddenly, the whole balloon burst, because the liaison guys from these three intelligence units started coming into my office and giving me a hard time because their bosses were madder than hell, because Herron had brought and showed this letter to their bosses, with my saying their stuff was full of crap. We had a little problem from then on with some of these people until they left. Of course, Haney was one of these people. I met him later at a social reception, and he jumped all over me about saying his report was full of it. It turned out it was just that way, nothing but feed. But it did worry the devil out of the military command there.

That was one story, but another story had to do with the reporting going on in the press at the time in the States. It was a real education for me, being a young Foreign Service officer, because I didn't really understand how badly the American press at that time was biased; in the way the publisher wanted it to be biased.

There were two reporters there from TIME, a fellow named Jim Greenfield and a fellow named Dwight Martin. They came in to call on Lightner and said they were to write a full story on President Rhee for a cover issue, which was going to have Rhee's picture on the cover of TIME Magazine. Lightner called me in and said I could give these gentlemen access to Rhee's file. I looked at Lightner and said, "There is an awful lot of very classified stuff in that file."

He said, "It doesn't matter. You can give them access."

I said, "Yes, sir," and took them back to my office and gave them a desk over in a corner. The two of them sat at one desk across from each other; I handed out the dossiers on Rhee. They spent maybe a week there going through this stuff. Then they went off on their own and came back about a week later with a draft dispatch to go to TIME; they asked me to go over it for facts. I went over it and made a few corrections, and it went off.

When this article came out in TIME Magazine, it was 180 degrees out of phase from anything they had in that draft article. If TIME-LIFE kept copies of drafts that were sent back and didn't

destroy them, it might be worthwhile for a scholar to go in and look at their draft, because they had access to everything we had at the time, and it was a very good article as originally written.

Now the last story was a humorous story. Phil Manhard and I had become good friends. He was a sophisticated fellow among the people in the political section at the time. But they split everybody up, and we lived all over the place. I lived out next to the general in command of the port, on what had been a base that the Embassy had owned called Hialeah Compound. We had two houses out there housing embassy people, and I lived in one of them. The way everybody lived, you had a bedroom and you shared a house with other people. As I said earlier, I shared the house with the consul, Charlie Borell.

It was a Saturday, and on Saturdays, we came informally to the Embassy, usually in the morning. The political crisis of 1952 had just ended, and everything was still very touchy. We had all worked long hours, and Lightner decided to have a party. He lived in the residence. He and the Ambassador shared the residence up on the mountainside; it was a very nice place. That morning, he turned to me and said, "Oh, Fred, I am having a little fun party at my place, starting this afternoon about two. Why don't you drop by?"

It was to be drinks and dancing and women. He was a bachelor. We were mostly bachelors at the time. So I said, "Sure."

In the meantime, though, I always had a standing invitation to have lunch with Manhard on Saturdays at his place, which was not very far from the Embassy. He shared it with two or three other officers. One of them was a junior officer in the Economic Section, just arrived, fresh out of Yale. He was like a brand-new second lieutenant who was sort of naive but nice. Dull bright, extremely academic bright, you know the type. Manhard treated him like you would a shavetail. Manhard would call him, "Bache". Anyway, we were sitting there having a drink before lunch at Manhard's place that same Saturday, and I said, "I'll see you this afternoon up at Lightner's place."

He said, "What's going on at Lightner's?"

I told him, "A party".

He said, "That son of a bitch didn't invite me."

I said, "I'm sure he just forgot it -- an oversight, Phil."

He said, "I will fix him."

At this point, Bache walks in from off the street, coming home.

He said, "Bache, come here! Bache, Mr. Lightner is having a party this afternoon at his house. He has asked me to ask you to bring your cello and your girlfriend. (Bache had a girlfriend who played the piano, and he played the classical cello.) at five o'clock this evening, and play the cello for the guests at the residence."

I listened to this and I didn't say a word, I just grinned. Manhard said, "You watch."

So that afternoon, I was at the party. There was a good-looking lady there who looked something like one of the characters out of "Terry and the Pirates," the Dragon Lady -- a beautiful Chinese-looking woman, young. She seemed to take a shine to me, and she sort of moved in on me fast when I got to the party. Well, I learned later that this was Lightner's girlfriend!

Anyway, about five that afternoon, I walked Bache with this little Korean girl; she sat down at the piano. The jazz music is out on the terrace, where everybody's dancing and drinking. But he is sitting there in the living room (it was June), by this grand piano, sawing away at the cello for an hour, nobody paying any attention. He got up and left an hour later with his girl.

On Monday morning, at our informal staff meeting after the formal one, in Lightner's office, Manhard walked in, looked at Lightner, and said, "Did you enjoy the cello music? You won't forget to invite me next time."

Another funny thing in terms of Manhard happened at the time. Suddenly, because Manhard was a Marine Reserve officer and they wanted to use him for these talks with the Chinese at Panmunjom, they called him back to active duty and put his uniform back on. I lived next door to the British MI6 for a while there, and the MI6 guy looked at me and said, "Well, this Manhard, he is more than meets the eye."

I said, "Well, may be, I don't know. But I like him; he is a lot of fun." Anyway, Manhard got the reputation as being "more than met the eye." Manhard sort of enjoyed that, anyway.

Manhard could learn anything. He was always on the streets; he made all types of contacts. But he hated to sit down in front of the typewriter. We also had another fellow there, named Walter Drew. Walter was an academic sort of fellow, who read the newspapers, never left the office, and turned out volumes of stuff to go back to the Department, which was a regurgitation of what was in the translation of the press. Which was sort of worthless; you could get that out of Washington. So I made a comment to Bushner, who was then chief the of Political Section -- we got to know each other socially, and we were dating two girls and showing up at things together. He said, "You know, that Manhard, you like him, but he doesn't write anything."

And I said, "He doesn't write anything, but he learns everything. And look at Drew, he writes everything, but it is worthless. The trick is to get Manhard to tell Drew what he is learning, and get Drew to write it up. And then you might, you know..."

So that is what happened. I can still remember being in Bushner's office when Drew came in with his first dispatch going out summarizing what he had learned from Manhard, but his name only was on the bottom. With this, Bushner called both of them in, and he said to Drew, "Did you learn this someplace?" (He knew where he learned it.)

Drew said, "I learned it from Manhard."

Bushner said, "I don't see Manhard's name on here anyplace."

He said, "Well, I wrote it."

Bushner said, "Well, that doesn't matter. You didn't learn it. I want you two to work as a team. And if it is going to be a team, I want both names down there."

From then on, that is the way it worked, and a lot more information got sent to the Department.

A fellow named Lacy succeeded Briggs, but he didn't get there until after I left. But I knew, from what I was reading when he was due to go there, that he wouldn't last long, because there had been all this rumor that he had been one of the people that had changed governments in Manila and had been part of that whole intelligence operation there.

Rhee was very suspicious of our intelligence people. And from what we knew in the Embassy, at some point along there, because of it all, he had kicked this whole intelligence station out of Korea. What happened was that Rhee liked to go fishing, and these intelligence people controlled a lot of small islands off the coast, for smuggling and for intelligence purposes. Of course, they were considered sensitive bases; any boats that got too near got fired at. It turned out that Rhee was out there fishing off one of these places where the intelligence (I think it was the CIA) had one of their bases, down off Pusan someplace; he got too close to this island, and people fired on his fishing boat. There was hell to pay, when it was found out who it was. Suddenly, Rhee said, "Get them all out of here!" And so the whole station, I gather, left.

Rhee was always suspicious that we were out to get rid of him. So when this fellow Lacy later arrived, he didn't last long, because that is what Rhee thought we were out to do.

Briggs brought in as chief of his Political Section an officer by the name of Arch Calhoun. There was a man he liked, who was very brilliant. He could dictate a dispatch or cable and not need to edit it. I didn't have that talent.

Anyway, the Ambassador told him, "Stay out of Korean domestic politics. We will only get ourselves in trouble with the Department. Let Fred handle it because he has been here for a long time. And make sure that anybody who writes anything on domestic politics clears it with Fred. We are just not going to mess with domestic politics, because there is not too much we can do. We don't particularly like Rhee, but we have got Walter Robertson to deal with back home."

As I said earlier, Briggs had the political officers busying themselves with the Panmunjom talks, with what was going on there, with what was going on with reference to Korean-Japanese relations, which were terrible and were going to remain terrible, and still to this day, aren't the best. This was due to the history of the relationship between the people of Korea and Japan and what happened there during the occupation. But that is what they busied themselves with. They didn't get involved. I was the one who was involved, what little involvement there was. You could just try to ameliorate the situation.

It was like that story I told you about Yi Ki-pung and how I gave a cocktail party for him and he

became the speaker of the National Assembly. He was an attempt to ameliorate the fascist tendencies of the Rhee regime, rather than let Lee Bum Suk, who was a strong-arm type, get that job. But you couldn't really do much more than that.

In retrospect, Briggs was probably the most capable and courageous ambassador I served under in my career; he also was such a good writer that he could sell the most outrageous ideas as being logical. He was more a European hand. Most of the ambassadors we sent to Korea were European hands. (In retrospect, this will always be the case. The politically appointed ambassadors with real clout with the White House serve in the European capitals. They look after the career types who work for them and there are few other places they can serve as important as Asia). Briggs liked to have his true staff meeting at four or five in the afternoon, over martinis, by the fireplace at home, with a few people that he liked. That was the way the Embassy ran. He wanted to cut the hell out of that Embassy, but they wouldn't let him. So he just let most of the staff float. He always harked back to his experience in Czechoslovakia, where they kicked everybody out. They forced that Embassy down to 15 people; he said it was the most efficient embassy he ever had.

In 1954, Rhee was due to make a presidential visit to this country. My two-year tour was just about up; I was put on a commercial flight going back with Rhee's advance staff. I got to know them and talked to some of his Western advisors that I didn't know before. It had already been set for me to go into Korean-language school. I left there sometime in July; it is hazy now. Anyway, Rhee was to come about a week later. I went off to Korean-language school; I was there from 1954 through 1956. That is when Lacy came in and took over from Briggs. Then Lacy got bumped out of there. I think, at the time I got back there, he was not there, but I don't think the new ambassador had arrived yet, as I remember it.

The US had a large aid program -- big aid programs -- and a lot of money was being wasted. There were a lot of questions in people's minds about the corruption -- tremendous corruption -- in Korea. Sort of like you have in China today. An awful lot of stealing. Because Rhee was always balancing forces underneath him, it didn't matter whether you were corrupt. The issue was, if your group got too powerful, he would put another group in. When you are playing that balancing act, you have got to put up with a lot of bad apples. And he had lots of them.

There is one other story that I think should be told because it has to do with that corruption problem. Just after Briggs arrived -- this was the late summer of 1952 -- Strong was the economic chief -- the fellow who used to get drunk and tell everything to his mistress. Shortly thereafter a man named Sydney Mellen, who was a very nice man, arrived to head the Economic Section. His wife was Italian, and he was a "European diplomat" -- very sophisticated, very charming -- but he really wasn't used to dealing with Asian subterfuge (although I felt, after Italy, he should have had some knack).

Anyway, he was at a staff meeting, where he told the brand new Ambassador that the Koreans had managed a recent currency exchange -- that is, currency reform -- beautifully, and that it was a massive success.

What it amounted to was that on one day they suddenly announced that you had 24 hours to turn

in all your currency and get new currency. You would get one-for-one up to a certain level, then you would get less as the amounts went up, so it was a way of contracting the money, which would indicate that the rich were going to get hit this way, especially the black marketeers.

So this was "beautifully run." Sydney announced the date the decision was made, which I didn't know. I hadn't been following economics that much; I was a political officer. The decision had been made three months before, and he gave the exact date that he had been told by Korean officials. It had been made several months before. And he gave the exact date that he had been told by the Finance Ministry. Not at the time, because this was all done, supposedly, on the q.t. by the Koreans.

Mr. Shin, who worked with me, was the top translator/ interpreter, the highest-paid Korean on the political section's payroll. I asked Mr. Shin, "Could you locate a day-to-day listing of the price, on the black market, of gold, diamonds, and dollars for the past four months? If you could do that and get it translated into English for us, that would be great."

Because I had my suspicions, and I wanted date-by-date, from black marketeers. Mr. Shin got it all. The inflation rate on the wan to dollar just almost flat, but going up slightly. When you hit the day that this decision was made, that curve goes straight up. I said, "Mr. Shin, can you go to the graphics people in USIS and get this all put on charts for us?"

He did, in English. At the next staff meeting, a week later, I came in and I said to Sydney, "Sydney, I have got something I want to show you and the Ambassador because I think you made a comment that the Koreans told you how honestly this currency exchange was carried out, and what a great job they did. Let me show you something." When we got to the conference room, I showed this chart to everybody. It told the whole story. These newcomers needed to understand how Korea worked.

Let me talk a little about sex at the Embassy. First of all, there was a long period, and it was the period when I first arrived when there were no American women in our Embassy. So you had "Rhee's offering", a group called the Nak Nong Club, that was made up of grass widows from the Korean War, younger women whose husbands had died. They were more or less educated and knew some English. And they were sent to the Embassy as basically an intelligence operation. So you had a lot of these Korean women running around, and they were the ones, for instance, at Lightner's party.

Manhard and I used to kid about these Mata Hari's from the Nak Nong Club. Well, that was the situation. We had all male clerks in the registry and in the code room. You could never find anything.

A story that illustrates the Wild West atmosphere that prevailed in an embassy without women: there was a fellow named Doyle Gentry, who was a lot of fun -- a file clerk in the code room. Doyle was a big, hulky man. We all carried pistols in those days. He got drunk one night, when he was living in this barracks-like place, which was of Japanese construction. The rats could be heard running across in the overhead between the roof and the ceiling. He was in his bed, drunker than the devil, trying to shoot the rats. He couldn't see them, so he would shoot at the

noise. This went on until the women arrived.

Later, there were no wives, only female secretaries and clerks. There was one woman officer, whom I started to date. Margaret Booth, Peg ended up marrying Manhard. She was a very nice woman. Peg was personnel officer. Then we had new secretaries in the Ambassador's office and in the Consulate. There must have been a dozen women who came in, which brightened the place up.

At the same time, there always were some nurses with the U.N. around. I was 25 and I was interested in women, but I wasn't ever the type that would go out and introduce myself on my own, or go try to pick up some girl someplace that I didn't know. That just wasn't my style. I guess I had been brought up sort of proper, and I just didn't do it that way.

We had several people, like Strong, who had a mistress. Most of them, I think, were just one-night stands, that type thing, with most people there. But you have to remember that our the two top officers were bachelors -- Lightner and Muccio; they had their Korean girlfriends.

There was another woman officer who arrived there on TDY from Tokyo. She was a reserve officer from the Department, who was very good looking. I dated her, but she later married Muccio. She was a sophisticated looking woman.

It was sort of wild and wooly after the first American women arrived. I can still remember some of the parties were a bit on the... I think there was a lot of... You know, women and men, there was a lot of interest in sex, and things went on. I dated Margaret, but my relationship with her was rather proper. She was a nice person, and I didn't want to get married. I was the type guy that believed if you got to fiddling with a woman, you had to marry her. I was old fashioned in the old-fashioned way. Manhard started to date her; they fell in love and were married in Seoul. I remember some of the girls were rather proper. There was a Jewish girl there who worked as the Ambassador's secretary -- very bright, and she had a quick, sharp wit, but she could also be nasty at times. She lived in the house behind me, where Peg lived. I was over there all the time, visiting with Peg. One morning I was coming out of my place; I was generally cheerful, and in such a tone offered her a ride, in my jeep station wagon. She was waiting for an Embassy car to pick her up -- the car hadn't come yet. And so I said, "Do you want to ride with me?"

She said, "What are you so cheerful about?"

I said, "Well, it is a nice day."

She said, "You wouldn't be so goddamned cheerful if you had to sleep alone every night." She was a very rigid girl.

We lived back to back -- these two houses. A retired lieutenant general from the British Army lived on one side of me; he headed UNKRA. He was a very nice guy. He liked us and we liked him. And then there was a brigadier general in the American Army who lived catty-cornered from us, who was the Pusan Port commander. He disliked State Department people with a passion; he didn't like having us there in the first place.

The interesting thing was that the entire compound on which we lived was Embassy property. It had been in the Embassy's hands as a base for storing stuff coming in at the port of Pusan to be shipped to Seoul -- the Hialeah Compound. With the war on, we had turned it over to the military to use, but we had kept control, in the sense that we still had title to it. On that base, we allowed the U.N. UNKRA to build a lot of brand-new housing for its employees who were to be part of their aid mission. Part of the deal was that, for letting them do this, they would let us have two of the houses to live in. We were given houses near the UNKRA-Club (mess hall) -- the prestige houses right next to the general. I lived in one of these houses.

General Lestayo, who was the port commander, disliked us all, but his colonel, his chief of staff, was friendly with all the girls in the Embassy. He would report back to the girls in the Embassy what was going on in Lestayo's office. Lestayo was always cussing the Embassy people -- e.g. that they were terrible people, etc. etc. All these young people living like senior officers, etc., etc. He was a character. He was a West Pointer but he had only made brigadier general; I think he was frustrated and unhappy with his career.

In the summertime, he would have movies in his garden, and the volume was so loud that you couldn't hear yourself think in the neighborhood. He would invite nobody to come to watch these movies. He just sat there alone. None of us liked Lestayo. One summer evening, a whole group of us were drinking at Peg's house. She had a little German-made cap pistol. When fired, wadding would come out of the barrel. It was powerful enough that the wadding could break a champagne glass. I was brought up around the military; I shot pistols and rifles, and I had hunted. And so here I was, with this pistol that belonged to Peg. We had had enough to drink, and I was shooting out champagne glasses on the table with this cap pistol. These glasses were cheap to buy at the commissary or the PX; they were Japanese. Anyway, everybody was laughing and having a good time; suddenly a siren went off for an air raid, and all the lights were turned off everywhere. We were waiting around; we went out on the porch of her house. I was firing this pistol in the air, and she said to me, "General Lestayo probably will be raising hell about this, Fred."

I said, "If that son of a bitch comes around here, I will shoot his ass." It was just a cap pistol.

It turned out he was around the corner, listening to all this. He had come over there, and he had heard all this.

He went to the general in charge of the UNKRA (Sir Arthur Rucker, Lt Gen., Ret'd, B.A.). He badgered him because UNKRA owned the houses we lived in; that is, UNKRA was, in his view, our landlord and they should do something about these Embassy people who were firing firearms in the compound. It was very dangerous.

Because I lived next door to the general who headed UNKRA, he asked me what all that noise was about. I told him exactly what had happened -- that it was a cap pistol. He laughed, and said, "I just got a letter from General Lestayo complaining, wanting me to give you folks hell about all this. I am going to go back to him and say that is not our business because, although we do own the house temporarily, you own it all as the Embassy; therefore, he should deal with you folks."

Then we got feedback from the colonel in his office that Lestayo was madder than hell at this British general for not doing anything and forcing him to write a letter to the Embassy.

The letter came to the Embassy, complaining. Cassidy, the administrative officer, brought it up to me and said, "Would you answer this in the name of the Embassy, for my signature. You know what happened."

So I wrote one of those very serious letters saying, "This is serious. We have investigated, and we feel that, if what you had to say here were true, it would be a very serious situation. However, from our investigation, it is very hard for us to believe that you, a professional military man, cannot tell the difference between a real firearm and a cap pistol." The feedback from the colonel indicated that the General was livid.

Did I tell you the story about the military getting involved with political reporting, and Briggs wanting that straightened out? Within a few weeks of the end of the war, that is summer 1953, Eighth Army G-2 suddenly began to send long political analyses concerning the local scene to Washington. The views expressed were off the wall. Briggs was fit to be tied and so was the Department. He liked the CG Max Taylor but he didn't have too much respect for the military in general. He sent for me and said "Fred, you come from a military family; do you think you could do anything to stop this foolishness?" I asked him to loan me his long black limo. He agreed; flags flying I arrived at the "Bunker" at 8th Army Headquarters. Breezed in, left my calling card and asked for an appointment to see the G-2 -- a full colonel. By the time I returned to my office in the Embassy the colonel had called and set an appointment for the next morning. The meeting was a real pony show. I was ushered into a large conference room full of mostly Lt. Colonels. The G-2 was a very affable man. In response to my question concerning how they came to the conclusions concerning the local political situation which they were forwarding to Washington, the answer was mind boggling! As the Colonel explained, each intelligence report no matter from which service had a grade -- for example varying from A-1 to F-6. A-1 meant the source was an A source or the finest, and the information being a 1 was solid, no question about it accuracy. These various agencies gave their own reports these grades before they distributed them. Many of these Lt.Colonels were trained in higher math. They used a computer to average these grades on all such reports and come up with an analysis which was therefore "objective". I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I convinced the Colonel that he should allow some of his officers responsible for this reporting to join me on a regular basis at my home for dinner when I was entertaining Korean politicians. Within a short period, they were bringing their analyses to me for review before sending them to Washington. From then on we didn't have the same problem with the military. (In retrospect, on reading recent comments in the press about the failures of the intelligence community over the past twenty years and remembering the series of debriefings done by CIA and INR over my own career, it is my conclusion that the "academic" system done here in Washington of arriving at political assessments was and is doomed to failure). One must be there, have command of the language, diplomatic access to the government in question including all aspects of the local political spectrum and have the courage to tell it as it is, not as is wanted, either by powerful special interests here, or the Department which is reflecting the desires of the Establishment. My experiences in both Korea and Pakistan clearly indicate the foundation for my opinion.

But the Rhee government was constantly shuffling people around, to keep Rhee in power. He was a great revolutionary, but a hell of a poor administrator of a government. As I said, this resulted in our aid being stolen blind. Really, in big money. Corruption was rampant. Three hundred, four hundred million dollars, back in those days, was pretty big money. That was what we were putting up a year. I remember the figure \$360 million, or something like that, a year, in terms of aid.

Then in 1954, I was assigned to Korean language studies. Many people had been sent to Yale for Korean language training. FSI didn't really have a full course in those days. They were fiddling around, talking about it. So they decided, because of my military background, to send me to Monterey.

This was 1954, and I can still remember, it was sort of fun. There was one other Foreign Service officer on the post, a guy taking Cantonese, named Ainsworth. I didn't get to know him because our overlap was just a month or so and then he was gone. I was in the Korean department.

The Koreans at Monterey liked me. I knew how to get along with Koreans. I already knew the drill and had gotten along very well. The Korean teachers and everybody found me very interesting, and I got to know them. The colonel in command of the post put out a post order. It caused me to kid these guys, some of my West Point classmates there who were lieutenants and captains. There was one who was a lieutenant colonel; he had been pushed out before he graduated, for getting married. In his first class year, he got kicked out of the Academy. So he enlisted in the Army, went through OCS, was commissioned, and was a second lieutenant with a Quartermaster unit in Japan when the Korean War broke out. He went AWOL and joined a regimental combat team in Korea, as an officer, but just joined them on his own, and took command of a platoon, ending up being highly decorated and battlefield promoted up to the rank of lieutenant colonel. So here he was, the highest-ranking member of his West Point class. It was a year before my class, I guess. He was at the language school along with some of the guys that were in my West Point class. I kidded them because they put out a post order giving me the personal rank of full colonel -- on the post, for social purposes. They had to do this, because the post commander held special "attaché parties" to teach the attachés how to get along at diplomatic functions. As a means of limiting the size of these parties, only full colonels were invited unless an officer of lesser rank already had an assignment as an attaché to a diplomatic mission abroad. They gave me this rank since most attachés were full colonels; they wanted me to go to these parties. I was the one State Department person there. I spent a full year at the school and got the rudiments because Korean is a very difficult language. They had people trying to commit suicide there, from the pressure. Guys who were honor graduates of the War College were flunking out of language school, because they weren't good at language. The smartest guy in my class, in Korean, was some hillbilly from West Virginia who hadn't finished high school, but he was a natural linguist. He was an interesting story, a Pygmalion story. The Korean teachers, many with advanced college degrees from our best universities, said that when he spoke English they tended to look down on him as being an uneducated hick, but when he spoke Korean, he became an educated Korean because of his spoken command of that language. It led later, after his assignment to Korea, to his marriage to an upper class Korean young woman from a wealthy family.

I guess there must have been 400 people studying Korean in my class, mostly AFSA, NSA, and the intelligence people.

Teaching language goes through all types of permutations and combinations. At that point, they were teaching it by treating you like a child. They wouldn't tell you anything. You had to learn it like a child learns English. They would pick up a pencil, and they would say, "This is a pencil." They would pick up a pen and say, "This is a pen," in the language. And you were to figure out, from hearing this over and over and over, what was the pen and what was the pencil and what "this is", just from hearing it and doping it out. Well, that is all right, maybe, for kids, but adults just get very frustrated with that approach. It was very frustrating for most of us. And they had all the rooms bugged, so that if a teacher started doing anything different, it was known down in the office and they would get hell for it. So they had to stick to this routine drill.

Then they had a damned military vocabulary you would have to learn; it was crazy because you barely knew how to speak the language. You couldn't say toilet yet, and here you were learning military vocabulary. The craziest damn method. A year of this was very frustrating.

I rented a small cottage in Carmel, which was very nice. I became the darling of what I call the divorcee set. As a single man, I was invited to a lot of parties. It was an interesting year. I got to know some of the arty types around Carmel, and went to the club. Every year the club had a function where each language department was to put up a booth to make money for charity. A major in the Asian Department there was a part-time student, part-time administrator, an official interpreter, and an excellent linguist. He also ran the club. The next morning after this function was over, I said to him, "I didn't see a Korean booth here last night".

He said, "Oh, that is a funny story. It tells the difference between the Koreans, the Chinese, and the Japanese. Yesterday morning, the Chinese arrived early in the morning and started hammering and sawing and putting everything together to build their booth to sell Chinese food. And by six in the evening, when the benefit opened, they were finished. About three in the afternoon, the Japanese arrived; everything pre-cut, bang, bang, bang, it is up, and they are done. About six in the evening, the Korean Department head came in and said, 'Where's our booth?' He expected somebody to build it for them."

Anyway, it was an interesting year to be there, with so much going on in Asia at the time, with our first getting involved with Southeast Asia. I felt that there were better ways to learn a language. The teachers were good, but they should have been left alone to teach language rather than the time spent teaching military vocabulary. Korean is such a complex language, but the vocabulary will come if you have got command of the structure and command of the fundamental verbs of the language. That became obvious later, especially when I was learning Chinese. I realized that if you can really handle Chinese fluently, the needed vocabulary is easy to add. The problem is getting the structure down and handling it fluently with ease. Korean is a much harder language to learn to speak than Chinese.

WILLIAM G. COLMAN
Economic Mission
Seoul (1953)

William G. Colman studied Public Administration at the University of Missouri and the University of Chicago, and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. His assignments abroad include Athens, Tokyo and Seoul. He was interviewed by Mel Spector in 1996.

COLMAN: During all of the war planning that had gone on during the Korean War--he helped set up the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM) and the Defense Production Administration (DPA). One of the issues closely tied in with civil defense but not dealt with in FCDA--How you recover from an atomic attack? How do you best prepare yourself for the worst?; and then, how do you come out of it as quickly as possible? The job was to develop an index of vulnerabilities to attack. It was called the Post Attack Production Staff. I joined that staff as a consultant.

Q: This was under the military?

COLMAN: No. These were independent agencies. The ODM was given general directions by the Executive Office of the President.

Q: I see.

COLMAN: I was with them, and at that time I had shifted over to a daily basis of consulting.

Q: I see. Then you went back.

COLMAN: I was with Hoff from September 1952 until January 1953 when I shifted over to the ODM and served there until August of that year and that's when Ty Wood called me back into the foreign aid program--to go with him to Korea and help him set up a new economic mission. The Korean War had ended with an armistice, and North and South were in a semi-peaceful mode.

Q: This is C. Tyler Wood, not to be confused with Tighe Wood.

COLMAN: Right. After the armistice agreement was signed, not a peace agreement. (That has been emphasized here lately in 1996 in connection with US-North Korea negotiations, that what ended the Korean war was not a peace but an armistice.) It seemed logical to reestablish an Economic Mission to Korea and treat it like other friendly countries, regarding economic assistance. Ty asked me if I would go over and help him set it up and partially recreate the earlier mission. I left and went with Ty in August of 1953 and I came back in November of 1953, so that was just a short period over there, but it was a formative period. It worked very fast and I think pretty effectively. The foreign aid agency was now, in the early days of the Eisenhower administration, the Foreign Operation Administration (FOA), under the leadership of former Minnesota Harold Stassen.

Q: And you were setting up in effect a brand new mission.

COLMAN: That's right. We were stationed in Seoul, living in the Chosun Hotel and dealing on a daily basis with South Korean officials. During the other period I perhaps had met with President Syngman Rhee no more than two or three times in that period of commuting between Tokyo and Pusan. In 1953 we could get right down to business with the top Korean officials.

Q: It was very good that you had that access to President Rhee.

COLMAN: We had some very useful assistance from the US military. It had taken over the remaining odds and ends of the MSA mission. Upon our arrival in 1953, we found that we had inherited several very able military people and they helped us set things up. Max Taylor was still commanding the 8th Army over there but they were in a peace keeping role at that time rather than a combat one. Also, some people in the former ECA posts in Korea, Japan and elsewhere came back and joined Ty Wood's staff. I came back to FOA Washington in November 1953.

Q: So when you went you just knew you were going to go on a temporary basis?

COLMAN: Oh yes. I specified that it would just be a start-up kind of thing.

Q: I see.

COLMAN: The US Ambassador in that period was Ellis Briggs. I came back to FOA Washington for a period of a few months from November to February...

Q: This is 1953 to 1954?

COLMAN: 1953 to 1954. I was asked by Al Roseman to join his staff as a consultant to study their operations. I was asked by him to assess the work that was being done in the Division, I guess the report was somewhat critical because he thought it was too critical. I had completed the job. Oh, and in the interim when I was still with Ty Wood, I think it was in that period, Don Stone had tried to get me to come back and head up the Personnel Department. Virgil Couch had left. I wrote Don that I just didn't want to get back into central management. I was through with central management types of activity, and why didn't he take a look at Bob Rupard? Don wrote a letter back saying that he had always taken my advice and that this time he was appointing Bob. I read this letter yesterday. I had forgotten it existed, but I remember it now.

After I finished that report for Roseman, I saw a new employment opportunity and that was with a commission on intergovernmental relations. Eisenhower had promised Robert Taft that if he were elected he would set up a commission to look at the division of powers and responsibilities between the national government and the states.

Q: So this was where you left the Foreign Aid Program?

COLMAN: Yes, in the Spring of 1954.

ROY T. HAVERKAMP
Motion Picture Officer, USIS
Pusan (1953)

Political Officer
Seoul (1953-1955)

Roy T. Haverkamp was born in 1924 in Missouri. He served in the U.S. Air Force in World War II and later earned degrees from Yale University and Cambridge University. Mr. Haverkamp joined the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in Korea, Sweden, Japan, Cambodia, Congo, Benin, Vietnam, Guinea, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and Grenada. He was interviewed on April 11, 1994 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: What was the situation when you got to Korea?

HAVERKAMP: I arrived in January, 1953 and the war was still going on. The truce came in July, 1953. When I first went there the embassy was in Pusan. We had a motion picture processing center near there. We made a local news reel and feature films. It was a great job because there was room for a lot of creativity. We had 16 United Nations countries there with fighting forces or the Red Cross, etc. So I went around and made movies of most of them and sent them over to USIA in their country. We made local feature films. I was totally ignorant of all of this when I got there so it was an exciting thing for me to do.

Q: How did they bring you up to speed on motion pictures?

HAVERKAMP: Well, we had a very unusual guy who ran our processing center there who had been a mechanic in the Army and married a Korean girl and stayed on. He did not have a degree but was a mechanical genius. He built this whole place up. It was way down in the south near Chinhae , a beautiful port area.

Q: It is now the naval academy.

HAVERKAMP: Right, the naval academy is down there.

Q: Did you get any feel for the embassy at that time?

HAVERKAMP: The embassy was located in Pusan. We had USIA offices in Taegu, Taejon, Kwang ju and Seoul. It was an unusually close knit group and we worked and lived together under an outstanding Ambassador. Under these conditions new officers like me did learn what others in the embassy were doing. We also cooperated with each other as a matter of course. An officer from another agency, for instance, taught us about political reporting.

Q: By this time the Inchon landing had taken place and the fighting was to the north.

HAVERKAMP: Right. We didn't want Syngman Rhee to move the government up to Seoul again because that would make Seoul more difficult to defend since the North would be more tempted to attack. To keep him in Pusan we kept the embassy in Pusan, although we had an office in Seoul and so did President Rhee. I used it a lot because I went up to many of the non-American military units up there to shoot films.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

HAVERKAMP: Ellis Briggs.

Q: He was one of the great names in the Foreign Service. How did you find him?

HAVERKAMP: I found him one of the most competent, delightful people that I ever met. He was a very tough task master. He probably would have scoffed at the idea of a school of management or administration...but he was a superb manager in the sense that he let people do what they did well. For instance, we had a budget and fiscal officer who was a great friend of the Minister of Defense because they used to go horseback riding together. Ambassador Briggs coached the guy saying, "Now, if he wants to know anything about a variety of issues come and tell me and I will tell you or I will be very happy to see him." Most people that I met subsequently, would have cut this off as soon as they heard about it. But Briggs knew how to use people.

He wrote beautifully. He was very gutsy. At the time of the McCarthy era, he did a beautiful telegram on why you shouldn't take certain books out of the USIA library because they were written by people suspected to be socialists, etc. This telegram eventually, to my great shock, appeared in Joe Alsop's column. Somebody passed it to him, but I was very naive in the ways of Washington in those days. Ambassador Briggs had a very good, orderly, neat mind and, consequently, his messages were clear, unambiguous and to the point. He could also be a bit cynical.

Q: What was your impression of the Koreans you were dealing with at that time?

HAVERKAMP: Life for the Koreans was extremely difficult. Pusan, for instance, about a third of it burned down about every other week. Many people were living in shacks. The shacks burnt. It took some time for me to get use to what I was doing, but after a year or so it was obvious to me that the Koreans were highly motivated people with a great respect for education, a great drive and desire to succeed, not only for themselves, but for their family. I would like to say I foresaw everything that has happened since, but I didn't. It was very hard to see that. The first promising thing was the military. By the end of the Korean War the Korean military was manning about two-thirds of the line. They got a very bloody nose just before the truce was signed. Economically, as I remember, their main export earnings were about \$20 million from tungsten, which we bought at an inflated price. Despite our large aid program at the end of the war, I do not think anyone foresaw the extent to which they would industrialize and modernize.

Q: I was in Korea in 1952 as an enlisted man and we were barracked with Korean air force enlisted men. I found them so interesting I always wanted to go back because I found that they were very straightforward people. The Koreans, I think, did impress young people like ourselves at the time, despite all the hardships.

HAVERKAMP: They were very hard working. Speaking of the military, that is where I really began to understand the role a strong military would play in the third world. I was arrested as a Russian spy while making a film in one area of II Corps. The Corps commander later became chief of staff and became a great friend. Eventually, I think I knew all the top military brass including Corps commanders down to the division and regimental commanders. After a year and a half I was transferred to the political section and this was very useful for me. I agree they were straight forward to a degree, at times amazing even to us.

Q: Were you in Pusan when Syngman Rhee let the prisoners go?

HAVERKAMP: That was at or near the end of the war. Later when there was an official exchange I was where the exchange was taking place because we were filming it.

Q: This is one of those climatic moments in recent Korean history. What did you see?

HAVERKAMP: There was an Indian Brigadier, a man who was about 6 feet 4 inches with a turban and a walking stick, walking at the head of this group. It was all very orderly to everybody's surprise. The problem was with prisoners, Chinese and North Koreans who did not want to go back and the threat they could pose to a truce. Those who did go back to China and North Korea were intransigent and threw away their clothes before moving out.

Q: Did you get any feeling about the Korean government, itself?

HAVERKAMP: Most of the young officers in the embassy were very anti-Syngman Rhee because he was really rough on the opposition. He beat them up, locked them up, threatened their lives. It was very dangerous to be in opposition. I had a slightly different attitude. I think if I had been Korean I would not have liked foreigners continually telling me what a bad guy this was because he was a leader of the opposition to the Japanese. We were pushing him very hard. And rightly so. But I think you could only have done it so far when you had a war going on and the immediate aftermath of the war. The American government was divided. When the Eisenhower Administration came in you had Walter Robinson, who was the assistant secretary for East Asia, who thought he knew all about Syngman Rhee. He came to Korea and thought he had an agreement with Rhee to accept a truce and not push north again. While he was in his plane en route to Tokyo, Rhee told the press there was no such agreement. So, while I certainly didn't like it because I also knew the leaders of the opposition, it wasn't anything that we should have condoned or put up with, but how you handled it was something else.

Q: You went up to Seoul in 1953?

HAVERKAMP: Yes, I moved up there. I had been up there a lot making films. We moved up permanently some time in the fall of 1953, after the truce.

Q: Did you find Seoul any different than Pusan?

HAVERKAMP: Oh, yes. Seoul was a more elegant city. It was a real city. There was a lot of destruction in Seoul but you didn't have the fires you had in Pusan. There were still impressive government buildings there that the Japanese had left.

Q: When you got into the political section, who was running it?

HAVERKAMP: Arch Calhoun was my first boss there. In the USIS job I think I had about four bosses. Turner Cameron followed Arch Calhoun.

Q: What were you doing as political officer?

HAVERKAMP: I did all the political work covering both the government and the opposition. It was mostly domestic politics. There was a guy who came in later who did political/military work, but I still had the contacts in the military that other people didn't have. It was not just the technical exchange between the MAAG people and the Korean military, but also the political role of the military in Korea. Rhee demanded absolute loyalty and his military were and had to be, politically sensitive and astute. It was then evident that no government was going to be put in power or remain in power without at least the tacit support of the military. The Korean military were also well aware of their dependence on us and anxious to touch base and have good relationships with Americans in the military and the Embassy.

Q: What was your impression of the domestic political situation in Korea?

HAVERKAMP: It was very rocky. Syngman Rhee was much too heavy handed. He was out of touch. He was already an old man. He was by and large out of touch with how the kind of country the people wanted Korea to be. He was though still respected for his role in resisting the Japanese occupations. Basically, at that stage, as many oppositions in third world countries, the opposition wanted to gain power to do to those in government what they said the government was doing to them. So I felt it was rocky and needed a lot of bolstering. We brought in our big aid program which was something like \$700 million.

Q: What was the feeling at that time, wither Korea?

HAVERKAMP: I don't remember anybody foreseeing how Korea would develop. One, you didn't have much time to think that far ahead because you were continually trying to keep things on track from day to day. Particularly on the economic side because the place was in a terrible mess. They had to have an infrastructure and an industry that would not only earn them money but help them to modernize and get off the aid dole. People were working in that direction. Nobody assumed that it would not work. As usual successes in the aid program had to be tainted and even exaggerated to justify continued funding.

Q: What was the feeling about North Korea? Was it going to be kept in its place? Was there a feeling it would eventually collapse?

HAVERKAMP: Many of the Koreans felt that in terms of industry, modernization in North Korea was farther along than in the South. Originally North Korea had hydroelectric power and a base for some industry. The South was agricultural. Northern refugees mostly ran the economy. They were more aggressive and ambitious and successful than the southern.

I don't think anybody thought there would be a resumption of the war because it couldn't be done without us and President Eisenhower promised to end the war not continue it. Our goal was to build South Korea up where it would be able to deter war. South Korea's obvious objective at that time was to push north. All during the war we had friendly demonstrations against the Americans to push north. We had a great demonstration in Pusan with all the women from the textile factory coming with signs offering their bodies to the UN if they would push north. And everybody suspected that as soon as he had a chance, Syngman Rhee would do it. But we failed very badly, as I understood it before my time, because we felt that the danger before 1950 was that the South would attack the North. In fact, the MAAG chief who left Seoul about a week before the North attacked the South in 1950, told the press the real danger was that the South would attack the North. This, although the North had tanks and the South had APCs and some 50 caliber machine guns and rifles as their main weapons. Of course, the danger for us was that despite the disparity in forces and armaments, the South might attack if they believed such an attack would precipitate our intervention whether we wanted to or not.

Q: We were deliberately keeping them weak so that they couldn't attack. As you did internal politics, did you get a feel for the American missionaries and their influence?

HAVERKAMP: They were very important in the whole country because of their role in education and medicine. They always associated themselves with the Korean people. They learned the language and many of them had children born there. There was one famous family I can remember, the Underwoods, who had several generations serving as missionaries.

Q: My son dated one of the Underwoods.

HAVERKAMP: One of them later came back and was the interpreter for the President of Korea when he came here.

Q: Dick Underwood, I think it was.

HAVERKAMP: I think they had a very positive and beneficial and good role in Korea.

Q: Were they one of your contacts?

HAVERKAMP: I think all of us talked to them, yes.

Q: Was there anything approaching a somewhat leftist movement or had whatever there was pretty well gone by then?

HAVERKAMP: Yes, there was a leftist movement, but no overtly, pro-communist movement. Of course, one of the things that Syngman did that was unfair was to try to attack all the opposition as helping the communists. There was a small remnant of a guerilla movement in a mountainous area in the South.

Q: Was the embassy trying to keep Syngman Rhee from getting too far out of hand on this totalitarian thing?

HAVERKAMP: The Ambassador and everybody in the embassy was certainly trying. We tried very much to bolster the image of the opposition by maintaining open contacts with them, by calling him out when he did something outrageous towards the opposition. We made no bones about it. DongA Ilbo was the main opposition newspaper, but it was very limited as to what it could say about the government. Embassy officers had close relations with the press.

Q: Were the universities back in operation? Later universities became the center of opposition and still remain kind of the tradition opposition to whatever government is in.

HAVERKAMP: They were living hand to mouth. They were functioning. I had a very interesting experience a couple of years ago at my last post. I made an official trip to Trinidad and a young officer from the embassy came out and introduced himself and said that his name was George Park. I said, "George Park, that is a very familiar name. I knew a George Park in Korea who was president of one of the universities. Are you any relation to him?" He said, "Oh, that is my grandfather." In Pusan they were in dismal makeshift buildings. The reverence for education was awe inspiring.

Q: You left Korea in...?

HAVERKAMP: In April, 1955.

Q: How did you think things were going to go?

HAVERKAMP: When I left Korea?

Q: Yes.

HAVERKAMP: With the proper framework for our aid program and the ability to be patient and adaptable it was worth the effort in a developmental sense. From the standpoint of our security interests in Asia, we had to stay to keep Soviet and Chinese influence from expanding into South Korea and Japan. The military were building up to the point where they would be able to deter the North with less support from us. Everything, though, would depend on two things: the type of government you had and secondly, how the economy developed or didn't develop. I saw nothing but some form of authoritarianism into the future. In fact, one of the last pieces I did when I left was on the role of the military. The military for the foreseeable future would be the arbitrators of what kind of government you would have. They might not want to impose a government, but if they felt it necessary to do so they would. Nobody would stay long in power without their approval, at least their tacit approval.

Q: Did you ever run across Park Chung-Hee during the time you were there?

HAVERKAMP: I am trying to think, my memory is a little hazy.

Q: This was the one who became president and was really responsible for the turn around of Korea in a way.

HAVERKAMP: There was one Brig. General who was the chief of artillery in I Corps and under General Lee Yung-Kun, who was then a very ambitious four star general and Corps commander...this Brig General had been exiled up there. He had been the leader of what they called the communist rebellion outside Taejon in the early 1950s. He had been a communist. He changed over and was accepted back, but everybody was afraid to know him. I think that was Park Chung-Hee. I called on him once at Corps headquarters and had a general polite conversation. At that time he did not appear very brightly on the political screen.

NILES W. BOND
Political Officer
Seoul (1953-1954)

Niles W. Bond was born in Massachusetts in 1916. He received a BA from the University of North Carolina and graduated from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1938. His postings abroad include Havana, Yokohama, Madrid, Bern, Tokyo, Seoul, Rome, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. In 1998 Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed Mr. Bond.

Q: You went to Korea, but first you went to Pusan in January of 1953. Is that right?

BOND: Yes, that's right. That's where the embassy was. That's where the Korean government was. It was in the middle of winter. Korea is the coldest place I think I've ever been. God, it's cold in winter! Living conditions in Pusan were abysmal. They were worse for the refugees, of course, but even for us... We shared a house with 48 rats. Big ones, you know, the size of cats! Pusan was the 'arsehole' [asshole] of the universe. *(Laughter)*

Q: Yes, I'll buy that.

BOND: When it's raining, it's mud up to your hips and when it was dry, there was dust everywhere. The ambassador there was Ellis Briggs. He decided to move up to Seoul at a certain point, while the war was still going on, and he asked me to come with him. Then we put the head of the political section in charge of the Pusan office. The negotiation of the Japanese Peace Treaty and the Korean Truce were handled by people sent in expressly to do that, so the staff didn't have to do it, although we got called in occasionally to help.

Q: I guess you wouldn't have been there during the Syngman Rhee release of prisoners from that

island.

BOND: Cheju-Do.

Q: Cheju-Do, that's right. I think you were in Japan.

BOND: I was in Japan, yes. Medical leave. You know, the Koreans have some very lovable qualities. Some British missionary back in the 19th Century referred to them as the Irish of the Orient.

Q: I've heard that, yes.

BOND: That's a good description of them. The Japanese are so ritualistic and the Koreans are totally unritualistic. Absolutely. When I was in Tokyo walking along the street and an embassy driver came by, he would bow. If that happened in Korea, the driver would have given you a big Irish wave, you know. *(Laughter)*

Q: By the time you had arrived in Seoul in the middle of '53, how did we see Syngman Rhee, particularly after he had released the prisoners? Did we see that this was going to be a problem?

BOND: No. By the time I got there, people weren't even talking about that any more. We were pretty happy with Syngman Rhee and hoped he would have a long life because, as long as he was alive and well, he had no opposition. Once you open the door to elections and so forth... They'd already had a terrible time getting stabilized. But Syngman Rhee was never a real concern. I didn't do much worrying about Syngman Rhee.

Q: What about the feeling about the truce negotiations that were going on?

BOND: Those were handled by people sent there for that purpose. Ken Young was one of them. The principal negotiator was a fellow from Wall Street. I forget his name. He was a friend of Foster Dulles'. He was very good. He did a fine job negotiating for the truce. But they did things their way... We saw them occasionally at dinner at the Embassy and so on, but they drafted their own telegrams to the Department and that sort of thing.

Q: Did we think of Korea as having any economic potential but that of a long term "basket case," a term that's so often used? What was our feeling at that point?

BOND: Well, I was not in on the economic side of it much but I think we were fairly hopeful. We had some very good people from ECA out there who had been with the Military Occupation and stayed on. They had good contacts with Korean economists and my recollection is that they were never very concerned about the economic situation.

GEORGE M. BARBIS

**Economic / Political Officer
Seoul (1953-1956)**

Mr. Barbis was born in California and raised there and in Greece. He graduated from the University of California and served in the US Army in WWII. In 1954 he entered the Foreign Service and was posted to Teheran, Iran as Economic Officer. His other overseas assignments included postings in Thailand, Korea, France, Belgium and Greece, primarily in the Political and Economic fields. Mr. Barbis served on the US Delegation to the United Nations (1973-1975). His Washington assignments involved him in Southeast Asia matters and the US military. Mr. Barbis is a graduate of the National War College. Mr. Barbis was interviewed by Mr. Raymond C. Ewing in 1996.

Q: Now, remind me, the embassy was in Pusan?

BARBIS: The embassy was in Pusan as a result of the North Korean march down through Seoul and Taegu [and] the difficult days of the Pusan perimeter. But, by the time I was [traveling] there, the war was winding down. We were deep in negotiation for the armistice and in fact those negotiations were concluded before I got there. [The truce was formalized in July 1953.] The Korean government had moved to Seoul and the embassy was gradually moving [back]. So, I only spent one night in Pusan and then took the train in the morning and went to Seoul.

One of the first things I remember is that I had a marvelous introduction. There were two men there, who became dear friends, Bob Brown and Charlie Davis, with USIA. They were information officers. Arthur Dean had just arrived in country with Kenneth Young to make the final arrangements for the demilitarized zone and where the military armistice commission would be housed in Panmunjom. Charlie, as press attaché, had a jeep, so the two of us and the VOA [Voice of America] correspondent, Paul Garvey, drove to Panmunjom and we were there when Arthur Dean and Ken Young arrived. So, that was quite an introduction for me on my first weekend in Korea to be exposed to what was the main issue at the time.

Q: And it still is the main issue today, the relations between the two Koreas.

BARBIS: [Static] ... which meant I did a lot of WTDs, (World Trade Directories), which we no longer do. This gave me an opportunity to meet a lot of Koreans in the business community, go to Rotary [Club] and things like that. But, a few months later, Vincent Brown, who had been an economic/political officer, a special slot formerly housed in the political section, and with whom Roy Haverkamp and I shared a house, was transferred. I stepped into Vincent's job, which meant I started doing a lot more political work than commercial work. I kept my desk down in the economic section but more and more I did political reports, which gave me a lot more satisfaction and was really what I was interested in. I had majored in international relations, not economics, although I had a basic education in economics.

Q: In this period in the Republic of Korea, the early period after the armistice, the economic conditions were pretty difficult. Syngman Rhee was the president and was pretty well in control, I guess, politically.

BARBIS: Very much so.

Q: And relations with the United States were pretty important?

BARBIS: Very important, very close, but not without tensions. My first ambassador was Ellis O. Briggs, a man of the old school, a model for many of us. He was a wonderful guy. He introduced us all to martinis which he adored. He was very sharp, very good with Rhee, very firm with Rhee, with whom we had had some very serious disagreements during the armistice negotiations because he didn't want to have anything to do with that. We had to bring all kinds of pressures. I wasn't there for that but I read about it. So, although the relationship was very close, they were very dependent on us and they knew it.

We had a major economic reconstruction program. We called it the office of the economic coordinator because [it wasn't part of the embassy, but was under the United Nations commander in chief]. I had a wonderful director of that... [static] ...wonderful experience for me because here was a case where the country team, which was a new concept at that point I think, really worked very closely. And because of the fact Korea had just been through this terrible war, informality was the rule of the game. Officers, like myself, third secretaries, frequently dealt with [minister-level officials]. The chief of staff of the ROK [Republic of Korea] army was a frequent guest at our house because Roy Haverkamp, with whom I shared the house, had been detailed to USIA as a motion picture officer and one of his duties was to visit military units and show them USIS movies, etc. [Static] ...ROK army leadership. The chief of staff, as I recall, wasn't much older than us. We were in our mid-late twenties and he was probably in his late thirties. So, we had a very informal relationship with many Koreans like him. And, within the embassy it was a very closely knit group, and to this day many of us from that period are still the closest of friends.

Q: I remember a little bit later, it must have been about 1960, perhaps, Syngman Rhee was deposed. Was that opposition beginning to build when you were there?

BARBIS: It was starting to build. Rhee, of course, was [the] George Washington of Korea. He had fought in Geneva after World War I for the independence of Korea. Parenthetically, I heard something last night watching PBS [Public Broadcasting System] that I may have known but certainly had forgotten and that is that [a documentary about Theodore Roosevelt] gave the green light to the Japanese to occupy Korea as part of his effort to stabilize the situation in North East Asia between Japan and Russia.

Q: To end the Japanese-Russian war.

BARBIS: Right, and then he won the Nobel prize for his role. But that kind of made an impression on me last night. I had admired TR as one of the great presidents and never would have thought he would have done something like that. He did it for strategic national interest reasons. Anyhow, that is history and I won't dwell on it.

Another thing that was wonderful about that assignment was that we were on the ground [floor]

regardless of our rank in the embassy or our role, in helping the Koreans build a new governmental structure.

Q: Because after the Korean War in many ways it was the first time that Korea really had a chance to develop as an independent nation because of the long period of Japanese occupation.

BARBIS: Right. And that period of Japanese occupation leaves scars to this day. Korean feelings towards the Japanese are still very strong. Maybe I am talking in too much detail here.

But, one of the proudest periods of my career was my role on the Korean desk. I was assigned to the Korean desk when I returned to Washington from Korea at the end of 1955 [and took up my duties in February 1956]. I was one of two assistant desk officers. I was given responsibility for following political/military affairs as well as domestic politics, etc. I had come out of Korea with quite a bit of knowledge about the political situation. As political/economic officer I had worked closely with the Korea labor movement because we were trying with the assistance of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations] and the ICFTU [International Confederation of Trade Unions] to develop it as a democratic movement. But, I had also done quite a bit of reporting on the domestic political situation. And, I had some excellent sources. A very close friend, who was the boss of the lady who later became my wife, Mark Sherbacker, had gone to Korea as a Navy officer so he was there from the very beginning of the military government doing social work and then joined USIA and was our cultural officer. He knew everybody from Mr. Rhee down to the lowest professor at the university. Through him I met people I otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to meet in the cultural and intellectual worlds of Korea. Through Mark I became very close to the two "Young Turks" of the liberal party, Syngman Rhee's party, and was able to do reporting that [concluded] that the liberal party was going to dominate with or without Rhee, but that also there was a movement for greater independence and greater democratization, if you will, and openness. So, I followed this closely when I was on the desk.

In December, 1957, there was a vote in the national assembly of Korea where the vote was very close but Rhee... I have forgotten the issue but it was a very important domestic issue with constitutional implications... Because he couldn't afford to lose that vote, his people with his support, came up with a crazy rationalization based on fractions and overturned the decision of the assembly and didn't let it come into effect. I had to do a memo for the Secretary, John Foster Dulles, through Walter Robertson, who was a China first type of guy and therefore very supportive of President Rhee who could do no wrong, even though Robertson would agree that at times Rhee upset us. The memo, [with] my name as drafting officer, [was cleared in] the Office of Northeast Asia Affairs [and went to Robertson, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Far East Affairs (FE)]. [It] stated that unless we react to this and make it clear that we don't agree with Mr. Rhee and that he has to pay a price for this, we will establish a precedent for the people of Korea who will take all our mouthings about democracy and liberalism as hypocrisy and we can't afford to do it. We will pay for it in the longer run. When it got to Mr. Robertson he refused to sign it because he didn't know me from Adam. He asked who this Barbis was and was told the assistant desk officer and then asked who was the desk officer and was told Sam Lane. He said, "I don't want Barbis' views, I want the views of the officer in charge." So, the memo came back to us and we rewrote it and I presume Sam's name went on it instead of mine in the final version.

But, they did not change, and I give credit to Sam and to the office director, Howard Parsons, for accepting my argument and point that we have to show our displeasure over this in order not to discourage people who do have democratic aspirations.

The memo did go to Mr. Dulles and he did approve it. But, he wrote in the margins in his own handwriting, "Aren't we being a bit too severe with Rhee?" That killed the recommendations, obviously. Soon after that I left to go to Chiang Mai, my next post. The national assembly incident had occurred in December and it took some months to reach this point and I was assigned to Chiang Mai late in 1958 and actually went there the spring of 1959. Anyhow that was one of my proudest moments in the Foreign Service.

Q: Before we go on to Thailand...

BARBIS: No, this relates to that. You are saying wasn't Rhee deposed in effect in 1961. He was. There was a student revolution occasioned by the harshness of his rule as things got progressively more difficult with people rebelling in effect and expressing opposition to many of his policies. After the students had forced him to flee to Hawaii, I got a telegram from Marshall Green, who was then, I believe, the DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Seoul. Marshall had been regional policy advisor to Mr. Robertson in FE and focused on Japan and China. His office was right around from the Korean desk and whenever he had to deal with Korea he would call me over to sort of brief him and help him develop his own thoughts, etc. So, Marshall knew well what my views had been and what role I had played on the desk. So, he sent me this telegram in effect saying, "You were right, you were vindicated." It was a short telegram but I knew what he meant. I have never discussed this telegram with Marshall although years later I worked very closely with him in the bureau and I guess we will come to that later. But that ends my Korean days, other than that is where I met Pat. She arrived six months before I left and we had a romance. I left without any commitment. Pat finished her tour, came home around the world the other way, and I met her in New York. We saw "My Fair Lady," which was the hit on Broadway at the time. She worked briefly for Arthur Larson, the director of USIA, before going on home leave. I had flown to Seattle to visit her because she had been assigned to Saigon, we got married and she received a telegram the next day that if the rumor is true she had gotten married she must resign immediately.

Q: What year was that?

BARBIS: That was in 1957.

Q: I have a couple more questions about general Korean matters before we go on. Both in Seoul and on the desk in Washington in the State Department and later on you worked very closely with the Army and the Pentagon, were there sharp differences between State and Defense in that period in terms of how to handle our relationship with the government in Seoul, or were we pretty well seeing things together?

BARBIS: We were fortunate. A good part of my tour there was with Ellis O. Briggs as ambassador and CINCUNC, the commander of the UN forces and also the commander of US forces, was General Maxwell Taylor. Taylor and Briggs were very close and worked very well

together. On the local scene at that level there were no problems at all. Obviously there were problems between the embassy and the military command over status of forces type questions, where we would always try to be sensitive to the Korean reaction and our military colleagues were more interested in protecting the interests of the soldier. But, the main sort of standoff between State and Defense that I recall at that time was over military officers, army and navy, shooting off their mouths frequently, as we saw it, on issues of broader, specific [issues] that just didn't make sense to us from our perspective. But, I think that was a broader problem, because even now we have that kind of difficulty, although we have established a much better coordinating mechanism.

Q: In the latter part of the fifties you talked about Syngman Rhee and his response to one situation in the assembly, the other thing I guess that was occurring in that period was the economic situation. Was there much recovery taking place, or were things still pretty affected by the war damage?

BARBIS: We were making a tremendous effort through the office of the economic coordinator, which was pretty much the USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] [office], and then there was also an agency of the UN, the UN Korean Construction Agency, UNKCA. The only visible thing that I recall was a fertilizer plant we built outside of Seoul. But, I can recall at the time I left Korea talking with my friends and colleagues who were lamenting that they will never be off our back, we will have to support this country until eternity. But we were proven wrong. We did, I think, establish the foundations which later permitted Korea to build on that and have the economic miracle they have had.

Q: But it really wasn't visible when you left?

BARBIS: When I left in 1956 it was not visible. As I said, we could point to this one concrete thing, a huge plant, but the country was still in very bad shape. There was an awful lot of reconstruction that had to be done. If I can jump ahead, I didn't return to Korea until 1980-81, when I went there with General Meyer, the chief of staff of the army, and it was a different country. We did a lot of flying around and just looking down you could see the difference. Houses with tile roofs, whereas before they had thatched roofs. Divided highways from the north down to the southeast, down to Pusan, and all over the country. New railroads and rolling stock, etc. The transformation in that 23, 24 years was just astounding.

Q: You mentioned in 1953 you were originally assigned to Pusan and by the time you got there the embassy was already in Seoul?

BARBIS: Yes. The embassy was already in Seoul and there were only a few officers who transferred up and we just had an office in Pusan. But, in Seoul we didn't have an embassy building or anything. We had taken over two compounds that had belonged to the Japanese. Compound I was where the ambassador's residence was, the DCM's house and the PAO's [public affairs officer] house. The offices were in some of these low buildings. I remember there was one building where the ambassador and the DCM were, another building where the administrative people were, and I have forgotten where the political section was then. The economic section was in a bungalow and people had to come through my office to go to the

economic counselor's office or go to see the agricultural attaché because we were literally on top of each other. But, soon after my arrival we moved to an old Japanese bank building that was much more like an office building and we were all housed there together.

Q: Before the Korean war started in 1950, did we have an embassy in Seoul?

BARBIS: No, because Korea was part of Japan. I think we had a consulate in Seoul in those days. So, we owned no property or anything. There was nothing that we could take back. But, we just took over some of the Japanese properties.

Q: So you had a total of about six years involved with Korea, your two years in Seoul and then approximately four years on the Korean desk?

BARBIS: Right. And, when I was told I was going to Chiang Mai, I had heard about it from some colleagues and knew it was isolated somewhere up there in the Thailand, Laos, Burma, China area, but I didn't know much more about it. My wife knew even less and burst out in tears when I told her. But, it turned out to be a wonderful experience for both of us.

Q: Before we go on to that, did you learn Korean along the way?

BARBIS: The Korean I learned was very elementary. By no means could I use Korean other than to break the ice by saying, "hello," "thank you," and "How are you?" I don't even remember if I took formal lessons, but certainly there was no big language program before I went there.

KENNETH MACCORMAC
Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS
Seoul (1954-1956)

Kenneth MacCormac was born in Cordova, Alaska in 1911. He graduated from the University of San Francisco in 1933 and served overseas in the US Army during World War II. After entering the State Department, MacCormac served in Seoul, Japan, and Thailand. In 1978 during his retirement Mr. MacCormac directed the Thai Fulbright Foundation. He was interviewed in 1989 by G. Lewis Schmidt.

MACCORMAC: I arrived in Seoul, Korea, in July of 1954. Bob Spier was the public affairs officer there, and Ellis Briggs was the ambassador. Going to a war-torn country after leaving Bavaria, with all its amenities, was sort of a shock. But actually, Korea was one of the best posts I was ever assigned to, particularly because of my great admiration for the Korean people.

My job there was in the cultural affairs office, and I was particularly assigned to starting and developing a book translation program. I forget how many American books we had translated and published while I was there, but it was in the hundreds. The way it was done was to contract

with young Korean professors who had been to the United States, who were interested in making some extra money by translating books, and then we assisted the publishers by making available newsprint to them of which we had quantities in Korea. As I say, it was a great post. I made many friends their, enjoyed it very, very much.

Following Korea, I was assigned to Japan.

Q: You translated several hundreds of books into Korean from English. Did you have a wide readership then? I presume you put these in libraries after that, but did you have a commercial distribution also

MACCORMAC: We had a commercial distribution. That was one of the big problems. Korea didn't have a book distributing system, but one was developed with the book translation program. The books went all over Korea and were widely sought after. As a matter of fact, the ambassador used to pass out translations of American books, histories, biographies, to his Korean colleagues, as well as to other members of government.

I think one of the interesting things about my stay in Korea was my association with (Chang Myon) John M. Chang, as he was known. He was a cultural leader and educator. He had a school and was a very prominent Catholic. He was in opposition to the Korean government. As a matter of fact, he was elected from the opposition party to be vice president of Korea while I was there. So Syngman Rhee was president, but his successor was John M. Chang, who eventually became president of Korea, a marvelous man. I'm afraid he's dead now. The morning he was elected, he sent a note to me asking me to get him a bulletproof vest. (Laughs) And I did. I got one from the other agency. Eventually, he was shot at. I don't know if the vest saved him, but he had the vest.

DONALD S. MACDONALD
Political Officer
Seoul (1955-1958)

Donald S. MacDonald was born in Massachusetts in 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from MIT in 1938 and a Ph.D. from George Washington University in political science. Mr. MacDonald served in the US Army from 1942-1946 and joined the foreign service in 1947. His overseas posts include Korea, Istanbul and Geneva. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 25, 1990.

MACDONALD: The second time I was in Seoul was from 1955 to 1958. When I first arrived back in Seoul, both the Korean government and the Embassy had just recently returned. The city was still under UN military control to some extent. My wife couldn't join me for six months because of that. The situation was bleak. Seoul was a wasteland. It had been heavily damaged during the war. Nothing was going on. Life was grim. Reconstruction efforts were just beginning, but they were in their early stages. The political situation was awful because during the war, there had been a constitutional crisis in which Rhee clobbered the opposition in order to

stay in power. When I started doing political reporting in May, 1955 the opposition forces were just merging into a single opposition party which was somewhat of a threat to Rhee's Liberal Party. Korean politics were beginning to jell, but it also began to be polarized even more. Although there was a period of relative freedom from mid-1955 to the latter part of 1957, the storm clouds were already evident. A group of hard-liners around Rhee were beginning to sharpen their swords and aim their guns against the opposition to keep their power, which is what happened by the time I was leaving Korea in 1958. Although the indicators were not entirely clear, they did lead to the dreadfully fraudulent election of 1960. My principal assignment was to be in touch with the opposition. The problem with Korean politics was that they only had a scant text-book acquaintance with the practices of modern democratic government. There is nothing in the Korean culture that would have prepared them for democratic government. The opposition leaders at the time had to live by their wits because they had unreliable sources of financial support; in any case they were very much creatures of their culture. Their basic drive was to throw Rhee out and take power. My impression was that the whole strategy was based on an aspiration to acquire power, not on the process of doing so. They would do whatever they thought they had to do to get it. Korean politics at that time consisted of congeries of small groups of leaders and supporters. A man who had political aspiration would collect supporters who might have been former students, associates, people who lived in his hometown, etc. These leaders and their followers would try to get together to build some kind of organization. The stability of the organization was always uncertain because various members were constantly vying for supremacy. The regions, although part of the support structure, were not important as such. Kim Sung Soo, for example, the democratic leader who at one point actually became vice-president during the war, was from South Cholla province and this was recognized. Many of his followers were from the same province; it was recognized that people from that province had the inside track with him. On the other hand, another political leader, Chang Myon, had come from North Korea and although his supporters tended to be North Koreans, his power was not based on that but on his individual relationships with his supporters. This was true of all of the political leaders.

In theory it would have been possible to build a support structure on another basis than regionalism. Fellow graduates from Seoul National University or from a Japanese University or any affinity group like that could have become a political group. The provincial differences and parochial concerns were recognized, but were not dominant in political affairs at that time. They had become so only in recent years.

The Korean military were a factor. The first indicator of this was the assassination in 1956 of a general who rejoiced in the sobriquet of "Snake" Kim. He was in charge of the Army CIC and was viewed as a source of information for President Rhee on what went on in the military. His assassination was a cause celebre. During all of Rhee's tenure, however, the military did not have much direct political clout. They had power because they had their own economic establishment. They had to make a living and so they were engaged in mining, trucking and other enterprises which they used for welfare and personal enrichment. In that sense they were a factor. When Rhee wanted to straighten out problems at a Korean coal mine, he called a general who took care of them. Rhee was quite skillful in manipulating his generals. As soon as one got too big for his boots, he would be reassigned abroad or promoted upstairs. Rhee had an interesting advisor, Jim Housman, a former US Army major who lived in Korea from 1947 to 1976. He knew every

Korean military person intimately. Through Housman, Rhee was able to get an objective fix on what was going on. With Rhee's political instincts and with sources like "Snake" Kim and Housman, he was essentially able to keep the military out of politics. The Embassy viewed Rhee during this period as becoming progressively worse.

During this period, 1955-58, we had a large American military presence. There was some rivalry between the four-star general who was the Commander-in-Chief of the US command and had a large aid mission and the American Ambassadors -- both Briggs and Dowling. In between these two, we had William Lacy who had a hilarious three months tenure as Ambassador and Rhee kicked him out. The rivalry between military and civilian was recognized by Rhee and he played on it assiduously. The military were jealous of their position and although by any rational measure the AID mission should have been under the Embassy, in fact, it remained under the UN Commander-in-Chief until 1959.

Ambassadors operated in such situations depending on the personal relationship between the Ambassador and the CINC. Dowling clearly recognized the problem and worked on it. He was successful with some and not with others. The issue was manageable but particularly during the war years there were some dreadful misunderstandings and foolishness that went on with the aid program and the rivalries between the AID mission, the US forces and the UN people. At one time, they were engaged in a turf battle that took a special mission from Washington to straighten out. The turf battles were a pure American concern, but the Koreans played on it.

Some military people lived on a better scale than others, but that did not cause resentment in the American civilian community. I don't think any of us worried about the way the military were living. The Korean military, particularly the senior officers, lived far better than the citizens. One of the factors in the coup d'etat of 1961 apparently was the jealousy of the younger Korean officers of the "gravy train" they perceived their senior generals to be riding. The senior officers had American nick-names; they used the 8th Army golf course; they had back-door access to the PX and so on. The younger officers transmuted the jealousy into anti-Americanism. Therefore, in terms of US-Korean relationships, it was a real issue. We had thousands and thousands of Korean enlisted men who worked alongside the American military men as KATUSAs (Korean Augmentation to the US Army). These soldiers were in Korean uniform but assigned to US Army components and treated essentially as US troops, except for pay and allowances. There were good and bad things about this policy. Personally, I didn't feel that my life-style was any worse than that of an American officer. Actually, given the conditions of an underdeveloped country, we lived quite well.

We had no restraint on our reporting. 1957 was a very interesting period. It was not too long after Walter Dowling arrived as Ambassador. In the initial briefings, the political staff told him that things were not as nice as they seemed; that there were all kinds of social problems developing, which would come to a head unless some actions were taken. It could become a mess. Dowling encouraged me to write a despatch putting all of this down on paper. I can remember one of the assistant secretaries getting this briefing and being completely horrified. He couldn't believe it. After all, Rhee was in charge and he was a good anti-communist. Dowling didn't suppress any of this reporting; he encouraged it.

FRED CHARLES THOMAS, JR.
Political Officer
Seoul (1956-1958)

Fred Charles Thomas, Jr. was born in Arizona in 1927. He graduated from Bucknell University in 1951 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He served in the U.S. Army from 1946-1948. He joined the Department of State in 1948. His overseas posts include Korea, Pakistan, China and Germany. Mr. Thomas was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

THOMAS: After I finished language training in 1955, I was assigned to a couple of courses at FSI and to writing some reports that had to do with Korea. I took a lot of leave; I must have taken all the leave I had. Then there was serious discussion concerning over where in the Embassy I would be assigned when I went back to Seoul because I had made some enemies. But in the end, I went back to the Political Section in the Fall of 1956.

When I went back to Seoul the first time, I was living over in what was called Compound I, in one of the smaller houses over there. When I came back the next time, I shared a house with two other bachelors, on Embassy row in Compound II. That was where most of the people did. When I first went there, I think everybody lived in a big house that was sort of treated like a hotel, which had a big garden around it. You had a room in it until they could find a place for you. They had a club there on the premises, an Embassy club, and a commissary, with a bar. Even in 1956, the majority of the people in the Embassy were single people. As a matter of fact, there are friends in the Foreign Service who say that I taught them how to be a political officer in the 1952 to 1954 period. Manhard knew how to do things; you didn't have to teach Manhard anything. But you had a lot of people coming in, for whom this was their first or second post; it was their first post in a place like Asia. Roy Haverkamp always says to me, "Well, you taught me how to be a political officer."

And then there was a fellow named George Barbis who was there at the time, and I sort of helped him learn something about Korea. Then there was O'Mahoney, who was an economic officer. They were all bachelors there with me.

By then, a new Ambassador had arrived, by the name of Dowling. I liked Dowling, but in the end, I didn't get along very well with Mrs. Dowling. I was brought up around the military, and I had a code of ethics -- from my father -- a cavalry officer, that went, "The horses, the men, and then yourself." You know how administrative officers are: money comes in, and it is supposed to be used, let's say, to upgrade the heating systems in the small houses for the clerks. Get rid of space heaters, which were very dangerous.

A lot of people were living with space heaters in these little houses in Compound II. As I remember it, there were several issues. First of all, I ended up being elected president of the Embassy club -- by all of the single people. Now you had just enough married people there that they wanted special privileges for themselves; I was the bulwark against being that black and

white. The married couples all wanted a limit so that no servants were to be allowed in the commissary to buy for the single people. The fresh vegetables and other items in short supply came in at ten o'clock in the morning and were put on the shelves, and they were gone in a matter of a couple of hours. Our servants were over there to get them for us, along with the wives. The wives didn't like standing in line with our servants. They should get VIP treatment. If that happened, single people wouldn't get any of the fresh vegetables. Since single people were the majority in the embassy, they could outvote everybody. That's why I was president of the Embassy Club. The ambassador put out an order that the servants couldn't shop at the commissary any longer. I said, "All right, I can't buck the ambassador." But I quietly went to this Korean manager, since I was his boss as president of the club, and I said, "Look, I want the stuff split. I want two-thirds of it not put on the shelves until six in the evening, the fresh stuff. One-third at ten in the morning because about one-third of the embassy is married. Two-thirds are single. That's the way it's to be split everything that comes in. If it runs out in the morning, you haven't got any more." That's what he did. Of course, that made me unpopular as hell over there with some of the married couples. But that's the way it worked.

Then the married people got together and tried to run somebody against me to become president. It didn't work. They got something through that I couldn't succeed myself; we got another single person in there as president. This type thing went on.

But, at that point, in terms of problems, there was money that came in to put steam heat or boilers in, for these smaller houses that all the secretaries lived in, in one section of that compound, Compound II. They were little, teeny houses. It was spent instead to put in a greenhouse or something like that, or a solarium, for Madam Ambassador. I got wind of this, and I started raising hell, "This is wrong." Well, she got wind of my raising hell about it all because I went to the administrative officer and said, "This is wrong. This should not be." The word got back; it didn't make me too popular with her. The Ambassador had not been involved in all this. She had been the one who pressured or pushed for this; the administrative officer, instead of telling her this money was for something else, just did it. It also didn't make me very popular with the Administrative Officer.

But you had that type situation; you had a lot of corruption. You had the U.N. using our club, and the Turks, including the Turkish Ambassador, who were selling stuff out of the club to beat hell. I went to our Ambassador, Dowling, about it, and Dowling said, "Well, cut him off." So I cut him off. He went to the Ambassador about not being allowed to shop at our club, and the Ambassador said, "The president of the club cut you off for reasons, I understand."

He said, "Yes."

He said, "I can't change that. He is in charge of the club. I can't do anything about that."

And that ended it.

But you had a lot of that going on.

I remember one of the first things that happened. It was not the same as under Briggs any longer,

because I didn't have that type protection. But I had a lot more knowledge and I had the language. I liked to travel, anyway. In those days, traveling around Korea took weeks. And I had my own four-wheel-drive station wagon Jeep.

We had a new economic officer and a new security officer, who shared the house with me. We were all bachelors. An economic officer who shared the house with me said, "Look, I would like to go on a trip around this country. Will you take me on one of your trips? I want to do some economic stuff."

He accompanied me on the next trip. After the trip, we wrote a dispatch. I said "Look, don't try to put this in a cable. You will never get it out of the Embassy. Just write a dispatch on everything we have learned. They won't bother to read it, you know, all the details. It will get sent. Then we will write a letter to somebody in the Department, telling them to get hold of that dispatch."

This dispatch told about how all our AID money was being siphoned off by Rhee's party -- the Liberal Party. It involved fertilizer sales. The fertilizer was to be sold at a price based on the official rate of exchange. This pricing was rationalized on the basis that it would help the farmer. The official rate of exchange was less than half of the black market rate. For example, say a bag of fertilizer at the official rate of exchange was to sell for 200 won; it actually was sold to the farmer for, let's say, 440 won. USAID was reimbursed the 200 and the remaining 240 was siphoned off to the Liberal Party. This corruption involved tremendous amounts of money, in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

It turned out that the AID director was back in Washington at the time this thing hit the fan, and Congress got a copy of it. USAID Washington sent cables to the Embassy, asking the Embassy to disavow this dispatch -- to say it wasn't true. Of course, the Ambassador took one look at it, as did Ed Cronk, the Economic Counselor, and said, "Oh, we didn't dare do that. We knew damn well it was the truth. But it would have never gotten out of there if it hadn't gotten out of there that way."

We have these people who always want things to look like they were going well. I was in Vietnam when the whole thing fell apart; that is another story that we will get to later. But I have come to the conclusion that, when you get up there in the stratosphere as a senior officer, it is a mutual back scratching thing. People sit on each other's boards; they don't want to create problems for each other. You don't want to tell Washington too much that makes anybody else look bad -- what went on and what came out of the dispatches from our Embassy.

There is a story out of that whole thing I have got to tell, because it becomes important by the time 1958 comes around. It happened before then, and this is very important as the lead-up.

In the 1953-54 period, my father (who by then was retired as a colonel in Pennsylvania, his health having come back to a degree) became very involved in the Kiwanis Club of Pennsylvania. After being president of his local town Kiwanis, he was elected as a lieutenant governor of the state district. Out of being involved with the Kiwanis, he became involved in local politics in Pennsylvania. He was a good Republican, who met various Republicans, including a new, reform mayor (because a lot of Democratic politics in Pennsylvania was very

corrupt) in Philadelphia named Dilworth. He wasn't mayor at that time, but later, became mayor.

My father also developed an interest in Korea, because I was there. I had access to the Army Post Office system where you could mail big packages for practically nothing. He could mail all this stuff; he started a collection of used clothing for Korean children and adults throughout the Kiwanis Clubs in one district of Pennsylvania. These packages started to arrive in mass. There was a little warehouse behind my house on Compound I that was maybe as big as three rooms stretched out put together, stacked from floor to ceiling with these packages. I had a hell of time keeping up with this stuff. I also knew that if I wasn't careful, it would be stolen and sold, and it wouldn't get to poor people. I was trying my best to get it out. I remember making trips out to the provinces, and going to schools and giving children's clothing away to kids, etc.

In 1952, during my first period there, I had lived in Pusan with a guy who was the labor attaché. He quit after only a few months, because he didn't like it. But during his few months there, he started inviting labor leaders to our place. We had to entertain together because we lived in the same house. One labor leader came, whose name was Kim Tu-han. It turned out that Kim Tu-han was not only a labor leader, but he was king of the thieves' market. He had been king of the thieves' market under the Japanese. He and his bodyguard came and got drunk; I remember fishing their .38 snubnoses out of the toilet because they fell out of their holsters when they were throwing up in the toilet. Anyway, I got to know him out of this.

By 1956, I had all this clothing coming in, and I was giving it out. Part of this stuff that came in was fur coats. To whom do you give a fur coat? I went to Kim Tu-han, who was then in the National Assembly, elected by the prostitutes of Korea. I asked him, "Would you hold an auction for these fur coats down in the prostitution section, and bring me the money?" He did and he brought me the money.

Then I wrote a letter to all the missionaries, telling them how I did this and where the money came from. Were they willing to take their share? Because a lot of these women were constantly giving me hell. I remember, later, Mrs. Dowling was trying to run things, in terms of help to the needy, and the missionaries were always against having gambling or drinking, all these problems. Anyway, they took the money; nobody turned me down.

Let me say a word about what the real political problems were during the 1956-58 period. The real political problems then were really Rhee and trying to make that government effective, in terms of all this aid money we were dumping in there. It wasn't going any place because of Rhee. Yet, here in the Department, you had Walter Robertson and that whole bunch who looked on Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek as second Jesus Christs. Therefore, what could you do? You were really hamstrung. You had to pretend all was going well to keep the money coming. People were pretending that, and that is why they didn't like that dispatch that got back there. And that is why it wouldn't have gone if it hadn't been in dispatch form. But it got out, due to the way it was handled.

When a dispatch reached Washington, maybe some junior clerk might read it. But you did this as a means of getting around the system of approvals, which some of the junior officers learned; I learned early in the game, out of that biographic story I told you.

I don't know, maybe they read dispatches from then on, emanating from many of those junior officers there. We got very frustrated, of course. You couldn't get things out.

"Wristonization" had occurred at this time, and we had a lot of new people. Many new FSO's were brought in from the Department at relatively senior ranks. A man would be, say, a GS-14 or-15 in the Department. He would come in at what was then a Class 3 officer, Class 2 officer, something on that order. They would come out for a first tour at a foreign post, and they didn't really know anything about being a diplomat. They understood how to write cables from the Department, and how to go through the bureaucracy back here, but not how an embassy worked or how you got things done out there or how you went about entertaining people.

A new political chief whose name was William Jones was one of them. He had been on the Korea Desk back here, and he ended up being chief of the Political Section. Bill Jones and his wife, Betty, were very nice people, but they really didn't understand that Korea, or foreign posts, are not like Washington. His whole approach was that if he could just be the best buddy with the Desk chief for the United States in the Korean Foreign Ministry, he had it made. His buddy Kim Tong-cho would tell him anything he needed to know, and that was all that was necessary. Kim Tong-cho was just another small, petty bureaucrat, who wasn't part of the power structure of Korea and really didn't know what was going on in Korea. And if you understood the Korean structure, and understood anything about Korea, you didn't bother your time with bureaucrats in the Foreign Ministry. But you couldn't tell Jones this. And so he went his own way, doing this. Of course, it kept him on top of all the foreign-affairs matters that the Foreign Ministry wanted us to believe. I kept telling Bill and the Ambassador (and the Ambassador took me more seriously than Bill did) that the foreign affairs of Korea are not run by the Foreign Ministry or by their ambassadors. They are run by the DCMs in all their embassies abroad; the orders come directly from Kyungmudae (the Korean "White House"). Kyungmudae was just the name of the area in the Seoul where the President's residence was located.

Anyway, the Ambassador started to realize that maybe what I was saying was true, but you couldn't tell Bill Jones anything. I just went my own way, reporting what I had learned. At this point, it was a frustrating situation. I had been told when I was in the Department that Rhee was an old man and that I should busy myself trying to find out what the plans were if he kicked off in office because there would be a scramble for power, and how would that be handled. The intelligence people had been given this function, but the Embassy had to have somebody looking at it, too. The intelligence people were rotated frequently and usually didn't speak Korean. They had agents who spoke the language, but agents are different from having American officials handling a problem.

I remember asking one influential Korean the question, "If Rhee dies, have you guys got any plans?"

He said, "I don't know, but I will go find out." He came back and he told me, "They don't have any plans."

I pointed out, "The American Embassy feels you should, because if anything happened, what

would..."

He kept reporting to me what he was learning, and I would put it into cables back to the Department. So that kept me pretty busy, doing all this and trying to keep track of Rhee.

In the meantime, I got involved in giving lectures at some of the universities on anything they asked me. I didn't know what I was talking about, but I'd go look it up and lecture on something to someone's kids. I got to know some of these college kids; I could feel, from talking to them, because I was speaking Korean at the time, that they wanted to learn some English; I had a group of people coming to my house to learn English and my girlfriend at the time was helping me. That was American, Catherine M. Frank, a vice consul. We ended up being married in San Francisco in October 1958 as she was en-route from Seoul to the Department. She was a woman Foreign Service officer and had entered in the class of 1956. She had been one of two women officers in a class of 60 appointed to the Foreign Service. She was to be my assistant in the political section, when an older woman, named Maggie Barrett, who had done this type work, arrived on the scene and became my assistant. I got to read Kay's personnel file; she had a doctorate in political science. Maggie was a lawyer and a CPA and had been a biographic officer in Mexico City for years; she ended up being my assistant in Korea. By that time, I had come to the conclusion that the only way to go at politics in an Asian country was the biographic approach. Looking at a political party was crazy. You look at people and the interconnections between people. Maggie turned out to be a gemstone.

Anyway, Kay Frank started teaching these students and talking to them. I felt that Rhee was unpopular. I concluded that sooner or later there was going to be a problem with the students. I kept bringing this up, but nobody would listen to me. You didn't dare put anything on paper, for fear you would get yourself in real trouble. Robertson, at that point, had already gotten rid of some young officers in Taiwan who were talking about what was wrong with Chiang Kai-shek. It was not the thing to do.

In the meantime, I kept looking around, saying if there is a problem and the Rhee government is in trouble, how are we, as a country, going to be affected by this? And how can we ameliorate our problem?

My first impression was that in most Asian governments, when you have this situation, whoever they are getting rid of tends to get bumped off. How do you keep that from happening because that would be a big embarrassment to us and create a lot of problems back here for the new people who were taking over there?

There were always worries of a military coup. I kept very close track of the military. Haverkamp, at an earlier period, had worked with me; he got to know the Chief of Staff of the Korean Army, Chung Il Kwan, in a personal way; he went drinking with him and some other generals. I had gotten to know some generals. I visited and made speeches at various Korean units along the front; out of this, I kept getting to know as many military people as I could.

I did this on my own because if you talked of a coup or talked of an overthrow of the Rhee government, you were in trouble in Washington. I was thinking this, but I didn't know. Nobody

could predict how this would turn out, but I knew there was great dissatisfaction with the corruption in Korea, and it was growing. It would be either the military or, as is the tradition in Asia, the students. Out of all this, I came to the conclusion that what we needed was an understudy for Rhee, who was close to Rhee, but was also close to the opposition; someone who was fundamentally an honest man. After researching various personalities, I came to the conclusion there was one person who fitted that bill. I had gotten to know him back in 1952. I had been a house guest of his when he first moved back into his own home in Seoul, back in 1953. I stayed at his house because there was no room in the Embassy at the time due to the wedding of Manhard and his wife. I wanted to come to Seoul on business, and the Ambassador said, "Well, there is no room here."

I said, "I will find a place to stay." And I stayed with my friend, Mr. Huh Chong who was an older man. At that time, he must have been then in his fifties, but to me, a man in my twenties, that seemed pretty old. Mr. Huh was younger than Rhee. Mr. Huh had studied in this country at Columbia University. His English was not too good, but he could get along with a little bit in English. I dealt with him in Korean at this time because my Korean, by then, was better than his English.

I liked him, and I liked his wife. He had been one of those honest people, who had been the first Minister of Transportation. Yes, he siphoned money off like everybody did, but it was to pay his employees enough to live on. It wasn't to make himself rich. He went to work on a bicycle, while the others had cars and stole money and had Swiss accounts.

You could look in the files and find out what Mr. Huh was. Mr. Huh had been in this country back when Rhee was in Washington lobbying for Korea. Mr. Huh had been one of the people who donated money to Rhee, just from what little he made working his way through college. He had been a Rhee follower. He had come from a better family down in Kyongsan Nam Do. Kyongsan Nam Do was the birthplace of the Democratic Party -- the opposition party. He was one of the five founding members of the Minjudong (Democratic Party), which was the conservative opposition political party to Rhee's Liberal Party. But he still had been fired by Rhee because he didn't really want to go along with some of the corruption -- early, even before the Korean War. They hadn't gotten back together. There was still this Confucian loyalty, but at the same time, he was a member of the opposition.

The city of Seoul was in such bad shape, and there was much pressure from the Americans to get something done about it. Huh was reappointed by Rhee as mayor of Seoul.

In the meantime, in that period, there was a Korean student going to school in Philadelphia who was mugged and murdered on the streets of Philadelphia. He was from a better Korean family. It caused quite an uproar in Korea. It wasn't nice.

It struck me, because my father knew the mayor of Philadelphia at the time, that maybe we could do something about that, in terms of making up for it, and at the same time, subtly do something that would set Mr. Huh up, in terms of possibly being the guy who would take over if anything happened to the Rhee government.

I remember dictating to Maggie Barrett. She used to go on all my trips with me. The first trip, she begged me to take her. She said, "If you let me go on one trip, you will never go without me." I used to get back from one of these two- or three-week trips, and there would be a stack of papers that I would have to go through, and I would have to write a dispatch on everything I had learned. She took shorthand, and every time we would stop, she would stay in the car, then she would stop me right after I came out from talking to somebody and had me tell her what happened; she would take it all down. When we came back from the first trip, within two or three days, she had the notes organized into a dispatch. Beautifully organized; she wrote well. She said, "Here is your dispatch. You won't go again without me." I didn't have to take any time; it was all there, everything I had learned.

I wanted to get Maggie promoted, because she was due for it. She was overage. She had lied about her age and made herself younger than she really was, or she would have been retired by then. This was going to be her last post. I said to Maggie, "From now on, all these dispatches we send back, biographic studies, don't put my name on them, you just put your name. But I will dictate the comments section. You don't know these people. I know them. But you get it all together, all the facts, from going through all the files. And then I will dictate my comments."

She did one on Huh Chong. I was to write the comments, but my name didn't go on the report, because I wanted to get her promoted. The first sentence I dictated in the comments said "If the Rhee government were to fall, the chances are that Mr. Huh would be the man to take power." Then I went on to explain why I thought this might be so, in terms of his close relationship to Rhee and the chances of his making sure that nothing happened to Rhee, etc., if that were the case. That was sent to Washington, but, like any document, it just went into the files; it also went into our files at the Embassy. That ended that, for the time being.

I kept writing stuff, but it was all the usual crap. You couldn't go into anything of any importance, because the place was getting worse and worse all the time.

I remember being called one time and dictating a memo that they told me about later. It was Kim Chong-pil who called. He was the intelligence chief after Gen. Park Chung Hee took power. He had been the real organizer of the coup for Park Chung Hee at that time. This was after I left there. But somebody came back and mentioned that when they looked at my files in the Political Section after I had gone, there was a memo I had written saying that this man, Kim Chong-pil, had called me on the phone and asked to meet me. I didn't know who he was. He asked to meet me at the U.N. Cemetery on a Sunday afternoon.

I remember going and standing around there, waiting for this man to approach me because it was to be a blind thing. He never showed. He had given me his name, and so it was all in the files that I had gone to meet him. It turned out, that this guy was the guy that later ran the coup that put Park Chung Hee in power. It came up at that time, because they looked up his name and here was this memo I had written.

By the time I left I was convinced we were going to have a shake-up in the Korean government and that Rhee was going to go, one way or the other. Whether it would be the military or the students, I couldn't say, but it was just a matter of time.

I went to see Mr. Huh and told him this. I told him that if anything went wrong, I felt that he was probably the best person to handle the interim situation. Furthermore I was going back to the United States and was going to try to get him invited to do a tour of the United States, on which I would try to accompany him. This would be a way of getting him known and also sending a signal to President Rhee. He said, "All right, if you can do that."

I came back to the States and I talked to my Dad about the fact that it was very sad about the killing of this Korean boy; that it had created terrible feelings in Korea. He knew Mayor Dilworth, and it would be sort of appropriate, on the anniversary, whatever it was, maybe the first anniversary, or the second, I forget, of this kid's being killed, that he invite the Mayor of Seoul to be the guest of the Mayor of Philadelphia, to commemorate the boy's death and to make an apology on the part of Philadelphia for this. It would be helpful to American-Korean relations. This idea was presented to Dilworth who thought it was a good idea. All it cost Philadelphia was the price of three airplane tickets because he could get free hotel space from the hotel owners. I then suggested that maybe if he could broker this to the cities of New York, Washington, Chicago and San Francisco because the costs to these cities would be small because Mr. Huh and his party could stop on their way back. He would get a chance to visit these cities and if each mayor would welcome him, it would be worthwhile. Fortunately, everybody agreed.

In the meantime, I came back to the Department; I was preaching at the working level, and I was waiting to go into Chinese-language school. It was all set up for me to study Chinese because I couldn't stay in Korea all the rest of my life. I wanted to take leave; language school was going to start two months or a month later.

Anyway, I was preaching all this stuff about Korea. I remember David Bane who was director in NEA. He had been in and out of the Department, I think with some of the oil companies, and he was a rather sophisticated guy. He ended up later in Pakistan as Consul General in Lahore. But at that time David was head of NEA. I remember telling David that Rhee was in trouble; his response was you better keep your mouth shut or you will get yourself fired if it gets to Mr. Robertson that the Rhee government was not long for this world. I said, "You watch, you watch."

In the meantime, Mr. Huh was invited to Philadelphia; I took leave, and traveled around with him. We went to Philadelphia, New York, Washington, Chicago and San Francisco; it took about ten days or a bit more for this tour. In New York we called on General MacArthur at his apartment. The newspaper reported the story about this call on MacArthur and how this visit by Mayor Huh of Seoul was in commemoration of the student's being killed in Philadelphia. It was also reported that Mr. Thomas from the State Department was accompanying the Mayor, etc.

When the word reached President Rhee, you can guess what happened to Mr. Huh when he returned to Seoul. He was fired, right there on the spot. He was out of a job. In the interim, Rhee started to make trouble for Ambassador Dowling back in Washington. He was called back for consultation. Kay, my wife, was assigned to INR on the Korean desk. I told her about the bio reports I had written long ago, in 1952, which reported about Rhee's use of political connections on the extreme right in Congress. They were top secret. She located them; put them in her purse, took them to the Korea desk in the department and gave them to Dowling. They were the

ammunition he needed to protect himself. She was later reprimanded by her boss in INR; he claimed that by doing it informally the INR desk didn't get credit. Those reports, if handled formally, would never have gotten to Dowling. They were too hot and too politically dangerous.

Over a year later after Huh's trip here, the student situation started to boil up. (I was in language school at the time.) Rhee was worried. Yi Ki-pung is the guy whom I helped elect Chairman of the National Assembly. His son, who had been adopted by Rhee to give Rhee an heir, ended up shooting the whole family, committing a family suicide. The Vice President, who was Chang Myon, had resigned; so you had no vice president. The third man in line, according to the Constitution, was the Speaker of the National Assembly. He was dead, killed by his own son; then the son took his own life. It had to do with loss of face, in terms of Rhee. Rhee was losing power. It was obvious that this thing was going to blow up in Rhee's face. Somebody had to take the blame. They thought, by killing themselves, they would take the blame for Rhee. Okay? Well, it didn't accomplish that, but that was the object. As a matter of fact, some of the relatives of Yi Ki-pung, who are alive today, accused me of having been responsible for his death, having had him made Speaker of the Assembly, because he really wasn't meant for that job. It was too rough a place for him.

Anyway, the Korean Constitution stated that, if you have no Speaker of the National Assembly, the next person in line is the Foreign Minister. Suddenly, Rhee appointed Mr. Huh Chong as Foreign Minister. The Rhee government fell. Mr. Huh took power as acting President. Rhee fell because of the student revolt. The police refused to fire on their own children; besides the people were fed up at this point. The day Mr. Huh took power as acting President, he called me on the telephone, and asked if he could go to the Ambassador and ask that I be brought out there. I said, "Let me do that from this end." We had a new Ambassador, named McConaughy, at the time. Anyway, he won the argument; I wasn't needed.

Mr. Huh took power at this point. He made sure Rhee wasn't killed. Rhee was flown out of the country and sent to Honolulu. I tried to talk the American government at that point into backing him, rather than Chang Myon, because I said, "Chang Myon is a weakling. This man is a strong man, if you will back him. He is not an ambitious man, but if you will back him, you have got somebody. He won't do what you tell him. He will do what he thinks is right for Korea. It is very dangerous putting somebody in there who would do what you tell him." But they wanted somebody to do what he was told. Chang Myon was put in power and did what he was told, but in the end, people got so fed up with him that the military overthrew him.

After Chang Myon was elected President, I would go to the Korean Desk to read the incoming cables; I kept telling people, "There's going to be a military coup." This was obvious to me because certain senior military officers were being transferred and where they were being transferred. But nobody listened. At this point, I was shipped out to Taichung and that was it.

That was my experience in Korea. (In retrospect, one can now understand the makings of the self-inflicted political problems we created in American-Korean relations for the next thirty years. At its foundation was the extreme right wing dogma of the self-righteous Republican administration of the 1950's. Secretary Dulles and Walter Robertson were responsible for years to come for our troubles in Central America, the Middle East, Iran, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and

the failure to understand what was happening in the Soviet Union, All, in time, were products of this failure to look for and try to understand the "truth". Dogma has little time for the truth. The CIA in Korea is a good example; its personnel were there in many guises but mostly under military cover. The U.S. Army in the early years was the more bureaucratically powerful in intelligence matters. The Korean Army's Intelligence Detachments worked closely with U.S. Command's G-2. ROK CIC under "Snake" Kim was a personal political intelligence arm of Rhee as was Gen. Won Yong-tok's Provost Marshal Command. CIA was new and inexperienced, in the Asian sense, and had a new group of players there. In the period from 1956-58 they were deeply involved in establishing the Korean CIA. In hindsight, they wanted an organization of their own making with which they could have a liaison. Rhee's two organizations did not fill the bill. The Agency was becoming bureaucratic like the State Department. After the East Asia hands in State were crucified, career European hands were made ambassadors to East Asian countries. The book "A Pretty Good Club", based on a Harvard doctoral dissertation by Martin Weil, clearly outlines how this happened. It was the legacy of the old career diplomats from Europe in league with the Japan hands in the Department. The last of these were the Dulles brothers who became their instruments. One can see the power of old and inherited wealth at work in the failed policies that held sway for the past forty years. To allow such policies to remain viable requires a system that is favorable to their long term existence. Such a system requires that the "organization man" be king; otherwise, such policies could and would not be viable. True experts on a society and a country would and could not go along with such policies. Thus, in both the Foreign Service and the CIA a culture which favored the "Organization Man" over the man of substance took over. The China hands had to go. A George Kennan is not needed.

The CIA policies in Korea are a good example. In creating the ROK CIA with which they could have a liaison, they created a situation where knowledge of Korea and its language were not only not needed but a hindrance. Only an "organization man" would and could fit the required mold. Through this mirror image, called the KCIA, a series of questionable generals usurped power. For the U.S. in Korea, it is now coming home to roost. Dogma is the weapon of wealthy special interests, who then and now are connected to wealthy interests in places such as Haiti, Guatemala, etc.. Note the CIA's record in those two countries. Can an organization with roots as described in a recent book "The Secret War Against The Jews" ever become truly effective, or is it a prisoner of its own inherited values. Is it possible for the Foreign Service, with its questionable inheritance, to become truly expert on the foreign policy problems we face? Or, will it continue to be a bureaucracy designed to carry on in the traditions formed and instilled prior to, during and subsequent to WW II? It would appear that "Dogma" is alive and well in our new congress. Note the latest questionable policy adjustments concerning Cuba in order to please Senator Helms and the extreme right in this country.

EDWIN CRONK
Economic Counselor
Seoul (1956-1960)

Edwin Cronk was born in 1918. His career in the Foreign Service included

assignments in Japan, Korea, West Germany, Australia, Singapore, and Washington, DC. Mr. Cronk was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 7, 1988.

CRONK: In the mid 1950s, the Department's economic analysis capabilities were in pretty bad shape. I remember going to Korea -- after my work on Japanese matters -- where I don't think there was a person in the Embassy -- and it was a fairly sizable embassy -- that really knew much about economic affairs. I was new to the Foreign Service essentially because, after "being Wristonized", this was my first Foreign Service assignment, and I was certainly new to Korea. And yet I could write a telegram about almost any economic issues and get it cleared without any difficulty; the Ambassador or the DCM would look at it, smile, and say, "That sounds good." There was no expertise. But I think that has changed somewhat.

I went to Seoul as chief of the economic section. I think I spent most of my time working on AID matters; we had a very large AID establishment -- several hundred people doing virtually everything imaginable. The AID program was \$350 million a year at its peak, but it was \$200 million plus for several years. The Ambassador -- as head of the country team -- of course, had overall responsibility for that effort. Although we did not administer the AID program, he told me to make sure that I attend all their high level meetings, and the important meetings with the Koreans -- where policy decisions were to be made. I was the liaison -- the link between the Embassy and the AID mission.

I got along extremely well with Bill Warne, who was the head of the AID program most of the time I was there and with the staff. I was, in effect, pretty well integrated into the AID organization. There were a lot of policy questions that the Ambassador would have to sign off on; he needed someone who could advise him -- what were the facts and how should he come decide? The level of aid, for example, was a perennial kind of problem. Do we need more or less, what for, and so on? He had to agree to a total request and the general composition of the program. It fell to me to be that person who could keep track of things.

When I first arrived in Seoul we had a Chargé d'Affaires, Carl Strom, who went off to Cambodia as Ambassador after about six months of my tour. Then Walter Dowling came and after him Walter McConaughy. Dowling was a very good analyst of the political scene, which in Korea revolved around Syngman Rhee. Rhee seemed to like Dowling pretty much; he was frequently up at the Presidential mansion and Rhee consulted with him. But nobody really had much influence on Rhee, including Dowling. Rhee did his own thing; that was not always in our interests. I can't fault Dowling for not having a good hold on Rhee; nobody ever solved that puzzle.

But he did have good relationships and he knew the political situation extremely well. He knew nothing or very little about economics and therefore had very little influence on the AID program. I would say that in the 1950s there were several problems in Korea. One was political corruption; Rhee ran things -- or his people -- ran the country as they saw fit. There was no political democracy of any kind, and it was quite apparent to everybody that it was a dictatorial situation. The economy was just run, really, on a system of graft and corruption. It was rotten to the core and we all knew it.

I guess I could fault Dowling, and McConaughy, and all of us -- particularly the people in the AID agency -- for not being more vigorous in insisting that something be done to reduce the level of official corruption. For example, the exchange rate was completely unrealistic. It would have been hard to imagine what it might be, but it was pegged at a level that made impossible exporting anything without a loss, because at the official exchange rate a producer wouldn't end up with enough to pay for raw materials or labor.

But millions could be made by importing anything that was usable -- say rice, or cement, or any of the basics. If you were one of the lucky ones to get an import permit, which was of course issued by the government, you were an instant millionaire! It was this distortion of the exchange rate which was one of the central problems, and we couldn't do anything about it. I felt then -- and I feel even more strongly now -- that we should just have laid the law down and said, "You either correct the exchange rate, or we're going to cut the AID program back to the very bone, and you take the consequences." We should have been tougher, much tougher. This issue came up often, both in Washington and in Seoul. We had a little group in the Embassy that I set up, of what we called the thinkers. It consisted of about four Americans from the AID agency, our political counselor, myself, and four young Korean government officials; one from the Bank of Korea, for example, and one from the Administration of Economic Affairs, and so on. We used to sit down about one evening a month and talk about issues, completely off the record. We more or less promised that we wouldn't report, or take any actions, as a result of these conversations. They were exclusively to try to figure out what each of us, respectfully, might do about a specific problem, or how envisaged Korea's future. These were all very frank exchanges. The exchange rate issue was always central to our dialogue. We would say if the exchange rate could be quadrupled, Korea might begin an export program.

The economic technicians, on the Korean side, would agree with that, and say, "Yes, but it is a political problem. It is hard to get Mr. Rhee to understand, or do anything about it." We faced a hopeless situation; the misallocated exchange rate became a given; we got so we didn't dwell on it, because we were just beating our heads against a wall. Everybody understood the problem. But we never forcefully presented the issue to the government, and said, "Look, either shape up or we're going to do something about it. Syngman Rhee was sort of a hero; he was viewed in Washington in a sense as a symbol of a democratic South Korea, even though it wasn't very democratic. He had a very high rating in Washington; he was "our man". I think the feeling was that we had to back him. I suppose that in the back of all of our minds was the hope that given enough time it would work its way out. People were confident that the Koreans would see the light. Today, when you look at Korea, you see a people who finally got their act together with a vengeance. But I think it was the Japanese who taught them the lessons, rather than we.

I seemed to be in a peculiar position. I was the Chief of the Economic Section -- the Ambassador's man on matters regarding assistance. In fact, the AID mission existed almost independently and had a momentum all of its own. The Ambassador's best hope was to have somebody who could tell him what was going on -- almost as though I were his ambassador to the AID mission. The Ambassador would go to dedications of projects -- completion of projects. Tyler Wood preceded Bill Warne. He was one of the great guys. Both he and Warne would come to the Ambassador's weekly staff meetings, and explain rather briefly what was going on; e.g.

that Mr X or Mr Y was visiting, or that the budget had been approved -- general matters, never any details. They would rarely discuss a problem. So I was the one put in the hot seat, trying to bridge the gap. The ambassadors acquiesced with this process feeling that AID knew its business. I don't think Dowling objected to it; he realized that he couldn't get intimately involved in day to day activities, and just didn't want to -- he didn't have the background for it for one thing. And he had had full confidence in both Wood and Warne. They were very good people.

Both Tyler and Bill wanted the economic situation to appear hopeful and successful. That was probably a mistake. It was hard to get them to say, "We have a screwed up situation." I remember one time we had a very junior economic officer -- one of my staff -- who took a two or three week trip around the southern part of Korea, which was not a very pleasant place to be in those days. He went down to Pusan and the southern provinces where the situation was pretty desperate economically. He talked to a lot of ordinary Koreans -- the man on the street, or the farmer, and so on -- to get a feeling for how was life treating them, whether they had enough to eat, and were getting the fertilizer that we were importing at US taxpayer's expense. He came back with a very negative report even though this was after the AID program had been going on for some years. There was a lot of food in the system that we brought in; a lot of fertilizer; and other basic things. On paper, there was an equitable distribution system.

The young officer returned reporting that there were a lot of people in the South nearly starving to death, because the food wasn't getting to them. They had a hard time getting seed and fertilizer, because the money lenders had a strangle hold on them, and the interest rates were so high that even when they raised and sold a crop, the money lenders would run off with most of it, in payment for the last round of supplies. It was a pretty desperate situation. The AID mission people were horrified by this report. They said, "It can't be that bad." They wanted to show that progress was being made; maybe they really felt it was. But I think that in those days, it was pretty hard to see any real progress in the average Korean's standard of living.

The refugees from the North, who had moved during the War, numbered a couple of million, I guess. Seoul, and all the urban areas, were just overrun by refugees living in tents and shacks and some were living on the street. Those people had a tough go of it; there was no way of glossing that over. But I think the AID people either were misled, or they just wanted to convey the impression that the situation was improving reasonably well. It was, of course, a standard bureaucratic problem that often exists.

I sent my staff member's report to the Ambassador and to Washington, where it caused a little stir back, but I think essentially the analysts in the Department, and elsewhere, said, "I guess that is the way it is." They had seen enough that it was no great shock to them. The AID technical people pretty well knew that the system wasn't functioning very well. Take the fertilizer distribution system as example; it was quite apparent to anybody who had made a field trip that some people were getting it and some weren't and that the money lending business was a key problem.

To Bill Warne's credit, the AID mission tried to devise a system whereby counterpart funds -- the local currency proceeds of sale of food, for example -- would go into some sort of farm credit system. My feeling is that that probably didn't work very well, either, because the whole system

was pretty rotten. All the politicians and bureaucrats had their hand in the till; the poor people like the farmers didn't have any political clout, and they probably continued to end up being short-changed. But the fact is that the fertilizer was brought in and it was used.

In an unusual situation, the Embassy's Economic Section ran the PL 480 program -- surplus foods that we provided other countries. It was a very important part of our AID program back in the late 1940's and 1950's. The surplus American food products were sold for local currency funds to almost any developing country that needed it. We had a sizeable program in Korea. We tried, you know -- with a very small staff -- to ensure that it was properly utilized, but it was impossible. But we comforted ourselves by saying, "Well, we brought in 100,000 tons of wheat, and it is gone. They didn't pour it in the sea. So we are feeding the people somehow or another." But the management of the commercial side of the process was beyond us.

WILLIAM C. SHERMAN
Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Washington, DC (1957-1958)

William C. Sherman was born in Kentucky in 1923 and raised in Pennsylvania and Ohio. He attended the University of Louisville until he joined the U.S. Navy in 1943. His career included positions in Korea, Japan, Italy, as well as other State Department positions in the States. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on October 27, 1993.

SHERMAN: In 1957, I was assigned to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) in the Department of State -- over my dead body! Mary Jane and I just had our third child toward the end of my tour in Tokyo. It was not a propitious time to come to live in Washington. I was still an FSO-5 with a relatively low income which barely kept body and soul together overseas. Ambassador Allison cabled to the Department taking up my cudgels, suggesting that the Shermans be assigned elsewhere overseas. No amount of objections or intervention worked. The last telegram on the subject from the department read: "We regret, but Sherman must return for a Washington tour".

So we returned and rented a house in Falls Church, VA. My assignment was the Korea desk of INR. By 1957, the work was essentially part of the National Intelligence Survey (NIS) program. The U.S. was just waiting for Rhee to disappear from the scene. No new policies were being considered until a new leadership was installed in Seoul. I replaced Dick Petree who had been working on Korea for at least six years before he went to Tokyo on his first Foreign service assignment.

INR, in 1957, was a relatively large organization because it had been the beneficiary of large sums from the N.I.S. That program was based on an assumption that it was possible to put together all the intelligence -- political, economic, demographic, geographic, etc. -- available on a specific country. The U.S. government decided that it would compile this massive country encyclopedic reader from data bases existing in all agencies, especially the intelligence ones.

Even the Holy See was included with two sections: one as a religious power and one as a temporal power. For an analyst, this compilation was an endless occupation. No sooner had a version been written, cleared and published, it was out-of-date, so that analysts had to begin again on an up-date. CIA was the lead agency and the major financial sponsor. The funds were in part distributed to other agencies and the State's share went essentially to INR which employed a lot of people with those resources. For example, Evelyn Colbert was initially employed through this program. As far as I know, those compilations are still in some dusty corner somewhere, but I doubt whether it is ever used; the information gathered in the late 50s was never used then. You have to remember that all this was done before the advent of computers and therefore was a highly human resource intensive effort. We used to send people all over the world to do the research. I took one three months trip to Korea to analyze the educational system in the country to write the chapter on education for the NIS volume. The country volumes, in addition to commentaries, included all of a country's basic documents: the constitution, basic legislation, etc. It was an exhaustive effort, using the "vacuum cleaner" approach to research. We tried to cover every country in the world, although obviously there existed large gaps in certain areas like the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. We even wrote histories for those countries which became a major effort for European countries for example. Much of the material was of course readily available in other forms for anyone who needed to have the information. There was no reason in the world why the government needed to duplicate what was more than adequately covered by experts. Each country analysis had a section on "key country personalities" which provided an in- depth biographical summary of every individual who was thought to be a leader or a potential leader. That of course had to be constantly up-dated as circumstances changed.

Biographic information has of course been standard fare for Foreign Service reporting for many years. I have never felt that it was very useful to conduct strictly as a compartmentalized effort; that is, a self-standing exercise. I remember arriving in Rome and meeting Mary Mack, an older officer in the Political Section. Her full time job was that of biographic reporting officer. That is all she did. You could of course keep as many people busy on that subject as you wish. It is very difficult to decide whom you want to trace. The only time a policy-maker found biographical information useful at all might be during a coup when he or she needed to know something about the new leaders. Too often of course those were not the people we would necessarily have included in our list. In any case, under such circumstances, a post could respond telegraphically with whatever information was needed and available. I should say that there were a lot of defenders of the biographical information system. Of course, many of them were biographic reporting officers, but there were some others. As I said, I never felt that it was worth while. I would make the same comment about CIA's efforts of recent past to provide in-depth psychological profiles of some foreign leaders. I remember talking to some of these fancy psychologists who would come to Tokyo to ask questions such as: "Has Mr. Horita ever had a mid-life crisis?" which to me was a good illustration of the weakness of the exercise.

Hugh Cumming was the Director of INR. He had just been our Ambassador to Indonesia where he had been replaced by John Allison, my former Ambassador in Tokyo. Cumming was still heavily involved in Indonesia issues, as is true for many people who are assigned to Washington. Many tend to stay involved in issues they dealt with in their previous assignment. Hugh wanted to know all that was going on in Indonesia and would second guess from his Washington vantage point. About six months before I reported to duty in INR, the process of morning briefings had

been started. Each INR geographical office would come in early in the morning and would screen all the overnight cable traffic and many public reporting sources, like wire services and newspapers. These analysts would cull all that material and if they saw material which they deemed sufficiently important, they would brief Bill McAfee who would then digest it further and brief the Director of INR. That worked pretty well for most of the world, but we in the East Asia section, had to include all material that mentioned Indonesia because that was Cumming's wish. He was involved in a complex and personal feud with Allison. They had different perceptions of the situation in Djakarta and differed strongly therefore on policy prescriptions. I never knew enough about Indonesian policy to form a judgment, but I can well remember the exchanges of elaborate telegrams between the two principals. In one, Allison said that the cable he was sending had been drafted primarily by Mary Vance Trent, a political officer at the Embassy and that he had not changed a single word. The analysis in the cable reflected the uncensored views of an observer on the scene, unswayed by Ambassadorial opinion. The message was not lost on Washington. Cumming nevertheless persisted. He sent, under the guise of an NIS mission, an INR officer, Culver Gleysteen, who had served in Indonesia while Cumming was Ambassador. Culver's real assignment was to send back, in personal letters -- not official communication channel -- reports on the situation in Indonesia and in the Embassy. That process, particularly reporting on the Embassy, struck me to be somewhat beyond the pale.

My boss was the Director of the North East Asia Office. That was first Joe Yager and then Mill Magistretti. The Office Director's boss was the Deputy Director of INR. I had a close relationship with the desk officers of the East Asia regional bureau. The Korea desk at the time was run by David Ness, assisted by Chris Norred and Greg Henderson. Chris was an old Korea hand; he was the INR Korea desk officer when I had that temporary assignment to INR when I first joined the Department. He was also one of the original junior principal assistants who went to Korea with the military government. He later served twice in Seoul, although not very happily, as I remember it. The regional desk would call on us for assistance, to do research and write reports. This was particularly true for us because Chris had been in INR and had some appreciation for our capabilities. I should mention that I had a colleague in INR who also worked on Korean issues, Dan Sullivan.

We in INR did not get involved very much in the Korean policy development process because in those days the theory was that INR was to operate like the Swiss Foreign Office. That was the phrase that was frequently used by INR managers to underline their view that INR officials had no role in policy development. It was INR's responsibility to analyze the facts and to array them so that the regional bureaus and the "seventh floor" could make an informed decision. The theory never works fully in practice, but that didn't dissuade the proponents. We were asked what the situation was, what factors were affecting that situation, what the likely outcomes might be, etc. INR was supposed to be strictly an objective, neutral analytical organization. It had no operational responsibilities.

BERNARD J. LAVIN
USIS
Seoul (1957-1966)

Bernard Lavin was born in New York in 1924. He received a bachelor's and a master's degree from Boston College. Mr. Lavin entered the Foreign Service in 1952 and the USIA in 1953. His career included positions in the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Nigeria, Indonesia, and South Africa. Mr. Lavin was interviewed by Mike Brown in 1988.

LAVIN: I was supposed to go to Korea on a two year tour. But as things turned out two years went into three years, into four years. And then the next thing you know we were in Korea for nine years all together. It was during those nine years that what I considered to be one of the most significant USIS programs was developed beginning in 1961.

In all of USIS programs that I have ever been associated with there has always been one objective that is common to all country plans -- and that is the development of democratic concepts and democratic traditions, particularly in developing countries as well as in developed countries.

Of course, in Korea we had such an objective -- the development of a democratic tradition and democratic concepts. It was always very difficult to try to address this objective, and I suppose we had more difficulty with this than any other objective in the country plan.

In the short term there were things that we could do. But it was the long term haul that we had to think about and how to influence the course of democratic development in Korea. That, in my view, was the real issue which was particularly difficult in the kind of society that Korea has had since ancient times and probably will have for thousands of years more -- the Confucian kind of stratified society where everyone has his or her status from the oldest living member of the family down to the last daughter-in-law (who gets all the dirty jobs to do in the house). Everyone has a position of seniority, rank, responsibility and status-from high to low. To try to develop democratic concepts in terms with which we are familiar was the great challenge in Korea. I saw it as an educational process that had to be initiated if we were going to be successful over the long term.

In 1959, we had a visit from Dr. Winfield Niblo who was then a professor at Columbia University Teacher's College. He visited Korea under what we then called the Smith-Mundt program. He described to us the materials that had been developed at Teacher's College under a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. It was called the Citizenship Education Program (CEP) to be used in the American school system.

They were very impressive materials indeed. It was Hunt Damon who set up a meeting between Dr. Niblo and members of the Ministry of Education, and he described to them what these materials meant. There was no reaction whatsoever because they had no idea really of what Professor Niblo was talking about. So he left after about two weeks and the whole thing just sort of fell dead. Hunt Damon turned the materials over to me and said, "Bernie, you take charge of these and see what you can do."

As I studied them, I realized that this was a magnificent research task that had been done by Columbia and that if this were implemented in the school system in the United States they would really have a wonderful program for developing civic values among young students. So I proposed to Hunt Damon that perhaps what we could do was try to get these materials Koreanized first of all. By that I meant translated into Hangul and in a language within the cultural concepts that the Koreans could understand -- because some of the examples that we used in the American school system would not be understandable to Koreans. I proposed that we try to get these into the Korean educational system. But in order to do that we faced an almost insuperable job because the Korean educational system (as was the Japanese) was impregnable to any kind of outside influence in content, particularly in something like moral education. Both in Japan and in Korea, moral education was a very, very sensitive question indeed. To both the Koreans and Japanese, citizenship education meant "moral education."

The important thing was to select some kind of a cosponsor who could help us get these materials "Koreanized" and into the Korean educational system. I examined exhaustively schools of education, educational research groups and institutions through-out Korea. Finally the selection came down to what was then called the Central Education Research Institute. We referred to it as CERI. As it turned out, the director of that institute had received his Ph.D. in education from Teacher's College, Columbia. And so he was very familiar with the whole idea. His name was Dr. Paik Hyun-ki.

We told him we would put the resources of USIS behind this concept if he would endorse it and work with us on the Korean side and get the Ministry of Education to understand what we were trying to do. He agreed. And it was at that point that we decided to take the fundamental concepts of the citizenship education materials and get them "Koreanized" and into the Korean language.

Now, very briefly what were the concepts? The "democratic concepts," boiled down from the massive Columbia materials went directly to cultural structures within Korean society. There were five. The first was, the "dignity and worth of the individual." This concept was so important because dignity, of course, is ingrained in Korean in the Confucian system -- but along with it goes the idea of superiority and inferiority. We took that first concept and here is how we handled it. For instance, as an example, we took a newspaper clipping from the Hanguk Ilbo and in that clipping it reported that on such and such a date, Miss Kim, a maid living up in one part of the City of Seoul, was beaten by a certain man because she owed him 200 won. We left the story unfinished (using the problem solving technique of the citizenship education program at Columbia University). We left the solution to the teacher and the students as they would have dialogue back and forth. In the teacher's guide we put in ideas like why did that man beat the maid? Because she owed him 200 won? (200 won was a very small amount of money.) It turns out that the reason he beat her is because she was only a maid and he felt he had higher status. And we noted that in a democratic society no matter who you are, you have your rights as individuals and as equals. Well, that is one way we handled the kinds of concepts that were included in the course content.

The second concept was "taking responsibility". The third one was "cooperation and community service." This was pretty difficult for Koreans to grasp in terms that we understand. They

cooperate as family units, but not in a community. They fight like hell.

The fourth one was "care for the handicapped." In our country the handicapped have been looked on in a certain way. And in recent years, there has been great attention and care devoted to the handicapped as equal members of society. That is a wonderful thing and should prevail in any society, particularly a democratic society. In Korea many of us noticed that Koreans would tend to laugh at and scorn handicapped people. So we put that one in as a basic idea.

And the last concept, was the one that was the most difficult to handle: "Choosing good leaders." That gets you into elections and national and local politics.

When we discussed all these things with the Korean professors that we finally selected as a core group, one of them, Professor Chung Bum Mo who is one of Korea's outstanding educators, and looked on as sort of the dean of educators today, said to me before we started the seminar system, which I'll describe in a couple of minutes: "Do you realize what this program is going to do? It's going to revolutionize the Korean education system -- because you are taking a system which is essentially vertical in nature under the Confucian system and turning it to horizontal where responsibility and rights fall equally across the spectrum of society. This is going to be very difficult to do." "But if it happens," he said, "It will be a wonderful thing."

I can say that there was great enthusiasm both in Washington and certainly at the post, after the usual skeptical questions. The Columbia University materials gave us a very solid educational foundation on which to build. And when it became clear what the intention was and that we planned on using a fair amount of our resources for a long period of time in seminars and other kinds of programs, our support colleagues said it was worth it.

One question that did come up concerned AID. Why was this project not assigned to it? I had talked to the AID representatives in Seoul and they were fully in support of it. Their reaction was: "We wish we could do it. But we are so occupied taking care of rebuilding Korean schoolrooms throughout the country and trying to acquire textbooks that it is impossible for us to take it on. It is the prime work of the United States government to do this sort of thing." Thus USIA became the action-oriented group and with support from Washington certainly everybody at post got into the programming on this.

After we got the full commitment of the CERI and USIS and Washington, we decided we would start off the process by bringing together the best educators in Korea, not only from Seoul but from the provincial areas also. And so it was decided that in July of 1961 we would hold the first seminar at the Haeinsa Buddhist Temple in the Taegu region. The reason I selected a Buddhist temple site was to emphasize to the Korean educators (and the American staff) that the educational process of democratization was a Korean task, not an American task. And as fortune would have it in May of 1961 the coup d'etat took place where General Park Chung Hee took over the government. And believe me, it was a very authoritarian and military government. Dr. Paik Hyun-ki, the Director of the CERI said to me: "I think we are going to have to postpone this because the military government would never allow a program like this to go on. Under martial law, it is impossible to hold any meetings." The program could almost be considered subversive.

I said: "It is either now or never. If we don't do it now we are never going to do it." So we proceeded with the plan and we ended up with a group of about 60 educators at Haeinsa Temple. The morning of the opening session came and Dr. Paik and Dr. Chung Bum Mo both came to me in a state of high excitement. They said: "We are going to have to cancel this whole thing." I asked, "Why?" They answered: "There is a Korean Army general and a member of the KCIA sitting out there waiting for the session to start." And they added: "We can't have them at the meeting." I said: "Why not? -- this will be an education for them and they will see that we are not subversive." So that argument prevailed and we went ahead with the program. And sure enough, at the noontime, the two generals and the KCIA official joined us for lunch and then disappeared because they could see it was an educational program and not a meeting of subversives. So we carried on. And it was determined by the whole group that we would Koreanize all of the materials that would be selected out of the Columbia University materials. The work would be done in Korea. The Koreans who were at the seminar would do basic research and implementation. We also agreed and they agreed that they would become sort of "pointers" for the program in their areas. This became very important for the future developments. It was also decided that we would develop what we called the "Teacher's Manual" which could be used by teachers on the elementary, the middle and high school levels and later we developed one for the university also.

The plan was to put this teacher's manual into the hands of teachers all over Korea. We knew that the Ministry of Education would never allow any new courses to be instituted without their full approval, most particularly in moral education. We decided to publish the manual as a supplementary textbook for teachers to use in their moral education courses. This was very well received by the Korean teachers because many of them told us privately that they were responsible for teaching moral education, and that they really didn't know what to teach.

"What we do," they said, "is to get quotations from Confucius, George Washington and Lincoln, as well as leaders all over the world and call it moral education." So when they had something available to them that used a system of teaching democratic concepts involving problem solving and dialogue between the teachers and the students, they said: "This would be very useful indeed".

Fortunately, there was little media coverage of the meeting or our subsequent efforts; we really didn't want it. The papers noted, of course, that educational meetings were being held and how many professors were there and that sort of thing. But we didn't want a lot of attention until the program was organized and ready to be put into the system to the extent possible.

We got to that point where we had a teacher's manual ready. I guess it was around 1963. We published in Korean 75,000 of these teachers manuals. By this time the Ministry of Education was fully aware of what we were doing. One day they sent over word that the Minister of Education, who was a good friend of ours, was so appreciative of this kind of work that he asked that his picture and his message be put into the manual. This was a very touchy question and I said to Dr. Paik and the Ministry officials, that we really couldn't do this -- because, God knows, he may die in two weeks or he may be out of office in four weeks and then we would be left with something that was useless because it would have too much of his stamp on it. So I proposed that what we would do is have his picture and message as a sort of insert. And that is the way it

worked out. As luck would have it, I think it was about two months later when the Minister was kicked out of office. The book went throughout the school system and I have to tell you that after I went back to Korea in 1981 on my second tour, when I went down to Taegu, I met one of the professors who started off this program with us back in 1961; he had by then -- in part because of his work in citizenship education -- become President of the Taegu Teacher's College. He very proudly brought me into his office. He showed me the books that had been developed under this program. And he said: "I still have the Teacher's Manual and I still use it." That was very good to know.

To make a very long story short, the 60 professors who worked with us in 1961 became resource persons with USIS support for seminars at the USIS offices in Taegu, Pusan and Kwangju and at Korean schools. We held quarterly seminars to discuss the results and identify problems.

We discovered in later years that as a result of these professors' participation in CEP, (they came in contact with thousands upon thousands of Korean educators) their reputations were enhanced. In my second tour (1981-86), one of them, Dr. Kim Ran Soo, who eventually obtained his Ph.D. in the U.S., said that there is no question in his mind that he became Dean of the College of Education of Yonsei University because he became so well known through the articles and books that he wrote on citizenship education and by meeting educators all over the country. Dr. Lee Yung Duck from Seoul National University became very well known. He was selected to head the Korean delegation to conduct negotiations with North Korea in 1984-86.

There is another, of many examples, of the effects of the CEP in Korea. The successor of the CERI is the KEDI (Korean Educational Development Institute). It has a staff of 200 U.S. trained Ph.Ds. The head of it was, when I left Korea in 1986, Professor Hong Won Soon. He was one of those 60 "Young Turks" that we started with back in 1961. When I went back to Korea in 1981 he invited me out to the KEDI and he informed his staff that they were now a multi-million dollar institute because AID has given a great deal of support to the idea of KEDI and also Florida State University. In fact, KEDI became the educational research arm of the Ministry of Education. Professor Hong told his staff: "Had it not been for the development of the citizenship education program in Korea starting in 1961, we would not exist today."

Now, I would like to relate the history of a short term program that was very effective. In the 1963-65 period, President Park Chung Hee's military authoritarian government had realized that it was in Korea's long term interest to normalize relations with Japan. There was much anti-Japanese feeling in Korea, particularly during the days of President Syngman Rhee who made sure that the students were taught in school to hate the Japanese for all the terrible things they had done, particularly in the period of annexation from 1910-1945.

Thus when President Park announced that he intended to normalize relations with Japan there were very large and violent demonstrations led by university students. Our Ambassador at the time was Winthrop Brown. One day he called all the Embassy's senior officers together. I was Cultural Affairs Officer by that time. Ambassador Brown said: "I want you all to understand that I consider it to be absolutely essential that President Park should succeed in normalizing relations with Japan. It will have benefits for all of us -- Koreans, Japanese and Americans. Any idea that you come up with that is reasonable I will fully support."

I consulted with the PAO and proposed that since the main opposition to normalization was coming from university students who knew little or nothing about the Japanese except what they had been taught, I thought it would be effective to send perhaps 50 college student editors to Japan for a one or two week tour to let them see the reality outside their own country and meet Japanese university students.

At that time, this was an unheard of proposal because there were no relations between Japan and Korea. Many people thought that this would be something that couldn't be accomplished. But I talked to representatives at the Ministry of Education and they thought it was a fine idea. But they said the big problem would be how to convince the Japanese to give visas to the Korean students. With Ambassador Brown's approval and the PAO's approval and encouragement, I made a visit to Japan to talk to our staff there to try to explain to them what we had in mind and to get an appointment at the Japanese Ministry of Education.

I will tell you some of the background on this even though some of my colleagues who are now retired may say: "Hey, let me tell my side of the story." When I explained the project to the PAO and the CAO in Tokyo, they were less than enthusiastic. As a matter of fact, they were downright angry. They advised me in no uncertain terms to just pack my bags and get back to Korea. The CAO told me it was impossible for Korean students to visit Japanese universities. He noted that, for example, USIS officers were not allowed to visit Tokyo University and surely Korean students would never be allowed to do so. This was quite incredible to me and I refused to believe it. My belief was strengthened when one of the senior Japanese USIS staff members told me that he could arrange for me or any other American staffer to visit Tokyo University. I realized that I was in dangerous waters.

After two days of being "blockaded" by the PAO (who was in the middle) and the CAO who somehow, I think, saw his turf invaded, my scheduled date of departure arrived. I was determined not to leave Japan until I had exhausted every avenue of approach. One can imagine my astonishment when the CAO and the Asia Foundation representative showed up at my hotel to "take me to the airport and wish me a happy trip home!!" I told them that I was not going back to Korea until my proposal was an accomplished fact. And I said: "If I have to go out on my own and do it, I will do it." Well, thank God, Hank Goshio was in Tokyo as Information Officer and I explained this whole thing to him as he puffed on his really stinking cigars. He thought it was a really neat idea. And he said: "You want to meet somebody at the Ministry?" And I said, "Sure." Well, he got the PAO's approval even though he was still kind of unhappy about this. Hank and I went over to see the head of the Northeast Asian Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His reaction was instantaneous. He said: "This is a wonderful idea. I will assure you that you will get the 50 visas without any question." "But" he said, "on one condition. There can be no public announcement of any kind that this has the blessing of the Japanese government. We will just issue the visas."

Upon returning to Seoul, I consulted with our military colleagues in Korea at the Eighth Army. I said: "We have to have an excuse to get these students to Japan and the excuse can't be that they go to Japanese universities because there will be a lot of public questions about that. Can you arrange for these students to visit the Stars and Stripes in Tokyo for one hour and then turn them

loose?" They replied, "Sure." So that is the way it came out. The Ministry of Education in Korea selected the 50 students around the country. And, of course, the students were all thrilled to be able to go to Japan to see the "hated enemy".

Thus we had the plane-load of them to fly to Japan. They were very highly selected, very intelligent, well informed students. They visited Stars and Stripes, had their one hour over there and enjoyed it. And the next thing you know they were off to Tokyo University and throughout the country, down to Kyoto to visit universities and the cultural and historical areas.

By this time the North Koreans were so furious that they were sending their agents around to the rooms of the students in the Prince Hotel in Tokyo and trying to get them to defect to North Korea. All the Korean students went back to Korea. The articles that they wrote in the college newspapers were astounding to everybody -- to the public, to professors, and to the students. They were saying things like "We thought that Japan got rich off us because of the Korean War, but the Japanese are rich because they worked damned hard." One of the law students of Seoul National University fell in love with a Japanese girl and I had a love-sick student on my hands for weeks.

The Ministry of Education was pleased by this effort. The National Assembly was so pleased that they summoned the Minister of Education to a special meeting at the National Assembly. And they asked: "How did this thing come about?" The Minister, to our great pleasure, said: "It was my idea. I organized this whole thing."

The next thing we knew was that the Korean government funded, as I remember, about 300 or 350 additional students to visit Japan, with the same result every time. They came back and wrote very positive things. The normalization of relations went through. But a great deal of the resistance to the idea had already diminished and many in the Korean government credited this project. We started at the student level which is where the problem was to begin with. They were the ones leading the demonstrations. A lot of the older people felt that even though they hated the Japanese for what they did to Korea, they came to respect the Japanese as their teachers. But they couldn't dare mention that in public because the Koreans would say, "Oh, you are Japanese lovers." The teacher-student bond in Asia transcends nationalism, often.

So that was a very, very interesting period. The Ambassador was happy with the results and with the PAO and everyone else involved. I should note here that in the revolution against Syngman Rhee in 1960, Ministry of Education officials were stoned by university students. There was just no communication between them. Yet here, in this program, two Korean Ministry of Education officials who accompanied the students to Japan as "government chaperons" became fast friends with the students as both the officials and the students assured me in a "debriefing" upon return to Korea. That was one project where a short term gain for the U.S. that could be identified.

ERLAND HEGINBOTHAM
USAID
Seoul (1958-1960)

Erland Heginbotham was born in Utah in 1931 and received a BA from Stanford University in 1954. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1955, his assignments abroad included Seoul, Lagos, Saigon, and Djakarta. Mr. Heginbotham was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: You were in INR from when to when?

HEGINBOTHAM: I was in INR from the end of 1955, basically 1956 through 1958.

Q: What part of INR were you in?

HEGINBOTHAM: I was in East Asia, the East Asian Bureau and I was working with “unwristonized” and “unwashed” people who were very good and fascinating. It was great group to work with. A few Foreign Service people had come from East Asia. I was assigned to the economics branch and had a number interesting assignments. I concentrated on North Korea and on Korean fertilizer problem, which didn't seem like a great glamorous way to begin a career. Also worked on improving relations between the Koreans and the Japanese. Those were some of the things that worked on. .

Q: And of course in a way, these things are still going on. North Korea is still a threat, a puzzle and a disaster all at the same time and the Koreans and Japanese still haven't reached an accommodation.

HEGINBOTHAM: Still fighting over islands.

Q: Still fighting over islands. There is a sort of mutual dislike based on century old problems. Could you describe a little about how people were looking at East Asia. I suppose one of the major issues during this time was whether China, the Tijuans Straits and all that. Even though it wasn't in your field, were you picking up how they people were looking at things? We had a rather hawkish administration, the Dallas Eisenhower Administration, particularly on China, the height of the China lobby and all that. Were you picking up the difference between the professionals and the politicians?

HEGINBOTHAM: What stands out in my memory are two main thrusts. One was the pre occupation with the Communist threat based on what was going on in China economically and also what was going on in North Korea economically. At that time, North Korea was far stronger than South Korea in economic terms and in other respects as well. When the peninsula was partitioned, the North inherited a lot of industrial capacity and energy leaving the South essentially an agricultural society. I should say that I was very much involved with or exposed to people who were working on China on the economics of the area.

On the political side what I remember mostly vividly were the pre occupations with Japanese politics. There was a lot more turmoil that there were labor problems. There were many riots and public demonstrations in Japan at that time. Possibly because the economic branches were compartmentalized, I didn't get very much involved in China; so I don't really recall any great

debates going on on that, but there was a lot of pre- occupation about where Japan was going and how --

Q: Before we move to Japan, what was the Korean fertilizer issue?

HEGINBOTHAM: We were close to the end of the Korean War. The South Korean economy was in total shambles. The one thing that mattered most was getting fertilizer to the Koreans so that the economy could get going again. By sheer accident, the first INR research study I did was on fertilizer.

Q: I served in Korea during the Korean War and if there is anything that stuck in one's mind came from how they fertilized the land, which was night soil, known as a honey pit. There were honey wagons and the smell was appalling. They were everywhere and when they weren't in a place they were being transported to a place. One certainly appreciates the fact that later they got regular fertilizer.

HEGINBOTHAM: It was hard to imagine that there was a shortage of fertilizer –

Q: What about Japan? What was the feeling about the Japanese economy at that time? Was it going anywhere; were we concerned?

HEGINBOTHAM: Most of the focus on Japan had to do with the occupation policies. I think a lot had to do with what was, how the demonopolization policies were being implemented and whether you were, in fact, beginning to see the resurrection of the ibotzu in new molds. As I recall, the Japanese had substantial balance of payment problems at that point.

Strangely, the politics stick out more in my mind; e.g., Kische and the transition of politics and the labor strives. The labor problems were major - whether they were going to have enterprise unions or political unions or how that was going to be resolved. It seemed as though the labor movement could become a very disruptive and very contentious and troublesome force. There were many communists in the labor movement, there were actually some communists unions and of course, given our preoccupation with communism this was something that we were watching very closely. Those were the things that stand out in my memory.

Q: What about South Korea? Did we see any hope there?

HEGINBOTHAM: I will now have to sort of merge my observations, because at that time again, I was concentrating primarily on North Korea. What I was doing and spending vast amounts of time was on extrapolating percentage increases without any absolute base on which to go. So, the question was, is North Korea really developing industry at the rate it says and what does this really mean and what are these percentages actually telling us? Are there even scraps of evidence that one can build on? I was so involved in the North Korean thing that I didn't spend a lot of time on South Korea which was limping along in a pretty pathetic situation. The AID program was very large. The reliance on military support programs and things of that sort were pretty overwhelming in 1955 when the war had ended. Our contributions were mainly relief and reconstruction. One just didn't see any end in sight at for economic development in South Korea.

Q: You left INR in 1958 and whither?

HEGINBOTHAM: That was an interesting story; it was my first learning on how to work the bureaucracy. I had enjoyed INR; I had learned a good deal and it was probably the beginning of the salvation of my writing skills, because I got a lot of heavy critique for my writing - which were well deserved and which proved to be invaluable I took a course in writing. The exposure to and learning about Washington was all great stuff, but by the time two years had gone by I was wearing out. It was still very tough getting an acceptable assignment; so I started shopping around. I knew I wasn't going to get anything worthwhile from the State Department and so I started shopping around in AID (Agency for International Development). Low and behold, I found that there was a really great job opening up in the AID mission in Korea. I volunteered for the job and AID requested my assignment to Korea and that's how I escaped from Wristonization in Washington.

I went to Korea which was a bit of a trauma, because I was engaged at that point in time, but my wife who is six years younger was still finishing her degree and we didn't want to take her out of college, but anyway that was worked out. So I went to Korea.

Q: You worked there from 1958 till what?

HEGINBOTHAM: I was there from 1958 until 1960. I don't remember the months, but I suspect it was probably mid year. I had a fabulous job. While most of my colleagues were going to non-substantive, non-challenging, uninteresting work, I was assigned to the non-project branch of the AID mission. The AID program at that time was probably in the six or seven hundred million dollar range and of that about two hundred and fifty million dollars was granted to Korea as non-project AID - unspecified allocations for Korean and American agencies to use for bidding by Koreans for the purchase of essential commodities. Those commodities were paid for the foreign exchange rights; when they were sold in the local market, the proceeds in local currency in a loan or grant funds. These funds were called "counterpart funds" and were used to pay the local currency costs of projects which also had some dollar contributions. The non-project program generated both resources to get the economy going again and put a lid on inflationary pressures by taking local currency out of the local market. We could control the flow of these counterparts funds into the economy, thereby expanding it while keeping inflation under control.

The AID mission had probably had four or five hundred people in the project implementation phase. Our office managed a little two hundred and fifty million dollar program staffed, I think, by two Americans and six or eight local Korean staff. It was a very, very, fascinating job. Absolutely, unbelievable. The Koreans have been referred to, among other things, as the Irish of the Orient. They are very tough; they are very stubborn, so it made for a very challenging environment in which to negotiate. The amounts of U.S. non-project AID were allocated into quarterly tranches and for each quarter we would negotiate with the Korean government on the composition of the commodities to be brought in for the economy. The Koreans being very, very stubborn had adamantly refused to create a realistic exchange rate. They were determined to keep it as low as possible, so that imports came in very inexpensively; they didn't worry about exports because there weren't any. The American government was not about to be provided very

small amounts of won for their dollar input. As a result, it was agreed that the bidders would bid for the foreign exchange for the dollars and there would be “competitive” bidding for these commodities.

The first thing I observed was that in effect, we had a foreign exchange auction system. Very rare experience in world history. My eyes lit up and I found the process fascinating. I discovered that strangely enough a lot of commodities went at the minimum or official exchange rate. There were others that didn't. The foreign exchange allocations were literally, as I said, by commodity. I begin educating myself on why these differences and it became quite clear that the Korean government was following Japanese management practices and was seeing to it that there was no competition in the sensitive commodities; but the less important imports were up for grabs. So, you had this extremely wide discrepancy. I would probably be far off on the numbers, but let's say that the base rate was 181 won per dollar, but there were imports worth six and seven hundred won per dollar - 701 won per dollar for a certain more popular commodities such as plastics; plastics, raw materials, etc. The largest amount of funding we supplied was for fertilizer. So, I was right back in my own old business again.

It appeared that capital formation in Korea in the period before I got there - after the war - had fallen in to the hands of those who were able to make large amounts of money relatively easily. “I-E” as they are known in the United States - the madams and the women who controlled the kisang houses and other houses that were frequented by the GIs - had accumulated large amounts of money. In Korea, it was customary that the women controlled the household budget; they were also beginning to control the national budget. As a result, it was the madams who had the money to buy the fertilizer and had the monopoly on fertilizer acquisition and distribution. So it was usually the case that those who held the monopolies were not often the owners; the madams and others simply held the chits and they could then resell these chits for very large amounts. They were getting the fertilizer chits, let's say for 181 won and then reselling them probably for four or five times this amount, because fertilizer was just very, very scare.

There were other interesting areas which became very political. For example, there was news print. In a very closed society where newspapers were not very aggressive or active, that wouldn't have seemed like a very interesting commodity. But, it happened that all the school books were printed on news prints at that time. It also happened, as one came to discover, that Madam Rhee was very involved in the school print monopoly.

Q: Syngman Rhee being the President.

HEGINBOTHAM: Syngman Rhee being the President. His wife, Madam Rhee was of Austrian origin and I can't remember how and when they married. Anyway, she wore Korean clothes and was very, very integrated in Korea in more ways than one can tell.

I figured that Korea was going nowhere fast as long as it didn't begin to consolidate these exchange rates. I took it as my task over the two years there to go as far as I could toward achieving a unitary rate of exchange for the Korean won - not as my communist friends wanted to do by negotiating an agreement with the Korean government, but by simply bringing about reality through the auction markets. I begin to experiment with very much tougher negotiations,

for example, on quantities, and I began also to get approval for grouping closely related groups of commodities where there was insufficient bidding. In other words, I would take, say plastics, raw materials and other industrial chemicals and there might have been a significant discrepancy between the grades. I would combine them and make them undifferentiated. We couldn't specify. The Koreans got the dollars and it was up to them what they did with them. During this process I learned a great deal about Korean economy, but I learned even more about Korean politics; I started getting late night telephone calls; I started getting threats; I started getting visitors who were clearly connected with Madam Rhee who literally issues fairly dire threats on my existence if I persisted in this sort of thing. It was fun nevertheless because I could tell immediately when I was getting into territory that was going to be interesting and that of course, increased my determination.

Q: Some Koreans are, very tough looking people. Can you tell both how the threats were made and whether you got any support from our AID mission?

HEGINBOTHAM: This is an extremely interesting and painful question. I was able to do some relatively minor things without attracting very much attention. But on several occasions, the negotiations which I carried on with a Korean counterpart lasted a couple of days. They were very vigorous. My counterpart was an economist and so we really enjoyed the substance of what we were dealing with and we debated very substantive questions. I would take the agreed package back and I could absolutely count on it that the ministry of reconstruction would come to see Joe Brent, who was our mission director, and that somehow the Koreans wound up virtually with their original position despite the negotiations that had taken place. Joe Brent would listen to the Koreans every time. He believed in them; he thought they were great. No matter how strong a case we had, he simply discounted it and dismissed out-of-hand the arguments of staff on these issues. He was apparently determined to be revered by the Koreans and so it was an extremely painful and unhappy situation. But, it didn't at all deter me and I was able to get Washington approval for consolidating some of commodities. In some cases, in order to get consolidation I had to go across major categories, and to do that I had to get approval from Washington. There were cases when I was successful in doing that. Joe Brent didn't last forever, so we had Loyal Giner later come in and he was a much more reasonable and less malleable mission director.

Q: Did you find that in the AID bureaucracy one could make one's discontent known back in Washington through visitors, mail or what have you?

HEGINBOTHAM: You know, you'll have to forgive me. This goes back a ways and I don't remember. I started out as an assistant in the non-project branch. I became the chief of the non-project branch. I had a very supportive boss, Tom Niblock, and my recollection is that Tom was very supportive, especially with Loyal Giner. I think that by the time I had gained enough credibility and enough support from Tom that when we had a change of mission directors, I was able to get more done within the mission so that it didn't become a problem.

There was major issue that I would like to relate. This happened at a time when the program was down around 230 million dollars. We shaved the all programs slightly. It was quite clear to me that the non-project program was a positive impediment now to the change that was necessary

for Korea to become competitive both as an importer and as an exporter. I had succeeded in moving quite a good distance toward a unitary exchange rate. I think by the time I left we were close to three or at most four rates instead of about 20 or 25 that we had when I first began. So, we'd moved quite a distance and there was almost nothing selling at 181 won per dollar anymore. That's a notional figure. I went to Washington with the proposition that we should begin an evolutionary process of reducing the AID program I felt that in order to get the Koreans' attention we needed to reduce non-project assistance by a minimum of 20 million dollars. It wasn't needed; the Koreans were beginning to generate their own savings; the madams were doing nicely, thank you from all those illicit rates which were bringing in fat profits. There was plenty of money around. I didn't think that money, local currency, was not really an issues. The issue was the profitability of enterprises which were being challenged by large imports of American goods at still below market rates of foreign exchange. My argument was that rather than going through the excruciating political pain of making the last consolidations on the exchange rate, which they would have been fought very, very bitterly by the Koreans, that it was better simply to get the message across that the trough was drying out. We are cutting this program and that this is the first crunch you can count on its progressive elimination.

Washington at that time would not hear of it. It was only after I left that they hired Jim Killen as mission director. He came in and started cutting the non-project program and created what I had recommended. I hope that I was instrumental in helping soften Washington up to the notion that this was the essential way to go. But, Killen certainly had his own instincts and he was aptly named. He was the opposite of Joe Brent. He came in determined to change the assistance program, but he was after my time so I didn't have the pleasure of doing that myself.

Q: When you were there you say the issue was money. Bribery has been the mother's milk of Korean enterprise right from the start.

HEGINBOTHAM: Let's be broad: Asian enterprise.

Q: Asian enterprise. I ran the counselor section at one time in Korea and corruption was a major problem and continues to be a major problem. You were dealing with the same sort of thing, something people wanted. During the time you were there how about corruption?

HEGINBOTHAM: It was such a fascination to me that I determined that if I should leave the Foreign Service soon after my Korean tour I would spend my next two or three years writing a book - an analysis on the economics of corruption. The question was to what extent is corruption economically functional and to what extent is it economically dysfunctional? I thought I could see at the end of my tour that there the beginnings of a transition. First of all, many of the madams, as well as many men, begin to understand what was going on. They found other non-monopolized enterprises outside of fertilizer which were beginning to be very rewarding. The Koreans were hell bent to industrialize and so a lot of industrialization was going on. The presence of the military greatly facilitated that, because instead of having to export the products initially, a lot of the production was expendables for the U.S. military. They got used to producing to world standards by producing expendables for the GIs in Korea, which was great. What was beginning to happen was the corrupt officials in the government who were the key to issuing permits - endless permits and all kinds of discretionary opportunities including the non-

project import program - began to see that more money could be made by going into enterprises than by staying in government.

I was beginning to see the very early stages of the transition where people were beginning to leave government before their retirement time to establish an existing relationship with the private sector. Incidentally, where corruption was most painful was at the school level. It got vicious in the area of school books and the school uniforms where the grafters would take their cuts, at the expense, of the lowest levels of society. That upset me no end. The big boys could defend for themselves. It started to affect the poor people and that was really rough. I was faced with a dilemma because on the one hand, I wanted to raise the price of textbooks and the news print prices up, but on the other hand, I didn't want to deny a good education to the many poor children. I must say that my efforts on prices had very little affect on the cost of school books because all the changes in the dollar exchange rate was going into hands of the profiteers and that was not affecting the price of books at all.

I was involved with a young Presbyterian group and there was a very charismatic Presbyterian minister who appealed greatly to the young. He was determined to create a legal system and a legal structure for Korea that would limit the opportunities for discretionary action. I can say that through that approach and through the non-project program, I saw just about every aspect of corruption. There should have been more of a rule of law than a rule of men as the minister had wanted. On the other hand, the corruption I saw was in part responsible for the vast amounts of capital formation in Korea. Some of that capital went in to speculation and made many people quite rich so that they were able to afford mistresses, live the high life and leave their wives at home to take care of the kids. But, others began enterprises that socially redeeming and really began to form a base which ultimately led to Korean industrialization.

Q: Today is the 13th of November, 1996. You are in Korea. I wanted to ask whether there was ever have any pressure put on you by Koreans or others? Were there bribes offered and that sort of thing?

HEGINBOTHAM: I never had any bribes offered me directly. I had pressure put on me; I had frequent telephone calls, very agitated telephone calls from government officials; I had late night telephone calls from people asserting that school children were going to go without books and all kinds of dire consequences would happen if I didn't relent on some of my views. I was protected by two extremely upright and fine Korean employees and I never thought to ask them whether they were getting pressured, but I think I would have heard if they were. Although, again one never knows.

The other thing was that I was also protected by the wishy-washy behavior of the AID mission director who, as I mentioned previously, after I concluded negotiations, heard several complaints from the minister of reconstruction concerning the unreasonable positions I was taking on these various issues. He would always give in without any reference back to me. Had this not been my first tour, think I would have stood up more aggressively against this kind of behavior. In the final analysis, the Koreans suffered relatively little. The unfortunate part is that they would have

benefitted from what I was trying to do, which was to unify the exchange rate gradually. The fact that the mission director caved in, I think may also have reduced the pressure on me. Although, I never thought about it until this minute.

Q: What about, what was your feeling about the rest of the embassy? You've talked about the AID mission. What was your feeling about the caliber in the embassy and how it was operating and all that?

HEGINBOTHAM: Oh, well, I had a couple of friends who were just absolutely outstanding like Tom Schutz, who was just terrific. He was extraordinary. He was kind enough to include me on various social events. He was in the political section so there was no reason particularly for us to work together, but he included me in a lot of things that he didn't need to and I remain in his debt for that.

Besides that, my contacts with the embassy were not that frequent. First of all, I had a very heavy work load and secondly, I felt that I was learning more about the politics and the economics of Korea than the embassy was. I was quite content to go about doing my thing, because I knew the inner workings of Korea lot better than they did, primarily due to the kinds of reaction feedback I would get.

Q: Did you, was there any sort of connect between you and the economic section?

HEGINBOTHAM: Not that I recall. My principle interactions were with the rest of the AID mission, because we were importing not only basic commodities that were intermediary goods for production processes, but we also imported a lot of equipment and spare parts and other things that were directly relevant to a lot of the AID projects that were being undertaken in the country. I really just didn't have a lot of time and we were sort of at the opposite ends of town from the embassy, so I really didn't do a lot with the embassy at all.

Q: I think last, what was your impression so overall and maybe you were getting from your colleagues about the Syngman Rhee government?

HEGINBOTHAM: I found it very disturbing. This was my first overseas tour so I didn't have any benchmark. But, as I mentioned, I was active with a young church group in which was led by a Korean pastor whom I felt, was just an extraordinary person. From that young church group I got a lot of inside views as to how things were working and weren't working and kinds of corruptions that were going on. We began some projects that had to do with rule of law and were also supporting some indigenous activities, such as the building of a Korean legal center. As I recall, that effort got integrated to a degree into my non-project program. So, I was very aware of a lot of the problems even though I didn't have CIA contacts or anything like that. I didn't know a lot of the darker side, I am sure, but it was an extremely distressing situation. The corruption that was pretty rampant the government at that time and Madam Syngman Rhee participated fully. I was not happy in the way that student activities were being cracked down on. I was not all that surprised when the coup that overthrew Syngman Rhee broke out. I was still in Seoul and that was a very fascinating event.

Q: Could you talk about your experiences during the coup?

HEGINBOTHAM: Often I got more experience than I bargained for, because on the day of the coup we were expecting someone back from a trip to the states and I volunteered to go to the airport to transport him back in. On my way to the airport, I was caught right in the middle of the streets filled with people running wild in cars and yelling from military vehicles that they had commandeered with the flags flying. This was pretty much after most of the over-throw had taken place. But, it was a tremendous and emotional moment

Q: How did your Korean people working with you respond when this was happening?

HEGINBOTHAM: I just don't really have any recollection. My basic recollection is that everybody was very pleased.

Q: Do you recall how you and the people around you felt about the coup that overthrew Rhee and, what did you think about whoever would replace him. Would the new leadership hurt our the programs or did you feel it couldn't help but be better?

HEGINBOTHAM: I think it was the latter, because in the ministry of reconstruction we worked with some very fine people and there was some qualified highly trained people, many of whom had done studies in the United States. I had no problems or quibbles with them. I mentioned that the principle negotiator on the Korean side was a very, very close personal friend. I just had no doubts that if these people were freed from some of the perversions that took place under Rhee that things would be better. It was pretty inevitable that a military government would succeed the Rhee regime however, given the circumstances and the fact that the country might not been ready for a democratically elected government. There was certainly a lot of hope that the new regime that the students and the popular reaction would sort of help keep things on track.

Q: You left Korea when?

HEGINBOTHAM: I left Korea in 1960, about mid year as I recall.

IRVING SABLOSKY
Publications Officer, USIS
Seoul (1958-1960)

Irving Sablosky was born in Indiana in 1924. He graduated from Indiana University in 1947 and served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1945. His postings abroad have included Seoul, Cebu, Hamburg, Bangkok and London. Mr. Sablosky was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

SABLOSKY: No, my first post was Korea, after those 14 months in limbo.

Q: Good heavens. You were in Korea from when to when?

SABLOSKY: 1958 to 1960. I went out as publications officer, on the basis of my having written these pamphlets in Washington. I not only wrote on music, but I also wrote one called, The Strange Case of Mr. K, which was about Khrushchev's double talk on many subjects, exposing the Russian disinformation. I wrote a couple of political things like that. Anyway, I was publications officer in Korea. We had a major pamphlet program there. I wrote pamphlets - the texts of pamphlets, on different subjects, which were translated into Korean, for distribution to schools, to journalists, intellectuals, etc. One was on Abraham Lincoln, for example - it was the Lincoln sesquicentennial that year (1959), so I wrote something called. Abraham Lincoln and American Democracy. In Korea, we were trying to influence the government toward democratic ideals. It was mostly quotations from Abraham Lincoln on the nature of democracy. This was translated into Korean, and put into schools. The idea was that it was going to inspire Korea ideals of democracy, which it certainly did. 1960 was the year Syngman Rhee was thrown out as president. I'm not trying to take responsibility for that...

Q: No, students had a hand in that.

SABLOSKY: They did, indeed.

Q: What was Korea like, when you went there in 1958?

SABLOSKY: Korea was on the verge of modernizing. It was still a very traditional culture, with a very sophisticated, University educated elite. They were certainly starting then to make what became the new Korea. The USIS post and the embassy - the political section and the economic section - were very well plugged into that elite. We were very well received there. There were no wraps on what we could do. What better friend did Korea have than the United States at that time? It was very hard, I think, when the revolution came, which was inevitable. Rhee was planting the seeds himself. He was teaching democracy. His schools were teaching American democracy. The logical conclusion of that was that they weren't going to have a dictator anymore. That happened while I was there. It was fascinating to see. I don't doubt that we were a factor in it. When it did happen, the Koreans wanted to hear immediately: with the students in the streets, where did the embassy come down? We felt we had to make some kind of a statement to the press and to the students who were gathered in front of the Embassy. It was quite an experience for me as a kind of neophyte Foreign Service officer. I happened to be acting Press Officer at the time, and I remember a very tense meeting with the Deputy Chief of Mission, Marshall Green, and Don Ranard who was Political Officer, and maybe a couple of others, as we worked out the language of a statement, going virtually without instructions from Washington. We finally issued a press release in which the Embassy stated that we couldn't interfere in the internal affairs of another country, but that the Embassy trusted the Korean government would address any justifiable grievances of the protestors. The fact that the embassy would say something about justifiable grievances was dynamite, and I had the feeling that we were making history there.

Q: Well, how did you find working in Korea? Did you have a Korean staff?

SABLOSKY: Oh, yes. The publications officer was in the press office, which had the press

attache, and the information officer in it. There was also a huge AID program in Korea. The AID program had its own information officer, also a USIA man. We had a staff of maybe six translating whatever we needed. We didn't attempt to write anything in Korean, but these people were very good in translation. The hardest thing that had to do was to translate for the press. We would get on the wireless file transcripts of Eisenhower's press conferences. I don't know if you remember those. There were so many ellipses, unfinished sentences. We would try to translate those for the newspapers in Korea. We would put out a Korean translation of the transcript. My translator would come and ask what a particular sentence meant. It was undecipherable. So, I was really making American policy. I had to say it in plain enough English that it could be translated. It was hard.

Q: It's really interesting because I'm told that Eisenhower was a superb briefer in the military, which you are trained to do. You are not trained to drift all over the place. You say it in very precise terms. But, _____ latitude because nobody could pin him down as to what he was saying.

How was the economy, from your perspective, in Korea at that time?

SABLOSKY: I don't think I could answer that now, from this distance. I believe things were looking up in Korea at the time. The industrialization was certainly starting, and also the AID program - it made many mistakes, but I think they also did a lot of things right. It made a difference.

Q: Did you have any chance to use your knowledge of musical affairs?

SABLOSKY: Yes, every place I was, starting in Korea. I gave talks on American music. We had an information center in Seoul. An officer named Bernard Lavin, who was a terrific officer, ran it. He had conferences on American civilization - and not just on American: he arranged for discussions where there would be comparisons of Korean and American civilizations. So, I was often called upon to give a talk with illustrations on American music, jazz, concert music, whatever there was. I worked up two or three standard illustrated lectures with recorded examples on the history of jazz, on the American and the European musical traditions, the contrast. Recent trends in American music for very sophisticated audiences, I would do that. I did it at all my posts. It was my hobby horse, I guess.

Q: I would have thought that Korea would have been quite a receptive place, at a higher level for music, because even today, some of our top violinists, conductors, come out of Korea. You go to a normal kisaeng party, which is the geisha house, and the guys will jump up and sing opera for you at the drop of a hat. They have beautiful baritones.

SABLOSKY: At the end of any dinner, everybody goes around the table and sings a song. Herb Baumgartner, the information officer, and I used to sing Take Me Out To The Ballgame. That was our song.

Q: I used to sing Old McDonald Had A Farm.

SABLOSKY: You were in Korea, too, weren't you?

Q: I was there in 1976.

SABLOSKY: Yes - how else would you know about Kisaeng houses?

Q: It was frightening, because they were very good. We are talking about for me, in the late 1970s, but they certainly absorbed western music.

SABLOSKY: Even in the late 1950s when I was there. There were two symphony orchestras in Seoul at that time. There was the Seoul Symphony, which was the regular symphony orchestra and the Korean Broadcasting System Symphony Orchestra, which was the better orchestra. The conductors of both of them were American trained, I believe. I know the Broadcasting orchestra was... The orchestras were not bad at all. They had wonderful singers.

Q: Wonderful real baritones, boy.

SABLOSKY: Sopranos, too. Very talented.

Q: It was obviously fostered at a very early level in the regular school system.

Did you get involved with the press, at all?

SABLOSKY: A little. I was acting press officer sometimes. Of course, journalists, even for the cultural affairs officers, were some of our main contacts. We went out with them a lot, and had them to our houses, and so forth. Many journalists were English speaking. One of the most important ones for me was not English speaking. His name was Chang Chun Ha. He was the editor/publisher of a magazine called Sassang-gye, which was an intellectual journal really, a quarterly. He was very interested in the United States and reprinted my pamphlet about Lincoln in his magazine. He later got the Magsaysay award. He came to the Philippines to accept it. I was in the Philippines, and we had him over, and had a party for him. He was a fascinating man, a wonderful man and very deep. He was connected to us by the number one Korean assistant in the Cultural Affairs sections, in the cultural office, a man named Park So-jin. He knew Chang very well. He thought I would get along with Chang, even though we needed a translator between us. He knew a little English, and I knew a little Korean, but very little, in both cases. With mediators, we could converse. We really hit it off. It was not only very pleasant, but it was important because Chang's magazine was important.

Q: After the student revolt, which overthrew Rhee... In the first place, while Rhee was the president, he had been the president for a long time, and it was probably beginning to wear thin. Did you sense a disquiet about Rhee within the embassy, kind of wishing he would go away?

SABLOSKY: Oh, I think the political officers wished he would go away, but the revolution really centered on his vice president, Li Ki-poong, who I think was involved in some corruption. It was Li Ki-poong's reelection which triggered the revolution. It was a rigged election. The students went out against it. Li Ki-poong's house was burned down. The regime had become

corrupt. So, yes, I think we were wishing Mr. Rhee would go away. There was kind of a mystique around him, among the general populous I think, not among the sophisticated journalists. With the journalists, there was a lot of skepticism, but there was still a certain mystique, as I say, about Rhee. You didn't really talk against Rhee. You could talk against Li Ki-poong.

Q: What was the impression of the newspapers there, like the Hankuk Ilbo, and other ones? Were they pretty good or sort of preachers of certain powers?

SABLOSKY: No. You mentioned the Hankuk Ilbo. Mr. Chang who ran that newspaper, which was very independent, didn't really talk anti-regime, but he was as close as you could come to it. His paper was very popular. He was a very independent character. The Chosun Ilbo was a very high-class paper. We would have dinner sometimes with Mr. Hong, the publisher. He was a very fine man. He was an older man. I was young at the time, so I knew some of the younger reporters. I think one of them was named Hong also. I can't remember that well. But, Hong, the publisher was a very imposing man, and a very independent thinker.

Q: What was your impression of the ambassador, Walter McConaughy?

SABLOSKY: My impression of him was that he was a very wise, prudent man. He had been in Pakistan before, I think. He and Mrs. McConaughy were very southern. She was quite charming. She was very southern. She didn't quite know how to do things without help, so she got a lot of help from the embassy. But, she was charming, and they liked her. Ambassador McConaughy had everybody's respect. He didn't give the impression of being the most decisive man in the world, or the fastest, but very wise and prudent, he was.

Q: How about during this time, was the threat from North Korea there? Was this a matter of concern?

SABLOSKY: Not especially. I had the occasion to go up to Panmunjong to one of the sessions of the Truce Commission, to observe. I guess occasionally, there would be an incident at the 38th parallel, at the DMZ, as they called it. But, it wasn't hot. There weren't submarines and things like that, certainly not during that period, as I remember.

HOWARD B. SCHAFFER
Political Officer
Seoul (1958-1960)

Ambassador Howard B. Schaffer was born in New York in 1929. He graduated from Harvard University and then served overseas in the US Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1955. Overseas, Schaffer served in Malaysia, India, Korea, Pakistan, Cyprus, and as Ambassador to Bangladesh. In Washington DC, he served in the Office of Personnel, as the Country Director for Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka, and as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asia. Ambassador

Schaffer was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 1997.

Q: In 1958, you were assigned to Seoul, Korea. Was Seoul on your wish list?

SCHAFFER: No, it was not. At the head of my wish list in fact, was Kabul, Afghanistan. I was told however that I would find many of the same features in Seoul that I would have found in Kabul. They both were listening posts on the border of the Sino-Soviet bloc; they were both medium sized posts, etc. But I had never given Korea any thought at all, much less putting it on my wish list.

I went there as a political officer. The ambassador was Walter Dowling--a career diplomat who today would have been described very much as a cold warrior. He had not had any experience in Korea nor as far as I know anywhere in the Far East. But I thought he was an effective ambassador. He had a close relationship with the Korean government, led by Syngman Rhee. I don't think that it ever occurred to Dowling to question the then existing U.S. Korea policy. He was not particularly close to the embassy staff; in fact, I viewed him as very aloof, as did others.

Dowling was in Seoul for my first year. He was then replaced by Walter McConaughy who was a true Far East expert. He later became assistant secretary for the Far East after his tour in Seoul. He also had very strong views on the Cold War--molded in significant part by his difficult experiences with the Chinese communists.

My first DCM was Sam Gilstrap. He was the inside man in the embassy. He had little to do with policy development, but was responsible for the functioning of the mission. I am sure that Dowling and Gilstrap had worked out this arrangement quite consciously. Dowling was the policy man. Gilstrap was replaced at about the time Dowling left and went on to be deputy consul general in Hong Kong. He was succeeded by Marshall Green --that well known expert on the Far East not to mention "punster extraordinary." I thought Marshall was a superb addition to the embassy. Needless to say, he was all over the lot, unlike Gilstrap. It was his first assignment as DCM. He came to Seoul accompanied by his wife, Lisa, who was very much Marshall's partner. Marshall was very vibrant, full of wit, and had an excellent sense of humor. He was especially good in his relationship with the military, which were very important for the embassy in Korea where there was then as now a large U.S. military presence. As far as punning was concerned, Marshall was already in bloom at the time. This was an additional bonus for me for I share his interest in that use of the English language.

I don't remember any of Marshall's outrageous puns from his Seoul days, but I do remember at a later time, when I was in New Delhi and Marshall visited the post. He liked to come there. One of his wife's relatives was an officer and, perhaps more important, it was widely believed that he hoped some day to become ambassador to India. I took him to watch the Indian Parliament in action. This was soon after the Sino-Indian border war of 1962. It happened that on that day Nehru was speaking about the war. We were listening to him in the diplomatic gallery. At one point, Marshall turned to me and said in a loud stage whisper, "there's a chink in Nehru's armor!" (I should note for the record that no racial slur was intended. People were less sensitive about the politically correct in 1962 than they are today in the late nineties.)

Seoul in the late 1950s was entirely different from the city that came to be a flourishing capital in the 1970s and beyond. It still bore the scars of the Korean War, which had only ended five years earlier. It was a very poor city--very much a Third World city. It was known for the frequent sight of old men and others carrying large burdens on A-frames on their backs. Almost of all of the vehicles, except those belonging to diplomats and UN military officials, were jeeps whose bodies had been beaten out of oil drums. They were remarkable pieces of equipment and formed the core of the transportation system in Seoul. We felt very much apart from the local population. We were part of a PX economy. We lived in compounds. I lived in Compound 2 and played at the Yongsan military base on the outskirts of the city. There we had access to sports and other recreational facilities. During my tour, Compound 2 went through a major renovation phase. The old residences, inherited from a Japanese Bank which used them as homes for their employees during the Japanese occupation of Korea, gave way to modern, duplex garden-style apartments. So during the first year of my tour I was assigned to a wonderful old fashioned Japanese house with sliding doors and Korean style, heated floors. Then I moved to one of these American style apartments.

My responsibilities in the political section were to follow some of the opposition parties. The head of the section was William Godfrey Jones. He left after my first year. My colleagues included Bill Watts and Tom Shoesmith, who were to become highly respected members of the Far East experts club. Jones was replaced by Donald Ranard, whom I had previously met during his assignment in Malaya. Don was to become well known for his strong views about Korea, but in 1959 he was having his first exposure to the country. At the time, he didn't know very much about how the Foreign Service operated--his only previous posting had been in Penang, where he had been the principal officer.

I must say that I was astonished in later years when I begin to hear about Ranard's unorthodox views about Korea and U.S. policies there. When he and I worked together for a year, he was very much inclined to accept the status quo. I did not detect any of the great antipathy that he apparently developed later against authoritarian Korean governments. He was one of the last people I would have thought would become the thorn in the side of our Korean policy. I don't believe that we had anything to do with his subsequent change of heart although we--Watts, Shoesmith and I--tended, as younger officers often do, to have a dimmer view of the Rhee regime than did our seniors. We had more contact with the opposition than the senior officers and undoubtedly our views were influenced by those contacts. Also we got around the country more than did Ranard, Green, Gilstrap or the ambassadors.

I traveled around the country quite a bit. Some of my important travels were to observe National Assembly by-elections and the general elections for president and the National Assembly in the Spring 1960. The way these elections were conducted did not inspire in me any great confidence in Rhee's democratic credentials or that of his cohorts. The opposition party--the Democratic Party--was divided into two factions. We had excellent rapport with that party at our level. The coverage of and liaison with the opposition was pretty much left to the junior members of the embassy staff with perhaps the exception of Vice President Chang Myon (John M. Chang) who was known to the ambassador and the DCM. When the Democratic Party came to power, its members knew the more junior officers far better than they did the embassy's leadership. I don't think that the level of the embassy contact had any impact on the Democratic Party's ability to

make its views known to the U.S. Government. The fact that we had warm relations enabled us to report accurately the positions of the party both to our embassy superiors and Washington.

I thought that in general the opposition leaders were talented and articulate as far as one could tell from translated pronouncements. I found them attractive and likeable. They suffered considerably for their political views. They recognized the political difficulties they faced, but very few desisted in their efforts. They always hoped that they would get a break as in fact they did in the spring of 1960. They were not bitter about the U.S.; far from it. They were friendly to the U.S. and did not condemn us for Washington's support of Rhee and his government.

We did have a language problem. I did not speak Korean nor did Watts or Shoesmith. Only a couple of consular section officers - Thomas Mayfield and Wever Gim - knew Korean. We used our local staff as interpreters. They had their own political points of view which made me wonder at times how accurate their renditions of our thoughts were. I think it is very difficult to be an interpreter in any case--as contrasted to a translator. Interpretation requires a subtlety of thought that I think may not have been present on the few occasions when actually required. In the main, our interpreters got our ideas across and I think we were given the proper interpretation of the views of our Korean interlocutors. Shoesmith, at one point I think, managed to carry on a conversation with some Korean political leaders in Japanese. That of course was quite daring in light of the negative views that the Koreans had of their former occupiers. All Koreans above a certain age were fluent in Japanese and Tom knew it well enough.

I might note that this was my first experience with a dictatorship. I recognized that Syngman Rhee had been a great patriot. But by 1959-60, his government had pretty much run out of steam. I was taken aback by the way he and his colleagues dealt with the opposition. I was particularly offended by the way elections were manipulated for Rhee's benefit. There were some anti-government demonstrations during my two years in Seoul. Only the last ones in 1960 made a lasting impression on me; the others were not central to our analysis of the situation.

I can't say that there were major splits of views about the Korean political situation within the embassy. The ambassadors and the DCMs accepted the situation as they found it. I am sure they recognized Rhee's weaknesses but--as is so typical--they felt more strongly than did the more junior staff that the U.S. had important security stakes in Korea that would be best served by the Rhee government. Of course, I am sure they hoped for a more lenient Rhee regime, but in the final analysis in their view it was that government, lenient or arbitrary, that we needed to support for the sake of U.S. security interests.

Much of our security interest focused on maintaining stability on the peninsula; i.e. deterring the North from another invasion of the South. But I must say that we did not really feel threatened on a day-to-day basis. The embassy did not have a siege mentality. We did not view the North as an imminent threat. I did go to the DMZ, not because my job required it, but because that was the thing to do. I found it a routine place; I don't remember being particularly concerned after a visit to the DMZ. I don't think our military was very much on edge; they did not feel an immediate threat either. I knew a lot of younger U.S. Army officers and became friendly with them, but these were social contacts. I had no liaison responsibility with the U.S. or Korean military.

There was not much discussion in those years about reunification. The tensions were minimal, as I have suggested, and the end of conflict was still too recent for there to be any meaningful discussion either about North-South rapprochement or the resumption of the war.

Corruption was an issue that was discussed within the embassy at considerable length. There were persons in the government who were said to be notoriously corrupt. I never myself delved into the issue, but I think it was pretty much taken for granted that the Rhee regime, then in its final stages, was laced with corruption. Madame Rhee and the wife of Yi Ki-pung, the speaker of the National Assembly, were mentioned particularly as being tied to illegal payoffs. There was a wonderful story about Korea's corruption that was making the rounds at the time. It was alleged that corruption was so extreme that a train coming from Pusan to Seoul bearing goods for the PX totally disappeared one night. Its cargo was said to have been shifted to the black market, which was quite extensive at the time. Whether the story was true or not, it was an interesting illustration of what people felt was possible in the Korea of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Corruption was a topic which was regularly raised with me by my Korean contacts. I don't think at this time any of the opposition was involved--they hadn't had the opportunity, This would come to them later.

Let me now talk a little about what happened in 1960. When it was announced that elections would be held in March there was considerable excitement. The by-elections that had taken place had not given much hope to those who wished to see the elections free and open. The embassy decided to give major coverage to the general election. We mobilized officers from all parts of the mission to go in teams into the countryside as observers. A team usually consisted of a political officer and an officer from another embassy section. The main contest was for vice president because of the death of the opposition candidate for president.

We could only hope that the elections would be held in a fair and open manner. When we went outside Seoul, it became clear that our hopes would not be realized; the elections would be rigged in a variety of ways. As the result of my experiences, I became an authority on how such rigging could be arranged. I have an interesting story about the elections which I like to tell. One of the officers who accompanied me on one of my trips was Walter Vance Hall who was then in the consular section. By the time we took this trip, I was pretty battle-hardened about election abuses. It didn't take us very long to find evidence of unfair practices--e.g. torn-down opposition posters, harassment of opposition election workers, closure of opposition campaign offices, etc. Whenever we arrived in a town, we never had any trouble finding the election headquarters of the governing party, but finding the offices of the opposition was sometimes a chore because the residents were not anxious to be seen telling an American embassy officer where these were. But in the course of our visit we would sooner or later find these offices.

In one town, we ran into the usual long list of complaints about unfair practices. Suddenly, we heard some shouting from a corner of the room in which we were meeting with local opposition leaders. When we looked, we saw that a man had cut his hand and was writing us a letter in his blood. He was protesting what was going on. Vance Hall turned absolutely white. Eventually, when the letter was finished, it was presented to us, still dripping blood. I saved it and I think it now rests in my storage of memorabilia. It was a very dramatic instance illustrating the depth of

the feelings of the opposition about the suppression it suffered.

We had very little hope that the opposition would make a decent showing in the elections. After the elections, the embassy recognized that the contest had been unfair. We were, to say the least, uncomfortable with the process. I think this view prevailed at all levels of the embassy. Therefore we were not surprised when the students began demonstrations that eventually led to the downfall of the Rhee regime.

When the demonstrations began, I was in my office which was right in the center of town--in the building which now houses the USIS operations, near the Chosen Hotel and City Hall. One of our locals had predicted that the demonstrations would take place. So we weren't entirely surprised when the students came by. They carried a banner written in French which said that they were not communists but wanted democracy in Korea. I think it was written in French because had it had been in Korean or English, it would have violated some laws. They thought that by using French they might allow them to get away with expressing their sentiments. The use of French also made sense because a major reason for holding the demonstration was to call the attention of foreign missions to the students' views. They assumed that we as foreigners would understand French whereas it was unlikely that the security forces could!

The demonstration was held on a wide avenue--not the one on which the embassy is now located. The students marched by the embassy; they did not violate our space at all since they were trying to get their message across to us and other foreign missions. Later, when we heard that there might be some conflict between the students and the police, Shoemith, Watts and I went to join the crowd. We were with the students for most of the day and had a chance to observe first hand what was developing. We were tear-gassed and jostled. We tried periodically to phone reports in to the embassy. I remember being with a crowd in front of Yi Ki Pung's home. There was another crowd that was moving towards the Parliament building. We tried to follow each group and phone our observations to the embassy whenever we had the opportunity.

I also remember that at one crucial moment we were on the roof of a newspaper building which was on a main intersection of the avenue that led to the Blue House--the Presidential Palace (then called the Kyongmudae). We were able to observe the police suddenly appearing and firing with live ammunition on the crowd, which then scattered. When the atmosphere calmed down a little we walked a few blocks back to the embassy, actually stepping over dead bodies. It was a very brutal scene. It was clear to us that Syngman Rhee's days were numbered.

We reported what we had seen to our bosses in the embassy. They listened to us and then sent us away--without further ado. We had hoped that they might have asked us to stay to listen to and perhaps participate in the meeting that followed, but as I recall it, Don Ranard said that they had heard the report and that we might as well leave the room. What was crucial at that moment was that Ambassador McConaughy recognized what had happened; he made a statement that was broadcast over Armed Forces Network--the U.S. Army's radio system in Korea. In his statement, he referred to the legitimate rights of the Korean people; that was interpreted throughout Korea as a signal that the U.S. was withdrawing its very strong support for the Rhee regime. My colleagues and I were delighted with this declaration; in fact, I think we were surprised by its forcefulness. We thought it was a realistic way of approaching the political situation.

McConaughy and Green recognized what had happened and decided that the time had come to “call a spade a spade.” I do not know whether McConaughy did this on his own or had Washington approval; those matters were far above my level.

Soon after these events, the Rhee government collapsed. I continued to work at my job in the embassy. I was not involved in the decision to grant a visa to Syngman Rhee, but I did think that Marshall Green, who apparently was the main decision maker on that issue, had recommended the right thing. I remember a conversation I had with one of our local employees who had spent a night in my apartment because it had not been possible for him to travel back and forth to his home during the curfew that the government had imposed. He was very proud of what his countrymen, particularly the students, had done. We were discussing the desire on the part of the opposition that the U.S. take more vigorous action to bring the Rhee regime to an end. I mentioned that I thought that a far better outcome had been reached because the Korean people had taken action by themselves. He agreed entirely that it was far better that the overthrow had been an action taken by the people without outside assistance or interference.

The opposition of course was delighted with the course of events. It didn't take over the reins of government right away; there was a makeshift interim arrangement for a few months. But the opposition saw itself as the beneficiaries of the students' revolution even though it had not really participated. One of the opposition members told me in English, “Now we come to power time!” In fact, they did not come to power until after my departure; I left at the end of June. The situation was still somewhat fluid at that time, but I think it was clear that the Democratic Party with its two factions would come to power at an early stage.

Being young and inexperienced, I left Korea with a conviction that the democratic forces in that country had won the day and that that country would now join the ranks of democratic nations. I had great hopes, as did many of my more experienced colleagues, that Korea had turned a page and that despite the weakness of Chang Myon--John Chang--who was likely to become the leader of the government, democracy had a chance to develop in Korea. I don't think any of us devoted time to an analysis of the transition from an autocratic to a democratic government; we were too caught up with the excitement of the day-to-day events to examine the process and come to any conclusions.

Finally, I must say that Walter McConaughy, contrary to the many prejudices that he had, was able to rise to the occasion. He recognized that it was not possible for the U.S. to maintain its support for Syngman Rhee and took the crucial step that led to the downfall of that government.

THOMAS P. SHOESMITH
Political Officer
Seoul (1958-1960)

Thomas Shoesmith was born in 1939 and raised in Pennsylvania. His career in the State Department included posts in Japan, Hong Kong, South Korean, and an ambassadorship to Malaysia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in

1991.

SHOESMITH: But I was only in Hong Kong for about another four months when I was told that I was being reassigned to Seoul. The reason for that was that the man that I had worked for in OIR on Japan affairs was the Political Counselor in Seoul -- William Jones -- and he asked for me. Everybody asked me what I had done wrong. I mean, to go from Hong Kong to Korea! That wasn't regarded as a plum assignment. However, I went and, in point of fact, it turned out to be a wonderful assignment.

I was here through the student revolution in 1960 and the downfall of Syngman Rhee. Economically, Korea was in very bad shape at that time. That wasn't the focus of my attention. My attention was focussed on the politics. And again, I was assigned to the opposition parties. There was a very vigorous opposition movement. The Democratic Party of Korea had a substantial presence in the legislature. It was very easy to make contacts with that group. We in the Political Section -- another officer and I had that responsibility -- used to see a lot of the Korean politicians, both in Seoul and when we travelled around the country.

The situation was very clear. Syngman Rhee had been in power ever since the end of World War II. I think he came back in 1947 or 1948. There had developed around President Rhee a group which was very determined to hold onto power, despite the increasing pressure from the opposition. There was a great deal of corruption and extensive use of police power to harass the opposition. There was an election, as I recall, somewhere in the six months preceding Rhee's downfall in which there was massive manipulation of the ballots -- stuffing of ballot boxes, stealing ballot boxes, and fraud.

Then at some time -- in the spring, probably in March or April, 1960 -- there were student demonstrations. One began in Masan, a port city in the southern part of the Korean peninsula. The police used force, firing tear gas, and a number of students were hurt. Then the student protest movement just marched up the peninsula from one city to another till it arrived in Seoul in April, 1960. There was a massive student demonstration.

I think that everybody in the Embassy at that time was persuaded that the Rhee Government could not survive and that Rhee had to step down. Of course, we were out all of the time, watching the demonstrations. As I recall, we didn't talk to the students who were organizing the demonstrations. Ours was mostly a watching brief. We watched what was happening, trying to assess the strength of the demonstrations. It was apparent that the police, and even the Army, when it was brought in, could not control them. Our government decided at some point to try to persuade Syngman Rhee to step aside. I went with Ambassador McConaughy to the Blue House -- the Presidential Mansion -- when he delivered that message to President Rhee. I was not present in the room when he delivered the message. I was seated outside. I did ride back with the Ambassador in his car, through the throngs of students, all of whom were cheering the American Ambassador and the United States. I think that they sensed that we -- how shall I put it -- that we were sympathetic to their cause.

There may have been individual officers in the Embassy who were quite open in expressing their sympathy for the students, but I was not one of them, nor did the Embassy issue any public

comments on the situation. What we did, as I said, was simply to try to find out what was going on. But somehow -- I don't know how this happened, because there were no statements from Washington either expressing concern about what was going on in Korea -- at least the students in Seoul had the impression that we were sympathetic to their dissatisfaction and discontent with the Rhee Government. They could see us. Some students -- at least a few of them -- could see us out talking with other students when they were marching and when they were being fired upon and so on. How this sense grew within the student movement I don't know, but it was certainly quite apparent. It was there, as I say, when Ambassador McConaughy came back from the Blue House that day.

I think that Ambassador McConaughy initially was very sympathetic to President Rhee and his government. But I think that he realized -- certainly by the spring of 1960 -- that whatever the sympathy he may have had for Rhee personally, the people surrounding Rhee were driving matters in a direction which was simply not politically sustainable.

Rhee was finally flown out to Hawaii with his wife, not unlike what happened to President Marcos in the Philippines. Although there was a lot of student activity and a lot of burning of cars and so forth, the level of violence never achieved the same degree in Korea. There was concern about the military, what they might do about it, but the military was not brought in until the latter stages of the disorders in Seoul. Their main burden was essentially to protect the government and Syngman Rhee. Dealing with the students was largely left to the police. The Korean military, as far as I recall, expressed no views as to this situation. They were doing the job which they were asked to do, but there was no hint at that time, no hint at all, that the military might intervene actively in the situation.

We had no concern about civil disturbances throughout the country that might entice the North Koreans to make a move. The feeling within the Embassy when Rhee left was very heady. We were on the right side. We were on the side of justice and democracy and all of those things. And we were quite elated when Rhee finally agreed to step aside and leave the country. And I think that we were very hopeful that the opposition party which came in after a brief interim transition period would prove effective in bringing about political stability in South Korea and in getting the country on its feet.

South Korea was in bad shape, politically and economically. Our aid programs were not working very well. There was a great deal of confusion and misplaced effort. There were great hopes that the new government, headed by PoSun Yun, would be equal to the task. I left Korea in the early fall of 1960, by which time it was rather apparent that the Chang Government was going to have great difficulty in forming an effective cabinet. There was a great deal of squabbling within his own party. I think that when you looked at the pattern of political behavior in Korea even at that time, it was apparent, I think, that the fatal flaw was the total lack of any sense of sharing of political power between the "in's" and the "out's". Under Syngman Rhee the opposition party was effectively shut out of any share of political decision making and everything which flows from political power, including economic advantage. It soon became apparent that when the opposition took over, they were going to follow the same pattern. The situation was unlike that in Japan, where you had a single party, the Liberal Democratic Party. It was firmly in control but did not shut the opposition out completely. It gave the opposition some role in legislation and

was responsive to opposition party views to some limited extent. This tradition, if you could call it a tradition, or this pattern, was absent in Korea. It occurred to me to devise what I called the "golden nugget" theory of political power. You had it all. And you either had it all or you had nothing. Although I am not close to Korean politics today at all, I wouldn't be surprised if that is still the problem. The sharing is an essential element of democratic politics that is very weak in the Korean context. It is a matter of "winner takes all" when I was there. But that wasn't the only problem for PoSun Yun. His government was just not very effective. Also, it was at that time that the student movement -- just having won their victory by overthrowing Rhee -- was very assertive. They began to mount pressures for unification with North Korea. As I recall there was a campaign on for a "March North." The students would march across the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone] and join hands with their compatriots in the North. This posed a real and very difficult problem for us and for the PoSun Yun Government. It didn't want it to happen. It put them crosswise with the students that had been their supporters. I have forgotten how it was resolved, but I am pretty sure, the "March North" never occurred. And probably the government had to exert considerable pressure to ensure that outcome.

WILLIAM WATTS
Visa/Political Officer
Seoul (1958-1960)

William Watts was born in 1930 and raised in New York, New York. He received a bachelor's degree from Syracuse University and a master's degree from Harvard University's Russian Regional Studies Program. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1951-1954. Mr. Watts' Foreign Service career included positions in Korea, the Soviet Union, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 7, 1995.

WATTS: I was assigned to Korea.

Q: You were there when?

WATTS: From 1958-60. That assignment was an enormous shock because my brother had been killed there and here I get my first assignment it being read out at the end of the course...“and Watts gets Seoul, Korea.” A lot of people knew about my brother. I was absolutely stunned. I had figured of any place in the world I could go, I am going to go there. It was very interesting. The next day I got a call from a woman in Far East personnel asking if I would come over. I went over and was told that I had this assignment to Seoul but they had not known about this situation with my brother and if I would like to go somewhere else I could. I was totally astonished. I couldn't believe a bureaucracy worked that way. I was amazed and I must confess I broke into tears and this poor lady was embarrassed. I said, “No, I have to go and want to go see where my brother died.” And, I am profoundly grateful that I went because I had a phenomenally good tour.

I went there in 1958 and the ambassador then was Walter Dowling. He was a very close friend of

Christian Herter, who was then Under Secretary under Dulles. Herter wrote him a letter telling him that this fine young man is coming out who is the cousin of one of my closest friends, Philip Watts, etc. So, I arrived in Seoul, without my wife who was coming later because we had just had a child, and lo and behold I was put up in the Dowling guest house. I thought that was bad news. You talk about teacher's pet! And then my wife arrived and we stayed there living in this guest house and we were included in everything, I mean everything. This, I realized, was untenable. Fortunately the people in the embassy were very nice, but it was not a good situation.

I did not want to live in the embassy compound. I didn't want to be in a place behind barriers, etc. So, we actually bought a Korean home paying some modest amount of money, although for the Koreans it was a huge amount. They invested it at about 10 percent a month and made a fortune of it. When we left we got it all back. I think it was the equivalent of \$5000. We moved into this Korean home on the outskirts of Seoul off on a dirt road, sleeping on the floor, etc. It became one of the most popular places in the embassy, everybody wanted to be invited to our house because we used to get Koreans to come all the time and they just loved it. There were no guards, we were on our own. It was phenomenal and a very exciting experience. In fact, during the student revolution when Rhee was overthrown, my home was sort of wild. We became an operational center away from the compound and the embassy that was kind of fascinating.

Q: When you arrived in 1958, what was the situation as you saw it in Korea?

WATTS: Desperate. The drive in from the airport was on a two lane, rutted road, through mud flats and rice paddies. All the way down to Seoul there was nothing on that side of the Han River which is now a huge buildup...

Q: We are talking about the south side of the Han River?

WATTS: Yes, where now is the international airport. At that time there was one bridge over the river and that was it, and it wasn't all that crowded. You get downtown and the embassy, which later became the USIS office, was across the street from the old Bando Hotel which had nine stories and was the tallest building in Seoul. The Bando is now gone, obviously, the Lotte is there. City Hall was up the street and further along the old Capitol building. Those were the four biggest buildings in the city, and there was nothing else there.

Q: What was the government like at that time?

WATTS: It was Syngman Rhee's dictatorship. There was no question that it was a dictatorship. The home minister, Choe In-gyu, was famous as a molester of little girls, grabbing people off the street. The general sense of the city was uneasy. The economy was in very bad shape. The AID mission was very large. I knew a lot of people out there and they were totally frustrated with the inefficiency of anything they were doing.

When I first arrived, the summer of 1958, the level of disturbance was very low. There wasn't much going on. We had a very tight relationship with the government, that is the embassy did. I used to see Syngman Rhee a lot. Dowling used to take me everywhere. I got to know Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung well, they were junior members of the national assembly. I have

stayed in touch with them over the years.

My first year in the consular section what I was doing was issuing a lot of visas, although I traveled quite a lot. The second year Dowling pulled me up into the political section and I must say that was an extraordinary year. That was the year of the overthrow of the Rhee government.

Q: Before we get to that, when you were doing visa work, what was the attitude towards Koreans going to the United States?

WATTS: It was the Holy Grail with long lines trying to get visas. Everybody wanted to go and at that time very few people had any intention of returning. So, our assignment really was to press very hard on the business of people returning and determine a reason for them to be returning.

Dowling was a very hard-working ambassador, he really tried to reach out, inviting a lot of people to dinners, etc. And that included people who were not completely clean as far as the government was concerned. I mean people the government were suspicious of. It really was a security state. The police were real thugs as were the security people. It was a very rough environment. And they were not at all happy with where I was living. There were guys around that you could see going up and down the streets trying to see who was coming to the house. I lived with a Korean family, it was a compound.

The desire of the people to get visas was just overwhelming. And, of course, there were all these visa shops around by the embassy running these terrible scams guaranteeing to get you a visa and they couldn't. And, of course, the other thing which was very interesting was the girls, the prostitutes who were marrying the GIs. Of course, none of them were prostitutes, they were all lovely women who were taking care of nice service men. I had one episode involving this woman who had been arrested three times for prostitution and there was no way that I could approve that. Actually you didn't approve the visas, what you had to do...the army would send the couple over before they were allowed to get married. They had to come over to the embassy and be interviewed and we had to issue a clearance that they would get a visa if they got married. In this one case I just said that I was sorry and could not issue this clearance. This woman picked up a glass ashtray and threw it at me. It hit the wall and just exploded. It was quite dramatic.

The desire to get a visa was just...and it was looked upon for many of these people as a ticket to freedom.

Q: But, basically, we weren't issuing many visas were we?

WATTS: We had the consul, Tom Mayfield, Bill Kane, and at least three different vice consuls. So we had four consular officers issuing quite a few visas. The marriage thing was a big deal. After we gave the approval for them to get married, they would go down to city hall and get entered on the *hojok tungbun*, the family tree, and bring it back and I would issue a certificate of witness to marriage, which was then stamped and that was the magic document. That then allowed them to apply for a visa. And all of these people thought I was the minister, the guy who married them. For years I got letters, I have a whole bunch of people named after me, maybe a couple of hundred, because I issued the document and was considered the minister by them. So

there were a lot.

Q: This was still in the fifties and the GIs were still marrying Asians, did you feel any racist uncomfortableness on the part of the Department when issuing visas?

WATTS: No, not at all. It didn't make any difference, either from the American side as to whether the GI was white or black or over the girl...the clear thing was about prostitution, that was the main concern.

The other thing that was fascinating was that many of these girls would come in and one of the things they had to do was to go through the 548 MedEvac hospitals which was a real MASH type unit, and usually they were just loaded with all kinds of bugs. They had ringworm, tapeworm, whipworm, etc. So, before they could get a visa they had to go back and get medication. Some of these girls would come in and think I was a miracle worker. I would send them over there and they said that all of a sudden they felt well for the first time in their life. It was a very interesting phenomenon.

Q: How wonderful.

WATTS: It really was. I just found it thrilling to see these cute looking girls who looked so wan when they first came in and then returned a month or two later just brimming with energy.

One other story I want to tell about this because it is one of the most interesting human interest stories of my entire Foreign Service career. On the visa application form you put name and then it says aliases if any. That is a very legitimate...obviously it is particularly useful in working against narcotics when they come in and can be extradited and thrown out of the country for lying on their visa application. I noticed that every single one would be Kim So-and-so, alias Watanabe So-and-so, written in a tiny cramped writing about one/eighth the size of the Korean name. I went to Mr. Chou, who was a Korean local and said, "Mr. Chou, why is it that everybody who has a Japanese name, and everybody did..."

Q: They were required to by the Japanese.

WATTS: Yes, absolutely. They were also not allowed to speak Korean. This is the kind of thing that I can get so angry about when people start talking about the bomb, etc. "Why is the Japanese name always written so small?" He said, "Oh, that is not important." I said, "Look, it obviously is important. Perhaps not if I saw it only once or twice, but I see it on every application." We came to be good friends Mr. Chou and I. When I moved into a Korean house and he learned my brother had been killed in Korea, he practically adopted me. He said, "You have to understand. We thought you were our liberators and you came in here and what do you do. You divide the country and maybe we can understand that. But then you make us use these hated, hated Japanese names. We can't understand how you can do this to us." So, I wrote a despatch recommending a change in the Foreign Service Manual Regulations explaining the whole background of this. I can remember the exact wording, although I am sure it is still there, I'm sure. Something like, "For purposes of Koreans with a Japanese surname or name given to them during the period of Japanese occupation, it is not required to include that Japanese name unless

it is related to criminal activity.” So a person who would use that name and then had gotten in trouble and use it for...in other words to protect the Justice thing. It went through Justice and they said, “Fine.”

Well, I came to work one morning about six months later and came in and suddenly Mr. Chou said, “You have to come out.” I went out on the street and there were hundreds of people out there. What had happened was the ruling had been approved and therefore the Japanese name was dropped and nobody had to use it anymore. When I came out they began cheering and cheering. It was very interesting. I think that was one of my proudest accomplishments. The people were so pleased.

Q: You moved up into the political section and were there from 1959-60. How did Ambassador Dowling operate from your observation?

WATTS: Fairly soon after I moved upstairs he was replaced by McConaughy and went on to become ambassador to Germany. Dowling was my first ambassador. I guess it tends to be the case that if it was a good experience it becomes idealized in retrospect. You have to understand again that I had this extraordinary personal relationship with him, which continued way after the Foreign Service. I saw him regularly until he died. But he was a very engaged ambassador with the staff, I must say particularly with people he liked it is true. But he was very involved and knew people. I have known ambassadors who didn't know the names of his staff even after two years, but he was not that way. He was extremely interested in Korea. He was fascinated by it. He used to give me all kinds of little assignments to find out something about, for example, how the Koreans spelt their name. He was intrigued why some people were Lee, Rhee and Hee, etc. So I had to do a little homework. He traveled quite a lot.

Q: How did he get along with Rhee?

WATTS: My sense was that it was a fairly easy relationship. See, the big problems, the real tense times, didn't come until after McConaughy was ambassador. I wouldn't want to characterize it as close, but when he needed to see him he obviously could always get to see him and could make his points. Whether Rhee did anything, that was always a question. Rhee was an extraordinarily volatile and interesting man. I must say I had some very intriguing episodes when taking people to see him, etc. That is very hard for me to answer. Rhee, for example, didn't go out to visit, go over to Dowling that I remember, you went there.

Q: The ambassador has to develop his own relationship. Within a political section you often get quite a bit of ferment going, particularly in a country where there is a very strong government, right, left or whatever. How would you describe the ferment, or whatever was happening in the political section when you went up there?

WATTS: I moved up there just at the time that Bill Jones, who had been the political counselor, was reassigned. He was replaced by Don Ranard. D. Ranard is a palindrome, and that was, some of us felt, his greatest claim to distinction.

Q: Within the Korean-American context he was a mover and shaker.

WATTS: He was when he got back here.

Q: Yes, and I would like to catch him when he was there.

WATTS: Energy and insight were not his strong points. The Embassy political section broke down into two groups and it reflected the Korean political system. The political section was split between the *Chayu-dang* and *Minju-dang*, the old faction and new factions. Cho Byong-ok was the head of the *Chayu-dang*, the old (liberal) faction and Chang Myon (John Chang) was the head of the *Minju-dang*, the new (conservative) faction. Tom Shoemith, who later became ambassador to Malaysia, Howard Schaffer, who became ambassador to Bangladesh and is now out in Sri Lanka where his wife is ambassador, and I referred to ourselves as the old faction, and basically did support what Cho Byong-ok was trying to do. We looked upon Ranard and the two others in this section as the weak new faction.

It was a very frustrating period. I remember writing despatches....I got a very interesting assignment. I was cleared to go to the Korean prison compound, where the North Korean agents they had picked up were, to interview them.

Q: At this time and for years there was a constant flow of agents coming in by ship or infiltration.

WATTS: Most of them got killed, but I was given the assignment because I was assigned to cover events at Panmunjom, the North Korean reporting officer, because I spoke Russian. So, I went up to the DMZ all the time to attend all the meetings. Then I got this okay to go and interview these guys. I really got some extraordinary stuff, particularly because at that time the North Korean regime had decided to follow the *Sovnarkhoz* system of the Soviet Union, these councils of national economy where they broke the Soviet Union up into about 15 different regional economic areas. And Kim Il Sung, this was a time of particularly close relations with the Soviets, decided to do this in North Korea. I had this one guy that I was interviewing and it was fascinating. I really could talk to him. He was rather amazed because the South Koreans didn't know what was going on. He at times was getting very interesting. I was getting real insight into the way Korea was divided then. I wrote this huge despatch, too long. Ranard kept putting it into the bottom of the in box and it didn't go out for months. By the way, this guy, as was usual, after about five interviews, I went and asked to interview him again and was told that he had become ill, and that was the end of him. They thought they had gotten all they could out of him and just killed him. And that was what was happening to one after another. With this one guy in particular I finally said, "Please, do not let him get ill until I have a couple more interviews." But apparently somebody killed him. They are tough.

Q: Oh, yes.

WATTS: The Turkish Brigade had a unit about half way up to the DMZ and it turned out that the Turks found a Korean who was stealing things out of the Turkish compound. They crucified him, literally nailed him to a cross, at the entrance. The Koreans came up with tanks but finally backed off and that was one of the few times I have ever seen them do so.

Q: Two cultures getting ready to go the route.

WATTS: That was very interesting.

Q: How did things evolve in the political section? We are talking about McConaughy now when he came in. How did he work?

WATTS: McConaughy was a very courtly Southern gentleman and really different from Dowling. He was a much more cautious and conservative, careful...I don't think of him as a guy who wanted to make waves. Dowling didn't mind making waves and was a very spirited guy. I had enormous respect for him. McConaughy was a lot more cautious. But he wound up coming in, boy, events took over. All hell broke loose. The foment and ferment was building up and beginning to happen all over the country.

Q: Was the political section able to monitor this? It is very difficult when you are on the spot to sometimes see a revolution that is brewing.

WATTS: We had, I think and I will say this particularly with Tom, Howard and myself, we spent as much time traveling as the money allowed and we had two or three really good interpreters. One of them now lives here and the other one I see when I go to Seoul. We really did a lot of traveling. I think we picked up a lot of stuff, including stuff that we quite legitimately could have been kicked out over. We could have been PNGed. For example, we would go off and get to these small towns and stay in one of those little inns and about 2:00 in the morning I would hear a tap and I would sneak out with him and we would go off on our hands and knees crawling down to get into a car and go off and meet with people unhappy with the system. It was really wild stuff and clearly they would have been in their rights to kick us out.

I can't say we predicted a revolution, but I think we were pretty damn good in reporting a lot of things that were going on. I spent a lot of time at the universities and particularly at Korea University, which at that time was one of the major areas of some of that ferment. We were at least reporting that things were happening.

Q: On reporting, were there any restrictions? We are still talking about the Eisenhower period. Walter Robertson was the head of Pacific Asian Affairs. I don't know whether Korea fell into this, one had to be careful dealing with this group, particularly when dealing with Chiang Kai shek and all that, one had to be careful, or at least the feeling was because of the fate of the China hands. Here is Syngman Rhee who is the darling of some people you might call the right wing conservatives. He was on his last legs. When you were there was there any feeling that you had to be careful or that the ambassador let it be known?

WATTS: I must say I didn't particularly feel that. I had one very interesting episode I am reminded of by you mentioning the right wing. Walter Judd came into town. A congressman from Michigan or Wisconsin and a total Chiang Kai-shek defender who thought Rhee was a great man. I went with him to meet with Rhee. The last year he was an old failing man, which is one thing to remember. He was not well. This time we went in. Park Chan-il was his private

secretary, notorious as a reputed Svengali/Rasputin who was running Rhee and the archenemy of Korea. He became a very good friend of mine. He tried to defect to me in our Korean home, in the middle of the student revolution after Rhee resigned. That is a story I will have to get in to.

I went with Walter Judd and we get in with Rhee. Park Chan-il would watch the old man and give me a signal when it was time to go. So, I sort of cut off and said, "Mr. Congressman, I think Dr. Rhee has another appointment so I think perhaps we should leave." He said, "Oh, yes," and gets up and said, "Well, President Rhee it is always great to see you. Sayonara." Here is a guy who is supposed to be a knowledgeable expert on Asia and he says goodbye in Japanese to a man whose life was one of hating the Japanese. Rhee had a tic in his eye and I thought he was going to have a stroke. I was really nervous and just grabbed Judd and explained it to him. He really didn't understand how bad that was. I was just amazed.

I moved up to the political section about the middle of 1959, I suppose, and by then Rhee was already failing and more and more power was taken over by Lee Ki-bung, who was sort of his deputy, whose son Rhee had adopted and was a captain in the army. He was more and more in control.

I will give you an example of a despatch that Tom and I wrote on the myth of non-intervention. This was when McConaughy was ambassador. There was this constant stuff saying that we can't interfere in internal affairs of another country and we have to be careful about not intervening in the internal political process here. These were instructions that we kept getting. Our argument was that our presence here was such an overwhelming intervention that no matter what we do we are intervening. If we say, "Yes," we are intervening and if we do nothing we are intervening. So let's stop kidding ourselves because everything we do constitutes intervention and we need to look at it in that perspective. Well, McConaughy was really taken aback with my despatch. But he sent it in putting a note on top saying that he thought these were views that needed to be considered, although he didn't endorse them.

Q: How did he get along with Don Ranard?

WATTS: In all candor, I think Ranard was in over his head. As things began to move, Tom, Howard and I just started more and more to just act on our own. We had the complete support of Marshall Green who had come in as DCM. I may be exaggerating, this is a long time ago, but I have the memory that what happened was you had Ranard and the two others, operating in one sphere, and Tom, Howard and I, with Marshall's blessing, operating in another. Now, that may be putting this improperly, I don't know. We were doing a lot of stuff. By the time things heated up we were off and running.

Q: Okay, let's talk about how you saw the developments?

WATTS: I am trying to recall. There were the elections and this was the famous three man vote elections where everybody had to go in teams of three into the voting booth and show their ballot to each other and then vote. This was in the spring of 1960.

Q: What was the purpose of this?

WATTS: It was so everybody would see how everybody else voted so there was no way you voted for anybody but Rhee.

Q: I see.

WATTS: The assumption was that Choe In-gyu, the home minister, wanted to have an 88 percent for Rhee to match his upcoming 88th birthday. We were spread all over the place. I was in some little dinky town off in the middle of nowhere. In the translations I came out as Wax Williams and was always known as Wax Williams after that. But, it was very interesting. I went over to the ballot place and it was completely a fraud, no question.

It was after that, that the great event occurred which was a student in Masan got shot and had that shell in his eye. They tried to cover this up, but it finally appeared in the paper and then all hell broke loose in Masan. Then it started to spread. You began to get these groups gathering and protesting. It built and built for a couple of months or so, I don't remember exactly how long. We used to go out to the university trying to get a sense of what was happening. It picked up very rapidly in the last week or ten days. I remember one time coming around a corner and the army was pushing back the students, and I suddenly had a gun and bayonet in my gut. I remember going out with Peter Kalisher, CBS news...he and I were running around, seeing the students marching and police going after them with these things with balls on the end and clubbing them. It was something.

This stuff just kept building and building, and finally Rhee tried to restore order by bringing in the army as things were clearly getting ahead of the police. The big question was what were they going to do? What they did was to basically seal off the old national assembly building to keep it from any destruction, but they didn't stop the students. The students then knew the army was with them and from there on it was very quick.

Now there was one thing that happened in the middle of this but I don't remember the timing, whether before or after that, but McConaughy did issue a statement referring to the "justifiable grievances of the students" and that was just like...we were heroes, let me tell you.

Q: How did that come about?

WATTS: It was after some of the shooting and some students had been killed and it was in response to this calling for the restoration of order and the justifiable grievances of the students. They just took that as an absolute blessing. I was up just outside *Kyungmudae*, the president's palace, calling into Marshall watching as the students were coming up and they would rip their shirts open, and I saw 20 people or so get shot about ten feet away. Finally the police couldn't do anything and broke and ran around inside and the rest of the students came charging up jumping over these dead bodies. It was unbelievable. Then they would carry them away.

I was up on the roof of the *Hanguk Ilbo* building and a piece of rock went by my head, chipped off by a passing bullet. One of my closest Korean friends and I were out on the street and he got shot...the police came out of the *Kwanghwamun* police box, that big intersection, with submarine

guns firing. The guns pull right. He was next to me and he died. I had to carry his body out of the street with another guy. We found a shop and got some shovels to carry because what the police were doing was grabbing bodies and taking their identification and going to arrest their parents. So we carried this man way out and dug a hole and buried him. It was an extraordinary period.

Tom and I were actually in the embassy building and they were still firing blanks when all of a sudden from the noise the bullets were making changed. A Korean journalist with us said, "live fire!"

Then finally Tom went with McConaughy up to speak to Rhee basically asking him to resign.

Q: What was the feeling of the embassy? Obviously we had a concern about the army just north of the DMZ. Were we concerned whether the students were going, was it going to be left wing coup or what?

WATTS: Well, I will tell you that our faction thought it was the greatest thing that ever happened, we loved it. We were out there with them and very excited. We were thrilled with the idea of getting rid of what had become a totally corrupt dictatorship. I think, generally speaking that people in the embassy were all kind of excited about something we supported the objective of, if it was the ending of this dictatorship and moving in the direction of greater democracy.

You know, the fear of a possible attack from the North was something I must confess I gave almost no thought to and I don't think too many did. I think there was a feeling in part that first of all that the US forces and the Korean forces were in pretty good shape.

Q: Yes, this wasn't that far after the Korean War.

WATTS: You are talking still of a well, well armed and powerful force.

Q: Yes, so it was quite different from what happened later on.

WATTS: Yes. So, I don't think that ever became...obviously we followed what they were saying very carefully and that was my job. I am sure whole units must have been on total alert. I guess part of it was that this was such an exciting damn development that was taking place right there in front of us that you just knew you were in the middle of something that was truly historical.

Q: How did it play out, from your perspective?

WATTS: It played out that after, and there are lots of specifics that I am not aware of about who saw who, etc., but eventually Rhee agreed to step down. Then Lee Ki-bung, who we thought was going to take over, committed suicide. There was a brief period and then Chang Myon became president. I had gone by then.

As soon as Syngman Rhee stepped down, the entire civilian security apparatus disappeared. These guys were gone. They got out of their uniforms and disappeared. Choe In-gyu's house was burned to the ground. The students took over the city. It was the god damndest thing you have

ever seen. They just took over, directed traffic and for a few days things ran beautifully. The army stood aside. They were heroes, we were heroes. I walked out of the embassy building and this old man falls to his knees holding an American flag and kisses my shoes while handing me the flag. This was happening all over the place. For several days that was what was going on. It was an amazing period. The students ran the place. Then civilian order came back. I left quite soon after that.

I have one story. President Rhee returned to his own personal residence. After things had calmed down a letter arrived from Eisenhower to Syngman Rhee. Eisenhower had been there shortly before and I was the control officer for that whole trip, and that was a wild operation. In this letter Eisenhower congratulates Rhee on this courageous decision and he will always be remembered as the father of his country. A very nice letter. McConaughy called me in and asked if I could get in touch with Park Chan-il. I called him up, and told him I have a letter from President Eisenhower for President Rhee and Ambassador McConaughy wants me to deliver it. He says, "Fine. I will come over to get you and we can go to President's Rhee private home and give it to him."

So he picked me up in his car and we went over and in. He had alerted ex-President Rhee and Madame Rhee, the so-called Austrian Queen, about this letter. They come down the walk and it was really fascinating because this was a broken old man hanging on to his wife with a cane hobbling along. He comes down and recognizes me. I say, "Mr. President, Ambassador McConaughy has asked me to deliver this letter to you from President Eisenhower." He opens it and he sort of squinted at it and then gave it to Madame Rhee to read it. She read it out loud to him. Rhee reached over for the letter, spat on it, threw it down, and turned around and walked away. I picked up the letter and gave it back to Park Chan-il. He says, "Thanks, you have done your duty." I go back to the embassy and McConaughy said, "How did it go Bill?" I said, "Well, let me tell you." I described it to him. He said, "Well, we have to get a telegram off right away and tell Washington what happened." I drafted a telegram and said, "At my instructions, embassy officer Watts delivered the letter from President Eisenhower to President Rhee, who received it with great emotion." I took it back to McConaughy and asked if it was okay and he said, "Well done, well done," and off it went. No mention of spitting on the letter!

Q: Okay, we will stop at this point. Before we leave Korea, I would like to ask you one last thing on the Eisenhower visit. I have Marshall Green talking about it, but I would like to have someone who was sort of down in the...

WATTS: Well, Marshall was the control officer as DCM and I was the guy he picked to be his assistant.

Q: So we will pick it up then next time.

Q: We were talking about Eisenhower's visit.

WATTS: That was an extraordinary episode because as you remember that was in the spring of 1960 and Eisenhower was in the Philippines. When they left they were going to Japan to commemorate the mutual security treaty with the Japanese when that huge riot broke out in

Tokyo and Ambassador MacArthur with Jim Haggerty, the President's press secretary in a car was mobbed. So Eisenhower couldn't go to Japan, he had to go into Korea two days early. Marshall Green was the DCM who was the control officer, as always is the case for these visits, and I was the grunt doing the scut work. It was quite amusing because we were at a meeting in the foreign ministry building and Marshall had left to go home. It was late in the evening and the next day the President was to go into Tokyo and was due to come to Korea about three days later. I was about to leave when somebody came running in and said, "We have a phone call from President Eisenhower's plane." They brought in a phone and gave it to me. They said that they had just heard that the President was coming directly and would be stopping in Taiwan coming in about two days early. All the Koreans said they couldn't arrange for such a visit so quickly.

Then the phone rings again and it was Tom Stevens asking to speak to whoever was there from the embassy. I got to know Tom later and he was a wonderful person. He was Eisenhower's appointments secretary who worked for him for years and then later went to work for Rockefeller. I got on the phone and he said, "This is Tom Stevens, who is this?" I said, "This is Bill Watts, I'm with the embassy." "Well, listen, we are coming in tomorrow or the next day. We can't go to Tokyo, the god damn Japanese are blowing up the ambassador's car. We are going to Taiwan and will be in early." I said, "Well, you know you can't do that. We can't arrange anything and get it all done. The Koreans say they can't do it." Stephens said, "What is your name sonny?" I said, "Well, maybe we can arrange this, I'll get back to you."

I then spoke to the people and they said, "Oh, my God." I said, "Look, if we can't do it, I am out of here. I am going home and I am through." We sat up all night and the next day having to rearrange everything. It was absolute mayhem. The very funny thing was when Eisenhower arrived...the Presidential Cadillac was flown in along with secret service men, etc... He was in this big car and as he was coming through the square to go around behind Duck Su Palace, up the driveway to the Ambassador's residence where he was staying, the car broke down. Here was this enormous gun boat not moving. At that point literally hundreds of students just charged the car. I could see the secret service guys, they were so edgy. I was there and was running around. Well, these kids pushed the car up the ramp and into the driveway and up to the residence and then all turned around and left. It was a delightful episode. I must say that Eisenhower was received as a true hero because this was shortly after the revolution and our behavior, the embassy was held in very, very high esteem.

The visit, itself, was not very important. It went well. It was later, of course, that Eisenhower sent that letter I mentioned earlier that Rhee spat on.

The one thing I really remember about the visit was the way the students took over the city and ran the place for days. It was really an extraordinary episode.

Q: You had lived outside the compound and had all these Korean contacts. Did you find yourself sort of the center with young people coming to you and asking what should they do and how should they do it?

WATTS: Yes. I had a lot of people coming around to the house because they knew about me. I

was the only person living outside the compound. Then Park Chan-il, who was Rhee's private secretary, who many people thought of as the evil genius behind the throne, actually came to me and in essence asked if he could defect to the States, because he was scared for his life. Ultimately, it turned out all right and he left and is now living in the States. Rhee, of course, soon afterwards flew him out to Honolulu. I think his wife is still alive in Hawaii. There has been talk about her returning to Korea.

Q: During the student revolution, was there any dispute or disunity at the embassy that you saw about how...?

WATTS: I don't think so. It was so clear by then to everybody that the regime was doomed. Once the army made clear that they wouldn't...when they came in what the General did instead of trying to disperse the students, he simply took up a defensive position around the national assembly building to avoid a confrontation between the students and political figures in the assembly. The students took that, and I think quite correctly, as a statement that the army was not going to put them down. And it was over. It took them another day or two and some deaths before it finally broke. But that was it. And then McConaughy went with Tom Shoemith to essentially tell Rhee he had to resign. Very reluctantly Rhee did step down and Lee Ki-bung, his lieutenant, killed himself. Then Huh Chung became acting prime minister until elections when Chang Myon was elected and then overthrown in the first military coup, but that was later after I left.

Q: You left there when?

WATTS: In the middle of 1960.

ROBERT PRINGLE
U.S. Army
Korea (1959-1960)

Ambassador Robert Pringle was born in New York City in 1936 and was raised in Washington, DC. He graduated from Harvard University and served in the U.S. Army before joining the Foreign Service in 1967. His overseas assignments include the Philippines, Burkina Faso, Papua New Guinea and South Africa. Ambassador Pringles was interviewed by Kenneth L. Brown in 2015.

PRINGLE: What I could get from the Army, I decided, was some foreign experience. I had eighteen months left. A European assignment was three years, so that wouldn't work, but Korea was only a twelve-month tour; why couldn't ' I go there? The Korean War was long over and it sounded interesting. But I had the wrong kind of serial number.

Q: What do you mean?

PRINGLE: Although I had *volunteered* for two years of active duty, I had a serial number beginning with "FR." While the tour of duty was the same as for normal, non-voluntary draftees, they were being sent to Korea, often against their wills. And they had serial numbers beginning with "US." It was my introduction to the stupidity of the military bureaucracy.

My mother, pursuing her Western interests, knew the senior staff person for the then- senior senator from Montana, who was, shall we say, very elderly. This guy ran the whole office. So he told my mother, "I'll write a letter and the senator will sign it and he'll be out of there and on his way to Korea in a twinkle."

The next thing I knew I was literally being frog-marched around White Sands Missile Range by two majors telling me that I'd ruined my military career by exerting political influence. And within a month or two I was on a transport ship going to Korea by way of Seattle and Japan. Then I had a full year in Korea, in Seoul, where I worked for the Public Information Office. It changed my life.

Q: What did those duties involve?

PRINGLE: It was not exciting. We wrote tedious press releases, mostly (again) about traffic accidents, all too often about an Army truck running over a Korean child on a narrow village street between Seoul and the demilitarized zone to our north, along which most of our combat units were located.

Occasionally I wrote articles for *Stars and Stripes*, the US Military daily printed in Tokyo, but most of that was done by their own Korea Bureau. I dearly wanted to be part of that. They had their own quarters in the newspaper's warehouse, in what was then the countryside, on the way to the Seoul airport, with no non-coms or officers within miles, whereas I was in a 900-person headquarters company, with thirty generals from three major commands - the UN Command, US Forces Korea, and the US Eighth Army -- all with large staffs.

We lived in old Japanese barracks in the former Japanese headquarters at Yongsan. Most of us were college graduates. We had some Koreans serving with us, many of them also well educated, with whom we became friends. We also had Korean houseboys who made our beds and shined our shoes. We paid them with cartons of cigarettes, I believe two cartons a week per GI and purchased at the PX. The houseboys then sold them on the black market for a tidy profit. So we were not exactly suffering.

During our twelve month tours we got two -- two! -- free, paid R&R ("rest and recuperation" - ha ha) trips to Japan, where you could stay for almost nothing in wonderful hotels that our military still had in Tokyo and vicinity. Rooms cost about five dollars a night. Everything else was paid for.

And Korea, as I had hoped, turned to be anything but a waste of time. We were able to see the sights of Seoul and attend meetings of the British Royal Asiatic Society, which sponsored lectures on Korean culture and tours into the hinterland. That enabled us to meet diplomats from all countries.

It is fascinating to recall that almost none of our foreign friends, technicians, economists, etc., had a good word to say about the future of Korea. They thought the country was hopelessly mired in poverty. Our aid programs, hobbled by corruption, were going nowhere. The educated Koreans were mostly still in the north. The ones in the south were peasants, "slick boys" skilled mainly at stealing from the US Army. Almost five years after the armistice, Seoul was still largely a slum.

No one we met recognized what later became apparent: an extraordinary thirst for education. Any GI, no matter how uneducated, or crude his own speech, could make good money by teaching English to these impoverished people. That thirst would turn the country around much faster than anyone realized.

Before long we hatched a great idea. We found out that the USAID Mission, in collaboration with the US Information Service, had considered a project to support Korean 4-H clubs. It never got off the ground, but they still had lots of unused 4-H pamphlets in Korean and English. So we decided, in collaboration with some Korean university student friends, to start our own 4-H project.

We found some GIs who were from the Midwest and actually knew about farming! Then we went to a nice lady lieutenant colonel in charge of civil-military relations (G5) and she agreed to assign a three-quarter ton military truck to us on weekends, the GI equivalent of heaven.

Thus began many weekend days of visiting a thatch-roofed village overlooking the Han River, in an area long since paved over with high-rise apartments. It is debatable whether the villagers learned much from us, although they did start a 4-H club, but they appreciated the attention and all concerned had a grand time.

My colleague in the 4-H project was a brilliant character who became a good friend, Herb White (now deceased), a Georgetown University graduate, sometime artist, and born entrepreneur, later a pillar of the Washington DC art scene. It later turned out he was gay as could be. I didn't know that for decades, even after I traveled with him for almost a year. All I knew was that he wasn't interested in girls.

Herb discovered that if you asked the Army to give you your separation papers when you had finished your year in Korea, you retained a right to go back to the United States ("CONUS" = Contiguous United States) at military expense. All you had to do was to present yourself to the nearest US military base wherever you were, with your separation orders -- and of course we had bases all over the place at that time -- and say, "I've had enough fun, besides I'm out of money now. Would you please take me home?" I was separated from active duty in Korea on November 15, 1960.

MARSHALL GREEN
Consul General

Seoul (1959-1961)

Marshall Green was born in Massachusetts in 1916. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1939. Mr. Green joined the Foreign Service in 1945. His career included positions in Sweden, Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, Indonesia, and Washington, DC. Mr. Green was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 12, 1988.

GREEN: 1961 was an even more tumultuous year for me and, I might say, for Korea, than 1960. It contains many memories that are both bitter and sweet. On March 10, Ambassador McConaughy received word that he was going to be assigned to Washington as Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, which meant that I would be taking over the job as chargé d'affaires, not knowing who the new ambassador was going to be. When he left, which was in mid-April, he was leaving in my hands a rather dicey situation.

The PoSun Yun government had been in power for about nine months, during which there had been considerable accomplishments. On the other hand, these accomplishments were largely pressed upon them by us, entailed a number of political risks, especially for Prime Minister Chang Yun. For example, he agreed to the institution of a realistic unitary exchange rate. This was not going to be popular. Secondly, he took measures to raise transportation and power rates, cutting out subsidies. Thirdly, he took measures to normalize AID, or our aid, procedures, so that the Republic of Korea took on more of the responsibilities for funding infrastructure costs of our military and ROK military in Korea than they had previously. Fourthly, Korea was assuming more of the costs of their own defense, yet continuing to observe Status of Force agreements that clearly gave the United States more rights in this situation than are usually present. We were engaged in Status of Force negotiations, which never bore fruit, at least not for many months.

We were calling the tune; we were exerting a great deal of pressure. The pressure, in the last analysis, derived from congressional restraints, congressional limitations on funds that were available, and therefore we had to accommodate to that situation. In other words, we had to get the Korean Government to do more to help itself, since we couldn't be giving the kinds and levels of aid that we had previously, due to cutbacks in our defense and other budgets. Therefore, if we were going to maintain the levels of defense that we had in Korea, they had to take on more of the responsibilities. We also had a problem with the exchange rate, where we were not only taking something of a beating, because the won was greatly overvalued, but it also meant that there was a black market in won, which would exacerbate the problems of corruptions that were already prevalent in Korea under the PoSun Yun government as, as a matter of fact, it had been under almost all governments.

So the rigors of these accomplishments that we pressed upon the Koreans created all kinds of tensions from the Korean community, and it made it appear that PoSun Yun was running errands for us. He was never a strong or forceful leader, and all we were doing was to contribute to the impression of his weakness of succumbing to U.S. pressures. Of course we were very aware of the dangers present in this type of situation. Furthermore, we knew that nationalism in Korea, which had been delayed by the war and reconstruction, was now becoming an important factor in the Korean makeup. We in the Embassy were well aware of the dangers in this total situation.

We leaned over backwards to avoid appearances of dictating to the government or of pushing them around. I can remember very well that our meetings with Chang Yun were carried on in private homes, not in offices, that we did everything we could to lower our profile in dealing with the Korean government on these issues, if only to try to minimize the dangers that our pressures on the Korean Government might become too visible and, therefore, reach a point of explosion.

I was very aware of the political aspects of the problem that a powerful US military presence may create having served on the Nash mission back in 1957, when, on a worldwide basis, we did what we could to improve community-U.S. force relations and to avoid the kinds of problems that we had been having.

In the case of Korea, the problem was particularly complicated because we had a United Nations command headed by an American, with all the ROK First Army -- all of Korea's fighting-effective forces, 450,000 in number -- under his command. We had two divisions there, plus a corps headquarters and some air units. How that would all fit into a Status of Forces Agreement made it particularly complex. As I say, we entered into negotiations, but as I recall, while I was in Korea we never finalized them. The very fact that we were holding these negotiations obviously came to widespread attention in the military, probably created certain concerns. On the other hand, I can't believe that this was, in itself, a major factor in stirring up the military.

I think here one has to bear in mind something which became more apparent after the coup occurred, but I mention it because in retrospect, this seems to be a very important factor. That is that in the Korean military, there were many, many young officers -- field grade officers, many of whom had risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel -- who had served in key exposed positions in the Korean War. They were serving under senior officers, many of whom had not really been in the fighting, and many of whom were now receiving various kinds of favors. In other words, corruption was rather widespread amongst many of the senior military. Of course, it was widespread in the community in general. But it may not have been as widespread as the lieutenant colonels thought it was, so that within the military there was a great deal of disgruntlement. It wasn't necessarily directed at Chang Yun, but it was directed, really, at life in general.

When the coup did occur, it was this kind of feeling of resentment and disgruntlement that, in turn, churned up very strong feelings for wanting to correct things -- a kind of a Puritanism, which the military wanted to impose upon all the people of Korea. I think that this was a very important force behind the military coup. I mention this now in terms of what was building up in the atmosphere before the coup.

Another thing that was a problem was Prime Minister Chang Yun's shy manner, his quiet personality, and his lack of rapport with the people, with his inability to be a rallying call for Korea that was badly in need of leadership. These were things that could not be corrected by anybody. These were simply facts of life we had to live with. I remember Ambassador McConaughy, in his very tactful way -- and by the way, he was a superb diplomat -- urging the Prime Minister to get out of Seoul, get out amongst the people, identify himself more with the national picture, the national scene. He also urged him to draw younger leaders into higher

positions. He was quite conscious that the youth of the country was disaffected, and there was a feeling of estrangement with the government, that the government was sort of composed of older people that didn't know their problems and didn't share their hopes and dreams.

I can't recall exactly its opposition, but the government party consisted basically of the older guard; people who had had advantages of better education; civilians, who had many contacts abroad, probably had good education. Some of them were good economists, and they were people that sort of talked our language. But I am talking about people that we didn't know very well, but we were very conscious -- or at least increasingly conscious -- of their importance and the fact that they had to be brought into the picture.

Basically, as I have said before, it was a very bleak picture in Korea, with a lot of recriminations: recriminations against the United States, against the government, against different groups of people, and it was wide open to exploitation from the communists in the north. We have to remember that here we were in Seoul, which represented maybe 30% of the population of Korea, just 20 miles below the DMZ, above which there were something like 600,000 North Korean forces. And Seoul was on the wrong side of the Han River. So it was not a comfortable situation to be in from any viewpoint, internally or in external terms. Externally, also bearing in mind that Korea had no friends in the world, really, except the United States, and we were half a world away. But it had no relations to speak of with Japan and China and the Soviet Union and North Korea. Its other neighbors were all hostile. This is the kind of situation that was almost unique in the world for a United States diplomacy to operate.

I can remember -- I was just rereading some of my wife's letters to her friends, which she got back after they had read them -- my wife saying: "The hopelessness of everything here, the confinement, the isolation, the bleakness, almost anything could happen at any moment." That letter was written in mid-April 1961, just about the time the Ambassador was leaving and we were taking over Chargé d'Affaires. She goes on in another letter to say, on April 26, about how I was working around the clock and how worried I was, and how there were rumblings in the night and there were demonstrations. The students obviously were restive, and there was a sense of tension you could cut with a knife.

That brings us to the coup itself, exactly one month after McConaughy's departure. In the early hours of the morning of May 16, 1961, I was woken by a phone call from General Magruder, CinCUNK (Commander in Chief, United Nations Forces in Korea). As I said, he had the ROK fighting effectiveness under his command, as well as two American divisions and other components -- Turkish, some Commonwealth, Ethiopian, Thai, and other forces. He called me up in the wee hours of the morning and asked me if I heard any shooting going around because there was shooting going around there in the south post. He was about four miles away from me at the south post. I said, no, I could hear no shooting, "What was it all about?"

He said that he believed that a coup was in progress, and that the chief of staff of the Army, General Chang Do Yung, who had already been in touch with him about a coup that evidently involved several thousand soldiers, was taking over various parts of Seoul. He asked General Magruder for support in the form of U.S. forces, as well as ROK forces, to help suppress the coup. Magruder had said to me that his answer to Chang Do Yung was that we could not involve

U.S. forces, and that he, Magruder, in fact, was going to order, or was ordering, the Americans to return or stay in their barracks, not to go out in the streets, not to get involved.

I told General Magruder that I completely agreed with that latter order, and I went on to say that I thought it would be very important that we, as soon as possible, make it publicly clear that the United States has nothing to do with this coup, and that the United States Government, in fact, supports the duly constituted government of Chang Yun, that had been elected in free and fair elections after many years of United States urging and that we clearly could not turn our backs on that government now in its hour of peril. This was a matter of very important principle. Would he go along with me on such a statement? This was around 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, over the phone.

He replied that he would have to think that one over, and perhaps we could have breakfast together around 7:00 the next day. He called me up around 6:00 before we had breakfast, to say that he felt we should go forward with that kind of a statement immediately, his principal reason being that General Lee Han Lim, who was the commander of the First ROK Army, had been in touch with him just a few minutes previously, to urge that the United States clarify its position, because the coup group was spreading the word through all the of General Magruder's commands, that the United States was behind the coup, that we supported the coup, and that unless we made our position crystal clear, we would bear a responsibility through inaction in allowing the coup to consolidate its hold on the country.

General Magruder had great respect for General Lee, and he therefore came over to the Embassy, or perhaps we did this over the phone; I can't recall. But he drew up a statement for public release to be accompanied by a statement which I would make. His statement would be made as Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Forces; mine would be made as a Chargé d'Affaires of the American Embassy. He would be speaking, in other words, in an international capacity; I would be speaking in a national capacity.

So Magruder's statement called upon all military personnel under his command to support the duly constituted government headed by Minister Chang Yun. My statement, which paralleled and accompanied his, strongly concurred in the position that was taken by General Magruder, adding that I wished to make it emphatically clear that the United States supports the constitutional government of the Republic of Korea as elected by the people of the Republic the previous July, and as constituted in the previous August with the election of a prime minister.

Both statements were immediately carried every hour on the hour by the United States Armed Forces Radio, located in Seoul -- broadcast in English and in Korean. But our announcement was carried in only one newspaper, of course, not carried in any Korean broadcasts, because meanwhile the coup members had taken over the communications of the country.

There was, of course, no time to clear these statements with Washington. We might be faulted on the ground that we didn't have any contingency plans to deal with a coup. I don't think that it occurred to us that a coup was likely. By the way, a coup is never going to succeed if you hear of it in advance. But I do think, in retrospect, that every country or every embassy and every command would be wise to have a contingency plan. I think the best way to develop such

contingency plans would be to come up with a hypothetical situation where this were to occur. What do you then do about it?

I might say that this whole experience made me a very strong believer in these war games, these politico-military war games in which I have engaged --in about five of them, all of which have been highly instructive. The only trouble with the war games is that nobody pays much attention to them in high places, so that it becomes an exercise of value, but of futility, too. War games can be instructive not just in case of war, but in case of disasters, terrorist incidents, coups, etc. We are carrying this, as you know, to great lengths so that we have all kinds of exercises against terrorists conducted by all our embassies. Our embassies all have contingency plans. So that this experience in Korea would merely fortify the argument that more should be done in this field. But anyway, we hadn't done it in 1961.

As I said, we didn't have time to consult with Washington. We had to get that announcement out right away if it was to have any effect. It never occurred to me that there would be anything but support in Washington for the position that Magruder and I were taking. Maybe I was naive in that supposition, but since we had worked so hard for so long to get this duly constituted government, and since this small coup group, led by God knows who and for what purpose. It was a question of what should the United States do. We had to react. We couldn't just sit there and say, "We have to get Washington's word." Some people might have thought that that would have been the right course, but if we had done that, then our voice never would have been heard. Silence would have been acquiescence. I think it would have left the Korean people with a great sense of disillusionment in the United States. As it was, the action that I took that day, as, indeed, the action we had taken the previous year, in talking about the justifiable grievances of the students, still left the United States with a pretty good record of not siding with those who were going to seize power from the people's representatives. This was a record that was going to be important, not only in Korea, but in Turkey, Thailand, and many other countries that had experienced coups. We have to bear in mind that what we do, wherever we do it, does have world-wide connotations.

All these thoughts as an experienced diplomat raced through my mind and left me with no choice but to move quickly. In so doing, I obviously kept Washington informed. We told them immediately what we had done and what we were doing. We sent in a stream of messages to Washington on an hour-to-hour basis. Our political section was headed by Don Ranard, a very active, conscientious, and able officer, with people like Elmer Hulen on his staff. They were all first-rate people. We had a very good cultural attaché and USIS staff. I said to Ranard: "Look, I am going to be busily engaged, as you will see, in a whole series of involvements here. Your job now is to send out messages to keep Washington as fully informed of events going on as is humanly possible, and in your messages urge that we get some early reaction to know whether we are on a course that they would support." So that was their function.

My next move, realizing that every minute counted, after issuing this statement and proceeding on the assumption that Washington would endorse a course of action that I now had to take -- again, every minute counted -- was to call, with General Magruder, on President PoYun Sun at his home at Blue House -- the Presidential Residence -- the one that was tenanted by Rhee for so many years.

We made the call on PoYun Sun, who seemed glad to receive us. Magruder gave his evaluation of the situation to the extent that he knew about it, which was that the coup group was actively supported by a small group, maybe several thousand, young insurgent dissident officers, but that the Army chief of staff, General Chang Do Yung, remained loyal to the government -- a situation which, by the way, was to change in the course of the day. Magruder stressed that many of the insurgent forces were under his command, and that their action undermined his authority and imperiled the Republic of Korea by withdrawing forces from the front lines to participate in a political action against the government. He thought it was essential that steps be taken to deal with this coup and to get the forces under his command to return to their positions.

I pointed out that Korea's international standing was very much involved in this issue. We had to support the Republic of Korea every year in United Nations debates. There was a huge United Nations presence in country, aside from just the UNC command. They had all kinds of U.N. machinery that I have talked about before. These events were going to create some real sound waves abroad.

General Magruder then, somewhat to my surprise, because he hadn't mentioned this to me before, suddenly asked the President whether he would approve calling upon loyal ROK Army units under General Lee Han Lim to take up positions surrounding Seoul in overwhelming numbers in comparison to the relatively few coup units in Seoul, so that negotiations with the insurgents could be carried on from a position of government strength.

President Yun was understandably reluctant to take such a bold step, lest it lead to a lot of bloodshed. I thereupon suggested that he call immediately to his office Prime Minister Chang Yun and the leaders of the coup group, to see if there could not be some reconciliation of differences based upon Chang Yun accepting the legitimate demands of the coup group, without wrecking the recently elected government of Korea. In other words, reaching some kind of compromise which, as I said, has occurred on several occasions in Chinese history. I was very interested in the problem of how governments could reconcile differences with insurgent groups.

The President wavered. He couldn't bring himself to make the decision. Meanwhile, Magruder left the Blue House, and I lunched alone with President Yun, who was desperately unhappy, at times in tears. He asked me repeatedly whether the position that I had taken reflected instructions from Washington, and I had to say that I had received no word from Washington, since the coup had only occurred nine hours earlier, but that I was certain Washington would support any peaceful means for trying to resolve the crisis in a way that preserved the constitutionally elected government and did so without bloodshed. At least I believe I added the latter.

President Yun remained undecided, so I returned to the Embassy. It is remarkable that Yun dithered for so long, when you think of it. I don't recall that there were any interruptions during our meeting, and I was there for four hours. PoYun Sun, for one thing, was a personal friend. Only two weeks earlier, he and his wife had come to our house for a reception, which was unique in terms of the President going to any foreign establishment. He never did. But PoYun Sun was a good friend. Incidentally, he was no friend of Chang Yun. Therefore, I was talking to a man who was not naturally disposed to want to get together with Chang Yun, because Chang Yun was his

political rival.

I had no idea what was happening to the government apparatus on that day! I had no idea. Things were moving so fast, I was focused on the central point of trying to get the government in those very few hours that we had, or they had, to bring about some kind of solution that would retain the constitutional government. That was the focus, and everything I did was focused on that one thing. That was also PoYun Sun's focus. He was desperately unhappy to see his country caught in this terrible crisis. The United States had this enormous power and influence and so forth, and it was natural that he would turn to us. Everybody did turn to us in these terms.

There were undoubtedly a great deal of things churning around in the government and messages coming in to the Blue House. All I can recall was that my conversation with the President seemed uninterrupted, that the coup had the President's full attention, because this was a critical point. We were really talking about what could be done and what could he do. I was focusing on that. If he was going to do anything, he obviously had to have the support and blessing of the United States, because in this situation, he didn't know who really was on his side.

I returned to the Embassy, you might say, empty handed. But several hours later, as I recall it was around 5:00 or 6:00 in the evening, I got a call from President Yun, and he said that he had been thinking it over and decided that my counsel was probably the best course to take. He, therefore, had tried to get in touch with Chang Yun, but he couldn't locate him, and did I know where he was? I told the President that I would try to find out, and through our various sources, including CIA -- we had a very good station chief -- we found out where he was -- evidently hiding in a nunnery that was run by the French.

I got a message through to him that it was very important that he get in touch with President PoYun Sun immediately and that I would hope to hear from him as soon as possible.

I heard nothing that night, but early the next morning, the French Ambassador said that he had received a message from Yun in writing, to pass to me, but since the French obviously didn't want to get involved, that he would pass this message on to me in the south post, where it was arranged that I should meet him, which I did. There I picked up from Chang Yun a letter addressed to me. Before I get into that letter and what it led to, in order to keep the time sequence here, I think perhaps I should return to a little more about what we had learned about the coup during the day of May 16. As I said, we had received no message back from Washington during that day. Nothing came back from Washington. We did receive in the course of the day one or two telephone calls, one from Bob Fearey, who was in our Embassy in Tokyo -- a good personal friend, to say that he and his colleagues there fully understood and supported us. I got a similar kind of message from Don MacDonald in the State Department, saying that they were working on it, they understood our position very well, and they were doing all they could to be of help. Those were the kinds of messages that I had, but I had nothing official from Washington.

Meanwhile, of course, the press ticker was coming in, and we were getting all kinds of play in the international press, some of them supporting what I had done, some saying I had goofed. The Chicago Tribune called me a dunderhead, and The New York Times and Washington Post apparently were playing this up favorably in terms of what we had done. So there was a mixed

kind of reaction, a confused reaction, and the ticker was tapping out constantly editorials and other kinds of press coverage. That was to go on and on for weeks. But my point is that nothing came from our government that was official.

What we had learned in the course of the day was that the real leader behind the coup was Major General Park Chung Hee, who had recently been named deputy commander of the ROK Second Army located in Taegu, which is 150 miles south-east of Seoul. He was a 44-year-old general, not well known in CinCUNK headquarters, since the Second Army in the southern part of Korea was not under CinCUNK command. Park's inner circle of supporters consisted of colonels and especially lieutenant colonels, of which the most dominant one seemed to be Lieutenant Colonel Kim Chong Pil, who had married General Park's niece.

The proclaimed leader of the coup, however, as it emerged in the course of the day, was no other than Army Chief of Staff General Chang Do Yung, who initially had asked Magruder to help put down the coup, including the use of U.S. armed forces under CinCUNK command, which, as I have said, Magruder had wisely refused to do. General Chang had evidently, during the next few hours, determined the coup was likely to succeed, and he decided to ride the bandwagon by agreeing to become its titular leader.

The coup group, shortly to be called the Junta, declared that its mission was to rid the nation of a weak and corrupt government, and to stamp out any incipient communist influences, referring, of course, largely to the student population, and to the Chang Yun government, which, of course, was not communists, and to restore law and order.

As I said, we still hadn't received orders from Washington or any response from Washington, but I realized that President Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk were in Canada. The State Department was under, at that point, Acting Secretary of State Chester Bowles, who obviously knew nothing about the Korean situation. As I suspected, there were some very strong divided opinions as to how to react, particularly since the coup group seemed to be consolidating its hold on power in the face of apathetic reactions on the part of the Korean masses. To me, in fact, it was very disillusioning to see with what ease this coup group was able to consolidate its position. You would have thought that there would have been a lot of citizens groups -- all the students and professors and others had been marching through the streets that had brought down Rhee -- which would have had a reaction. They didn't at all. This, I think, reflected the disillusionment with the duly constituted government. One could almost conclude that, indeed, Korea wasn't ready for democracy! It was that kind of gnawing doubt about the Korean people that I found rather upsetting.

We had officers out in the streets under orders to report everything that went on; they fanned out. We had quite a few people in our various sections. They fanned out and looked and observed, and they talked. Many of them spoke Korean. We knew as much as one could know about the situation. As far we could tell there was a general feeling of apathy, of people not standing behind the old government, but not supporting the new either; they were just waiting to see how things turned out. General Magruder and I and our colleagues had taken a strong stand on behalf of letting people speak up, because if we hadn't, there would have been no time, no encouragement or inclination on the part of anybody to speak up. As I say, the reaction was one

of general apathy at that time. This was to change, but I am referring to May 16 and the next few days.

We began the second day of the coup, May 17, with still no word from Washington, although, as I said, we had indications from telephone calls that there was a good deal of sympathy in the State Department for the position that I had taken.

But there were also indications that DoD, the Defense Department, was taking a rather different view. They were rather critical of General Magruder, and I think the reason for this criticism was that many of the old-time military who had served in the Korean War and who were very dedicated to the Korean armed forces sort of automatically sided with them, thinking that they represented the military viewpoint. Of course, they didn't. I mean, Lee Han Lim, for example, was against it, and he was the commander-in-chief of the ROK Army. Also the former ROK Army chief of staff was opposed to it as well as others. So their suppositions were not well based.

In any case, DoD was reluctant to get involved. They didn't know what to do, whereas State felt that we should come up, as it turned out, with a statement.

So this meant that I had to begin the second day of my trying to rally the government to take some position through PoYun Sun and Chang Yun, without real Washington authority to do so. As I said, I was now in touch with Chang Yun, and he sent me this letter which was dated the morning of May 17. The letter expressed gratitude for my statements supporting his government, but he wanted to know whether the U.S. Government would continue to support that government, and how far we would go if what he called "the rebels" refused to relinquish power. "Would you," he asked, "either persuade or force the rebels to support the incumbent or make some compromise with them, or let them take over on their own course of condemning the Chang Yun government?" which he said, "would almost certainly entail court-martialing me and my colleagues, and God knows what would happen to us."

After several more paragraphs pointing to the long-term adverse consequences to the United States of our not opposing the coup, and the loss of CinCUNK's authority and prestige, Chang Yun talked about how failure to act now would inevitably result in many years of authoritarian military rule, in violation of all that the United States and most Korean people stood for. He said he felt he had to remain in a safe place until these points were clarified.

By the way, he ended the letter by saying, "Destroy after reading," but I evidently didn't, because I came across this letter in my files the other day. I had squirreled it away somehow, thinking that perhaps it would have some importance for history, and I still have that letter. The letter was well suited and well formulated. Remember that Chang Yun had been Ambassador in Washington, and I think he knew our government's thinking very well.

Two hours after receiving this letter, he called me up to ask what my reaction to the letter was. I told him that I had received it, and I felt that he still should establish immediate contact with PoYun Sun, since the President seemed interested in finding a constitutional solution. In fact, over the previous 12 hours, I had received seven calls either from PoYun Sun or his chief

assistant with regard to the importance of getting in touch with Chang. Chang replied, expressing concern that they had tried to get him, which implied fear and that he didn't trust PoYun Sun. As I said, they had been political rivals, although both standing for the same broad principles. I ended the phone conversation by noting that I continued to stand firm in support of his government and, in fact, that I had just been meeting with the international press at noon on May 17, in which I had reaffirmed my position, despite all the mounting evidence that the Junta was beginning to assert control and hold over the country. Chang Yun remained uncertain, and that was to be, as I recall, my last conversation with him.

Returning to the subject of my press conference, the air space over Seoul seemed to be black with planes bringing in the press corps, the international press corps in particular, but also a lot of Japanese newsmen from Tokyo. Huntington Damen, the USIS chief, had announced that I would meet with them all in the USIS conference room. It was already apparent to these correspondents that the coup was succeeding, that the Korean masses seemed apathetic, as well as apprehensive, and that the U.S. Government in Washington was undecided. In the face of all that, they persisted in asking me whether I was going to change my position. I defiantly said, "No! What I said yesterday still stands."

"Does it reflect the position of your government?" they asked.

I said, "My government has been fully apprised. I am sure they're sorting this all out, and I await word from Washington." They were dumbfounded that I should take such an independent position without having cleared it all with Washington in advance, and I took pains to point out the whole timing factor of why we had to move when we did. I think, by the way, that most of them clearly understood that and sympathized. At least it was reflected in the articles that they wrote. People like Abe Rosenthal, who rose to great heights in The New York Times, I remember was one of them, and was one of the most prescient and wisest of the group.

Some hours later, I did receive a press ticker item that State Department spokesman Lincoln White had declared, in response to questions, that "the State Department stood behind the statements made by the American Chargé d'Affaires." However, there was no statement by the White House or the Defense Department, and it was already clear to me that Walter McConaughy, the Assistant Secretary of State, was pulling out all stops in Washington to give Magruder and me the backing we needed. He was not trying to reverse the coup, because it was already too late for that, but in he was trying to reassert support for the principles long advanced by our government. Incidentally, by so reasserting these principles, we retained some kind of leverage over the new military Junta with regard to the return to civilian rule and making them perhaps more attentive to our viewpoint than they would be if we had just supinely gone along with their position or kept quiet. In other words, I could see that our position was going to gain us some leverage, which was going to be critical, although I won't say that that was the reason for my original statement, which was based completely and simply on principle.

Meanwhile, the Junta was beginning to visit on Korea a harsh regime of martial law, curfews, censorship. Some 800 newspapers were closed down; arrests, beatings, and campaigns began to root out what they called "moral laxity and corruption." A stream of new austerity and disciplinary regulations were issued. Some of them went to ridiculous lengths. Traffic laws, for

example, were being rigorously enforced by gun-toting military in a highly ostentatious manner, in order to "teach everyone a lesson" to obey the law. Jay-walkers, for example, were forced to squat down on the curbside for half an hour to an hour, to teach them a lesson, and do it in a visible way that other people could find "edifying."

The Junta group was making a great deal of the fact that they were militantly anti-communist, as though that fact in itself would amply justify the coup in the eyes of the Korean people and especially of the United States. It occurred to me, I could say parenthetically, that the United States had, ever since the McCarthy days, made so much of anti-communism that we really hadn't supplied an affirmative measure as to what we did stand for. So that anti-communism was really what we stood for, rather than being pro-this or pro-that. This has been an unfortunate theme in our foreign policy, that almost every government that takes power by force, particularly coming at all from the right wing, has used this as its main excuse. And often it has been bought by at least significant elements within American society. In this connection, there were a lot of incredible stories, rumors, going around that Kim Chung Peel had had leftist connections in his university days, and that even Park Chung Hee himself was tainted really by associations with his nephew. These were people whom we didn't know. As I say, there were rumors all about them being this or being that, and I do think that one can say the heavy stress on being anti-communist suggested that they might be otherwise. Some people in our Embassy felt that way. I can't say that I felt that way. I did think that it was a possibility, and I did think we had to be always wary of that being a possibility.

I think we were greatly concerned about North Korea, although things were happening so quickly that I don't think the North Koreans would have been able to put themselves in a position to do anything really. We had all the armed forces still up on the DMZ. They also might inadvertently have rallied South Korea together, which was not what they wanted. What they wanted to do, realistically, was to see things falling apart, which was happening. So from the North Korean viewpoint, the logical thing might well have been to just let things go the way they were, sliding out of control and increasing internal dissension and so forth. Then when things were appropriate, when things were ripe they might move in prematurely -- this is all, of course, conjectural. But we were always conscious of the proximity of hostile forces, and undoubtedly PoYun Sun's reaction to the suggestion that there be some kind of a military preponderant force brought to bear around Seoul to deal with the coup group, was unacceptable for that very reason -- that it would possibly invite attacks from the north. I don't know. But in any case, we didn't want to see any organized armed clashes in South Korea, that was sure. I was dealing entirely in terms of a kind of political solution, not a military solution, one of the important reasons being the proximity of North Korea to the scene.

Late May 17, I received a confidential telegram from Assistant Secretary McConaughy, which said that the State Department agreed with the Embassy's assessments and agreed that the coup was contrary to our principles and interests, and supported the position that I had taken. However, the telegram went on to say that the State Department had to adopt a position of "wait and see." In the absence of some indication the Chang Yun government was willing to put forth some additional effort to save itself, the Department would refrain from additional public information of U.S. identification with what might be a lost Cabinet.

This was an eminently sensible position. I could appreciate why the State Department had come to that view. I would have, too, now that Chang Yun and President Yun were clearly unable to restore the duly constituted government. The problem now was to get on with the show, and what we were going to do with this new government. The State Department refused to declare a policy toward the coup itself, which I think, again, was wise, and merely acknowledged that Magruder and I were acting within our rights. So as far as the public was concerned, the State Department simply said we acted within our rights. They still hadn't given us any kind of public support, but privately they were fully supportive, so I knew that I was operating on the same wave length as the State Department would wish me to.

One of the problems that I faced at the time was keeping the whole American community together. We had a lot of Americans there, lots of missionaries and businessmen, and we had the world's largest aid establishment, called USOM, and a lot of military and other dependents and so forth. So it was a big American colony. I wanted to be sure that they were kept apprised of what was going on, why we were doing what we were doing, and that we answer any questions that they may have had. I remember particularly my meetings with USOM and the missionaries. In the case of USOM, the aid mission, it had an auditorium that seated about 750 people. All the seats were taken and there was a spillover of another several hundred, so I would speak to the same group twice over, each time for about half an hour, in which I explained our position and answered questions. With the missionaries, I remember them all coming. There were about 140 of them that came to the Embassy Residence in the gardens. It was a lovely evening. I stood out there with them and just talked my heart out as to why we had done what we had done. I had their complete support.

The American business community wasn't very big, but it was supportive. I didn't involve myself so much with the military, because that was Magruder's responsibility, and I am sure that he met with his people. I was really talking about the civilian community.

One of the most heartwarming experiences in my whole career was the support and unity of opinion that I experienced in dealing with the American community. It led me to feel that when Americans are faced with a common danger, they really rally together. This may be true of all countries, but it was certainly true in Korea. Korea, as you know, had had a long history of bickering amongst the missionaries, and yet that evening when I met with the missionaries, we were all one. So this was one of the compensations of those difficult days.

Meanwhile, on May 18, Lieutenant General Chang Do Yun, now entitled Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee, which was called SCNR, sent President Kennedy a letter in which he listed the following as being the policies of the revolutionary government: anti-communism, adherence to the U.N. charter, complete elimination of corruption, effectiveness in combating communist tendencies, and transfer of the control of the Korean Government to clean and conscientious civilians upon completion of the revolutionary government's mission.

Shortly thereafter, he announced to the press that he was going to Washington to discuss these things privately with President Kennedy. We hadn't heard of any such trip; Washington had not heard of any such trip, and I knew right away that the White House would be vastly irritated by his unilateral declaration of a meeting with the President. I had had no communication with the

coup group. So what I did immediately was to get, I believe, on the phone to Walter McConaughy, to inform him of this, and say, "Look, I know I am supposed to try to turn this one off, am I correct?"

He said, "Yes."

So there was a quick exchange of messages through whatever channel -- I can't quite recall -- authorizing me to persuade Chang Do Yun from going to the States, on the grounds that the President's schedule wouldn't permit it.

Thereupon I called on General Chang to deliver this message, and he persisted in thinking it was most important that Kennedy officially recognize the new Korean Government before he left for the summit meeting. He went on to say that all he asked for was a brief, even 30-minute informal meeting with the President, and that he was preparing a joint communique that he hoped the President and he could sign. I was firmness itself in dealing with him regarding this trip to Washington, but I said that his message to the President was entrusting and helpful, and that I trusted there would be a response from the White House. This, indeed, was to come some days later when I was authorized to inform Chang, which I did, that the U.S. Government noted with approval the pledges that he had made about intentions to return the Korean Government to civilian control.

There was a question, as I recall, also of my trying to get in touch with the real coup leader, General Park Chung Hee, in order to establish personal contact and to bring to his attention our views and to hear his views. As I recall my meeting with him, which took place in the latter part of May, was also an opportunity for General Magruder to once again express his strong concerns about restoration of the integrity of his command.

By the way, at that time I had about 14 Marine bodyguards, which were deemed as essential for my safety, and they followed me in two station wagons wherever I went -- during the coup time and for maybe two weeks afterwards.

So this whole group of cars swept up to General Park's headquarters, which was an old dilapidated building. Of course, all the guards stayed out. Magruder and I, and I think I was accompanied by my military attaché, we called on Park. The principal thing I remember about it was the icy atmosphere in which we were greeted. General Park Chung Hee never smiles anyway, and his lips were firmly set in a thin, straight line across his face. He looking very dour. After the most perfunctory of greetings, he set about strongly avowing his long record of being anti-communist, as though I thought otherwise. He pointed out that the military coup was based on fear of the previous government becoming communist-tainted; he was obviously trying to develop a feeling on my part that being against a duly constituted government was alright, on the grounds that it was communist-tainted, which, of course, was not really so.

I then pointed out what our reasons were for opposing the coup, and why the United States Government would always stand by a friendly government in time of peril. That remark, by the way, was a very important one, and I'll come back to that later on.

The other main purpose of our meeting with Park was to try to get some affirmation about restoration of Magruder's authority over the elements that had been taken to Seoul from their positions on the front lines, and he got some kind of assurances from Park on that score, which eventually was worked out. It took a bit of doing on General Magruder's part, and his efforts were not helped by the rumors coming out of DoD, especially from those retired generals like General Van Fleet, who were criticizing Magruder publicly. So it undermined his ability to get things back where they should have been.

We could learn very little from the tightly controlled press and radio in Korea as to how the people really felt about these developments, but our Embassy staff knew from its many contacts with the Korean community that feelings of bafflement, insecurity, and disillusionment were rife, and that recriminations abounded against the United States, against the old government, against the new military regime. I wrote a note to myself, which I found in my files at that time, saying that the Koreans are basically a very dissatisfied people, with expectations far exceeding possibilities of realization, that they were sort of dreamers and hoppers, and therefore very subject to feelings of disillusionment and resentment against all those that they thought stood in their path. We were dealing with a very kind of fundamental problem in this situation. The Koreans are people that I greatly admire for many reasons. In fact, my wife and I have often said that of all the Asians, we think we like the Koreans the most. We never could explain exactly why. I think it is because of their independence of spirit and also because they were going through so many difficulties. One cannot help but sympathize with Korea for all the dangers and sufferings it has endured. There is an outgoing and a directness there, too. We got some very frank statements from many Koreans, even from Chang Do Yun, by the way, talking to our cultural attaché, Greg Henderson. There were some amazingly frank statements about how they really felt, which tended to confirm all that I am saying now and to confirm that there was a great deal of inner doubt with regard to this new government.

This new SCNR was obviously being wrecked by internal struggles. It wasn't as though they were all one united group. Later on, General Chang Do Yun was to be suddenly ousted from his position as leader. This was preceded by the arrest of all of his entourage, and then suddenly he was grabbed and had nobody to defend him. There were also very clear indications that the lieutenant colonels, in particular, were a source of the strong action-mindedness to move, to crack down on the people, and to visit on Korea a kind of austere regime. There was a kind of vengefulness in their position against all those that they thought had stood in their way in the past.

I mention the lieutenant colonels because they were the highest level in the military that didn't really have their hand in the till. The colonels and above were in positions, usually, where they could make something out of their positions. Lieutenant colonels were not. They also had come through field-grade responsibilities where they saw what was going on and where their resentment deepened. Lieutenant colonels were the ones that, in the case of Korea, were held up longest in promotions. So that there was this tendency, as I say, for lieutenant colonels to be the politically volatile element. They, of course, were the most senior officers who didn't get the favors, and therefore they were looked up to by all the people below them to take the lead. That is why I say that the lieutenant colonels, not only in Korea, but other places, are very likely to be the incendiary element. Of course, as I said early on, in the case of Korea, they had gone through

the Korean War, and what had they got from it? Not very much. But what had their elders got for it? A lot. These younger colonels within the SCNR, I think, were an increasingly difficult problem for Park Chung Hee to control, and that he was trying to balance one off against the other. I don't think that we ever had access to what really went on in this Junta group, that we would find that every day there was a great deal of bickering and a great deal of tension and a great deal of differences, which put Park Chung Hee in the position of moderator, to try to keep the Junta under his control, and that wasn't easy.

Meanwhile, on June 21, our new Ambassador, Samuel Berger, arrived fresh from his post as Deputy Chief of Mission in Athens. My days as chargé were over. We had already known for two months that he was coming, and it was not a prospect that I particularly welcomed. The Ambassador had a lot of experience in labor and economic issues, and was good at handling them, but he had no experience really on the kind of situation that we faced in Korea -- the political strategic position. In fact, he had no experience in Korea at all. He made it clear from the day of his arrival that his views differed from mine. Whereas I was counseling a continuing policy of friendly reserve in our contacts with the SCNR, Ambassador Berger favored going all out to befriend members of the SCNR, to reassure them of our total unqualified support for them. I warned him that that kind of outgoing position ran the danger of the government taking the bit in its teeth and, for example, locking back up in jail all those Cabinet ministers that we at great length had finally gotten out of jail. He didn't agree. I might say that the Cabinet members were soon back in jail again.

My views were shared by my staff. Berger, in a way, found himself saddled with an Embassy whose viewpoint was not in accord with his own. We felt that he was jumping to conclusions very early without absorbing the full measure of what was going on in Korea. We thought he would have been wiser to size up the situation more carefully before adopting a position, but he was very much of a matter-of-fact, get-down-to-business type of person, and he did not like to sit back and think about things like that. He knew damn well what to do. He had made a name for himself early on as being the labor man who was the entre to the socialist government in Britain when we really didn't know anybody when labor first came in, and he had been dealing with essentially friendly governments in Greece and in Europe. He had similar experiences in New Zealand as labor attaché there. It is also an American tendency that the best way to get what you want is to co-opt. If you are wide open and friendly and supportive, you will get what you want, which doesn't work in many societies. Frankly, I liked some of the things about Berger very much. I liked his directness. He did not ignore me; he did consult me. He would draft telegrams and then pass them to me for my comments. My comments were so numerous, my suggested changes so numerous, that most ambassadors would cease turning to a deputy of that type, but he didn't. He was quite prepared to sit down and argue. So to that extent, I liked him. He also gave me a free hand to continue on, but he obviously wanted a deputy of his own choosing, someone whose views were consistent with his own, and preferably who was new to the scene and therefore did not carry as much intellectual luggage as I carried, and who would be more malleable in terms of his own views. As a matter of fact, he was pretty blunt about this.

One time he said that he attached a great deal of importance to the fact that he was specifically asked by Generals Park Chung Hee and Chang Do Yun that I not accompany the Ambassador on his initial calls on them. He interpreted this to mean that these generals did not wish to deal with

me. He then went on to say he hoped I wouldn't leave too soon, for he needed my counsel during this transition period, but he wanted me to know that if I wished to be looking for a new job, he would not stand in my way.

I accordingly wrote to Walter McConaughy, who set the wheels in motion, and after many, many months of waiting and uncertainty and unhappiness on my part, and many frustrations -- particularly on the part of my wife, who found it rather difficult sometimes to deal with Mrs. Berger -- that after many months, suddenly I was assigned as Consul General in Hong Kong, which was probably the most sought-after position in the Foreign Service -- certainly in East Asia, and I'm forever indebted to Walter McConaughy for all he did to give me support in those difficult times and to land me with such a fine job after Korea. As a matter of fact, that assignment was important in itself in telling the Koreans that the U.S. Government, far from putting me in Coventry after my actions, was honoring me with an even more important assignment.

I worked with Sam Berger from June 21 until my departure from Korea on November 23, five months later. However, in the course of those five months, I was Chargé d'Affaires for about two weeks at one time while Berger went to a Chiefs of Mission meeting, and I also went back to Washington on consultation before I went to Hong Kong. As far as I know, Berger was not assigned to Korea because the coup had happened. This was just a routine assignment for him. As a matter of fact, I was left as Chargé d'Affaires en pied for two months, from mid-April to June, which is longer than most interims.

Let me briefly comment on my staff during my tour as Chargé d'Affaires. I think I was pretty well served by the CIA after the coup, in terms of their ability to foresee. Forestall the coup, no. I am not sure anybody could have done that. That is the kind of thing that is carried out in a way that nobody was ever going to find out about it, if it were to succeed. I did get daily briefings from the CIA, including some fascinating interviews which came to our attention through various ways, of what the coup leaders were saying about me, for example, which, I might say, were very alarming at times. I was a marked man at one point. That is one of the reasons why I had all those bodyguards. So I learned all these things through CIA sources. The ROK CIA, meanwhile, had been established under Kim Chung Peel, and we began to have contacts with them. I think that might have been useful because when our intelligence people work with other intelligence people, there are some useful results that occur from that. It certainly better than their being at war with each other. So there was a development of ties between our CIA and KCIA, even though we didn't trust Kim Chong Pil further than you could throw an anvil.

As I said, there was one very important development that occurred during those last few months that I was in Korea, in which I was the principal actor. One of my closest friends in Korea had been a fellow member of our "economic" club -- a small group that met every week in my house to discuss the economic scene in Korea. In fact, he had come there several times before to talk about the importance that a number of key generals set on a rapprochement between me and General Park. One time, after Berger had arrived, he came to my house with the news that General Park did want to contact me, and Park proposed that an informal confidential meeting be held, during the course of which Park would explain the position he had taken, and most importantly to let me know certain actions he proposed to take in the near future.

I asked Tchah Ken Hee, whom I called Kenny, if Park would prefer to have the meeting with the Ambassador or with the Ambassador and me together. It was very unusual for a Chief of State to have a private meeting with the number two of an embassy. Tchah replied that Park definitely wanted to have this meeting with me alone, and that I was not even to inform the Ambassador. I replied that I had to inform the Ambassador and to have his approval, which I was fairly sure he would give.

I then asked Tchah if Park had, in fact, indicated at any time that I should leave Korea the way the Ambassador had suggested to me. Tchah replied that some of Park's associates so recommended and had tried to convey threats to me so that I would leave, but that situation had recently been completely changed.

Ambassador Berger gave his consent, and on the night of July 12, I and my interpreter were picked up by an unmarked jeep with blinds drawn, and taken to a back-alley restaurant in Seoul. There I was led to a private room, where I met for four hours with Park Chung Hee and his close friend, the mayor of Seoul, Brigadier General Yun Taeil, and a Colonel Cho, serving as their interpreter. My interpreter was Kenneth Campen.

Throughout the evening, Park's manner was friendly, almost affable at times. He asked me, for example, whether he thought I could be his friend, even though he didn't play golf. That kind of joking which was very unusual for him. And forthcoming and direct.

General Park gave a very frank account of the background of the coup and how Chang Do Yun had deceived both Park and Magruder, and under the circumstances, he said he fully understood why General Magruder had acted the way he had. In fact, Park added had he been in Magruder's shoes, he would have done exactly the same thing. He also wanted me to know that my outspoken support for the duly constituted government was correct and proper and in the best long-term interest of Korea. This is an important point that I will come back to again.

I replied that my concern was not on past events, but on the future and, indeed, on the real success of General Park's government. "This is now in our common interest. Let us put the past aside and consider the future." The question really comes down to how his government could develop good support and understanding at home and abroad. I noted that over the past eight days there had been a rapid succession of moves, including many arrests and accusations, together with reports of punitive measures being taken by the Secret Police all over the country. "Things like that," I said, "contribute to apprehensions and misunderstandings both at home and abroad," and I thought that kind of thing helped explain the continuing business stagnation, the lack of foreign investment, and the economic decline. I believed that there couldn't be any degree of economic upsurge until these things were straightened out. Park then gave his indication of his government's intentions to deal with that situation. He said there would be speedy trials and fair trials for all those accused and that many hundreds detained on political charges would be released on July 17. When I asked him about General Lee and Chang Yun being released, he had reasons for not immediately releasing, but indicated that as soon as the young colonels cooled down, that that would be done, which was a clear indication of the problems he faced within the SCNR. He said that orders were being issued to the Army to treat the populous kindly. As to the

return to civilian government, he acknowledged that that was desirable, but could not be done until age-old social evils and corruption and communist infiltration were corrected, but the government would, nevertheless, soon announce a specific date for return of government to civilian hands. Meanwhile, a new cabinet would be announced, half of whose members would be civilians and all military officers would in the course of the next year or so be removed from civil service positions and replaced by honest, competent civilians.

Park also asked me if the United States could provide him with an economic advisor, an American, who would be in his outer office, at his beck and call, and who would supply him with the best counsel on issues related to the development of the economy. I was prepared for that through Kenny Tchah having forewarned me, and I came up with a name -- I've forgotten the name right now -- of a person, and Park agreed to it right away. This was a very important development.

In response to further questions, Park allowed that the power struggle within the SCNR was still unresolved, although he said it was mainly over.

After discussing a number of specific economic and aid issues -- I've forgotten exactly what they all were -- I took the opportunity to raise with General Park something that had been on my mind ever since I was named to Korea, and that was their relationship with Japan. I had felt that if there was to be any real economic recovery in Korea, a constructive relationship with Japan was going to be essential and that Japan's economic upsurge presaged a similar upsurge by Korea. Korea could cash in, in other words, on what Japan was doing. Now that Korea didn't have a civilian government with a parliament or a National Assembly, which would have been so terribly anti-Japanese because it was politically expedient to be anti-Japanese, I thought Park was really in a position to be moving behind the scenes to improve ROK's relationship with Japan. Park was nodding his head, but he was non-committal on that point. I do think I got through to him, though.

I remember leaving that meeting with the impression I had been talking with a man who was deeply motivated. He said at least twice in our conversation that he had staked his life on accomplishing the revolution, and he gave every evidence of really meaning it. Park's most revealing remark of that memorable evening -- during which many bottles of sake were consumed, causing Park to be periodically leaving the room to go you know where -- came as we parted. He turned to me, as he shook hands to say goodbye, and said, "Mr. Green, before leaving, I want you to know that you have done me a great favor."

I was very surprised. I said, "What favor?"

He said, "You made it so difficult for me to pull a coup d'état in this country, that I don't think anybody will ever try it here again. And that is the way I want it to be. You have made it more possible." Of course, I had never really thought of it in those terms, but from his viewpoint, this was really a very telling remark and clearly indicated why he had confidence in me. It was because I had opposed him or anybody else who might suddenly seize power. Now he had confidence in a man like me or my government. Once he was in power, he saw it from an entirely different perspective! That's why, basically, he wanted to have that long meeting with

me. It is in that last final remark. I am confirmed in that view because over the next several weeks, he asked me out several times to go to one of these keerang houses for dinner and watching dances and things like that. It was really rather baffling as to why he asked me out, because he spoke no English and I spoke no Korean. I don't even recall we had an interpreter, or if we did, he wasn't used very much. Because Park just wanted to sit down there in my company and watch the dances and drink saki and be friends. I really got the feeling that the man liked me, and I had come to like him. A strange kind of chemical process that one cannot explain.

This is to be borne out, if I can leap ahead in history, by the fact that after I left Korea, he wrote to me at least once a year. He frequently urged me to visit Korea. In fact, he urged me to do so when I was assigned as Ambassador to Australia in 1973, and I did stop in Korea to visit him, obviously at my expense -- not Korea's expense. But we did establish a kind of rapport between two people who had been at one time at loggerheads.

I think Park was impressed by integrity. The overthrow of a legitimately elected government is a disregard for integrity. That was one of the reasons why I was so appalled by the reactions of many Americans, both in Washington and in the press, about "Green backing the wrong horse," as though our role in international affairs should be playing the main chance, a policy of expediency, rather than a policy of principle. I think that, as I said earlier on, our principles had been too much confined to anti-communism and not enough in affirmative terms of human rights and human responsibilities. The two go closely hand in hand. We also should have supported governments that reflect the will of the people. Our country stands for our willingness to stand by friends in their hour of peril and for our reaffirmation of our commitments to other countries. That is the stuff on which our relationships with other countries are based, and if you debase those in any one country, it spreads and weakens your position everywhere.

Just one final note about my stay in Korea. First of all, Park's promises that he made to me that day weren't all fulfilled. He continued to have difficulties with the SCNR, and it was a long time before many of these things really happened. They did eventually happen, although during his years he never did really return the government to civilian rule -- although he civilianized the government. I do think he gave Korea a good government. Some will dispute that, but on balance, I think he certainly gave Korea enough stability that it was able, during the next 20 years, to score the most remarkable economic progress and growth rates of any country in the world at any time in history. So in that sense of the word, he succeeded.

I often thought to myself of those words in Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem, "Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide/Then it is the brave man chooseth and the coward stands aside." That line kept reverberating through my mind all during those difficult May days. It was a very emotional experience to be placed in the position that I was. It was very easy to see things in terms of those who are for us and those who are against us. I fought against that, because I realized that if there was going to be any solution in Korea, there was going to have to be a meeting of all meetings. There was going to have to be a reconciliation.

I was also mindful of something that has been a dominant consideration in my mind ever since I joined the ranks of diplomacy. People question how far the United States should go in telling other countries what to do. To what extent does this confront nationalism, the strongest force in

any country? How do we deal with a country like Korea, where we had such enormous responsibility and, in those days, were footing the bill, and we had commitments of forces and all that, and had to defend them with the United Nations? How do we go about dealing with the government of a country like that, where our interests are just about as strong as theirs and yet they won't act unless you press them pretty hard, because you are accustomed to do things that are not, from their viewpoint, popular? And to the extent that they accept your urgings, they weaken themselves in the eyes of their own people, and therefore, in the long run, you may be bringing them down, rather than strengthening their hand.

This is a dilemma. I tried to square that circle many ways. I mentioned earlier on how we treated Chang Yun. We were aware of this danger, but evidently partly due to our persistence in pressing him on issues, partly due to his own lack of stature and gumption and strength, will, and partly due the growing discontent, he fell. Korea has that combination of poverty and lots of university graduates, and that can be a very dangerous brew, because dissatisfied intellectuals tend to take to the streets. They tend to do something about it, whereas the oppressed masses or ghettos full of poor people don't in themselves constitute a challenge to authority. But well-educated graduates who cannot find jobs with their skills and who are aware of who are the fat cats and the corrupt elements in their society, they are going to be taking to the streets, and they are going to find a lot of people that are going to follow them.

In the case of the military, there was this group of disgruntled officers, and it was they, in the last analysis, who were really the coup itself. Park Chung Hee was using this discontent to bring about a new order in Korea along the lines that he mentioned to me in our conversation. In other words, he was deeply motivated to carry certain reforms, he had this group of discontented younger officers, he used their force to get the power, to get through the things he wanted to do, whatever they were, and he succeeded.

Just one last point about my departure. I left Korea with many regrets, with many feelings of deep attachment. When you have been through that much together, your attachment to your colleagues and friends that you were leaving, people like Don Renard, who had worked with me hand in hand, and others, was a personal relationship, too, that you hated to see end. Don Renard had a very emotional attachment to the democratic government and democratic process in Korea. He was very much opposed to the military coup. He was not the kind of person that was prepared to forgive and forget. His position as head of the political section enabled him to retain that position for a long, long time.

My position as Chargé d'Affaires and later on as Assistant Secretary of State in charge of that area did not permit me to indulge in emotional feelings about the situation in Korea. I also had this personal contact with Park Chung Hee at the end, and as you can see, it frankly left me with a feeling of personal friendship for the man, despite what he had done to democracy in Korea. This doesn't mean that I rationalized that the coup d'état was a good thing, because God knows Korea was to go through all kinds of turmoil -- still is -- over return to civilian rule. But I did learn a lot from those two years in Korea about human nature and how governments operate, including my own.

But I was really glad to get on to a new job. I felt that my mission really was over, that a new

ambassador was prepared to follow a different line which may or may not have been the wisest thing. I wasn't able to follow Korean events closely after that, although I was to revisit Korea many times when I was Assistant Secretary and in other capacities, and most recently on population issues. I had long been concerned with that as being one of Korea's principal problems.

In my meeting in 1982 with the Korean Prime Minister, he said to me, in response to my question of what he thought the two greatest dangers were that Korea faced, he said, after a moment's reflection, "A world business recession that lasts more than two years, and the fact that 40% of the population of Korea lives in the city or around the city of Seoul, which is only 20 miles south of the DMZ." Korea had come a long way. Early on, that question was always answered in terms of communism, anti-communism, or the north and the south struggle. Now it was expressed in terms of international economic issues, and in terms of demographic cum over-urbanization cum threat terms. Korea had indeed come a long way.

To get back to my narrative, my wife and I and our ten-year-old son Brandon, left Korea for Hong Kong on Thanksgiving day. The fact that we were flying to Hong Kong on Korea Airlines -- at that time a pretty shoddy outfit with a very low international reputation, at least in international aviation -- drew very favorable front-page notice in all the Korean papers -- that my family should risk their lives in that plane, as it were!

The Kimpo Airport was thronged with reporters to interview me on my last day, and I told them a bit about my views on all the difficult, challenging times that I endured, and yet my continuing respect, indeed, affection, for the Korean people. But I said it had been a very aging process. I had arrived in Korea in early 1960, 20 years younger than the President of the United States, and here I was leaving almost two years later, one year older than the President of the United States. I said, "That's how much I have aged."

JAMES A. KLEMSTINE
Korean Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1959-1961)

James A. Klemstine was born in Pennsylvania in 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree from Yale University. He served in the U.S. Army from 1952-1954 and entered the Foreign Service in 1956. Mr. Klemstine's career included assignments to Germany, the Soviet Union, China (Taiwan), and Korea. He was interviewed by Jeff Broadwater on April 15, 1993.

KLEMSTINE: I returned to Washington in December of 1958, and I started work on the Korean desk in 1959 and stayed there until the fall of 1961. I was on the desk when there a student revolt in April of 1960 in Korea followed shortly by Syngman Rhee's resignation. That was probably the one area of high politics which I had something to do with. In March-April of 1960, Rhee rigged the presidential elections in Korea. This was sort of a model of what happened with

Marcos in the Philippines much later. There were three of us on the Korea desk at the time -- the bureaucracy wasn't as big a bureaucracy in the 1950s and 1960s as it became in the late 1970s and 1980s. We were sending memoranda up to the Secretary, who was Herter at that time, and also to J. Graham Parsons who was Assistant Secretary of Far Eastern Affairs. We were feeding him this information about the riots, and the problems that Rhee was having in maintaining control. And then sometime in April, Rhee asked for strong U.S. backing. Our Ambassador was Walter McConaughy, who later was my Ambassador in Taipei. We were able to persuade J. Graham Parsons to ditch Rhee. Another individual, Phil Manhard, and myself, drafted an Aide Memoir to McConaughy saying that he should tell Rhee that the United States no longer supported him, but we would offer him asylum in Hawaii.

We did not clear that with the White House. Manhard took it up to Secretary Herter, and surprisingly the White House agreed within a very short time, and the Aide Memoire went out that night. And as a result McConaughy saw Rhee, and he subsequently resigned. We weren't surprised therefore when Rhee resigned. The desk was at that time one of the instigators of forcing him out. In fact, it was very interesting after that. Sam Lane, who was head of the desk at that time, said that we were lucky because the former Far Eastern Secretary, Walter Robinson, who was an old pal of Rhee, would never have permitted us to get away with that. He thought that if we had tried it, we probably would have all been out on your ears.

Robinson was a real hardliner. Parsons was a much more flexible individual. And then again, Secretary Herter was also very flexible. And as I say, the White House went along with it in a very short time.

Rhee's running mate in that election was Lee Ky Bong who was, I think, the Speaker of the National Assembly at that time. His opponent was PoSun Yun. Lee Ky Bong died during the uprising, and there seems to be some question as to whether he committed suicide or whether he was assassinated. After Rhee resigned, PoSun Yun took over for about a year, and then came the military coup, which came as a surprise to us. The consensus in Washington was that Chang Myon, the Prime Minister, was a weak individual. There was a sort of feeling that there wasn't too much we could do. In fact, since he was a weak leader, some thought that perhaps the military could be better. There were telegrams going back and forth from Korea, and I do remember somehow that we had several meetings and the consensus finally was that there was not really too much we could do at that time, or wanted to do, to reverse the coup.

Park Chung Hee, who became the President after the coup, was a good man for Korea. Many people don't like that idea, but Park was a good man. He was the man that put the country on its right course. Park made a de facto agreement with the businessmen of Korea; i.e. that he would give them full rein to develop the country if they stayed out of politics. I once did a paper for Duke University comparing Park and Ne Win in Burma, and the differences between the two were like day and night. As a result of Park, Korea has advanced. Ne Win has driven Burma into the ground.

In 1960 I don't think there was too strong a threat from North Korea. Actually there was a stronger concern during the incident in 1976 just before I went out to Seoul when the axe incident took place in the DMZ. There seemed to be at that time more fear of a clash than in the

1960s when the North Koreans were quiet. Then the North Koreans were feeling that over time South Korea would fall to them. In 1960 the conventional wisdom in Washington, and everywhere else, was that South Korea was a state that could not economically survive. It is hard to think of it now, but I can still remember people talking about giving aid forever and there was not much hope for this country. When Korea was divided, the industry went into North Korea. That is what the Japanese had built up along the Yalu. The South was agricultural. And then the Korean War came along and what little bit of industry that had been built up had been decimated and Rhee and his cohorts, a corrupt outfit, were milking the country anyhow. So the conventional wisdom was that South Korea was going to be a burden on us, as I say, at least during our lifetime. And I think the North at that time sort of felt the same way. They were doing fairly well in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the result of aid from China and the Soviet Union -- which were just at the beginning of the Chinese and the Soviets dislike of each other, their ideological conflict, and both were vying for North Korean support. As a result Kim Il-Sung was able to play off one side against the other. North Korea, as I said, at least when I was on the desk, was economically much more advanced than the South.

What happened in the 1970s was that the South started to develop, had overtaken the North, and was moving ahead. The North was starting to lag behind, and I think it was becoming frustrating to them since in the 1960s they had gambled on the South falling as a plum in their hands over time, and believed that we would just give up supporting them. But in 1970s they realized that the South was on its own, and was growing so much that there was no likelihood of a South downfall except by military force.

FRANK D. CORREL
Commodity Import Program Officer, USAID
Seoul (1959-1962)

Frank D. Correl was born in Germany in 1929. He received his BS from Rider College in 1950, and his MA from Columbia University in 1955. He served in the US Army from 1953 to 1955. His postings include South Korea, Vietnam, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Lesotho, and Zambia. W. Haven North interviewed him on September 29, 1990

CORREL: Maybe because of my previous government service or whatever, I got sent after only two and a half months to Korea. I was earmarked to become a Special Assistant to the Mission Director. At the time, if Korea wasn't the biggest mission we had in the world, it was one of the biggest, because there were over 500 employees including contractors there. The Mission Director at the time that I was hired, was a fellow named Bill Warne, but as it happened in AID and its predecessors, by the time I got to Korea, Warne had left and there was no longer that job for me. To my everlasting benefit, I was immediately put into an operational job in the Program Office in that big mission in Seoul. My job was to deal with so-called non-project assistance, the commodity import program. This consisted of what was called the Saleable Dollars Program. Thereby, dollars were sold for local currency to Korean end users and middlemen importers to purchase specified commodities for the Korean civil economy, and thereby mobilize local

currency to be used for the defense effort.

Q: What was the situation in Korea at that time?

CORREL: When I arrived in May of 1959, things were quiet, but there was the constant menace of the North Koreans hanging over the whole situation. Seoul still showed extensive damage from the Korean War that had ended six years earlier. We were constantly reminded of the very close presence of the North Koreans. The economy was at a very modest level. If I remember correctly, their total earnings from exports were something like \$16 million. In addition to that, they earned foreign exchange from sales of commodities and services to the U.N. forces, largely American, but there still were Turks and some others around. The economy in Korea had absolutely no resemblance to what subsequently happened when it just burst forth into one of the giants on Earth. In Seoul itself, conditions were relatively primitive. The Koreans relied a great deal on castoff equipment. Most motor vehicles were rehabilitated jeeps. They got streetcars from the U.S. They had some old rolling stock for the trains. If you took the train from Seoul down to Pusan in the South, it was an all-night trip, not a particularly comfortable one. I understand today you can do it by road in a couple of hours. The people were still quite poor. There was some business, but generally they were picking themselves up by their bootstraps. The government was in bad shape. One of the heroes of the time when the Koreans were under Japanese occupation, Syngman Rhee, had come back to Korea, become President and had established a very authoritarian regime. The U.S. policy was to cater to that regime and as a result, a number of things were happening in that country that I don't think helped create stability.

Q: Such as?

CORREL: The Rhee government was very repressive and in 1960 there were student demonstrations, which I think the U.S. establishment tended to discount. Certainly the theme of briefings we got, both from Embassy and senior AID people, were that this unrest was considered a blot on the record of an otherwise deserving country, that these people didn't really know what was good for them and so on. It made a lot of us, including junior officers like myself, very uncomfortable, because we did have extensive contact with Koreans at various levels. We could see or hear of people who were having a very hard time. Working on the non-project program, I could see for myself that basically the system of auctions of dollars was rigged so that the cronies of the party were getting the lion's share if not just about all of the money. Essentially, even though this was supposed to generate currency to run a fair defense effort, we were getting only 30, 40 cents on the dollar and I just didn't see how that could be in the U.S. interest.

Q: How was the allocation process? You were much involved, I guess, in the allocations. What scale of resources are we talking about that you were handling in the non -project assistance?

CORREL: In rough terms, it was between a hundred and a hundred and fifty million dollars a year as I recall. Then, on top of that came a PL480 Title One sales program (government-to-government sales of agricultural commodities), which technically we in USAID didn't have responsibility for, but we had a very good relationship with the office over at the Embassy where

that was handled. There was a PL480 Officer over there, a woman by the name of Elsie Quick, with whom I became very friendly and we ended up coordinating the two programs as if they were the same. I remember returning on home leave in 1961 and the U.S. customs agent in New York asking me how much money I'd spent while I was out of the country. I was able to count it up and say, half a billion dollars. So, that's what we programmed in two years.

One very interesting thing about this program, if I may just make a quick aside, is that we had 500 plus people in that mission, but they were only three of us Americans, plus one Korean who handled the non-project program, which was far greater than anything else that the mission had. Everybody else was concerned about project assistance and other things. Somehow, the four of us were very much left alone to handle this program and we had very little in the way of accountability or guidance as to how to allocate the money. We based our decisions on analysis that we did ourselves. We programmed the money and negotiated with our Korean counterparts. When some kind of question developed, only then did we really have very much attention from the Front Office (Ambassador's Office), at least in the first couple of years that I was there. The actual allocation process consisted of a joint Korean and USAID Committee called The Saleables Review Committee. We were not called USAID at the time, we were the Office of the Economic Coordinator of the United Nations Command in Korea. We would meet with people from the Ministry of Reconstruction (MOR), which later became the Economic Planning Board, and they'd have a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as a member of the committee on their side. We were sparring with them and reaching agreement on how to allocate all these dollars. We had a couple of special situations. One of them, and a very important one, was imports of petroleum and petroleum products (POL). POL was not imported commercially, but by the U.N. command, i.e. the U.S. Military, and then was allocated to the Korean civil economy. Civil economy imports were covered by our non-project program within the total program level. Thus, large POL imports would have reduced availabilities of funds for other imports. This was one of the key issues in our allocation process, because the Korean government's policy, especially in the days of the Syngman Rhee government, was to keep that POL allocation down at rock bottom levels. This was because, essentially, they were stealing the rest from the military, and that was an official government policy that a Korean official once admitted to me. When I reported this to the Commanding General of the U.N. forces at the time and to the Mission Director, they were absolutely flabbergasted that that was the case.

Q: I don't understand. What was the process?

CORREL: Well, we found out that the Koreans had tapped the POL supply line in Incheon Harbor and were siphoning off supplies. Further, the various commodities in military stocks were stored at different bases all over Korea and were being stolen there. They were generally in drums or containers like that. So, what would happen is, that if let's say you had a quarterly allocation of 25 million dollars for the total commodity import program, of which \$10 million was needed for POL, the Koreans would try to set the quarterly level for POL at only five million, figuring they could steal the rest. Then they would want to program other commodities. Thus, in effect, if they were successful in persuading us to go along, they would get a lot more than the official program level, namely what they were able to acquire "informally" in the way of POL. On the other hand, if we made them program POL at realistic levels, they would receive fewer other commodities. It was this whole POL issue that probably took, if not half the time of

our deliberations, an awful lot of time.

Q: Were there any action taken by your leaders when you reported it?

CORREL: No, not that I ever knew, at the time at least. The general was very offended that his military was being criticized for not exercising whatever caution was necessary. He pushed for us to increase civil economy POL allocations so that the thefts would not occur, a most unrealistic view since the stolen supplies came at little or no cost to the Koreans. Action was eventually taken by a subsequent general, General Carter Magruder, who unlike his predecessor, was very interested in AID and what we were doing there, and who once invited me to come and give him a briefing on how this whole commodity import program worked.

Q: How did you decide on how to allocate the resources in the non-project assistance?

CORREL: We would analyze the situation with regard to specific commodities. That might be through travel, visiting plants, conferring with businessmen, and reviewing newspaper reports and documents. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry would provide justification for the things they were requesting. I had a Korean assistant, a commodity analyst who went out and came back with data. We also reviewed past import and consumption levels, i.e., historic levels or what kind of record had been established over recent years.

Q: What were the major categories or commodities?

CORREL: Of the non-PL480 stuff, beside POL, a very important thing was fertilizer. We had production materials, machinery and equipment, but no finished consumer goods. We had a long list of commodities.

Q: Was there a positive or a negative list which you used to characterize these programs?

CORREL: We had a positive list defined by program category. I mentioned fertilizer and POL. There were also a number of industrial chemicals, textile materials that were not covered by PL480, such as tire cord, logs and lumber, pulp and paper, iron and steel, non metallic minerals, non-ferrous metals, machinery and scientific equipment, medicines, medical equipment, even some rubber and sugar in those days. This would have been fiscal year 1963 when we still had world-wide procurement.

Q: Did you track any of these as you imported them as to where they went and how they were used?

CORREL: Yes, we did. But, before we did that, we would get together with the Koreans and decide on how these were to be allocated, as between end-users and traders or middlemen. They were all made available at a Bank of Korea auction, but in the case of quotas allotted to end users, they generally got together to fix up the quotas before hand, so the bidding was rigged. This was a problem when you had an unrealistic exchange rate. In the case of the stuff where there was competition, you had genuine auctions, namely among traders. Some allocations were made partly to traders and partly to end users. In this case, the percentages could be very

important, and it took a lot of our time to calculate this. As far as actually tracking the commodities themselves, it was more on a spot basis than anything else. We had a policy of going around the country visiting different plants and seeing how the stuff was stored and how it was being used. But, we ourselves did not have that extensive an end use checking capability. There was some of it. But, given the relative isolation of Korea, once the stuff was in the country and given the kind of materials they were, they generally ended up in the right place. It was the terms under which they ended up that were probably more important. It could be that some commodities were being made available very cheaply and this would result in an undue skimming-off of profits by the government party and by insiders rather than low prices in the civil economy.

Q: There was a system of import controls, I suppose, at that time within which you were operating. It wasn't a free foreign exchange environment.

CORREL: Absolutely not. Foreign exchange was extremely short, yes, and most of it came from us.

Q: Were you involved in issues over who got what and how the licenses were issued and all that?

CORREL: Very much so.

Q: Some people say, it's not particularly important in non-project assistance, it's just the flow of resources, but other people ask: "what was the impact?" Did you ever have a sense or an evaluation of what was accomplished by these commodities in getting businesses going or servicing the agricultural sector with fertilizer. Did you have any sense of impact of the program apart from just providing foreign exchange?

CORREL: I would say from the time I arrived in 1959 to the time that I left, which was October of 1962, there were a couple of very important developments in Korea. Number one, Syngman Rhee's government was overthrown in April of 1960. After that, there was a year's political uncertainty, which then resulted in a military coup. That would have been May of '61. During this time, notwithstanding these political uncertainties, there was a constant growing of Korean industrial capacity, manufacturing capacity, and there were more and more products available in the market places. I spent quite a bit of time looking around at markets, factories, etc. We visited plants that were starting up and producing for export. One that is particularly in my memory is the Gold Star Electronic Company. They started by making little radios, but they subsequently became one of the industrial giants in Korea. On my last trip, just before I left Korea, I visited a site where they were just beginning to build the Hyundai shipyard, which became an industrial complex that went on to make cars and everything else. We never had a formal evaluation during my three years in Korea that I remember. But, I know that there was evidence all over the place that things were really catching on in Korea and that more and more enterprises were getting started and expanding and supplying goods, both for export and for domestic consumption.

Q: Were some of these Korean giant businesses ones that we were supporting with this program in our early days?

CORREL: Well, in those days, the big giants, if there were any, were in textiles. They certainly were being supported by the U.S. government, largely through PL480, but also through textile machinery and parts. We had no policy that the big giants had to fend for themselves and that we were only interested in small business. The whole idea of support for the small farmer, small business, the concept of as wide participation as possible, didn't come until later, although we had things in the system that permitted a relatively modest trader to participate in it and act as distribution to small enterprises.

Q: But, you were able to recognize some of the successful companies, the ones that we were providing resources to in the early period?

CORREL: Certainly among the textile companies, yes.

Q: But, in other areas?

CORREL: Other than that, there weren't any big ones at the time.

Q: I see.

CORREL: Gold Star, as I remember the plant, looked like the sort of thing you'd see up on the road outside of Harper's Ferry somewhere, a machine shop. They were turning out these little radios, the kind that had been popular in the United States about 10 years earlier.

Q: Were we providing any support for this activity?

CORREL: They were getting some raw material from us.

Q: Was there any technical assistance tied in with these commodities?

CORREL: Only insofar as these products went to an organization. In the case of agricultural development, we had various projects, but there was little if any coordination between U.S. project and non-project assistance. But, the idea that somebody was buying a million dollars worth of machinery and that we in USAID would have somebody to assist in the using of that machinery or financing that, that was done through the supplier of the machinery. Also, as you can probably tell from the list of those commodities, in those days, we had worldwide procurement. Otherwise, how could we have furnished rubber? Most of the programmed funds were not going to the United States.

Q: I see. I hadn't realized that.

CORREL: The limited worldwide procurement didn't come until after 1962.

Q: Was this non-project assistance linked to policy reform measures, to policy dialogues? Was there any thought of linkage in terms of reform measures and conditionality?

CORREL: Let's put it this way: My memory fails me if there was. The only kind of policy

reform that I remember had to do with opening the economy more to competition, and quite honestly the initiative came from us in our little office. I don't recall that in my time the commodity import program was ever used to encourage policy reform. It was essentially viewed from the U.S. side, officially at top-side, as a means of supplying resources for the civil economy and generating local currency for the defense effort.

Q: It wasn't involved in any exchange rate reform at that point?

CORREL: During the Syngman Rhee days, the U.S. government did not seem to exercise any pressure for them to reform the exchange rate. Later on, there was exchange rate revision. I think the U.S. changed its position at some point, but the Koreans themselves realized they weren't getting anywhere. The rate was 500 Huan to one dollar when I got there, which was totally unrealistic, and then went to 650 to one, which was just about as unrealistic. After Rhee was gone, it went to 1,300. At that point, we actually had a sensible opportunity there, and at 1,300 things started thriving.

Q: Did you get to know the Koreans and how did you find them to work with and socialize with?

CORREL: I got to know the Koreans largely through my office and socialization was a very interesting experience. There were friendly relations, especially with one of the people from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with whom we dealt with a great deal on commodity justification and getting information on the economy. We visited each other's homes. Much of the Korean entertainment was of a predictable variety. I don't suppose it is any different now than it was at that time. Usually, one was invited after work to a party in a restaurant somewhere where there is a lengthy dinner and lots of talking and relaxed informality in contrast to rather stilted formal meetings. Then, there were Kisaeng girls, which are sort of the same idea as the Japanese geishas who help entertain. In my case, they helped me to use the almost-knitting-needle-like chopsticks, occasionally even having to feed me. In such parties, which I reciprocated by dinners at the big officers' club on the Yongsan base, one got to know these people reasonably well without establishing a close relationship. I think the key element in those days was to get to the point of where they would feel free to come to your house and maybe bring their wife with them and vice versa. We did achieve that to a considerable degree, which I won't say is unusual, but it wasn't that terribly frequent. Some of the USAID project technicians, especially again in agriculture, had very good relationships with their Korean counterparts. Other than Korean counterparts, I know that we took a very lively interest in the Korean Branch, or the Royal Asiatic Society, which put on trips to different places in Korea, even outside of Korea. There, one might run into people at museums, cultural events, and things like that. I did have a number of more casual Korean friends and acquaintances whom I'd see from time to time.

Q: Did you have much dealing with the Embassy in that time?

CORREL: Yes, especially with the PL480 section, Miss Quick, and then the economic section where we had reasonably good relations. Other than that, we didn't have much contact with the Embassy, except during periods of unrest.

Q: Did you get signals to deal with something from a political point of view or respond to a

certain person though the commodity program? In other words, did you get political pressure from the Ambassador or others on resource allocations?

CORREL: It's hard to believe when considering what happened afterwards, but I do not recall that we were ever under any kind of political pressure with that program, with the exception of the good general complaining that we were not importing enough petroleum. If anyone contacted the Ambassador about a larger allocation of, say, cotton, I certainly never heard of it. It didn't happen with regard to our program. I would say that we had a very substantial free hand and again, people seemed to be focusing on other things. They were focusing on the military situation; they were focusing on project assistance and that's what kept our Mission Director and his Deputy occupied much of the time.

Things changed in the summer of 1961 when the Mission Director left, and Jim Killen arrived to take his place. Killen started taking a somewhat broader interest in the Mission. He gave the clear impression that his main interest was to cut activities and cut the number of people and there were very substantial reductions. But actually, I think Killen was very concerned about the quality of the program and its contents. Unfortunately, at the same time, I had an immediate boss whose approach basically was that we were really interfering much too much in the process of this resource allocation and we should let the Koreans do it.

Q: Did you share that view?

CORREL: I most certainly did not and objected quite vigorously.

Q: Why?

CORREL: Because, basically I felt that if the Koreans with their political, cultural, and individual economic pressures allocated the funds there would be a number of things happening that would not achieve our stated objectives of developing a stronger civil economy and generate support for the defense effort. It was a question of trying to get a free economy going, rather than one that consisted of preferred suppliers who were on the scene and profited handsomely from the status quo. We felt that with the kind of resources we had, the development of a free economy with true competition was of critical importance for the future of that country. Essentially, I think my chief's position was that this stuff was basically of no relevance, the most important thing was, get rid of the dollars and be done with it. This man's tour ended just before a so-called installment sale of these dollars took place. All of a sudden, the entire allocation went "on a weekend" and there was no money left. I had gone on leave and when I came back, my Chief had gone and the dollars had gone. I had written an analysis beforehand as to what I thought would happen under that policy. Mission Director Killen, who had sort of put me in a corner with my stupid views, called me up and asked me to come see him. Let's say that from that time on, he and I had a very close professional and personally friendly relationship.

Q: Good. How did you find the mission as a place to work?

CORREL: A very mixed bag. I was very uncomfortable in some respects, because there were so many people who seemed to be either going off on a tangent or at the very fringes of programs. I

just felt that the program was much too widely scattered and that supervision either wasn't adequate or couldn't be adequate. I met some very impressive people there, but also a type of person, who I was told was considered a "stateside reject," and I agreed. Fortunately, there weren't all that many of them.

Q: What was that?

CORREL: A "stateside reject" was somebody who managed to get a job with AID when they couldn't get a job elsewhere in the United States. Some of them were in leading positions within the Mission. But, changes came, some inaugurated by Jim Killen, and others took place naturally. There seemed to be an increase in the overall quality of the leadership or the middle leadership of that Mission. I found that there were some people who I really came to respect very highly, who were doing very effective work in their particular areas in Korea, and who I had the pleasure of running into again elsewhere in the world as I went through my AID career.

Q: Looking back on that time, what would you say were the principal characteristics of the Korean situation, society and so on that led to the tremendous growth and development that people hadn't anticipated in the early days?

CORREL: Well, I think the Koreans have been used to a great deal of hardship. They had a terrible Japanese occupation. It was the kind of country where many people lived literally at the margin and had to work awfully hard for their livelihood. I think that as more resources became available and as opportunities arose, they seized their chance. At the same time, I think the Park Chung-Hee government, like earlier ones, maintained a very strict discipline and really managed to get an awful lot of work out of the people. In my mind, the thing that made the Korean economy take off was the Vietnam War. I think that the Vietnam War gave Korea a chance to produce much more for the export market, i.e. the U.S. and elsewhere in Asia, than before, and under favorable conditions. I think that the Vietnam War, more than anything else was a key catalyst in how that economy took off. We saw some very nice positive developments in '62, even a little earlier, but nothing like what happened afterwards. And, of course, the Koreans jumped right in when the United States started getting into Vietnam in a very big way.

Q: And, that was in the early '70s?

CORREL: No. I think the Koreans started supplying the U.S. forces when things started really expanding, in '65 maybe. Then, of course they had Korean troops and supporting personnel in Vietnam. I think they jumped at the chance. I know that wouldn't account for all of this tremendous economic activity, but I think it provided the spark.

Q: Did you see anything in the Korean culture or society that seemed to support this growth?

CORREL: The combination of very great diligence and discipline and being used to a very modest lifestyle.

Q: I see. Well, to what extent do you think that the U.S. assistance program made a difference in enabling Korea to take off like it did?

CORREL: I think that the U.S. aid program provided them a tremendous resource pool that they would have had absolutely no chance of otherwise getting. In fact, it was the kind of thing that we kept thinking about constantly in our non-project program. And, that was to make that resource make a real difference for this country. Don't just dump it in there to generate money. A non-project program can do double duty, which I think was an unusual concept at the time. I think the project program in a number of key elements made a big difference. For one thing is, it got Koreans out of the country to get training that wasn't available there. The Koreans, unlike some other countries' nationals, came back, went to work and applied their knowledge. I think the exposure to the U.S. education system and to the U.S. generally, was of critical importance in the Korean development and they were concerned to exploit it. It's interesting to see how many Koreans have left in the many years since I left there - '62 to '98, that's 36 years. Now, there are a lot of Koreans in this country. But, that wasn't the case in the '60s. They were working in Korea then. Whatever immigration there was came later.

Q: Well, anything else on your Korean experience that you want to add at this point?

CORREL: Well, it was my first overseas tour for the U.S. government. I think that, until I became a Mission Director, it was the best job I have had; it was the most responsible job I have had; it taught me a tremendous amount; it gave me a great deal of confidence in dealing with people from other countries. I think that I had a greater sense of accomplishment with regard to that job, other than the time that I spent in the doghouse at the Mission, than most other jobs gave me in AID. Regrettably, during my career, I never returned there. I was not able to see for myself at first hand what happened.

Q: You never returned?

CORREL: I have never been back there and it is one of the genuine regrets of my AID career and subsequent life. It was an incredibly valuable learning experience and it was a doing experience and I deeply appreciated it all.

I'd like to go back to a couple of things in what we covered in our last discussion. One thing with regard to the non-project program in Korea was the need to learn and know the details. I really wish to underline this because it was so important and had a lot to do with how I came to view my subsequent AID work. I must stress the whole question of the relations with the Koreans and the kind of culture of bribery and corruption that existed there at all levels, much of which managed to get completely past the technicians and leadership of USAID. I know from some of my discussions with the USAID leadership and with other AID employees that they didn't have the faintest idea of things like that. For example, take the allocation of the commodities, even at the quarterly levels. Regarding percentages as between traders and end-users, even small numbers were of critical importance. This was brought home to me one time when my Korean assistant, with whom I had established a very close and productive working relationship, told me about an endeavor made by some people who had come to see me to "present their case" for an increase in a commodity allocation. Under their proposal a ten percent switch between end user and trader was to be effected on a procurement authorization of a couple of hundred thousand dollars. They were basically fishing to find out if I would accept a bribe equal to five thousand

dollars on what, to us, seemed like an almost insignificant amount of money. I personally feel that since we were in the business of supposedly creating a stronger civil economy in Korea, a fairly significant presence by us - Program Officers, Commodity Management Officers, or whatever you wanted to call it - was very important and that by and by as people started understanding the rules, we could lessen the extent to which we involved ourselves to such a degree.

I'd also like to mention that during the period May, 1959 through the beginning of October, 1962 we went through two changes of government: one dramatic, drawn out collapse of government, which removed Syngman Rhee after a great deal of violence; followed by a period of about one year where the Korean government was trying to find a level from which it could effectively operate, which was brought to a close with a coup by the Army, headed by Park Chung Hee. We were operating in a very unstable political situation. We were able to work effectively with the Koreans to achieve a more effective exchange rate and we then had a currency reform, which was intended to take a lot of excess money out of circulation, which it did up to a point, I believe. I don't honestly know, because I think that there were a number of back-door ways that people could make the exchanges on more favorable terms than generally permitted from the old currency to the new. Certainly, on the basis of the activities that I saw and heard about, I believe there was a great deal of collusion at higher levels. This was after Park Chung Hee had come to power. So, it wasn't just the kind of thing that might have happened under a less well-organized government. Unfortunately, I'm familiar with at least one example of an attempt by a senior USAID Officer to profit from the exchange rate through inside information connections and things like that. Quite honestly, I'm pleased to say that my colleagues and our program managed to avoid getting involved in things like that. That's Korea.

ROBERT G. RICH, JR.
Political Officer
Seoul (1959-1962)

Ambassador Robert G. Rich, Jr. was born in Florida in 1930. He attended the University of Florida and Cornell University. Ambassador Rich entered the Foreign Service in 1957 and during his career has served in Korea, Indonesia, Trinidad, the Philippines and was ambassador to Belize in addition to various assignments in the State Department. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1994.

Q: After your tour in the Executive Secretariat, you were assigned to the Embassy in Seoul in 1960. What did you do in the embassy?

RICH: Actually, I went out in late 1959 as a junior political officer at the time the embassy was beefing up its political staff to observe the spring 1960 presidential elections. I overlapped for several months with the officer that I would eventually succeed because of this effort to have additional hands and talent on the scene for that election period. Personally, I was responsible for a couple of provinces in the middle of South Korea, the Chungchong provinces, in which I

traveled extensively and observed the campaign and the campaigners. I came to know at that time several important members of the opposition party that later became cabinet members in the first post-Rhee government. However, the defining period was the election itself. Rhee, of course, was the first president of the Republic of Korea after World War II. He was an American-educated man with an Austrian wife and a very dominant personality. Korea had adopted a republican form of government, somewhat on the pattern of the United States, and the ideas of democracy were being instilled in schools, although I must say at the top there was more form than substance to the democracy at that phase. It was still a rather authoritarian government based on authoritarian institutions and very hierarchal cultural traditions.

One strange thing about the constitution in Korea at that time was that the president and vice president were elected on separate ballots. In the immediately preceding period, Rhee's vice president had been a member of an opposition party, a situation which he found intolerable and with which he wasn't going to put up. A great deal of the focus in the 1960 election was on the vice presidential campaign. One thought that Rhee, himself, wasn't in any danger of being defeated. He was the father of his country, so to speak, although Korea was still very devastated from the Korean War and a poverty stricken nation of perhaps a \$100 *per capita* income in 1960. This was quite a contrast with the dynamic Korean society approaching \$10,000 *per capita* GNP today.

The presidential candidate running in opposition to Rhee actually died of natural causes after the deadline for filing a new candidacy, leaving Rhee himself uncontested for a new term. This threw all of the race really into the vice presidency, and there were strong-armed tactics used. Rhee's party, the Liberal Party at that time, was well-organized down through the countryside, but was not adverse to using sticks and strong-armed methods as well as a great deal of money which passed from hand to hand in the election campaign. In those days, money was passed out in white envelopes, and a lot of free alcoholic beverages and other goodies were dispensed.

Rhee's running mate was declared the winner in the election, but it was clear to us that he had not. There were UNCURK observers (UN Commission for the Unification of the Republic of Korea), in which Australia, New Zealand and others were participating, plus the large American embassy observer team. It was clear to all of us outside observers that the vice presidential vote had been rigged. Many ballot boxes were stolen or stuffed. This was widely enough known among the general public that the students came out and protested. It is striking that they did, but perhaps understandable because it was among the schools that democracy had really taken hold. Students had become used to electing their own leaders, their own officers, and they thought that what they were being taught about democracy was supposed to be real. So there were student demonstrations, initially not in Seoul but down south in the peninsula.

It started with high school students rather than in the colleges, and the student demonstrations were put down rather brutally. That might have been the end of it except that a couple of days later the body of a young lad was dredged up by a fisherman in the Bay of Mokpo with a tear gas grenade projectile imbedded in his skull. This was a tragic case and it was clear that he had been killed by the riot police, almost certainly not on purpose, but they had tried to hide the event and dispose of the body. That sparked a general outpouring of student demonstrations which spread to the university level and then spread up the peninsula to Seoul. What was being demanded was

not that Rhee step down but that there be a recount of the election for the vice presidency and apologies for the police brutality and the other brutalities that had occurred during the election period.

Rhee at that time depended on a police force that was not gentle. The regime had also organized university students to demonstrate in ordered cadres against the United States. Whenever the Korean government wanted to make it clear that they didn't like something that the United States was asking it to do, there were organized demonstrations against the American embassy. Student marshals actually formed battalions and classes to march against the American embassy from time to time. Suddenly this mechanism which had been created as a tool of government was unleashed on behalf of the people themselves, and the students rose up in what has become known in Korean history and folklore as the April Revolution of 1960 in which the students poured into the streets. Seoul at that time was a city of a little over two million people, although a city of 13 million today. We estimated that at the height of the demonstrations, probably one million of those two million people were in the streets of Seoul.

Q: Was the embassy ever in danger, Bob, during your period there? Were the riots directed against the embassy and did the government protect us?

RICH: The demonstrations against the embassy had been organized and controlled so we were never in any danger. The spontaneous demonstrations in April 1960 were not directed at the American embassy in any fashion. They were against the presidency, really, and the police. The demand was to have new elections. The presidential guard, a segment of the police, was arrayed at barricades outside the Blue House, which is the Korean equivalent of the White House. At the height of these demonstrations the police at that barricade on someone's orders lowered their rifles and started firing into the mass of students, creating death, panic and confusion.

Seoul in those days was essentially a city of walls. The properties were walled, streets were bounded by walls, and it was very hard for the students to get away because you couldn't flee through properties due to the walls. So there was a lot of bloodshed. As the streets began to clear, police armored vehicles began to move out into the city firing indiscriminately. The government's newspaper, the *Seoul Shimun*, which was about two blocks from the American embassy at that time, was burned by demonstrators. Police kiosks were burned.

Some of us who were out observing the demonstrations were at times almost caught in cross fire. We certainly got plenty of tear gas. I remember one vivid incident that seems to have been in slow motion. I was trying to work my way back from the presidential palace area to the embassy, and the motorized machine guns were rounding the corner behind me firing indiscriminately. I was trying to get off the street because again there were walls beside the sidewalk. I ran past the burning newspaper building into a small alley and here was a little boy about two feet high selling extras of a newspaper. I grabbed one and gave him some money and he started counting out the equivalent of farthings to me in change. Here we were in the middle of this little street and I am thinking, "Those guns are going to round that corner any moment and I am going to be standing here and get killed for the equivalent of about three cents because I do not want to embarrass this honest little boy and not take his change." Fortunately, the boy and I both survived.

After a day during which the police were completely routed and most of the police boxes and stations burned, President Rhee brought in the military to establish calm in the streets of Seoul. The army commander, who was in good contact with the U.S. Forces Commander of the UN Command and the U.S. embassy, told us and then told the president, "I am not going to turn the army against the people. I will not fire on the people." At that time Ambassador McConaughy was the U.S. Ambassador. He went to see Rhee to tell him basically that the U.S. Government would not support a repression of the people and would not in any way encourage the army to carry out orders of that type. With that impasse, a situation which had originally only been demanding a recount of the election, was transformed after all the violence that had occurred against the mostly peaceful demonstrators, into demands for the resignation of Rhee, who shortly stepped down and went into exile in Hawaii.

I would like to backtrack a moment to say a little about those demonstrations because Korea is a society in which education has a great deal of cultural prestige, and if there is anything that has more prestige than education, it is medicine-doctors. Seoul is a city of universities and even in those days had a very large student population compared to most American cities. These are huge universities, many of them around the outskirts of the city, and some of the campuses were closer in in those days than they are now. When the university students came into the streets, the population came out to support them. It was the students who were the actual demonstrators. They came in their orderly ranks with their marshals as they were taught to do against the American embassy, but in vastly greater numbers. Then there was almost an electric current that went through the crowd when the medical students from Seoul National University arrived in the center of town, having trotted in formation for several miles in their hospital whites. Here were the doctors, and you almost felt that the mandate of heaven had been withdrawn from the regime at that time. That is the way the public felt, and that really was the end of the Rhee regime.

I was out there in the streets during most of this as an observer to report to the Embassy. One of my colleagues from that time who later became an ambassador to a couple of countries and I were talking in recent years. He said that he would never have sent his officers out into the streets like that to observe when he was ambassador. I said, "I don't agree with you. In this day and age are we going to sit back and rely on CNN to know what is going on, or are we going to have our own sources?" Of course, we didn't even have walkie talkies then, certainly not cell phones. We would dive into a tea room and grab a phone and call back into the embassy.

In the period that followed, Ambassador McConaughy left and the embassy was in charge of Marshall Green, one of our great Asia hands. Marshall, who had been DCM, became Chargé d'Affaires ad interim. I had a rather interesting view of things in those days because Marshall used me as his note taker for most of his key conversations and as his personal telegram writer. This was a practice of utilizing able junior officers and giving them special experience that I tried to use as I got into more senior positions, a practice which I think is often not used as much by some of our successors as it was in those days: the business of training more junior officers by involving them in key meetings and having them write the reporting cables. There is another factor that I have always appreciated very much, and that is that the process provides a witness to very sensitive dealings. There are times when it is awfully good to have had another person who can say, "Yes, that is what transpired." So I don't have a lot of sympathy with those ambassadors

who feel like they have to do it all by themselves.

The immediate period which followed was one of very orderly transition along constitutional lines in Korea. The chief justice formed an interim government, as there was no vice president. He was the next officer in line of succession. He formed an interim cabinet whose task was simply to calm the country and conduct free and fair elections. When those fair elections were held, the party which had been in opposition to Rhee became the victors. This was the Democratic Party (*Minjudong*), a name which has gone through many iterations in Korea, so it is not quite the same Democratic Party of later. But some of the politicians have their lineage right back to those years, President Kim Young-Sam, for example, who was a junior congressman at the time. A politician whom I had gotten to know quite well as an opposition figure became the Minister of Finance in the new government, and I found myself as a fairly junior officer in the rather interesting position of being one of the few people in the embassy who knew some of the new government, since most of the senior people had been dealing primarily with the government in power. That new government was a prime ministerial government. As a reaction to authoritarian leadership, they thought they wanted to do a European style, Westminster system, which would be more accountable to the parliament and the people. However, the government was inexperienced, although it was not as weak as it was perceived within Korea. It was perceived by the public as very weak, and there were a number of reasons for this. We are not totally blameless. One of the principal reasons was that after the students had created this tremendous revolution, there was a headiness to it which made it hard for many to quietly go back to classes. What in effect happened was that now students came out and demonstrated for everything. Over almost anything you could name somebody was demonstrating in front of city hall or in the main plazas of the city with banners, etc. These were not the huge demonstrations with the public behind them that had brought down a regime. Nevertheless, in the now open media environment these were publicized in the headlines of the papers every day with photos. I suppose to those of us who were foreign observers these seemed like the natural after ripples of an earthquake, and they had no punch to them. The objectives of the demonstrators were almost whatever they happened to think of when they got up that morning. But, with a newly free, but not very responsible press, and a government which wanted to bend over backward so as not to appear to suppress the students (thereby allowing almost totally free rein to these ripples), the impression given to many Koreans was one of anarchy-that the center was falling apart. I think out of that strong feeling really grew the seeds of the coup d'etat that occurred in May 1961 by an army general, Park Chung Hee. Korea was threatened by an enemy only 30 miles north of the capital, a heavily armed enemy who was ready to take over the country by armed force. The army, having been developed with our assistance, was one of the best run institutions in the society at that stage. The military officers certainly felt a commitment to the nation and many felt that if anarchy was going to rule then the country was vulnerable to attack by the totalitarian enemy to the north. I think that was a bad judgment, and that the new democratic government was slowly taking effective hold, but the general public could not see that.

Q: It was about that time, Bob, as I recall because I was still serving in the Secretariat, that President Eisenhower canceled a trip he had scheduled to Korea. Did that cause difficulty for the embassy there?

RICH: The circumstances were a little different, Tom. What he actually canceled was a trip to

Tokyo. You may recall that there were major student anti-treaty demonstrations in Japan at that time, so he canceled his trip to Tokyo at the last minute and came to Korea. This was the period after the student revolution, and before the coup d'etat. Eisenhower was feted as a hero symbolic of the public's feeling that the United States had sided with democracy in the April crisis, and had at least not thrown its weight in with an autocratic solution to the crisis. Eisenhower was treated as the conquering hero. I have never seen a state visit by one of our Presidents with such overwhelming outpouring of the public. People of the city poured out into the streets. This was not a happy time for the Secret Service, because the arrival motorcade was totally stopped in its tracks for over an hour, with the crowds pressing against the President's car and entourage. However, it was a friendly and joyous crowd with no hostility. It was almost a triumphal visit to Korea and certainly buoyed the White House spirit after having to cancel Japan. For the Koreans there was also a bit of "one upmanship," because they had not yet restored relations with Japan at that time. There was still a great deal of bitterness from the forty years of Japanese colonialism and the World War II period.

Q: Bob, those were certainly exciting days in Korea.

RICH: Yes. I don't think I should leave this period without talking a bit about the coup period which brought in General Park Chung Hee and a period of authoritarian rule in Korea which, however, became the period of its great economic miracle.

This was a situation in which not only had the government been, perhaps, too lax in allowing the appearance of anarchy to rise, but it had also in the public's eyes been a patsy to the United States. I think, perhaps, we too quickly tried to take advantage of the fact that a friendly government had taken over. After all, it had been difficult at times to do business with Syngman Rhee. He had been a very stubborn man, perhaps rightly so from his perspective. In any case there was a big push by the United States to negotiate a new economic relationship with Korea which would have them do everything that we wanted on the economic side. A special negotiator was sent from Washington, and an agreement was reached after hard negotiations in which essentially almost everything the United States asked for we got. I think that was partly due to the naivete of the new government as well as the general goodwill that existed. Some of what we were trying to get probably was very important, but I think we overreached, because the impression was that the government had essentially given up its sovereignty to the United States.

That element of weakness added to the other, coupled with an important naive attitude by Prime Minister Chang Myon, who had been an academic. He felt that because the constitution said the military was subject to civilian rule, that that made it so. He really made no effort to cultivate the military hierarchy or to understand their point of view. Essentially, the military and the civilians didn't talk. The only place that they ever talked was at the residence of an American embassy officer. So there was certainly a gap in understanding, all of which contributed perhaps to the coup which followed.

When the coup took place there was one other factor of Korean misapprehension that I will always remember. Most Koreans believed the military could not conduct a coup in Korea without American approval, because there were American Military Assistance Advisory Groups, MAAGs as we called them, down to the battalion level all over the country, physically present

with the Korean units. These were mostly small units, but they were scattered throughout the structure of the Korean military. Park Chung Hee did a very interesting thing. He first wrote plans which could bring his forces to the Kimpo Peninsula southwest of Seoul for exercises to practice repelling an invasion. Well, these plans were known by the Americans and were approved, of course, in military channels. They seemed innocent enough. This is how he prepositioned his coup forces within striking distance of Seoul. Then when the time came to move on Seoul, it was very simple. He simply took the carburetors out of all of the American's jeeps, took their two-way radios away from them, and moved out. By the time the first MAAG officer who had been attached to those units got himself to a place where he could communicate, it was several hours too late.

In that first coup day, we Americans knew very little about Park Chung Hee, later to become President Park. He was not one of the top generals. There was some evidence that he might have toyed with communism in earlier manhood, and there was considerable concern as to just what this coup represented. There was also concern, very deeply, for the destruction of a democratic government. However inept, it certainly could learn and was learning, and it would have matured over time. In that first day, when the coup was not yet solidified, the major Korean forces were of course still north of Seoul facing North Korea on the Demilitarized Zone. Those commanders commanded the real power of the armed services. Their communications were poor with the coup group, but they had good communications with the UN Command, which was the U.S. headquarters command. The UN Command was the strategic and tactical command for the defense of South Korea.

So messages came in to U.S. General Magruder, the UN Commander, from the division and corps commanders to the north asking what they should do. Should they come down and throw this upstart out of the capital and defend the government? Well, obviously the United States was not in a position to give such orders to Korean generals, but we could transmit their question. So General Magruder and Marshall Green, as Chargé d'Affaires, and I, as observer and note taker, trundled up to see the President, Yun Po-Sun. Under this constitution the president was relatively a figurehead, the executive power being invested in the prime minister. But the prime minister was nowhere to be found, having disappeared during the night hours of the coup. Nobody knew where he was. He had apparently gone into hiding, and most of his cabinet was also unreachable. The constitution said that the President was the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, so we went to see the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

We sat down in the Blue House and General Magruder conveyed the messages that had been received from his commanders. Marshall Green said, "Mr. President, this is not our decision to make. You are the commander-in-chief. However, we have technical means to transmit your messages to your army. What are your orders?" The president agonized over this and finally said, in essence "I cannot be responsible for the deep bloodshed in the streets of Seoul which will ensue if major forces of the Korean army are engaged in battle in the city, so tell them to stand where they are." That message, of course, was relayed, and after receiving that message essentially not to challenge the coup forces, those generals all made their accommodations with General Park within 12 hours and the coup was solidified.

In the days immediately after the coup, Park governed with the aid of a group of close supporters

dubbed the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction, or SCNR. This was a group of colonels and lieutenant colonels, mostly unknown to us. In an effort to try to sound out this new force without acknowledging or dealing with Park Chung Hee directly, we sought to talk to some of the SCNR. I was able through a contact to invite three of the lieutenant colonels to my home, and was surprised when they came. Each side looked upon the other with considerable wariness and suspicion. They arrived with armed escorts who remained outside, but the colonels entered conspicuously wearing sidearms. I decided this was a time to take a stand, so I said we did not wear weapons in the home and asked them to hang their pistol belts in the hallway. They did!

FRANK N. BURNET
Korean Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Washington, DC (1959-1963)

Frank N. Burnet was born in New York in 1921. He joined the Foreign Service in 1951 and served in the Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Washington, DC. Mr. Burnet was interviewed in 1990 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

BURNET: I went to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) and eventually got assigned to work on Korea, about which I knew nothing. Korea, in time, became a very interesting situation, because in the spring of 1960 came the overthrow of Syngman Rhee. So there was a lot of demand for intelligence on Korea. That was very interesting and I enjoyed that. I believe that many in Washington were happy to see him leave Seoul, but there were some who wished that he would have remained as President. But I think that the group that saw a future for Syngman Rhee was dwindling and was definitely on the wane. There was a feeling afoot that we really had it with Rhee, and that it was high time for him to get off the stage and make way for somebody who was not as blind and hidebound as he was. In general, I think that we welcomed that change in leadership.

I have often thought that it was the Korean students who really kicked off the decade of the 1960s by taking matters into their own hands. In the years before that, there really wasn't much revolt in Korea. But the Koreans, in April of 1960, really did it. And they kicked off the whole decade of the 1960s and a lot longer even.

In those days we certainly had no idea that Korea would become one of the "four tigers" that it is today. I would suppose that we were more inclined to think that it would be sort of an American dependency than anything else. I thought, perhaps from my Philippine experience, that it would become another Philippines. And that's about as much as I thought about it.

I, of course, was kind of a little bit off on the side of the policy process, but I was reading all of this traffic back and forth. And I had the feeling that Seoul, or rather the Chargé felt that the Embassy was kind of left a little bit high and dry. I think there was sort of a softness in the leadership back in the Department.

I moved from INR to the Bureau for Far Eastern Affairs in 1963. We then called it that instead of

"East Asia and Pacific" as it is now called. Jeff Parsons was Assistant Secretary. Dick Ericson, who was sort of a chief of mine in INR, had become his Staff Assistant. In those days, the assistant secretaries had only one staff assistant, as opposed to today when they have several. He told me that there would be a vacancy after Jeff Parsons was replaced by Walter McConaughy. Then Dick went off to become a special assistant in one of the Under Secretary offices. So there was a vacancy there, and he said, "How would you like to be Staff Assistant for Walter McConaughy?"

And I said, "Sure."

So I went and had an interview and eventually got the job. Then Averell Harriman replaced McConaughy. I was there for the two years while Averell Harriman was the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. By the time Harriman came in I think we were pretty well settled in with the new Administration in Seoul. A civilian, John Myon Chang, headed the new government, as I remember it.

JAMES T. LANEY
Methodist Minister, Yonsei University Campus
Seoul (1959-1963)

Ambassador Laney was born in Arkansas and raised in Arkansas and Tennessee. A graduate of Yale University Divinity School, he first went to Korea as Methodist minister and professor at Yonsei University in Seoul. Returning to the United States, he continued his career as minister and educator, teaching at Yale and Vanderbilt Universities and serving as professor and President of Amory University. In 1993 he was named US Ambassador to Korea, where he served until 1996. Ambassador Laney was interviewed by David Reuther in 2004.

LANEY: By that time I was very much involved with the personnel committee of the board of missions of the Methodist Church in New York, because they had known I had been in Korea, and they were eager to try to get us to go back and work on a college campus in Seoul.

So after a few years we, my wife and I, and by now with three children, agreed to go back to Seoul, and we were on the Yonsei University campus. Our house was right there on campus.

This was 1959. We were there five years, and it was then that I learned the language, began to speak in it, lecture in it, and so forth. And many of my students, when I later came back as ambassador, were heads of institutions, or in the government, and so forth. So that was an interesting, constant recycling back, and also, of course, there were some people that I'd known when I was there in the Army.

Q: We in the Foreign Service like to see that. You go to a post as a young officer, and you meet your young colleagues in the other government, and then the two of you grow up together, and then you have a ready access when you return on a future assignment.

LANEY: Yes. Well, for example, when we went back, when we returned to Korea as ambassador, there was a big reception for us thrown by a number of our Korean friends and students. And this occasioned, by the way, some interesting criticism in the newspaper, because they said, “What kind of nonsense is this, that all of these different organizations, groups, and people, including one cabinet member, would have a party for the arriving American ambassador?” [Laughter]

Q: Prodigal son returned?

LANEY: Well, something like that.

Q: You were saying that with the move to Yonsei University in 1959, you began to study the Korean language?

LANEY: Right...well, no. Actually, we'd gone back to Yale in 1958 – 59 and took a year of intensive language before we went out. But I continued to study all the time when I was there.

Q: I mean a real year of intensive language, nothing but Korean for a year?

LANEY: Nothing but Korean, that's right.

Q: Ah, well, that's...that's very Foreign Service! [Laughter]

LANEY: Well, it was...I've often said that was probably the most miserable year of my life, not so much because it was learning the language, because we were totally cut off from all communities of support and friends. I mean, you know, we just picked up, and put into language school, and spent all our days [laughter] immersed in the language.

Q: Well, Yale was actually...had been used during the war; especially for Chinese

LANEY: This was a continuation of the same program. It was called the Institute of Far Eastern Languages. Right. They had the Chinese, and Mandarin, and Korean, and Japanese at least; I don't know what else. By that time that was my third time to go back to New Haven. I was yet to go back one more time later [laughter] on for a Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy), but that's a later story!

Q: So it was the board of missionaries that encouraged you to take this position at Yonsei? Or was there a position, and they wanted you to fill it?

LANEY: Ah...both, yes. Right. You know, they supplied the personnel, and the institution had approval authority; they would negotiate, “Is this person acceptable to you?” you know, that sort of thing.

Q: Was Yonsei University itself set up by the missionaries?

LANEY: Right, it was. It had been founded right after the turn of the century, in the early 1900s, by a Horace Underwood, whose brother John Underwood founded the Underwood Typewriter Company in Utica, New York. John Underwood largely financed his brother's work in Korea, and so they had some resources that were denied an ordinary person, and they were able to develop a very significant college, which later blossomed into a full fledged university, and now it's the most distinguished private university in Korea and an excellent university. It was to that school in 1959 that I was attached. I worked there in a number of capacities. I had student groups that I met with; we had a world friendship group.

The students at that era in Korea were very idealistic. This was the early days of the democracy, and there was also a great deal of criticism of the Syngman Rhee's corruption and oppression at that time. It was the students, as you might recall, who in 1960 demonstrated, and a hundred and something of them were killed on the streets of Seoul by Syngman Rhee's army, and that brought down Syngman Rhee, and he was dispatched to Honolulu by the American ambassador, Walter McConaughy [Ed: served as Ambassador to Korea from December 1959 to April 1961]. McConaughy had to go to his house and say, "You're through. We have a plane ready to take you to Hawaii."

Q: Now you were there watching these events?

LANEY: I was there. I was there. Yes.

Q: It must have been a very heady time to talk to the students on one hand and see these things unfold.

LANEY: Well, it was a dicey time because we didn't know how things were going to turn out when they were unfolding, you know. It was bloody, it was an attempt at total suppression, and it was only the most egregious example of brutality on the part of the government, which was so public that the whole world was outraged. I mean it was the Tiananmen Square of Seoul in 1960. "Sa-il-gu" it's called, 9 April 1960. No...19th of April, that's it. I'll get it straight. It was just springtime.

Q: All these things happen in springtime.

LANEY: All the sap was bubbling, you know.

Q: We have May 4th Movement in China in 1919.

LANEY: Yes, right.

Q: Now, if the concerns and the idealism on the campus, were preexisting, with the students talking about corruption, or democracy, and whatnot, what moved them to then begin the demonstrations?

LANEY: Well, actually, what moved them was that the election of 1960 had been so corrupt that there had been demonstrations in Masan, which was down on the coast in the south, and the

police suppressed the demonstration, and some people were killed, and a body of a student was found floating in the sea, and when that body was found, that ignited a great demonstration down south, and it gradually moved up towards Seoul, the demonstration, the sense of outrage and so they began demonstrating very peacefully in Seoul, that we can't have this. This is again a kind of problem that I was telling you about earlier, about Syngman Rhee never having a serious rival. They began demonstrating, and as the demonstrations grew and as it was clear that the general population on the whole was supportive, even if it was quiet, you know, it was the students doing the marching, the attempt to control it and keep it from getting out of hand grew more and more frantic, and that then led to the shooting of these students right on the main plaza of Seoul, just exactly like Tiananmen Square, but 29 years earlier.

Q: Because I lived through the same thing in Bangkok only the student demonstrators were moving from one location to another and the army shot them as they moved.

LANEY: Well, I don't know exactly the physical disposition of the students, except they were downtown, and they may have been trying to march on the Presidential residence. I'm not sure.

Q: But Yonsei, where you were living, was far enough away -

LANEY: Well, the campus was well removed from that by about 4 or 5 miles. But we saw that the students left our campus and marched right by our house, in front of our house, down the road, and it was a very...well, in one sense it was a tense time. We didn't feel any sense of danger, but there was an electricity in the air. We knew that things were coming to some sort of head. It was just...it was...it was unstoppable. The stories about the corruption of the Syngman Rhee regime were so rife, and then when they tried to strong-arm critics, it just was, you know, too much.

Later, after that, of course, after Syngman Rhee left and the interim government was instituted, there was a great deal of lawlessness, which often follows these things, with the fall of the government; and students became very arrogant, and they stood up in class and criticized their teachers. That sounded like China again. It sounded like the Cultural Revolution. Except this was before that, and it was not, as far as I know, had anything to do with Communism.

They also trashed several homes. One of them was the home of Syngman Rhee's vice president and his wife who had been a very powerful figure, and they brought out bolt after bolt after bolt of silk. It was almost like Imelda Marcos's shoes, you know and they laid them out in the mud in the street, and everybody trampled on them. It was almost like this was a mock assassination, you know, or trial and execution, and as a result, it was such a humiliating and devastating thing that Yi Ki-bung, that was his name, and Maria Park was his wife, those two and their two sons killed themselves in a suicide pact. It was a tough time.

Now it was several months after all that confusion that Park Chung Hee had his coup. He was at that time a colonel in the army. It happened that we were at dinner with the chargé d'affaires of the embassy, Marshall Green.

You know Marshall?

Q: We all knew Marshall very fondly.

LANEY: Well, Marshall was a Yale man, so we had gotten acquainted. [Laughter]

Anyway, we were at dinner, and all of a sudden a message came in [for] Marshall, and he and his DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and his chief political officer immediately left, and they never returned! And it turned out that they had gotten word about the coup [Ed: General Park Chung Hee staged a coup on May 16, 1961], and they were terrified because of Park Chung Hee's history. He had been accused, and I think convicted, of having a Communist taint back in 1948, and so they didn't know whether this guy was, you know, for the North, or what. As it turned out, he was very much for the South, with a strong arm.

Q: You've introduced something here. I mean here you are in the graduate school of theology as an associate chaplain at Yonsei University. So you're part of the American expatriate community. Now, as part of that community, are you interacting with the embassy from time to time, or was your association with Marshall through the Yale connection?

LANEY: Well, it's social, through the Yale connection, just socially, and we were not all, you know, we didn't go to parties. It wasn't all that big deal, the social life, but occasionally we got invited. I can't remember now why we were invited there, but for example, this was a couple of years later when Sam [Samuel D.] Berger was the ambassador [Ed: Berger served as ambassador from June 1961 to July 1964]. I guess he followed Marshall Green. Marshall Green was never ambassador. He was chargé, probably from April to June 1961, and then he went to Hong Kong as the consul general.

But anyhow, when President Kennedy was shot, November 22, 1963, I led the American community service in a commemorative memorial service, where the ambassador was there, and then we had the honor guard and that sort of things. Later we had had Sam Berger out for dinner at our house, and he had had us over for a swim at the embassy pool and things. But we were not intimate, but we were, you know, friends in an easy way. I never thought of myself as being inside, I was not in any kind of inner circle.

Q: Right. But I guess my point was the expatriate community would have some contact from time to time socially or otherwise, with the embassy. I mean you knew they were there.

LANEY: Oh, yes! And there were several people there that I had known, or known of, from Yale in the embassy. I don't remember now exactly who they were...but you know, we were a young couple in our early 30s, and I was particularly, along with a couple of other, in fact, other people from Yale who were there with me, had become noted for our fluency in the language, and this I think gave us a certain, maybe, notoriety or something. The reputation was greater than the reality. And I never tried to reconcile the two! [Laughter]

Q: Well, there must have been something there. I just finished reading Chun-shin Park's, Protestantism and Politics in Korea, which discussed the Protestant missionary movement in Korea and why 40 percent of the Korean population is now Protestant.

LANEY: Right. Well, there was a big missionary community after the Korean War, because a lot of it was AID (U.S. Agency for International Development) programs and supplies and just meeting the physical needs of the people. But there was also a huge church and school building project. You know, they were doing this all over with American money, which was pouring in from the churches in the United States, and we were there at that sort of peak of that representation in the early 1960s. Very, very powerful - I guess certainly the strength of the missionary community and their abilities certainly eclipsed, at that time, the business community from the United States. You know, at that time there was not that much investment, and then there were just a few traders and businessmen. So the two major American communities were the official U.S. community, the military and the embassy, and there was a major missionary community. Because the missionaries stayed there longer and most of them had become, were becoming fairly adept in the language, they had far more access into what was going on among the people than even the embassy for the most part, because there were very few people at that time in the embassy that had any language skills at all.

They had not started that program. It was amazing that even into the 1980s and 1990s - well, when you were there, you know, it was hard to find somebody in the embassy who was really fluent in Korean. Many of them had excellent command of Japanese or Chinese, but not Korean, you know. It had not become a priority in the State Department. Most career people didn't see a career in Korea. That's the whole thing. It seemed to be too insignificant and not - Korean doesn't lead to anything, you know.

And you know, I understand that fully. You know, as I was learning Korean, I thought, I'm going through a door into a small room. It didn't open up a huge array of literature and culture and that sort of thing at that time, you know. This is changing. It has changed over the years.

Q: Well, that's an interesting career problem for the Asian part of the State Department in Asia and other region as because each of those countries has their own language. If you have Spanish, you can go to Latin and South America, and you can have a full career; they've got 31 countries down there. You've got it made!

LANEY: Or French, and the same, you know, in German, yes.

Q: Or French and work in Africa.

LANEY: But not in Korean. Korean is just for Korea.

Q: In Asia you also have a variety of languages.

LANEY: Right. So anyway...the work of, the growth of the church in Korea has been noted by many people because it's so far in excess of anything else in Asia: that one-half of one percent in Japan, which speaks of their insularity; China's a little bit larger percentage, of course, a huge number of people because any percentage in China brings you a lot of people! But Korea's really remarkable, and I think part of it was that in the 1920s and 1930s the American missionaries in Korea and the church in Korea, not just the missionaries, but the church, was one of the few

remaining citadels of Korean identity that the Japanese did not tamper with initially. It was where they could still speak their own language, because the schools had gone Japanese and so forth, outside the home.

And so, as a result, instead of seeing the church as foreign, the church became Korean, and what was foreign was Japanese. So that, for example, when I was working among the students in the early 1960s and the Japanese got up and carried on about imperialism and colonialism, the Korean got up and said, “The only colonialism we know about is from you! It’s not from the United States!” [Laughter] Oh! This was quite a shock!

But this sort of strange historical twist took away the foreignness of the church for the Koreans because they had appropriated it as theirs, and this is almost historical acts. It had nothing to do with the missionaries, except they just abetted it, you know, as best they could. As a result, the church did not have to overcome the sense of strangeness because they had crossed that barrier back during the Japanese occupation. It’s a very interesting thing!

Q: When you were in Korea there is a change in America to the Kennedy administration. In your contacts with the embassy and the American community did you detect that the change in American administrations meant anything particular for Korea?

LANEY: Well, we were there when Eisenhower was still president, and he came out to Korea. He was precluded from going to Tokyo because of the demonstrations in Japan. This was early 1960 [Ed: June 19 – 20, 1960], and he came to Korea and just an incredible sea of people came out. I mean the turnout was unbelievable! Millions of people in Seoul turned out to see Eisenhower, and there was a reception for him at the embassy, which we attended. I mean it was open; I mean this was not something special to us, and I remember that very well. Actually, my wife’s uncle had been Eisenhower’s Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the mid-’50s, Admiral [Arthur W.] Radford.

Q: Didn’t he go on to get an appointed position in...

LANEY: No. He had two terms as chairman. He had been the Commander of the Pacific Fleet [Ed: and High Commissioner of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands], CINCPAC, in 1952, when Eisenhower was elected, and Eisenhower fulfilled his pledge, “I will go to Korea.”

In that trip Eisenhower stopped off at Honolulu. Actually, Radford had led “the Admiral’s Revolt” in 1948 against Omar Bradley, and they were called “fancy Dan’s,” and there was a big brouhaha because the admirals wanted to continue the aircraft carriers and naval air and all that sort of thing, and they had a big blowup. Eisenhower, although he was not, I think, in Washington at the time, his good friend Omar Bradley was there, and they squared off. So Radford was not particularly well thought of by the Army.

But then when Eisenhower went to Korea, he stopped in Honolulu and got a briefing and was so impressed with Radford that he said, “You come with me to go to Korea,” and by the time they finished the trip, he had asked him if he would serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [laughter], which is an interesting 180 degree turn! So he, from ’53 to ’57, was the chairman.

By the time we got to Korea, he was out of the chairmanship, but he had been friends with, and of course, obviously, acquaintances with Syngman Rhee and Madam Rhee. So the Radfords came out a couple times while we were there. A few months after we arrived, we were living in a house that was so remote we didn't have a telephone, and it was only accessible by a rice paddy road.

So we were in language class at Yonsei University, and this person came in and whispered to the teacher, and they said, "We have a message for you." And I said, "What is it?" He said, "The Blue House," that's like the White House, "wants, is calling for you." "For me? You know, what have I done?" [Laughter] Well, it turned out, he said, "Your wife's uncle has arrived and wants to see you tonight." I said, "Oh, my gosh!" So Syngman Rhee, the president, sent a car. Well, he had such a hard time negotiating the ride that he was really upset, and he said, "Why are you living in this hovel?" and then would carry on like that, you know! [Laughter]

Q: Well, wait a minute now! Let's answer that question. Here you are, private sector, missionary out there. It must have been very basic living, or was this just during the language-training period?

LANEY: Well, it turned out that we did move after that because it was such a difficult home to live in. It had been built by the White Russians at the turn of the century and had not been lived in for...I guess since before the Second World War.

And it needed a lot of stuff! And it was also isolated. So after six months they moved us over onto the campus proper in a better house.

Q: But it came to the ownership of the missionary group or just some -

LANEY: No, it was a university house, actually. But it was way off to the side. Of course now the city's grown up all around it, but it was very isolated, and we went through a very -

Q: The joys of being a junior faculty? [Laughter]

LANEY: Oh! You wouldn't believe. We went through the most harrowing fall after our arrival. Our daughter almost died from a misdiagnosis of...what is this...strep [streptococcus] throat - not scarlet fever. We had a fire. We brought out, at that time, \$3,000 worth of groceries and basic items, you know, because we couldn't get them.

The very night that they arrived in our basement the whole thing was stolen! Obviously, this was an inside job from the port; you know, they knew that it was there, and delivered it, and they took it all away. So that would be, you know, worth \$25,000 today. That's a lot for a young couple!

We lost all of that, and you know, it was just one horrible thing after another. But after we got over those six months, it was smooth sailing the rest of the time.

Q: And those were six months. So you arrived in...1959?

LANEY: Arrived in July of 1959 and through December. It was a very - my wife had shingles. Oh Lord! She gave birth to our fourth child, and oh, my! It was just one really very, very difficult thing after another, you know, and all this time we were in language school. But the isolation, and the loneliness, and the series of very difficult -

Q: Now, once you get over language training, you go down, you move closer to the campus, and you are now...?

LANEY: Well, we were just adjacent in the campus in faculty housing. There are a number of Western-style houses that both Koreans and Americans lived in that are assigned to the university.

Q: Now on campus, your duties were to...?

LANEY: I had two, really three duties: I was associate chaplain; I was teaching in the graduate school of theology, which, by the way, was intended to be an international program, not just for Korea. The intent was to bring other Asian Christians into Yonsei's program; and then the third thing I was doing, I was working with some other Korean leaders of my age, my cohort, in establishing what we call a student Christian movement nationally. For this we designed study materials, we talked about nation building, we talked about ethics, we talked about institutions, what's required in building institutions, and all. This was a larger canvass on which I worked in terms of working with students, and I went around the country talking about these things. This was quite a marvelous opportunity.

At that time, as I mentioned, the students were not only idealistic, but, to get back to your question, 'What changed when Kennedy came in?' the most important thing that changed, at least from my vantage point, was he introduced the Peace Corps. Well, Korea was not at that time on the Peace Corps list, but the concept of the Peace Corps electrified the students in Korea.

I began working with a group of medical, dental, and nursing students who went out on weekends to a benighted village about 30 miles south of Seoul on the Han River, and they spent the weekend there holding clinics and classes and all sorts of things, and then on Sunday they had services, and then they had clinics again, and so forth, and then they came home. They did that every weekend for years! They called themselves the "Veneratio Vitae" (the Reverence for Life) Club after Albert Schweitzer; that was his motto - reverence for life. In the 1990s I was invited back to a meeting of the alumni of, they called it, the VV Club, and here were these doctors and nurses and dentists who were in commanding positions in Korea, in medical schools, and in practice, and so forth; and that was a formative period of their life, that club. I mean, of course, the school was, but in a way this focused their energies and gave an outlet for their idealism. So that was also what I was involved in, not just on the actual university campus.

Q: Which, when you abstracted a little bit, means that all these societies are progressing in a particular way, and if they're not at a particular point of modernization at some point in time, they might be in the future. I mean here the idealistic students have had their demonstration

they've had the clash with the Rhee, people were killed, Rhee is removed, a short democratic period, and yet the military comes back. So you know, would we say at that time, well, Korea will never, ever -

LANEY: So then that sets a...let's see, I think...anyway, there were several books that came out about that time, in the late 1950s, from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Harvard about nation building.

Q: You may be thinking of [Walt Whitman] Rostow's seminal book The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto].

LANEY: Yes, Rostow; and we translated that book and made it available; and we did not consider ourselves, in a sense, subversive to the government, but we were sure a leaven.

Q: Well now, the "we" that translates and publishes Rostow, that's Yonsei or the missionary?

LANEY: No, not the missionaries; this is quite apart from that. All of my cohorts with the student movement were Korean, and these were very bright, able people who later took positions in government: one just finished a stint as head of World Vision Korea, which is an enormous thing for a North Korean; anyway, one was head of the New Village Movement. I felt so privileged to be a part of this group. We were otherwise all foreign nationals, but I was taken into their confidence and had a credibility. We felt like we were preparing a younger generation for leadership in a democracy. That's what we really were working at, and we were very serious about it, and we had a lot of fun, and we had enormous sense of purpose and moral leadership. We felt we were making history!

Q: Very heady time. Now you were talking about being able to go around Korea and speak to groups.

LANEY: But also, not just go around and speak, but we welded this in the - we had groups on all the campuses, the student Christian movements. These were conventicles of their own clubs, as you might say, or chapters, or whatever; and you know, they were not, as I say, they were not attempting to do anything that was illegal or overthrow; they just were study groups and action groups; many of them were prompted just to do service somewhat on the order of this VV Club, maybe not as ambitious. The VV Club got such a reputation that the German government gave us a Volkswagen bus equipped to be a mobile clinic. [Laughter] You know those old fashioned Volkswagen buses, the tall thing?

It was all equipped with shelves and counter space and everything where they could take their equipment, and they drove out to this little village out there.

Q: Marvelous! I wonder how the Germans picked up on your work.

LANEY: Well, they found out through the church. They found out about what was going on and wanted to help.

Q: As churches talk about the various programs they sponsor -

LANEY: Right, right, right, around the world. And Korea was still seen as a needy country; it was still reconstructing after the war and all. But anyhow, that's what went on.

So you know, we had five years after that miserable first six months. The rest were just wonderful!

You know, I spoke to three or four thousand students at a time in Korea, in their chapels and assemblies and stuff, and they thought it - back then, it was so remarkable to see an American speak, you know. Actually, my accent was far better than my real command of the technical language, so I had to work hard on what I said, but my delivery was good; and they were just, they were really quite taken with my efforts [laughter].

Q: That was the experience I had in Thailand! Constantly surprising people, just aghast that you would know the language.

LANEY: Yes. and you know, in Korea there just weren't that many people, Westerners, that were speaking the language. I once heard a story, it was not my experience, and I don't think it's apocryphal; I think it's real. This American was out in the country, spoke marvelous Korean, and he stopped an old man who was a country fellow, you know, no experience with foreigners or anything, and he asked him, how do you get somewhere. The fellow said, "I don't speak English," in Korean, and the fellow nodded, and he said, "Okay, shall we speak in Korean?" He said, "Yea!" So he repeated the same question in the same language [laughter], and he said, "Oh, yea!" [laughter] and gave him instructions. But at first it was blocked out. He couldn't hear him. [Laughter]

Q: I think students of each of the Asian languages has a similar story. But as part of the expatriate community in the Seoul area, the embassy would have July 4th parties, and would this be an occasion for the American community whit large to -

LANEY: Uh, uh. Well, the missionaries were never included in, and we were not given access to the PX (post exchange or a commissary on a U.S. Army post) or anything on the army post. So we had to live off the economy.

Q: Which probably, as a community, brought you very close to the Korean community.

LANEY: Right. Yes, well, and of course, you know, the great part of our lives, other than our collegueship in the mission community, was with the Koreans; that's where we spent our time. My friends, and they've been lifelong friends since then, were the colleagues on the faculty and on this student Christian movement.

For example, one of my colleagues, who was a law colleague, a graduate of Yale, a Korean at Yonsei, later became ambassador to the United States, and he came to Atlanta when I was president of Emory, and we met and had a wonderful time. So you know, it just, it was all over the place.

Q: Living in the community I suspect you might have had the same reactions as your Korean colleagues as political events in Korea unfold - the removal of Syngman Rhee, and then the arrival of the military governments. Well, as you saw those events unfold, did they really impact on what you were doing? I mean you see -

LANEY: Well, yes; the course it did, particularly...well, all of it did because both the tragedy and then the headiness of what we call the student revolution, and then the oppression, the growing oppression of the Park Chung Hee regime, in terms of they had the KCIA (Korean Central Intelligence Agency) infiltrate the colleges and report on people who were criticizing the government or being too...of course they always called such critics as Communists. [Laughter] I mean if you criticized the government it was because you were a Communist, not because the government was really vulnerable to criticism. So there was that sense of pressure - I don't want to quite call it oppression, but pressure - on the students.

But...you know, I was rather probably callow at that age and felt like it was my calling to beard the tyrant, you know. I was very outspoken, and I'm sure that I became a vicarious mouthpiece for a lot of people who wouldn't say the same thing because I could do it with impunity. I was aware of that! I didn't have any illusions, and it was because, in some sense, it was an arrogant American approach. I could say these things critically of the government because they couldn't do anything about it, or you know, later on they did; they deported missionaries later who were critical. But at that point, they were uneasy to be that hard-nosed, and you know, I wasn't gratuitously public about it.

LANE HOLDCROFT
Advisor to the National Community Development Program, USAID
Korea (1960)

Lane Holdcroft was born in Iowa in 1933. He received an undergraduate degree from Iowa State University and a graduate degree at Michigan State University. He served in the U.S. Army with a counter-intelligence specialty. His career postings abroad have included Korea and the Philippines.

Q: You were first working with an AID contractor in Korea?

HOLDCROFT: Yes, the Near East Foundation had the USOM/K contract to help the Republic of Korea's Government launch a national rural development program. I was assigned to Taejon, capitol of Chung chong Namdo, located about 100 miles south of Seoul. At the age 26, I became Advisor to the National Community Development Program in four provinces.

Third World rural community development programs have been the focus of a number of analytical studies that have looked at the impact of a multi-sector development approach versus a single sector development approach at the village level. In the 1950s and early 1960s, rural community development was seen as a way of providing technical assistance to improve the

levels of living of rural people, and also of developing democratic institutions at the grass roots level.

Over time the community development approach lost host-country political, and external donor, support in most developing countries. By 1965, there were only a small number of community development programs in existence around the world that were being directly supported by national governments and donor organizations. But during the '50s and early '60s, this was a very popular donor-supported movement directed at responding to the spread of totalitarianism, a euphemism for the spread of communism in the rural areas of the developing world.

The lessons learned are many and later in my career I authored a small book about the rise and fall of the community development approach to rural development. I found in my research that the approach worked very well where there was a charismatic national leader who was willing to provide the political and other resources needed to keep it moving forward and expanding. But where there was not a charismatic leader who could provide the kind of environment that encouraged multi-sectoral efforts, community development movements failed.

Q: You may want to include that publication, if you like, as an appendix to this oral history if it's still available.

HOLDCROFT: That early rural community development movement is important in the sense that about every decade, as donor agencies and Third World nations look for ways of getting at basic development problems, they often return to the rural community development approach as a model of some kind for a new rural development effort. There is a tendency to try to reinvent the wheel. For example, you remember the attention and impetus that was given to "integrated rural development", or IRD, in the 1970s and the beginning of the '80s - that effort was modeled on the earlier rural community development movement.

Q: That's very interesting. Were there host-government counterparts?

HOLDCROFT: The way it was organized in every country was quite similar. There would be a national ministry or sub-ministry-level agency that would be attached to the prime minister's or president's office. That agency would have a national training facility, and staff at the national, provincial, and district level that would provide the administrative and technical back-stopping for village-level workers to organize villagers to cooperatively undertake projects that would benefit their communities.

Q: You felt that national level input was one of the keys leading to success?

HOLDCROFT: The record was mixed. But generally those national efforts that had the support of the president or the prime minister, for example Nehru in India and Magsaysay in the Philippines, became major development efforts in those nations. Wherever there was that kind of political support, these movements did well. But in most nations the community development programs were competing with the old-line ministries - agriculture, health, and education - and over time in many instances significant animosities arose. And this carried over to some degree into the donor agency's operations. For example, there was a great deal of bureaucratic animosity

between some of the U.S. advisors in the community development division and those in the agricultural division of the USOM in Korea. This did not cause any serious problems at the field level. But there was a good deal of competition for budgetary and personnel resources between those divisions in the mission. Being a contractor in the field, I was not privy to what was going on in that regard at that time, but there have been papers written about this - the controversy surrounding the community development divisions in USAID missions around the world.

Q: Versus the agriculture...

HOLDCROFT: Agriculture, health and education - because most of the community development program that USAID supported had health, education and agriculture elements. And so there was the sense that this multi-sectoral initiative wasn't appropriately utilizing the skills of host country personnel in the technical ministries. In Korea, the community development program was identified with Syngman Rhee and then briefly with Chang Myon. When the coup d'état took place and Park Chung Hee assumed power as chief of state, the national community development entity was abolished. Most of its programs were subsumed by the Ministry of Agriculture, with some by the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

Q: About what time would this have occurred?

HOLDCROFT: After the student uprisings, President Syngman Rhee resigned in April 1960. Then in July, Chang Myon was elected Prime Minister under the new parliamentary cabinet system. The next year in May, some of the military revolted and Park Chung Hee assumed power as Chairman of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction. Then in late 1963, Park Chung Hee was elected President under the new Constitution that revived the presidential system.

Q: And by that time you had become...

HOLDCROFT: By that time I had become a direct hire foreign service officer. I continued to serve in Taejon, but, after the coup, as the USAID provincial Rural Development Officer. I was advisor to the governors of two provinces until mid-1965. Then I was transferred to the USAID/K headquarters in Seoul and put in charge of an expanded Provincial Rural Development Staff. We had at that time two American advisors in each of the provinces.

It was a rather exciting period because this was the time when all of the earlier development efforts started to come to fruition. The Korean economy, both rural and urban, started to take off. From 1962 through 1976, the Republic of Korea maintained an average annual economic growth rate of about 10 percent. Exports went up very rapidly - from only \$50 million in 1962 to nearly \$8 billion in 1976. Of course, per capita income also grew very substantially. Agricultural yields increased very dramatically. All of this commenced in the early '60s. The only significant external donor at that time was the United States. We made a very substantial contribution to that effort.

I remained in Korea until 1968. From mid-1968 until mid-1969, I was on the Korea desk in USAID's Washington DC headquarters. My office was in the State Department on the fourth floor above the diplomatic entrance.

Q: You started as a contractor in Korea in 1959?

HOLDCROFT: Yes, and in 1963 I became a direct hire foreign service officer.

Q: And stayed on five years in Korea as a direct hire?

HOLDCROFT: Yes, I stayed on five years as a direct hire rural development officer. I was the American direct hire officer in the USAID Mission who had served in Korea the longest, and had tested fluency in the Korean language. So I had the opportunity to become involved in interesting activities beyond my responsibilities for the rural development field operations. For example, I had the opportunity to do the Korean interpreting for many of the American VIP's that visited Korea.

Q: How did you find your Korean counterparts as far as capabilities and willingness to work with you?

HOLDCROFT: They were super; for the most part well trained and highly motivated. At all levels they worked hard and played hard. Their culture stressed a strong work ethic. I could work without an interpreter, so it was easier to form close working and personal relationships with my Korean colleagues. I spent over eleven years in Korea. I went there in the Army in 1957 and I left USAID/Korea in 1968.

Q: You could be called a Korean hand.

HOLDCROFT: I could be called a young, "old Korean hand" at that time. Those were really exciting days to be associated with the U.S. foreign assistance program in Korea, as it was working so well in terms of helping the Koreans succeed in formulating and implementing their ambitious Five Year Economic Development Plans.

I am always quite surprised to hear comments by supposedly knowledgeable people that downplay the significance and importance of America's role in Korea's unusually successful economic development effort. For example, I happened to hear a Mr. Keyes, Republican candidate for president, on the PBS McNeil-Lehrer News Hour a few months ago. When asked about the significance of America's role in Korea's economic development - he stated something to the effect that Americans didn't really do anything much in Korea in terms of foreign aid after 1960!

Not true. In fact, it was during the '60s that our program was so large in terms of personnel - direct hire and contract, technical and administrative - that were working in Korea on behalf of the Korean development effort. We had absolutely outstanding people, some more controversial than others, who provided leadership to the U.S. aid effort in those days. When I arrived, there were a number of Americans in agriculture and industry who had outstanding careers in the States but who felt called to work in Korea. Korea was of importance to the U.S. and free world in the minds of so many Americans with so many personal ties forged during the Korean War.

Semi-retired deans of American universities were coming out on long-term assignments. The outstanding director of the research system of the state of Texas was, for some time, our agricultural research advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture. And a chap who operated a fertilizer producing factory in America was operating the major fertilizer factory in Korea, as advisor to the Korean who was managing that facility. We had some of the outstanding fisheries people from the Pacific Northwest assisting the Koreans in developing their fishing fleets - much to the chagrin of the American fisheries people today.

Q: There wasn't any shortage of American skills who were willing to come forward.

HOLDCROFT: That's right. It was a unique opportunity for young persons like me to work with world class professionals. Those were heady times. One of the outstanding mission directors was Joel Bernstein. Joel was a bright economist, who had earned a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago at a very young age. He and our small economics staff provided a great deal of the intellectual leadership to the Koreans in terms of their macroeconomic planning, their national programs and policies. Joel and his deputy, Roger Ernst, also provided excellent leadership to the several hundred Americans and Koreans, contract and direct hire, were in the USAID/K Mission at that time.

Q: As I recall it was one of the largest, if not the largest...

HOLDCROFT: It was probably the largest USAID mission in the world at that time. Iran had been - as I recall - the largest mission in the '50s and I believe Korea was the largest in the '60s.

Q: Was that your favorite post of your overseas experience?

HOLDCROFT: It was certainly the one that influenced me the most in terms of my own thinking and understanding of development and the role of the external donor. I also thoroughly enjoyed my other overseas posts which were Ethiopia, where I served for four years and the Philippines, where I also served for four years. There were tours in Washington DC after each of my overseas assignments. Ethiopia was particularly interesting because much of Ethiopia was still as it had been a century or more ago.

DONALD S. MACDONALD
Political Officer, Korea Desk
Washington, DC (1960-1962)

Donald S. MacDonald was born in Massachusetts in 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from MIT in 1938 and a Ph.D. from George Washington University in political science. Mr. MacDonald served in the US Army from 1942-1946 and joined the foreign service in 1947. His overseas posts include Korea, Istanbul and Geneva. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 25, 1990.

MACDONALD: One of the first things I had to do when I started as officer-in-charge of Korean affairs was to participate in writing a national policy paper on Korea. This was at the very end of the Eisenhower Administration. My experience in Korea had persuaded me that the old-fashioned, free enterprise, representative democracy approach was simply not going to be effective in Korea. Furthermore, I had become aware, during a six month tour at Harvard, that the thinking about underdeveloped countries such as Korea in the academic community was far ahead of the anachronistic thinking in the State Department. I tried to get some of the academic views into the policy paper. I didn't really succeed except that I managed to persuade them to include a report that Max Millikan at MIT had made to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the period when Senator John Kennedy was asking for such contributions. Of course, no one paid any attention to it. We were then in the period following Rhee's toppling by the student revolution. We were in Chang Myon's parliamentary democracy period. I was persuaded from the beginning that it wasn't going to work.

The reporting from the Embassy at that time tended to be euphoric. The staff had suffered through the end of the Rhee regime and the lid had finally come off on Korea and everything was great. I worried about it and in the Fall of 1960, a man whom I greatly respected who was the publisher of an independent newspaper, Chang Key Young, passed through Washington. He was muttering darkly about how bad things were and predicted that there would be an upheaval unless something happened. After receiving that report and a couple of other similar ones, I began to worry about the possibility of some kind of coup. Therefore, in January 1961, I sent an instruction to the Embassy asking it to appraise the possibility of a military coup. I also asked whether and what we should do about it. The answer was: "Don't worry about a thing". Of course, the coup came in May, 1961.

Another interesting event during this period was that the man who stood out above all others in Chang Myon's Cabinet was the Minister of Finance, Kim Young-Sun. He started right in to develop a five-year plan. The idea of a five-year economic development plan was not new. Earlier a few people, inspired by Rhee's Finance Minister, Song In-Sang, had started work on such a plan, but it didn't receive any high level attention. The Americans at that time were not thinking in terms of five-year plans because they were considered socialistic. When Kim Young-Sun took over, he directed some American-trained economists to work up a five year plan. In due course, it was submitted to the US government for comment. The State Department's attitude was that the five-year plan was socialistic; it was crude, thrown together, and was not useful. I had particular trouble with the Economic Bureau in State. I felt that this was not the right answer. I managed to persuade State to employ a developmental economist from the Rand Corporation to review the Korean plan. I had a session with him during which I explained that I thought the plan had symbolic importance beyond the nuts-and-bolts of the econometrics. He did a critique of the five-year plan in which he agreed that it was a good beginning. But then the military coup came. The military immediately co-opted the plan and refined it further. It became the first Five-Year Plan, effective in 1962, that helped turn Korea around. There was also new competence and new discipline.

When the coup actually came in May, 1961, we got a "Critic" message, which is the highest priority. It came in at the end of the day in Washington with only a bare announcement. I spent a good part of that night trying to find out what was going on. It was a difficult period because

John Kennedy had just taken over. He had other things on his mind besides Korea. There had been an interesting development. A man by the name of Foley, who had been the Deputy Administrator of the aid mission in Korea, had mounted a crusade against what he viewed as galloping corruption in the economic aid program. He resigned his position and had returned to Washington to launch a crusade to "clean house". Several of us persuaded him to do this through proper channels instead of setting fires. He got President Kennedy to set up a task force on Korean corruption. The fact that this task force was in existence and that corruption was only one symptom of a much broader problem meant that when the coup came, there was a Presidentially-appointed group already in being, which could quickly focus on this new problem. However, the other side was that the Assistant Secretary of State then in charge, Walter McConaughy, was still an Eisenhower hold-over. He had been Ambassador in Korea. He was uncertain which way to go. His contacts in the new Administration were also uncertain. When I went to him to beg him to make a decision on what was to be done, he hemmed and hawed and for three days we did nothing. During that period, Marshall Green, then in Korea as the Chargé d'Affaires, made himself somewhat of a hero by taking a position in support of the Chang government and standing firm with very little support behind him. My judgment at the very beginning was that the time for supporting democratic principles had long passed. My view of the situation was that the Korean people in general were relieved that someone who knew what needed to be done had taken over.

We had not quite written off the Chang Myon government as an effective force. Chang's administration in March and April 1961 had began to show signs of life. They had began to face the problems confronting them. One of the mistakes that Chang Myon made at the beginning was to be too complacent in accepting American advice, so that he began to be perceived as an American "patsy" in a country that was becoming increasingly nationalistic. We made the mistake of leaning on him to get everything that we had been unable to get from Rhee. This was certainly an ingredient in the situation. By March and April, the Chang administration began to talk back to the Americans. Marshall Green sent in a recommendation to Washington, cautioning us to be careful about our continuing and increasing demands. He was absolutely right.

We were not certain who was taking over at the beginning. We thought Park Chung Hee was a communist. Indeed one of his senior officers told us that. That got very high level attention in Washington. It was only over the course of time that the new government's competence and direction became evident. Park Chung Hee worked with the Americans, not because he loved us, not because he was necessarily a free enterprise capitalist, but because he recognized that in order to consolidate his coup and his control over the country, he would have to have American support. So he somewhat grudgingly went along. The man who had been selected as the new Ambassador was Samuel Berger. He had been in the political outhouse for several years because he had crossed swords with Nixon. He had been in Wellington and Athens as labor officer. He was brought back into the fold and named Ambassador to Korea. This was a brilliant decision by Kennedy because Berger had a labor movement background, he was an economist, he was a man who knew where he stood and had no inhibitions about getting things done. As soon as Berger returned on consultation and saw the Presidential task force, he took it over. He got the task force to write him his instructions as Ambassador. The opinion, which I shared from the beginning, prevailed that it was hopeless to try to support the Chang Myon government. We had to work with the new group. They were in and there was nothing we could do about it.

We found ourselves in between a right-left battle in the American Congress I don't know which of the American military knew in advance of the coup. I have some suspicions that some did, although none ever told me so. A number of the military were very supportive of the coup. They perceived the Korean situation as anarchical and chaotic and greatly weakened in its fight against Communism. They thought it was a good thing that it straightened out.

On the other hand, you had people like Ed Wagner at Harvard, who was writing articles berating government policy for supporting this awful dictatorship. I was being called by both sides all the time.

Eventually, the titular head of the coup, Chang Do-Young, who was not the head at all, issued a statement on behalf of the junta, laying out five or six principles, including the eventual return to civilian government. I wrote the U.S. government commentary acquiescing in that, stressing those aspects we thought important. That was our first public announcement. I was so upset by the absence of any response to Seoul of any kind that finally I went home and phoned Marshall Green myself. He didn't talk to me, but the Consul, Tom Mayfield (whom I knew) was called up to take the call. I identified myself as Smith, hoping he would recognize my voice. I told him that we wanted the Embassy to understand that we were in full support of it. As far as I know, that is the only communication that the Embassy received for three or four days. That was disgraceful. I kept drafting messages, but could never get them approved.

At that time, the NSC didn't enter into my calculations at all. The Department under Dean Rusk was running affairs. But I received no direction from the Secretary. I don't know to this day what kind, if any, "back-channel" messages there may have been. I certainly never saw any of them.

It was made clear in the instructions that the task force worked out for Berger that he was going to work with the government to the extent that the government showed itself responsive to our requirements. Berger received jurisdiction over the AID mission and brought in new leadership and trimmed the staff. He took a stand towards the Koreans; instead of holding their hands and instructing them what do to in minute detail, they were told to come with a plan, which we would approve and monitor. We were not to be bothered with the details. This along with the new talent they mobilized were responsible for the Korean growth. It was essentially a step-by-step process of accommodation on both sides. That was still developing when I left the desk in 1962. After I left, it did develop that Park Chung Hee was going to constitute a civilian government, but his generals got to him and he decided that it was too early. We told him it was too late. Finally they did.

ISABEL CUMMING
Secretary, USIS
Seoul (1960-1964)

Isabel Cumming was raised in Boston, Massachusetts. She joined the Foreign Service in 1957. Ms. Cumming held positions in Iran, Korea, Sweden, Poland,

Japan, Yugoslavia, and Germany. This interview was conducted by G. Lewis Schmidt on January 15, 1990.

CUMMING: I went to Seoul in 1960 just in time to witness Syngman Rhee's ouster. It was not too long after the Korean War. So it was time to build the country back up again, and the American military was much in the foreground.

The student revolution occurred just before I got there. I was in California when I saw the revolution on television and wondered what I was getting into when the students had revolted. I was in Seoul only a matter of a couple of days when I was invited out to dinner by our information officer and his wife, Irv Sabloski. There was a couple of other couples. All of a sudden the officers had to leave. When they came back they told us that Syngman Rhee had gone that night. Rhee was succeeded by John Chung who came for just a very, very short time. I think he was only there for a matter of just maybe a few months. Then Park Chung Hee came in.

The PAO was Hunt Damon. We were doing a tremendous number of things with students. We had a big student program. We had a big Fulbright program, a lot of Fulbright teachers, professors. Bernie Levin -- director of the USIS center -- was the coordinator of the students' program. He later became the cultural affairs officer and then the PAO. But there was a lot going on in the country because we had so much press around us all the time.

I know that during the early days of the program in Korea, USIS was acting almost as a public affairs section of the Korean government in that it was trying to build up Syngman Rhee. When Park took over it became entirely different. For a while we were under martial law. After Syngman Rhee went out, an entirely different group of people came in.

It was almost a dictatorship. I remember coming to the office on a bus to find that American military had taken positions out in front of our Embassy -- the front of the Embassy was secured and we had to go in the back door. We didn't know who was in charge of the government.

The staff lived at the Nasia Apartment. A lot of the Americans lived there. They couldn't even get to the office because there were wires on the street.

So it was a different government that took over. Although we were trying to get in and find out naturally what we had, what we were working with, we weren't running it by any matter or means. USIS had great access to the press that time. We had press from all over come to our office because the DCM was giving press conferences and the PAO was giving press conferences all the time. All the Americans coming in -- they wanted to know what was going on in Korea.

Our information service was pretty well limited to dealing with Americans in the 1960 to 1962 period. We dealt with some foreigners, the exception of the Japanese because the Japanese were not welcome in Korea in those times. We were trying to deal with the Korean press, but how successful we were, I just can't say.

Bernie Levin was pretty successful in his dealing with the students. Bernie had a fantastic rapport

and when I went back for my last tour -- he was then the PAO and he had people coming to him then who had been his students in the 1960s. Bernie was probably one of the most popular Americans ever in Korea -- all through Korea, not only in Seoul.

The students at that time had been largely instrumental in the downfall of Syngman Rhee. There was a picture in those days that was hanging in the Embassy, or in the USIS -- we were in the Embassy in those days -- of the Ambassador's car going through with Ambassador McConaughy and Tom Shoesmith, who was then the DCM and is now an Ambassador, going through, and the students breaking rank for our American car to go through. The students were very friendly toward us, very friendly. We all had friends among the students. The students were eager. They all wanted to learn English. They wanted to learn things about America. You would invite them to your home; they were more than willing to come. Anything Americana. It's entirely different today.

The production part of the motion picture program was done in Sangnam by Lorin Reeder, who worked down there and was in charge of that operation. He was an old China (Far East) hand and knew the Ambassador personally from those days. He married a Korean and a reception was held at the Ambassador's Residence.

Neils Bonnesen (and another officer) were stationed in Seoul and were in charge of distribution and the rest of the motion picture end of the program. They had offices in the Seoul Center.

We had President Eisenhower come to visit us -- I mean he was only originally coming for four hours, but when he couldn't get into Japan he came to Korea and spent the night in Korea. The military, of course, wanted to take care of the ex-general but the ex-general, who was then the President, was coming as a civilian. So we had to work with the military very closely. But we had to anyway because the military felt that they were running Korea, and they were not. They did forget that there was an Ambassador there.

The general populace adored Eisenhower. Absolutely adored him. They had a motorcade that came from 8th Army headquarters. I guess that is where his plane landed. His car was secured there. He came and by the time he got to the main square where the Embassy was, the motorcade broke down because of the press of people. You have never seen anything like it.

I have a picture here somewhere of the mass of humanity that broke down the motorcade. They just had to almost lop hands, to break arms because everybody wanted to touch Eisenhower. This was in contrast to Japan where Hagerty went to make the arrangements and he was almost stoned. That canceled the Eisenhower visit. It was entirely different in Seoul. The picture was so marvelous. We finally went out and we were standing up on top of our center building so we could see some of the crowd. Of course, the women all got dressed in their beautiful Korean dresses -- and the colors. You could hardly see the cars. It was a nightmare for the Secret Service. They told us they just didn't know what to do because Eisenhower was in an open car.

Here they were: these people who just wanted to touch this magnificent man. No, it was a scene that I don't think we will ever see again.

There was a lot of resentment against the Rhee government. Certainly I did not get the feeling it was toward us at all. Not a bit. That was true even after Park Chung Hee came to power. The only thing that I can remember now is a Korean saying to me: "I don't understand how you people can now go for this man with the way he came into power." He was the exception. I did not have the feeling that the Koreans were against us at all. In those days, I felt that Koreans just thought we were the greatest thing that ever happened.

By 1960, most of Korea had been rebuilt. It is true that there were a lot of shacks, but even in the countryside there was very, very little war damage left. People would point out hills to you and say this was such and such a hill during the war. But in the city itself, there was no sign of bombing or war per se, but there were a tremendous number of shacks just put up everywhere.

There was one hotel -- the Bando Hotel -- which was across the street from the Embassy. It was the only hotel and that was what we used for the press room when Eisenhower came. The Chosen Hotel was a field grade officers billet at that time.

The compound where some Americans lived was the same in 1960 as it was when I went back in 1984. There may have been a few different houses -- but the apartments were the same. The subway was almost completed in 1986. It was fun to ride. It was brand new. We would just hop on it all the time. It was just wonderful because driving is horrendous.

I retired just before the Seoul Olympics. But I have a tape that they gave me of the Olympic Village that they were building. I was invited to go out and see the grounds.

While we were there, they showed a tape of the many changes that had to be made to Seoul and the Han River to build this city for the Olympics. In this film they also showed the many cultural programs available -- opera, symphony, art exhibits, historic places, et cetera, and as I had attended the symphony they filmed was actually in the "shot". My Korean friends presented me with a copy of this video before I left Korea.

But the whole thing -- the building of the Olympic site -- was very thrilling to me because it was on the other side of the Han River, and I admired what they had done to the Han River. The Han River 25 years earlier was our escape route if we had to be evacuated. The only bridge over the Han River was out most of the time and we would have had to go down through the river and then up over to Incheon.

Well, this is not the Han River today. They have bridges, they probably have twelve or fourteen bridges over the Han River now.

DANIEL A. O'DONOHUE
Political Officer
Seoul (1960-1964)

**Korea Desk Officer
Washington, D.C. (1964-1966)**

Ambassador Daniel A. O'Donohue was born in Michigan in 1931. He received a BS from the University of Detroit in 1953 and an MPA in 1958 from Wayne State University. He served overseas in the US Army from 1953 to 1955 and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. His assignments abroad include Genoa, Seoul, Accra and Bangkok, with ambassadorships to Burma and Thailand. Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed Ambassador O'Donohue in 1996.

O'DONOHUE: Service in Genoa was a good experience for me. However, I had sort of "fallen in love" with East Asia when I was in the Army in Korea, with Korea as devastated as it was. I was there just after the agreement on the cessation of hostilities [in 1953], and not during the fighting. At the time I was in Korea in the Army, the country was still wrecked. In Seoul one could see the Catholic Cathedral standing on a hill. The old Japanese Capital building was bombed out, and its dome was gutted. It was still there, but there were holes in it. One had the impression that most of the city had been almost leveled. As a matter of fact, when I went back later to Korea, I realized that there were more buildings than I remembered.

Korea in 1954 and 1955 was an utterly different world than it is now. Since I entered the Foreign Service, I have always been interested in going back to East Asia and Korea. So I requested Korean language training. In the summer of 1959 my Genoa tour of duty was cut short and I was sent to Yale University, where we studied Korean in those days.

Q: So after your tour in Genoa you were assigned to study Korean. How long did this last?

O'DONOHUE: I studied Korean for one year, from 1959 to 1960.

Q: What was your impression of the Korean language program at Yale? At the time Korean was widely considered a difficult and still obscure language.

O'DONOHUE: I thought that the course was unreal and "pro forma," in that there is no way that in one year anyone but the most exceptional student could ever master or even get a good working knowledge of Korean. There are two other East Asian languages, Chinese and Japanese, in the State Department's language training program. An immensely greater amount of attention is devoted to teaching these languages. Regarding the Korean language, perhaps "pro forma" is too strong a term. However, I would say that the Korean language training program at Yale was not really "serious business," in contrast to Japanese and Chinese.

Q: Who taught Korean at Yale?

O'DONOHUE: I think that this was the final couple of years of the US Air Force contract with Yale to teach Asian languages. Yale had an Institute of Far Eastern Languages and Linguistics, which taught Japanese, Chinese, and Korean to Air Force officers and enlisted men. So that is where we went. I think that a couple of years previously the Department had sent someone out to study Korean at the University of Washington. However, in those years Korean language

training was very much an offhand sort of thing. The FSI [Foreign Service Institute] did not devote a great deal of attention to it.

Q: You went to Yale in 1959 and completed your training in 1960 and then were assigned to the Embassy in Seoul. What job were you assigned to in Seoul?

O'DONOHUE: I was assigned to the Political Section. A mutual friend of ours, Bob Willner, had studied Korean with me at Yale. We went out to the Embassy in Seoul together. Bob was assigned to the Consular Section of the Embassy for the first year, and I was assigned to the Political Section. This assignment to Seoul ended up being the "second act" of a "three act" play in the Political Section. Syngman Rhee, the President of the Republic of Korea, fell from power in March, 1960. When I arrived in Seoul in June, 1960, those events were over.

Q: This was the "student rebellion" in Korea?

O'DONOHUE: This was the "student rebellion" against the "rigged elections" of 1960. As a result of this "student rebellion," Rhee was swept aside. There was an interim government under a politician named Ho Chong, who presided over a transition period. Then free elections were held which led to the establishment of a government headed by Chang Myon. However, this period was marked by immense and intense, political turmoil. The turmoil ranged from factional fighting within Chang Myon's own party to the bitterest of factional fighting with the other civilian party. There were labor unions and students still on the streets. This was a period of very significant, political disorder.

At the same time, as became evident later, the Korean military began plotting coups d'etat. In this case President Park Chung Hee's coup succeeded, although it was not the only one being planned. President Rhee fell from power, he kept the military very much under his thumb. Rhee had constantly kept in his mind balancing factions in the Korean military. Generals did not stay in one job for very long. He had seen this as part and parcel of the process of ruling. After he fell, the military began to go through a period of change. We saw all of these things as harmful to military efficiency. Chang Myon didn't have the same independence of action which President Rhee had had. He was so absorbed with the domestic political situation that he erroneously assumed that the Americans were "taking care of the Korean military."

As you know, the Korean military were under the operational control of our generals in the context of the U.N. Command. However, the meaning of "operational control" changed as the Korean military became more independent. Nonetheless, until then the illusion was that the American generals commanded and that the Korean generals, in effect, were their docile subordinates, dependent on the US for everything. As time went on, particularly as we moved into 1961...

Q: Before we go on, could you talk a little about who was our Ambassador in Seoul? What was the composition of the Political Section? Also, what were they telling you? What did they say about the Koreans in the Political Section?

O'DONOHUE: Well, when I arrived in Seoul in 1960, we were still in the last phases of a

transition in which the Ambassador was finally emerging as the “senior American” in the country. During the Korean War [1950-1953] and throughout the 1950’s there were really four, distinct US entities. There were the Embassy and the Ambassador. There was also the American military who, as I said, in fact commanded the Korean forces, provided the military assistance, and had dominating influence. There was the AID [Agency for International Development] Mission which, for a good part of that time, was quasi-autonomous. In terms of size, we’re talking about 400-500 people and AID programs of as much as \$500 million in 1960 alone. So immense resources were going into Korea. Then there was also the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency].

So there were these four entities. Of these four, the one which didn’t give the Koreans any resources was the Embassy. Also, the entity which gave the Syngman Rhee the most headaches and lectures on democracy was the American Embassy. During my period, the Ambassador slowly emerged as being more than “first among equals.”

In this context when I was in Seoul, 1960-1964, the Embassy was quite modest in size. There were about 40,000 American troops in Korea and a huge AID Mission. The Political Section had five officers assigned, and the Economic Section had four or five officers. In a relative sense the Embassy was small, compared to the other official American elements in Korea. Also, what characterized the Political Section was its youth. The first Political Counselor when I was there was Don Ranard. Phil Habib was the second Political Counselor. We had one FSO-3 in the old system--equivalent to an FSO-1 now. The rest of us were all junior officers. So this was a Political Section which was dominated by youth.

On the other hand, we had an almost unlimited “mandate.” For instance, from beginning to end of this tour in Seoul I handled the unification issue and dealt with North Korea, UN questions, and the major opposition parties. I probably had the broadest responsibility. Phil Habib was my senior boss and also my closest friend. We were on particularly close terms. However, all of us in the Political Section had our finger in everything, at one time or another. It was an exciting time to be in the Political Section. There were limits to what we could do, which became apparent, particularly in the period immediately before the coup d’etat [of 1961]. The Embassy Political Section was absorbed with the domestic political situation and at that time, the Korean military were more or less “off the screen.” As we approached this period prior to the coup d’etat, the Ambassador and the DCM were certainly dependent on the other agencies for any feel for what the Korean military were doing.

Q Who were the Ambassador and the DCM?

O’DONOHUE: The Ambassador at first was Walter McConaughy. Marshall Green was the DCM. Ambassador McConaughy had derived a tremendous amount of prestige from the way the fall of Syngman Rhee was handled by the Embassy. He left South Korea to come back to Washington as the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. Marshall Green was Chargé d’Affaires at the time of the coup d’etat. As I noted, they were essentially dependent on the other agencies for intelligence on Korean military attitudes. That was the result of the Political Section being composed mainly of junior officers. Also, there were no “patterns,” of Embassy contact with the Korean military. This showed up very strongly. The next time around--three years later-

-it was quite the opposite.

Q: Prior to the coup d'etat, how did you get out and around? You were saying that Korean society...

O'DONOHUE: Korean society then was completely dominated by males. However, if you worked at it, you could really manage an amazing level of access and entree across the board. What it meant was that you were literally working all the time. During the day, for example, there would be a fair amount of business with the Korean Foreign Ministry and other ministries. We would go out to lunch. We used to vie with each other to see who could submit the cheapest luncheon vouchers. At the end of the day we would often meet with someone at the old Bando Hotel for a drink. Maybe you would pick up a couple of other Korean friends and go off down to Myong Deng and the bar areas. We were constantly in motion. We were literally going all of the time.

So we became very disciplined at work, meaning that we got our work done very quickly. We turned out an immense volume of reports, because Korea was so important to the US. At the same time, the reporting was invariably based on wide ranging contacts.

Q: What were the political currents going around at that time--before the coup d'etat?

O'DONOHUE: In the pre-coup d'etat period the basic currents on the domestic political scene were, first of all, the almost bitter nature of the domestic, political rivalries among the parties which had been united against Syngman Rhee. Then they broke up into their original, factional groupings as soon as he was forced out of power. However, first and foremost was the bitter, almost pre-modern factionalism characterizing the Korean political parties. To a degree, you can still see this tendency to this day. I met Kim Dae Jong in 1960 in Mokpo as a young man. Kim Yong Sam was in the other political party--at that time under Yun Bo Sun, who was President, a figurehead position.

The first characteristic of the political currents was the inability of the Korean political parties to work together. You can argue that, to this day, this remains an institutional problem in Korea.

Secondly, student unrest was a significant factor but, as it turned out, not unmanageable. Nonetheless, you could argue that the students felt that, having overthrown Rhee, they were ultimately the conscience of the country from that day until now. So student unrest in the universities was another major aspect of the political currents in Korea.

A preoccupation with North Korea and the attraction it had for students was another thread in the political situation. From the perspective of the Political Section in that period the Korean military was essentially "terra incognita." The Political Section had almost no dealings with the Korean military--certainly none that would contribute to our reporting.

Q: Did the American military have any ability or interest in reporting on the Korean military?

O'DONOHUE: Our military essentially viewed the Korean military as "loyal subordinates."

They found it almost inconceivable that the Korean military would do anything that we didn't want them to do. There was some reporting on the coups d'état being planned--mainly from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] but a little from the American military. The tendency of the American military was to dismiss these reports.

Now, in all of this President Park Chung Hee--who, in those days, was a Major General--was probably the one Korean general whom our military actively disliked. He was austere, didn't speak English, and was critical of what he regarded as the American dominance of Korea. Probably, if you looked at the whole spectrum of Korean generals, Park Chung Hee probably would have been considered by the American military as the least likely to lead a coup d'état.

What happened is that the Korean Army factional group led by Park Chung Hee moved first to stage a coup d'état and secured power. After securing political power, he went back and "purged" the Korean military of his rivals.

Q: I've been told a little about this period. Park Chung Hee remained in power for a long time--until 1979. The South Koreans have been called the "Irish" of the Far East. Since you and I are both of Irish ancestry, we can appreciate that this means that the South Koreans had a certain inability to "get it all together."

O'DONOHUE: Well, you can even trace this back to Korean history. In my mind the Korean economic "miracle" is the most impressive of all of the East Asian economic "miracles." In effect, if I go back to when I first arrived in Korea in 1954 in the US Army and to conversations I had with a very close friend who had been there in the US Military Government during the period 1945-1947, we were essentially talking about a country which the Japanese had thoroughly "dominated." For a Korean, promotion to the rank of Sergeant in the Japanese-run Police Force was a success. A few Koreans "broke through" in various areas of society during the Japanese period. However, the Korean "large" business community, when I originally arrived in Korea, could easily have fit into a single living room. Indeed, the job of chauffeur was regarded as a prestigious occupation. There was a sense that the Koreans were unable to do much of anything.

To my mind, what was most interesting in terms of US policy was the far-sighted decisions that were made in 1959-1969, in which I was not involved. Essentially, at this time decisions were made to start cutting back on assistance to South Korea to force the Koreans to stand on their own two feet. Up to that point, the per capita, annual income in South Korea was something like \$100- 150. In one way or another the United States provided all of Korea's very limited foreign exchange needs. Now, these were at a level well below the poverty line. However, between our economic assistance programs and our purchases of Korean currency for the use of the American military, essentially the Korean businessman looked to the government for support not to competing in the world.

Starting in 1959-1960, decisions were made to wean South Korea from dependence on US assistance. Initially, there was a debate, if one can even contemplate it these days, over building one Korean fertilizer plant. An American company would manage it, but it would be provided under the aid program, and it would belong to Korea. The debate about whether the Koreans

could manage one fertilizer plant was intense. That was where South Korea was in 1960.

In 1961 the Chang Myon government had made all the “right” decisions economically. However, it had fallen from power before implementing them. President Park Chung Hee came in and, initially, made all of the “wrong” decisions. His approach was highly “statist” in character. He had some economic “guru” from one of the lesser known universities. At one point--I think that it was early in 1962--they had a change in the currency which amounted to confiscation. There have been few times in South Korean affairs when Americans have had the opportunity to use “lines that you don’t often use, but this currency change was a disaster--a sheer, unmitigated disaster. The government had “frozen” the economy. You could only exchange currency up to a certain amount.

From the beginning Ambassador Sam Berger had cast his lot with President Park Chung Hee and the military government. He was very sympathetically disposed to the Park Government. He was able to go in and say to them, in effect, that South Korea was a sovereign country and that they could do what they wanted. However, we were also a sovereign country, and we weren’t going to fund this South Korean economic silliness with our AID program. In effect, he forced the South Korean Government to “retreat” on this issue. I guess that you could say that this was a “watershed” development. Park’s later decisions didn’t necessarily flow from this, but in a sense it was the last dumb economic decision he made.

From that point on, President Park became, without a question in my mind, the “father” of South Korea’s economic development. It was not that he was an economist. However, he invariably gave the “technocrats” his full support. Invariably, when decisions came to him, the decisions he made on broad, economic paths were the right ones. Often, the advice given to him, including our own, turned out to be overly cautious and he chose the bolder course.

In 1961-1962 South Korea was a country where human hair for wigs might have been their second or third largest export. By 1964 this situation was beginning to change. Just as the Korean War was the catalyst for the Japanese economic resurgence, the Vietnam War became the catalyst for South Korea’s emergence as an economic power on the international scene.

Q: Could we go back to the period of the coup d’etat? At the time, what was your estimate of Marshall Green?

O’DONOHUE: It was a traumatic period. This was influenced partly because of the particular circumstances in Washington. The Kennedy administration had just gone through the “Bay of Pigs” fiasco in Cuba. That colored the administration’s treatment of the senior officers in the Embassy in Seoul. In other words, an administration was in office which had just had one “amateurish failure.” Then, all of a sudden, there was a coup d’etat in a country where, allegedly, the US was running their armed forces. So the focus was on, “Who was to blame?” The blame had to be outside of Washington. This attitude hurt Ambassador Walter McConaughy, who had gotten his job as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, partially because of the acclaim for his handling of the situation in Korea. It also hurt Marshall Green on the scene, because there had to be someone to be “blamed.” However, it didn’t hurt him long. Actually, the Political Counselor, Don Ranard, probably suffered the most in career terms.

Marshall Green had both standing and ability. He may have lost appointment to an Embassy at this point but he went to Hong Kong as Consul General. So for Marshall Green the Korean coup d'etat was nothing more than a "bump in the road," in the career sense. In a professional sense, I am sure, it was an excruciating period for him.

In fact, looking at the problem retrospectively, during the next three years the role of the Embassy and of the Political Section in Seoul was utterly different. Our contribution was in the whole, broad range of Korean affairs, during a period which was as tumultuous as before. Qualitatively, it was of a different nature.

Q: As one of the more junior of the Political Officers, how did word of the coup d'etat get to you?

O'DONOHUE: Well, as I said, the way in which the situation developed then was that whatever information there was came essentially either from CIA or the American military. There were several coup plots going on. Reports from CIA and American military sources involved restrictions on access to this information. I was very junior at the time--an FSO-8. The fact that we were not given access to such reports was understandable. By the way, the next time around--and there were several "next times"--we were brought into it. At the time of the coup d'etat in 1961 even the Political Counselor was not given access to this information.

In my view Marshall Green was left utterly dependent on the judgment of an American four-star general, because the South Korean Army was "his army," so to speak. I don't think that the General could contemplate them as being actually "disloyal." So the coup d'etat came as a shock. Not that there weren't reports in advance. However, the coup happened, and the South Korean military moved in and took over the government. I received a call from the Embassy and went into the office. Then, for the next five or six days we worked day and night, sleeping on couches. The Korean military group tended to view us with hostility. They resented that the Embassy had condemned the coup.

On the other hand, in terms of relations between the United States, the Korean military couldn't just "walk away" from us. So we had a surprising amount of freedom to move around. Now we couldn't see some of the people that we might have wanted to see. However, in our case it became a period of intense activity, focusing on: first, picking up the threads of governmental dialogue. In the end, as our basic judgment was, coup or not, the security situation was dominant, and the US had to work with the Korean coup leaders. So, we were "picking up the threads." Secondly, the South Korean military put a government into office. The civilians in it were people whom we had known, one way or another. But we had to pick up contact with a whole new government. Thirdly, as best we could, we had to be out and active enough to try to make an assessment whether the new regime was going to "hold together" and whether there was going to be a public backlash. In fact, there wasn't. We also needed to know what was happening in terms of the political dynamics.

Then belatedly, but not really until Phil Habib came on the scene as Political Counselor, we had to pick up on developments in the South Korean military, an area which, up until then, we had

not paid any attention to. The work of the Political Section was overwhelming. The Washington interest in the situation in Korea was intense.

The situation was complicated by the fact that at one time President Park Chung Hee had been a communist. So we had the general who was reputed to be “anti-American,” and maybe a former communist, in charge of the government. Among the various coup groups the Park faction was the one group that the American military wouldn’t have “liked.” At some time in the mid 1940’s Gen. Park had been associated with the Communist Party and, indeed, had been “saved,” by his senior ROK army friends. Even though Park Chung Hee was a Major General, in an Army where there were 30 or 35 year old Lieutenant Generals, his standing in the military was immensely higher than his rank because his background had been the Japanese Military Academy. He was also viewed as being “non-corrupt.” His standing in the South Korean military was far higher than the positions he had held.

So there was that concern. Indeed, at one point I had to do an assessment which was sent to Washington on General Park’s leftist background. This was a period of immense tension. What dominated other considerations was the Kennedy administration’s concern that it might be charged with yet another foreign policy “fiasco.”

Q: In my interview with him, Marshall Green made a big point that he was left “dangling” for about three days after the 1961 coup, with no instructions.

O’DONOHUE: That’s right.

Q: Green said that, in a way, we condemned the coup, because that is always American policy. However, he felt that he wasn’t getting any support from Washington. Did you feel this?

O’DONOHUE: Well, he didn’t get any support. As I remember it, he not only didn’t get any support, indeed was undercut by critical “backgrounders” to the press in Washington. He had to come out, and so did General Magruder, the UN Commander, with statements condemning the coup and asking the troops not to support it.

In fact, it wasn’t simply that Washington didn’t give him any instructions. Washington was talking about this “young” Chargé d’Affaires in Seoul. Washington was talking about Green as being “inexperienced” and said privately that he had “gone off on a limb.” So it wasn’t simply that Green was left dangling. It was clear that he was being made a “scapegoat,” although I think that the “scapegoat” theme disappeared relatively quickly. However, it was quite clear Green never felt that he had support or understanding during the period of several months before Ambassador Sam Berger arrived in Seoul.

Marshall Green had a standing and reputation in the Foreign Service which protected him from the worst consequences. Nonetheless, it wasn’t just three days that he was left “dangling.” The whole period immediately after the coup was clearly a time when someone else was going to come out as Ambassador to South Korea. Ambassador Berger was going to “run” the relationship with South Korea. Marshall Green was just there “holding the reins.”

Q: You understand this now, but at the time did you get the feeling that this was a case of Washington trying to “duck” responsibility? Later on, as recently as the Gulf War of 1991, there was...

O'DONOHUE: In my view at the time this was very clear. I was the most junior officer in the Political Section, and my career was not caught up in this situation. On the other hand, as a result, there was a much closer relationship within the Embassy. What had been too “compartmentalized” a situation changed. So there was a very different atmosphere. Yes, I had the very strong impression that, in effect, Washington clearly wanted to put the onus on the Americans on the scene in Korea for having “mismanaged” the situation. They wanted to find an excuse for picking up the relationship with General Park Chung Hee and the new government. All of those things were understandable. However, this attitude was also characterized by “slights.” The word “discourtesies” isn't the right one, but Washington gave the impression that it wanted to make the Americans on the scene feel that they were “pariahs.” This affected Don Ranard, the Political Counselor, more than Marshall Green because he didn't have the same kind of reputation and standing. Washington did not give the impression that they were reposing any trust in the Embassy's judgment. They were simply waiting for Ambassador Sam Berger to arrive.

Q: I know both Marshall Green and Sam Berger. I worked for Sam Berger in Vietnam. I have great respect for both men. However, I almost have the feeling that Ambassador Sam Berger arrived in Korea, not so much with the attitude of a “hostile takeover,” but with the attitude, “All right, I'm in charge. I'm taking over.”

O'DONOHUE: Oh, there's no question of that. He came in with the view that the Embassy had mishandled the situation. With Marshall Green he was much more tempered--but certainly not in public. We were made to feel that it was clearly Ambassador Berger's view that the Embassy had mismanaged the situation. That was a ‘given.’ Also, Berger probably saw the Embassy leadership as complicating his own efforts which, from the beginning, were aimed at trying to establish a close relationship with Park Chung Hee.

It was a very difficult period when Ambassador Berger arrived. You might say that this situation lasted until Phil Habib arrived on the scene in Korea. I think that Ambassador Berger had scant respect for the views of anyone in the Embassy, although he treated Marshall with respect. I was more involved in these things than others were because of the role I had created for myself. I would generally “pipe up” and express my views. I can't say that I wasn't treated with courtesy. Indeed, later on Berger and I became very good friends. However, certainly it was a case where, simply put, Ambassador Berger didn't give the old team's views any great weight.

Both Marshall and Don Ranard were loyal members of the Embassy team, but the situation worked against them. You could argue that the situation was objectively impossible, and a new “caste of characters” was needed. My impression was that Berger was “careful” in his relationships. He didn't go out of his way to embarrass Green and Ranard. However, this was a case where there were two senior officers in the Embassy who knew that their days were numbered and that the Ambassador wanted them off the scene.

Q: Berger was not a diplomat in the sense of the “niceties” of protocol. He was a very good Foreign Service Officer, and I had great regard for him. However, he was fairly blunt-spoken. He more or less came out of the labor movement.

O'DONOHUE: I would say “yes” and “no” to that. In the Embassy in discussions and in the conduct of business Ambassador Berger could be blunt to the point of curtness. Later on I found out that he put up with my talking back to him, and he did with others. But there was a terseness and a bluntness about him. On the other hand, in a social context, he was an utterly different, charming person. Particularly during that period, we had a really difficult time of it. Everything that you would propose to send out, he would want to re-write or argue about. Then there was also the problem of my two intervening superiors, Marshall Green and Don Ranard, who were having their difficulties. However, if you went to Ambassador Berger's house on a social occasion, he couldn't be more charming. He left these problems in the office.

However, be that as it may, Marshall Green then moved to Hong Kong as Consul General. As I said, this episode, in a career sense, was just a “bump” along the way. As far as Don Ranard was concerned, this episode marred his career.

Q: After he retired from the Foreign Service, Ranard later became a vocal critic from the outside of our relations with South Korea. I wonder if you could talk about how he was to work for at the time.

O'DONOHUE: Well, Don Ranard was the first Political Counselor that I worked under in South Korea. I owe him an immense amount in terms of training a young officer in how to write and to be a political officer. He showed confidence in me. He had an utterly relaxed manner and allowed me to go along at my own pace. I learned an immense amount from him. He was a fine writer and had done an excellent job in handling the domestic political turmoil in South Korea.

As I said, he had been kept out of the flow of intelligence on the coup d'etat. So, he was hardly to blame for what happened. Whereas Marshall Green had many friends in the Foreign Service, Don Ranard had come into the Foreign Service under the Wriston Program and was not in the same situation. He was “out” of his job in South Korea and had no ongoing assignment. He stayed in Seoul until January, 1962. Ambassador Berger did not simply “ship them out.” Marshall got his assignment and left. Don Ranard stayed until Phil Habib arrived in Korea in early 1962. So Ranard was more or less in “limbo” for seven or eight months.

At the Washington end Don Ranard was treated shabbily. I'm talking about the way career officers treated him. He went back to Washington without an assignment. He finally was assigned to Cultural Affairs. Then he went out as DCM to Burma and to Australia. He came back to Washington and was Country Director for the Republic of Korea, a position in which I eventually succeeded him. For Don the events in South Korea, the coup and all the rest, were the central event in his professional life. They dominated and colored all of his perceptions. You may say that Don Ranard never “forgave” President Park Chung Hee. As Office Director for South Korea Don took a very strong human rights stance. He and Phil Habib, one as Office Director and the other as Ambassador, undoubtedly were the key figures in saving Kim Dae Jung's life. We issued a very strong statement which I don't think we would ever have gotten out

if it had ever come to the attention of the Seventh Floor of the Department before being issued.

Don Ranard increasingly viewed South Korea within the prism of the 1961 coup and what might have been--and also in terms of the brutality and the oppression of the Park period. Then Don moved from focus on Korea into the broader "human rights" milieu. Once he retired from the Foreign Service, he almost deliberately avoided retaining his relationships with other people in the Department and the Foreign Service. His interests overwhelmingly were concerned with human rights. To a large extent the catalyst for that was the Park Chung Hee Government in South Korea.

Q: When Park Chung Hee came into office, I would assume that one of the first things that you, as a young officer, would try to do was to find out what the students were up to. Could you talk about that?

O'DONOHUE: When I was in Korea, I was happy with the two Political Counselors we had. They really gave me broad-ranging freedom. What it meant for me is that I started out doing several things. One of them was getting to know university professors, particularly those who were closest to the students. To get some feeling for students, I also started giving an English class once a week. This attracted some student leaders. One of them ended up going into the Korean Marine Corps. However, at the time he was regarded as a "leftist" leader on campus.

Q: That is a common pattern.

O'DONOHUE: Four of the students, in today's terms, were "activists." Two of them were fairly prominent. I will call one of them, "Mr. Kim." I said to him, "Do you have to be the one handing in the petition in front of our Embassy? Let somebody else do it." So this ended up being more than I bargained for. I just use this example because you can't pick four students and extrapolate too much. I did this just to get some feeling for the students. It ended up being a little more than that, because a couple of the students were quite representative of the politically active student leaders.

So all of the Political Officers in the Embassy had a wide spectrum of political contacts, among them the professors at the universities. Also, I stayed in close touch with the USIS [United States Information Service] officers. One of them, Bernie Lavin, was the director of the USIS information center in Seoul. I would go down and talk to them. So this was also one of the areas that I focused on, just as I developed contacts in the political sphere. The overwhelming change resulting from the coup d'etat took the form of the emergence of a new political dynamic. The coup itself led to a "purge" in the military, and the coup group itself began to break up into factions. One of President Park's weapons was the controlled manner in which he applied brutality--usually for very clear purposes. He wasn't a sadist, but no one was exempt. If his closest associates misstepped, they could find themselves in the clutches of the Korean CIA. Then they would eventually be released but they would have had their lesson and would know that what they did was what he told them to do, nothing else.

Overwhelmingly, the thrust from that point on became plugging in to this new, political dynamic. The South Korean military who were in the senior political positions had to deal with

us. That situation then provided an opportunity to broaden our contacts. This posed problems for the South Korean military and major opportunities for the civilians whom they attracted, since these civilians often didn't have a "track record" with others. The South Korean military had brought in a group of advisers. Two of them became very close friends of mine over time. So in the field of foreign affairs I was always able to go down and talk to the people who were, in effect, advising Park Chung Hee.

During my first year in Korea, as I said, we had done an immense job with the civilian, political figures, which turned out to be irrelevant, since there was a military coup which replaced them. During the next three years [1962- 1964] the Political Section and the Embassy made substantial policy and reporting contributions across the board. We never could deal with tactical military units but we at least had enough contacts to do our job. Then we were blessed by another circumstance. Phil Habib came on the scene as Political Counselor in 1962. He was Ambassador Berger's protégé. Phil cut out a major, dominating role, whether it was with the American military, the CIA, or whatever. So all of a sudden, the Political Section was the "heart" of the American Mission in Korea. That was due to Phil Habib and his relationship to Ambassador Berger.

Within the Political Section, if an issue was important to Phil Habib, I was assigned to handle it. So during the years from 1962 to 1964 we turned out an immense amount of work. The dominant element in American policy toward the Republic of Korea became the Embassy--specifically Ambassador Berger and Phil Habib, and the Political Section under Phil, because of his role.

We went through a tumultuous period during the military government. Ambassador Berger did a superb job partially because of Phil Habib--but you really have to give much credit to Sam Berger. It was clear in 1962 that the military government was shaking itself to pieces. Ambassador Berger and Phil concluded that the South Koreans had to move from military to civilian rule. Berger was very comfortable with Park. However, Park resented his dependence" on Berger and the US, so this feeling was not fully reciprocated. Nonetheless, we had an American Ambassador who, both rightly and wrongly, had made judgment after judgment, based on support for Park and the South Korean military. There was no hostility toward Park in this. However, Berger and Phil Habib were convinced that it was necessary to return to civilian government, since political/factional controversy was resonating through the whole South Korean military establishment. So it was necessary to separate the South Korean military from politics. Now, this didn't mean separating President Park from politics. Berger simply realized that it would be necessary to get the South Korean military back in the barracks and let those military who wanted to be political leaders get out of the army.

Q: You're really saying that the South Korean military, at various levels in the government, had established "rule by the major generals."

O'DONOHUE: Well, the problem was that political strife in the military government resonated throughout the whole military structure. For example, the South Korean Marines had originally been key players in the coup. Their leaders were then "purged," and so forth. A high degree of tension developed. "Plotting" is too strong a word, although not completely so. So Ambassador Berger and Phil Habib concluded that it was necessary to return to a form of civilian government

in South Korea even if it was dominated by the military coup leaders, converted into civilian politics. Now, as it unfolded, no one could have been happier than Berger that Park Chung Hee became President of the Republic of Korea. So it was not a case of getting President Park out of power. It was a question of getting the South Korean military out of politics.

This tumultuous process went on. At one point President Park decided to call off the election. Ambassador Berger went in to see him and made it clear that elections had to take place. Park never forgave Ambassador Berger for having forced him to do the right thing. So throughout 1962 and into '63 we went through a process of high tension, with the US playing a huge catalytic role in bringing about elections.

Q: Well, Park Chung Hee remained President of the Republic of Korea, but...

O'DONOHUE: At that point Park Chung Hee was Chairman of the Council for National Reconstruction, which was, in fact, Park's faction of the military leadership. Under Park was a mixed government of military and civilians. There also was the Korean CIA, which emerged as Park's political secret police arm. As military governments all do, the South Korean military government had promised to return to civilian rule. Then there was the process of getting back to civilian rule, which was accompanied by tremendous tension. Finally, after a lot of pressure from the US, there were presidential elections which Park barely won. He won by 0.5%, or something like that, over the former President, Yun Bo Sun, who ran against Park. It was a measure of the unpopularity of the military. At this stage you would have to say that the military controlled everything. If they won by only 0.5%, or whatever it was, clearly enough a more objective vote count would have led to a defeat for the military. Nevertheless, the South Korean military learned a lot from that. From then on the Korean CIA was much more effective in managing elections.

One of the things that the KCIA learned, which they then applied frequently from then on, was that you didn't need 90% of the votes to win an election. In the 1963 parliamentary elections, using a variety of techniques, including the power of the government officialdom money, and coercion, Park's government party was able to win a massive victory with only 33% of the vote. In rural districts, for example, they would put up two or three "independents," thus splitting the election. This ensured that the government candidate would win with a minority. From that point the government no longer worried about getting 60 or 70% of the vote. What they did was to manipulate the results at the margin by a variety of ways. This led to an outcome which was adequate for the South Korean government's purposes, and government victory avoided "blatant" irregularities.

During this period, as I said, Ambassador Berger certainly played a strong role. Then he had Phil Habib as Political Counselor. Phil was a tremendously effective Foreign Service Officer.

Q: Phil Habib is one of the great "legends" of the Foreign Service. But looking back at this period, he was the Political Counselor, which is an interesting job in itself. However, you're talking about somebody who could really "do things." What were his strengths?

O'DONOHUE: Phil Habib had come into the Foreign Service comparatively late in life. He was

29 when he entered the service. He had graduated from Idaho State University, fought in World War II, came out, and got a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. So when Phil came into the Foreign Service in 1949, he was then and was always viewed thereafter as an outstanding, mature officer. Everyone who worked with Phil thought that he was one of the best. When Ambassador Berger was in political exile as DCM in New Zealand under the Republicans, Phil served under him as Economic Officer. Berger thought the world of him. So from the beginning Berger was determined to get Phil assigned to South Korea. Phil had been working on Africa at the beginning of the Kennedy administration, which was exciting at that time. So Phil already had a reputation at that point as a very strong performer--with a personality that most people liked but some found overwhelming.

If you compared Phil and Marshall Green, Marshall was a rank or two senior to Phil. Marshall was widely known in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, while Phil had no real East Asian experience. Phil had a reputation as an outstanding, energetic officer. In South Korea Phil was in a perfect situation for him, in that he was Ambassador Berger's "right hand man." The DCM's at the time had to adjust to this relationship.

Q: Who were the DCM's in Seoul at this time?

O'DONOHUE: The first one was Frank Magistretti and then Ed Doherty. Both of them had to adjust to Phil's dominant role. Phil had to pay some attention to them, but not all that much. He just did an immense job. Being Political Counselor at that time fit him. He was an outstanding writer, tremendously gregarious, and politically sure handed in what was a very difficult situation. In a variety of ways the American military in South Korea was playing its own games. So there was a difficult, American interagency situation. Various American military officers saw as their first objective getting as close to President Park Chung Hee as they could. As I said, you couldn't have had a more favorable view of Park than Ambassador Berger did. However, at various times we disagreed with Park and Berger always had US policy interests in mind.

Phil Habib did a superb job, but you cannot imagine the work involved. We would literally be going from the morning hours to late in the evening. Fortunately, what saved us was the curfew, as you know. This meant that your working day ended sometime around 10:30 to 11:30 PM. We worked all the time. In Phil Habib's case he had easy access to all of the South Koreans, short of Park. With that tremendous energy of his, whether he was dealing with businessmen, politicians, or others, and using his ready wit, he played a dominating role in the US Mission in the Republic of Korea. Phil "dominated" the AID and CIA. When I say "dominated," I mean that they had such respect for him that, in effect, they accepted his lead.

Q: As a Political Officer, what was your feeling toward the CIA?

O'DONOHUE: We were actually quite close. This was partially a reflection of the fact that Phil Habib and his counterpart, the Chief of Station [COS], were on close terms. As I said, in a very real sense they accepted his policy "lead." That attitude was pervasive throughout the Mission. There was a closeness between the officers of the Political Section and the Station. One of them and I were on particularly good terms. We would go out together. In my last three years in Seoul on this tour as a Political Officer I would go down and talk to the Chief of Station. There were

certain areas, primarily domestic political and foreign politics, on which we knew more than Station officers did. In others their access was far better. There was a minimum sense of competition. Our relations with the AID Mission were also as they should be.

However, at this point in time, the period between 1961 and 1964, when you looked at American activities in South Korea--whatever it was-- the focus had become overwhelmingly the Embassy. In the Embassy the Political Section, under Ambassador Berger, had the major influence, and for a simple reason. Phil Habib headed it.

In all of this, while all of these developments were taking place in South Korean domestic life: our security commitment remained of immense concern. We had a whole range of activities in the international field going on with the South Koreans, including defending South Korea in the UN and dealing with Korean-Japanese rapprochement. The latter issue was first negotiated with the Korean CIA--led by Kim Jong Pil--in 1963. This led to an immense, public reaction. Instead of fighting against this public feeling, President Park Chung Hee, with that good judgment that he had, let every student in Seoul, from the universities to the primary schools, go out on the streets and demonstrate. He let them march, he put this issue on "hold," and then he negotiated it with the Japanese in a more formal open way in 1964. The South Korean Government then rammed the Korean-Japanese rapprochement agreement through. However, they had created enough public acceptance of the issue that they were able to deal firmly with the opposition to normalization.

Q: Did we play any part in trying to bring the Japanese and the Koreans together?

O'DONOHUE: The answer is "Yes" and "No." First of all, during that period there was the emergence of what, over time, was an essentially "corrupt" relationship between Japanese businessmen and politicians and South Korean businessmen and politicians, with the Korean CIA engaged. So you would have to say that that certainly was an underlying aspect of the rapprochement. However, as the matter developed in 1964, the South Koreans had to handle this issue in an acceptable public manner, and normalization was in Korea's interest. We played a very useful role in support of this rapprochement, providing them with a sense of solid support. In the negotiations, I think, we were able to pull the South Koreans back from extreme positions occasionally. The negotiations were between President Park and the Japanese in the first instance. However, without a question, we played a helpful and useful secondary role.

Q: While all of this was going on, what was the mood? There was, first, a weak South Korean Government, then there was the coup, and Park Chung Hee made some "missteps" in all of this. We both served in Korea. You have your "night thoughts," "when you think about the North Koreans standing 30 miles to the North."

O'DONOHUE: First of all, the whole period was one of intense involvement by the United States. As you know from your own South Korean experience, the one thing about South Korea is the intensity of our relationship with that country. In an emotional way, it is quite exhausting. On the other hand, we were dealing as close to "first hand" as we could get with the South Koreans on major issues. So there was that sense of satisfaction or of challenge, I guess.

Regarding North Korea, our concern was far more about North Korea trying to exploit the South Korean domestic scene than about North Korea “marching South.” Invariably, when there was domestic trouble in South Korea, the North Koreans would do whatever they could to heighten tensions. So there was a pattern of heightened tensions. Nonetheless, there were invariably incidents. During this period there was the first of the US helicopter crashing in the North. However, in the period from 1960-67 the front lines were fairly quiet. There wasn’t a sense of impending invasion or high military tension. Rather, there was a sense of North Korea constantly trying to put increased political pressure on the South.

Later on, the period of 1967-1972 was a time of really intense activity along the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone]. This period included the North Korean raid on the “Blue House” assassination attempt [residence of the South Korean President], the PUEBLO incident, and the shooting down of the EC-21 [electronics intelligence] aircraft. This was also a period of far more violent clashes along the DMZ and the North Korean tunnels under the DMZ.

By contrast the 1960-1964 period involved less physical threat to South Korea, although that was always there. I think that during this period we had a few incidents regarding the islands off the South Korean coast. Then we had the helicopter incident involving an American helicopter which strayed North of the DMZ. It took about a year to negotiate for the release of the American pilots. In fact, I had left South Korea by that time.

Q: Before we leave this period, one last thing. Can you describe the group which waxes and wanes in importance, but none more so than in other countries? That is, the role of the American missionaries during this period from 1960 to 1964. Did they play any major role or not?

O’DONOHUE: No. First of all, the Catholic missionaries did not play a noticeable role during the 1960-64 period. The American Protestant missionaries, such as the Underwood’s, for example, ended up being a focus for student activities. They were the focus for “anti-foreign feeling” or whatever you want to call it.

When we traveled in the countryside, we would always stop and see the missionaries. I am talking here, in particular, about Catholic missionaries-overwhelmingly those belonging to the Columban and Maryknoll orders. Through the missionaries we were able to get a perspective on what was happening in the countryside. Not that they were active or advocating anything, but in terms of what was actually happening. That is, whether people were hungry or how the government was functioning in the countryside. They were an invaluable source of information.

Q: During my time in South Korea, 1976-1979, the missionaries played a much more active role, because “human rights” was a deep concern of the Carter administration at the time. They were well informed about “peace moves.” They were much more of a factor then.

O’DONOHUE: In that period, the Catholic missionaries were much more engaged in the South Korean political situation, particularly as they moved away from parish work and into urban work. There was a tremendous growth, at least in terms of the Catholic Church, which began to appear “institutionally” in the 1970’s.

In the 1970's a lot of things happened. There was the growth of an indigenous, Korean priesthood. As they were Koreans, they also had strong views, most notably Cardinal Kim. The foreign priests played a different supportive role. The foreign priests were always valuable for perspectives on what life was really like, especially in the countryside.

O'DONOHUE: I left Korea in July, 1964, and went back to the Korea Desk in the Department of State for two years.

Q: So we'll pick this up in 1964, when you were on the Korea Desk.

O'DONOHUE: Okay.

Q: Today is August 9, 1996. Dan, you have now taken over the Korea Desk. When did you serve there?

O'DONOHUE: I was not the Officer in Charge. I worked on the Korea Desk. At that time it was part of the old Office of Northeast Asian Affairs. I was the political officer on the desk, under the OIC. I served there from 1964 until 1966.

Q: What was the "chain of command" in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs [JEA] at the time?

O'DONOHUE: The "chain of command" was as follows. In the EA front office William P. Bundy was the Assistant Secretary. He did not spend much time on Korea. Marshall Green was the senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. Obviously, Marshall was very much engaged in Korean and Japanese affairs, as they arose.

The Office of Northeast Asian Affairs [NA] was headed by Bob Fearey. His deputy was Josiah Bennett. There were three desks in NA, dealing with Japan, Korea, and Taiwan--or, in those days, the Republic of China. There was a separate office dealing with Chinese Communist, or China Mainland Affairs. On the South Korean desk Chris Norred was first the Officer in Charge, and then was followed in that job by Ben Fleck. When the Department eventually went to the Country Director system, Ben Fleck became the Country Director.

Q: During this 1964-1966 period what were the major concerns on the Korea desk?

O'DONOHUE: Actually, Korea is always a "busy place." However, this was, relatively speaking, one of the "quieter" periods. The tremendous tumult over South Korean rapprochement with Japan and the normalization agreement that they had to abort continued. However, the South Korean Government then handled this matter in the right way. While there were demonstrations in South Korea, they got through the normalization agreement. We had had the first of the cases of US helicopter pilots inadvertently crossing into North Korea. The pattern for handling these cases, which has pretty well held until now, obtained. There was a very lengthy negotiation. Then, finally, by expressing our regret that the incident had ever happened--and we surely did regret that it had happened--we finally arranged for the release of the aircrew.

In terms of South Korean domestic affairs, outside of the very much more controllable demonstrations over the agreement for normalization of relations with Japan, it was actually a quiescent period. The dominant, bilateral issue with South Korea was actually the negotiations and the circumstances that led to the introduction of Republic of Korean forces in Vietnam. This was a very concrete negotiations, in which the South Koreans looked to see what economic benefits they could get.

There were three major elements leading to Korea's economic takeoff. The first element leading to Korea's "economic miracle" was the American decision in 1959-1960 to wean them away from dependence on American aid. The second, crucial element was President Park Chung Hee. The leadership he provided, and the role he gave to the South Korean "technocrats" was central to the country's economic success. The third crucial, catalytic element was the economic benefits from South Korea's involvement in Vietnam.

This developed in an analogous way, to what happened in Japan during the Korean War. The dimensions were not the same but, nonetheless, there were similarities. In the negotiations the South Koreans had pressed for access to contracts and a series of other economic benefits, which we gave them cheerfully enough. At that time we would have done so, anyhow. However, essentially, we saw these as minor 'throwaways,' because the South Koreans were still struggling at the very beginnings of their economic miracle. The most optimistic observer would never have predicted the pace at which economic growth took place in South Korea.

Indeed, the general view was that the Filipinos would be the major economic beneficiaries of the Vietnam War, in the sense of providing technical services and a variety of skilled and semi-skilled technicians. We didn't expect the South Koreans to do this. However, what happened was that the South Koreans, in fact, took hold. In Vietnam the South Korean companies learned how to compete internationally and how to work in an international environment. Just as importantly, they developed the self confidence to do it aggressively.

If you took a South Korean businessmen in 1960 or 1961, the only economic models that they had were the US, which they saw as a different world, and the Japanese economy. That was it. In both cases they saw themselves as not being in the same league. All of a sudden, in Vietnam they found out that they could compete very well on the international scene.

Q: At that time, as you were looking at Korean performance, what was the attitude in the State Department and your attitude and that of the Korea desk about where South Korea was going? Did you see these arrangements as "bones" to throw to the South Koreans to get South Korean troops to be deployed to Vietnam?

O'DONOHUE: First, all of us were impressed with South Korean economic growth. What we're talking about was still on a fairly small scale. To give you an example, in 1960 the only private cars in South Korea were driven by foreigners, except a few vehicles with Jeep chassis with painted, plywood tops.

You drove through potholes, around ox carts, and men carrying loads with A- frames on their

backs. I'm talking about the middle of Seoul. When I left Seoul in 1964, you had your first traffic jams at the middle of the day at Chongno intersection. So while statistically and visibly the country was changing. The truly "dramatic growth" was in the period starting in 1964-1965. I was always impressed with Park Chung Hee's decisions on economic matters. These decisions were always better than even his advisers had recommended, in the sense that he had a larger vision, which turned out to be correct.

Q: Speaking of this, you were in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. What were you getting out of the Philippines? How did the people who dealt with the Philippines view the situation there?

O'DONOHUE: I can't recall. I don't have any focus on that. Secondly, I was an FSO-6 [in the old system] or an FSO-5. I was fairly low-ranking. The world we worked on included Japan. Taiwan didn't really figure with us very much. I would have to say that I don't have any great impression of the Philippines at this period of time.

Q: In the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs you had Marshall Green there as a Deputy Assistant Secretary, who came out of his time of "trauma," "you might say, when Park Chung Hee took over in South Korea. Obviously, we were pretty uncomfortable with Park Chung Hee when he first took over in South Korea. However, by the 1964-1966 period what were your own feelings and what were you getting from Marshall Green and others in the Bureau about the direction South Korea and Park Chung Hee were going in?

O'DONOHUE: I think that we were fairly relaxed. The tensions in the Korean-American relationship ebbed after the 1963 elections. I think that I mentioned before that the period before the 1963 elections was a period of very high tension.

However, the South Koreans had gotten through the 1963 elections. At that point, and as we entered the period from 1964 to 1966, the situation wasn't particularly marked by extreme repression. The opposition was not a major threat and there was no charismatic figure like Kim Dae-Chung yet on the scene. The country's economic development and its participation in the Vietnam War, plus normalization of relations with Japan, were the major issues. In Korean terms no period is placid. However, there were not the dramatic dimensions that you could find previously and afterwards.

We had, on the whole, good relations with South Korea. From my perspective, Marshall Green never carried any particular baggage in terms of South Korea, because of what had happened in 1961, although this had been a difficult period. I don't think that I ever noticed in Marshall any particular sense of concern. In the case of Don Ranard, his South Korean experience colored the rest of his professional life.

Q: How did we look at North Korea at this time?

O'DONOHUE: This period [1964-1966] was the prelude to the following period, which was marked by the most intense, military activity since the Korean War. During 1964-66 we continued to regard North Korea both passively and distantly. There were constant incidents and there was the beginning of erosion for support for our policy of keeping North Korea out of the

UN. A constant, diplomatic effort had to be made to keep North Korea isolated diplomatically and to maintain South Korea's favored position. South Korea wasn't in the UN at that time, although it belonged to UN specialized agencies. There was a whole body of UN resolutions left from the Korean War. The UN Command remained in existence. UNCURK [UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea] had "withered" away to a small, nominal operation but still existed.

We knew very little about the situation in North Korea. We had no contacts. At the same time, this was not a particularly "bad" period in terms of tensions. Our helicopter crew had flown into North Korea by mistake, but we finally got them out. So, all in all, I think that this was a period when North Korea didn't figure very prominently.

Looking back on this period, in an institutional sense what struck me was how very limited the State Department's role was in a country like Korea. When I was in South Korea, we had had a strong Ambassador. We had Phil Habib as Political Counselor. The Embassy had a very strong and pervasive role. As I look back on the period when I went back to Washington to serve on the Korea desk, I was particularly struck by how, while we dealt with many things on the desk, we had a limited role in major activities. That was a period when AID was still a big and quasi-autonomous player in the field of foreign affairs. The Department of Defense, of course, was also a major player. While we certainly had something to do with both of them, it was nothing like when I later came back to the Department in 1974 as Office Director.

It struck me that the Korea desk had a more or less "traditional" portfolio. We certainly had liaison and contact work with DOD, AID and CIA. Our role on the Korea desk was more one of coordination. I hate to say, "on the fringes," but there didn't seem to be any major issue facing us, in the sense of something that engaged the attention of the Sixth Floor [where the office of the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs was located]. This was in dramatic contrast to when I came back to the Department later on.

The other issue, of course, was the amazing difference in relationships with Congress. As a desk officer then--and I think that I am pretty much reflecting the situation--we certainly had some contact with Congress. We provided them with information, but they hardly intruded into the conduct of Korean affairs. While I am sure that it isn't true, my impression is that we were more or less handling just "odds and ends" of Congressional business. Congressional staff would telephone us. There were a few who were deeply interested in Korea, and these persons were somewhat different, but our role was providing the Hill information. Overall, my impression was that this was a period in which Congress may have played some role at the policy level, but it had nothing like the major role that came with the growth of Congressional staffs and the programs which we later had when I was Office Director--and ever since.

Now we really have major input from Congress. I think that this involves three things. First, this is a result of the breakdown of Congressional respect for Executive Branch leadership. Secondly, there has been a proliferation of "earmarkings" of programs. In the days of which I am now speaking, the programs were large, but we didn't have Congress bringing all sorts of other considerations to bear and tying the hands of the Executive Branch as they have done--in effect, putting in Congress' own objectives. Thirdly, there is the effect of the expansion of

Congressional staffs. Previously, when Congressional staffs were smaller, they wouldn't have had the time to get too deeply involved in matters. So that was an utterly different aspect of our work.

Q: Did you see any indications of what I would term "unhealthy relationships" between some Congressmen and some South Korean businessmen, which developed later on?

O'DONOHUE: No, we didn't, although there may have been such relationships, because of the PL-480 ["surplus" agricultural products sold overseas on concessionary terms] Program, which was the genesis of what came to be called, "Koreagate." Whether there were some beginnings of such relationships between Congressmen and South Korean businessmen, I don't know. My impression is that these programs were essentially run straightforward. AID and Agriculture would develop them and then they would go up to Congress for approval, but I may have been naive in this respect.

Q: I'm not sure whether I have already asked this, but could you look at this in terms of both when you were in South Korea and when you were on the Korea desk in Washington? I'm talking about this matter in a worldwide sense. At one time there was real tension between AID and State. One of the matters which "grated" in this relationship--it was really a minor issue--was that AID people serving abroad lived "better." They had "better" living quarters and had "better" office facilities than their counterparts from the State Department. This situation didn't help bureaucratic relations. How did you see AID, particularly when you were in Washington. Did they tend to go "running off" on their own?

O'DONOHUE: As I said, the matter which, seen retrospectively, impressed me was how little we had to do with AID in Washington. So, with that limitation expressed, my impression was that in AID you had this large, quasi-autonomous entity which pretty much managed its programs as it wished. It was not so much that there were conflicts related to policy than that there was a feeling of "separateness." In other words, you could hardly look at the major AID personalities of those days and see them as somehow "subservient" to Department of State middle level officers. In fact, from the organizational point of view, AID came under the Secretary of State. It was during the Carter administration that AID was set up separately from the Secretary of State. So during my time in South Korea of which you speak, AID was literally a "dotted line" under the Secretary of State. I don't think that, at the very highest levels, AID personnel were challenging anything that they were interested in. I think that AID personnel accepted the policy framework set by other people, for example, in the Department of State. But they implemented policy quasi- autonomously.

It was rather that you had this very large, autonomous entity that, by its very nature, had great influence on the country in which it was located. AID was dispensing immense sums of money. In South Korea during the period of which we are speaking, the amount of money involved was very large by any standard. AID tended to operate, not in conflict with established policy as much as simply within their own framework of operations. I never had a sense that AID was an active player in what we should be doing globally, or anything like that. It was a powerful entity which commanded very large resources, and the State Department didn't have such resources. AID tended to set its own, specific priorities.

As far as the contrast in living styles, I was very junior when I was in South Korea from 1961-1964. If you consider the Embassy as a whole, the Political Section amounted to four or five people. The jobs we had were important. As I said, the Political Section, particularly under Phil Habib, played an immense role, even though we were relatively junior officers. None of those problems came up. In retrospect indeed, you could probably give a lot of people who were many years older than I was a fair amount of grace and tolerance for having me, as a young man, constantly telling them how to do things. So that was not a problem, although AID personnel were usually significantly higher ranking than State Department people, in a bureaucratic sense. Perhaps they lived more comfortably than we did, but I don't think that we would have traded positions because we lived in Seoul, and they lived out on the Yongsan compound. So I don't think that was an issue.

Q: Regarding North Korea in particular, were you getting any information from CIA, INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research in the State Department], or other US Government agencies on North Korea? Did you get much information on North Korea?

O'DONOHUE: No. As I said, if it weren't for the constant pressure or "weight" that came from the border that divided North and South Korea and what was happening at Panmunjom [location of the talks between North Korea and Communist China, on the one hand, and South Korea and the US on the other], it was remarkable how little attention we paid to North Korea. The American military paid a lot of attention to North Korea. Here, we are talking about the State Department. There wasn't much. North Korea didn't intrude much into what we did. There were occasional "spy" issues. The South Korean government, of course, used the threat of Communist North Korea to pry resources from the US. However, there wasn't enough "grist" in such matters to have much effect. There were no contacts with North Koreans. So, in addition to the border between North and South Korea and the problems and diplomatic competition which resulted from that, North Korea was not a major difficulty for us. North Korea was almost "two-dimensional," from our perspective. This was also true when I first served on the Korea desk in the Department of State. As I said, this was not true with the American military, which had a concern about North Korea in the military sense.

Q: In 1966, where did you go?

O'DONOHUE: In 1966 I was assigned to the Executive Secretariat [S/S]. I remained intensely interested and involved in the problems of South Korea. I would often go down to the Korea desk and give them my two cents' worth of advice. However, at that time the Secretariat staff did quite a bit more than they do now. On weekends, after the "principal officers" of the Department went home, the staff more or less "ran" the State Department.

My two major activities in S/S were, first, the Paris Peace Talks with the North Vietnamese on Vietnam. Phil Habib, a close friend of mine, was assigned to Paris as the senior Department officer on our delegation. The Department wanted someone from the Secretariat to go. So I went to Paris for about three months in that connection.

The next event involved the seizure of the USS PUEBLO by the North Koreans.

Q: Let's talk about the North Korean issue first. The North Korean raid on the South Korean "Blue House" [residence of the President of the Republic of Korea] also took place about that time.

O'DONOHUE: The two incidents were inextricably linked, in terms of the US relationship with South Korea and how events worked out.

Q: Then let's talk about that first, and then the Vietnam Peace Talks later.

O'DONOHUE: I didn't have much to do with the Vietnam Peace Talks.

Q: But we can talk about them later.

O'DONOHUE: Regarding the USS PUEBLO incident...

Q: Could you explain what the USS PUEBLO was?

O'DONOHUE: The USS PUEBLO was an electronic intelligence surveillance ship which had been sent to operate off the coast of North Korea. It was captured by the North Koreans, and the crew was imprisoned. This posed an immense and immediate challenge to the administration because a US Navy ship had been attacked and seized in international waters. It was located about 15 miles off the coast of North Korea when the attack and seizure took place. The ship was attacked and one or two of the crew killed and many wounded. The captain surrendered the ship, and he and the rest of the crew were imprisoned. So this posed an immense crisis for the administration because there was not only the incident itself but the welfare of the crew imprisoned in North Korea. Then there were all sorts of other aspects, which didn't involve me. This was a major intelligence disaster because the ship's sensitive equipment wasn't destroyed.

What colored the South Korean reaction was that, as I remember, just a week before, but no more than two weeks, there had been a major, attempted assassination of President Park Chung Hee. The North Koreans had sent across the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone] 31 agents whose purpose was to assassinate President Park.

The fact that these 31 assassins had crossed the DMZ was quickly discovered. There was a subsequent man hunt going on, which resulted in killing of a string of the assassins as they infiltrated to Seoul. The finale was that three of the assassins actually got to the gates of the "Blue House" compound. There was a "shoot out" in front of the "Blue House" compound, where the last were killed. I think one was caught.

Q: The "Blue House" was the equivalent of the American "White House."

O'DONOHUE: Yes, the Presidential Mansion. It wasn't the house itself that was attacked but the area in front of it. So there had been, in effect, a "trail of bodies." This had been a serious North Korean attempt to kill Park Chung Hee. All of this was taking place during the period which I mentioned earlier--1967- 1969--in which the military tension along the DMZ was at the highest

point since the Korean War. There was the “Blue House” raid, there was the PUEBLO affair, and, in 1969, there was the shooting down of the EC-21 by the North Koreans.

This was really a period of immense military tension. Profound consequences flowed from this series of incidents. It led to the modernization of the South Korean Army and to the emergence of the South Koreans as much more active players in their own defense.

In the case of USS PUEBLO President Johnson was faced with twin crises. First, obviously, was the PUEBLO itself, and that involved North Korea. Secondly, there was the reaction of President Park and of the Korean Government. In my view the Department of State earlier mishandled the “Blue House” raid, in the sense of dealing with a chief of state, who has just gone through an attempt on his life. I may be wrong but, as I remember it, the Department did not recommend that President Johnson send a message to President Park, expressing relief that he was safe. Our initial reactions to the “Blue House” raid were focused solely on being sure the South Koreans didn’t overreact against the North. We didn’t say, “We’re glad that you survived,” but, rather, “Don’t do anything precipitous.” The whole thrust of our attitude to the South Koreans was, “Don’t react.”

Then we had the PUEBLO incident. President Park, at a very real level, and also, as it turned out, tactically, was enraged at the difference in the American response. As it were, he felt that the North Koreans had tried to kill him and all Americans did about it was try to hold the South Koreans back. Then the PUEBLO incident occurred and the Americans, in Park’s view, wanted the South Koreans to do all sorts of things on their behalf. So we really had a second crisis with the ROK. So the President of the United States had more problems with regard to Korea than he wanted.

Q: I was going to say that, while this was happening, you were in the Operations Center of the Department, right?

O’DONOHUE: No, I was in the Executive Secretariat.

Q: Well, were you watching this situation as it unfolded?

O’DONOHUE: I was watching it, but, my nature being what it is, I was also down on the Korea desk, giving them my advice, on a daily basis. So President Johnson’s most immediate problem was mending fences with President Park Chung flee, in the sense that this was his most “solvable” problem. There was nothing much that he could do about getting the crew of the PUEBLO Out, at least in the short term.

So President Johnson dispatched Cyrus Vance, former Defense Deputy Secretary who had a very special relationship with the President as his personal envoy to Park.

Once Vance had left the Defense Department, President Johnson had first used him as a mediator on the Cyprus situation, with its Greek and Turkish involvement. He did an amazing job. At one time he went on the premise that if he was in the air flying, the Greeks and Turks wouldn’t shoot at each other! So Vance was flying from Athens to Ankara to keep the peace there.

In connection with the PUEBLO incident, Vance was charged by President Johnson with handling it. The Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department of State, John Walsh, who had no background on Korea had a very close relationship with Vance and had worked with him on the Turkey situation. Walsh went along with Vance on this PUEBLO negotiation. An Air Force Colonel, Abbot Greenleaf, had been Walsh's executive military assistant. Then I was assigned as the fourth man to go to South Korea.

As I remember, this happened in January, 1968. We left Washington on a cold, wintry day, which matched the signals that we were getting from South Korea, which were even colder. By then Ambassador Sam Berger was the senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in EA, the job which Marshall Green had had. Berger briefed Vance. When we left, the South Koreans were saying, 'Were not sure that we're going to accept you.' As we got over North Dakota, the South Koreans said that they would perhaps send the Protocol Officer to the airport to meet us. Lee Bon Sok was the Chief of Protocol in the South Korean Foreign Ministry. He was later Foreign Minister and one of those who were unfortunately killed in the 1988 murder of a South Korean cabinet member in Rangoon, Burma by a North Korean sapper squad. In any event, while we were ultimately received in an appropriate manner when we arrived in Seoul, it was a very difficult negotiation. It was further complicated because the South Korean Foreign Minister at the time, was not of any great weight, and negotiations were going on all around him. However, he did figure in one of the memorable tales of that time. In the course of a week the South Koreans and President Park took a very strong stance, in terms of asking, Where do we figure in all of this, or do we count at all to the Americans? Vance was superb. With patience and charm he "rode out" this period of coldness. He kept clearly in mind what he was about, which was, in effect, to deal with the South Koreans and bring President Park to support our approach to handling the crisis.

The negotiations lasted more than a week. It involved a whole series of negotiations on a "quid pro quo" package to strengthen the South Korean military.

Q: Was this "package" for the negotiations with the South Koreans sort of "hastily" assembled, in the view that we had to bring something over there?

O'DONOHUE: Well, it was hastily assembled and then was modified as the negotiations went on. This was happening during the first week of this crisis. In effect, what we were going to do was to secure South Korean agreement to operate within our framework. That is, no military actions. For our part we would visibly strengthen the South Koreans militarily.

As I say, this negotiation continued through that week. Park was both genuinely but also tactically incensed. However, in the end, there had to be an agreement, however difficult it was going to be to reach it. Vance handled this negotiation beautifully, combining the grace and patience that was needed.

In dealing with the South Korean Foreign Minister, Vance allowed him to insert himself belatedly into the process although the details had already been agreed upon. The South Korean Foreign Minister wanted to get together with Vance to dot a few i's and cross a few t's. Well, nobody was happy about that, but Vance agreed.

The Foreign Minister forced Vance into an all night meeting. With great patience Vance allowed the Korean side to tell him that this English word was better than that one and that he should put a comma here, etc. With immense tact Vance went through it all and managed both to endure this process, while preserving everything of substance.

Obviously, Vance worked out the final agreement with Park Chung Hee. Vance was able to deliver one of the great lines in diplomacy. You don't often get a chance to do this. At the last minute President Park said that he wasn't sure that he could agree. With utter charm Vance said, "Well, Mr. President, I have come here only to see if we could help you, and if you believe that this agreement doesn't help you, so be it." Well, that took care of it. Park quickly agreed. In fact, the South Koreans had done pretty well.

The long term importance of the agreement was that this was the point at which the modernization of the South Korean armed forces began. Indeed, the attempt by Kim II Sung, the North Korean leader, to increase tensions during this whole period turned out to have been a major strategic mistake. This was because this period of tension really led to the modernization of the South Korean armed forces.

In 1968 the South Korean military were still using World War II equipment. Their equipment was increasingly obsolescent. Our military assistance level was still fairly high, because South Korea still had a large army but only allowed for maintenance of the status quo. The Korean War had occurred 18 years before that, and the equipment was deteriorating. Actually, in the mid 1960's we didn't see much of a military threat and our military assistance program reflected this view.

As a result of this agreement, this was when we agreed to provide South Korea with its first F-4 fighter-bomber aircraft. At that point the F-4 was the major American first line aircraft.

Q: It was called the "Phantom."

O'DONOHUE: "State of the art" is the wrong word to describe the F-4, but it was the "standard aircraft" of the US armed forces. We agreed to provide the South Koreans with a squadron of F-4's. We also began a process of significantly increasing assistance and providing the South Korean armed forces with modern equipment. Later, as the economic situation improved, we shifted from our providing and paying for this increased military assistance to a situation where the South Koreans bore an increasing share of the cost burden. This change really meant the emergence of the South Korean Army as a modern, fighting force, rather than a large, static Army.

So Vance had succeeded in this negotiation, and I thought he had done so brilliantly. The negotiation had been difficult, and his negotiating skills had been superb. With it all this established a framework for the Korean-American relationship. It allowed us then to proceed. I had just gone out for the Vance visit to South Korea, and then was in the process of leaving in the summer of 1968 to Ghana to be chief of the Political Section in the Embassy in Accra.

Q: On this situation, when it started to develop, you had the “Blue House” raid and then the PUEBLO affair. In retrospect you can see that we should have been more responsive to Park. However, at that time and when Vance was going out to South Korea, did it become clear that we had “screwed up”?

O'DONOHUE: The East Asia Bureau should have drafted a letter from President Johnson to President Park, expressing concern about the attempt on his life. The Bureau recognized that it had not handled this issue very well, but it all just passed off. Events continued to unfold. This did not affect subsequent developments. As I said, Park used this issue very well, from the tactical point of view in his negotiation with us.

Q: From your perspective, how did Vance use you? You had been in South Korea...

O'DONOHUE: This was a negotiation, and I went along as a sort of a “support” person. However, I did not really figure in any substantive way. I was there and, I think, was helpful, but this was a negotiation and Vance was a superb negotiator. The negotiations were handled at a very high level. Vance had talked about tactics and the rest. However, essentially he had a very firm grasp of what he was doing. We had a very strange relationship, Berger the Ambassador to South Korea and with CINCUNC [Commander in Chief, UN Command in Korea].

Q: Who were they?

O'DONOHUE: The Ambassador was William Porter, and General Bonesteel was CINCUNC. Gen Bonesteel was an officer whom no Ambassador should be burdened with--mainly because he saw himself as a “soldier diplomat.” His career had been in political-military questions. Indeed, as a colonel he had been one of those who worked with Dean Rusk on drawing the boundary line between North and South Korea along the 38th Parallel. He combined this experience with a tiresome tendency to lecture people. Ambassador Porter and Gen. Bonesteel tried to pull together. Nonetheless, I would say that this negotiation was a near virtuoso performance for Vance. As close as anything, John Walsh, the Executive Secretary of the Department of State, was the “alter ego” of Vance. However, as far as I was concerned, I was just assigned there to be helpful. The negotiations were all handled by Vance. John Walsh played the “sounding board” role because of his previous experience. John Walsh was a difficult person, but an officer of great ability.

Q What was John Walsh's background?

O'DONOHUE: John Walsh was connected with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. I think that he ultimately retired after serving as Ambassador to Kuwait. He was a very organized man but very “quirky” and difficult. This clearly negated what I think were his very real abilities. I had always gotten along with him well, which is another reason that I went to South Korea on this occasion. I was certainly one of a handful of people who got along with John Walsh. There were a number of people who felt that he was vindictive. That clearly had an affect on his career. During that brief period with Vance he had established an immense rapport, and his judgments were very good. He played a very secondary but significant role at this time. I don't think that Ambassador Porter, Gen Bonesteel, or any of the rest of us played much of a role.

PHILIP C. HABIB
Political Counselor
Seoul (1962-1965)

Ambassador Habib was born and raised in New York and educated at the University of Idaho, the Sorbonne and the University of California at Berkeley. Entering the Foreign Service in 1949 he served in: Ottawa, Canada; Wellington, New Zealand; Port-of-Spain, Trinidad; Seoul, Korea; Saigon, Vietnam and Paris, France. In Washington, Ambassador Habib held the senior positions of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia, Under Secretary, and Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State. He was also Political Counselor in Saigon and participated in the Vietnam negotiations in Paris in 1967-1968. He served as US Ambassador to Korea from 1971 to 1974. Ambassador Habib was interviewed by Edward Mulcahy in 1984.

HABIB: Well, from there I went to Korea. Korea was an entirely different world, of course. There I not only ran the political section but I was in many ways the man's right hand man. He had two DCMs. We did some very, very good work there. Sam was a man who believed in democratic rituals. On the other hand he was very practical. He knew what you could do, and what you couldn't do. Of course, we had a junta. And elections which they kept putting on and then postponing until we laid the law down to them, and we made it stick. And that was the restoration of something like an electoral process in Korea. But in any event, Sam and I were a very active team, very active politically. And, of course, again I got to know a lot of people in my usual [way]. There were two things, learning as much as I could about the country, traveling all over and getting to know as many people as I could. I knew everybody, anybody that counted at any level, military, civilians, business, I knew them all.

Q: Did you try to learn Korean while you were there?

HABIB: I studied it at breakfast time in the morning. It's not a language you can learn that way.

Q: Or use anyplace else.

HABIB: How did I know that I would be back there in eight years. We trained a couple of guys. One guy we trained of all the guys we had in the post, only one guy could speak Korean well enough to interpret at that time. That was Ed Hurst, and the way he did it he had a year of training in the States. We sent him out there to a year in university where he lived in a Korean house. And after that he came back to the embassy. That's the way he learned. At the end of his tour, two or three years later, he knew enough that I could use him to interpret. Otherwise, I used Korean-Americans. I had a marvelous CIA fellow, David Lee, he was CIA, but he was my interpreter. He was in my political section, but he was with me all the time. And then there was another CIA guy who was an absolute language freak. He was not a Korean-American,

Scandinavian origin. He was a fantastic linguist. He could interpret Japanese, Korean, or Chinese. He was one of these language freaks.

Q: Three oriental languages.

HABIB: But he was a CIA man. He was just a linguist, that's all he was. He wasn't worth much else but he was a fantastic interpreter. Well, at any rate, those three years in Korea with Sam Berger were very, very intensive hard work. We went from crisis to crisis.

Q: Crisis in the sense of internal Korean development. The DMZ was fairly quiet in those days.

HABIB: The DMZ was fairly quiet in those days. You know, from time to time getting into it but nothing big. The Pueblo came later, and the Blue House raid came later. But in any event, those three years with Sam in Korea I really got heavily involved in political action, and negotiation, all sorts of things, and very complicated maneuvering. I think that's where I made my reputation as a political officer, and manager in the political section. So one day Sam asked me to come into his office. Bill Bundy was there. I had been involved in the negotiation of normalization relations with Korea and Japan. In the Department was a drinking buddy of mine, I was at his house all the time while the negotiations were going on constantly, breakfast, lunch and dinner. I used to play poker with the Prime Minister every Sunday afternoon. I knew everybody in the country. I'd go drinking with the Minister of Defense, and the generals. I knew more Koreans than anybody except for one guy who was the military man who had been there since 1945. He knew more than I did, but he and I were great friends and he would teach me all the time. But I knew everybody, and I was very active.

Q: And you got a chance to travel around the country?

HABIB: I was all over the place.

Q: How about up around the far east?

HABIB: I went to Japan a couple of times. I went to Japan on business a couple of times. And then I took a vacation in Japan with the kids. You know, I still didn't have a lot of money to go gallivanting off. But I traveled a lot around Korea itself. But at any rate, one day Bill Bundy arrived. And he said, we're looking for the best political officer in the business, at the time as chief of the political section in Saigon, the war was heating up in 1965. How would you like to go to Saigon? It was in early 1965. He said, well, you don't have to answer, you go talk it over with your wife and let me know. I said, Bill I don't have to talk that over with my wife, that's a decision I make, and the answer is yes. At that time you could take your family. It was months later when they bombed the embassy and wounded several people, that they decided to make it a non-accompanied post.

EDWARD HURWITZ
Political Officer

Seoul (1962-1966)

Edward Hurwitz was born in New York in 1931. He received his bachelor's degree from Cornell University in 1952. After serving in the US Army from 1953-1955 he entered the Foreign Service in 1956. During his career he had positions in Moscow, Seoul, Washington D.C., Afghanistan, Leningrad, and an Ambassadorship to Kyrgyzstan. Ambassador Hurwitz was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in August 1996

HURWITZ: Because I had been in Japan in the army, I was interested in studying Japanese, having been very taken with Japan. My second choice for language training was Korean, to make the Japanese sound really plausible. Well, I was sent to Korean language training, which I'm glad of in retrospect. FSI didn't teach Korean in those days, so I was sent to Yale.

Q: How long was the period of studying Korean?

HURWITZ: It was ten months at Yale. Then in September, 1961, I went to Korea to Yangtze University which had a course basically for American missionaries learning Korean. It was not a good course.

Q: I remember Yangtze University because I was barracked there during the Korean War. I used to monitor the Soviet air force. I had gone to the Army language school to take Russian and that was where we were located. Can you describe an American taking Korean? What are the problems?

HURWITZ: Well, the problems were that there were no real text books and very few tapes. The reason I went to Yale was not because Yale had any established academic program in Korean. What Yale was doing was playing host for a crash course for people who were doing just what you were doing with the Soviets, that is monitoring. These air force enlisted men were really focusing on listening to numbers and that sort of thing. When they finished this course, if they were good enough, they would be sent to Korea and go along the fringes of Korea, either up the coast or along the DMZ, listening to North Korean military broadcasts or communications. So, that wasn't really good. I did well in it because I studied hard and the teacher, a Korean, took me aside and worked with me. When I went to Yangtze, I did six months with that group, and then I did six months alone with an instructor.

Q: You were in Korea studying from 1961-62?

HURWITZ: Right. I joined the embassy in July, 1962, the political section.

Q: While you were at Yangtze, one of the preeminent schools of South Korea, were you able to get any feel for the students, the campus?

HURWITZ: No. I went to Yangtze in the afternoon. The morning I spent with an older, very interesting, Korean woman, a Methodist laywoman, who had been in jail during the Japanese occupation and was part of the independent movement. She had a little office near where I lived

where I went to study. One of her other students at the time was Jim Laney, who was a Methodist missionary at the time and is now ambassador. I studied in the morning with her and in the afternoon I went to Yangtze and was in this course. I had nothing to do with the regular student body at that time. Later, when the student demonstrations against the Japanese treaty in 1964 started, I got a little involved.

Q: What was your impression of Korea at the time, 1960?

HURWITZ: I came right on the heels of the Park Chung Hee military takeover. You had the student riots of 1960, which deposed Syngman Rhee and then you had in May, 1961, the Park Chung Hee military takeover. So, the embassy was dealing with a military government, which was not committed to democratic ideals by any means.

Q: You were at the embassy from when to when?

HURWITZ: I joined the embassy in July, 1962 in the political section. The political counselor was Phil Habib. I was dealing with the government party largely. I stayed there until January, 1966.

Q: So, 1962-66, a long time there. I am interviewing right now Dan O'Donohue.

HURWITZ: Dan and I were there together.

Q: Let's talk a little about personalities. What was your impression of how Phil Habib operated?

HURWITZ: Phil had to be every young Foreign Service officer's hero. Phil knew everybody, played cards with the Prime Minister, went hunting with this minister, was constantly on the move. He was a very brilliant guy, hard worker, terribly loyal to his staff, moved by the highest standards of morality and fairness. A good boss in the sense you would write something and he would look at it and say, "Hurwitz, I wouldn't have done it exactly this way, but get it out of here, send it." He was not a nitpicker. He would back you 100 percent. Really a fine guy.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HURWITZ: It was Sam Berger when I first got there and then it became Winthrop Brown.

Q: From your impression, how did Sam Berger get on with Habib?

HURWITZ: Very well. The DCM at that time, Magistreti, was sort of cut out. Berger was not really a Korean or Japanese hand.

Q: He got his real renown for being a labor officer in England where he knew the Labour Party when nobody else did.

HURWITZ: Yes, and he was close to Governor Harriman. Phil, at one point had also been a labor type. I guess that is how they knew each other. Berger, I think, gave Phil a rather free hand

and sort of bypassed Magistreti, who didn't seem to be doing very much. And that continued when Brown came in, with his DCM, Ed Dougherty.

Q: When you came into the political section, how did we look upon the Park Chung Hee government? This was very early on.

HURWITZ: The effort was to try to get Park Chung Hee to come around as fast as possible and restore civilian government. To try to make sure he didn't ride roughshod over civil rights or the free press. There was a strong authoritarian bent to them, which was hardly surprising in Korea at that time. As I recall we were trying to get them to reinstitute normal government instead of ruling by military fiat.

Q: What was your particular focus while you were in the political section?

HURWITZ: It wasn't really divided up that much. I did deal with the DRP, the government party. Kim Jung-pil was head of the government party. My Korean by that time was pretty good, in fact, at one point, because we didn't really train Korean speakers and we really didn't have the teaching materials, I was probably the best speaker of Korean. So, I dealt a lot with opposition types too who didn't speak English. I dealt with them without an interpreter which was useful. I did a lot of traveling around.

Q: How about the opposition with Kim Dae Jung?

HURWITZ: Kim Dae Jung wasn't really a figure at that time. Kim Yong-Sam was the leader of the Democratic Party.

Q: What was our impression of the opposition?

HURWITZ: Not particularly favorable. We dealt with them and tried to give them a little support and encouragement, but they were really not top notch people at the time. Kim Yong-Sam was not very impressive at the time. But, he was long lasting and was there when I went back in 1974-75.

Q: What were you getting about Park Chung Hee as far as his effectiveness and how we felt about him as far as our policy was concerned?

HURWITZ: I was a pretty low man on the totem pole there. Park was a fact of life. You couldn't say, "Let's deal with somebody else," he was in there and in control. We didn't try to undermine him in anyway. Dan O'Donohue and Phil may have at some point felt this was dictatorial, but my feeling was that these guys were within the ball park for certainly that part of the world and the opposition was not stamped out. One newspaper DongA Ilbo was pretty darn independent, critical. So, while we tried to soften the rough edges of the Park regime, there was no effort to somehow depose it or go public with strong criticism.

Q: Were we monitoring the students at all?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes.

Q: Because they had proved to be a force.

HURWITZ: Well, they tried to be a force again with something that the United States was very much in favor with and that was the settlement with Japan in 1964. It led to a whole series of street demonstrations. The students then, as now, were very, very tough. These are not placard bearing students, these are students that arm themselves, throw rocks and fire bombs, etc. I must say the Park regime handled those demonstrations extremely effectively. Only one person was killed, if memory serves me. A number of students commandeered a truck and one of them fell off. But, the students were very destabilizing.

Q: Spring was always the time. As I say now, we both heard the same news reports that students are holed up in Yangtze University threatening to blow themselves up if there isn't unification with North Korea.

HURWITZ: Yes. And that sort of unification is nonsense. Even if the North would say, "All right, let's unify," you have real big problems. At one point for the North Koreans to come hat in hand and say, "Let's unify," that would have been a great propaganda plus for South Korea. They would have welcomed it. Now, they don't need that propaganda plus and don't need the expense like the Germans had. Unification is not something that you simply say, "Let's do it."

Q: How did you find social life in Korea in those days?

HURWITZ: Work social there was a lot of. You would take politicians to lunch where you would go to the tea house. Koreans didn't invite you home that often, although with a number of people I simply knew, like my landlady or my Korean teacher, they would. The normal thing the Korean politicians, both opposition and government, did was the gisieng party, the equivalent of the geisha party. There was lots of intra and inter embassy dinners. You had facilities in the 8th Army clubs and things like that. Life was very nice there. I did a lot of outdoor hiking, the mountains are right there.

Q: On the Japanese treaty, we were obviously for this. How did the political section operate to make it known?

HURWITZ: I can't remember. I do remember being told to monitor various demonstrations, but I can't recall how we made known our position.

Q: What was the feeling at that time about the threat from the North?

HURWITZ: Very serious, as it should be and always has been. The only time we miscalculated, I think, was when Carter came in much later and there were serious plans made for the withdrawal of American troops. But, that was later. It was a serious thing. There was constant infiltrating of Korean agents along the coast or across the DMZ. The regime, as could be expected, used this to try to justify very tight controls on the opposition, but indeed (I think this came clearer in my second tour in the 70's) they did make some headway with students. There

was an appeal there that resonated among students. This was a time when you began to see things in print and even in newspapers and certainly in some of the intellectual journals that was quite directly anti-American, using terminology that sounded a bit North Korean in style. But, the threat is real, it is only 30 miles away.

Q: What about your impressions about the relations between the embassy and the American military?

HURWITZ: That was a big issue and depended on the ambassador. Sneider, who was there in the '70s spent a lot of his time at the American military types and very little time with the Koreans. I thought the relationship was basically good. There was no question on the part of the UN Command, which was basically American, that the embassy was in charge.

Q: Did you have the feeling that Berger and later Brown were able to get along with the military camp? There have been very strong commanders who...

HURWITZ: Yes, the relationship was good.

JOHN P. LEONARD
Army Intelligence Officer
Korea (1963-1964)

Ambassador Leonard was born and raised in New York and educated at Harvard University. After service in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. He had several assignments at the State Department in Washington, DC dealing with a variety of issues. His overseas posts include Luxembourg, Seoul, Madrid, Asuncion, and Montevideo where he was Chargé d'Affaires. In 1991 he was named United States Ambassador to Surinam, where he served until 1994. Ambassador Leonard was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Q: Jack, before we move on you were in an intelligence unit in Korea from when to when?

LEONARD: From 1963 to 1964.

Q: What sort of work were you doing?

LEONARD: The most interesting work that I did was to get a job working for the English language newspaper in Seoul. It was a government owned and run newspaper which served as the mouthpiece of the military government that was ruling South Korea at the time. The thought was that maybe some of the newspaper men might be possible informants. So I got a job on this newspaper. They had advertised for a copywriter. It just so happened that one of my summer jobs when I was in college was with the old New York Herald Tribune in New York City. I was a copy boy there so I knew what a copy writer does. A copy writer is a guy who writes headlines. So somebody in my military intelligence unit had spotted the ad in the Korean Herald as the

newspaper was called saying they needed a copywriter. My boss there in the intel unit said, "Get down there and get that job." The idea being as I said perhaps we could cultivate some of the newspaper men down there and maybe they might be ripe for recruiting and sources. So I worked there for a couple of months and was doing well sort of ingratiating myself with the newspaper guys, but then I came down with a case of hepatitis and would up in the hospital for a couple of months so I lost my job. When I got out of the hospital I had to go on kind of limited duty, so I wasn't able to work this part time job. I used to go down to the newspaper four or five days a week. I would go to work about 5:00 and work until we put the paper to bed 10:00 or 11:00 at night.

Q: What was your impression of Korea and the Koreans at that time?

LEONARD: Korea as a country was still very poor. You could see evidence of the destruction from the war there everywhere you went in Seoul. The Koreans I found very interesting hard working people who seemed very much determined to try and turn things around. They really faced a monumental job. Korea was certainly one of the poorest countries in the world in those days. So that was my impression. I really enjoyed living there. I liked being able to get out and around Seoul and liked this job that I had. So I was very favorably impressed by what I thought were some of the good and interesting things about Korea.

Q: How did we view the Park Chung-hee government at the time. How did we view it?

LEONARD: Well our relations with it were very edgy. Remember that Park came to power in a coup d'état in 1961. He and the group of young generals and colonels who organized this coup and ran the government were not particularly close to the United States. Most of them like Park had originally served in the Japanese army in WWII. There was very little of anything in their background that made them comfortable with the liberal western style democracy that we hoped could evolve in Korea. So relations with Park were very edgy. He was viewed with considerable suspicion also by some because in the late 1940's, when the United States was winding up its occupation of Korea after WWII, there was a communist uprising in Korea. A number of Korean army officers were implicated in it including Park himself. So there were some concerns about Park in the back rooms.

Q: Did you have much contact, you had mentioned the USIA officer, Nagorski, but did you have much to do with the embassy at all?

LEONARD: Not really. Basically with Zyg and his family. An army friend of mine happened to meet Zyg somehow, I don't remember how. And he and his family would invite us to parties occasionally. We went up to visit a summer place outside of Seoul once. But he was about the only person in the embassy I really knew. In the course of my duties I didn't have occasion to meet people from the embassy.

Q: Did you get any feel about how the Koreans you were in contact with felt about the American presence there?

LEONARD: Yeah. It was an interesting relationship. Most of the Koreans whom I met, and I

think that is probably true generally of them, they were obviously appreciative of American support during the Korean War. On the other hand, many of them blamed the United States for the division of the country after WWII which was purely an administrative convenience when we were looking for a convenient dividing line between that part of Korea which would be administered by the Soviets and that part which would be administered by us, having already agreed that we would share the occupation of Korea with the Soviets after the defeat of Japan. So, many Koreans blamed us for what had hardened the division of the peninsula into two separate countries. There was always that do deal with. In addition the Koreans had just come out of a very brutal 35 year occupation by the Japanese, and most of them had no experience with democratic government. They had very little understanding of American values. It is a very traditional society which had been flung headlong into the 20th century. All of its institutions had been destroyed. The country had fallen under Japanese rule. The Japanese then lost the war. In came the Americans and Soviets, and the country was divided. It was a really traumatic period for Korea.

Q: They you say you moved on, you left Korea and left the army when?

LEONARD: Late spring of 1964. I was assigned back to Washington to a military intelligence unit in Washington. I got out of the army at the end of June, 1965.

VINCENT W. BROWN
Assistant Director for Program and Economic Policy, USAID
Seoul (1964-1967)

Vincent W. Brown was born and raised in the San Francisco area of California. Brown attended UCLA where he received his Bachelor of Science in business administration. Brown was hired by the Marshall Plan in Paris in 1950. In June of 1968, Brown became a fellow at Harvard's Center for International Affairs. He has served in Tunisia, Libya, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan. The interview was conducted by W. Haven North in May of 1997.

Q: When did you arrive in South Korea, and what was the political, economic and social climate?

BROWN: We arrived in Seoul early in the morning of October 3, 1964. Contrary to our arrival in Zaire, everything was handled very efficiently. We were through customs in minutes, and on our way to our home. Our little house was comfortably furnished and waiting for us in a gated area on one side of the UN Military Compound called South Post. As we entered our home, I was informed that I was expected at the office for a meeting. So I left Françoise and the children at home to unpack, and went directly to the office to start work. This heavy, urgent work load would continue non-stop during our three years in Korea. I never worked so hard before, nor since.

The USAID offices took up a whole building in downtown Seoul, not far from the Korean

Economic Planning Bureau (EPB). (Actually the USAID office in Korea in those days was called a USOM, United States Operating Mission. But I'll use our current term for an AID mission (USAID) from here on out.)

Politically, this was a period of great internal stability. President Park Chung-Hee and his political party had been elected with a large majority. The government was firmly established with full support of the military. There was a small opposition party of no serious consequence. The potential threat from North Korea was constantly with us, and provided a strong incentive for unity. While it is no longer the case today, in the '60s Americans were still considered "blood brothers" having successfully fought together and stopped the Communists. Students were very active in those days as they are now. However, at that time the demonstrations were over issues such as whether to accept reparations from Japan or not. The spirit of team work between the Koreans and the Americans at all levels was at an all time high.

Economically, while most people were very, very poor the economy was in the early stages of an economic take-off which would remove it from the US economic aid roles after a few years. South Korea had a number of significant pluses. Most of the infrastructure damage caused by the Korean war had been repaired and modernized. The population was 98% literate in Hangul, the Korean language. This literacy made it much easier to introduce new techniques in agriculture, and made its workforce easy to train in the manufacturing sector. Korea's free market economy approach was very attractive to foreign investors, especially the US and Japan as well as a number of Western European countries. The years of supplying the US military based in Korea had taught Korean business men the importance of quality control, and complying with contract specifications and standards on a consistent basis. In 1964 the export drive started in 1960 was beginning to take off. In fact the USAID had a very talented, dynamic, "hands on", export promotion advisor, Amicus Most from New York City, who was very busy and effective in helping the budding Korean export industry grow faster.

The USAID annual program of Development Loans, Technical Assistance (consultants and participant training), significant food imports, PL 480 (Titles I, II, III, and IV), and Commodity Import Grants totaled close to \$260 million a year. When this amount was added to the invisible earnings from the presence of the US military it gave the US considerable economic leverage. In fact the USAID had a joint economic stability agreement under which the USAID jointly monitored the Korean government's economic activities on a monthly basis.

Socially, the Koreans were and continue to be an extraordinarily homogeneous group (no tribal or ethnic problems as experienced in Zaire). They were traditionally hard workers who put an extraordinary value on education whether from the rural or urban areas. There was tremendous competition to get into the local universities. They had a great sense of humor and were dubbed by those who knew them well as the "Irish of the Orient". While it tended to be a "man's society", the wives we met were well educated, and put an extraordinarily high priority on the education of their children in this very competitive society.

Q: What was the scope of your work at the USAID?

BROWN: As Assistant Director for Program and Economic Policy, I was responsible for the

overall development of the aid program content and strategy. For example in 1966 the Supporting Assistance component was \$66 million, PL 480 Title 1 \$50 million, II & III \$25 million, \$5 million Technical Assistance, \$120 million for Development Loans plus a won (Korean currency) budget support program for defense and development. The program office I supervised consisted of 27 Americans and 38 Koreans. The program office coordinated the preparation of program submissions and their execution by the USAID Divisions. I also served as the principal staff advisor to the Director on overall program content and execution.

On the Korean side I negotiated at the Vice Minister and Bureau Chief level on matters of program content and execution, and worked out systems of joint planning and consultation. I also accompanied the Mission Director to all of his meetings at Ministerial level. I would be at the office very early, leave late taking documents home to read, work almost every weekend. Three or four nights a week (perhaps more) I was out at official functions related to our work.

One of the most important sections in the program office was the economic policy and analysis branch headed by a Harvard development economist on loan to AID, Dr. David Cole. He and his staff of US and Korean economists monitored the Korean's economic performance and kept them on the "straight and narrow" in executing our joint economic stabilization agreement and achieving the various goals agreed to in our negotiations.

Another of Director Dr. Joel Bernstein's very innovative ideas was the creation of a "think-tank" group in the program office. The small group of staff officers was called something like "New Programs and Initiatives Section." It was headed up by Dr. Princeton Lyman who went on to become a USAID Director in Ethiopia, and US Ambassador to South Africa. The two other members were Don Cohen and Eric Chetwynd, who in later years became a USAID Director and a Office Director. When a new program initiative was being considered by the USAID, it was given to this group who worked up detailed programs, policies and operating procedures. Some of the programs developed by this office included integrated Rural Development, Export Promotion, and Family Planning.. They also were called upon to help solve problems in existing programs -- for example, in Agriculture and Education. This overview of ongoing major programs was a big help in making mid-course corrections before they became a crisis. Something similar might be considered today in the larger, priority USAID missions around the world.

The Korean officials, staff and private sector managers worked extremely hard. If we sent a letter to the Planning Ministry on Friday requiring a quick, but complicated answer, they would work all weekend and more to meet the deadline. Sometimes they would rent a suite in a down town hotel, so that their professional staff could work uninterrupted.

Q: Was this hard work recognized?

BROWN: Yes it was! In addition to my regular duties, I served as Deputy Director when the Deputy Director, Roger Ernst, was away on leave, and also when Director Bernstein was away and Roger moved up to be Director. It was a challenging learning experience for which I was very grateful. I should mention that to help me with my work, the USAID recruited an excellent, experienced, Deputy Assistant Program Officer, Garnett Zimmerly, who was of great help in

running the program office. He went on to be Director in the Philippines some years later where he was killed in an airplane crash during a field trip.

The long hours and devotion to the program was recognized. During my three years in Korea I was promoted to FSR-1 (about a GS 16), was decorated with the order of civil merit by the President of Korea for my contribution to Korea's economic development, and received a very laudatory merit award from AID signed by USAID Director Bernstein, and US Ambassador Winthrop Brown from the State side.

I guess the most wonderful part about the three years that I worked in Korea, was the sense of accomplishment. The economy grew spectacularly in agricultural production as well as the manufacturing sector. The increase in the standard of living of the Korean people was visible to the naked eye.

Q: We all know of South Korea's continued success both economically and as a functioning democracy. The list of countries graduating from our assistance roles is not very long. Are there some lessons to be learned here?

BROWN: Before getting into specifics, I should like to point out that by 1964, the USAID had already established itself as a major factor or force in South Korea's economic/social reconstruction period after the end of the fighting in the late '50s. Although earlier prognostications were that it would take 25 to 50 years before South Korea would be able to "go it alone," in only 15 years after the end of the fighting, the situation was beginning to change dramatically. I believe this stunning turnaround would not have taken place were it not for the US foreign assistance program.

During these years, the amounts of technical assistance including participant training, program grants, loans, and emergency food were consistent from year to year and very large. By the mid '60s South Korea was entering into the "takeoff" phase of development. Although the \$150 million a year in 1964 represented a substantial reduction in aid levels over previous years, it still was a major help to the Korean economy. The commodity import program still provided much needed raw materials for Korean industry.

The capital development loan program was hitting its stride. Loan financing for private petroleum refineries, chemical plants, and manufacturing industries was stimulating the economy. Public sector projects which assisted agricultural development, roads and dams were already underway. Electric power, and port rehabilitation projects were in their final phases. Almost all of these development activities were financed with a combination of grants and long term low-interest rate loans. The invisible earnings from the presence of the 50,000 or so US troops were over \$100 million a year.

Perhaps, one of the most important development tools of the '60s was the economic stabilization agreement which made the USAID a full partner with the Ministry of Planning in programming the scarce resources, monitoring the government's collection of domestic revenue, its expenditure levels, and the relative emphasis between development and consumer spending. The USAID Program Office's economic section met monthly with the Planning Commission to

review the monthly statistics as well as the allocations of foreign exchange. The needed economic discipline was supplied by the USAID during these joint meetings. Had the USAID not been there, the Planning Commission might have bowed to domestic pressures for excessive government subsidies and consumer spending. Psychologically, this joint programming was palatable to the Koreans because their US colleagues were considered “blood brothers”. Almost all of the civil servants we dealt with had been directly affected by the North Korean invasion and were very grateful for the US standing by their side in time of crisis. Economic stabilization agreements for major USAID programs have become more and more common in recent years. I believe the success of the agreement in South Korea, helped lead the way for more widespread adoption of this technique.

In addition to the bonding between Americans and Koreans which grew out of the Korean war, I would like to highlight two factors that greatly facilitated our joint cooperation in the development of South Korea:

Education: Literacy was about 90% in Hangul, the Korean language, and the average Korean family was ready to make great personal sacrifices to assure that their children received a good education. This made it much easier to introduce new concepts and techniques since we could use the written word as well as oral communication to present new ideas.

Stability: South Korea is about as ethnically homogeneous as a country can be. One hundred percent of the population considered themselves Koreans. The government was stable, and in full control of the country. The threat from the North was an additional reason for the population not to “rock the boat”. This stability was attractive to foreign investors.

Q: It sounds very rewarding ? Did you make any lasting friendships?

BROWN: Yes. One in particular comes to mind. My primary contact in the government was the head of the Planning section in the Economic Planning Bureau. His name was Yang Yoon Se. He was about my age and also served as the personal advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister, Chang Key Young, who headed the Economic Planning Bureau. The Deputy Prime Minister was called the DPM by most of his staff and was nicknamed the “bulldozer” for his ability to get things done. We (Yang Yoon Se and I) hit it off famously and as a consequence were able to arrange/sort out informally many “difficult and delicate issues” between our respective bosses. I believe this worked in large part because of our mutual respect and trust. In later years, Yang Yoon Se went on to become Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Energy. We kept in touch and our two families renewed contact in the 1980s. By this time he had left government and represented a private Korean company, “Gold Star”, in Washington, DC as their Vice President in charge of US operation. Both of his children eventually obtained their doctorates in US Universities.

During my last summer in Seoul (1967), I was asked if I would like to become a Fellow at the Harvard Center for International Development. (It was a kind of sabbatical to recharge the intellectual batteries of AID officers likely to move up into policy making positions, and to help prepare them for that step.) I accepted and AID sent me for training as a Harvard Fellow at the Center for International Affairs for an academic year beginning in September 1967.

MELVIN R. CHATMAN
U.S. Army Officer, 1st Cavalry Division
Korea (1964-1967)

Mr. Chatman was born in Oklahoma and raised in California and Michigan. After graduating from the University of Michigan, he pursued theater interests before serving in the US Army in Korea and Vietnam. In 1970 he joined AID and spent the rest of his career with that agency. His overseas postings include Vietnam, Malaysia, Bangladesh and San Salvador. He also had assignments with AID in Washington and New York City dealing with refugee, rice imports and training issues. Mr. Chatman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: When did you go to Korea? You were there from when to when?

CHATMAN: '64-'67.

Q: So a lot of commitment and it was beginning to build up in Vietnam at that time.

CHATMAN: Right, that's when I transferred from Vietnam in '67 to '75.

Q: From Korea.

CHATMAN: From Korea, right.

Q: What were you doing in Korea?

CHATMAN: I was a Platoon leader, a company commander and then a S-5 officer. The S-5 officer was one that goes out and handles the public relations effort for the military to facilitate military operations. That's what my specialty became.

Q: How did you find Korea at the time?

CHATMAN: Oh I had a ball. I just never knew about other people and other cultures and it just fascinated me. Of course, I liked the outdoors, I liked being around people and things like that so I immediately got into the civil affairs business but my main job was to pave the way to develop a good relationship with the local population so that we could successfully carry out military operations. I was very effective at it.

Q: What area of Korea were you in?

CHATMAN: Seoul, Yongsan, which is near Seoul, sort of the mid-level of Korea.

Q: Were you in a division?

CHATMAN: It was the First Cavalry Division.

Q: It was the First Cavalry Division, yeah, which was pulled out later on.

CHATMAN: Right and went to Vietnam I believe because they needed an air mobile division.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Koreans?

CHATMAN: No problem at all. The first thing I did was I learned how to speak Korean, which, of course, facilitated everything. I was there for three years and during that period of time I got a three or something level in Korean and I was able to read and write. This is untested, I'm basing this estimation on the fact that I have a four in Vietnamese and a three in Spanish so I was easily in comparing the other levels a three in Korean, a very easily a three.

Q: Were you during this period or before you got there were you married or not?

CHATMAN: No.

Q: Well did you find...were there problems with your, not so much your unit because your unit would be used to dealing with a civilian population but the regular infantry don't always mix terribly well with another population even an American one being down...?

CHATMAN: Yeah, there were terrible problems both ways and that was what I was good at working with. There were guys, everything from guys wanting to marry the local hooker to people who just could not stand seeing a person with slanted eyes and could not, in many cases, there were people from the south white guys who couldn't really stand being too close to Blacks, so you had a double-whammy in a foreign culture.

Q: Were you seeing some of the problems that of course became really bad later on in Vietnam of sort of the breakdown of military structure? I'm thinking about between officers and race relations and all of that.

CHATMAN: I saw problems but I didn't see any insurmountable problems. There are people who just from both sides who just had extreme difficulties in adjusting to the fact that they had to live in the same room with a person of another color, there were people who just had a problem with that. Of course me being a Black officer too sort of set me up for that same thing. I never, as far as me being aware, was never aware of that being a problem in being a leader in the military. I think that I had strong NCO (non-commissioned officers) and other people who were a part of the system that completely neutralized that they were neutralized by the NCOs and the other people did not have that same problem.

Q: During the time you were there was there a feeling that war could break out at any time?

CHATMAN: Where are you talking about in Vietnam?

Q: In Korea.

CHATMAN: No, no I don't think so. You kept a hype about them coming across the 38th parallel, that was part of the deal but I don't think anybody ever thought that was going to happen, at least I didn't feel it.

Q: Did you have much dealings with the Korean military (ROK)?

CHATMAN: I eventually became an advisor to the ROK army in Vietnam; my first assignment in Vietnam was with the liaison, the U.S. military liaison office that worked with the Korean's because I could speak Korean. So yes I did and also I did have KATUSA (Korean augmentation to the U.S. army), which were Korean augmentation to the U.S. military. We had those people integrated into our company.

Q: This was carried over from, of course, the Korean War when they were first I think started.

CHATMAN: Okay, I'm not sure where it first started but...

Q: Yeah, I mean it was started then...

CHATMAN: That was always a problem because the KATUSAs had a problem being away from their own culture, eating American food, it was a whole bunch of things that went into that. They were excellent soldiers when you treated them right but a lot of people did not have the skills to deal with that and you know you needed people who understood what was going on and people with patience.

PRINCETON LYMAN
Program Director, USAID
Seoul (1964-1967)

Ambassador Princeton Lyman was born and raised in San Francisco. He was educated at Stanford University, University of California and Harvard University. In 1961 he joined the Agency for International Development (AID), where he served as Program Director in Korea and Ethiopia. In his long and distinguished career, Ambassador Lyman held a number of high positions at AID Headquarters in Washington, D.C. as well as with The Department of State. After serving as Ambassador to Nigeria and later to South Africa, Ambassador Lyman was Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations from 1996 to 1998. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: In 1964, you moved on. Where to?

LYMAN: I was scheduled to go to Vietnam. The AID director had offered me a job as his

special assistant. It was obviously an area that I knew well. But then President Kennedy appointed Maxwell Taylor as our ambassador; he wanted a new AID director whose first decision was to freeze all assignments. So I was left out in the cold, but along came an offer from an extraordinary AID professional, Joel Bernstein. He was very influential; he had a tremendous and powerful intellect. He was going to South Korea as the AID director there. So I went with him.

I was in Korea from 1964 to 1967. When I got there, Korea was considered the “rat hole” of American aid. Our program was considered a total failure; Korea was viewed as a hopeless case. We had poured lots of money into that country seemingly with no results. When I left Washington, I commented to my boss while we were discussing Korea that perhaps there might be some hope for exports. His response was: “How much seaweed can the world absorb?” I always remember that as Korean exports rose into the billion of dollars. But that was typical of the AID attitude toward Korea when I first arrived.

Korea had just gone through a long period of rule by Syngman Rhee. Under Rhee, the country had terrible and distorted economic policies. Rhee’s rule was followed by elections which were however overtaken by a military coup. By 1964 when I arrived, Park Chung Hee, a general, had been president for a year.

We had a large assistance program which covered most of the economic sector in the country. We trained social workers for example, while at the same time doling out large amounts to cover for balance-of-payments deficits. We also provided a large subsidy to the Korean military which came from the sale of imported U.S. food products.

Seoul then was a city with only one or two decent hotels. It had one semi-fancy hotel – the Chosun. There were a lot of shacks. The twin office buildings – one which housed the U.S. embassy – had just been finished. There was no subway system. We lived in army barracks on a U.S. military post – almost all the Americans lived there. It was a crowded and poor city. There were no signs of hunger, but also no signs of a middle or upper class.

Q: What was your job?

LYMAN: I had a similar job in Seoul as I had in Washington. I was in the program office, whose director was a very fine economist with whom I later wrote a book on Korea. My job was to liaison with the embassy and the military. I also sponsored a social science research program by Korean scholars whom I came to know and respect. I also participated in doing over-all economic planning which brought political and military aspects into our country programs. I worked a lot with our military assistance office and with the embassy. At the embassy I met Philip Habib who was then the political counselor. He later became a very important figure in my life. Winthrop Brown was the ambassador – an extraordinary fine, dignified and intelligent ambassador.

Q: Tell us a little more about Joel Bernstein.

LYMAN: Joel was a PhD economist. He was an extremely thoughtful, meticulous person who

was determined to have a very successful, comprehensive economic development program in Korea. He wrote extensively on all aspects of the program and beyond; he was a very strong figure. In those days, AID mission directors had a lot of discretion – much more than today. They could shape the program as they saw fit. Joel did that. He developed a partnership with the deputy prime minister, who then was the chief economic and financial officer of the government. Every Friday, the two would meet together for four or five hours. They covered every aspect of economic policy.

Joel brought in a large group of top flight American economic advisors. They in turn worked with a core of brilliant young Korean economists. Joel was fascinated by everything. For example, as I mentioned, I wanted to start a program of social science research to support a number of Korean academics who were unhappy in part because there were no funds available for research. Some were not too friendly to the U.S. So I suggested we start a research program. Joel said fine.

He was interested in military strategy. He once gave me a paper which he told me to deliver to the four star general in charge of all U.S. and UN forces in Korea. Joel wanted to send it as an annex to the assistance program request. It was an analysis of our entire security posture on the Korean peninsula. After the general read it, he told me that he would refuse to clear it. I asked what I should tell Joel. The general said that the reason he would not clear it is because if Joel sent that in, there was nothing that the general could submit to the Pentagon.

We were working in an extraordinary atmosphere. I got deeply involved in two issues: a) Korea's involvement in Vietnam – that was a major issue on which I wrote an article later in *Daedalus*; and b) the turn around of Korea's economy. When we arrived in 1964, the major question that every Korean – including the Kaesong girls (the Korean equivalent of a geisha) – tried to pry out of every American was what the U.S. aid level would be for the following year. It seemed as if Korea would live or die by the answer to that question. We of course couldn't tell them until it was announced in Washington. When I left Korea three years later, no one cared about the aid level any longer. It was not an issue for Koreans.

In the 1964-67 period, the Korean economy turned around greatly and that brought a new confidence to the Koreans – they could get along in this world without American aid. They could compete even with countries like Japan. They could be a major economic success.

Q: What were the sentiments when you arrived about Park Chung Hee?

LYMAN: There were attributes of Park that we should not forget. He was determined to change Korea's psychology. He wanted to discard the inferiority complex that was running rampant in the society. He did this in two ways: a) he was determined to make the economy a success. He fully supported a group of young, bright PhD economists led by the deputy prime minister who felt they could turn the economy around. Therefore he approved changes from the old Rhee policies; e.g. the government abolished subsidies, increased interest rates to encourage savings, adjusted the exchange rate and encouraged private investment through government direction and resources. Secondly, he undertook to re-establish diplomatic relationships with Japan, which was a traumatic event in light of the strong anti-Japanese feelings held widely by Koreans. Students

demonstrated in the street against the decision and other groups joined them. But Park kept plugging away, telling his people that their antagonism towards Japan was at least in part due to their feeling of inferiority to the Japanese and therefore their fear that the Japanese would exploit them if diplomatic relationships were started. He told his people that their fears were unwarranted.

These were the positive aspects of the Park regime. He was very self-confident as he showed by running for office in 1967. He did win that election, but then went on, like so many people of his inclination, to change the constitution so that he could be president for life. I think that led to the coup and his assassination in 1979. In 1964, our security interests on the peninsula were so predominant that we were more concerned with the stability of the regime and Park's interest in remaining our ally. When Vietnam began to be a crisis, the question then became whether Park would support us there by sending one of his divisions to fight along the Vietcong. That became the major preoccupation.

There was lingering resentment against Park Chung Hee because he had in fact brought to an end the brief period of Korean flirtation with democracy in 1963. The U.S. was at that time caught somewhat in the middle, not happy with the end of Korean democracy, but needing Park Chung Hee. Of course, in those days, we didn't have the same emphasis in our foreign policy on democratic values as we have today. We didn't have the same emphasis on human rights. We did deplore some of the heavy-handed tactics of the regime and in fact, started a training program for the police on how to handle demonstrations without using deadly force. It was a successful program which unfortunately was later abolished by Congress in a reaction to what was happening in Vietnam. Our chief advisor on this program invented bamboo underwear for the Korean police which prevented rocks from having much effect on the police; they just bounced off the bamboo. So the police could withstand considerable more student antagonism without over reaction. There were parts of the police program in other countries which were not so benign, but in Korea we tried to ameliorate the confrontation. The embassy really took the leadership of this effort.

As I said, I started a program for social science research for academics so that they could explore their interests. I worked with the press. I used to write the political overview for the AID mission program submission. I was always concerned that the embassy might not agree with my views. I did not need to be concerned; Habib would sometime look askance at what I was writing because he thought it a little naive, but he and his staff did not interfere very much. I remember one meeting chaired by Ambassador Brown which Joel and I attended. I was to give my assessment of some political development that was a hot issue at the time. At the end of it, Brown turned to me and said: "Young man, you are just wrong!" Fortunately, one could survive comments of that kind without lasting damage being done to your reputation or standing.

As I said, I became acquainted with Phil Habib; I was one of his greatest fans. He was the political counselor of the embassy. He was obviously concerned by any signs of deteriorating stability such as student demonstrations. He also worried about the security issues and the North Korean military. He also became involved in getting the Koreans to send one of their divisions to Vietnam. He was a very strong minded individual. He could be very sarcastic, but also very tolerant. I did not see a lot of the embassy's cable traffic; in addition to being a separate agency,

we were in a different building which did not foster close relationships. But on the other hand, we didn't have any major clashes either.

Q: Your job was essentially to write?

LYMAN: My main responsibility was to write overviews and strategies for the AID mission, but also to develop initiatives, and to take responsibility for inter-agency matters. For example, I used to work very closely with the U.S. military on the annual allocation of assistance to the ROK military. It was partly an AID responsibility because the funds came from the sale of U.S. food aid. For example, we would sit down together with the Koreans and go over their military budget line by line, pledging to support some items and not others. We also would comment on the adequacy of the budget, finding some items over-funded and others under-funded. So our contribution to the ROK military budget was a negotiated amount. That annual exercise took up a considerable amount of my time. I also worked very closely with them on how we would support the Koreans in Vietnam.

I did a fair amount of writing within and for the mission primarily on the interaction of the political, economic and social spheres. The program office was responsible for drafting the program plan.

Q: How did you get your information?

LYMAN: I talked to a lot of people, both Koreans and Americans. We had a cracker-jack Korean staff that gathered a lot of information on the economy. One of them in fact went on to become deputy prime minister. We had a tremendous amount of economic information gathered primarily from the government with whom we worked hand-in-glove. The political information came primarily from embassy reports that I read supplemented by my friendship with a number of academics whose views were quite insightful. Of course, the academics had to be somewhat guarded in their comments; Korea in those days was not exactly an open society. Some were closet Marxists, but had to disguise that. They were mildly critical of the government – of its heavy handedness. They were a little more sympathetic with North Korea – certainly more than the government and most of the people, but always in a guarded way.

We had a daily translation of the Korean press which I would read cover to cover. There weren't at the time many publishing outlets so that the academics would always welcome our assistance. The Asia Foundation also was very helpful with the academics; this was a San Francisco based organization which supported a lot of academic programs in the region. While I was in Korea, CIA's support of the Asia Foundation was exposed. Because the U.S. government had not yet started its democratization or human rights programs, a lot of our efforts in these areas were covertly funded by CIA and it used the Asia Foundation as one of its conduits. When this came out, I sat down with a number of my academic friends, all of whom had received grants from the Asia Foundation. I asked them whether they were not shocked by these revelations. Their reaction startled me; they were not surprised because they considered that all U.S. funds – for assistance programs, for publications, for public relations, etc – came from the CIA or its equivalent. All U.S. funds in their view were intended to buy Korean loyalty. That really shocked me; their cynicism was an eye opener for a young man like myself. They accepted the

view that if they took U.S. grants, they would have to pay a price.

I might just tell an anecdote that reflects on this attitude as well. I got to know one Korean academic quite well. I talked to him often, but as time passed I realized two things: a) that he was convinced I was working for the CIA and b) that he was sure I could get him a visa to the U.S. I agonized about how to disabuse him of both views. How could I convince him that just because I was in AID and talking political science that it did not mean that I was a CIA agent? I finally figured out a way. We had lunch one day during which I described to him the whole AID programming system – the preliminary analysis, the project proposal and all of the other documents that the agency required. I named every one of AID's many documents, with acronyms, etc. It was such a detailed presentation that I could see the academic coming to the conclusion that I really did work for AID and not CIA. After that lunch, he never treated me quite the same way.

Q: How was North Korea viewed at that time?

LYMAN: At the time, the North was considered much more successful than the South. The North was industrializing and developing economically, while South Korea was in a hopeless funk. Just the opposite of today. The North had inherited almost all of the Korean industry; the South had been the agricultural area. That gave the North a great advantage and it had besides the support of the Soviets and the Peoples Republic of China. It had a high educational level. It was then, as it is today, a very secretive society so that we didn't have a lot of information about what was going on. We knew that the country was highly regimented, but it was also much more economically developed than South Korea. There was therefore a worry that pro-communist sentiment, even insurgency, could develop in the south.

What happened to change things for the better in South Korea was very important. Even before the Korean war, there was an extensive land reform program. That reform wiped out the feudal aristocracy. It started with our occupation right after WWII led by a fellow named Lejinsky; he in fact copied MacArthur's program in Japan. The Korean War was the final straw for the landed gentry; they lost what ever they still held. The reform program was important for two reasons: it created peace in the country-side – it bought South Korea a generation of peace. The government didn't do a lot for agriculture, but at least people owned their own little farms. Second, it took the landed gentry out of agriculture and turned them into industrialists. They were given government bonds in exchange for their lands which they then invested. Many of their children became academics. One of the studies that I sponsored did a study of the Korean academics and found that they were nearly all descendants of the landed gentry – which was an amusing finding in itself.

Land reform broke the feudal backbone of South Korea. I think that had a very profound effect.

Q: Was it true that Park Chung Hee decided very early in his regime that he would not let the urban population gain from low rice prices? He wanted farmers to be content with their lot.

LYMAN: This was one of the major economic changes. What Syngman Rhee had done was to under-report his country's agricultural production in order to maximize the amount of food aid

that he could request from the U.S. That abundance of food allowed him to subsidize food prices in the cities. That discouraged farmers because they were obviously receiving little for their products. So the country became increasingly dependent on outside assistance. He could get away with this disastrous policy because the U.S. so generously supported his government with budget support and other assistance programs.

Park Chung Hee got rid of that system and this was one of his major innovations. First of all, the agricultural reporting was improved and we began to have a real sense of farm production. The pricing structure was changed which not only increased farm income but enabled us to reduce our food aid program. He was willing to accept the unhappiness of the urban dwellers – including student demonstrations. In part, he could afford to make this policy change because the economy was growing and employment was increasing; so that the price increases were not as traumatic as they might have been in a depressed economy.

Q: Was there any feeling of optimism about South Korea's future in 1961?

LYMAN: When I arrived, the country was still considered a basket case. The question was what were the realistic expectations. Within a year, I think our psychology turned around, but we gradually remained in fact more cautious than the South Koreans. Year after year, from 1964-67, their output projections were far more sanguine than ours; they were right and we were wrong. But as I said, by 1962, it was clear that the economic situation was changing for the better.

Korea's participation in the Vietnam War also gave them a boost, both psychologically and financially. Their construction companies found fertile fields in Vietnam; that was the beginning of their international ventures that have been so successful. Other markets opened up for Korean industries and they became export oriented. The government also got some financial aid to pay for its participation in Vietnam. We had some indirect role in this export process because we used to get reports of what our people in Vietnam needed which we passed on to the Koreans. Once Korean troops were in Vietnam, I think there was also some preference given to Korean contractors. We used to joke that it would be wonderful if the Koreans could find a market for their rocks – their country side was filled with them. Lo and behold, Vietnam became a major consumer of Korean rocks because they were needed for road constructions. It was like manna from heaven.

The Koreans felt very strongly that Japan had turned around economically because of the Korean war. Therefore they viewed Vietnam as their equivalent of the "Korean war." I don't think that in fact Vietnam was as financially significant as people thought, but it certainly was psychologically. It did give South Korea a greater international exposure.

Q: Tell us a little about what you saw in the attitude of our embassy and military towards the Koreans.

LYMAN: It changed a great deal in the period I was in Korea. As economic development was taking hold, I think we all began to see that Korea might have a future and that it was not the hopeless case that we had assumed. Two ways, beyond land reform, in which the U.S. was involved, helped the turnaround.

From 1950-1965 the South Koreans went from a literacy rate of 20% to 80%. You can't underestimate the importance of that. Their devotion to education was extraordinary. Related to the surge in basic education, tens of thousands Koreans went to the U.S. sponsored by AID and our military to some extent. When they had finished their training in the U.S., many returned to Korea. This was important because while the country was in a state of economic depression, that training was not well used. But as it escaped its malaise and the economy took off, we found trained people all over the place. There were people who had been trained in one field but because they couldn't practice their profession had taken lower level jobs in banks, in the bureaucracy, in factories, etc. But when the opportunity arose, they came out of the woodwork and said that they could do whatever new program was being assessed. So the country suddenly tapped into a talent base that had never been used before. We were amazed by the range of well qualified Koreans available to participate in economic development.

Second, when the Johnson administration wanted to reward the Koreans for their participation in Vietnam, the White House proposed a profound idea: to set up in Seoul an Institute for Science and Technology. The U.S. would build it and then turn it over to the Koreans to run. It was built after I left. One of the reasons the Koreans were so supportive of this proposal was because it gave them an opportunity to entice their scientists who had stayed in the U.S. or other foreign countries back to Korea. These Ph.D.s had stayed in the U.S. to teach; many had fled to avoid the draft which was universal in Korea. So the government first allowed these Ph.D.s to skip military service. Those who did not return because they felt too settled in the U.S. were offered an opportunity to spend a sabbatical year in their native country. The government built them housing on the campus of this new institute. Korea attracted enough highly trained and skilled professionals to allow the institute to become one of the most important support systems for Korean industry. It was something akin to tapping into the diaspora without requiring the Koreans to return to Korea permanently. It was a brilliant move on the part of the government.

Q: I saw some of this many years later when I was Consul General in Seoul. One of my file clerks came to me and said that her brother had been offered two scholarship and wanted my advice on which one he should take. The choice was MIT or CalTech. I was stunned, I thought she might have been talking about two small schools, but this was the cream of the drop. I was left speechless.

LYMAN: The Koreans' appetite for science and technology has been terrific.

Q: Did you see any evidence that Park Chung Hee was taking any political interest in the economic issues facing his country?

LYMAN: He obviously was very pleased by the progress Korea was making but I think he knew very little about economics and left the management of that aspect of the country to his deputy prime minister. The deputy was a big, burly, savvy guy; he was smart enough to assemble in his office a corps of very bright young minds whom he protected against the political people who were either jealous or didn't like the reforms that were being installed. He told us that he had to provide his people with extra income because the government salaries were just not enough to attract the kind of staff he needed and he protected them against others, as I said. Park Chung

Hee in fact gave the deputy prime minister carte blanche – as long as the economy was doing as well as it was. I think he did not get very much involved in economic policy; he recognized that he didn't know much about it.

I am told that later in the 1970s he would go to the economic ministry periodically just to check up on things, but that didn't happen while I was there.

Q: Did you worry about a North Korean invasion or other military action?

LYMAN: It was very much on everybody's mind; it colored the whole atmosphere. When you went to the DMZ, you felt that the Korean War had just ended the day before rather than 11 years earlier. There was considerable tensions; the troops were dug in. We had a large military presence there. The threat was considered as if the war had just ended. It had a profound effect on people's attitudes because it added an element of insecurity all the time. People felt that all that been built since 1950 could be totally destroyed as indeed it had been during the Korean War.

On the other hand, this feeling of insecurity gave the military considerable political power. National security came first in the Korean psyche.

Q: How was the performance of the Korean military in Vietnam?

LYMAN: They were reported to be brutal, fearless. It was said that they had executed some of their own troops for discipline reasons. They fought fiercely when they did fight, but were not a major player in the war. They sent their best soldiers and they built up a reputation for being a great fighting machine. Part of the reason for joining in Vietnam was as a pay-back for those countries who came to their aid during the Korean War. Another reason for their participation came from their new found optimism about their country's future.

Q: What about Japan?

LYMAN: Koreans had a constant fear of Japan along with loathing and a deep, deep resentment for the Japanese occupation. They were concerned that Japan would dominate them economically and exploit them; even after Park Chung Hee "normalized" relations with Japan, direct Japanese investment was forbidden – and that has lasted until quite recently.

On the other hand, a number of Korean industries had been quietly trading with Japan. Korean silk was being sold in Japan as Japanese silk. So there were connections between the two countries, but the population on the whole resented Japan and feared it.

Q: What about corruption?

LYMAN: It was significant. For example, we knew that every investment that was approved by the government – as it had to do for every investment – required the investor to make a contribution to Park Chung Hee's party. One of my colleagues – an economist in the mission – said that he didn't mind that contribution as long as the investment made economic sense. Since

most of the investments tended to be good ones, he didn't mind the corruption too much.

But corruption was clearly present. There were rake-offs in almost every government investment decision.

The *chaebols*, industry conglomerates, were just becoming the industrial powers that eventually made them world-famous. They had not yet branched out into major industries; they were mostly importers in the early 1960s, but they were signs of their empire-to-be. They started with fertilizer plants and other basic production. Cars, shipbuilding, etc were to come later.

Q: Was our mission in Seoul beginning to think of Korea as a "second Japan"?

LYMAN: I don't think so. Japan had progressed so far that it seemed unlikely to have any competitors. And Korea had a long row to hoe. I don't think anyone in Seoul in this period anticipated Korea's economic success. Today, it is the 11th largest economy in the world. No one could have dreamed of that in the 1960s. We were sufficiently encouraged by the progress that we did witness. When I was there, the Koreans still couldn't make a shirt that would fit a Westerner. A few years ago, you couldn't buy a shirt in JC Penney's that wasn't made in Korea. So in the early 1960s, we were just happy that the economy was growing at all and that was enough success for us.

There is one story which illustrated to me what was going on. While I was in Seoul, they built a big fertilizer plant in Ulsan – in a joint venture with Gulf oil, I think. The factory went into production a year ahead of schedule. I went to the Minister for Science and Technology to inquire how they managed that feat. After all, a fertilizer plant is a complicated production facility. He asked whether I remembered the fertilizer plant that the U.S. had built in Korea in the 1950s. I told him I remembered it well because it was an abject failure; we never succeeded in having the output it was supposed to have; we used to drive Congressmen miles and miles out of the way just so that we would not be anywhere near that plant. The minister said that it may have been a disaster for the U.S., but for Korea it was a learning lesson. Every engineer in Korea had trained on that plant. They learned more about fertilizer and its production than any other country in the world. So then, when they began to build their own plant, they knew how to do it right. I repeated that story in AID over and over again because it was a clear illustration of the importance of training which was more valuable than the construction of the plant itself. We thought the project was a failure; in fact, it was a great training opportunity for the Koreans. I think this story tells you a lot about the Koreans and about how we measure success and failures.

Q: How did you feel about Korea when you left in 1967?

LYMAN: When we left, we felt that Korea was a model for a successful Third World country that wished to rise. It was a success not only for the Koreans, but also for AID because we had assigned a very highly talented team to Seoul. We had some of the best people in the agency. We thought that if we could find another country that might become a "second Korea", we should concentrate there the same quality talent as had been assembled in Seoul.

When my tour in Korea was up, after some agonizing, I made a decision to take a year off and

with my colleague David Cole write a book, Korean Development; The Interplay of Politics and Economics. We wanted to explain how politics and economics had interacted in Korea and how economic development was leading to a more open political process. We also discussed the other side of that coin; that is, how economic development had allowed the government to keep a tight rein because people were trading political freedom for a rise in the standard of living. So we left Korea very pleased with what we had witnessed in the three year we were there and my colleague, David Cole and I recorded the history of that period.

ROGER ERNST
Deputy Director, USAID
Seoul (1964-1968)

Roger Ernst was born in New York in 1924. He graduated from Williams College in 1948 and the National War College in 1956. He served as an overseas Captain from 1943 to 1947. His career with USAID included assignments in India, Taiwan, Korea, Ethiopia and Thailand. Mr Ernst was interviewed in 1997 by Arthur Lowrie.

ERNST: Yes. Then from Taiwan I was asked to go up to Korea, and part of the request for my transfer was based on an understanding that we would do in Korea what we'd done in Taiwan, we'd get them going and we'd get out. The head of the AID mission in Korea was a fellow named Joel Bernstein, an economist from Chicago, a Milton Friedman type. And I was really going to run the mission, I'd be the deputy, but I was in charge of all the operations. Joel did the theory and serious economics - most critical, too! There was Winthrop Brown as ambassador, who had been DCM in Delhi. We just flowed in together. And he was followed by Bill Porter, from New England, a superb guy. And the military side, one of the most outstanding individuals I ever worked with, Ben Davis, whose father was the first black general in the Army. Ben was one of the Tuskegee guys, Air Force. Later he was Assistant Secretary for Aviation in the Department of Commerce. Smart, sensible, he knew how to do things, knew how to work with the Koreans. Koreans were wonderfully rewarding to work with. Very volatile. The Irish of the Orient. In some ways they're a little like the Poles, because they were squeezed between the Chinese and the Japanese and the Russians, they had these big countries sitting on them for all these years. Very inventive people. They fought hard, they loved hard. When you had an argument with them, you'd be rolling around on the floor with them, not literally, but tremendous arguments. And then when it was done, best buddies, and agreements would be honored.

Q: I've been told the Korean workers made the Japanese look lazy.

ERNST: After President Park Chung Hee went to Washington, there was an agreement to establish a Korean Institute of Science and Technology (KIST). And I was on the Board, as the American representative on the Board of Directors of the Institution, and there was a schedule for construction. Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, Ohio, had the substantive contract to help build the laboratory and train the people. The ROK fell behind in their construction schedule. And President Park was there one day, visiting - he used to go visit projects to beef

them up, make them happen. And he said "Why are you falling behind?" And they said "Well, it's too cold to pour concrete." He said "Well, why don't you make it warm?" And they said "What do you mean?" He said "Put up a temporary shelter, put in space heaters, and pour your concrete." And they did.

Another example: We were pushing with them to build their exports, when I got to Korea, the total Korean exports were 100 million dollars a year. That was in 1964. In 1968, they broke a half billion, 500 million. They're now 130 billion, you know, astronomical numbers, but the point is that we did a study, had a study done, of how many steps it would take to make an export. And it was 35 procedures, "okays" to be obtained. And the President said "That's impossible! Cut it to seven, by Monday." And his staff produced a new plan with seven steps, with a one-stop shopping center, and it was objected to by two members of the Cabinet. The President said "I'll take your resignations. I'll get a new Central Bank Governor and a new Minister of Finance. We're going to do it. It's that important." He made it happen.

Q: I've also been told one of the secrets of the Korean success, economic miracle, was the number of Koreans went to the United States for training. Did you have a role in that?

ERNST: Yes, one of the biggest elements of our AID program was sending individuals at all levels and all across the board. And some people complained that we were doing was sort of like spreading marmalade on bread: There were too many. We said "Some will disappear, they're going to fall off, but they're going to come back into the picture somewhere and be constructive." And they have been. And it was a very, very exciting time.

Q: Did you succeed in terminating...?

ERNST: The AID program closed a couple of years later. I was there 'till '68, and I think the last year of the AID program was about '73, after the Shanghai Agreement, that sort of eased things up a bit. '73 or '74 when it was closed out, and of course Korea now is an exporter of both capital and technology.

Q: Now, how did the Vietnam war come into play here?

ERNST: President Johnson asked the Koreans for support, and they agreed, and they sent first one, and then another, division down to Vietnam, to fight with the Americans and the South Vietnamese against Communism. We paid most of the costs. Two footnotes, one important, the other fun. The fun one: The Koreans said "We have to have our kimchi." That's their spiced cabbage with peppers that they eat, it's usually fresh. A whole new industry grew up, to produce, for each soldier, an individual little tin, like the size of a pet food tin, cat food. One tin per soldier per day. The first export of kimchi in a tin didn't work because the kimchi had too much pepper in it. It ate through the tin plate. They had to do a revision of the can-making industry. But they learned. They learned in two weeks. And politically, the contracts for growing the cabbage and producing the kimchi were handled by the Korean government, and I'm sure the contracts were handed out on the basis of friendship and favoritism. Call it corruption.

I was asked, before the House Asian Affairs Committee - Ross Adair was the ranking

Republican member, and Frances Bolton was another member, "What about corruption in Korea?" I was testifying for the AID program. I said "Well, I want to explain corruption in Korea. There aren't enough schools to accommodate all the children. So an individual will go to the principal, and slip him the equivalent of five or ten dollars so his child will get into the school. Wouldn't I do that, wouldn't you do that, Mr. Congressman? You would. I would. Second, in going to the classroom, the kids in the front five rows get pencils and paper, but there aren't enough supplies to go to the back of the room. You go to the teacher. Say 'Despite the fact that my child's name starts with a W, at the end of the alphabet, and is going to have to sit in the back of the room, here's five bucks to put my kid in the front. I want my child to learn.' I would do that, Mr. Congressman." And they all laughed, and said "You're right." And I said "I'll tell you one more thing about Korean corruption. It is increasingly democratic." And some member of Congress said "What do you mean, Mr. Ernst?" I said "It's not skimming off the top, it's not a percentage of the big contracts; it's like the policeman in my childhood neighborhood in New York used to walk into the grocery store and have an apple. It insured that he came everyday to check security. He got an apple. Or he could use the bathroom. Community based. One can think that while corruption is growing, it is at a lower rate than the GNP grows. Then we're winning." And it was accepted. Accepted in the sense that it was an acceptable explanation of a factor of reality in the life of a peon. It was interesting. I learned to ice skate.

Observations on Korea and the Vietnam War

Q: What was the feeling among Korea elite and among the Ambassador, the embassy people, about the Vietnam war?

ERNST: Supportive. About the wisdom of the war, there were the divisions that we found elsewhere in American society. Was it necessary? Could it have been avoided?

Q: Was this '66, '67, '68?

ERNST: There were those who knew, not including me, that Ho Chi Minh had pleaded, after World War One, for support for a free Indo-China; he had heard Mr. Wilson's statements about the self-determination of small nations. He said, "We're a small nation, we want to be free, too." He did it again after World War II, he got turned around. There were those who knew. Not me, I didn't know then. We probably could've avoided it. Wrong side. The Domino Theory never was right.

Q: And the idea that the Vietnamese would not fight the Chinese, and all that. See, what I'm getting at is here you are a major embassy in East Asia, as opposed to people like me who are off on the other side of the world, who may be critical, but not knowing anything. Who was the Ambassador? How about Porter?

ERNST: William Porter? He was supportive, neutral. Can't say anything now, he's passed away, but I would say the Koreans saw it as an opportunity. The other thing I was going to say, I told you the story about the cans of kimchi, the other factor, which was very important; senior Korean officials turned to me one day at a function, and said "You know, this is the first time our troops are walking on somebody else's soil, not being walked on. We're not being walked on." They had

been walked on by the Japanese, by the Chinese, by the Russians, by the Americans. Now their soldiers were walking on somebody else's land. He said "This is very important for us, psychologically."

Q: The Turks have always been great fighters in the Korean War, and Vietnam too, I remember. Did you ever hear any comparison with the Koreans?

ERNST: No, haven't. But it was used, it spread their economy, they got a lot of orders. Japan got lots of American contracts, but Korea got some, and it gave a boost to their economy.

Q: And they were in favor of a large American presence in Asia.

ERNST: Yes, they were. And we went from Korea.

Q: You had two pretty successful years in Taiwan and Korea. Putting AID out of business. I mean, two in there, two in the Tigers.

MADISON BROADNAX
USAID Office of Rural Development
Suwon (1964-1968)

Assistant Chief of Agriculture, USAID
Seoul (1969-1970)

Madison Broadnax was born in Georgia in 1914. He received a BS from West Virginia State College in 1940 and an MS from Michigan State College in 1942. Mr. Broadnax served in the US Army from 1943 to 1946. He served as a USAID officer in Korea, Sudan, and Kenya. Mr. Broadnax was interviewed in 1998 by W. Haven North.

BROADNAX: I went to Korea in 1964.

Q: And you were there until?

BROADNAX: I was there until 1968. In 1968, I had an AID's sabbatical to Cornell University.

Q: Then you went back?

BROADNAX: Then I went back — they requested me back. After that — instead of being at Suwon where I was originally, I was Deputy Chief of the Food and Agriculture Division with the responsibility of supervising all the provincial advisors.

Q: Let's talk about the first period you were in Korea.

BROADNAX: My title was Team Leader for Research Extension and Education, and I had six advisors under my supervision. My counterpart was the Administrator of the Office of Rural Development. We were housed in the same office. We traveled together. We organized training programs together. We selected participants for training, all agreed to. Koreans are hard workers.

Q: That was in the Ministry of Agriculture?

BROADNAX: Yes. But in Suwon, not in Seoul.

Q: This was what part of the country?

BROADNAX: Thirty miles south of Seoul. It was a showplace. All of the provinces were under the Korean Office of Rural Agriculture, their agriculture people. And this was the production arm for the Ministry of Agriculture. The Research Station was there and so was the School of Agriculture, and Seoul National University also was there.

Q: What was the agricultural situation, as you found it, in Korea at that time?

BROADNAX: It was rice, rice, rice — their food crop. We had an horticulture advisor who concentrated on diversifying vegetable and viticulture industries. His expertise led to industrializing their viticulture on a par with Japan.

Q: Were the Koreans able to feed themselves?

BROADNAX: Oh yes, yes.

Q: There wasn't a major food crisis?

BROADNAX: No, no famine. None at all.

Q: What was your primary goal?

BROADNAX: Our goal was to put in place an organization capable of running their own show. And as I said, they were hard workers. If you said let's get up at 6:00 and go on a field trip, they were there. It was a pleasure to work with them, as were the Sudanese. The Sudanese — once they got in the office, they would work, but they weren't there too long. They were there from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. That was their custom. But the Koreans were a different breed of people. Their work habits were different. We interfaced with the people of the School of Agriculture too, because when they found out that I was a former college administrator, they would call on me to talk to their students. We had a large vegetable garden in the back of my place where we grew vegetables that they didn't know existed because they grew Chinese cabbage for their main delicacy.

Dr. Wang was an Agricultural Economist who studied at the University of Wisconsin. He was in my office once a week. We would exchange ideas on agricultural growth potentials. Here again, he would acquaint me with the culture of the Koreans, which was essential for me. We got along

very well. The fine part about it was that they were convinced that the United States was an honest ally; and we were an honest counterpart for them. We utilized IRRI (International Rice Research Institute) a lot for training some of their senior people. We would program some of them to go to IRRI for the latest data on rice production.

Q: In the Philippines?

BROADNAX: In the Philippines, right. That paid off. In fact, we finally got my counterpart on the board for the Philippines. He was on the board until he died. But my first year there, we promoted that training. We emphasized training and research. We had this large administration building as a training facility.

Q: Was there any particular focus to the training?

BROADNAX: We would bring people in from the provinces; they learned about recent research data. They would come in to get the research data. Also how to obtain food production goals for the current growing season.

Q: These were extension people.

BROADNAX: Yes

Q: They already had an extension system.

BROADNAX: Oh, yes, they had one. We had set that up a long time ago. It was operating when I got there.

Q: Was it something the U.S. had helped set up?

BROADNAX: Oh, yes, we did it. So these people would come in, the research people would talk to them - their extension people - information people, and they would make slides on the research findings and their application to provincial growing conditions. Then they would take the findings back to the provinces and teach them to farmers. It had a great multiplying effect.

Q: So this was a further development of the extension system?

BROADNAX: Right.

Q: Were there any particular technologies you were trying to promote?

BROADNAX: All of the newer higher yielding strains of rice, which we took from IRRI to increase their production. The strains from IRRI worked well there. They're still working well.

Q: What were some of the main bottlenecks in making the extension program effective?

BROADNAX: The transfer of personnel. You get somebody trained in one position and, if there

is a promotion, they went on the promotion system and if he was senior for it, he went for that position. I found that perplexing, but understandable at times.

Q: A lot of turnover.

BROADNAX: Right. But within the system.

Q: What about the benefit for the Korean farmer?

BROADNAX: It was wonderful. Let me tell you something. Two things happened to me when I was there at Suwon. We had a Presidential visit. President Johnson made a state visit. And Suwon being the showplace for U.S. VIPs, I had to help with the program.

Q: So it was a major area of U.S. visits.

BROADNAX: That was something we could show off. It was an investment that everybody could see was functioning. I had an interesting experience with President Johnson's expediter. He came and he thought that I could just do this unilaterally. Every day while he was there we were planning the visit. The planner would come down from Seoul and they'd stop in Suwon and pick me up. We'd go down to a place called Anyang Hill. It was a place we had chosen for the President to go. It was right at the top of a farming center. It was in the fall and the Koreans turned out every elementary school to come there to see and hear President Johnson. When President Johnson came, he was programmed to stay there 40 minutes. He stayed an hour and 40 minutes. Dean Rusk kept reminding him that "you are over your time." He said, "We'll just cut out some other part of the program." He got there and he and the chief of that village got into it and he looked around and as far as he could see were these school kids standing, listening to him talk. It was in October and the rice harvest and everything was a golden yellow. One of the most beautiful scenes you've ever seen. Johnson was impressed. He was very impressed. He asked the chief of the village if he wanted to go for a ride. The chief of the village thought he asked him if he wanted to go to the United States. So he took the chief for a ride. The Koreans felt good that they were able to host the President of the United States and that he took time to spend so much time with them. I think that was a big plus for the United States, and the U.S. AID Mission to Korea.

Q: Was the development of that area largely the result of U.S. assistance?

BROADNAX: Yes. Definitely.

Q: Farming assistance, varieties, and all that?

BROADNAX: Yes. Mainly training the Koreans. They're the ones who had to do the job. We provided a research advisor, a horticulture advisor, an education advisor, and an extension advisor.

Q: How large an area were we working in?

BROADNAX: All over the country.

Q: But in the Suwon area, particularly.

BROADNAX: Right. Suwon was the backstop for the production program in the country. It went very well. But as I said, the visit of the President was a big plus for us. Another VIP visit was Secretary of Agriculture Freeman.

Q: Did you meet with President Johnson when he was there?

BROADNAX: Well, the onus was on me. If that program had failed, I'd have been fired. I knew it.

Q: Did you talk to President Johnson?

BROADNAX: I just met him. I shook his hand because the fact is, the CIA man told me not to get too close to the President. I said, "Well, you know, it just so happened that I organized this program." He said, "You heard what I said." I said, "Yes." Anyway, President Johnson felt good over it. He felt good at his reception and everything. And so did Secretary Freeman when he came. Secretary Freeman landed on our helipad where we had cars there and took him right to the conference center. He's a politician, you know. He and Soapy Williams are about the same. The Koreans were impressed with the President and the Secretary of Agriculture - that was a big thing. They went over very well. They enjoyed it, too.

Q: You came back to Korea in what year? Your second round?

BROADNAX: The second round, I came back in 1969.

Q: What was your role then?

BROADNAX: I was the Assistant Chief of Agriculture in the Seoul office for field operations, supervising nine provincial advisors.

Q: I was going to ask how big a staff and program did you have?

BROADNAX: We had nine provinces and an advisor in each province.

Q: How big a budget did you operate with; do you remember?

BROADNAX: No, I don't, but it was adequate. We had two good Mission Directors--Joel Bernstein and Henry Costanzo. Costanzo was the one who requested me to come back after Cornell.

Q: Did you have a particular program you were trying to promote while you were in that position?

BROADNAX: Only the increased food production and get the Koreans to use chemical fertilizer instead of the honey buckets. We did that. In the province around Pusan, the Army had a contract to buy food from the Korean farmers. So the horticultural advisor introduced viticulture. We'd build these greenhouses for viticulture that would keep the heat in so he could get growing seasons with confined heat. That went over very well. We got them to use chemical fertilizer. The Army bought all their vegetables as a result of that change.

Q: What were the conditions for farming in Korea? I always had a picture of it being very difficult. A harsh situation.

BROADNAX: Well, they did rice paddy farming and you know the Korean seasons are just like it is the U.S. The farmers were very good. As I said, we saw that some of their seed varieties weren't of the best and that's why we brought them in connection with IRRI, so we could get the best rice strain, and we increased their production.

Q: Apart from rice, what other crops were particularly significant?

BROADNAX: Vegetables. Fruits. We had a vegetable research sub-station. We experimented with different types of fruits and vegetables. I guess the one that was most productive was grapes. I know it was, because it led to the establishment of a winery, with Suntory Japan. That was productive.

Q: Our overall program must have been very, very large. Didn't we dominate the agricultural scene at that time?

BROADNAX: Our programs?

Q: The USAID Program.

BROADNAX: Yes. It was. Joel Bernstein set that up with the Finance Minister when he was there. They requested a U.S. advisor for each department. That was a plus for us. We had a good staff.

Q: These advisors were working with the extension service?

BROADNAX: Extension was the main thrust. All of these people had extension experience. All of them. They were counterparts to the government from each province. There were some political attachments to it.

Q: But the system of agricultural service was essentially patterned after the U.S.? Very much the same?

BROADNAX: Yes. Definitely. Here again, not so much as to the one-on-one, as we used to do in the United States, visiting farms. We did it through demonstrations. Mass training programs. That's why we had this training center at headquarters, and bringing people in.

Q: Farmers and everybody?

BROADNAX: Yes. Farmers and workers. And we would go out with a follow-up program to the provinces, which had their own training set up. The multiplying effect, I thought, was excellent.

Q: You had the university involved in teaching?

BROADNAX: The university played a role in graduating the personnel. The personnel - most of them we got - were university graduates.

Q: They were involved in the extension program?

BROADNAX: No. That was Office of Rural Development. It was the Office of the Minister of Agriculture with that responsibility.

Q: That was the policy of the Korean Government to promote rural development as well as a big emphasis on industry?

BROADNAX: Very positive. President Park Chung Hee was always ahead of his ministers. He was out front. He'd make a speech and we would always say if the Korean agriculture kept up with the President, everything would be okay. He was a good leader. Too bad that they killed him. They would have rice planting, you know, every year. He'd come and take his shoes off and get right out in the paddy and work with them.

Q: Anything else about your Korean experience you want to add?

BROADNAX: As I said, it was a different one from Sudan. But also a positive one. I was enjoying it so much until I got notice that I had been appointed as Deputy for the Office of Agriculture back in Washington, I didn't want to go.

Q: Well, we'll come to that. Let's talk about what you were doing at Cornell in the middle of this Korean time?

BROADNAX: I got a sabbatical. I wasn't a Diplomat-in-Residence, I was a student. I went and took a full load of graduate studies--Economics, Sociology, and Extension Education. And everybody thought I was crazy. I said, "I think I might want to go back to academia one day." So my professor said, "Anytime you want to do it, we'll trade positions." But I was a student. I always did enjoy studying.

Q: A one-year program.

BROADNAX: Yes. One academic year. That was a good experience. I met a lot of good people there. Met a lot of good people from the Rockefeller Foundation. That's how I met Dr. Cliff Wharton. I was there when we had the student uprising. Cornell has never been the same since. I think for the best. At the close of my school year, I got word that I was to serve on an [AID personnel] evaluation panel in Washington prior to going back to Korea. I did that.

Q: How did you find serving on that panel? I assume you were covering agricultural themes or more general?

BROADNAX: No. Not only for agriculture. What we had - we had a panel - the Director of Personnel at the time had some trouble spots. He wanted a panel to review - a lot of people had been selected out - and he wanted a panel to review it and make a recommendation to him. Of the six people we reviewed, we recommended an overturn of five. Only one that we agreed probably ought to be selected out. One [of the five] was a Mission Director in Jamaica. He'd been in Jamaica, his most recent post. We read all of the reports and everything, and we felt that he, along with several others, were being railroaded.

Q: How did you find the panel system?

BROADNAX: I found it very interesting. I was fortunate. I went out--my appointment was limited when I went to Sudan. Before my tour was over, I had a permanent appointment. I had to evaluate all of the people under me, which wasn't exactly a new experience because I had to do it for college faculty. I knew what to look for when I got on this panel. I could see personal things creeping in, you know. Ralph Gleeson was on the panel and another Engineer who is dead now. Can't think of his name. Anyway, there were three of us. We had complete agreement on what we had done. Fortunately, one of the fellows that was railroading a technician, I ended up evaluating him when I came to AID Washington. He never knew that I had that information.

Q: Do you think it was a fair system?

BROADNAX: Yes, I do. I think it was fair. You know, human elements will get into these things, but you've got to have a panel that can see through that. I served on that panel and I was sent back to Washington to serve on one after that from Korea.

RICHARD A. ERICSON, JR.
Political Counselor
Seoul (1965-1968)

Ambassador Richard A. Ericson, Jr. was born in 1923. He enrolled in Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1941, but did not graduate until 1945, due in part to being drafted in the U.S. Army in 1945. In addition to his service in Japan, Ambassador Ericson also served in England, Iceland, and Korea. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 27, 1995.

ERICSON: I was assigned to Seoul from 1965-68, I had a three year assignment. As I mentioned I had met Win Brown, then our Ambassador to Korea, at the War College when he was deputy commandant for the State Department, and he wanted a political counselor. I will say from the outset that I have served with some pretty good ambassadors -- Alex Johnson, David Bruce, and a number of other people with staggering reputations -- but I never worked for anybody for

whom I had greater respect than Win Brown and as a couple, I would say Win and Peggy Brown would be our all-time choice. A man of towering integrity. Brown was the son of a Presbyterian minister in Maine. He sort of looked the part. He was the oldest 53 year old I think I have ever met. He looked old and had premature gray hair, rather craggy features, and slim build. Looked like a very austere, ascetic sort of person. And he had a sort of abrupt manner to him. He was really one of the kindest, nicest, but very firm when it counted. When action was required he could take it very swiftly, almost carelessly in some ways. He was a damn good surgeon cutting out the nonessential. Nobody ever tried to pull the wool over Win Brown's eyes. He was much too clever and the integrity was just much too much. He was absolutely great. And he interested himself in all kinds of things. I will never forget when Win Brown looking over a draft of mine at some point after we had talked over the policy aspects of it and interpretation of it, he looked over his glasses and said, "But Dick, I want you to redraft parts of it and please have respect for the English language." He went to the important things first; he was by no means a nitpicker.

He had been the Ambassador in Laos during the Vientiane crisis, and he had been deputy commandant at the War College and now he was ambassador in Korea. The Koreans incidentally had tested him as Koreans will do to see how vulnerable he might be to certain aspects of their culture. They had given him his first dinner party out at Walker Hill. The foreign minister at that time was a young fellow in his 30s who was married to one of the most beautiful women I had ever seen, but he never went home from a party with his wife. The Browns usually took her home as a matter of fact. Walker Hill is the great big pleasure dome that the Koreans had built along the Han River which was designed to keep American GIs from going to Japan to spend their R&R money. It was not entirely successful in that regard, but it had a big nightclub which had a line of dancers scantily clad and all that sort of nonsense. Of course, women are one of the enticements that Koreans offer to visitors one way or another. They thought they would try Ambassador Brown out. It was a stag party and they had one of the lady's in the line in her skimpy costume come up and ask for the first dance of the evening with Win Brown. The other Koreans and maybe some of the Americans in attendance (I was not there) apparently urged him to get up and have that first dance. So he took the lady gingerly in his arms and waltzed her around the floor once and sat down and was never known to dance with a Korean woman for the rest of his career. He was not going to put up with that sort of thing. Of course, the Koreans abandoned that. As a matter of fact there were all kinds of "kisaeng" partying going on (a "kisaeng" girl being the equivalent of a Japanese geisha, although not quite) around Win Brown while he was there, but he never attended, never accepted an invitation to a "kisaeng" party. Well, I am sorry, he went along on one or two very large ones when visiting congressmen and their wives were included, but he never went to a stag "kisaeng" party that I know of in the two years that we served together.

It was a good Embassy staff in Seoul at the time. We arrived there in the summer of 1965 when Park Chung Hee, who was President of the Republic, had just passed two enormous measures through the National Assembly. One of them was a bill providing for authority to send Korean troops overseas. They had already done that but that was apparently unconstitutionally and they wanted to make it specific that the government had the power. The other one, of course, was the bill ratifying the treaty of reconciliation with Japan. These were measures that were causing enormous political strain in Seoul. Not the overseas troop thing so much, but the Japan thing caused terrible dissention in Korea. As a matter of fact when I arrived, if you read the American

newspapers, you would think the air was full of tear gas and bricks. Actually in and around the universities there was quite a bit of agitation and a lot of tear gas in the air. They were facing some very serious demonstrations. Of course, the Koreans were very, very sensitive to student participation in demonstrations dating way back to the Japanese occupation days and, of course, the 1960 uprising against Syngman Rhee. It was the student participation that really broke his back. It was the military refusal to put down the students that caused Syngman Rhee to fall or cause him to submit his resignation.

Anyway I was very busy the first couple of weeks I was there trying to sort out what the heck was going on. Another sidelight on Brown. He invited me up to the residence, alone, for a tete-de-tete, hours after my arrival and sat me down on the sofa and fixed me with his gimlet eye and said, "Dick, I don't want you to do to your family what your predecessor did to his, is that understood?" I kind of blanched a bit. I didn't know what he was talking about. My predecessor was Phil Habib. It turned out what Win Brown had in mind was his experience at that nightclub in Walker Hill. Phil was Political Counselor under Sam Berger when Park Chung Hee overthrew the Chang government and Phil had gotten very close to the junta who ruled during the immediate period after the overthrow and in trying to sort out who was going to emerge on top, he got very close to a number of actors. And the actors, of course, were all military types and the military types, of course, were all hard drinking and playing. The only time you could get to them was in the evening in an informal situation. So Phil had developed a system and habit of attending poker games and "kisaeng" partying three or four times a week. And that was what Win Brown was referring to. He did not like this kind of institution and he did not think that Phil had paid adequate attention to his family while he was Political Counselor. Having this warning in mind I was allowed to do it but I had to be rather circumspect. By the time I got there things had changed. The American Affairs Bureau of the Foreign Ministry no longer were getting the money to host their wild dog parties -- those things were very expensive.

In those days \$50 a head was fairly inexpensive. Some of them were pleasant parties for the most part. Some time you would get into a drinking competition and they would start pouring it out. I often said if I could be reincarnated as a Korean, I would want to have the Johnny Walker Black Label concession because that was what they drank. And if you tried to give them anything better or different they would feel insulted. It had to be Johnny Walker Black Label or it didn't qualify.

Anyway, Park managed to weather this political storm and it was one of the beginnings of the Korean economic miracle, which it has been. I was there in 1945-46 with the army of occupation. Except for a few isolated urban areas in South Korea, you were back in the 10th century. When I arrived in 1965 the per capital gross national income was still somewhere between \$50 and \$100 and that amount in Korea did not buy you very much. In some places like Indonesia it would go further because food grows on trees, the temperature doesn't get cold. Korea has a harsh climate and is a harsh land. People were terribly poor. In the winter time in those days the newspapers used to keep track of the bodies found in the street.

Four things were responsible for Korea's economic development. One was the Japanese reparation payments. Now these were regarded by many Koreans as totally inadequate in light of the 40 odd years of occupation by Japanese and their efforts to totally wipe out the Korean

culture -- all the insults and indignities imposed on the Koreans all through the years by the very harsh Japanese system. But nonetheless the reparations played a major role in developing Korea.

The second thing, of course, was the Vietnam War; Korea's participation in it from which they reaped considerable economic benefit. The third thing which is really basically ignored is the way that American aid over the years had been channeled not into individual products really, but into reconstruction of an infrastructure that became the basis for successful projects in later years. I am talking about communications, electric power development, roads, certainly central industries that were foundations for others. For example, cement was one of the first that American aid helped to develop. And, of course, the money that went into improving the agriculture provided labor surpluses that fueled other industries in later years. We did a pretty good job on the aid program. We didn't do well politically in Korea because I don't think we had an agenda of any kind, but we did pretty well on the aid side.

The fourth thing, which I really think is terribly important and history ought to correct sometime was the nature of the President, himself. Which is to say that all of my politically correct friends will shoot me when I say things like this, but I think Park was one of the great men of recent Asian history. Now this isn't to say that he didn't have blemishes, warts, even cancers. The man was terribly flawed, but he also had a fixation on being the one who brought Korea into the modern era, and economic development was the key to that and he pursued this with extraordinary vigor for his first two terms in office over eight years. I think he has never been given adequate credit for that. The American press always portrayed him as an autocratic little monster of some kind that stifled all Christian and democratic elements unmercifully and was cruel and supported cruelty, etc. And to a certain extent some of those charges are reasonably accurate. The point with Park was that he also had this burning intent to take Korea where he thought it should go and he had the conviction that he and he alone was the one who could do it. And you know, he may very well have been right.

He had a feeling for economics but he also knew that he didn't have himself much economic knowledge. He had no training in economics. But we had an AID director in the Embassy who was a fine economist in his own right and he had a weekly appointment with Park -- this was in 1965-67 period -- for an hour or two and he would sit there and Park would tell him: "I am going down to such and such place next week for such and such a project. Now let's go over where this fits into the scheme of things. When I get there what shall I say? What questions will they ask me? Then what should I say? And then what questions will they ask me?" He tried to go beyond what he should say. What are they likely to be discontented with? What do your people say -- is it really worthwhile? What are its deficiencies? What are its strong points?

He went into these things and when he went down to one of these places, people were absolutely flabbergasted. He also spent a lot of time in the economic planning agency building next door to the Embassy. You could always tell when Park was there because his security was all over the place. But he was in that building and going down to section chiefs and asking them why they were screwing up a project somewhere off in the boonies. The guy was startled to have the President come in and tell him more than he knew about his own project. He was remorseless in pursuing this kind of thing. He put in an enormous amount of energy into it. Joe Bernstein, the AID director, said I could sit there and tell Park that he was stupid, that this was a dumb thing to

do, that he didn't know his foot from his elbow about this and he had better wise up and do something else, but I had the strong feeling, and this may be true of any Korean, if I had ever said "you have no right to rule this country," -- diplomatic immunity or not -- I would be in jail before the hour was out.

Park was a stimulant to everybody around him. He was politically -- a very nasty, difficult man to deal with. But he thought, incidentally, that his opposition, and he had evidence to prove this, was just as nasty in its way, particularly to him, as he was to them. One of the stories on Park was that he had planned the coup in the immediate aftermath of the Rhee government, but that he had seen this democratic regime under John M. Chang come in and had withheld moving because he thought maybe he wouldn't be well received.

I only go on hearsay about that, but all the Koreans I talked to in later years about the John Chang government said that in terms of democracy it was delightful. Here we had an elected government with opposition, people who had been opposed to Rhee and put down by him for years and years who finally had their chance at power. They were good people, some of the finest in Korea. Unfortunately, the government turned out not to have any kind of a program, no idea of where it was going and it started going in sixteen directions at once. It also proved to be enormously corrupt. That these guys that got into office, everybody all the way down the line, was going to get his while the getting was good. It was terribly corrupt, getting worse by the day when after a year in office Park decided the time had come for him to make his move. He got the Korean military to support him without the support of the UN Command, which was supposed to be in control of the ROK military, of course. It was the first of several episodes of that nature. To a certain extent we got blamed for Park's succeeding because we should have denied him the use of Korean forces, but, of course, one could not have denied him the use of Korean forces. They followed him and they supported him.

Anyway, there was a period of junta rule, but he had promised when he came in to have another democratic election for a government and a new constitution. It proved very difficult, he thought, to keep that promise and besides the junta despite some corruption allegations and difficulties, was doing all right. It took a very strong arm move on the part of the United States. I think Habib and Ambassador Berger were largely responsible personally for having US aid suspended until Park followed through on his promise to hold the first elections, in which he then became a candidate. Habib, incidentally, was under the illusion, I thought it was an illusion, that he was well beloved and esteemed by the Koreans for his part in this activity -- for forcing the Koreans to adopt the democratic form of government after the military takeover. He was probably correct in this with regard to most Koreans. He was not correct in this from my observations in respect to Park, himself. Phil could never understand that in later years, and he used to become very irritated at his lack of accessibility to Park, himself. When he took up golf, for example, Park would play golf with the UN Commander but never play golf with Phil. Phil had no close relationship with Park, although he thought he had Park's friendship and admiration, etc. As a matter of fact, Phil was sent down as deputy ambassador to Vietnam and he sent a message out asking for a statement of support of some sort from the Park government to the Vietnamese government, which he didn't get.

Anyway, Park resented, I think, very much what to him was an humiliation -- this act of force on

the part of the United States was contrary to his public position and he had to swallow it. Of course, he got himself elected three times afterwards. He then took office as the President and proved to be a pretty adept maneuverer. When I got there in 1965, which was two years after he had been elected President, he was following a divide and rule sort of strategy among his own supporters. The opposition didn't amount to much. They made noises and got some attention in the international press, but domestically they basically were not particularly effective. Within his own party he had a number of factions within the so-called Democratic Republican Party, which wasn't democratic and not necessarily republican and not really much of a party. He had basically to contend with the ambitions of his nephew -- by marriage -- who was the organizational genius within his group as opposed to the varying ambitions of a fairly wide group of other Korean political figures and ex-military leaders, etc., who formed a kind of loose faction to oppose his nephew. Park played these two elements for many years quite skillfully. But on the other side you had people like the bag man for the party and Kim Jae Kyu who was a political operator who was primarily remembered for being director of the ROK CIA during most of this period. And Chung Il Kwan, who had been everything in Korea except President -- Chief of Staff of the army during the Korean War, President of the Assembly, Prime Minister which was an appointed office. These people and their supporters were played off by Park against other leaders and their supporters, and he did it very, very skillfully for a number of years.

As a matter of fact, during the entire time I was there from 1965-68 this was sort of the way it went. The faction leaders and their organizations competed among each other for Park's favor, which is one of the reasons why the 1967 re-election went absolutely smoothly. The United Nations had a supervisory commission there at the time and they certified that the 1967 election was free and fair and all that sort of nonsense. And it was probably an accurate reflection of the way the country felt, but there were certainly excesses in it and most of these were not by Park, himself, saying that he wanted this or that done, but by people who directed such organizations as the KCIA. The union leaders all wanted presidential favors. Teachers' unions were particularly effective in this regard. Or people who were running the party, they wanted to turn out large votes in their areas. The Koreans were very good at corrupting elections. They used every device that had ever been heard of. There are more drunk elderly women on election day afternoon than you could shake a stick at. In other words, everybody was competing very earnestly for Park's favor. I don't think he ordered any of the excesses, except that he did say that he wanted two opposition politicians beaten. He wanted Kim Dae Jung beaten, who was then a very young, up and coming politician in the opposition's camp, and he wanted the present president, Kim Young Sam beaten. They were kind of vying to be the leading young Turk of the time. But, Park was farsighted enough to say that these guys are "my" trouble in the future and I wanted them beaten.

Kim Young Sam was from Pusan, as I recall, and Kim Dae Jung was from Mokpo. I went to Mokpo to see what was going on down there because all the forces that I have enumerated that were active in Mokpo were really active on Park's behalf. They were running demonstrations, using intimidation, bought votes, drunk votes, etc. Don't ever underestimate Kim Dae Jung if he still has a political future in Korea, which he may not. But don't underestimate him as a force to counter this kind of force. It was my observation in Mokpo at the time that Kim Dae Jung matched Park thug for thug and rock for rock and wane for wane and pitch battler for pitch battler. And with the aid of the fishing and some other unions in that area which Park could not

control, Kim Dae Jung beat him and it was serious. Park had made his Minister of Construction - one of the most lucrative jobs of all in the Korean government and the only guy from Mokpo ever to hold such a place -- resign and ordered to run as a home boy against Kim Dae Jung. And even with that, Kim Dae Jung beat him. Kim Young Sam, of course, had not very much trouble down in his stronghold of Pusan and beat Park in that election, too.

I went around to many, many rallies that were held by the various parties and they were very impressive things in Korea when you get a mob of 30, 40, 50 thousand people in an amphitheater or somewhere and inflated speakers, etc. It struck me that Park was a very poor campaigner because in contrast to the opposition's method of coming in and speaking more or less informally, but without much fanfare, very little ceremony to these people, if you went to a DRP rally that the President was going to speak at, you would get this crowd made to be orderly in the first place by security personnel and then in would come this motorcade of motorcycles and cars with flags flying off the fenders and that sort of thing. The President would get out and would not look right, left or down the middle. He would get out of the car and march up to what was always sort of a throne raised on the dais and he would sit there very coldly not making eye contact, not communicating with anybody. When the time came, he would get down and deliver a very poor speech. By that time the crowd started to melt away. They were probably paid to come and by that time they felt they had done their duty and he started losing his audiences time after time. Nonetheless, he did win the election and I think in all fairness that it was probably for the best because the opposition seemed incompetent to me. We were reporting events; we were not interfering in the political process.

The CIA station chief during the greater part of this time ran a pretty tightly closed station. But, I think Win Brown had him under quite good control. We had some other people working in the Political Section under State cover. I never heard much of anything from them. But we were not controlling the ROK CIA which was a very, very powerful element in Korea. The station chief had a very close relationship to the ROK CIA and they were closely tied in. They also had various assets -- informants or sources -- here and there and you were never really sure whether you were dealing with an asset or not because they were not declared to the Embassy. In other words they were doing their job in a politically sensitive area and they were doing it reasonably well; they did not have the capacity to direct very much of anything. They had the capacity to get information, but I do not believe they had the capacity to control. If they had, we might have had less trouble with some of the incidents that happened during this period. And, after all, their contacts were very close to the ROK CIA people and they had to be for a good reason because our interests, of course, were the activities of the North and that was a matter of desperate interest to the Koreans as well as to us and our whole partnership evolved around the security relationship. We were there to help defend the Republic of Korea, not to dictate its politics. And, I think, by and large, Americans would have been pretty well satisfied and there was no political reason at the time to oppose Park. After all, if Lyndon Johnson had been asked to comment on it he would have said that they were the only people supporting him in Vietnam. Others were doing tokens and getting a lot of money out of it, but the Koreans had troops there.

I want to touch briefly on the 1967 election again because I think that something happened then that the world has overlooked that caused Park to forget any thoughts that he might have had about stepping down at the end of his second term, as the constitution which he had put in

required him to do and to continue to rule until he eventually got himself assassinated for essentially having hung around too long. But during the inauguration ceremony following his election in 1967, he had invited a large number of foreign guests to witness this great moment. They chose to hold the ceremony outside in the National Capitol grounds and assembled the various dignitaries, including the Prime Minister of Japan and the Vice President of the United States and equivalent dignitaries from many other countries. This was a great moment for Park, who incidentally was extremely sensitive to his international reputation and his international relations. He hungered to be acknowledged as the dynamic leader that he was, in my opinion. There are all kinds of stories on that score. But, this particular ceremony they held out-doors, I think it was June, a very nice day and two blocks from the Capitol grounds was the headquarters of the opposition party. As soon as the ceremony started, the opposition party that had surrounded its headquarters with a group of trusted young men began to broadcast speeches and music and loud noise from the army of loudspeakers that they had placed on the roof of their headquarters. They made so much noise that you could scarcely hear what was going on at the ceremony itself. And they kept it up until the police finally got mobilized and moved in forcibly and forced them to stop, by which time the ceremony in the main plaza was virtually ruined. They even made noise over some of Park's remarks during his speech.

He took this as a bitter, bitter humiliation and in front of the world. He was never going to be friendly, I think, to the opposition after that. It was an insult of the kind that I don't think we can really appreciate. But it cut him right to his bone. Also, the fact, of course, that the opposition boycotted the National Assembly, even those opposition members who had been elected refused to attend the Assembly. The opposition for weeks and months agitated for a new election claiming the previous one was fraudulent. They refused to go back and suspended government operation for a long, long time. This did not exactly affirm Park's belief in the virtues of democracy. Now, here is a man who is willing, I think, up to this point to make a lot of concessions, but this experience turned him cold. But you could not expect Park to be a democrat because here is a guy who is born into an occupied country. He went to Japanese schools. He became a teacher in the Japanese school system. A pure Korean of this period. You think about what this meant, you subjected yourself to that fearsome discipline of a school system that is trying to alter the culture of a whole nation, and you are part of that nation. Then he went to Japanese military school, the Manchurian West Point. He got himself a commission in the Japanese army. This isn't going to make a democrat out of him either. Plus the fact that he is born a Confucian to start with. He is a rural Korean, not a sophisticated city guy, and his life work up until that time, after World War II, had been in the Korean army. And here is a guy who served, fought and existed all of his life in intensely hierarchical situations and all of a sudden the world expects that he is going to pay a great deal more than lip service to the principles of democracy. Well, it didn't work that way. He was willing to make concessions, but you could not challenge his right to rule -- that was political heresy and that was cause for slapping you in jail or doing something worse to you.

When you add to that the fact that he had the threat from the North to play upon as a justification for all of his political discipline, as he might wish to call it, then you have a situation where if you raise your head above the crowd and start criticizing him politically, you are going to get hammered. And many Koreans did. I don't think that this damaged the essential virtue of the man which is that he made Korea a semi-advanced nation. When I first came there in 1945, it was the

middle ages and in 1965 it was somewhat better. When I came back and left in 1976, Korea was virtually a modern nation. They were making wooden boats in 1945 and from 250 to 300 thousand ton tankers in 1976. This took some doing and President Park is responsible, I think, for a very, very great part of the success.

I could talk about Korea for days. By all odds it is the most interesting post I ever served in by a long shot.

The Koreans were organized chicanery. In some respects the Koreans take a backseat to nobody, and that is what happened to a certain extent in Vietnam. I can remember in 1945 when we had a terrible winter (winter of 1945-46) when blankets and winter clothing was not supplied. We had no appropriate housing and it was a very, very cold winter. So, the army was going to be prepared for the next one. In the summer of 1946 they shipped in all kinds of winter equipment and put them in great warehouses down in Inchon and put guards around them, fences, lights and dogs, etc. When they went to open one of them in September or October, they found that the Koreans had tunneled under the highway from a location a couple hundred yards off the highway, up into the floor under the warehouse and sucked it dry. There were a lot of strangely dyed blankets in circulation in Korea along with Eisenhower jackets and god knows what. The Koreans developed that kind of reputation in Vietnam, I think, too, and deservedly so. They were known as the great PX raiders.

When I got to Korea in August, 1965 as Political Counselor at the Embassy, they had just passed the bill authorizing the despatch of troops to Vietnam. Johnson wanted foreign troops in Vietnam. He wanted a lot of them. Americans were getting killed and it didn't look like the world was supporting us too well; so he was doing his damndest to persuade other countries to send troops. The Koreans had already sent a regiment of marines. They were already there and there was also a headquarters unit and a supply unit of some sort. The legislation authorizing further troops, division strength, etc., was just passed and the Koreans were responding by sending the first full infantry division to Vietnam.

Now, people got very cynical about the Korean contribution. When that division went down there they were largely composed of volunteers who by and large went to Vietnam because most Koreans honestly, deeply felt they had a debt to pay. They were a poor, poor country and the only way that they could do it was to respond to America's call for help. The United States had helped them during the Korean War and ever since, and by God here was an opportunity to repay that debt.

I will never forget sitting in on a conversation between Ambassador Brown and General Che, who was the first commander of the Tiger Division just before it went down to Vietnam. Che and his people came down to speak to Brown -- to say their farewells, to pay their respects to the United States as they went to help the United States. He and senior members of his staff came -- there must have been about eight of them, wearing sidearms, camouflage fatigues and a tougher bunch of human beings I had never seen. I remember Ambassador Brown asking General Che what it was that he intended to do in Vietnam. General Che, through his interpreter, said, "You must remember, Ambassador Brown, I am a North Korean. My family was decimated during the Korean War. They [communists] killed my family, all of them." One way and another during the

war he lost his brothers and sisters. "You ask me what I am going to do in Vietnam? I am going to kill communists." And this statement had a ring of sincerity to it. As a matter of fact, the Tiger Division was quite effective. They kept an area very quiet up in the Second Corps.

Later, of course, we issued another call and the Whitehorse Division was sent down. The Koreans got compensated, of course, for sending divisions to Vietnam. We gave them some additional military aid because it was felt that we had to make some gestures and we were weakening their position in Korea by sending some of the finest forces they had and they deserved some compensation. Of course, the question of direct compensation to those who went was negotiated. The United States was going to pay the pay of the troops that went to Vietnam and there was a lot of talk in Congress about our hiring mercenaries with the usual smear that goes along with that. I always thought that was misplaced and gratuitous because we are talking about increasing the pay of a guy who got a dollar a month to something 20 times that. Percentage wise that is a hell of a pay increase, but basically it wasn't much to us. They got some death benefits and that kind of thing. They also insisted on getting the same food rations that our troops in the field got. The Koreans got on their high horse and said they were not going to be second class citizens and were going to get the same food that the US soldiers got. That took a lot of negotiating but we finally agreed. They did a study later of the effect of this on the average Korean soldier. They said that the average Korean soldier in Vietnam gained something like 6-8 pounds the first month he was there and then all of a sudden the weight dropped off -- large amounts of US field rations were being thrown away. They didn't like the food. This was when AID was moved to try to develop some kind of preservable form of kimchi because that was what they were hungry for. AID put a fair amount of money into this and actually did produce kimchi that was not good but satisfactory for the purpose.

The point is, the first troops that went, I think went out with a sincere sense of being there to repay an obligation and the satisfaction that came with that. They took great pride as a nation; it was palpable -- they were helping as others had helped them. I don't recall at what stage, however, that Korean tactics in Vietnam became difficult for us. They were vicious. Korean troops did kill communists and apparently killed just about anybody who they suspected of harboring communists. By the time the Whitehorse Division went down there were so many Korean troops there that serious thought was given to giving them an entire sector to administer and to police. They were policing very effectively taking many fewer casualties than we did. They were much more ruthless with the Vietnamese who sheltered the Viet Cong and that sort of thing than we were. But it reached a point where this kind of campaigning caused the United States government to ask that we approach officially the Korean government in Seoul to stop using the kind of tactics that they were using which was causing so much havoc among the civilian population -- killing so many innocent people. Korea probably in the early days of their forces down there had a number of My Lais. The Koreans were probably guilty of a number of those.

I was with Ambassador Brown when we went to Chung Il Kwan, who was then Prime Minister, and officially presented this request. Chung read us a lecture in response to this in which he said in effect, "You Americans don't understand Asian communists. We understand Asian communists. You must recall that during the Korean War there was a communist uprising down in the Cholla provinces in the southern part of Korea. I was chief of staff of the ROK army at the

time. I left that position to organize the countermovement because we regarded it critical to organize against this communist uprising. Our patrols went into villages looking for communist sympathizers and if they drew fire, we eliminated that village. We burnt it and killed everybody there. You know, it didn't take us all that long. We didn't get the firing from villages nearby. They weren't harboring communists, they drove them out. They didn't love us. We didn't win their hearts and souls, but we won their minds. And that is the way we handled that situation and that is what we are doing in Vietnam. You Americans have great sympathy and sensitivity for human life and you want to discover only the confirmed VC and you want to kill him. I would challenge you as to which is the more effective method. We will kill a lot of innocent people. In the end you are going to fight a much longer war and it will be much more difficult for you. You are going to spend much more treasure and in the end I will wager you will have killed many, many more innocent people than our kind of system. But, of course, we will restudy our tactics and request our troops to be less forceful." And they did, I guess.

Anyway, the Koreans turned largely into "let's get out of it what we canners." Let's keep it reasonably quiet in our areas and we won't be as aggressive." Besides, they were beginning to get body bags too and the political reaction was beginning to set in. The wave of enthusiasm for the first effort was waning. When the second division went down there, of course, we had to make many, many more concessions in terms of additional aid and that sort of thing and there were much more difficult negotiations. As a matter of fact, to Ambassador Brown's credit, somewhere in 1968, there came a telegram from the Department asking our reaction to the idea of asking them for yet a third division. Brown was on leave in Hong Kong at the time this telegram arrived and we fed it to him. His telegram back to the Department, which the Embassy did not participate in, started out "Will it never end." He seriously discouraged the idea of asking this structure to take anymore burden than it already had, particularly as nobody else was doing much of anything. The Philippines had an engineer battalion and a medical unit. Brown seriously discouraged us from asking for any more.

Of course, there were a number of kind of amusing things that happened because of a result of this. The Koreans also at this time began profiting economically because the money that the guys down there were making and sending home made a significant difference in the cash flow situation. They also began to send down a lot of people, individuals first and then companies later, to do engineering and other construction contract work. Civic action was the buzz word. They worked on bases. First they worked for American firms and then their own firms began to get into the act. So it became a very lucrative source of money for Korea and it was being reflected in the life back home.

There is the story about Park visiting the front lines in Korea about this time. He was up along the eastern part of the DMZ and he talked to some sergeant in a Korean outfit up there and asked what he thought of his life, what were his problems, etc. The sergeant said that the major difficulty was getting his children educated. "We would like to bring our children here to live near the DMZ if we can, but the children who do come up here, and the wives, too, are outcasts. They come from another province, they don't fit into the life here. The kids go to school and are not accepted by the other children or the teachers. It was very, very difficult. It would be very nice if we could have at least a high school that we could send our kids to and keep the families intact." Park turned to the Minister of Defense and said, "Build them a school complex." The

Minister of Defense stuttered and said, "But Mr. President, there is no budget for a school complex." Park said, "Did you hear me? Build them a school complex." So the Minister of Defense being the adroit Korean that he was, went back to his office and figured out a way to build them a school complex without a budget. He knew that his divisions in Vietnam had artillery and were firing and using up quite a bit of 105 ammunition. This ammunition came with brass cartridge cases so there was a fairly substantial amount of brass. Korea has a very fine brass industry. Pretty soon Koreans artillery started turning in its brass. We had given the Koreans two LSTs -- Landing ship tanks -- They put the brass from Vietnam on the LST and stopping off shore, unloading it onto smaller boats, sending it home, all under military control, and selling brass and taking the money they created and building a school with it. We found out about this story shortly before the buildings were finished. For one reason or another we chose not to blow the whistle on them until the schools were finished. However, shortly thereafter cast iron replaced brass in the Korean artillery's stuff in Vietnam.

The Minister of Defense also took his share -- it being a Korean operation -- and Park was driving around Seoul one day and he saw a very handsome house going up. He asked, "Whose residence is that?" The hemming and hawing went on until somebody confessed it was the Minister of Defense's house. Park said something to the effect, "I didn't know he had that kind of money" and called him in the next day. He said, "I saw a house on the other side of the mountain and was told that it was yours. Is that true?" The minister knew better than to say no, and acknowledged that it was. Park said, "Well, you are to report to that house and you are not to leave it until I give you permission to do so." And that was literal. The man did not leave the house for something like five or six years. Obviously he was no longer the Minister of Defense. Park didn't try him and didn't make him make restitution; he just cooped him up in the damn place and left him there in isolation. And nobody, of course, would dare come within miles and miles of him.

That was one of the things about Park; he didn't like corruption. When he found it he did something about it. He was not corrupt himself. When he died there was no evidence that Park had enriched himself mightily in all the time he was President.

Anyway, the Vietnam troop thing was a tremendous experience for the Koreans in many ways. In addition to the fact that they had a sense that they were paying back an obligation, it gave them influence in areas that they had never expected to have influence. I can remember one episode when the President of the Philippines sent a message to the Korean government asking the Korean government to exert its influence on a third Southeast Asian government. General Hwan asked Ambassador Brown, George Newman and me, "What do we do?" They didn't expect that they would be looked upon by others as a source of influence. Vietnam really was a catalyst. It put Korean overseas construction firms into the thing and it started the country as an international power. That was very much the picture in the 1970s when the construction firms went into the Middle East. They made a lot of money and they became a force to be reckoned with in a lot of business ways in addition to being recognized as a pretty strong military force.

During my tour in Seoul, I did visit Vietnam after it seemed quite likely that the Koreans were not going to be contributing anymore troops and American policy shifted to a certain extent from getting more third country troop involvement to trying to see what could be done about the

infrastructure in Vietnam by means of more foreign civilians, particularly Asian participation. Somebody in the administration got the bright idea that there was a major role for discharged Korean veterans to play in Vietnam. They had proven themselves as capable soldiers and they knew how to operate the machinery of war, and much of that is also machinery of peace. We were asked to form a team to go to Vietnam to examine what the prospects were for increased Korean civilian presence down there on an organized basis -- not just those who individually were going down to work for specific companies, to work on the infrastructure.

I was named to head the team and we had a colonel from the United Nations command and two AID officers. The four of us went down in January 1967 and were received, I think, quite warmly by headquarters. Lodge was the ambassador and Phil Habib was there and became my principal point of contact. The idea in part was to give the Koreans a province where they could both maintain security with military forces and do all of the civilian infrastructure work that had to be done. Tay Ninh was the province that was under consideration; so, of course, we flew up there and took a look around. We also went to Plai Kuo and visited the Filipino contingent down there. We visited the Korean military headquarters. And we talked to various officials in and around Saigon, both Vietnamese and American, and then we sat down and wrote our recommendation.

One of the striking things that happened, of course, was when at a meeting up at Tai Ninh one of the AID officials broke down and cried, literally, at the conference table at the prospect of turning the lovely Vietnamese over to these very difficult Koreans. The station chief then in Saigon had a bright idea. He asked me what the prospects were for a program which would bring permanent settlers from Korea. What this plan was concerned with was the prospect of getting Koreans down there to build roads, schools and bridges, dams, or whatever was needed to be done to strengthen the civilian components. Teach them agricultural methods, and all that sort of thing. What the station chief had in mind was bringing discharged Korean veterans down and putting them in the Mekong Delta and establishing them on farms, having them marry local Vietnamese women with the idea for the long run that you would stiffen the spines of the Vietnamese by this infusion of good northern Asian blood. He was quite impassioned with the idea.

Anyway, we sat down after we had done all of our in-country work and sent a telegram back from Washington from Saigon. It ran some 13 pages and the fundamentals of it were, "No, no, no, no, no, and no." It simply did not seem to us that Vietnam was the kind of place where you wanted these cultures to clash the way they would without a third culture overseeing them. We thought there were enough Koreans contributing enough in terms of the growing Korean civilian presence down there with the construction firms, etc. The scheme was fraught with so many problems for the future and the immediate presence, in terms of acceptance by the local population and all the rest of it that we recommended strongly against it. In any event, it was the last that was heard of this scheme.

It was rather interesting of course, while we were there we saw a rolling thunder -- B-52 -- raid, or rather we heard one. And we saw from helicopters some fire fights on the ground. And Saigon, of course, was a fascinating city to be in at that time in terms of security and the rest of it, but we did not see a major role for our Korean friends in a civilian capacity.

The Vietnamese were very wary of having more foreigners living in their country which was one of the reasons our decision was negative. We thought it would be extraordinarily difficult for the Koreans to gain acceptance in that community. It would be different than being there under military status where they were there under orders and command and were fighting. But to come down there and work side by side with the Vietnamese was a different situation. It didn't look like the Vietnamese wanted them intruding. The Vietnamese had, I think, good grounds to fear that the Koreans, being very strong people, would siphon off whatever benefits there were to their detriment. The Vietnamese obviously did not trust the Koreans greatly and, of course, by that time the Koreans had pulled in their horns to a certain extent in terms of the way they were conducting their battlefield operations and turned instead into PX raiders, which I gather they were better at than the Filipinos. The Filipinos held the world record up to then.

If anyone had studied what went on in Korea before they looked at the situation in Vietnam, they would have realized this is the way the Koreans would have operated because all through both of my tours in Korea, and I assume every period before and since then, one of the major problems for the American military in Korea was this siphoning off -- the black marketing of American goods. And when a soldier came to Korea he had an opportunity to right away acquire a wife, a yobo, and she, of course, was a member of an organized gang that used their PX and Commissary privileges to the maximum and the goods usually went directly off base to a waiting taxi outside and disappeared forever. The soldier made a little extra money, the woman made a little extra money and the gang made a lot of extra money. There were fights in the aisles of the Commissary over the last box of something. If there was anything good coming into the PX why the Korean wives were waiting at the door and went right to the counter. It was a very well organized operation.

As a matter of fact, at one point General Stilwell put in a policy which said on certain days of the week access to the PX and commissary were restricted -- two days a week for one category and four days of the week for the other with one day a holiday. The two categories were dependents who had made a change of station move with their principal versus those who had not made a change of station move with their principal. Of course, this avoided the outright discrimination against Korean women but most of them obviously had not made a permanent change of station, whereas the American wives obviously had. The problem was you came up against those soldiers who did marry overseas in Korea, who both were from the United States and the wife then found herself in the Commissary with the combatants, and they didn't like it very well. And, of course, there were other complaints about it so it was suspended. But, they tried all kinds of goodies like that.

The Koreans in Vietnam got their full share, which meant a lot of people didn't. They were organized and went into it on a highly systematic basis and there were a lot of complaints from Americans and others. The Thai did that in Korea, however, the little Thai contingent in the UN command.

Let me make a few comments on the American missionaries in the 1965-68 period, as I look back on it. First of all, Christianity in Korea is a very interesting thing and worthy of many, many books. The Japanese, during their period of occupation, had never hounded the religious

organizations the way they did everything else. They hadn't tried to take them over, so belonging to a Christian congregation was one way dissidents could get together and communicate with one another. They found it very difficult in other ways, but particularly up in the northern part, the Christian organizations, run by missionaries, of course, became political organizations too. Not that that was their main thing in life, their main thing in life was obviously religion, but they also provided this opportunity for at least political communication if not activity. It was kind of a tradition by the time the Japanese occupation ended and Korea got its independence. But many, many, many of the Koreans who came from the north were Christians. The American Christian missionary movement in Korea has been a long, long standing thing so that when political difficulties arose during the Park regime -- I don't know how it was under Syngman Rhee -- but under Park's regime the Christian community in many ways was one of the focal points of it. And, of course, many of these Christian communities were headed by American missionaries.

During the period of 1965-68 when I was there, the Christian missionaries supported or were certainly sympathetic to the activities of the political dissidents in Korea who opposed Park, his methods and his regime and thought the elections were fraudulent, etc. They were not, however, active. They would petition the Embassy to do certain things, which the Embassy and the United States government were in no position to do. If Park arrested somebody who was a good upstanding member of the Christian community, the missionaries would be heard from. They would generally come in a group to petition. Ambassador Brown always handled them extremely well, I might add. Bill Porter was probably a little shorter with them, but Brown was courteous and gave them their full hearing and let them leave feeling relatively satisfied. He was a master at that kind of thing. There really wasn't much the Embassy could do or should have done, I thought. In that period the American Christians were not as active vis-a-vis Korea as they were in my second tour, for example. For a while the missionaries of that time were being heard from and we saw a lot of them and we listened to them. We tried to point out the position of the United States did not permit, as it would not in any country, direct interference in domestic politics.

Then we said we would talk to senior Koreans about policies and actions that got the missionaries agitated. The missionaries did not get to the point where they felt they had to take part personally, it seemed, on what was going on politically. The ones we saw most frequently were the Protestant missionaries, not the Catholics. Certainly it was fair to say the missionaries were sympathetic and supportive of anti-Park political activity.

Incidentally the missionaries in Korea ought to be given credit at some point for having done a really marvelous job in Korea in terms of not only religious proselyting but also in terms of education and medical advances. During the Japanese occupation in particular, the only non-Japanese education that was available to Koreans was through the aegis of the missionaries. Several of the greatest universities in Korea were established by missionaries. By and large their reputation in Korea was very, very high. Of course they were sympathetic to the Koreans vis-a-vis the Japanese.

They suffered at the hands of the North Koreans. There certainly are none left in North Korea.

I viewed CIA as perhaps a necessary evil. We had two station chiefs during that period while I

was there. One deputy who stayed there all of that time and various case officers known and unknown. They were identified to the Korean Government. And that caused some problems because it tended to identify them with the Korean CIA. One of their purposes was certainly gaining intelligence on what was happening in North Korea. The other, of course, which was not done in cooperation with the KCIA, was keeping tabs from their own point of view on South Korean political activities. Anyone who was identified with the KCIA, of course, which was the enforcement arm of the Park regime at the time, had some of that onus wash off on him. So, you couldn't say you admired everything the CIA was doing at the time, but it was doing what had to be done.

When Park took over, Kim, his nephew by marriage and right hand man, organized the KCIA and one of its purposes was to maintain the regime in power. He also organized the DRP that was the overt political arm of Park's regime. The two functioned together very effectively. The 1967 election went totally awry because agencies like those two -- KCIA and DRP -- plus the unions, plus the various ministries of the government plus everything else wanted to please the President by handing him a big victory and went to some major excesses. I think the ROK CIA was responsible for a great deal of that.

Also, of course, were the stories from time to time of what the methods the ROK CIA used in handling political prisoners of one kind or another. They were not very pleasant. So, if your CIA is declared and identified with them, you would expect them to keep these excesses down and you get unhappy when they can't or don't. Anyway, I do think, that they were quite effective. One of the difficulties was that you weren't always aware of who they were dealing with on the internal political side. Which is to say if you were talking to an opposition politician you almost had to assume that he was an asset and we didn't always know who the assets were. But in that sense I think they kept a pretty effective tab on them.

I might add that I was not terribly fond of the two directors. Joe Lazarski was a good egg but not terribly effective.

Let me now turn to a couple of specific events that occurred in the 1965-68 period. The Blue House raid was the culmination of a series of very nasty incidents along the DMZ throughout the 1965-68 period. We thought that the North Koreans probably were stirring things up along the border to give us something to worry about in addition to Vietnam. There was never any evidence of concert between the North Vietnamese and the North Korean regimes, but it seemed peculiar that there was this long series of incidents along the DMZ, which worried us because President Park was so unpredictable. He had a phobia with respect to assassination. The North Koreans had good reason to hate Park, really despise him personally, beyond what they might feel about any South Korean leader. The North Koreans used to drop leaflets accusing Park of all kinds of things. They were all over the golf course, all over open areas under US control -- but picked up quickly in Seoul itself. They might have been brought down by balloons but chances are somebody much closer at hand, was distributing them. Witness the fact that I found a couple under the doormat of my house. Basically they accused Park of having been the source of information back in the 1940s which resulted in the rounding up the Korean Labor Party by Snake Kim, the notorious chief of Syngman Rhee's CIC. This story may well have some truth in it, although you will never find any records to bear this out. The North Koreans claimed that

Park had been arrested by the Rhee Government because the battalion he commanded during the communist-led Yosu rebellion in the later 1940's had defected to the rebels, but secured his reinstatement in the army by divulging all he knew about the communist party in South Korea, of which he had allegedly once been a member and of which his brother was allegedly a senior official. This, of course made him a marked man -- an arch enemy of the government in the North. Thereafter, he had a very good career in the army and rose to be a Major-General without much contact with the Americans. We didn't know him when he came to power. But he brought with him an abiding fear that the North Koreans were going to kill him at some point. And, indeed, there were a fairly large number of attempts, none of which came terribly close but were well enough known to him and his security people to keep this morbid fear alive. And it was not from his own people; he never feared assassination from any South Korean, he thought it would come from the North.

Anyway, these events along the DMZ included things such as this example. There was a mixed group of Korean and American engineers in the base camp just south of Panmunjom, where they were working on a project of some sort. The camp was close to the southern border of the DMZ and pretty well defended, but the perimeter wasn't patrolled. There were only trip flares out there. This engineer group was lining up for dinner one Sunday evening when a trip flare went off. Nobody went out to investigate because they thought it had been set off by a deer or something like that, which happened fairly frequently. So they stayed in the mess line and the North Koreans, who had come through the DMZ to a hill on its southernmost edge, hosed them down with a machine gun. Being caught unprepared, the engineers suffered a large number of casualties, both Americans and Koreans. The incident was not reported very broadly in the American press. Something was happening in Vietnam I suppose, and there were no American correspondents in Seoul.

There was another such incident the morning that President Johnson arrived for his visit in 1967. This again was not reported. A friend -- a high school classmate -- who headed the investigative team gave me the details. It seems that the 2nd Division had sent a patrol up into the DMZ in this particular location at scheduled intervals for years. They followed virtually the same route every time. They went along a well known path until they reached an area where there were two hills, one a little higher than the other. The lower hill had a nice stand of grass and it was apparently the habit of these patrols to take a break there. This particular night they put out a lookout, but he was looking out for somebody coming up from their company headquarters and not from the direction North Koreans might take. Anyway, the North Koreans were probably already there, concealed in the thick undergrowth of the higher hill. Six of the seven men of the American patrol were sitting or lying down, smoking cigarettes or just flaking out, when the North Koreans lobbed a series of grenades onto the hill top and killed five of the six. The poor fellow who was on lookout duty opened fire and was also killed for his pains. The only survivor on the hill top feigned death and the North Koreans took his watch and a few other things. The press never reported that one, but North Korean propaganda labelled it a present for President Johnson.

I don't know why the American press did not report this incident because God knows a enough reporters came along with Johnson. But there was a series of things like that. There were boats that came down periodically and landed people well below the DMZ . The South Korean security was very well organized down in the south and they were always chasing infiltrators. They

usually caught them all, although during that period there were networks of North Koreans sympathizers who probably sheltered some of these people from time to time.

Anyway, to the Koreans, the Blue House raid was certainly the most critical event -- and I mean the Blue House raid, I do not mean the Pueblo -- during that 1965-68 period because it came as the culmination of a long series of incidents on Korean territory. People were very tense and Park used this tension to justify many of his repressive measures. As I say, he was very fond of quoting President Lincoln to all the congressmen who came through protesting these measures, both during this period and my later assignment.

Thus the Blue House raid came at a time when there already was a hell of a lot of tension. Park was feeling very unhappy about a number of things. He was beginning to think, I believe, that his commitment to Vietnam had weakened him too badly. He was starting to agitate for more military aid to Korea. And then we got reports that thirty or more well armed North Koreans had been seen inside the DMZ by a couple of woodcutters. They had been allowed to go back to their village, with a warning that if they told anyone that North Koreans were in the country, the intruders would come back and wipe out the whole damn village. Well, of course, word spread immediately through the South Korean government and it threw up road blocks, mobilized internal security teams, and covered all the routes into Seoul -- but the infiltrators just plain disappeared. For two days they were not heard from. Then about 9:00 pm on January 23 -- a cold , cold night -- a column of men in South Korean uniforms came marching from the North toward a police checkpoint on the road that ran along the south side of Puk-san toward the Blue House. This checkpoint had been established specifically to look out for the infiltrators. The police challenged this column and their leader, who, using remarkably good Korean psychology, told the South Korean policeman to button his damn lip. He said that his men were ROK CIC returning to the barracks following a search mission. He sneeringly told the police that they should know better than to muck around with the CIC. And, of course, the police backed off.

But one of the guys in the police block was a little annoyed by this. He felt it was embarrassing to be talked to like that. So radioed his headquarters to complain that they should have been warned that there were CIC in the area. The headquarters came back after a while and said, "There are no CIC in your area." A police lieutenant on duty at the Blue House heard the broadcast and decided to investigate. He got into his jeep and intercepted the column. By this time it was within 800 yards of the Blue House and into a fairly heavily populated area. Seoul in those days was not all that populated to the north; now it is. You couldn't do this thing today. The lieutenant challenged the column and was promptly killed. The North Koreans opened fire on him but in the process they opened fire on everybody else around them, killing and wounding a number of civilians, including passengers on a bus. Then strangely they separated into groups of two or three. They apparently had no dispersal plan, no contingency plans as to what they should do if something happened before they got to the Blue House.

To make a long story short, they split into small groups and the ROKs devoted enormous resources to rounding them up. They captured two almost immediately, I think two more just disappeared and were never heard from, and the rest were all killed in fire fights with ROK security forces. Of the two they captured, one they took to the local police station. Once inside, he managed to detonate a grenade he had concealed on his person, killing himself and about five

senior Korean police officials. They didn't shake him down very well, obviously. But the other one, after severe interrogation, broke down and told all about himself and his unit.

We were not aware that there were units of this kind, but he said there was an organization of at least a thousand people currently undergoing training in North Korea for just such missions. The Korean military had never heard of anything like this, so they asked him where they had trained. He told where the camp was and drew a map of its layout. When the spy plane photographs were developed, the camp was where he said it was and his map was almost an exact overlay of the photos. They asked him whether these units used radio during their training. Yes. Frequencies? He gave them frequencies. The ROKs denied ever having heard anything on these. He suggested they try again, and up they came. So we began to believe this guy. He said that their primary mission was to assassinate President Park. They were supposed to deploy not very far from where they had been intercepted; they were getting pretty close. Their idea was to rush the Blue House, raise hell and kill Park, who was there. He also said that their original mission had been to split into three groups, one of which was to go to the American military headquarters at Yong-san and kill the UN Forces Commander and other senior officers, such as the UN representative to the Armistice Commission. The third group was to come into American Embassy Compound 1 and kill the Ambassador and anybody else they could lay their hands on there.

As I say, we believed him. It so happened that the girls high school right next to the wall of Compound 1 had a very large open play area, but a new building was being constructed right along side the wall, where a lot of construction materials were piled. The wall might as well not have been there. We had armed security guards, but we didn't trust them all that much. So, at that point the Ambassador issued a weapon to each family in Compound 1 and to some residents of Compound 2. And the UN Command designated a platoon of tanks to stand by to go to our rescue should the North Koreans come again. The tank crews were billeted in the Yong-San post gymnasium, thus depriving soldiers and high school kids of their basketball court, and the tanks got lost trying to find the compound on the one attempt they made to hold a dry run of the rescue effort. But the knowledge that they were there was reassuring to some. Of course, the Blue House raid was never duplicated, but the North Koreans had succeeded in making everyone nervous.

Anyway, Park went ape over this incident. It came close. It clearly demonstrated that his phobia on assassination was well grounded and he reacted by doing what he occasionally did in periods of great stress. He went up to the mountains with a couple of friends and a couple of ladies and a large supply of alcohol and disappeared. But we got stories that he was enraged, just beside himself, out of control.

Now, the Koreans looked upon this threat to their President as a major, major event, and we were seriously concerned that out of that mountain retreat of his would come the order to go get them, to cross the DMZ seeking retaliation of some kind. But he was out of touch and there was no way that you could get to him directly. Meanwhile, the ROK security forces were hunting down the infiltrators and finally found all but one. The way they broke the one prisoner, incidentally, was to align all of the bodies on a hillside, 26 or 27 corpses in various states of disrepair, and march their prisoner along the line. This was a man who was still refusing to talk. When his escorts reached the last body, they kicked its head and the head rolled off down the hill. At that

point, they say, this fellow decided that he would be willing to tell all. As far as dealing with the North Koreans was concerned, some ROK generals felt that if they weren't going to declare war, they should at least haul the corpses up to Panmunjom and, after flaying the North Koreans verbally, dump them on the conference table. However, calmer heads eventually prevailed. It was several days after the Blue House raid that the "Pueblo" was seized, and that is where we really got into trouble with the South Koreans. They had no knowledge that the "Pueblo" was there. The "Pueblo" was Noah's Ark rigged with electronic listening gear. I say Noah's Ark because it was what we used to call a Baltic class freighter -- a slow, most inefficient, very small coastal freighter. I forget what its tonnage was. Maybe under a thousand, I can't remember. It was not armed, except for a few small arms. It was a sad excuse for a US Navy vessel. But this particular ship was one of the Navy's electronic intelligence gathering vessels and it had replaced a similar ship called the "Banner" which had been there for quite some time. So the "Pueblo" was fairly new on the job, but it had been patrolling up and down the coast of North Korea, picking up what it could by way of North Korean electronic activity. CINCUNC may have know it was there, I don't know, but the Ambassador was not informed and neither were the South Koreans.

It was approached by North Korean patrol boats off the North Korean port of Wonsan. I think it was pretty clearly in what we considered international waters. It was likewise pretty clearly not in what the North Koreans considered international waters. They were claiming a 12 mile limit at the time and the ship's orders were to stay outside the three mile limit. The North Koreans were certainly aware that it was there and had been for some time. They had tolerated it, probably not wanting to kick up a major fuss. But then when the Blue House raid came along, they took it, killing one seaman and capturing 51. My theory has always been that they had no idea of what it meant to attack and seize an American naval vessel on the high seas -- what it would mean to us. They were fearful that since the Blue House raid had failed to kill Park, he might order some kind of major hostilities and they didn't want a vessel with this kind of capability there. It was something to be gotten out of the way. You have to remember the North Koreans had been taking South Korean boats on the high seas regularly. It was their habit to pick up South Koreans fishing boats, take their crews off, brainwash them and send them back to South Korea. There had probably been 50 to 100 incidents of that kind. I don't think they were fully sensitive to what the taking of a US naval vessel would mean to us.

Anyway, it turned out that it meant a great deal to the US as a nation and to its leaders -- much more than the Blue House raid. One of our major points of difficulty with the South Koreans was that they thought the Blue House raid -- an assassination attempt on their President -- was by all odds the more important event. To them, the "Pueblo" was a sideshow. And back in the United States, Americans from Lyndon Johnson down thought that the "Pueblo" seizure was the heinous crime of the century and the Blue House raid was something few had heard about. That became a real bone of contention between us. Washington reacted violently to the "Pueblo" incident and Johnson ordered the carrier "Enterprise", which had just finished a visit to Sasebo, to come steaming up the east coast of Korea and to station itself off Wonsan. The idea was maybe we were going to take out Wonsan and all its defenses and recapture the ship. Or perhaps it was simply to intimidate the North Koreans into acceding to whatever demands we might make for reparations. All kinds of wild ideas were floated about what our reaction should be. Our main concern in the Embassy was trying to get Washington to focus on the fact that there was a real problem with the South Koreans because of the Blue House raid and the disparity between our

reaction to it and the "Pueblo." We were not concerned as much with the North Koreans, who probably were not interested in a real war at that time, but who would respond certainly if attacked.

That, of course, was what determined the United States to send the "Enterprise" back on its way. Those interested in a cold assessment of the situation rather than histrionics estimated that it would take everything the "Enterprise" had and probably a good deal more to penetrate the air envelope around Wonsan and that we might very well find ourselves facing a full scale war in Korea if we tried to do anything of that kind. My own feeling was that if we had attacked Wonsan it would have encouraged Park to the point where he might just, UN commander or no UN commander, order South Korean forces to go. The man was out of touch with reality during this whole period.

So, we had to figure out how to get the "Pueblo" and its crew back. That is where we got into further difficulty with the South Koreans. The South Koreans, more emotional than rational, were already, many of them, looking at our reaction as pusillanimous. Of course they weren't aware -- although perhaps they should have been aware -- that the forces that we had in Korea -- two divisions, the 2nd and 7th -- were in very bad shape. They had about two-thirds of their complement of troops, the shortfall being made up by KATUSAs (Korea Augmentations to US Army). These were basically Korean soldiers detailed to serve with American units. That was always an iffy situation; they never fit in very well, although some of them did very, very good work and certainly without them we would have been in vastly worse shape.

Incidentally, the Blue House raiders had deliberately come right through the 2nd Division's lines. The captured raider said that they figured they couldn't get through the South Koreans because the South Koreans did their patrolling, kept awake, did not smoke cigarettes on the line, did not huddle together for warmth and all that kind of thing. Whereas, he said, the Americans up along the DMZ smoked -- you could smell their smoke, you could hear them talking, they did huddle together when it got very, very cold and did rely on electronic sensors installed at American -- but not South Korean -- positions. But a lot of these sensors -- anti-personnel radar, seismic detectors, and stuff like that -- had been developed for battle in Vietnam, but unfortunately nobody had made sure they functioned as well when the temperature sank to 20 degrees below zero. And they didn't.

The 2nd Division commander was furious when he heard this North Korean say they came right through his lines. They took him up to the fence -- there was a big chain link fence along the entire front of the 2nd Division's lines -- and the commander said, "Prove it to me." The Korean went up to the fence at the point where he indicated they had penetrated and kicked it, and a large section of the fence fell out. He knew exactly where to go, and this incident certainly enhanced his credibility. Incidentally, they had come down over the hills. During the two days that they were undetected it was way below freezing all day and all night. It was a marvelous feat of endurance -- carrying all their equipment over rough and mountainous terrain in vicious winter weather and getting to Seoul so fast.

How to get the crew of the "Pueblo" back became our main concern but to us in Seoul, placating the South Koreans was as important. And, of course, our tactics in getting the crew back made

the South Koreans even angrier. The Embassy wasn't really consulted very much in this as I recall. The powers-that-be in Washington decided, once it became clear that negotiations with the North Koreans were possible, that they should be held at Panmunjom. We discarded various other possible places. And the North Koreans, with their own objectives in mind, wanted Panmunjom. Washington decided to use the United Nations Command representative to the Military Armistice Commission (at that time a US Navy Rear Admiral) and his American staff and to do it at Panmunjom. Now, Panmunjom has been called a village, but it is not a village and never was a village; it was just an inn. It is now and was then just a full fledged armistice meeting place and it was regarded as neutral territory. It was close to the scene, with good communications for both the North Koreans and us and therefor had a lot to recommend it. The problem was the South Koreans regard it as their territory. The idea was our team would negotiate directly with the North Koreans and no other nation represented in the UN Command would be present. We wouldn't take any of the UN Command members and most specifically we wouldn't take any South Koreans. The North Koreans had the Chinese with them for every meeting from the very beginning.

When word of our intentions reached the South Koreans they erupted. When their initial protests were delivered to Bill Porter, then our Ambassador, he gave them sort of short shrift and this enraged them to the point that they would not talk to him. They said that they would refuse to discuss this matter with Ambassador Porter. Anyway, we were going ahead to do it.

Our strategy was dictated entirely by Washington. At first, it was being called by Lyndon Johnson personally. He was on the telephone a number of times when the "Enterprise" was there. The Department quickly set up an inter-agency crisis team. The South Koreans were absolutely furious and suspicious of what we might do. They anticipated that the North Koreans would try to exploit the situation to the ROK's disadvantage in every way possible, and they were rapidly growing distrustful of us and losing faith in their great ally. Of course, we had this other problem of how to ensure that the ROKs would not retaliate for the Blue House raid and to ease their growing feelings of insecurity. They began to realize that the DMZ was porous and they wanted more equipment and aid. So, we were juggling a number of problems. But once the venue for the negotiations was agreed on with Pyongyang, we had to find solutions for our problems with the South Koreans. Park, by this time, I think, had returned to Seoul.

It was decided that I would be the operating officer in Seoul on the Pueblo negotiations. The official arrangement was that Admiral Smith, who was the UN Military Armistice Commission representative, would be the chief and only negotiator for us. He would take his negotiating team up there, all military personnel except for one Korean-American civilian employee (the invaluable Jimmy Lee) and they would conduct each negotiating session. They would then return directly to the Embassy, where I and some of the political officers would debrief them. We would write the immediate reporting cable covering the highlights of what had happened, and then we would also transcribe and send the verbatim text of the meeting, which had been taped. Then we would review the transcript and concoct an interpretation of what had happened -- what the significant points were, and add whatever comments and recommendations the Embassy might have for what was going on. I am not sure what impact our recommendations ever had. Then, after that had been done, it was my job to inform the ROK Government of what had transpired, because as part of keeping them in place we had agreed to keep them informed of each step along the way. I would have to do this by going up to the Foreign Ministry, usually

around 10 or 11 at night, into that freezing cold, enormous stone building -- the old Japanese capitol which housed the Foreign Ministry, among others. The lights would be out and the elevators not working. I could hear a scurrying sound in the dark corridors of that ghostly building. I would walk up the four floors to the office of Park Kun, who was the director of North American Affairs at the Foreign Ministry at that time and my good golfing buddy. The Korean idea was that only he and I could communicate on this subject because only he and I had a friendship capable of withstanding the strains created by this terrible thing that we were doing. The scurrying, of course, was newspapermen who were hiding around the building and would get a debrief from Park after I talked to him. I would sit down in Park's office and he would read me the riot act. Every time I was told exactly how we were giving the North Koreans the status and propaganda ammunition they craved while trampling on the sensitivities of the South Korean people and undermining their confidence in us and in our alliance. I used to ask Park, "Why don't you just put it on tape and I will take it home with me. Then we can get right down to business and I can go home and go to bed?" But I think his diatribes were delivered under orders so that I would report duly that the South Koreans were still outraged. And then I would tell him more or less what had happened on that day at Panmunjom. In the early months there were frequent meetings at Panmunjom and many sessions of this sort with Pak. From about the first of April until I left in July there wasn't that much to tell the South Koreans because meetings at Panmunjom were less frequent and there wasn't all that much happening. It wasn't until almost Christmas Eve that the "Pueblo" crew was released.

But in the first two months, when we were meeting almost every week, some interesting things emerged . For one, we got a good look at North Korea's negotiating style. People should study the "Pueblo" sessions whenever there are negotiations with the North Koreans, because I think they show how their system functions and why they are so difficult. As one example, we would go up with a proposal of some sort on the release of the crew and they would be sitting there with a card catalogue -- I never went on any of these trips, incidentally -- the military command went. If the answer to the particular proposal we presented wasn't in the cards, they would say something that was totally unresponsive and then go off and come back to the next meeting with an answer that was directed to the question. But there was rarely an immediate answer. That happened all through the negotiations. Their negotiators obviously were never empowered to act or speak on the basis of personal judgment or general instructions. They always had to defer a reply and presumably they went over it up in Pyongyang and passed it around and then decided on it. Sometimes we would get totally nonsensical responses if they didn't have something in the card file that corresponded to the proposal at hand.

George Newman, who was then DCM in Seoul, and I were quite proud of the telegram we wrote sometime in fairly early February, just before Washington finally decided to negotiate at Panmunjom. We called it the slippery slope telegram and it is somewhere deep in the Department's archives. We based it on our analysis of what had happened in previous incidents, not like the "Pueblo" but the two or three incidents we had had of people who strayed across the border or got shot down, killed or captured. What we said in effect was this: "If you are going to do this thing at Panmunjom, and if your sole objective is to get the crew back, you will be playing into North Korea's hands and the negotiations will follow a clear and inevitable path. You are going to be asked to sign a document that the North Koreans will have drafted. They will brook no changes. It will set forth their point of view and require you to confess to

everything they accuse you of. If you allow them to, they will take as much time as they feel they need to squeeze every damn thing they can get out of this situation in terms of their propaganda goals, and they will try to exploit this situation to drive a wedge between the US and the ROK. Then when they feel they have accomplished all they can, and when we have agreed to sign their document of confession and apology, they will return the crew. They will not return the ship. This is the way it is going to be because this is the way it has always been." And that is pretty much what happened. We went back and forth, back and forth, for ten or eleven months. We very quickly abandoned the idea of getting the ship back. We figured it had been dismantled and all its sensitive equipment sent to Moscow. We thought they might eventually tire of holding the crew, because the propaganda value of holding the crew would erode with time and they might be leery of having the situation turn against them if the crew started to become ill and their care began to appear inadequate, as eventually it would. Of course, there were all these incidents of the crew being interviewed and sending messages by signs, etc. The crew held up pretty well I think, except for perhaps one or two members.

On our side, the chief negotiator proved to be something of a problem. Rear Admiral Smith was too much his father's son and too much of a Navy man. It galled him beyond description to think that a US naval vessel had been taken by a gunboat on the high seas. There was a lot of talk at the time that the ship should have been scuttled, the captain should have gone down with his ship -- if anybody wanted to go down into the waters of the Japan Sea at that point, he was a braver man than I. After the crew was released, the Navy held an extensive inquiry into the capture and, I believe, exonerated Captain Bucher of responsibility for allowing the ship to be taken. Anyway, the Navy was very unhappy the way things went. And Smith, in particular, was very disturbed. He was kind of a nervous guy. His father was H.M. (Howling Mad) Smith, a World War II Marine Lt. General of towering reputation and Smith very badly wanted to get his third star to equal his father's rank, etc. He was scared that the State Department was going to make him do something that would besmirch the family name and persuade the Navy that he was not a man to be promoted. He particularly feared being made to admit to any of North Korea's allegations about the ship's activities, its violations of its orders or international law, or its position when captured. The story goes that he made General Bonesteel give him orders in writing to take his instructions from the State Department through the Embassy. These things affected his judgment and his ability to get on with the job. He was replaced by an Army general named Woodward, who had dealt with communists and their negotiating tactics in Berlin. Smith had had absolutely no political dealings in his life. But Woodward came from this background in Berlin and his first words when he came to the Embassy to talk to us were, "Well, what are you bastards going to have me do? Let's get it over with." He was the negotiator who achieved the final result. He was a delight to work with. I must say that Admiral Smith's staff, the UN Command people, were also absolutely great. One of the problems with working in a place like that is that there really is no institutional memory except that which is provided by relatively junior and sometimes out of the mainstream types. In the case of the "Pueblo" negotiations, one of the real stalwarts was the previously mentioned Korean American civilian -- Jimmy Lee -- who had been an employee of the UN Command for years. Within the Command, among the military, he was just a civilian. But he was the institutional memory and provided the most cogent comments and deserves an enormous amount of credit for whatever successes we finally had.

There had been a previous incident, and I don't think the people in Washington were terribly

aware of it, although we had reported it as part of our analysis of what was going on and what might happen. In that instance, a feisty American Armistice Commission representative named Ciccollella had been negotiating for weeks for the return of the body of a helicopter pilot who had strayed into North Korean territory. The North Koreans had stonewalled everything and had insisted he sign a document admitting all sorts of evil intentions on the part of the dead pilot. General Ciccollella finally got authority to sign that paper. What he didn't get authority for was what he did spontaneously, and that was to sign it and hand it over while saying, "Here you sons-of-bitches is your God damn sheet of paper. It isn't worth the paper it is written on. The only reason I am giving it to you so that we can get the body of this man back." He continued with something like, "You people should be ashamed of your conduct. You are not worthy of wearing the uniform of a soldier. I spit on you." The North Koreans took it with equanimity, looked at the paper, saw it met their requirements, and returned the body.

And that, on a larger scale, is essentially what happened with the "Pueblo." I am given to understand that back in Washington, Jim Leonard -- he was a member of the task force -- was shaving one day and moaning because they hadn't reached a solution and things were just stumbling along, when his wife asked whether they had tried offering to give the North Koreans the paper they wanted. The piece of paper they wanted of course was to acknowledge that the "Pueblo" was a spy ship, that it was trying to steal the secrets of the People's Republic of Korea, that it had repeatedly penetrated (even though we had proven at the negotiations that it had not penetrated) their coastal waters without authority and with the intention of spying, and to apologize for the gross insult to the North Korean people. That was the essence of it. Leonard's wife said, "Have you ever thought of giving them their piece of paper and then denouncing it orally?" Jim took it to the Department and said, "Will you try this?" It should have been suggested long ago because there was a history for it. Washington approved it and Woodward was instructed to say, "I will give you exactly what you want, but I am going to denounce it publicly as I do." They said, "Okay." And that is what happened. He did give them the piece of paper and he said in effect, "It is a worthless piece of paper and doesn't mean a thing and is not a reflection of what happened. But we give it to you simply to effect the release of the crew." The crew came back.

That period was, I think, the low point in our relations with the South Koreans. What happened on the Blue House raid and the "Pueblo" left the Koreans feeling that we had behaved badly where their interests were concerned, that they were a hell of a lot weaker along the DMZ than they thought, there was more danger in Northeast Asia than they had thought, and that they had weakened themselves unduly by sending two divisions and a brigade to Vietnam. They began to hint that they were either going to pull some troops from Vietnam or we were going to beef them up. We didn't want any Korean troops to come out of Vietnam at that stage of the game, so Washington sent Cy Vance, accompanied by Dan O'Donohue, who was later Political Counselor in Seoul and Ambassador to Thailand, to Seoul to negotiate with Park and company over what additional aid we would give them. I don't remember the exact amount, in terms of dollars, but he was authorized to offer substantial additional equipment and a lot of other concessions.

It was interesting though that at this time there was a contact of mine, Kim Chong-Pil's lieutenant, Kim Yong-Tae -- a very, very tough ex-army guy. Park had banished him from Seoul because of his participation in another one of Korea's political incidents that had earned Park's

wrath. Park had told him to resign from the National Assembly and get his butt into the countryside and out of Seoul until cleared to come back. He came into my office during this thing -- he sneaked in since he was not supposed to be in Seoul, and was defying Park's orders which you did at your peril -- and sat there and said, "Dick, you are going about this the wrong way. You are sending Vance over here to offer a lot of equipment that is going to arrive six months, two years down the pike. What you have to do first is get to the man, get to Park and do something about protecting him personally. The man is crazy with fear. The Blue House is a damn sieve. Anybody with a well organized group could probably go in there and assassinate him. And that is what he fears. That is why he is up in the mountains, drinking and screwing around with these kisaeng girls. He is scared to be in the Blue House." We had Kim talk to our station chief and various other people, and the upshot of all that was a significant part of what Vance finally came to offer him. It was an immediate survey, done by Air Force specialists, of the Blue House, turning it into its own little fortress. That was done. It is a very well guarded installation to this day, at least it still was when I left. I thought it rather courageous of Kim to make this effort on Park's behalf, because if he had been caught in Seoul things would not have gone very well with him.

Anyway, Vance arrived maybe two weeks after the "Pueblo" seizure. During all that time Park had been out of communication and when he met with Vance it was his first appearance for at least two weeks. This would have been 1968 and it was the last year of the Johnson Administration. He was a special envoy.

As a matter of fact he was apparently told to negotiate in considerable confidence -- which meant excluding the Ambassador, CINCUNC and their staffs. It was kind of funny; I remember when the then Foreign Minister came to office he was characterized by his Korean associates as a cautious man, a man who would knock on a stone bridge before crossing it. But he knew that his neck was on the line in this negotiation. So he invited Vance to come alone to a negotiating meeting at a hotel. And he held Vance virtually prisoner all that night. Porter, who was at a formal dinner party, was not told of the meeting. He arrived uninvited at the hotel about 11:00 in black tie and stayed there with them. It was very clear that the Foreign Minister was going to hammer out an agreement and get the credit for it that night. He wouldn't let them leave. They got out sometime very early in the morning, very much chagrined, very unhappy and the agreement was not concluded that night.

At any rate, when Park appeared at his first meeting with Vance, people said his hands were so shaky that he couldn't hold his coffee cup. Eventually, of course, we came through with adequate additional assistance and the Koreans got used to the idea that things were happening at Panmunjom that they weren't privy to but they were getting adequate briefings. The insult to Korea had taken place at the first meeting when the two sides met on Korean soil without South Korean's presence, and they got to swallowing it at the end and the emotion died down. But things were never quite the same for the rest of that period I was there.

In South Korea there was a lot of concern about US resolve well before the "Pueblo." They didn't like the way we were conducting the war in Vietnam. The constant theme was, "You don't understand Asian communists; we do. You can't fight them on a curb bit. You have to go all out. If you are going to beat them, beat them in Hanoi." This was their theme. "You can't confine it to

the South. If you really want to win it you have to use everything at your disposal. You can't be kindly to the villagers. You have to wipe out whole villages in order that the next village won't be supportive." They weren't happy with the way we were running the Vietnam war and certainly not happy with our response to the "Pueblo" and the Blue House raid. They thought that we should have punished North Korea, but we didn't act. In the end, of course, even the most belligerent among them tempered their belligerence with fears of what the consequences might be for the city of Seoul. Seoul was just beginning to emerge as the ROK's major industrial and commercial area. Anybody who has lived in Korea knows that people who have gone through the Korean War experience, when the war rolled over that city three times, knows how close Seoul is to North Korea.

I often thought, especially when the North Koreans were acting up and after the Blue House raid, that I was in a city under siege. We thought idly of sending dependents out. It was discussed at staff meetings. Obviously, anytime during their recent history if the North Koreans had perceived the South as weak and the American support as questionable, they might have launched a military attack. God knows their stuff has always been located in forward positions. It has just been a question of how far forward. My own feeling was that they wanted to get rid of Park. I do believe that they had a very special feeling about Park and I do think it is because of this allegation that he was the source of information that destroyed the communist party in the South. Beyond that, they wanted to keep us as agitated as possible but short of war. I don't think they really wanted a war, but they wanted to distract us, to help the Vietnamese to the extent that they could, to keep things boiling, keep the South fearful, help produce conditions in the South that might lead them to a better opportunity. But I don't think they ever took it to the point where they really wanted to make an attack unless conditions were just so overwhelmingly in their favor that this was the time. Even then they must have sensed that the South was going to be developing -- they could have seen the same things that I saw happening, if indeed the word got back to their leaders, and I am sure it did. But they wanted to embarrass us. They wanted to make us appear as a weakling in the face of other Asians and I think that is very clear. That is why they worked against our troops all the time and with a fair amount of success. There was another incident where they crossed the DMZ and came right into one of our encampments, blew up a barracks and killed several people and got away clean. They wanted to keep things in agitation, but I don't think wanted it to get to the point of war unless the circumstances were such that they were assured a good chance.

The Chinese were always present at all the Pueblo negotiations and, of course, a good deal of the North Korean posturing might have been for the benefit of the Chinese observers, I don't know. Were the Chinese supportive of the North Koreans at this time? Yes. I don't know what strains there were, if any, between these two supporters of North Korea. Maybe we weren't that knowledgeable at that time. The Soviets were still providing them with military equipment, but on the other hand this was also a period when the North Koreans were developing their own military arsenal and the capability of making a great deal of their own stuff. Certainly the two supported them politically, there is no question about that.

Let me now say a few words about Lyndon Johnson's visit. Ambassador Brown wrote "Postmark Asia". It was privately published for his own family and friends. He has a whole chapter on Johnson's visit.

Johnson had been to a Vietnam troop contributors conference in Manila. He was hot for more third country civilian and troop contributions and it was decided that he should visit Seoul as the major contributor on his way back to the United States. So he arrived. The Koreans took this sort of like the second coming. Eisenhower had visited them of course, but this was something special. They had a chance to prepare for the visit even though it was a last minute decision. I must say, in terms of civic improvements, it was a great success. I used to drive out to the Seoul Country Club golf course, up along the Han River in the eastern part of Seoul. You drove past miles of squatters shacks, I mean just indescribably poor housing, and the road was bumpy and rutted. That was also the road to Walker Hill, the huge resort the Koreans had built right after the Korean War to keep the Americans troops from going to Tokyo for R&R. Anyway, Walker Hill was quite a presentable place and that is where they decided to put Lyndon up. The plan was that he would go back and forth by helicopter, but on the off chance that he had to go by road he would follow the standard route. I went off to play golf one morning and the shacks were all standing. I came back about four hours later and they were gone. I am talking about a couple of miles of shacks. I think half the bulldozers in the Korean Army engineers were there. It was an indescribable scene. People running in all directions trying to salvage what they could before the bulldozers ran over them. There certainly wasn't any legal process involved here. And then, of course, after they cleared the shacks away they hastily planted things, most of which later died. Then they came along and repaved the road, so there was a very nice road to the golf course for the rest of my tour there. Well, Lyndon never traveled that road and the shacks never reappeared.

They put Lyndon up in Walker Hill in the special villa on the top of the highest hill. But Lyndon liked a good strong shower and he liked it coming at him from several directions. His was a lovely villa, but the water pressure up there was the worst and the story is that Lyndon's valet had to hold a garden watering can over his head while he took his shower. He found that most unsatisfactory and let the whole party know about it.

Other than things like that, the visit was an enormous success. Johnson was wiped out -- totally exhausted and visibly so when he got off the plane at Kimpo. He looked around and you could see that here was a man who fed on public adulation. He had seldom in his life had such a feast spread before him as he found in Seoul. An enormous crowd at the airport and full military honors. The way in was lined with Koreans ten, twelve deep all the way from Kimpo to the City Hall Plaza. And in City Hall Plaza was the biggest crowd I think I have ever seen in Korea, or anywhere else as far as that goes. Now, a great deal of this was spontaneous. Lyndon was genuinely looked up to by the Korean populace, but I couldn't deny that a fair amount of it was somewhat less than spontaneous. But the Koreans planning the visit had told me, "Now look, we know your man likes to see and do various things and you just tell us what you want in terms of a motorcade and that sort of thing. We will arrange it just the way he wants it. But, along the way we can't let him stop anywhere he wants to. So there will be three or four places where it will be possible to stop the motorcade and he can jump out and shake hands. It will be secure in those places." And that's where he stopped to press the flesh of this admiring public. They said, "In the matter of signs, we will have lots of signs but they will not be all the same. There will be no uniformity to them." So, we saw things like, "We love you Lady Bug," and signs with his name spelled forty different ways. But everything looked very spontaneous. There were no groups of uniforms. There were lots of Korean and American flags, of course, but all of these individual

signs looked very spontaneous and some of them may have been, but most of them were very carefully prepared. And the difference between Johnson's demeanor when he arrived at the airport as compared to when he stood on that platform at City Hall Plaza to make his speech, was night and day. Here was a guy who had just come to life.

But there was a problem with the City Hall Plaza speech. Paul Crane, a prominent American medical missionary spoke the best Korean of any "round eye" in Korea and was chosen to read Johnson's address in Korean. There was no room for him on the platform, so he was stationed in an alcove below. The speech was supposed to be canned, and Johnson was told where to stop to permit translation. But of course he didn't stop where he was supposed to and he extemporized. It was windy and the acoustics were terrible. Crane couldn't understand what Johnson was saying, but he sure as hell had the speech, so he just read it. He did the very best he could and he did as well as any human being could have, but the Embassy switchboard began to light up about two-thirds of the way through with Koreans calling up saying, "Fire that man, he is not saying what the President is saying." There was a big fuss about that. What they didn't realize of course was that Crane couldn't hear Johnson and that Johnson was winging it because he was so hepped up about this damn enormous crowd.

There were enormous receptions and big state dinners and all the rest of it, but no real substantive business was conducted. Lyndon woke up, for example, during the middle of the night and wanted tapioca pudding, and he was agitated. He wanted tapioca pudding and here in the biggest hotel in all of Korea there wasn't any to be found. We finally found some in the kitchen of one of the Embassy's staff. We woke up half of Compound 2 in order to see if anybody had any and somebody did and we got it out there and that appeased him.

Somebody gave the suit he was going to wear on the second day to an American Embassy Korean driver to take to be pressed at the one place that was adequate to do it. The guy took it and had it pressed but took it home with him that night, intending to bring it back five or six in the morning. But Lyndon somehow became aware that the suit was missing so practically a door-to-door search of Seoul went on to try and find it.

We had all sorts of incidents like that. We had a great reception at Walker Hill and right in the middle of the reception with every dignitary in Korea present, the lights went out. Everything was pitch dark. Of course the Secret Service people were running around elbowing everyone right and left, trying to hustle the President towards the door when the lights went back on again. It was just one of those things that happened in Seoul from time to time. But everyone thought, "Oh, my God, the North Koreans are at it again and if they drop a bomb on this place they have the whole United States and Korean governments -- the Secretary of State was there and everybody else."

It was a hilarious and typically imperial Presidential visit. It must have impressed the Johnsons because the welcome was (a) so spontaneous and genuine and (b) so well contrived. They couldn't help but feel they were among friends.

The visit did have one enormous political effect -- in a sense it helped Park, his self esteem, tremendously. One thing the little man wanted was acknowledgment from the United States. He

got to wanting it even worse in later years. But the fact that the President of the United States would come and visit Seoul helped with our relations with him, personally, a great deal. That was important in Korea, where he held total sway.

The only major differences between the Embassy and the desk in the Department during my tour in Seoul were on details of how to handle all the crises that came up, like the "Pueblo." The reason we wrote the "slippery slope" telegram was to let them know that our intended course of action was really going to screw us up with the South Koreans. That was probably the major point of difference. The Desk reflected political pressures on the Department from within the United States. Everybody has his own agenda and when something happens in Korea, some interested party or his political representative is going to exert pressure on the Department to do something. We felt that sort of pressure, although we often felt the complainant didn't have the whole picture. But there were no serious problems with the Desk.

The "Pueblo" incident reflects how crises often get handled. Something happens and all of a sudden it is taken away out of the hands of the people who know how to deal with it and all of a sudden get centered away from the experts and into the hands of the political movers and shakers in Washington. I want to deal with that very subject in my later tour in Korea. We, in the Embassy, thought that the Vance mission was unnecessary and it should not have been sent. It was an embarrassment. We eventually achieved what objectives we had, I guess, which were to mollify the Koreans, but it could have been done much more easily. The problem with doing things that way, in my point of view, is that you focus the local's attention on Washington. He thinks thereafter -- and when you are dealing with a man like Park, it is important because he controls his government -- that the only people he can deal with are in Washington. If Washington ignores or undercuts its Embassy, then he thinks the Embassy can't be of much help to him. So he tends to ignore the Embassy too. And this was true of the whole Kissinger period of foreign relations, when having contact with Kissinger himself became much more important than doing things the normal way, through people who have the experience and some knowledge of what is going on. In that sense, I think the Vance mission led to a lot of things later on that Park -- if he didn't originate at least supported -- in terms of trying to buy influence. Park never, to my knowledge, made any effort to suborn any American official in Seoul. No Korean politician ever approached me by saying, "Hey, Dick, we want a favor," or that kind of thing. This was done in Washington with American politicians and White House personnel later on in the Park regime, and was done rather flagrantly to the point where, for example, a woman who I was convinced was a ROK CIA agent sat in the front office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives as his receptionist.

Let me now talk about the status of forces during the 1965-68 period. During the Korean War and from the end of the Korean War until the middle 1960s, there was no agreement between the United States and the Republic of Korea defining the legal status of the American military forces in Korea, including such sensitive questions as Korean jurisdiction over crimes committed against Koreans by American personnel or in general over any activities by American personnel. American military authorities had jurisdiction over American soldiers and the Koreans had none. In any country that values its sovereignty, however welcome foreign military personnel may be, their presence inevitably engenders friction of one kind and another. If these problems are handled unilaterally by the country which provides the forces, ignoring the home government,

eventually you arouse resentment on the part of the general population and a desire to institute some means of exercising some influence over what the foreigners do on their soil. Anyway, this was the situation in Korea. The Japanese, after a long negotiation and considerable difficulty, had gotten a status of forces agreement with us and the Koreans were agitating for their own. Phil Habib, my predecessor in Seoul, had all but completed the negotiation of this agreement with the South Koreans, but there was a major stumbling block involving jurisdiction over military personnel. Under just what circumstances would the Koreans be able to try an American soldier for a crime committed off base or off duty and/or against a Korean? We were being very, very tight, reluctant to acknowledge Korean jurisdiction over American soldiers. In virtually every context we wanted to retain jurisdiction. One of the reasons, of course, was that the American veterans organizations back in the United States were strongly opposed to giving foreign governments jurisdiction over American military personnel. If you read the "American Legion" magazine at the time, you saw cartoons featuring long-toothed, vicious Oriental guards wielding batons and beating helpless American prisoners in substandard jails.

So there was a great deal of reluctance to do this, but about the time the Koreans started sending troops to Vietnam the attitude in the United States changed. It softened considerably and at some point in early 1966 the decision was made that we would complete this negotiation and that we would grant Korean jurisdiction over military forces in the case of crimes that were committed off post, off duty and against Koreans. This made it possible to finally wrap up this agreement. I had the honor of being the designated chief negotiator for something that was essentially a one meeting affair, with the thing all cleared out in advance. The great thing about it was that we were able to persuade Secretary Rusk, who was very highly esteemed -- the Koreans liked Rusk -- to come to Korea on his way to Vietnam and to hold a signing ceremony in the big rotunda of the Capitol building. You can't imagine what this really meant to the Koreans. It was an irritant to us, by and large, but to the Koreans it was a major acknowledgment of their place in the world. They were going to sign an agreement with the Secretary of State. He was coming to them to sign it. They decorated the hall like nothing you have ever seen before. There were enormous flags, for example, American and Korean flags made of the various flowers that were in bloom or raised for the purpose at the time. There was an enormous banquet and a very elaborate ceremony. I got my measure of a lot of Korean Foreign Office people during the process of producing the treaty documents themselves in two languages, as they had to be. First the thing had to be translated. Ron Myers, who was our very junior officer in the Political Section at the time, but our best Korean language officer, participated. The night before the ceremony I was in the Foreign Ministry all night with Ron and a bunch of Korean Foreign Ministry personnel going through the texts. They were typing it as we went along, producing and accepting translations of various segments of the English language version. Of course the thing was drawn up in English, but they had to reproduce it in Korean. They had to produce two copies absolutely letter perfect; the Koreans wouldn't allow a speck on any one of those pieces of paper. Anyway, a large number of those fellows dropped out during that night and we were left with only a few Foreign Ministry officials at 6 in the morning. I always held these in very high regard. Well, we had this ceremony with Rusk and the Korean Foreign Minister signing the agreement and the President sending his best wishes. It was televised and engendered a great deal of feeling.

So, how did it work out? It became almost an embarrassment to the Koreans to have jurisdiction. They wanted the right to exercise jurisdiction, but they didn't really want to handle Americans in

jail. Americans wouldn't do what the Korean would do, bring in the whole family to cook for them and that sort of thing. The few foreigners the Koreans had in jail before the agreement were always pampered. They had special accommodations, special food. They weren't forced to work as Koreans prisoners were. After the status of forces went into effect and they began to assume jurisdiction over Americans, the Korean habit was to convict them of whatever crime they were accused of, but to give them a suspended sentence on condition that they be sent out of the country. The sentiment among GIs was that you got off lighter in a Korean court than you did if you got court-martialed. And if you did get sent to a Korean jail, it would be better than being in the military stockade because you got special food, people could come and see you, you didn't have to work. The long and the short of it is that the Status of Forces Agreement over the years has worked out much, much better than anyone in the Pentagon or the American Legion thought it was going to. The same is true in Japan where the same fears existed earlier on and exactly the same kind of things have happened.

I was happy to be associated with that sort of thing and it was one of the times when the Embassy and the UN Command worked very close together. But that leads me to another point of how our affairs are conducted in Korea. A great deal depends on the nature and character of the UN Commander and the Ambassador and their relationship to each other. The UN Commander in Korea is in a rather odd position. If he were the kind who would try to exploit it, there were things that he could exploit. He is the commander of the UN forces, but he is an American general. He is subject to orders from Washington as commander of the United States Eighth Army. As commander of UN forces, in theory he reports back to the UN Security Council through the United States government. And that makes him think that he is a little different from military commanders in other countries, vis-a-vis his relations with the American ambassador. He has a unique position. If you have an egotistical UN commander, you just might have trouble on your hands in the sense that he does not recognize that in matters political certainly he is subordinate to the ambassador. That was a prominent feature of the landscape in both of my assignments to Korea.

When I got to Korea there was a UN commander named Dwight Beech, who was the same kind of guy I had in Iceland. When I arrived there, the Keflavik base commander said, "Look, I will take care of the military things and you take care of relations with the government and political stuff. I am not skilled in that and don't want to be bothered with it." And that was General Beech. He and Ambassador Brown got along absolutely perfectly. Nobody was ever going to be insubordinate to Ambassador Brown. No American in Korea was ever going to doubt who was the senior American while Brown was around. Brown was replaced by Porter and Beech was replaced by Bonesteel. General Bonesteel was at least a second generation general officer. I had run into his father as a matter of fact years earlier when he was commanding Fort Benning. Old Bonesteel was too old for World War II but he took the American forces to Iceland before the US entered the war. His son had lost one eye and was famous for his patch and also for his ego. He was a very good general, but he saw himself first as the United Nations Commander and he didn't cotton to being subordinate to any other American in that country. Even he and Brown had their difficulties. When Porter arrived as the new boy on the block, we really had difficulties. I have sat in meetings of the two of them when they were both talking at the same time and, like ten year old kids, neither would stop to oblige the other. They had a constant struggle. They did not get along. It never amounted to anything serious, but it could have had serious repercussions.

The other part of relations with the UN Command is that Korean Presidents, from the time Park took over through Rho and Chun, until Kim Yong Sam took office, were all out of the military. Park's instinct was to look first to the military in dealing with Americans. If, for example, you were going to hold a joint exercise with distinctly political overtones -- as in the reaction of the North Koreans -- he would not ask the Foreign Office to get involved -- that was something to be worked out with the military command. The military commanders would discuss it and then the UN command would back-channel the stuff to the Pentagon. By the time it surfaced on an intergovernmental basis, the military commanders and the ROK leadership were in agreement on what was to be done, and if there were any changes to be made for American political reasons, the Embassy had an enormous uphill fight. The UN Command always had this advantage of learning about military things first and getting it through the Pentagon, getting their ducks in a line and then springing it on the Embassy. This could at times offer serious problems. I think the situation still exists. Personally, if I could do it, I would wipe out the whole back-channel capability of both State and the military. It is an insidious kind of thing.

But there were difficulties between Bonesteel and Porter and, as I will describe later, between Habib and Sneider and Stilwell.

CHARLOTTE LORIS
Executive Officer, USIS
Seoul (1967)

Charlotte Loris was born in Pennsylvania in 1916. She joined the State Department in 1950 and then joined the USIS. She held positions in Japan, Vietnam, Libya, the Congo, Korea, and Indonesia. Ms. Loris was interviewed by Max Kraus in 1989.

LORIS: I had to leave, they said. I must go to a cold country. So I took off for Korea. Well, I was there about a year and a half and there was a big cutback. I didn't think that I was busy enough, my Korean assistant was very capable of handling routine executive jobs and there was a Deputy PAO. It was a big staff. But not nearly the amount of work required that we had in the Congo or French Indochina, a place like that. So I said to the PAO, I said, why don't you eliminate my job, I don't think it's necessary.

Q: What was your job?

LORIS: Executive Officer in Korea.

Q: Executive Officer in Korea. Who was the PAO?

LORIS: Ken Bunce.

Q: Oh, yes.

LORIS: Well, then, they eliminated the Executive Officer job and kept the Deputy PAO who had to take over the Executive Officer's job, but I won't mention his name as he was not very happy about it. So then, because I was supposed to be in a cold country for seven years, they immediately transferred me on a direct transfer to Indonesia, a land of malaria-

WALTER L. CUTLER
Political Officer
Seoul (1967-1969)

Ambassador Walter L. Cutler was born in Boston and attended Wesleyan University, and later Fletcher University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1956. Ambassador Cutler served in the Cameroon, Algeria, Korea, Vietnam, Zaire, Iran, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

CUTLER: I think, like most Foreign Service officers, that I was quite affected by my first post. I had ideas of going back to Africa. And, of course, Algeria at that time was part of the African Bureau. So, in effect, when I went to Tabriz it was my first step out of the African Bureau abroad.

The assignment to Korea was about the last thing in my mind. That came, quite frankly, because Bill Porter, with whom I had served in Algeria, by that time had become Ambassador to Korea. He needed a Political-Military Officer, and he asked if I wanted to rejoin him there in that capacity, and I did so.

Korea had not yet had its great economic takeoff. In some ways you could sense it coming, but I don't think any of us had any idea that Korea was going to become, in just the next 20 years, what it has become. It was still very much of a struggling, developing country. We had a very large AID mission there.

And it was still fending off the mischief-making (to put it mildly) of North Korea. In other words, security was very much a central element in our relationship with the Koreans. I was the embassy's Political-Military Officer attached to the Political Section. It was a frustrating job, probably the most frustrating job I have had in the Foreign Service. Our own military presence was huge, headed by a four-star general, as I recall. I was a middle-grade officer, and it was very difficult to shoulder your way in and become a part of the political-military dialogue. The Ambassador and the Political Counselor were deeply involved with that. And, in effect, I was supposed to be reporting on the Korean military capability. In Korea, most of my contacts were with American military officers. I did develop some useful contacts with Korean Generals and things like that, but it was tough sledding.

But it was an interesting time to have been there. Only a few days after we arrived (as a matter of fact, I was living temporarily in some Embassy apartments), the whole sky lit up, as a band of

North Korean guerrillas tried to attack the President's palace and assassinate him -- the famous Blue House Raid. I had been actually involved in tracking the progress of these 31 commandos, who in January, in bitterly cold weather and snow, had tunneled their way under the DMZ, had emerged in South Korea, and had been reported by a woodchopper.

They had run into a South Korean woodcutter, and they had held him for a day (why they didn't kill him, I don't know), while they hid in the woods. Then when nightfall came, they released him and they headed south toward Seoul. Thirty-one of them, in full combat uniform, heavily armed. The woodcutter went to the nearest police station and said, "I have just been held by 31 North Koreans, and they are on their way south." He was hardly believed.

I spent a lot of my time at the command center in Seoul, at the Eighth Army Headquarters, and the reports started coming in regarding these infiltrations. There were others, by boats and so forth. But I spent the weekend trying to figure out what was going on with these reported commandos. Other reports came from additional sources.

The South Koreans set up blocking lines. But this band of 31 commandos moved so fast at night that they were actually south of the blocking lines each time. Within two or three days, they were sitting on a hill overlooking the city of Seoul.

It was there they made their mistake. They marched right down the street, and finally somebody figured that they were not "friendly" forces. A firefight broke out several blocks from the Blue House, and Park Chung Hee was saved from assassination.

It was extraordinary, because they all dispersed after that, those who were not killed, and tried to make their way north in intensely cold weather. Individually, in this fairly open terrain, they were tracked down. It took a week or two before they were all apprehended, one by one. I can't remember whether anyone made it back or not. The whole affair was extraordinary. It really rattled the cage.

I never quite understood North Korea's strategy during the two years I was in Korea. There were always domestic US pressures for us to reduce our military assistance to Korea. Every time there was some serious effort to do so, the North Koreans would try to pull something off, which would only buttress the case of the South Koreans that we were needed one hundred percent there.

Shortly after the Blue House Raid, there was the capture of the Pueblo. As Political-Military Officer, I spent a good part of my tour, 11 months of it, in an ongoing effort to devise ways of resolving that crisis. It wasn't always easy to work with the US military. I certainly came away rather impressed by the quality in the higher ranks. The overall commander was General Bonesteel. (I was always amused, because General Bonesteel used to communicate regularly with General Birdsong in the Pentagon.)

General Bonesteel was a very strong-willed, intelligent officer. He had been a Rhodes Scholar. He was the cream of the crop. But, as you can imagine, service with a fairly strong-willed Ambassador like Bill Porter was not always easy. There you had a good deal of difference of

view. For example, Porter was concerned about the size of our military presence in South Korea and was looking for ways of reducing it. And General Bonesteel didn't agree with that.

But for me, personally, I found it rather difficult dealing with the military only because I was a middle-grade Foreign Service officer trying to deal with literally dozens of high-ranking American officers. I dealt a lot, for example, with General Woodward, who at the time was our man at Panmunjom. We had a good personal relationship. But, of necessity, the higher-level officers in the Embassy had most of the substantive dialogue going with the higher-level American military officers.

But I can tell you this: my experience as a Political-Military Officer has left me with a very profound sense of respect for our Political-Military Officers in the Foreign Service. Respect for the difficult task that they face. They have to overcome what I think is a widespread perception among our military people that diplomats don't understand military problems, that they don't think very clearly, that they are always looking for ways of avoiding problems rather than tackling them. In other words, there is quite a different mindset in the military and in the Foreign Service.

But I think it is terribly important for us in the Foreign Service to overcome this barrier and to deal with our own military effectively. The best way, and perhaps the only way, that this can be done is to really learn their trade. I do think that there sometimes is a reluctance on the part of our Foreign Service officers to do the homework (and it is not always very exciting homework) that is required to deal effectively with the military. They deal in facts and figures and all kinds of areas that are somewhat esoteric for a Foreign Service officer.

But if you are going to be effective dealing with our own military people, you have got to get across to them that you know what you are talking about, and that you can present your case based upon a good knowledge of their profession.

It is a whole new world for many Foreign Service officers. But I think the ones who have been most successful are those who have taken the time to go through all the hoops and to know what they are talking about, and not come across as some sort of fuzzy-minded diplomat, which is the perception that I think is all too prevalent.

RUSSELL SVEDA
Peace Corps Volunteer
Seoul (1967-1969)

Mr. Sveda was born in New Jersey in 1945. After serving with the Peace Corps in Korea he joined the Foreign Service in 1975. His overseas posts with the State Department include Korea, where he served as Staff Aide to the Ambassador and in Moscow, as Science Officer. In Washington, Mr. Sveda was assigned as China Desk Officer and subsequently as Watch Officer in the Department's Operations Center. He also served as volunteer in the Sinai Field Mission. Mr. Sveda was

interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in June, 2000.

SVEDA: So, the idea was to find a place to avoid being drafted because we didn't want to be put in a position of fighting a war that we didn't believe in. My choice was to go into the Peace Corps, even though the PC did not guarantee a draft deferment. I was assigned to Korea. I taught English there in middle school, high school, and then later university.

Q: This would be 1967-1969.

SVEDA: Correct.

Q: How did you get trained to go to Korea?

SVEDA: In the summer of '67 just after I graduated college, they took us to a mountain top in Pennsylvania. The Westinghouse Corporation had gotten a contract to train us in Korean. This was only the third PC group that was going over. It was only the second year that they had been in Korea. Nobody knew how to teach Korean. It was never taught to foreigners. So, we had an interesting time learning Korean from instructors who were just trying to figure out how to teach their language, their very different language, to foreigners. One of the ideas that the organizer of that project had was to gather Korean children from graduate students, doctorates, people who were living in America, and bring them to this mountain top, which was Blue Knob, a ski resort in the winter but largely abandoned in the summer, and train these little Korean kids in English. Our object was to learn how to teach English, so what better way to learn it than to do it? Problem was, when these kids got off the bus, maybe there were 80-100 of them, only two kids did not speak English and those two kids learned English in one to two weeks. So, we wound up being camp counselors for a lot of cute kids who spoke English and we couldn't teach anything to.

Q: When you went out, did you have any feel for Korean or for training?

SVEDA: They taught us the wrong language. Korean is a language with many different levels. So, you were taught the language that professors might use to the president of the university or you might use appropriately to the grandmother of an emperor, but not what we needed to know on the street. So, we wound up speaking the equivalent of King James Bible English on streetcars and were getting what you might expect to be the reaction. That changed very quickly when we got in country and began to speak the more common speech.

Q: You arrived there in 1967. Where were you assigned?

SVEDA: I was assigned to a school that was run by Korean Presbyterians called Shinil High School on the outskirts of Seoul. It was endowed by a very wealthy Korean Presbyterian. It was a very modern school. I was their show foreigner.

Q: What was Korea like when you arrived there?

SVEDA: It's hard for me to imagine now that we're on the 50th anniversary of the start of the

Korean War (That was this Sunday). The thing that's hard for me to imagine now at age 54 is that I went there at age 21 only 13 years after the Korean War. Thirteen years ago was 1987. That doesn't seem very long ago for me. In fact, it's just a blink. The longer I got, the more the blinks seem to cover. But it's hard for me to imagine how as a 21 year old, thinking the Korean War was pretty much ancient history how alive it must have been in the minds of the people I encountered every day. I saw war damage still around. Korea when I arrived was a very poor country. Korea was so poor that whenever we turned on the electric hotplate, we threatened to brown out the neighborhood. Korea manufactured hotplates. Korea manufactured Gold Star radios that looked like they had been made in the 1940s. No doubt, these were factories that had been brought over. Korea did not have a decent chocolate bar. I mention those three things because in 1967, that was Korea. In 1969 when I left PC, already things were changing. They began to make transistor radios and they had a very good chocolate bar. Later when I arrived at the embassy in 1975, I asked casually of one of the Foreign Service officers coming in from the airport, "And what does Korea now manufacture?" He replied, "You know the Sears catalogue?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Everything in it. I don't mean something like what is found in the Sears catalogue. I mean everything in the Sears catalogue." I thought, "Well, that's interesting." Then a couple of years after that, I bought my first computer and it was, to my great delight, made in Korea. So, in a period of 15-20 years, they went from a country that couldn't make a hotplate to a country that was making leading edge computers.

Q: When you went there, did you have any feel for Korea or Koreans or was this a pretty exotic place?

SVEDA: I remember in PC training before we really met the Korean instructors, the first night, we were going to have a Korean cultural evening. They were going to sing and dance and show us Korean costumes. Having studied some East Asian history but knowing very little about Korea, I was curious as to whether this culture and this language would be more Chinese or more Japanese. Korea was between the two. I was surprised and remarked upon it to my fellow PC volunteers that it was neither. It was something of its own. It was neither Japanese nor Korean. It had as many elements from China as Japan did and as many elements from... Well, nobody has as many elements from Japan as Korea does. But it was a very different thing than I expected. One thing I should say about PC training is that if you've ever seen the film "Hair," for me, that summer of training was like the experience of the army recruit who gets in with a group of hippies and basically has his life transformed. I came to PC training a very uptight and narrow, closeted person. I was very ambitious, very career oriented. Most of the people who were there in PC training with me, it seems were from California and had entirely different attitudes. They had been harbingers of the summer of love. 1967, in fact, was the summer of love.

Q: Woodstock and all that.

SVEDA: Yes. I went that summer on the way out after my PC training, in October, through San Francisco for the first time. I stayed in Haight Ashbury with another PC volunteer who has since become a Foreign Service officer. I had never experienced jet lag before, so I, attending a party in Haight Ashbury fell asleep on a bed where some people had put their jackets, and I guess they assumed I had overdosed on something, but I never had any drugs at all; I just had jet lag.

Q: Now there are Koreans just about everywhere in the U.S. You and I had contributed to this when we were doing immigrant visas. But had you ever run across any Koreans in the U.S.? Had they crossed your radar at all?

SVEDA: Absolutely not. I had never met a Korean in my life. I had known about them. They crossed my radar because my uncle, Mike, who was a CIA agent, had served in Korea in the early 1960s. He specialized, I think, in overthrowing governments. Whenever Mike was sent to one country or another, there was always a new government. He arrived there in '60 and by the time he left there in '62, there had been a coup and Park Chung Hee had taken over. Then he went on to Laos and Vietnam and bigger and better things. He had lived in Korea and gave me my first impressions of the Koreans just from the letters that he had sent back. I got the impression that they were very engaging people. He was Polish by ethnicity and he said that they were very close to the Poles but they were sometimes called the Italians or specifically the Sicilians or the Irish. So, ultimately, he said they were the Poles, the Sicilians, the Irish, the Orient, by which he meant that they were effusive, very friendly, very quick to tell you honestly whether they liked you or disliked you, and were probably very volatile. Also they were romantic.

When I got my invitation to the PC and it happened to be an invitation to a PC training project for Korea, the first person I called was my uncle, Mike. I said, "What should I do" and he just said, "Take it. Don't hesitate."

Q: I went there at the worst of times. I was in the Air Force as an enlisted man and I was sent to Yonsei University in Seoul. There weren't any students there. This was '52. The place was absolutely flat. We shared it with Korean Air Force enlisted men. I liked them immensely. You shoved them, they shoved you. They loved our dehydrated potatoes in the mess hall, which I couldn't stand. I think most Americans really adapt to the Koreans, much more than to the Japanese.

SVEDA: They're very different.

Q: At least on the surface anyway, they seemed to be more interesting.

SVEDA: The Koreans were definitely an extroverted culture. The Japanese are a very introverted culture, so there is that distinction right there. The Japanese I understand from a missionary I met there... He had lived there for 22 years with his family. He was leaving Japan. I asked him casually how many Japanese friends he had. He said, "I'm not sure." You could never say that about Koreans.

Q: On the PC thing, this was '67. The anti-war movement was picking up. Did you have the feeling that PC was an anti-American government establishment as far as student ranks?

SVEDA: We had a particular problem, those of us who were against the war in Vietnam, with comparisons between Korea and Vietnam. For many of us, Korea was a justifiable war, much more justifiable than the Vietnam War. This was in part because it had indeed been successful and the Vietnam War was not perceived as something that could be successful. It's much

different fighting a war on a peninsula which you could cut off by your own navy versus fighting a war in a country with a porous border. There was a great hostility toward the American military.

Q: In your group, was there hostility towards the American government, the State Department and what have you?

SVEDA: Yes, there was. The U.S. government, both civilian and military, were perceived by us as propping up the Park Chung Hee dictatorship and working hand and glove with the Park Chung Hee dictatorship. One instance of that which angered us was when the Park Chung Hee government decided to build a road, a modern, interstate highway-type road, between Seoul and Pusan, the northernmost city and the southernmost city, with trunk lines going out to other cities. We thought, those of us in the PC, that this was absolutely insane. Korea had a wonderful train system which had been left it by the Japanese. Why go into building roads for a country where there were no cars, when only the military and their rich friends had cars, and this road would disrupt village life, cutting off one village from another, it would disrupt natural means of getting goods to market, and would destroy the fabric of Korean life. We were wrong. We were gloriously wrong. By the time I got back to the embassy in 1975, the economy of the country had been transformed largely because of this excellent road system.

Q: Park Chung Hee represented a quandary for many of us.

SVEDA: He was a nasty person but he was a necessary person in retrospect. Park Chung Hee was a military dictator who knew that his military had to have the wherewithal to meet the North Korean threat. At that time, North Korea was perceived as being a much stronger military power. Park Chung Hee did not want Korea to be dependent upon the United States. Frankly, he did not trust the United States. He thought we would sell Korea down the river if it became inconvenient the way we were, in his view, selling Vietnam down the river. So, he embarked on a program of building military industries where they would have proper optics manufacturing, jet engine manufacturing. They actually produced titanium, so titanium was there in Korea and was useful for military purposes. There is a man named Samuel Huntington who has argued that the military is not necessarily a bad thing to have running a country when they want to modernize quickly because the military, of all the parts of society, are the ones who are most aware of what's going on in the outside world technologically and the ones who realize they cannot fool around. If they perceive they have a real threat from a more advanced country, they are going to do their best to have a modern logistics system, modern weaponry, and whatever else they need. South Korea always had this threat hanging over it. It was an obsession. We could not forget the fact that Seoul was as far away from North Koreans as Washington, DC is from Baltimore, which is to say a good 35-40 minute drive with traffic. I don't know how the traffic would be because if the North Koreans had attacked, all the traffic would have been moving south.

Q: You arrived in Seoul-

SVEDA: With a death threat, by the way, announced at Panmunjom over the loudspeakers by the North Koreans. They had learned that there was a group of American spies who were coming in and they announced that these spies would all be found and shot to death.

Q: Did that encourage you?

SVEDA: It didn't really affect us very much. We just realized how serious the whole business was. The one thing that did really scare us – the only thing that happened while we were there – was, in February of 1968 we happened to have a conference in Seoul in a kind of hotel retreat house. While we were having our conference, we were up on the roof one afternoon or evening because we heard popping sounds in the distance. We later learned that this was an attack by commandos who got as far as Park Chung Hee's mansion in an effort to assassinate him. This was something that scared everybody because it was very real.

Q: Did you have any contact later on with the embassy?

SVEDA: The only contact between the PC and the embassy was the PC director, Kevin O'Donnell, who would go over to the embassy to meetings every so often. But the PC office was quite separate and we really tried to keep as separate as possible from the embassy in order to establish our credibility. I was at the PC office quite often because, after hours, I edited the PC's magazine. It had been a newsletter but I turned it into a monthly magazine, a glossy magazine with photographs and articles for the PC volunteers. My position as an editor was that I would never reject any copy or any photographs. I never guaranteed that I would publish them the same month they were received, but I always had material. I felt it was a very worthwhile thing to do for morale purposes and also for communicating what we were doing to Korean officials and American officials.

Q: Did you feel you'd better make damn well sure not just for the credibility but just for your own minds that you're not going to have contact with the embassy or the military?

SVEDA: We distinguished ourselves from the military the way St. Johns University students distinguished themselves from Annapolis students in Annapolis, Maryland. We had different hair length. Some of us had facial hair. We had a different way of dressing. The only times that I was on a military base in my two years in PC was once when we were invited for a Thanksgiving dinner by one of the local bases. I was struck by how people who eat meat regularly smelled different from people like us who did not. The second time I was on a military base was Workabee City, our most forward base, where I had an evening where I talked to soldiers about what PC did. I was surprised at how friendly the reception was. I was on my best behavior and I didn't indicate any hostility. I was trying to be friendly and make them friendly toward us.

Q: Let's talk about the teaching. What was your impression when you got started and how did you operate?

SVEDA: I was the show foreigner teaching English in this model school the first year. The first semester, I had about 9 classes of 50-60 students in the middle school and 9 or so classes in the high school of equal numbers. Now that I think about it, I had an 18 hour teaching schedule. I was befuddled at how I could possibly teach English... I also had a very difficult time with the very strong religious orientation of the school. They wanted me to attend weekly church services somewhere, visibly, on Sunday. They wanted me to attend services for the faculty at the school

on Wednesday morning. I found this a little bit too pressing. At the time, I considered myself an atheist. I found myself drifting over to the PC volunteers who were teaching at Sogong, a Jesuit school on the other side of the city. The school was started by Jesuits from Marquette University and they had a number of what they called Jesuit volunteers there. There were four or five people who had come from Marquette to teach at Sogong for a year or two. They were given housing and the same kind of minimal salary that PC volunteers had. I found this a very, very congenial group of people. We also had a couple of PC volunteers teaching there. The person who had helped set up the English teaching program for PC Korea was a Jesuit from Marquette University, Father Jerry Brunick. He was a very fine man who had a very good friend, a Korean dissident under house arrest, a man named Kim Dae Jung, now the president of Korea. Kim Dae Jung was taught English by two of our PC volunteers, Dave Garwin and Doug Reed. Kim Dae Jung asked that Doug be given a job at the Korean embassy here in Washington when he became president and Doug has been working at the Korean embassy. So, our PC effort taught Kim Dae Jung English. It also gave a certain amount of U.S. government attention to Kim Dae Jung's plight because PC volunteers were visiting him on a daily basis. I think he appreciated that attention. The Korean government did not know that we were not working hand in glove with the military and with the embassy. They assumed we were. Later on, when I was a graduate student at Columbia when Kim Dae Jung was exiled, he taught at Columbia and I had him as a teacher in my Korean political science class.

Q: Did you find that this was all show?

SVEDA: In the middle school and the high school, I thought it was all show. They had good teaching there, but there was no way that you could teach 1500 students a week anything. I did have problems with that. At Sogong, it was a very different story. The students were all learning English. Classes were never larger than 15-20 students and instead of having 45 minute sessions, they divided the hour into two sections. The first section was a 20-25 minute language lab, which you had to attend if you were a student before you had the 20-25 minute session in a smaller class with the native instructor. So, native instructors like myself never saw a student who was not prepared via the language lab. We made the narrow assumption that the students would not study outside of class. So, we figured out how we could force them to study before class. So, instead of having a 50 minute period with 30 students, I had a 15-20 minute period with 15 students and it was very effective. Sogong very quickly gained the reputation as the only school in Korea which actually taught people how to speak English.

Q: As editor of this magazine, what were the reactions in the earlier days of the PC in Korea that you were getting from the volunteers, particularly away from Seoul?

SVEDA: We had two kinds of volunteers. We had health volunteers and we had English teacher volunteers. The health volunteers worked on TB control projects. The education volunteers were there to teach Korea how to teach English effectively. This was not something that we saw as a colonializing mission. Of course, there was an argument that could be raised that we were trying to colonize the country. There was that criticism, but we dealt with that because we said very simply that Korean is a very difficult language, Korea is not a very rich country, and if Korean medical researchers are to have access to the latest medical research, they would have to know English or another world language. The same went for Korean technology, Korean business,

what have you. No one was going to bother to learn Korean, or very few, and Korea was never going to be able to translate into Korean and publish in Korean everything that they needed to have. The other reason that we gave was that Koreans did not like to speak with the Japanese in Japanese nor with the Chinese in Chinese. In East Asia, the Chinese speak with the Japanese in English and the Koreans speak with the Japanese or the Chinese in English. The language of business in East Asia, like it or not, is English. So, that was access for the Koreans to be in the business world in East Asia.

Q: Were there demonstrations on dissidents or PC volunteers in your group particularly involved in that?

SVEDA: No, not to my knowledge.

Q: Was there a difference between those who taught in a large institution such as your college or middle school and those who were more out in the field?

SVEDA: We all heard that from them. The ones who were in the big cities like Seoul especially always heard, "Oh, well, we're Seoul volunteers." We have running water. We could go to a movie theater and actually see a movie. We could go to a shop and buy food or whatever, whereas people who were in the smaller villages were more isolated. We heard that but it didn't really make very much of an impression on us. There were some very funny cases of people who were put in truly out of the way places. One of them, who now teaches English at the University of Las Vegas in Nevada and won the Penn Prize for a novel he wrote about his PC experiences, Dick Wiler, found he was in a fishing village off the southeastern coast of Korea teaching English to fisherfolk who had no perceivable interest in using it. So, to amuse himself, he taught them Chaucerian English, a very strange sounding language. But he figured, well, they weren't going to use it anyway and if per chance a traveler came through that island and heard Chaucerian English spoke by the locals, it would be an interesting article in some paper.

Q: Did you run across any problem of... We have the Park Chung Hee dictatorship. We acknowledge that it probably was good for the country at the time, but it certainly would run counter to any good PC volunteer coming out of an American university. Were you having to mind your manners or anything like that? Did you feel constrained?

SVEDA: Oh, yes, and we knew that we were being watched and reported upon, but nobody really bothered us overtly that I can recall. I can't recall any PC volunteers who had political problems who were thrown out of the country at that time. Later, yes. Later when I came back with the embassy in 1975-1977, you did have problems. In fact, Doug Reed was thrown out of the country because of his contacts with Kim Dae Jung. There were others in that period.

Q: Did you note any instances of how the Korean government or Koreans treated students or others that you were dealing with?

SVEDA: Not on an individual level, but on a group level certainly. The Korean students at this middle school and high school that I was at were given military instruction, drills, physical education. The whole thing was a very militarized system. I found it repugnant in some aspects.

For example, one day I was told there would be no classes because these students had to do their field exercises, literally exercises. They had to do running, pushups, pull-ups... They were going to be graded on them. Unless a student could do a certain number of pushups, the student would flunk physical education, which was part of military training, which was a very serious matter because they could get thrown out of the school perhaps. It turns out that there were a couple of students at the 1,000 student school who were physically handicapped. They didn't have wheelchairs, but they got around on crutches. The school prided itself on the fact that it was the only school in Korea that allowed cripples in. I thought that was a very good thing. They had their religious mission. But these students were required to do the 100 yard dash and the other physical things that they were absolutely incapable of doing. I protested this but to no avail. The principal of the school said, "Well, the law requires us to test them and they will fail. They will be in danger of expulsion. But we will take into consideration their special circumstances and ask for a reprieve from the Ministry officials." I thought this was a terribly demeaning and cruel thing to have to do, but there were many instances like that. It was part of the general Korean attitude of discipline. One day when I was in my teachers' room (and I have to explain that in the Japanese and Korean system, all employees share one long office with desks arrayed in rows in the rank order of precedence to the boss, who sits at the top), I was reading something at my desk. Only a few teachers were in the teachers' room. One of the teachers had come in with a couple of students and paid no attention to the middle school students. I heard a bonking sound and suppressed screams. I looked over and this teacher was hitting these kids on the head with a rod that was at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick. The old rule of thumb in English law was that people were allowed to beat their wives with a stick no thicker than the thumb. That is where the term "rule of thumb" comes from. The kids were being bonked on the head. They could have sustained serious damage. I jumped up out of my chair and I ran to the teacher. I am 6'2" and the teacher was considerably shorter. I stood between him and the students. He raised his rod and was about to hit them, but I was there, so he dropped the rod in surprise. I picked it up and broke it over my knee and slammed the two parts of the rod on my desk and went out to the little shed where we had a hot stove, which was the only place that had heating in that whole school. They had a coal stove where tea was brewed and where we kept warm when we were really turning blue with cold. I sat there and a delegation came out to talk to me about 20 minutes later. One of the English teachers who had been my friend asked me, "Is there something wrong?" I said, "Yes, you know very well there is something wrong." He said, "That's okay, you can apologize to the teacher later and he will forgive you." I said, "Pardon me. Why would I apologize to the teacher who was beating the students?" He said, "Well, nobody, even the principal, was allowed to interfere in a teacher's relationship to his students. You interfered." Then I thought about the Korean cultural context and said, "Oh, but this man interfered with my kieun." Kieun is a Korean concept of mental harmony, happiness, placidity, outward control. Nobody really is allowed under their system of etiquette to intentionally disturb your equanimity. I said, "Well, this man had disturbed my equanimity. I think that he should apologize to me for having done that." "Oh," they said. Then the delegation went back and another delegation came. This went back and forth for a while.

Then I decided I really did have to change schools. I went to Sogong University, which had a much more liberal attitude. Certainly nobody was ever beaten. It was really basically a branch of Marquette University in Seoul.

Q: Let's stop at this point. We've come to 1969 when you left Seoul.

SVEDA: I went on my trip across the Soviet Union by the Trans-Siberian and other means.

Basically, I went across the Soviet Union. The interesting thing was not so much where I was but how the Soviets reacted to a PC volunteer who spoke Korean going across. At a certain point, I got the general idea of the Trans-Siberian. I took a plane from near Kutz to Samarkand. When I landed in Alma Ata on the way over, I had this strange sense that I had a number of Koreans on the plane. They looked Korean. I thought, "Well, maybe it's one of the minority people of Central Asia." But I didn't think they could be Koreans. I got to Tashkent and saw more people who had that absolute distinctive Korean look. So, I asked the Intourist guide and she said, "Oh, yes, 11% of the population of Tashkent is Korean, 7% is this, 5% is this." I said, "Whoa, let's go back to the Koreans. What are they doing here?" She said, "Well, they have huge collective farms near Samarkand." I said, "Well, I'm going there on my next stop." She said, "Why are you interested?" I said, "Well, I just lived in Korea for two years." So, still doubting this, I went to the department store in Tashkent and in the ladies garment section, I saw unmistakable Korean traditional women's clothing and underwear. Having lived with a Korean family, I certainly knew what the stuff looked like on the line. I just was astonished. I got to Samarkand and found out that they were there, too. I asked the guide when I came in from the airport, "The Koreans, where do they live?" She said, "Oh, there are two very large collective farms." I said, "I don't really know if I'll be able to get out there." She said, "Well, probably not, but they're also selling rice in the farmers market." I went down to the farmers market and I saw this Korean, an older lady sitting on a donkey smoking a cigarette. I went up to her and asked her in Korean, "How much is this rice?" She answered me in Russian. I said to her in Korean, "I don't speak Russian. I speak English. I'm an American. And I speak your language." We got into a little conversation. It turns out that she and her people were from Mokpo in southern Korea, in the southwestern part, a very small and rough town. I said, "Well, I've been to Mokpo." She said, "No, you haven't." I said, "Well, I've climbed Yudalsan," which is a mountain in the town. She was astonished that someone actually knew the name of this town. She told me her story. They had been brought as slave laborers to Manchukuo by the Japanese in the 1930s. In 1937, they had escaped from Manchukuo across the border into Soviet Central Asia. Stalin, noticing these people who he probably thought looked Japanese moving into his territory, moved them as far away as he could think, which was Soviet Central Asia. They arrived in Uzbekistan and places like that at a historically propitious moment. They were probably asked by the locals, "What can you do? Do you know how to grow rice?" It seems that the Central Asian peoples, whose main dish is rice pilaf (or as they call it, "rice po"), didn't really know how to grow rice but had gathered it from swamps historically where they got it in trade with China or with India. But all that trade had been cut off. The population was rising. They really didn't have any good supply of rice. The Koreans built these huge electric lines and even colleges and some of them became quite well off in the Soviet Union.

Well, talking to Koreans in Korean excited the interest of the Soviet authorities. So, in my next stop in Volgograd (the old Stalingrad), as I got off the airplane, I noticed that there was not the usual Intourist guide, the usual woman, but there was a man who spoke flawless English with her and claimed to be a journalist and there were two other men who didn't seem to speak any language whatsoever who just watched him and her and just sort of hung around. The four of

them took me on a tour of the battlefield but also brought me through a TV studio and wanted to interrogate me in a TV studio about my attitudes toward the Vietnam War. I sensed that there was something strange. I was only 23 years old. So, I began to talk about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 as having been just as bad in my view as the war that was going on then in Vietnam. They didn't seem to like this very much.

In my next town, which was Moscow, actually nothing happened. But I got to Leningrad after Moscow and outside of the Hermitage, a strawberry blonde woman came up to me and asked me if I was a foreigner and if I would marry her. I asked her how she knew I was a foreigner. She said, "Well, you're wearing jeans." I said, "Well, a lot of Soviets are wearing jeans." She said, "Well, you're writing in a notebook." I said, "It's a Soviet notebook." She said, "Why would you be writing in a notebook if you were a Soviet? You're a foreigner." We paled around for three or four days and she became really importuning on marrying me. I more or less said, "No, I don't have the time to do that. I'm only going to be here for two or three days. I don't have the money to come back to the Soviet Union." So, my next stop, my final stop in the Soviet Union, was Kiev. I get to Kiev and I am picked up at the railway, as usual, by an Intourist guide, direct to the hotel. As soon as I get into my hotel room, the phone rings. Who knows me in Kiev? So, I just let the phone ring. But as the phone was ringing and ringing and ringing and ringing, I decided that maybe I ought to just pick it up to stop it from ringing. There was a voice on the other end, somebody speaking very good English asking me if I would stay in my room because a reporter wished to interview me about my impressions of Kiev. I said, "Well, I've only been here about half an hour. To tell you the truth, I don't have any impressions. Why don't we talk tomorrow?" "Well, nevertheless, you will wait in your room and the reporter will be there." So, the reporter came in wearing a trench coat (It was summer) and was probably in his mid-30s and was smoking one of those Soviet cigarettes that stinks. He sat down and began asking me about my trip in the Soviet Union. He already knew my itinerary, of course. He was particularly interested in my trip to Central Asia and my discussions with the Koreans there. Well, it was obvious that I was being interrogated. I guess it began around four in the afternoon and by around seven in the evening, I had told him everything I could about PC. He was convinced that the PC was a CIA organization. I looked at my watch and being the young American, I said, "Look, I have brought coupons for dinner and I must rush down to the restaurant because it opens at seven at closes at eight. If I don't get there right away, I won't get fed. It takes a half hour to get the lady's attention, a half hour to get the food. You're lucky to do it before closing time." He said, "Oh, well, no problem. We'll stay here in the room and continue talking. We'll just order up room service." I said, "Wait. I can't get food in a Soviet hotel restaurant and you're going to be ordering room service?" He said, "What do you think? This is a normal and modern country." He picked up the phone. He asked me what kind of food I wanted. I figured I'd better make points at this point, so I said, "Ukrainian food, of course." He said something on the phone and about five minutes later came this cart laden with food and bottles of cognac. He signed for it and turned to me for a tip. I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "A tip. 50 kopeks is enough." This really is a minimal amount of money. I realized that this guy was a government employee because he could sign the tab, but he couldn't put on a tip. So, we talked the whole evening. Then around midnight or so, he said, "Well, we'll continue tomorrow morning." I said, "No, we won't." He said, "What do you mean, we won't?" I said, "Because I will only be in Kiev for most of tomorrow and I really don't want to miss Kiev." He said, "Oh, well, I have a friend who has a car and he can drive you around and save a lot of time." I said, "Fine." It was a grey car, which was a distinctive

color that was used only by the KGB. His friend had a two grunt vocabulary and seemed to be interested only in driving this grey car. We sat in the back and while we went through Kiev - it was a pleasant enough visit – he asked me a lot of questions, more about PC and Korea. He showed me a book which he said proved that PC was a CIA prop. It was a book in Russian, but I could read the Cyrillic a bit. It said that PC had been expelled from Mozambique for CIA activities and PC had been expelled from another left leaning country in Africa for CIA activities. I said, “That’s ridiculous. It would never work, not in this generation of PC volunteers. The unrest on the campus... If anybody ever thought for a second that PC was being used as a spy organization...” When he came back to the hotel room, he repeated all the questions that he had asked me in the car in a kind of a summary fashion. So, obviously, the car wasn’t bugged but the hotel room was wired for sound. Then I left the Soviet Union.

Later on in my career, this interview was to be used against me by State Department security. They claimed that as a former PC volunteer and a perspective member of the Foreign Service, I put myself in a position that could have led to my being compromised. This was one of the things that they used against me. The way they knew about this was because I told them about this interview during the Foreign Service and they went through my file and found this and used it against me. My response was very simple, that I was a former PC volunteer and was not a U.S. government employee at that point, and I did not know... Maybe it was in the mind of God, but I didn’t know that I would be a Foreign Service officer some six years later. But it was something that later wound up used against me.

Q: When you got out of the PC, what were you up to?

SVEDA: I really was up to nothing. I was very draftable. I didn’t have any deferment from the PC, but my draft board decided not to draft me, which was very nice of them. I didn’t really have anything to do. At that point, if you were classified 1A, if you were draftable. Nobody would hire you because nobody would know how long you would be around. So, not knowing what to do, I went to the PC office in Washington and just by luck got a job at the PC training center at the University of Hawaii training PC volunteers for Korea. That gave me a nice bridge back into the world of work. I went to Hawaii, to the Big Island, and to Oahu, and to the PC training program.

Q: For how long did you do that?

SVEDA: That was only really from August/September of 1969 until February of 1970.

MARK E. MOHR
Peace Corps Volunteer, English Language Instructor
Taegu (1967-1969)

Mr. Mohr was born in New York and raised in New York and New Jersey. He was educated at the University of Rochester and Harvard University, where he studied the Chinese language. After service in Korea with the Peace Corps, he joined the

Foreign Service in 1969, and served abroad in Taipei, Taichung, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Beijing and Brisbane. In his service at the State Department in Washington, Mr. Mohr dealt primarily with Far East Affairs. After his retirement he worked at the Department of Energy on Nuclear energy matters. In 1997 he was recalled to the State Department, where he worked as Korean desk officer. Mr. Mohr was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Well let's talk about the Peace Corps then. You started in '67?

MOHR: Right, 1967 to 1969. I applied for the Peace Corps while still in graduate school, at the same time I applied to the foreign service. I felt that I first wanted to learn about Asia from the ground up, so to speak, and that going into the Peace Corps would be excellent training for the foreign service. Since it was impossible to go to China at the time, I applied for South Korea, as the nearest country available with a Confucian culture, and was accepted. I was a member of the third group to go out to Korea.

Q: How did you get in? How did they train you? How did you sign up for that?

MOHR: Well, when I filled in the application, they asked for your preferences. During our three-month training period, I found out that among the 120 trainees there, only three had asked for Korea. Apparently, most wanted to go to Latin America, especially Brazil. So those of us who had asked for Korea were pretty much assured of going there. During the training, approximately one-third were "selected out," and did not get the opportunity to go. Unfortunately, not all those selected out were eliminated for the right reason. Incredibly, in 1967, despite the U.S. having spent more than three years fighting the Korean War in the early 1950s, almost no one knew anything about Korean culture. Proof of this was that our main book in training, selected as the core for our cultural studies about Korea, was Ruth Benedict's The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, which is about Japan!

Apparently, the assumption was that Japanese and Koreans were basically the same. Thus, many people were selected out of training because they were too loud or too aggressive. Perhaps they would not have fit into Japanese society, but they certainly would have fit in well in Korean society. They were never given the opportunity. Most of the quiet, sensitive types were allowed to go to Korea, and many of them only lasted a few months, because Koreans happen to be more to the opposite of those quiet and sensitive type personality traits. When I arrived in Korea, I tried to reign in my personality because I had been told in training Koreans were quiet and passive. I taught English at a middle school in Korea, and the first night out with my teachers, they were shouting, singing, making a lot of noise, banging on their rice bowls with their chopsticks, and aggressively flirting with the waitresses. I knew then, over the course of the evening, that our whole training program was wrong. They trained us for the wrong country. Whoops!

Q: I am no cultural expert but I was in Korea in the Air Force as an enlisted man. The thing I liked about the Koreans was we ate with the Korean Air Force. We were all together and if you shoved in the chow line they shoved back. It was great; some people call them the Irish of the Far East.

MOHR: So true. The Koreans are up front. They are frank and they are honest. Now some people may not like that, but I did.

Q: Well I found it refreshing. Again as an enlisted man in Japan I was always hankering for Korea. I was there you might say in the worst of times because the war was on.

MOHR: You were there during the Korean War?

Q: Oh yeah.

MOHR: Oh wow!

Q: Yeah I was there in 1950 or 1951. I had taken Russian and we were monitoring the Soviet Air Force.

MOHR: So where were you based?

Q: I was based at Yan Se. We ate at Iwa. We were bused over to Iwa. And I spent a month up on Chonu Island. You probably don't know where that is.

MOHR: Weren't you glad you weren't in the infantry?

Q: Yes. Chonu was up off Yung Yung Poo, It was during the war we held those islands, so it was up in the Yellow Sea off North Korea.

MOHR: Really?

Q: Yeah, we were in, we had a British cruiser in the channel there. But as I said thousands of Americans had gone to Korea during the war. I mean if Stu Kennedy could come out with this impression, what the hell....

MOHR: One of the many things wrong with the training program—only this time through no fault of Peace Corps administration— was that at the time no volunteers had yet completed their two-year tours of duty. When they did, some went into training, and of course one of the first things they did was to hammer home the fact that Korea was quite different from Japan. The drop-out rate started to decline.

Q: Well that is as it should be. Ok, you had this...

MOHR: So I went directly from Peace Corps into the foreign service.

Q: OK, but let's talk about your time in the Peace Corps. What did you do? You were there for two years.

MOHR: I taught English conversation in Taegu, South Korea. Taegu is in the south, only an hour

from Pusan by train. In other words, I was going to go to Korea, but I wasn't going anywhere close to the demilitarized zone. If there was going to be another invasion, I wanted to make sure I could make a safe getaway.

Q: Well Taegu, that was where the naval academy was, wasn't it?

MOHR: No, that is Masan.

Q: We don't have a map but..

MOHR: (going to the map of Asia on the wall) Here on this map, here is Taegu, and the naval base is over here.

Q: What was the city like?

MOHR: Well it was a big city, as opposed to most of the villages where the majority of Peace Corps volunteers were based. Coming from New York City, I wanted to be in a city. Also, the allies had stopped the North Korean invasion in 1950 just north of Taegu, so the city had not been destroyed during the Korean War. But it was still very poor at the time. Most people did not have indoor plumbing. Taegu at the time I was there was a dusty, dirty city of about one million people.

Q: So you taught English?

MOHR: Just English, yes. During the first year, I taught at a middle school, first year English. But English is a hard language for Koreans to learn, because it is so different from their language. So in a year, if you can teach them to respond to "Are you a boy?" by saying "Yes, I am," rather than "Yes, she does," you're making progress. I did not want to go through this for a second year, however, so I asked to be transferred to a university, where I could actually talk to my students in English.

Q: Did you find the university students were more responsive?

MOHR: Yes, the students could speak some English.

Q: The classes tend to be very big.

MOHR: Yes, in middle school anyway. I mean there were 20-30 in university, but in middle school there were 60 in a class. It was a challenge to try to teach 60 in a class. One interesting thing is that Koreans, like most Asians, are used to being in a crowded society, so they have learned not to take up much space. You could only fit about 30 Americans into the class size occupied by 60 Koreans.

Q: How did you find them as students in the middle school?

MOHR: They were energetic and hard working students. But it was frustrating because their

progress was so slow. Now they begin English in the third grade, not in seventh grade, so by the time they are in junior high school, they have a working knowledge of English.

Q: How well were you accepted by the faculty at the school?

MOHR: I think most of the English teachers felt I was a threat, because I was a native speaker. But I had a co-teacher Mr. Lee Sang-mu, who was one of the finest human beings I have ever met. He was kind and understanding, and I don't know if I could have survived Korea without him. He loved the English language, and had a book containing Churchill's speeches, which he kept next to him on his desk. After I had been in Korea a few weeks, I noticed his eyes were moist. I asked him if he was upset. He replied, on the contrary, that he was very happy. He told me that it was his fondest desire to improve his English, but he never dreamed that he would be able to have an American sitting next to him for two years, so that whenever he had a question about English, he could just ask. We lost contact for many years, but about 12 years ago we got in touch again, and we have continued to write letters to each other. He is 85 and doesn't like e-mail.

Q: Did you make progress in Korean?

MOHR: Oh yes, although it took almost a year until I was comfortable. We only had 12 weeks of language training, and Korean is a very different language from English. So that added to the strains of the first year. In addition to the new surroundings and the food, you couldn't communicate much to people beside basic baby talk. You felt like a complete idiot, and most Koreans you met had never met anyone who couldn't speak Korean, so they were a bit puzzled as to why you couldn't communicate with them. You were always wondering if they thought you were a bit retarded.

Q: Were you ever in contact with the embassy?

MOHR: Once or twice, because when I was in Peace Corps, I had already passed the foreign service exam, so I was curious what life in the foreign service was like. I met some people at the Embassy in Seoul, and had lunch with one of them and dinner with another.

Q: How did you find the administration direction of the Peace Corps while you were there?

MOHR: Quite good. Kevin O'Donnell was the head of Peace Corps Korea, and he later became director of the entire Peace Corps. He was a very good director. Mel Merkin was our regional director for southeast Korea. He was based in Taegu, and easy to talk to. He was a very kind fellow. He was a lawyer who decided he didn't like practicing law anymore. He wanted to do something different. So we had adult supervision and it was pretty good, pretty caring.

Q: Did you come away from the Peace Corps with a positive view about the program?

MOHR: Most definitely. I mean, the thing that bothered me the most had been our training, but that was corrected. A lot of the people from my group, K-III (the third group to go to Korea) went into training. I went into the foreign service, but through the years and various Peace Corps

reunions, I heard stories from people in K-III about their various experiences training other Peace Corps groups. As for having been in Korea, I was very grateful. It accomplished its initial purpose: after surviving various parasitic infections and getting used to an outside toilet in the winter time, the little administrative and housing problems you incur in the foreign service did not seem so important. Also, I really have a warm feeling for the Korean people, and a special feeling for my co-teacher, Mr. Lee Sang-mu.

Q: Ok, well I am looking at the time and this might be a good place to stop, and we will pick this up the next time.

MOHR: That's fine, we're at the point where I've just finished Peace Corps and am about to enter the foreign service.

Q: Ok, we will pick it up then.

MOHR: That is good. Thanks, Stu.

JOHN ALLEN CUSHING
Peace Corps Volunteer
Wonju (1967-1970)

Mr. Cushing was born in New York City and raised in New York and Hawaii. He graduated from Reed College and continued studies at a variety of institutions in the US and abroad. After service in the Peace Corps, he held a number of positions as English language instructor before joining the Foreign Service in 1988. Mr. Cushing served abroad, variously as Consular, Political, Economic or Public Affairs Officer, in the Dominican Republic, Korea, Benin, Papua New Guinea, and Trinidad & Tobago. In Washington, Mr. Cushing served as Korean Desk Officer. Mr. Cushing was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: Where did you go in Korea?

CUSHING: I was in the town of Wonju which was southeast of Seoul, about 80 miles or so. It was just at the beginning of a fairly extensive mountain range that ran down the entire spine of the peninsula.

Q: What were you doing?

CUSHING: I was teaching English at a junior high school. I taught English classes there.

Q: How did you find Korea and the Koreans?

CUSHING: Very cold, freezing winters. The Koreans were quite interested in the United States. I think there was some residual bitterness about the fact they had been divided and the war and

so forth but also there was gratitude that the United States had saved them from being entirely communized. They were very ambivalent, very ambivalent but I lived with a very nice family. The husband was a teacher at the same school where I was and he rented me a separate little one-room house.

I almost died of carbon monoxide poisoning after I had been there a little while. I bought a charcoal burning stove to keep the place a little warmer than the ondol floor but one night I went out to a Chinese restaurant with a bunch of other teachers and drank a whole bunch of pegal, very strong alcohol, came back and left the stove on all night as usual and about 2 in the morning had a splitting headache so I pushed open the door and pushed my head out of the door and through to the courtyard and decided this is kind of nice, this cold air so I think I will just leave my head out here in the cold air and then next morning took apart the stove and found out the pipe had been completely gunked up so if I had not awoken with a splitting headache, and had not pushed my head outside, I would have probably just expired from the carbon monoxide.

Q: That killed a lot of people.

CUSHING: It did, about 2,000 people a year died because of cracks in the ondol floors.

Q: How did you find the educational system there?

CUSHING: Very rigorous. Education was in high demand. The junior highs had an entrance exam and not everyone got in. The kids all wore black uniforms, student uniforms, sort of military style, modeled after the Japanese school uniform with the caps. In the summer they wore lighter trousers and a white short sleeved shirt. They were not allowed to do anything except go to school and go home and study. They were not allowed into movie theaters while wearing their uniforms unless it was a school approved movie. Then they could all go. It was a very rigid hierarchy. The principal was sort of the god of the school and the vice principal was the enforcer and then there was a department chairman for mathematics and social studies and English and so forth.

I recall they had a specific class in anti-Communism at the time. They taught anti-Communism as a subject and they would have anti-Communist speech contests and anti-Communist poster contests and anti-Communist essay contests and any number of things.

Q: Did you get any feel for Park Chung Hee and his rule there?

CUSHING: The thing about Park Chung Hee was what I encountered later with the Shah of Iran; hang the photograph of him on your wall and don't bring him up at all. Make sure you have his photograph prominently displayed somewhere and don't talk about him. Just do not talk about him, period.

Q: This was a period where they were making quite an effort to allow people coming from more agricultural communities, which I assume yours was, to benefit, whereas so often governments will make the farmers bring their produce in and give them a low rate to let the city populace have cheap bread and Park Chung Hee was not doing that.

CUSHING: No. I think he wanted Korea to work toward self sufficiency in agriculture. Actually the first family I lived with, the father took an examination and was able to get a position in Seoul, so I lived with them from October to about January of '68 and they moved away to Seoul so then I lived in sort of a boarding house from February to about July and then in July of '68 I moved to a farming village about five miles outside of town. I lived with Korean farmers in a mud-walled, thatch-roofed farmhouse. We got water from the well, had no electricity. It was a very interesting way to live. All the food came from the farm. They had rice fields, they had vegetable gardens. We had kimchi and tofu and in the summer we had corn and potatoes and fresh vegetables. It was excellent food.

Q: How did you feel about kimchi?

CUSHING: Oh, I liked it, still like it.

We had a conference up in Seoul in January of '68 and about two days prior to the seizure of the Pueblo a team of North Korean commandos came down to assassinate Park Chung Hee. I happened to be hiking on the same mountain ridge as these 31 North Korean commandos so I was hiking along and was on my way back down when this ROK helicopter came by at a very low level bristling with guns and they motioned for me to go back up to the top of the ridge so I did. They had rounded up all the hikers and had them all in a group surrounded by these gun-packing soldiers and they screened each person and they saw that I was obviously an American so they said, "Get off the mountain." I said, "Sir. That's exactly what I am going to do. Goodbye," and I left. That night we were at Academy House in Su Yu Li, which was on the outskirts of Seoul at the time and there was a gun battle in the mountains up above so we all got up on the roof and watched the tracers and the flares and the mortar rounds and what not.

Q: How did you find teaching?

CUSHING: It was good. The kids were very diligent. There were an awful lot of them. They didn't light the stove until November 1 and they took the stove out on March 15th. It got plenty cold before November 1st and it was still pretty cold after March 15th. I would wear long underwear and a wool shirt and sweater just to try to keep warm.

Q: Were you teaching only boys or girls?

CUSHING: I was at Wonju Middle School, which was a boys' middle school, from '67 to '69 and then I did one more year at a small Catholic school that was coeducational. It was about 45 boys in a class and 15 girls. They sat the girls up front— so the boys wouldn't pester them, I guess.

Q: I know this from Seoul. The students would come to class and then they would, particularly by the time they got around to high school, be expected to go home and study for another three or four hours with their parents helping them. They didn't fool around.

CUSHING: That was pretty much it. Once kids got out of school, it was take your books and go

home and study. Some of the teachers made extra money by doing private tutoring at night. They would go to different kid's houses and study, help them study.

Q: Did you have much social life with your fellow teachers?

CUSHING: I'd go out drinking from time to time. I wasn't much of a drinker. I would go out and drink with them from time to time but sometimes we'd go on hikes together. We'd have a school hike. On Arbor Day all the kids would have to go up in the mountains and plant a tree. During school vacations I did a lot of traveling around on my own. I liked to just get on a bus and go; the roads were almost all dirt and the buses were converted army trucks. They just hammered some sheet metal over the bed of an army truck and threw in some benches and that would be a bus. The trains were very slow but that was pretty much the only way around, by train or very primitive bus. The road from Seoul to Chunchon was paved because it was considered a military road and from Chunchon to Wonju it was paved. From Wonju to Seoul through Yeosu was all dirt and everything south of Seoul was all dirt and east of Wonju was dirt.

It is kind of ironic because now, because of the traffic jams, if you are on a bus trying to get back to Seoul on Sunday night it can take you five hours. I would be telling the younger people in Wonju, "You know, when I was your age, it would take you five hours to get from Wonju to Seoul on a bus." They'd say, "Yes, it still takes five hours on a bus." If the highway is clear it is about an hour and twenty minutes.

In the summer of '68 one of my students had an older brother who was a Buddhist monk so he asked if I would like to travel around with him. So in the summer of '68 this Buddhist monk and I traveled to a whole bunch of different temples all over Korea and stayed at temples, which was nice. Traveled with him on the train and bus and went to He In Sa (which is where they have all the woodblock prints that we saw), went to temples in Chinju and in Masan and Pusan—a number of places.

Q: Did you have any contact with the embassy?

CUSHING: They tried to keep a very strict wall between Peace Corps and the embassy, although every time a new Peace Corps group arrived, the North Korean radio would say, "Another group of nefarious American spies has just landed in occupied Korea" and then they'd read all our names, so somehow the North Koreans got a list of all the names of the Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: Were you at all interested in the Foreign Service?

CUSHING: We'd go to the USOM (US Overseas Mission) cafeteria, which was near Kyung Bok Palace. It used to be the Overseas Mission; it is now the embassy building. We'd go to the cafeteria because we could get grilled cheese sandwiches and hamburgers there.

I took the Foreign Service exam for the first time in the cafeteria of the U.S. Overseas Mission in late 1969, I believe. One of the other Peace Corps volunteers had already been accepted into the Foreign Service and got a deferral to do Peace Corps for a couple of years before he went in.

From my Peace Corps group there were five who went in, I think before me. There is Leroy Norton who eventually ended up in economics and the Foreign Commercial Service, mostly in Australia and New Zealand. Doug McNeal, Leroy Norton, Russ Sveda, Mark Mohr and Dick Christenson. I joined considerably later than everybody else. Mark had already gotten in in '67 but he didn't have actually start until '69. Dick got in I think in '73, Doug McNeal maybe in '70 or '71 and Leroy Norton about that time too, and Russ Sveda probably not much later.

Q: How did you find Korean?

CUSHING: The language?

Q: Yes.

CUSHING: I wasn't a particularly good student during the training but once, especially once I was out living on the farm and there was nobody for miles who spoke English, my Korean got quite a bit better.

Q: Did you find sort of the class structure of Korean, you use a different form depending on whom you are talking to. I suppose in a farm community you don't get involved in as many of the, you might say the "niceties", did you?

CUSHING: No, they just spoke low form the whole time.

One of the things that was extremely striking was that virtually all the young men were in uniform and carrying a weapon, so it was not uncommon to be riding on a bus with a soldier who was carrying an M-1 rifle or an M-1 carbine or something. The same thing with the train; they had their weapons and helmets with them at all times. I guess it was standard procedure.

Q: They took the whole thing very seriously, and rightly so. This was not a minor exercise.

CUSHING: Following the assassination attempt on Park Chung Hee the Pueblo was seized two days later and then in either late '68 or early '69 there were 120 North Korean commandos landed on the east coast and it took months to hunt all of them down. As a matter of fact, they originally estimated they had 120 commandos but they ended up with more than 120 bodies because if they caught a South Korean out after curfew, they would shoot him and count him as one of the commandos.

Q: Koreans are rough.

CUSHING: Yes. The other thing they had was the Ye Bi Gun, which was sort of like National Guard, composed of army veterans. They had these uniforms and they'd keep all the carbines locked up at the police station or the local armory or something and if there were a rumor of a spy or guerrillas in the mountains or something, they'd call out the Ye Bi Gun from that village and arm them and send them all up into the hills.

Q: Were you getting any news or was there much talk about the Korean division in Vietnam?

CUSHING: We were told not to talk about that. Occasionally we would go to a bar and we would meet a Korean soldier who had served in Vietnam. They would talk a little bit about it. They would talk about how much tougher the Korean soldiers were than the Americans, how it took more bullets to kill a Korean than an American and so forth.

Q: The Koreans had quite a reputation in Vietnam for not taking any crap. I think the Viet Cong particularly left them alone.

CUSHING: Pretty much, yes.

Q: What had inspired you to take the Foreign Service exam?

CUSHING: One of the people I roomed with during Peace Corps training had already taken the Foreign Service exam and had been admitted. That was Mark Mohr and I thought, well, living overseas here in Korea is pretty interesting and if I were to get into the Foreign Service eventually I would be able to live in lots of different countries and learn different languages and so forth.

Q: So you got out in '69, was it?

CUSHING: I extended until July of '70.

Q: And then what?

CUSHING: Then I got a master's of arts in teaching from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. It was an offshoot of the Experiment in International Living, so I did a one year master's program which included a home stay and teaching in Mexico. At that point I learned Spanish.

Q: Compare and contrast Mexico and Korea.

CUSHING: Mexico was a little more laid back. The thing I noticed there was they had a very balanced view of how much you should work and how much you should relax. Korea was striving to catch up or to, well, at first just to rebuild from the war, I suppose. It was a very hard scrabble society when I was there in Peace Corps so I guess the central unit was the family and you know, maybe your classmates or something but essentially it was every man for himself. You had to work really hard. You had to study hard. The farmers worked hard, the people in the factories worked hard, the soldiers trained hard. There is something about having a cold winter that keeps your mind focused on your work whereas in Mexico, they were nice people. They were pretty laid back.

CYRUS R. VANCE
Presidential Emissary

Seoul (1968)

Secretary Cyrus R. Vance was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia on March 27, 1917. He received a bachelor's degree in 1939 and a law degree in 1942 from Yale University. He served as Secretary of the Army (1962-1963); Deputy Secretary of Defense (1964-1967); special representative of President Johnson in the Cyprus crisis (1967); U.S. negotiator at the Paris Peace Conference on Vietnam (1968-1969); Secretary of State (1977-1980); personal envoy to United Nations Secretary General on the Yugoslavia crisis (1991-1992); personal envoy to United Nations Secretary General on South Africa and Nagorno-Karabakh (1992); co-chairman to the United Nations-European Community International Commission on the former Yugoslavia (1992-1993); and special envoy to the United Nations Secretary General on Greece-FYROM negotiations (1993). Secretary Vance was interviewed by Paige E. Mulhollan on November 3, 1969.

Q: Did he do the same thing in the Korean mission in early 1968?

VANCE: Yes.

Q: How did that one come up? That was sort of a quick one, also.

VANCE: Yes, that came up just about the same way. I got a call from Dean Rusk that time, as I recall it. I knew that we had a crisis because the Pueblo had been seized, and there had also been the attack on the so-called Blue House, which is the Presidential palace. Secretary Rusk asked me if I would be prepared to go to Korea should it become necessary. He said that they had received a recommendation from the Ambassador Bill [William J.] Porter and from [Gen. Charles H.] Tic Bonesteel, who was our U.N. commander in Korea, saying that they felt that the situation was getting terribly tense and that it would be helpful to have a Presidential emissary come and talk directly with [Chung Hee] Park.

Q: Just to calm Park down, or to try and get some -- ?

VANCE: Primarily to do two things. First, to prevent any precipitate action in terms of a move to the North by Park and the Republic of Korea's army; and secondly, to talk with Park about the kinds of assistance which the United States was prepared to give. So it was a double barreled set of objectives that we were being asked to discuss with Park and his Cabinet.

Q: Did you talk to Mr. Johnson this time before you left?

VANCE: Yes, I did. I talked to him about two hours before I left. He called me on the phone and wished me good luck. I then took off and caught the plane here in New York, again with John Walsh, whom I had asked to have with me, and a couple of others. We flew to Anchorage and refueled and then on to Seoul where we began our around-the-clock sessions with President Park and the Foreign Minister and other members of his Cabinet discussing the situation.

Q: What was President Johnson prepared to do? I know he did announce a hundred million

dollars and some airplanes were sent in. Was he prepared to do more than that, anything necessary?

VANCE: No. President Johnson was prepared to provide a hundred million dollars of military assistance. He was terribly concerned that President Park might take some action in terms of a military move across the demilitarized zone into the North which could precipitate a war, and he made it very clear to me that President Park should be under no illusions as to the seriousness of any such action; and that if such a step were taken without full consultation with the United States that the whole relationships between our countries would have to be reevaluated.

Q: In a case like that, I know Park is one of the Chiefs of State that apparently Mr. Johnson had a very good personal relationship with -- does that kind of thing pay off in a crisis such as this was?

VANCE: It certainly does, and I think this is the reason why the Ambassador and General Bonesteel felt that it was important to have somebody coming as the emissary of President Johnson, because Park had great respect for President Johnson. When the President sent somebody to come and speak on his behalf, Park listened in a fashion that he could not or would not do for the people who were on the ground and there all the time.

Q: The situation was as tense as reported -- our intelligence was good in that case?

VANCE: Yes, it was terribly tense, and this became clear to us as soon as we got there and discussed it with Bill Porter and Tic Bonesteel and members of their staffs.

Q: But it wasn't really an attempt to get an agreement, in the sense of a document, so much as just a personal -- ?

VANCE: No. It was, as I said, to convey a clear message to him concerning any military action, and that message was that there could be no military action against the North without prior consultation with the United States, and that we felt very strongly that no such action should be taken; and that the negotiations with respect to the crew of the Pueblo should continue with the Americans meeting with the North Koreans without the South Koreans present. This was another one of the matters which we discussed with and received the approval of President Park to continue. We felt this was very important because we felt that to bring the South Koreans into the discussion at this point might jeopardize the success of the discussions. President Park agreed to this, and we kept him fully informed -- the Embassy kept him fully informed at all times -- on what had taken place as soon as each meeting at Panmunjom was terminated.

Q: You weren't connected with those meetings at all?

VANCE: No, I was not. So that he was fully clued in at all times on all conversations.

Q: But not a party?

VANCE: But not a party. This caused a good deal of pain for Park in his country, because

members of the opposition party attacked him for permitting discussion of matters affecting Korea -- the Republic of Korea -- to be going on without Koreans being present. So he showed considerable courage in going along with our request to abstain from being present at those meetings.

MORTON I. ABRAMOWITZ
Staff Member, Senior Interdepartmental Group
Washington, DC (1968-1969)

Ambassador Abramowitz was born in New Jersey and educated at Stanford and Harvard Universities He entered the Foreign Service in 1960 after service in the US Army. A specialist in East Asian and Political/Military Affairs, the Ambassador held a number of senior positions in the Department of State and Department of Defense. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research and as US Ambassador to Thailand (1978-1981) and Turkey (1989-1991). He also served in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Vienna. Ambassador Abramowitz was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 2007.

ABRAMOWITZ: My job title was staff member of the Senior Interdepartmental Group, part of the undersecretary's office. One of my principal tasks was to participate in an interdepartmental study of our military relationship with South Korea. There was then increasing unhappiness in the USG with Park Chung Hee and his government. The working group was chaired by the DoD representative, Earl Ravenel, a deputy assistant secretary in the Office of System Analysis in the Pentagon. The work of this group became particularly important after the *Pueblo* incident. Our study started with an examination of DoD's requirements for the defense of South Korea. Somehow, I became involved in a study of naval requirements, particularly mine-clearing efforts. This allowed me to travel to a number of military bases in the U.S., looking at what clearing capabilities were available and thinking on the issue. I also got involved in an examination of economic issues relating to South Korea as well as beginning the study of North Korea.

My sub-group eventually got combined with that of another working group created because of the *Pueblo* incident. The administration, in light of that event, undertook a study of the general American defense posture toward South Korea. Joe Yager became the chairman of this working group which consisted of about five members from DoD and State. I had known Joe since he was the DCM in Taiwan. I think that this was the first high level review of our relationship with South Korea for more than a decade. The questions posed were basic policy ones which was the reason it was under Seventh Floor supervision.

We finished our report in the spring of 1968 – I think. This was a time when our vision of Asia was essentially Vietnam. It permeated the Seventh Floor. We also had two divisions in South Korea and there was great concern about the potential for conflict on the Korean peninsula. The *Pueblo* episode was brought to an end when Cy Vance went to the Far East and sort of apologized for the “incursion” while leaving the ship in the hands of the North Koreans but

getting the crew. Our report outlined and recommended consideration of a program for the withdrawal of our ground troops from South Korea over a five year period – no gentle policy. There were considerable differences over our recommendations, but I felt that the group had to issue a report which said something and caught the attention of senior policy makers to make them face up to the hard realities then existing on the peninsula, even if they did not accept the broad recommendation.

I spent full time with this working group for five to six months. As might well have been expected, the report went nowhere in great part because it ran into election season. It provided fodder for a lot of discussion; it was praised in various quarters, but the bureaucracy was certainly not going to do anything about it, particularly since it was the end of the administration. It was partly resurrected by the Nixon administration when it tackled the Korean issue as part of a NISM study. It may well have contributed to the development and implementation of the “Nixon doctrine,” whose biggest manifestation was the removal of one division from South Korea. The work of this group came in handy later on for me, when I attended the Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS) in London on a sabbatical, where I wrote an Adelphi paper urging South Korea to start negotiations with the North on normalizing relations between the two countries. I felt such a move toward dialogue would inhibit a U.S. effort to remove all U.S. troops while negotiations were ongoing – my theory being that the U.S. would not wish to undermine the discussions by withdrawing the troops making the South Koreans anxious about their future. I felt further removal of troops beyond the Seventh Division – much discussed at the time – was very dangerous.

Regardless whether our Korea report went anywhere, the process of writing it forced people to look at the situation in Korea, especially in light of a terrible incident – the *Pueblo* – which could have generated a war. Furthermore, our policy needed review in light of the sizeable Korean contribution to the war in Vietnam. It was likely the view of the undersecretary that the issues were likely to be considered from a fresher perspective than might have happened if the study was under the control of the regional bureau. I think in general that is the proper approach to issues that have been dormant, frozen, or unreviewed for prolonged periods. I doubt that people who have to deal with these issues daily can easily step back and analyze a situation with fresh eyes.

When not dealing with the Korean review, I spent my time dealing with minor policy issues which arose in the under secretaries’ committee. The staff would review it and submit some recommendations to Art first and then to the Deputy Under Secretary. I don’t believe that I worked on any really major issues during this assignment. Indeed, I felt somewhat underemployed initially, until the Korean study was launched. The undersecretaries’ committee agenda was not filled with challenging items. Much was routine. Part of the reasons for that was that the U.S. government was falling apart at the time. Rusk was hardly talking to Katzenbach. Vietnam was absorbing everyone’s time with much effort being devoted to defending one’s views and attacking others’. The country was in ferment over the Vietnam War. The students were in a rage. It was somewhat akin to the recent atmosphere on Iraq. The exception today is that our military is highly regarded and respected unlike the situation in the late 1960's.

I wrote a paper in 1972 while at IISS which generated quite a stir and may have had some influence on policy makers. It was entitled “Moving the Glacier”. Not surprisingly it got plenty

of attention in Korea. The U.S. had just pulled out the Seventh Division from South Korea as part of the Nixon doctrine which called for more self-reliance on part of our allies. I noted that the long-range answer to the tensions on the peninsula – however remote – was a North-South dialogue leading eventually to a peace agreement and unification. I took the position that the withdrawal of our troops was inimical to the achievement of that long-range goal because it reduced any incentive the North might have in coming to the negotiating table. I mentioned this paper earlier while discussing my role as a member of the SIG review calling for a withdrawal of U.S. troops over an extended period of time in part on grounds that our participation in the Vietnam war had so soured the American public that it would probably not support any further American military involvement overseas and particularly in Asia.

But when I got to IISS, I took another look at the situation and came to a different conclusion, namely, that the presence of American troops in Korea was essential to the maintenance of stability on the Korean Peninsula and the achievement of long range goals of peace and eventually unification. Part of the reason for my change of view was that the U.S. domestic situation had changed. Furthermore, as the junior member of the SIG working group, I went along with the views of my seniors, who felt stronger than me; since 1968 I had gained considerable experience and knowledge and could strike out on my own. I also came to the conclusion that some sort of *détente* on the Korean peninsula and ultimately negotiations between South and North was essential. In fact, the two agreed to start talks in 1972.

I had been in Korea only once on one of my trips to the area. But as I said, I had learned a lot working in the undersecretary's office. My paper was published by IISS after I had left and, as I said, was widely read in Korea. Three years later, I think when I accompanied Secretary Schlesinger to Korea for an annual Security Consultative Meeting, President Park Chung Hee congratulated me for it. I also got a new Korean watch from him – as did all the other members of the Schlesinger delegation; the Koreans had just started a watch manufacturing enterprise. It stopped after a month.

JAMES F. LEONARD
Country Director, Korea Desk
Washington, DC (1968-1969)

James F. Leonard was born in Pennsylvania in 1920. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and served in the U.S. Army from 1942-1946. Mr. Leonard entered the Foreign Service in 1948. His career included positions in China (Taiwan), France, Russia, and Syria. This interview was conducted by Warren Unna on March 10, 1993.

LEONARD: Then we had this crisis in Korea. First the capture of the *Pueblo*, then the raid on the Blue House, where a North Korean commando team almost got a hold of President Park Chung Hee and killed him. That produced a real crisis in US/Korean relations. A little task force was formed as a result of a recommendation that Cy Vance made. Vance was asked by Johnson to go to Korea and talk to the Koreans about US/Korean relations. Vance came back very critical

of the character of our relations and of our policy toward Korea. Vance recommended that a study be done of the US/Korean policy, and he suggested that some people who never had anything to do with Korea should do the study so that they didn't have built in prejudices. So a good friend of mine, Joe Yager, was named to run that and Abramowitz and I joined his team together with a very capable colonel who was in the State Department on detail; the four of us did a study. At the time, I was working on disarmament and arms control matters in INR.

In the course of that study Joe Yager became involved in the negotiations to try to get the crew of the Pueblo back. Joe was given the responsibility for that. Then in the summer of 1968 I was sufficiently on top of all of that, so that I think I was accepted. In fact I probably wrote a lot of the stuff that was published about what really happened. I remember that one of our jobs was to write a long report for Senator Fulbright on what the Pueblo was really doing. The Pueblo was really victimized. It was outside of territorial waters. It was doing intelligence work -- no question about that -- but that has long been accepted as legitimate intelligence work. In fact I still remember the first sentence of the report I wrote for Senator Fulbright which said that "the communications' intelligence began with the warriors of one tribe listening to the tom-toms of another tribe." That sentence got knocked out before the final version went off to the Senator.

The relationship between the Administration and Senator Fulbright was a very dicey relationship, because by 1968 he had become very critical. We were at the period when Johnson was about to give up. McNamara was about to resign. Johnson was considering not running again. But on the surface nothing had changed. So I can recall with what minute scrutiny anything that we wrote for Fulbright was gone over by the people in the Department to make sure that there wasn't anything in there that could be used against us -- so to speak.

There was no doubt who we were working for. We were working for the White House. As was the case with a few individuals, the feeling was strong that if you just couldn't keep working comfortably, then you would resign, and a number of people did in precisely that. As far as Korea was concerned, I felt we were completely in the right and the North Koreans were a very dangerous crowd. I still feel that way today.

The chief of this little working group, Joe Yager, was named the negotiator for the recovery of the Pueblo crew. He did that for several months and then he resigned from the State Department and took a job outside. I guess he recommended me as his successor and I did take his place. Eventually some months later I became the Korean country director, and did that for the rest of 1968 and the first three or four months of 1969 during the period when the crew eventually did get released.

It was a very satisfying job. I was the lowest level that dealt with the negotiations. Those negotiations were considered super secret and I was not allowed to discuss them with anybody at my level or below -- only with my superior who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Ambassador Win Brown who had been Ambassador in Korea and who was Bill Bundy's deputy. He was put in charge of the negotiations, and over him was Katzenbach, and over Katzenbach was President Johnson. That was the pecking order. So I felt that what I was doing -- in trying to come up with some sort of way of dealing with this problem -- was a very responsible job. If anything it was a frightening responsibility because you knew that if the negotiations went wrong

in some way or other, it could be quite a serious problem.

I think I got a certain amount of undeserved credit for the success of the Pueblo negotiations. We used a rather bizarre formula to get the release of the crew and I was given credit for coming up with that formula. In fact, it was my wife who came up with that formula. The formula was that we would agree to sign a totally false piece of paper which the North Koreans had put on the table. It was a confession that the Pueblo had been inside the territorial waters, that it was an espionage, etc. All sorts of totally untrue things. We, in December of 1968, told the North Koreans that we would agree to sign that if they would release the crew. But we also told them that we would sign it only we could publicly denounce it before ratification as a complete and total fraud. We would also tell the press that we were signing it only in order to secure the release of the crew. The North Koreans grabbed that and it took approximately a minute and a half for the North Korean negotiator to accept it. I was in Washington; I wasn't out there. It was all done at Panmunjom. It was a typical oriental "face saving". Anyway, I got, as I said, credit for subtlety or duplicity or whatever. Maybe it was not deserved. Then I went to work for ACDA.

WILLIAM CLARK, JR.
SEATO Desk, Bureau of East Asian Affairs
Washington, DC (1968-1969)

Ambassador William Clark, Jr. was born in California in 1930. He graduated from San Jose State College with a B.A. degree in 1955. He served in the U.S. Navy intermittently from 1949 to 1953. In 1957, he joined the State Department, serving in Sierra Leone, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, India, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on January 11, 1994.

Q: So after studying Asia for a year, you were assigned to the SEATO desk in the Department?

CLARK: Right! The assignment was a curious one, obviously. EA was watching out for its officers and it indicated some reservation about the assignment, as I did. But I was told that it was just a temporary one. Then, as now, INR had first crack at anyone who was slated for an out-of-area assignment. That was me, because EA/P did not have a position for me at the time. I was interested in an assignment in Europe, but INR would have had priority. So I was assigned to the SEATO desk, which was still part of EA. It was part of the EA Regional Affairs Office. At the time, we had a SEATO "vault", where all the "secret" SEATO documents were stored. That was a perversion of the classification process! The Regional Affairs Office in EA had always been, and still remains, a somewhat curious office. It was a creature of the assistant secretary, who used the staff as he pleased. At times, the office was used for speech writing. When I was in it, it was not used that way by William Bundy or Marshall Green. We handled odds and ends and did not get involved in bilateral issues. We did have a strong relationship with USIA.

SEATO began in the 1950s; it was originally known as the "Manila Pact" for the city where the treaty was signed. So when I took the desk, the organization was about 10 or 12 years old. If I tried real hard, the work-load may have kept busy for 20 minutes per day. It was a very quiet

assignment. But it gave me an opportunity to stay current on Asian affairs -- the Vietnam war was raging. What other troops were there came largely from SEATO countries. The treaty relationship with Thailand sprang from the SEATO Treaty. So there were some issues, but it was hardly a full-time job. At the time, we used SEATO as a useful forum for discussion on military matters and also an avenue through which we could assure the Southeast Asian countries that we were interested in their security.

I sat in the same office with the US military officer who was on an exchange assignment from the Pentagon. Also there was Louise McNutt who had been in the Bureau for many years working on UN affairs. She kept her own files because she had absolutely no confidence in the central file system. That was useful for she could find almost everything she needed. We also had a regional affairs officer; he got me involved in a fledgling organization called ASEAN. Since I didn't stay in that assignment for less than a year, I didn't mind and I did learn something about Asia and its multi-lateral organizations. At the end of that year, I was detailed for three months to the UN Mission as the Asian advisor to the Delegation.

Every year, before SEATO Day, the Secretary of State recorded a SEATO message, which was sent to Bangkok, which, I think, was probably the only place that SEATO Day was celebrated. In 1969, I wrote the draft for a new Secretary of State, Bill Rogers. I cleared it with other parts of the Department. The day before it was to be read, EA had a staff meeting which gave me the opportunity to mention the message to the USIA representative who attended. This was shortly after Frank Shakespeare had become Director of the Agency. He was a great devotee of TV. Soon after the USIA man returned to his Agency, I got a call asking whether the Secretary could be televised giving this statement. Since this question had never arise before, I had to send a memorandum to the Secretariat, saying that we were planning to televise the Secretary. Since time was of essence, I walked the memorandum to the Secretariat. The next day, we started to set up camera's in the Secretary's conference room. Before we were ready the Secretary strolled in and asked whether he could get started. I told him that we were not quite ready, but that we would be ready to televise him soon. He looked startled because he apparently was caught unaware. He went back to his office and read the riot act to his staff. He had not been briefed and was not ready. Finally he came out and did two takes; he reviewed them later and asked me which I preferred. I said I liked the second one; he said he preferred the first, but he said that we could which ever take we wanted. That was my first meeting with Rogers, but certainly not the last! Later, the Secretariat called the office of the assistant secretary to chastise me for "surprising the Secretary". I told the front office that the Secretariat had had the memorandum for twenty-four hours and if the Secretary was surprised, it was not EA's fault. The Secretariat could always have told me that it would not be done! I was too junior at the time to realize that if you had a matter for the Secretary, you dealt with his special assistant and not the Secretariat bureaucracy. When I became more seasoned and knowledgeable about Washington, that slip would never have happened. The TV tape was then shown on Washington stations.

While on the SEATO desk, I did attend a SEATO meeting in 1969. It was Rogers' first solo visit overseas. At the beginning, he was just going to the SEATO meeting. Then someone decided that he should stop in Vietnam first and as long as he was stopping in Bangkok, he should also stop in Karachi on the way to a CENTO meeting in Ankara. Then he went to Europe. I stopped in Bangkok and returned to the US from there. When we landed in Saigon to let the Secretary

and most of the party off the plane, I told the pilot that I too would like to deplane to watch the arrival ceremonies, which were always a show when a senior American official landed. The pilot said: "Fine, but if any shooting starts, I am leaving". That led me to the conclusion that I could watch the ceremonies just as well through the window on the plane. As I said, I returned on my own from Bangkok. In those days, there were such things as "excess foreign currencies" -- Pakistani rupees, Israeli shekels. So I had a choice of going through Karachi or Tel Aviv on the way back to the US. I went to Israel; it was my first visit to that country; it lasted for an hour while the plane refueled. All we had to do is be able to say that we had landed in the right place and that permitted us to use the "excess foreign currency".

The SEATO meeting was an interesting experience. Being new to the desk officer job, I did a lot of preparation in Washington. I looked at the files reflecting previous meetings. I found that SEATO had always issued a communique, which had historically been drafted by the SEATO Secretariat. I decided I would take a crack at a first draft, which I did not send to Bangkok, but cleared it within the Department. I knew it would be debated once the meeting got started. I should mention that after each SEATO meeting, there was a special session for all countries that contributed troops to the Vietnam effort. Out of that meeting, there had also always been a communique. A draft had been prepared for that meeting and on our way to Bangkok, the Secretary was reviewing the comments that all of the contributing nations were making. It looked like an interminable process. There was not a single comment about a SEATO communique. Rogers was delighted and thanked me for doing a terrific job on that paper. We had not told him that we had not yet circulated it for comment. The Secretary got off in Saigon and I went on to Bangkok. There I asked the Embassy officer handling SEATO affairs -- John Kelly, now our Ambassador in Finland -- where the SEATO Secretariat's draft was. He said that there wasn't any. I knew that there had always been such a draft, so I suggested that we go over to the Secretariat to see what they were up to. General Vargas of the Philippines was the Director General of SEATO at the time. The Deputy Director was a USIA officer. We asked him where the SEATO draft was. He told us that it was on the third draft. So John and I, without even looking at it, went to all the other SEATO delegations, including the Thai, to give them a copy of our draft. We talked to some, like the Australians and New Zealanders and the British. When the delegations finally met, the Secretariat passed out its draft and asked that it be used as the working document. The British representative said that all the delegations had the American draft and preferred to work from that. The Secretariat representative pointed out that his staff was only available in the morning and therefore work had to be done during those hours. To which the American representative, George Aldrich, replied that the delegations would work also in the afternoons and that if they need the Secretariat, they would call. So we worked all day on my draft and finished by evening. That worked very well. So Rogers, by sheer luck, was right in his comments because in the final analysis, it was our draft that was essentially passed without any major changes.

The American delegation was headed by the Secretary, of course. George Aldrich, the Department's Legal Advisor, was there. I was his deputy on the communique drafting committee. Bill Sullivan was there to handle Vietnam issues. Charlie Small was there. Admiral John McCain, CINCPAC Commander, was there. No senior member of the EA Bureau was there, which was an indication of the importance we attached to SEATO. Bill Rogers wanted conclude all discussions as quickly as possible. The Foreign Ministers who headed the other delegations

loved to go through the communique word by word. Rogers thought that after the drafting committee had finished with it he could have the afternoon off, which he did. Rogers wanted to finish the communique; he pushed very hard for approval saying that he had full confidence in the drafting committee. The New Zealander offered an amendment to it in the final minutes of the meeting, at the behest of the Vietnamese. But he was not quite sure what he was amending; neither was anyone else quite sure. But Rogers said that we all agreed with the proposal and it was approved. It took us two hours afterwards to figure out what the New Zealander had proposed and where it would fit in the communique.

There were a couple of other interesting events during this meeting that come to my mind. One actually led to my next assignment. I mentioned that the CINCPAC Commander was attending the meeting. He had a Political Advisor, furnished by the Department of State, Bob Fearey. Bob had a reputation in the Foreign Service as being very difficult to work for. He was in Bangkok after having stopped in Saigon with the group. But some of McCain's staff went ahead to Bangkok. When it arrived, they noted that they didn't have the CINCPAC's briefing book. I told them that I had taken them to Honolulu and left them there. I suggested that they ask the Political Advisor; they said they would prefer not to do that. So I offered to provide them mine and my boss' -- he was up in Chiang Mai. I changed the names on the covers and gave them to the CINCPAC staff. The next evening, I saw Bob Fearey and asked him whatever happened to the briefing books I had left with him in Honolulu. He said he had them with him. I told him that one of them was McCain's. He said that he would give him the copy ASAP. That was essentially my introduction to Fearey who later chose me to be his assistant in the civil administration function in Okinawa, on the basis of our attendance at the SEATO meeting.

Leonard Unger was our Ambassador to Thailand. He had been there for several years and knew more about SEATO than any of the officers working on the subject. One day, I got an urgent call from the Embassy's deputy Political Counselor. He told me that the Ambassador wanted to change the briefing books. I said I would be glad to talk to him to see what he wanted done. The Embassy officer noted that it might be difficult to change the books since the Secretary already had his copy. I knew that the Secretary had not opened his book. I was in my little hotel room when Unger called. We negotiated the changes over the phone and I made them in the Secretary's book. Rogers never knew; as far as I know, he never looked at it at all. This SEATO meeting was typical of many such gathering. Speeches were drafted and cleared in a car coming and going to meetings or meals.

SEATO was never an important institution. The officers we used to assign to it were always frustrated. Whenever they were asked to research anything, they would go look for documents in the Secretariat and find that they were so far out of date to be useless. SEATO was kept alive because it provided a psychological support base in Southeast Asia at a time when we were involved in a war in that region -- a war that was not a smash success either in Vietnam or at home. Admiral McCain paid some attention to it; he had a large staff devoted to liaison with the organization. It had some aspects of prestige for him. I remember that he wanted to come to the SEATO meeting in 1969 on the Secretary's plane. Dick Pedersen, who was the Counselor of the Department and in charge of the Secretary's travels, and I were working together on the seating on the airplane. He was not very much in favor of making room for CINCPAC on the plane. So I finally told the military aide that we would save one seat for McCain. That raised eyebrows

because the CINC never travels alone; he always had an aide with him. I said that I was sorry but that we had room for only one person. The aide went to McCain who said that he would take it. He traveled from Honolulu without an aide! The plane was configured to have a table in front. At that table, sat Pedersen and his wife and McCain and Bill Sullivan. When McCain joined the group, he asked Mrs. Pedersen if she minded if he smoked. She said "no". So McCain proceeded to pull out a big cigar and lit it. He saw precious little of the Secretary during the trip, as far as I could tell. I remember at one time, he was trying to find something in the briefing book. He said to Sullivan: "God-damn it. I can't find anything in my god-damn briefing book without my god-damned aide!". During that whole trip, it is highly unlikely that the Secretary and McCain had much of a chance to discuss anything at any great length. In Saigon, he had to go see the troops, in Bangkok he had his own Committee to attend while the Secretary attended the Foreign Ministers' Committee.

Q: You said that you spent about a year on the SEATO desk, part of which were devoted to assisting the US Delegation to the UN. How did that come about?

CLARK: When the UN General Assembly meets in the Fall of each year, each geographic bureau sends a representative to New York to be an advisor to the US Delegation and to see it on meetings that the Secretary might have with his counterpart from countries in their region. The UN person in EA was in the same office with me, but I was the underemployed staff member. So early in 1969, I was asked whether I would go to New York for the General assembly meeting. That sounded like great fun and I readily agreed, even though it meant postponing my arrival in Okinawa -- my next assignment for a couple of months. I wanted to see how the UN worked without being assigned there for a long time.

I spent my three months in New York, working on EA issues as they arose during the Assembly meeting. I also met with representatives of other EA countries to discuss the issues of the moment. That was in part to enable the US delegation to have someone that could go to each East Asia country delegation to garner support if needed for US position. We were supposed to know what the sentiments of each delegation were, whether they would be amenable to changing positions, what might be done if policy changes were to effected. You become the "whip" for a geographic region.

I sat in on all the meetings the Secretary had with East Asia Foreign Ministers. That does not happen today because the regional assistant secretaries or their deputies do that. Rogers did not like to have many people in those meetings; so there may have been two or at a maximum three Americans attending these one-on-one sessions. I don't believe that the assistant secretary was there. So it was usually the Secretary, a member of the US Delegation at the UN, myself and the Country Director -- sometimes. In those days, the US contingent was very much smaller than today. Over time, the Fall meetings grew into a major exercise with ever increasing representation from Washington.

I learned that countries tended to send some good people as members of their UN Delegations and as part of their Permanent Representative offices. We had very little to do with the UN Secretariat; it was essentially a paper-pushing and locating operation. I met Tommy Koh of Singapore -- the UN was his first Ambassadorial posting. I remember talking him into voting in

support of us on some issue. After I first had made my pitch, he said that he thought he would abstain. I told him that we would be grateful if he could vote with us and asked him whether it would not be possible for him to check with his home base for some new instructions. He said he had already been instructed. I asked him what the instruction were. He said: "I am instructed that whatever I am not instructed on, I am to abstain".

The year 1969 was the last year we were able to successfully defend the Republic of China against that "menace from the Mainland"; that is, we were able to have the China seat remain in Taiwan's hands for another year.

In general, I concluded that the UN was a useful instrument of international diplomacy. Of course, it was a lot more talk than action, but there was enough done to suggest that it was a useful forum. We worked very hard to prevent further erosion of our Vietnam policy. The Soviets kept threatening to table a resolution of disapproval, but in the final analysis, never did. We also worked hard on the China Sea issue and the Korean issue -- that dreaded North Korean resolution to end the UN Command and withdrawal of all foreign forces from the peninsula. Of course, all members of the US Delegation got involved in Middle East issues. My colleagues were an interesting group. I had my onward assignment; the ARA representative was on his way out; AF sent Dean Brown, who was an Ambassador. So each bureau was represented by very different levels of officers, as had been historically true.

EDWARD W. KLOTH
Peace Corps Volunteer
Seoul (1968-1971)

Mr. Kloth was born in North Carolina and raised in New York. After service in the Peace Corps and private business, he worked with the Department of Defense, later joining the State Department. In his career with State, Mr. Kloth served several tours in Japan and Korea, In Washington assignments he dealt with East Asian, Political/military, Economic and Environment matters. He also spent two years on Capitol Hill as Department of State Pearson Fellow. After retirement, Mr. Kloth continued as advisor to the Department on variety of matters and served a tour in Iraq as Economic Officer. Mr. Kloth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: Well, let's talk about going to Korea as a Peace Corps volunteer. Do you want to talk about first the training and then what they were preparing you for? And then what you actually did and saw?

KLOTH: President Kennedy, of course, had started Peace Corps in the early '60s. We were told that the Korean government had asked for Peace Corps to come in as one of the initial programs. But the U.S. government refused because Korea's leader, former General Park Chung, came in via a coup d'etat, so the U.S. refused to send Peace Corps in then as part of the pressure on the coup makers to "democratize." By '66, Park's government had held elections, which he won to

no one's surprise. The U.S. also wanted Korean troops in Vietnam, so the Johnson Administration sent Peace Corps to Korea. I've never reviewed the diplomatic record, so I'm not sure of the timing of decisions. The U.S. Administration did a lot more for Korea to reward it for sending its troops than just send a few recent college graduates to Peace Corps/Korea.

Q: Looking back Park Chung Hee was basically positive, I mean if you are looking at a country...

KLOTH: Well, in terms of development on the economic side, Korea was when I got there in '69 still a poor country. It had a long tradition of literacy, and there was a very strong drive in almost every family to educate their kids. The Japanese colonial government had started schools and a school system that the Koreans then built on with some assistance from us, but I think Koreans get the primary credit. Korean families didn't rely just on schools because they had an entrance examination system for university in particular, for companies, for government. Kids would also go to cram schools, if their parents could afford it. That was a big "if," but as the country moved up on the economic scales more and more families could.

Peace Corps was primarily an education program. Volunteers first were put in middle schools and high schools as English teachers. There was one group of science teachers, and one did rural health. By the time our group started training in '68, Peace Corps Korea decided to focus on teaching the teachers by putting us in university English and English education programs. We were in the seventh and eighth groups.

Earlier programs had problems. Middle and high school classes were so large that the spoken English program had minimal impact. We teach Foreign Service officers Korean for two years to get them to minimal professional competence, so you can guess what a struggle it was for the health volunteers after three months Korean which is what Peace Corps training was.

Most of the English teachers, in fact, did not speak English well. Many senior professors when I got there had been trained and gotten their degrees under the Japanese. They could often read quite sophisticated literature and could do things such as parse sentences in ways that I had forgotten, but they often couldn't speak with a great deal of fluency. No practice. After the false starts, Peace Corps decided to teach the teachers

Our two groups started in October in Hawaii. My group – K7 because each group had a number beginning with the first being K1. Our job was to teach in the English departments, and the K8, many of them had teaching experience or MAs, were to teach in education departments at the universities. We spent three and a half months, two and a half months on the big island, in what had been a World War II era military hospital with simple wooden walls, but in Hawaii, that was fine. We were taught Korean; we were taught English teaching methods, and we had Korean culture and history classes. We spent the last month on Oahu practice teaching and getting ready to go.

Korea Peace Corps had the highest extension rate - that is at the end of two years people wanted to stay another year, and the highest early out rate, meaning someone wanted to leave short of the normal two years, of any country in the Peace Corps at the time. There was therefore a lot of

concern among the Peace Corps staff about trying to figure out who would stay two years and who wouldn't. The goal was to drop the trainees who weren't "likely" to stay. There were two reviews; a mid level review and a final review. They didn't exactly fire people, but if they thought they didn't want to send someone, they "counseled" until they decided to drop out and perhaps ask to go to another country. Except one guy who said, "What do you mean I shouldn't go? I'm in the top Korean class, and every other. Did any of the Korean teachers say I shouldn't go?" They backed down. He went.

Q: Did you ever figure out why...I can understand a retention rate because you are moving into a society that really loves education. Education is extremely important, so teachers get respect, but why the early out? What was the problem?

KLOTH: Within the training I think we started with 130 plus and 80 plus went. In the first week or two there were a lot who said, "I don't want to do this." Korea was a tough military dictatorship; it's physically tough; it's very cold in the winter, and we were in unheated classroom. There's a hard driving quality to Koreans which is why they've gotten where they have in terms of the success story in economic and now political development. All those factors, I think, combined to make it a place where if you decided, you don't really like it, it was a little hard to sort of isolate yourself with your books or travel around in-country or something and make do. Remember too this was 1968.

The North Koreans had taken the USS Pueblo. In fact, in December, when we were in training, the Pueblo captives, the sailors aboard the ship and the Marines, were released while we were there. The North Koreans had been and were still running armed infiltrators some of whom had been up in the mountains and had gotten shoot outs. People, including civilians were killed. So the Koreans had 50,000 troops in Vietnam and supported their troops as it were. So for an anti-Vietnam War American or even someone just coming from the atmosphere of a U.S. campus, even if they had no strong political views, this was a tough place.

You had to agree you were going to cut off your beard or moustache, and trim your hair because it was a very conservative society, and the schools were a very conservative part of that. Friends who had been in Peace Corps in some other parts of the world told me that they worked hard, often under rough conditions, except for Korea's cold, perhaps rougher than we did, but that the host country atmosphere was much more laid back. But maybe that's why some of those countries are still in pretty paid shape, while Korea is a world leader in electronics. Then too, being trained in Hawaii in fall and then arriving in Seoul in January was more than a cultural shock.

For some volunteers, and probably most of us felt this way at some point, teaching English at a university in a major city wearing a coat and tie was not exactly a cutting edge Peace Corp-type job. Peace Corps' image was say working in a farming village.

Q: Okay, well you went out in January of '68?

KLOTH: '69, we started in October of '68 and January of '69 we arrived. It was very cold; school started in March, so we spent two weeks in a Korean inn. They called them a yogwan; it

was a hotel, but the bathroom was down the hall sort of thing. Then we were put in families. No modern apartments to speak of in Seoul then. I had a very nice family, and they worked hard to make me feel at home. The president of our university had gotten her MA from USC (University of Southern California), and she had had one or more exchange students from the U.S. prior to our coming – two of us were assigned to the same university. The prior Americans hadn't apparently adapted well, so she was very solicitous.

I found among the professors there was a big cut. There were younger ones just starting to come back with U.S. PhDs. They spoke English well and were up on the latest. But many senior faculty, as I said earlier, had had much of their education under the Japanese and hadn't been able to go abroad. You can imagine what that means for a professor of English. You could feel the stress between the professors. For example, the head of my department was one of the older generation. He was very stand-offish when I first met him. Then one day in the faculty lounge - when I say lounge it was a room with a big pot bellied stove in the center of it - I'd just come from my Korean class, so he asked me what I was doing, and I told him in Korean. Suddenly he opened up, and from then on I always made a point of speaking to him in Korean. He was now my "teacher." We got along well because there was no danger other faculty or students would hear his awkward spoken English. It was a valuable lesson for my future work in the Foreign Service. Help the other guy do his job, and odds are good he'll help you do yours.

Q: Where were you?

KLOTH: I was at Chung-Ang University in Seoul for two years. I extended for a third year and spent it at the Supreme Court's Training Institute. Seoul at that time was a much different city than the great metropolis it is now. Korea was very poor; it was beginning its take off. I think it was just starting to lift off. It was not at altitude by any means. The Koreans were exporting a lot of cloth; they were doing screwdriver plant sort of activities. But they had a very planned development track, which was highly successful and modeled on the Japanese success. There were a lot of Korean laborers in places like Saudi Arabia and Iraq and Vietnam, working for Korean firms who gave them some spending money and deposited most of their pay in banks at home. Now the Korean firms abroad hire Filipinos or workers from similar countries to do the blue collar jobs in foreign countries but in 1969 Koreans did that tough work. When I started in '69, it was the cloth that was being exported rather than clothing. If you wanted something made like a shirt, you went down to the Korean market and ordered one, and they made it for you.

Q: How did you find the students?

KLOTH: At first I was depressed, because most spoke poor English even at the university level. After a semester though, I realized it was amazing that some of them could speak English very well, given the obstacles, large classes, teachers not fluent, and high school classes focused on preparing them for university written exams, and spoken English was not part of that; it was impressive that any spoke English at all.

Q: How did you find the class situation?

KLOTH: I had 20-40 students with two sessions a week for each student. When I first went to

the university, the Peace Corps Seoul representative, who had gone out and scouted all of these places, wasn't sure I would get the support from the school I needed in terms of size of classes or frequency of classes. When I got there, however, I found that not only did they live up to the agreement, but if I came up with things, they were enthusiastic. I found I could get an English-language movie at the U.S. Embassy's cultural center. When I asked if the university had a projector and could give me a room to show it, the administration immediately did so. We started showing one a month! I would discuss it later with my class; but it was open to everybody in the school. These were not top run Hollywood movies, but things like Winston Churchill or Franklin Roosevelt's life -- these kinds of things. But the university was always very serious about supporting me.

I worked in a Korean organization. I think you come out of the Peace Corps with a different experience than if you work for an American business abroad, let alone the U.S. government. You are working in a Korean organization, and you have to figure out how that organization works. I'm not sure I figured it out but that's what you have to try and do. You are not in a position where you are telling people what to do or these are what the USG wants or else, or these are the rules of our American company.

Q: My experience in the outside is that the Korean organizations are very much driven by those above. The people below really are expected to produce, and if they don't, you just feel the tension and the sweat popping out, because they are given a task and they are supposed to do it.

KLOTH: Right. The university president very much ran the place. What was unique about Chung Ang was that the head of the university had created it herself, and she was a woman. In 1968 Korea and even today there aren't many woman university presidents in Korea. This was a coed university, there is a university that's a woman's university and yes there is...

Q: Like Ewha.

KLOTH: Yes, but this was a coed school, and she was quite a character. She would be out there when the students were demonstrating, and she would go out there and tell them to get back into class. They would but the next day they'd demonstrate again, and sooner or later run out the gates and clash with the police. You are talking about the top down and do what they say, but it's also the people at the top, at least the better ones, really feel that they have a responsibility that goes down the line as well. It was fascinating and with that I decided to stay a third year.

I visited the East Coast before I finally decided to stay. I had some money left over because I lived very modestly, and the school paid for my housing and things were cheap. So a Korean friend who was my colleague and I went out to the East Coast and its beautiful mountains. We met a Peace Corps friend out there who was living in the scholar's house of an old yangban, the old Korean nobility. It was just idyllic, cold, but idyllic -- mountains and ocean. And the air was so clean. Seoul was pretty gritty with charcoal used for house-hold heating, and trucks, buses, and cars belching fumes.

Peace Corps and Fulbright had a legal training program run by two lawyers for judges and prosecutors and the students at the Korean Judicial Training Institute. AID and the Korean

government together sent ten to twenty Korean judges and prosecutors, there were almost no private lawyers at that time, to Berkley Law School for a year. Peace Corps provided English teachers for three year long and summer intensive programs. When the PC director heard I wanted to stay another year, he pulled me in. “We need to keep this program going and your colleagues (two lawyers) have been working it. They’re leaving. There’s a lawyer that AID has brought in to do the legal classes, but I need an experienced English teacher. I would like you to pick up the English teaching side of this and work with the lawyer.” So I let him sort of hornswaggle me into doing that and didn’t go out to the East Coast.

Q: What sort of impression were you getting of the political situation there?

KLOTH: Two years at university and then a third with legal professionals gave me a view into two different parts of Korean life. In the university the students would demonstrate in the fall and the spring; Korean University, Yonsei University and Seoul National University were the ones who would demonstrate first.

Q: These were the top schools?

KLOTH: These were the top schools, and then it would sort of go down the academic ladder, and the others would then start demonstrating. This activism, of course, came out of the April revolution that overthrew President Syngman Rhee. Large student demonstrations in front of the presidential mansion and then the police either lost their nerve or got overly aggressive or both, and shot into the crowd and killed some students, and then it all came apart in terms of support for the government. That started a tradition for politically active students – rush out and confront the police.

When I was there in the early ‘70s, the students would demonstrate. The issues would vary, but usually with anti the Park government; these were not anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. In one of my first English club meetings with my students I was verbally assaulted as to why the U.S. government was supporting the Korean dictatorship in Korea and then lit into because American students were not supporting our soldiers in Vietnam fighting Communists. In many, many subsequent conversations, I realized both of these tracks were alive and well in the minds of many South Koreans of all ages.

One of the best points made in our training was that Korea has a love-hate relationship with the United States. You will never be treated better than you will be by Koreans. If you are in a bar and start talking with people, your money will no longer be any good. Strangers will want to treat you. On the other hand, certainly there is plenty of resentment. Because you speak Korean, you’ll understand some of the nasty comments about “American SOBs” from some guys at another table. Of course, the same guy bad mouthing you will flee with embarrassment when someone tells him you understand. Or worse yet, he’ll want to buy you a drink to make friends! The basic issue is Koreans want to control their national fate. They’re grateful for the alliance but resent Washington making decisions too often with “notification” rather than consultation – we decide and then tell them, hopefully before we tell the media.

Q: What about the menace to the North? What were you picking up from your students?

KLOTH: Well, I think at that time the students, like many Koreans, were anti-Communist, but felt one, that the divided-country situation had been created by the United States, first with the agreement with the Soviets in WW II as to who would occupy where. Then, in many Koreans' opinion, we didn't carry through and do whatever we had to reunite Korea after the North Korean attack. On more than one occasion students and plenty of other Koreans asked, "Why didn't you let MacArthur finish the job?"

If you brag a lot about powerful a country you are, as we tend to do, you shouldn't be surprised if, when you get a stalemate like the Korean War, people who feel they're suffering from the outcome believe you left them in the lurch. Of course, there were other factors contributing to the resentment. Koreans rightly felt the Japanese trampled on Korean culture. We Peace Corps volunteers were part of a wave of change as Korea sought to develop as rapidly as possible and still keep their "Koreanness." You'll recall there was a "culture war" going on in the U.S. too then.

Q: Did you feel under constraints either from the Peace Corps authorities or the Korean authorities or just by inference about how to treat descent within the Korean student body?

KLOTH: We were told before we went to understand the U.S. government was sending us to Korea and that with Korean troops in Vietnam, it was inappropriate for us to engage in demonstrations against U.S. policy in Vietnam or to be a heated advocate against U.S. policy in Vietnam. As I recall, we were also told we could take a teacher's approach on any U.S. policy. You could say that this is the U.S. government policy and here are the anti-war groups, criticisms. We were also told correctly that we could expect the Korean authorities would keep a close watch on us and that, if the government felt we had crossed the line on anything from anti-Park statements to wild behavior, the Koreans could tell us to leave and Peace Corps would have to comply.

Q: It was very difficult during that period there were protests on the part of the Peace Corps volunteers. How about the Kent State business when, this is in the spring of 1970 when the National Guard actually fired on students at Kent State University and killed some.

KLOTH: Right, there again the usual line from older Koreans and particularly older professors was "that's what happened in 1960 in Korea and that's why the riot police don't have guns. But that's also why we aren't going to let demonstrations get out of hand."

The Korean government's response to the demonstrations was to - because they had intelligence agents among the students or students who would tell them and also you just knew it by the calendar. As you got near April 19 and school started in the middle of March, so by April 19 they would bring up the riot police in Chevy flatbed trucks, these aren't trailer trucks but trucks with a flatbed. They would have a fence wire screen over the top of it and the riot police had on helmets made of helmet liners and attached to them were...

Q: Like a bib?

KLOTH: Yeah, a kind of bib filled with sand on the back to protect the nape of your neck. Then they had a wire screen that would be pulled down over the front. Then they had shields and Billy clubs and shotguns with teargas attachments on them. They also had at that time what they called pepper fog sprayers; they were also used in the spring and summer against mosquitoes. They just carried them on the truck itself; later on they progressed to more armored trucks or things with mortars that would fire teargas shells. They weren't lethal unless you got hit by the shell it wasn't lethal. But basically they would come in and the students would meet either in front of the soccer field or the campus square; they would meet there and they would rally and talk and chant and sing. Then at some point they'd try to go out the gate and the cops would, at different schools and at different places, the cops would block it with a Roman legion shield wall and they'd fire teargas. Then they would at some point; usually they would let them block the traffic for a while too to annoy the rest of the citizens who are sitting in traffic. I think it still works this way but certainly it worked this way up to the mid-'90s when I was in Seoul seeing them. It was all highly choreographed; I mean each side knew what the other will be doing. Then at some point the police would say that they had to get the traffic moving again. The tear gas would go off. The front rank would put their shields sideways, and the back ranks would charge with their batons high, whack some protesters and try to grab the ones who were the ringleaders. That would go on for a week or so and then they would close the universities until things cooled off.

At my university there were never many students who demonstrated. The students sympathized but weren't willing to go out. Most of them thought that the demonstrations were heavy on symbolism but light on results. Across the country there was a consensus that economic development was number one and that the North Korean threat was real. People didn't like the government beating up students, torturing professors or newspaper people, but also were worried about "chaos" that might slow economic development or give the North Koreans a chance to use violence. Many South Koreans thought students should be studying. That was the consensus that the Park government played on.

Q: Let me just stop there. We are talking a bit about the difference between the North and the South, which at the time was maybe not that profound?

KLOTH: In the economic terms the North certainly had the mountains and the natural resources of the mountains such as coal and other _____.

Q: And waterpower.

KLOTH: The waterpower, the hydroelectric. During the colonial period certainly there was industry built around Seoul, but there was also industrial development in the North. While the North was heavily bombed during the Korean War and much of it was destroyed...well, actually it began with the Russians taking to the Soviet Union some of the machinery, etc., as they did in other places like Germany, but also the destruction of the war. The planned socialist approach plus aid from the Soviet Union enabled the North to rebuild some facilities. In terms of economic growth, scholars who looked at it as well as the U.S. government felt that up through the '60s, the North had made considerable progress. Perhaps it even did better in the 1950s than the South in terms of economics. Change started in the South in the 1960s.

Q: I was there right in the mid-seventies my second time there before; I was there during the war.

KLOTH: Right, during the war.

Q: But Park Chung Hee had made a critical decision, which most dictators don't make and that was that he was going to make the farmers reap the benefits of their production as opposed to most dictatorships who want bread or rice for the cities and they take it away from the farmers who make it. The farmers were doing well and this meant that you had good food production.

KLOTH: In the seventies he started the Saemaoul (New Village) Movement. Park had been a Japanese Army officer; he spoke Japanese very well as did virtually all Koreans educated before 1945. People continued to have high school reunions with their former Japanese classmates. So those kinds of cultural relations, as it were, kept going in a low key way with a love-hate feeling. Go back to the comment about the U.S. With the Japanese hate was very strong but probably strongest among those born after 1945. Older folks would say to me, "Ah, in 1968, this hatred of the Japanese is stronger among the young people who actually never suffered than it is among older people who, while we suffered, also had Japanese friends."

More importantly in terms of the larger policy Park and his group looked at Japan both before and after World War II, and particularly after, and said to themselves that the Japanese recovered from World War II quickly, and that's what we want to do, so we'll plan the economy around the development of large private companies. They also wanted companies large enough so that Japanese companies couldn't dominate the Korean economy.

The North played a role here too. Park and most other South Koreans saw economic development from a nationalist point of view, wanting it so people could live better and also for security vis a vis the North. The Northern threat was direct military aggression as well as subversion in the form of support for a Communist revolution. This was 1968, so Communist movements were still alive and well in many places. South Koreans were very worried about Communist infiltration into the industrial workforce as well as into the rural areas.

Students could not have summer jobs in a factory the way I did in college. First of all blue-collar people needed factory jobs. College kids were supposed to train for white collar work. The government was very suspicious of college students going out to rural areas, because they were afraid they were going to organize/radicalize farmers. So there was a strong feeling that we need to have economic development; we need to have workers get more prosperous, so they won't become Communists. We also need to limit conspicuous consumption by the people running the factories and the companies. More fundamentally, we need to develop by this Japanese model, which is planned development based on the nurturing of private industry, which of course can very quickly become crony capitalism, which is an element of this too. But there is no doubt that the Koreans have been highly successful in using this model and growing a country.

It also meant that the industrial people were also very worried about a Communist revolution aided and abetted by the North or another invasion. I remember our first embassy briefing when we were newly arrived in Peace Corps. My recollection was that the embassy briefer said that the

North Koreans had a 350,000 man army with more tanks, armored personnel carriers and guns than South Korea with a 600,000 plus force. They told us that the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) added the high-tech part - they didn't call it that at the time – with well-equipped units. They felt there was still a little bit of hint of at least from one briefer, and I can't remember the exact words, and you were in the embassy so maybe I misunderstood what was said, but there was still a little hint of the pre-1950 concern that the South might if they had a proportionate number of armor be tempted to go North; so the U.S. was comfortable with this difference.

Q: That was always there, yeah.

KLOTH: More men in the South Korean armed forces but the U.S. forces provide the high-tech edge and in the North fewer men but more armor so this keeps the balance of power. In the mid-seventies we discovered that the numbers had changed dramatically in the North, but not in the South.

Q: Speaking of the embassy how much contact did you have in the Embassy?

KLOTH: Virtually none. One, we were told not to because Peace Corps was just you know...

Q: Yeah. Did you get involved...obviously going to a geisha house was out of your range but did you get involved or have to be concerned about the drinking because there was an awful lot of drinking. The men went out and one would be the designated leader who would stay sort of sober and the others would get really, really drunk.

KLOTH: I guess the guys you were hanging out with were pretty responsible. With students or the people I knew there wasn't anybody designated to stay sober. But we all took the bus home.

Having a car was way out of the price range of students or most Koreans then. The country was poor; further, the Korean government discouraged conspicuous consumption. Taxes were prohibitive. If you had a car, it was a company car; there was a driver and the car was black. Korea was making some cars, basically brought over in crates from Japan and assembled in Korea. "Recycling" was big; there were a lot of former Army jeeps "recycled" as private cars. Someone would get a jeep, strip it and put a hard body on it. A lot of Korean buses and trucks looked like they'd started life in the U.S. Army too. The black market was efficient. An American friend couldn't find the right size jeans in the market, so a shop keeper pulled out what my friend could see was a PX shipping list, asked him what size, run a finger down the list and told him to come back in four days.

MILES WEDEMAN
Deputy Director, USAID
Seoul (1968-1971)

Miles Wedeman was born in Maryland in 1923. He received a BA from Swarthmore College in 1943 and his LLB from Harvard in 1949. He also served

as a lieutenant overseas from 1943-1946. After joining USAID in 1962, he did development work in Nigeria, Liberia and Uganda. He was also assigned to Korea, Cambodia, and Syria. Mr. Wedeman was interviewed in 1995 by John Kean.

WEDEMAN: I went to Seoul, Korea, as the Deputy Director of the AID Mission. I had a second title, Deputy Director for Economic Affairs in the Embassy. The decision had been made to combine the Embassy's Economic Section with the AID Mission, so I and the Mission Director wore two hats. It didn't have any great significance. I spent almost all of my time on AID matters. This was in some ways an easier situation than my position in the Africa Bureau, and one of my less challenging assignments. The AID program in Korea had been very successful for a long time. For many years, I gather, people had wrung their hands over aid to Korea, up until the middle 1960s. Joel Bernstein, who had an African connection, became Mission Director. He was an economist and was very much interested in economic policy, and very influential in getting one major reform carried out in Korea, the freeing up of the interest rate structure. He convinced the Koreans to allow domestic interest rates to find their natural level. Also, the exchange rate regime was made more flexible up to a point.

Q: Put a strong emphasis on export development, right?

WEDEMAN: That came as a result, I think. But the two things I mentioned, I think, really got things going. Someone in Korea told me that for years foreign aid officials would say, "You know, we have spent all this money on industry, all kinds of industrial projects, infrastructure, technical assistance, and we just don't seem to be able to get anywhere. Nothing seems to work. The only solution is to find some sort of accommodation with the North." However, as I said, in the mid '60s when the decision was made to get the Koreans to, in effect, reform their banking structure, things changed enormously. All of these investments, which previously had looked like white elephants, turned out to be excellent, because they provided the base for industrial expansion in Korea. Also, the country became export oriented. I can't tell you because I wasn't there at the time, whether the Embassy or the AID Mission was influential in getting the Koreans oriented in that way, or whether it was another distinct influence - Japan. My feeling, the longer I was in Korea, was that even though the Koreans respected and admired the United States greatly, nevertheless the model they looked at in terms of their own future was Japan. If the Japanese could do it, there was a chance they could do it. Very clearly, their export oriented economy was partly a result of watching what was going on in Japan. They were very close observers of what happened in Japan, and they knew a great deal about Japan

Q: A love-hate relationship, perhaps?

WEDEMAN: I said it was like the relationship of the British and the Irish. Yes, it was a love-hate relationship. The Japanese looked down their noses at the Koreans. When I was there, I remember an organization was set up to promote greater cooperation between Japanese and Korean businessmen, and they had a big annual meeting. One year it would be in Tokyo, which the Koreans loved to go to. The next year it would be in Seoul. The Japanese never wanted to come, because among other things they couldn't stand Korean cuisine. They didn't like kimchi, the Korean national dish, which you could never forget once you ate it. Nevertheless, when it

came to how Koreans were going to go, Japan was an enormous goad to them. Not just goad, but example. Of course, the Koreans had other great advantages. It was a fairly literate country. Long before I arrived in 1968, the school system had become well organized. As for the university system, it had some drawbacks. It probably still does. Nevertheless, there were a large numbers of highly educated, trained, skilled Koreans. Also, the American aid program had been quite successful, both in terms of technical assistance and in capital development. By 1968 Korea had really taken off. Someone told me that in 1960 total exports from Korea were something like \$20 million, and it consisted, first, of raw silk, shipped to Japan to be made into garments or spun, and, second, I can't remember the Korean word for it, but it was pressed seaweed, a delicacy, both in Korea and in Japan consumed as an appetizer. By 1970, the exports were at the level of \$1 billion a year. People couldn't understand what was going on; they can't go much further, was the feeling. They had grown just about as much as they could. But they did go on and on and on and on and on to the point where Koreans now buy American firms. They had a lot going for themselves in terms of the infrastructure and education, and ambition.

Q: All that had been laid down with a lot of Korean initiative in the earlier days, but with a lot of U.S. support too.

WEDEMAN: Any country's development in the end is the product of that country, not of foreign assistance. There's no doubt about it, Korean success was born of Korean attitudes, Korean capabilities, and Korean interests. Absolutely no doubt about it. When I was there I read what was then a fairly well known travel book by a British woman who had traveled through Korea in the late 19th century. She said, in effect, "This is the sleepest place I have ever seen. There is no energy in this country. Just sloth and nothing else." It's incredible when you think of Korea as it must have been compared to what it was when I was there.

In any event, by 1968 the AID program was beginning to wind down. We were not undertaking new capital projects, we were not financing new technical assistance. The only really new thing that was being done, and it had been authorized earlier, was to help the Koreans with the establishment of the Korean Institute of Science and Technology, KIST as it was usually known. The purpose behind it was to attract back to Korea highly trained, skilled people who had left for better prospects overseas, free as well of the suffocating political atmosphere in Korea.

Q: Yes, I happened to be in close communication with Joe Bernstein whom you had mentioned, who became an Assistant Administrator, during the period immediately after he was in Korea, and he continued to have a strong interest in KIST.

WEDEMAN: I know when I was there we kept wondering exactly what the Koreans were going to do with it. It sounded like a good idea, but would it work? The political rationale was to try to get people back who did not think well of the government. Many who had left were strongly opposed to Park Jung Hee. It turned out to be a great success. It did exactly what it was supposed to do.

Korea is an authentic example of success in development. I remember when I was there you had the Embassy and the AID Mission (it had originally been just the AID Mission) in one building, and you had a twin next to it, which was the Korean Economic Planning Board, established with

American inspiration and support. The Economic Planning Board-I'd never seen anything like it. It was in total control of the economy or at least it had total policy direction of the economy. The Deputy Prime Minister, who usually was a political figure, but not all that political, ran the Economic Planning Board. The Economic Planning Board was senior to and directed the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Central Bank. It was also the equivalent of our Office of Management and Budget and in that capacity controlled and developed the national operating and capital budgets. It reviewed and approved all foreign investment and controlled all aspects of foreign assistance to Korea. It was unique and it worked. Once a month the President spent an entire day with the Economic Planning Board to review the performance of the economy and to determine economic and fiscal policy. He played a major role in all of this. Economic development was a religion in Korea.

Q: So, here was a case where you went from a considerable period of exposure to the aid and development processes based in Washington to a field assignment which gave you a different perspective. What were your principal reactions?

WEDEMAN: I enjoyed it very much. I was the number two not the number one, which naturally makes some difference, and I didn't have the responsibilities that the director had. To some extent I think it was an educational period . Even when I was in Washington I never thought of the field as being "they" against "us" and similarly in the field I never looked at Washington as being the enemy or "they" against "us." In Korea in 1968 things ran smoothly. We were not doing anything new, which had been the great fun in being in the Africa Bureau. It was mostly a matter of keeping the machinery tuned, and seeing that the gradual process of phasing down proceeded in an orderly way. So it was an easy period for me. I didn't have to work as hard in Korea as I had in Washington.

Q: It's a wonderful experience to be phasing down in a country that's succeeding as you withdraw. Perhaps not quite unique maybe, but certainly one of the most spectacular cases of this sort.

WEDEMAN: It certainly is. Korea was broadening for me. I had spent six years on Africa matters; I knew almost nothing about the Far East but I learned a little. In great contrast to Africa you were dealing with a developed situation and the country you were working with knew where it wanted to go and how to get there. What you were there to do was to phase out politely and with grace.

Q: So, as you look historically at Korea, from the time that this lady tourist saw Korea in the late 19th century as the sleepiest place she'd ever experienced, through 40 years of colonial experience under the Japanese, and then to burst forth from the end of the Korean War in the next 15 years by the time you got there to a country that was not only on the way but racing forward, what would you say were the principal ingredients of that as you perceived it?

WEDEMAN: I don't know Korean society well enough to be able to analyze what got them started. The colonial period is probably one that ought to be examined and studied more closely. Development had occurred under the Japanese, harsh though they had been. The beginnings of industry in Korea were certainly noticeable under the Japanese, and mass education started

during the occupation. When you looked at Korean school children, you knew you were looking at Japanese school children. Much of the foundation had been laid between 1910 and 1945.

Q: The prevailing philosophy of education was still that of the Japanese?

WEDEMAN: Yes, I would say so. Education is a key to success. The basic question to ask is why did they shift, why did this change occur? I will be frank in saying I don't know, except that perhaps it was a society that had been pushed down not only under the Japanese but also the previous Yi dynasty. The talents and energies of the Koreans had simply not had an outlet until the end of the second World War. Beginning in 1946 all kinds of changes occurred. They had opportunities they had never had before... Again, I don't know why it is Korea changed the way it did. I can't tell you.

Q: The Korean War was a stimulus, perhaps?

WEDEMAN: Since I hadn't been through the Korean War in Korea, I don't think I would know whether it was that that produced all this energy. I think the energy must have been obvious or apparent before that. One major thing that happened under Syngman Rhee was a major and effective land reform. The Japanese had taken all of the best land. When the Koreans had gotten their patrimony back, the Korean government under Syngman Rhee undertook a major land reform and redistribution program that was tremendously successful, politically and economically. Someone has said that this is what gave South Koreans a real stake in the survival of the republic in the South; not Syngman Rhee, who was not very popular, and who had been, as you know, in exile for a good deal of his life.

Land reform was a major factor in the survival of South Korea. The people had such a stake that by 1950, even though it was not completed by then, they had something they were determined to preserve. After a while Korean agriculture began to produce not only a surplus of food but a surplus of people. The latter went into the nascent industries in Korea. One time I visited an industrial town that impressed me as having the characteristics of the industrial revolution in England in the 18th century in terms of working conditions and pay, child labor, what have you. It was really pretty shocking to see what would go on in a Korean factory.

Their economic policy was based on cheap, skilled, submissive, obedient labor. I remember visiting a forge in a small South Korean city and here were little boys all bandaged up from having been hit by flying sparks and what have you, working in conditions that we would consider intolerable, and there were a couple of other factories in that town that were roughly the same. The owner of the factory owned the town. He had all kinds of charitable foundations. He ran the schools. It was right out of Dickens. I went into a plywood factory in the southern city of Pusan. The conditions were bad and the plywood looked to me like a low grade product. The young women working there weren't exactly in the same situation as the Thais in the Los Angeles garment factory, but they couldn't go anywhere. They worked 30 days a month, ten hours a day, and they lived in the company dormitory next to the factory.

Q: Your reference to the Thais in Los Angeles is a reference to the recent newspaper stories about the people there under essentially slave conditions.

WEDEMAN: Yes. Not quite that bad in Korea, but there's a similarity. The Koreans had become very large in garment manufacture in the way the Thais had. Like Los Angeles, the work was done under contract with American firms. Gradually the Koreans came to realize that quality was important. Today you will find Korean clothing sold almost anywhere. All that was done with American assistance and American leadership, although the working conditions still would not be very admirable.

Q: What were your relationships with Korean officials? Were they comfortable?

WEDEMAN: Yes, I found them comfortable. I saw a great deal of them. The Economic Planning Board, Ministry of Finance, some people from their banks, and from the technical ministries as well. I did not speak Korean. but most of these officials spoke English, and many had American training.

Q: Including the President?

WEDEMAN: Syngman Rhee, not Park Jung Hee.

Q: Park Jung Hee spent some time at Harvard.

WEDEMAN: Did he? I didn't know that. I found them quite satisfactory to deal with. They were quite aggressive and I didn't blame them for this. We were not at that point pushing them to do very much. We would have liked to see more flexibility in foreign exchange rate management. But that was about all, and, of course, our leverage was going down as the size of the aid program went down.

Q: And their own economy was growing vigorously anyway.

WEDEMAN: That's right. We had had an impressive training program under which Koreans went to the United States for training. At the same time we brought a large number of American technicians to Korea to do a variety of tasks. All of this had been going on for years. Finally, one of the senior officials of the EPB said to us, "I think we don't need those technicians anymore. Some of our people are better trained and more experienced than yours." That shows you've succeeded. I don't think we had any difficulty slowing things down and beginning to get out. I don't think that bothered anybody in the mission. I found the Koreans quite good to deal with. They knew their stuff. Of course, there were some oddities about Korea. You are aware of kisaeng parties?

Q: No.

WEDEMAN: It's the Korean equivalent of a geisha party. It's a much bigger thing in Korea. Same idea. It's almost a national disease. The Korean Government had a flat rule - the Korean Government would not pay for any kisaeng parties for Koreans alone. At a kisaeng party, a large one, you might have 20 women and 20 men, plus entertainment, plus bands, what have you. They could be very expensive. The government said "No kisaeng parties financed by the Korean

Government unless it's in honor of a foreigner." So you were always being asked, "Is there anybody coming from Washington?" The result was you'd end up going to many kisaeng parties. If you've been to one you've been to them all, but people from Washington thought they were great. But I'd had enough after a while to last a century.

Q: But were these occasions where business was done, or strictly social?

WEDEMAN: They were quite social, very social. There was one apocryphal story about one kisaeng party, which didn't involve AID. Someone like the Secretary of Defense came to Korea or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Naturally there was a kisaeng party. At a kisaeng, you sit around a low chop table, one man, one woman. The woman is assigned to the man, and she pats his face with hot towels, and feeds him. The story goes that at the party I mentioned the kisaeng girl sitting with the Secretary of Defense, or whoever it was, said, "You are going to give us that destroyer, aren't you?" True or not, I don't know.

We were always aware of one particular American politician in this regard, his name was Otto Passman. You remember Otto Passman, who was chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance of the House Appropriations Committee. He came to Korea once a year, and when he came, he always wanted to stay in a specific hotel. He didn't want to stay with the Ambassador, or the Mission Director. He expected to be treated in accordance with his perceived importance. There would always be a very big kisaeng party for Passman. It was usually held in a kisaeng house called the Blue Cloud, the most expensive in Seoul. The cost of these affairs was based on the price per kisaeng girl - \$100.00 per girl, or something like that. At all the ones I went to, you were well aware of the fact that when you were through, and left, your Korean hosts, not just the kisaeng girls, were staying behind. Because the kisaeng house had another function. Someone said who went to kisaeng parties with Passman, that they were different in one respect: even though all the other Americans left, and the Koreans stayed behind, he stayed behind too. He liked this sort of thing and he came to Korea once a year. I think I could almost predict when Otto Passman was scheduled to visit

Q: So that assignment was for how long?

WEDEMAN: Two and a half years.

Q: And maybe we have time to introduce your next assignment, unless there are other things about Korea you would like to talk about?

WEDEMAN: I don't think so. Korea was an interlude.

KENNETH YATES
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Kwangju (1968-1972)

Kenneth Yates was born in Connecticut in 1940. He served overseas in the U.S.

Army from 1969-1962 and received a BA from the University of Pennsylvania in 1967. After entering USIA in 1967, he was posted abroad in Seoul, Kabul, Tokyo, Reykjavik and Beijing. Mr. Yates was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: Did you find that this was the spirit that was within USIA at that time?

YATES: That was my motivation for joining. Others had other reasons. USIA was a kind of conglomerate of different kinds of people. There were bureaucrats and adventurers, who having lived abroad, didn't want to come back to the US. There were press people who were looking for something else to do. USIA at the time, was really a mixed group. When I entered USIA, my first assignment was to Korea. I had come to Washington with Japanese as my principal language claim. There was a requirement of at least a minimal competence in a language before you got promoted. So I was put into Japanese language training to get me off that probation. In about three months, I got a 2 - 2 releasing me from the language probation.

There weren't any assignments available in Japan, so they put me in Korea. I knew little about Korea but was interested in it and happy to go. It was a fine move; I never objected to it at all. So I switched from Japanese grammar on a Friday afternoon to elementary Korean on the next Monday morning. I had six months of training before going to Seoul. At that time, Seoul was a different sort of place for USIA. We made movies in Korea and had four branch posts which still has the old "Mopix" vans as standard equipment. These were old Willys jeep trucks with roof racks which could be used for mounting a 16mm projector for outdoor movie shows. This past year those branches have all been closed, a sorry testament to bean counters making what should have been thoughtful policy decisions. Thus has the Foreign Service changed.

Q: Where were they?

YATES: Kwangju, where I eventually became PAO, as well as Pusan, Taegu and Seoul. It was an important program. Korea was a poor country; the people were much poorer than those in Hokkaido that I knew in Japan, but hard working and tough. There wasn't much in material wealth. The southern part of Korea is principally agricultural. After a year in Seoul as a JOT, I was initially assigned to Kwangju.

Q: I would like to do each chunk at a time. How did you find studying Korean? You say you have trouble studying languages.

YATES: I was one of the older people in the class, having been to college for one year, three years in the army and six years getting a four-year degree at Penn and then going into graduate school after that. So I was getting on. I was in my late '20s, but others in my class were younger. Language isn't easy at any age, but it sure does get an awful lot more difficult as you progress down life's path. Japanese was basically easy for me since I had lived in Japan and had studied it at Penn. I got my 2,2 and got out of it. But when I switched to Korean, it was back to zero again. Japanese helped a little bit, but even then, Koreans didn't use Chinese characters very much. I had enjoyed Chinese characters a lot. While I was in Chitose with the Army and not otherwise teaching English in Sapporo, on my other off-duty-hours, I took some classes in "soshu," (grass)

writing of Japanese characters in a special style. I learned a lot about Japanese discipline, esthetics, and culture in those classes.

Unfortunately, Korean at the time was taught in Roman character equivalents. I guess the theory was that thick-skulled Americans couldn't understand squiggly little writing or something equally indefensible.

Q: Actually there are only 28 characters, so it is not that big...

YATES: It is a syllabary, not an alphabet actually. It is grouped in these clusters of syllables, so you get syllables forming words instead of the single "kana" pronunciation in Japanese. It is more difficult. Phonetic values change, based on their relationship to the following syllable, making it more complicated to learn. At the time, Korean was, and still is I guess, considered the most difficult language for an English-speaking person to learn. The reason for that is, it has Chinese characters and a very complicated grammar. Someone once told me there were 2,000 separate verb forms for each verb. Whether that is true or not I don't know, but the multiplicity of verb forms is one aspect that makes the language more difficult.

For example, newspaper language is different from the spoken language, and within the spoken language, there are different levels. If you are my classmate, I speak to you one way. If you are one class ahead of me in school, I would have a slightly different twist to my verb endings. At home, you speak to your child one way; to your father, another way; your wife, a different way; and your brother, in a fourth way. There are different levels of language. That doesn't mean they are completely dissimilar, but there are enough differences so that you can make errors very quickly. English-speaking missionaries who spent their entire lives in Korea are famous as the butt of Korean jokes, because they would make errors that sounded all right to foreigners but to Koreans gave rise to a great deal of amusement. I don't know anyone who is not a native Korean who really speaks Korean. Perhaps that is true for most difficult languages. You have to limit your expectations when you begin such a study.

Q: Let's start with the time you were in Seoul. You were there from when to when?

YATES: From the fall of 1968 for almost a year.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

YATES: Bill Porter.

Q: Did you have any dealings with him or any feel for him?

YATES: Not when I was in Seoul but when I was in Kwangju. Bill Porter was a very, very smart and capable ambassador. He was intensely interested in Korea and spoke Korean. He was interested enough in the process, so that when he ran his embassy, he made sure he had all of us who were in the field - the Branch Public Affairs Officers, a smattering of USAID people who were gradually being withdrawn, and the Consular Officer who was in Pusan - come to Seoul

every three months for a de-briefing on what was going on in the provinces. It was nice for a young officer to have that kind of serious attention from the boss.

He would listen carefully and absorb what we had to say. He had very good knowledge of what was going on in Korea. He was a good friend of Cardinal Kim, who was one of the opposition people in Taegu. The ambassador had a robin's-egg-blue carryall which you couldn't miss, since his was the only one like it in Korea. He would take only his driver and suddenly leave Seoul, often driving the carryall himself with his driver as passenger. No one knew where he was going. If he wished, he would use the radiotelephone installed in the carryall, but of course, could keep it off and be fully out of touch. This drove the Korean security police crazy. The only reason I would know he was in Kwangju was because his driver and my driver were old buddies for some reason or other.

Every time the ambassador would come to Kwangju, his driver would bring the carryall to our American Center to park it. I would walk into the office in the morning, see the bright blue carryall, and know the ambassador was in town. Usually within an hour or so, I would receive a call from the local police, saying they understood the ambassador was in town. I would respond that I couldn't confirm or deny it. They would ask what he was doing. "He doesn't confide in me," I would say. "Where is he going?" "Well, I don't know." "When is he leaving?" "I don't know that either." They couldn't approach him, because that would be getting out of channels, but they wanted to make sure they knew where he was, what he was up to, and, more importantly, who he was seeing. He was a really nice, smart guy.

On the other hand, he gave his political section a terrible time. When we got finished with one of the field officer's quarterly briefings, we would leave his office, only to be intercepted by the staff of the Political Section, anxious to hear what was on the ambassador's mind. That would lead to our debrief for the Political Section.

Q: In 1968, how would you describe the political and economic situation in Korea?

YATES: It was unrecognizable. I remember clearly my ride in from the Kimpo airport on my arrival in Korea. I was met by the PAO (Public Affairs Officer), Dan Moore. He picked me up in his nice black Chevy, or whatever it was. It was dusk when I got in and very dark by the time I had processed through customs and been received by Dan. We proceeded on the highway into the capital, and as we got nearer and nearer to the center of the city, I noticed there weren't any lights. It was pitch black. There were no cars. There was nothing. I was riding in a void. I said, "Dan, what is this?" He said, "Well, at night time, it gets pretty dark in Seoul, because there isn't much power." And, sure enough, I didn't see any light in Korea until we got almost to the Seoul railroad station in the heart of Seoul. On the way in, near the U.S. Army's South Post compound, there were a few light bulbs in windows, mostly stores. No street lights or visible signs of people. I began to worry about what I was getting into.

The next day, the streets were very busy. But Korea was very poor and undeveloped. Of course, there was no subway, and I saw only a few, overcrowded busses. It was very much an agrarian society and had suffered almost total destruction in the Korean War. They were just beginning to

pull themselves together. A person going to Korea today would have no idea that it was so poor such a short time ago.

Q: I first saw Korea in 1952 as a GI in Seoul. There were no trees, rugged hills.

YATES: Fifteen years later, there had been some rebuilding, although there was only one major tourist hotel in the city.

Q: What were you getting from the Political Section and in briefings about the political situation at that time?

YATES: Park Chung Hee was President and had been for more than five or six years. He was in full control. It was very much a military society, although it wasn't oppressive. The image of the Park Chung Hee government is a little bit distorted in this country. He is remembered by some as a "tin horn" military dictator. I don't think that ever was really the case.

I had spent my undergraduate work on East Asia and knew a little bit about Park Chung Hee. I never met him, although I came close. We had set up an exhibit on the Apollo landing on the moon and the related space program, and he was at the opening. I did not meet him personally or even shake his hand. My only impressions were from his passing close by. He was very short, with a crisp military bearing. From my academic work on his life, I believe that he was basically honest. He got that from the Japanese, because he was schooled in their ethics of the time.

Q: He was in the Japanese army wasn't he?

YATES: Not quite, he was in the Manchurian army which was run by the Japanese. I know a fair amount about Park, because when I went back for an MA, I did my thesis on him. I fault our intelligence services for not devoting the time and energy to do a better job of looking at foreign leaders. It was always a source of frustration to me that our senior leadership did not have the benefit of careful biographic data on their counterparts. What I had seen was mostly the most cursory impressions, much like what you read in news accounts. More important is a better understanding of the elements of the training and experience that serve as the foundation for attitude and prejudice.

Park Chung Hee was a country boy, basically a teacher who was given a break by the Japanese. His later biographies are not very good. He was recruited into the Manchurian army. At that time, Manchukuo was a Japanese state in Manchuria. The basis of the state, as the Japanese promoted it, was a gathering of the five nations that comprised Manchuria. The problem for the Japanese was that in order to sustain the image of a real nation of five nations, they had to have input from all of the member groups, including Koreans. Park Chung Hee was picked as a Korean who could be trusted. He was very good at martial arts.

Evidently his martial arts teacher was Japanese, and saw something in Park that they wanted. He went up to the military academy operated by the Japanese in Harbin (the present day Changchun), graduated, and spent another two years in Zama at the Japanese academy where he had more classes. He then went back to Manchuria and became a lieutenant, fighting bandits in

north China. When the Japanese lost the war, Park Chung Hee somehow got himself to Beijing and was then repatriated to Korea. He then went on the rocks for a while. Opposition folk claim that he turned into a drunk and a wastrel, but I doubt that, given his character. He was always fond of drink, even the otherwise lower class Makkoli, a sort of rice beer. His brother was active in the communist movement and Park Chung Hee was eventually arrested and was sentenced to death by court.

Q: Would this have been under the Syngman Rhee government?

YATES: Yes. He was sentenced to death for collusion with the enemy who were the communists of the time. His brother died fighting some place (*actually, he was executed*). Park Chung Hee had been known by a Japanese name during the period when the Japanese had forced all Koreans to adopt Japanese names in an effort to forcibly integrate Korea as a province of Japan. Chung Il Kwon, a general in the new Korean army that emerged after the Second World War, had also been in the Manchurian army. Like Park Chung Hee, he had served in the Manchukuo Army but had studied for four full years at the Japanese Military Academy in Tokyo. He pulled Park Chung Hee out of the fire by arranging an agreement for him to cooperate. He allegedly turned over the names of everybody who was among the conspirators on the communist side to save his neck. Again, that is a little bit out of character, but possible. He became part of the civilian intelligence apparatus of the Korean army and because of his Japanese military background, he later entered the Korean military academy when the academy got underway. He was in the fourth class.

Q: When did he get his commission?

YATES: I would have to look that up.

Q: Was this before the war?

YATES: Yes, Park Chung Hee received his commission before the war. He served during the war in a variety of jobs, essentially logistical. He was not good at English but knew the Japanese manual of arms. When the Korean army was founded, there was nothing to guide them on what to do, so strangely enough, they used the Japanese manual of arms for their training. Park Chung Hee then worked his way up the ranks. He didn't have a very good career, and he always seem to struggle. He rose to the colonel level and then languished there. I lived in the house where he once lived when he was head of the logistics command in Kwangju. It was rumored that he was living in the house at a point sometime after the war when the U.S. opened the American Cultural Center there. Since that house had been Japanese property before the war, it became Korean government property after the war and was among the sites made available to the U.S. for official use for a minimal amount of rent each year. I often wonder how much resentment of the Americans was instilled in the later President, since they expropriated his residence and forced him to leave. That property remained the residence of the BPAO (Branch Public Affairs Officer) up until the recent closing of the center.

Q: Have you any idea of his role during the Korean War?

YATES: No, I don't. I don't think he had one that had a command function where he would have been mentioned in the history books. At that time, his function appeared to be essentially support.

Q: One would think this was the defining time for anyone in the Korean army.

YATES: The first couple of classes at the academy contained the ones who were very significant in the Korean conflict. He was behind that curve and was a junior person at that time, so he didn't have a command. Secondly, he did not particularly like Americans, and I think that attitude was demonstrated in the following years. He didn't like the way Americans acted. He detested the Korean generals who played golf and hobnobbed with the Americans, spoke English, and generally lorded it over those like himself who were, as he saw himself I am sure, good patriotic Koreans. His training in the Manchurian academy instilled in him some very distinct social principles. The unity of the people; the concept that if you are not for me, you are against me; the certainty of a rigid social order along military lines. This shows up later in his work in the "Saemaul Undong," the New Community Movement that emerged in the latter part of his administration. It was very similar to the kinds of things that were taught at the Manchurian academy.

However, he had a grasp of management, particularly in the way he used advisors. Hahm Byon Chun, whom I knew in Seoul, a professor at the university at the time, later became an advisor at the Blue House, an ambassador, and an important influence on Park Chung Hee as president.

Q: Blue House is the equivalent to our White House.

YATES: That's right. The heart of the Korean government. Prof. Hahm once told me that one of Park Chung Hee's strengths was the way he used his advisors. He read incessantly, mainly Japanese newspapers, and was very well versed in what was going on in the world. He would call advisors in regularly, but according to a specific ritual. Prof. Hahm told me that when he would go in, Park Chung Hee would ask specific questions, very carefully crafted questions, and never let on what his opinions were. He would simply absorb information and then thank the advisor very much. The next advisor would go in, and similar questions were asked. After Park had heard all the evidence, he consolidated all the information and made his decision. The advisors did not meet together and present him with a consensus report. Often they did not know who else was being consulted.

Park was able to maintain control for so long by using his advisors that way, and because he learned from the Americans. He had learned American skills in management in his duties as logistics officer in the Korean army. This was a very smart man, but a man who had very clear prejudices, including feelings of distance from Americans.

Q: When you got to the embassy in 1968, and this was a new country for you, what were you getting from your colleagues about the government there? What was the feeling towards both the government of Park Chung Hee and the situation in Korea at that time?

YATES: Most Americans were uncomfortable with Park, as he was with them. He was known as a dictator, having taken the government by force. He had become a civilian and done things that appeased the people to a degree. I think most people were focused on development at the time, though. It was the economic development of Korea that was the main thrust, not the political situation. Human rights were not a particularly popular thing in Korea, not an essential issue when compared with the larger questions of economic development.

On the other hand, women's affairs were a major element in our program efforts. We had a lot of programming to involve women in the community. Consumer protection was a big item. They got into a debate in USIA about where to draw the line when helping this kind of process along to what we termed at the time as "social engineering." Were we making a conscious effort to change Korea, or were we simply trying to help when people asked for assistance? That became controversial. We made a special effort to reduce intrusiveness into the Korean social situation, so we would avoid any possible future charge of "social engineering." That was not our business. Our business was to interpret America. We were not there to promote consumer protection but to promote an understanding of how Americans use consumer protection and make that knowledge available to Korean women, particularly, leaders who were interested in developing this to a greater extent in Korea; purity of food, the cleanliness of water, etc.

Q: Did we have women's programs that came out of the can from Washington?

YATES: This was something that we developed locally, because on our staff, we had a very dynamic local employee who was interested in that and she dragged us along. She subsequently became a very prominent woman leader in Korea and still is. The last time I was there, I saw her on television several times on expert panels, etc. She was a very good example of how an FSN (Foreign Service National) employee really can become a dynamic force in her own society.

Q: What was her name?

YATES: Lee Chung Sook, I believe.

Q: What was the feeling you were getting from your colleagues about the threat from the North?

YATES: The threat was palpable. I remember a reception, one of the first official functions I attended in Seoul, when we were all talking and suddenly we hear "boom!, boom!." The sounds were obviously not caused by firecrackers but heavy artillery. The entire room froze, and we wondered if this was the beginning of the war again. It turned out to be only South Korean army maneuvers, but the tension was always close to the surface in Seoul, only about 30 miles from the DMZ.

That is still the case. Just this past year when I was in Seoul, they had a celebration in town where they set off loud fireworks. You heard "boom" and the same question pops up after all these years. There is a constant threat. Thirty miles away, there is the sixth largest army in the world, poised to strike and threatening to do so. They have lived under this threat for 40 years. It is quite a psychological burden.

Q: Did they have the 15th of the month air raid drill and all?

YATES: Yes, and they still do, sometimes observed more in the breach than in practice. Perhaps this relates to the general attitude of the younger people who did not experience the horror of the Korean War.

Q: I'm talking about in 1968.

YATES: Oh, sure. But what I was relating was not part of these drills. I am commenting on it in terms of the psychology of the people at the time. We had a person on our staff who said he still, after all those years following the Korean War, had nightmares. His nightmare was always the same. He was hiding under the floorboards of his house and above him were North Korean troops looking for him. He would wake up in a sweat every time. There is still that kind of psychology.

Q: In USIA at that time, did the American missionaries play any particular role?

YATES: No.

Q: Were they used at all as purveyors of information?

YATES: No, never to my knowledge. In Kwangju, I knew some of the missionaries there, although not very well. All my dental work was done by an American dental missionary.

Q: Seven Day Adventist?

YATES: No, he was a Baptist, I think. They were medical missionaries and didn't do much preaching. He was there to teach Koreans how to do good dentistry, and he did a good job. I still have some of the caps he put on. I did a lot of work there with him. He was a very fine man. But no, the medical missionaries had nothing to do with us, and we wouldn't have anything to do with them on a professional level in the work we were engaged in.

However, we had a bigger problem with Peace Corps volunteers, as at that time, young dynamic Americans were very anti-government because of the Vietnam war. They were quick to accuse. Some Peace Corps volunteers were telling their Korean hosts that those USIA people were really CIA. That was a hard thing for us to deal with in Korea, because Koreans are very easily convinced of conspiracies and because the volunteers living with them every day had developed a strong sense of confidence and trust. The Peace Corps Volunteers' views simply confirmed for their Korean hosts what they always suspected. We really had to "talk turkey" to some of these Peace Corps Volunteers who were doing us severe harm in the rural areas of Korea and in the cities where they taught English.

Q: When you arrived there, what was USIA trying to do? One thing was to explain the United States, but beyond that, there was pushing American policy and a high priority on that was Vietnam and our involvement there. What were you up to?

YATES: Vietnam was never a problem for us in Korea. Remember Koreans were part of our effort in Vietnam. They gave it their full support. They had experienced, first hand, the perfidy and atrocities of the communist armies and needed no convincing to give our efforts in Vietnam full support. In fact, the White Horse Division of the Korean Army that went to Vietnam while I was in Korea, was famous for its effectiveness with the Vietnamese.

There is a story that after they arrived they were attacked by a North Vietnamese contingent, and the Koreans captured a number of them. In order to hold the prisoners without an extra amount of manpower, they took copper wire and a big needle and strung them together through their checks with this copper wire like a string of fish and put a Korean soldier on one end with the wire in his hand. In that manner, one soldier could control a very large number of North Vietnamese prisoners. In our Army, a GI would be run out of the service for doing this. However, the word got around among the Viet Cong that these were not Western, long-nose types with all these fancy ideas about human rights; these were Asians with a different view. So the Viet Cong soon learned not to engage the Koreans in battle, since the consequences could be severe.

With the ensuing and rapid pacification of their area, the Koreans became quickly bored with their Vietnam experience and would spend their time shopping to the PX to buy television sets and other inexpensive consumer goods to take home with them at the end of their tours. The North Vietnamese scrupulously avoided contact with the Korean troops.

There was a Korean military academy in Kwangju, and when I was there, we used to watch them come through the city while in training. They would double time twenty miles to the exercise grounds and double time twenty miles back after a whole day of training. You would see them running through the streets and there wasn't an ounce of fat on them. They were very, very tough. This is what the North Vietnamese were running up against in the war there. I can understand why they didn't want any part of the Korean forces.

Q: What were you trying to do?

YATES: The mission had a variety of aspects to it. The major one was to interpret American policy. For example, towards the end of my tour in Kwangju, Nixon visited China, and the Koreans were absolutely convinced that Nixon had sold them down the river. The Shanghai Communique was the only thing we could point to with clarity to convince them we had not. Videotape was a big part of my program and was key to the solution of this special issue.

We copied off-air from Japanese television a tape of the Nixon-Zhou En-lai toasts, the banquet, and the speeches and translated them doing a voice-over. I had a transportable video unit consisting of videotape recorder, a transformer, and a television set. One of my local employees, a driver, and I would show this video at every possible university, business club, school, civic organization, governmental organization, and anybody else I could find, if I could gather three or four in a room together to see that tape. This was to discredit the Korean government's version of what we were doing in China. That was direct support of policy and was one of those rare instances in USIA where we had a clear and unambiguous problem on policy that we could do something with. After about two weeks of very intensive programming around the country, we

essentially discredited the Korean government's persistent claim that the U.S. government had ignored Korea and was making secret agreements with the Chinese about policy on the Korean peninsula.

Q: Was it a direct collision with the Korean government, saying these Americans had sold us out?

YATES: Yes. At that time, the Korean press was essentially a handmaiden of the government. We were getting hit by editorials, by political opinion columns, and by slanted news coverage saying, "Aha! The Americans are double dealing us and ignoring our interests to their own advantage." They really were not. I saw governors and mayors and went to the Korean CIA headquarters once, showing these tapes that showed the real story. And it worked. It was a countrywide effort with all the branches involved. We hit them with everything we had and were very effective, I think, in getting Korean opinion turned around. However, the Korean government was still uneasy with what we had done. I suspect it was Park Chung Hee, himself, who was really ticked off.

Q: This was around 1971 or so?

YATES: Yes.

Q: One talks in Japanese terms about the Nixon "shokku". How did the opening of China go down when word came out that Henry Kissinger had gone to China?

YATES: That was what I was talking about. That was a shock. The Koreans weren't involved and didn't know about it. It was as much a surprise to them as it was to everybody else. The shokku that occurred in Tokyo had reverberations in Seoul as well. But what we had to do was, quickly and without any kind of hesitation, put out information on exactly what had happened; that was effective. The repercussions of the disinformation from the Korean government did not last very long. I don't know what happened in Japan.

Q: In 1969, you went to Kwangju?

YATES: Yes.

Q: And you were there until when?

YATES: Until 1972.

Q: What was the situation in Kwangju, away from the capital?

YATES: This was my best tour ever in the Foreign Service. It turned out that the AID (Agency for International Development) people were pulling out as I arrived, so I was the only American official left in the two southwestern provinces of Korea.

Q: You had just arrived at Kwangju.

YATES: Kwangju was in the agrarian part of South Korea. A major rice producer, rape seed, sesame, and that kind of stuff. Basic Korean food items. There also was good fishing off the coast. I had two provinces, Cholla Namdo (South Cholla) and Cholla Pukdo (North Cholla). We had a fairly large American military base at Kunsan in Cholla Pukdo (it is still there) and a contingency base in Kwangju with a full Colonel as its commander. It was there in case there were a war when it would become a rear area landing base and logistics transfer point. It had the POL on hand...

Q: Pol being petroleum, oil, and lubricants.

YATES: Right. On hand in case it was needed for actual combat. So the Kwangju Air Force base was essentially a ROK air force base, or Republic of Korea air force base which would also serve as a contingency base for American forces, should we have to move them in. I think that contingency is still present, although the American forces no longer reside. There must have been about 200 Americans at the time I was in Kwangju as BPAO.

Q: Did you find a difference in attitude in talking to people in Kwangju and out in both provinces?

YATES: From the rest of the country?

Q: Yes, the outlook.

YATES: Absolutely. Kwangju is traditionally the opposition capital of Korea. Korea historically was divided into three parts. Koguryo in the north, the hunters and gatherers, as it were, and Paekche and Silla which are the two southern principal kingdoms during the highpoint in Korean culture. The region containing the Cholla provinces was called the kingdom of Paekche. Paekche had close ties to Japan and was considered a cultural capital of the larger Korean society. It also had ties to China. If you look at a map, you will see how close the Shantung Peninsula of China is to the Korean coast.

The southern part of Korea was especially affected by China, for some reason. When I traveled in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, the language there sounded like Korean, but of course wasn't; it was Cantonese. The Paekche and Silla people did not get along. At the time I was in Kwangju, there was a sign above a tunnel that goes through the Chiri mountain range which divided Honam (Cholla Namdo and Cholla Pukdo), the old Paekche, from the Kyongsando region (originally the Silla kingdom) that says, "This is where the language changes."

The language, of course, is all Korean, and the nation is supposed to be the most homogenous country in the world, but there are a lot of differences there. There is the difference in attitude and language among other things. The Honam provinces of the southwest provinces traditionally have felt discriminated against. They spoke a dialect which was not standard. The Kwangju revolt of 1918 was one of the first civil revolts against the Japanese. The Tonghak rebellion found its roots in Kwangju and the Silla area. The most prominent people of the opposition today

are from the southern area, including Kim Dae Jung who is from Mokpo, the port city southwest of Kwangju.

While I was there, they built the first four lane limited access highway from Seoul to Pusan. It ran through Taegu, which is in the Kyongsando region. It came down through areas outside of the Honam region. Therefore, much of the intense industrial development of the time occurred on the east coast of Korea because of this new highway. This was much to the chagrin of the people in the Honam region who felt they were being ignored. They finally put through a double lane “limited access” highway down to Kwangju and then over to Pusan. When I first arrived, all roads outside of Kwangju and a couple of the other larger cities of the region were gravel, unimproved gravel. I spent lots of time on the road between Chonju, the capital of Cholla Pukdo, and Kwangju, where I lived.

Q: I forgot to ask, did you get married while in Korea?

YATES: Yes, I married a girl from Kwangju. For several semesters, I taught American Studies at Chosun University where my wife studied and at Chonnam University, the national university in Cholla Namdo. She was not a part of my classes.

The two classes I taught were particularly interesting, to me at least. I was asked to teach by American studies professors, because they wanted to have their students get a little bit of the feeling of how American classes are taught. They didn't feel comfortable in that effort, so I agreed to teach a couple of semesters in each school. According to school rules, I would have to be paid for it. However, being a government employee, the money I earned went into a scholarship fund for students at each school.

I had an assistant teacher, particularly since the classes were in English. I taught about what kind of country this is, the geography, the economy, etc. It was kind of fun, because I was able to experiment with the teaching environment that the Korean students were accustomed to. In the normal Korean classroom, on the entry of the professor or instructor, the class would stand up. The class monitor would then report the class attendance to the instructor, who would then move to the front of the room where there was a podium and deliver a lecture for almost exactly fifty minutes. At the end of the lecture, he would close his book and leave. That was the way Korean classes worked. The procedure was to take notes and then be examined on the information given in the lectures. There was very little outside reading or individual research by students.

I decided that instead of that essentially Confucian relationship between instructor and students, we would do it straight American style. When I would enter the classroom and the class would stand up, I would ask them to sit down. I wouldn't stand in front or take an attendance report. They were told if they did not attend, it would be all right with me, but that I could not be sure that they would do well on the exams. I would walk around the room, write on the blackboard, ask them questions from the back of the room, assign reading, try to get others than the class leader to respond in class, and generally caused great consternation.

One of the most difficult shocks for the classes was the habit of asking questions of the students who were not class monitors. Just about always, the class monitors would answer the questions.

The reason for that was that in the traditional system, the students did not respond to questions from the instructor since the teacher was the font of all wisdom and it was the student's duty to absorb the teachings that were offered. How could a teacher question the students? They did not have the knowledge unless first imparted by the teacher, who assuredly already knew the answers. Tests were written exams at the end of the course. Thinking independently was not required, even discouraged.

If I had the brashness to ask a student a question directly, I would be told politely to ask the monitor who speaks for the class. This direct interrogation on the material, of course, was to indicate who had completed the assigned reading, but always came as a shock to those who were unaccustomed to speaking up. This was particularly true for the girls, who were always quiet. Yet this was to be taught in the American mode, so I persisted.

I also assigned reading, which caused some concern among the inferior students, who certainly did not want such assignments. Professors always rehearsed to the classes what was going to be on the exams, so reading on one's own outside of class was a waste of time. To make matters worse, I assigned reading out of a text book which I laboriously xeroxed and passed out. Some students did the extra reading, catching the wave as it were, to learn a bit about the "American way." Some even tried to respond, albeit shyly and hesitantly, to my questions. Rarely would anyone ask questions, so I would press, "Okay, who has a question?" All that usually prompted was staring at the floor.

I remember my first math class in Clarkson. With a brand new syllabus, the instructor walked into the room and put his book down on the table, saying, "You were all assigned reading for this first class. I assume you have all read it. Are there any questions?" There was no response. He continued, "Okay, I guess everyone knows what is required for tonight, I will see you tomorrow" and took his book and walked off. That was the end of the class. I didn't go to that extreme in my lectures in Kwangju, but I did walk into the class and said, "Okay, now, you have all read the assignment, what do you think about it?" That caused enormous stress for the students.

I couldn't push it too far, but it was fun to do. I said that at the end of the class there was going to be an exam like they had in their other courses, so they understood that. But I also asked them to do a paper. They asked what was a paper? I said that you go out and do some research. You pick a topic, go to the library, find materials, read about it, think, and give me three or four pages in a paper. The language of the paper could be in Korean. It did not have to be in English. I told them if they produced a paper, they would automatically get a one letter increase in their grade, regardless of the quality of the paper. Therefore if a student got a B on the exam, he or she would get an A in the course. Well, that went down heavy. I got some questions, but I didn't get even one paper. I tried and tried to get them to write.

A couple of the smarter students in the class came to me at the American Center, which I ran, and said, "What do I do?" I would say, "Read books or magazines if you want and find a topic". "What topic?" "You pick something that interests you." It was hard for them to understand that they had to think independently, which, of course, was the purpose of the exercise. A few students made an effort to get started, but to my knowledge, nobody ever finished a paper. This was Korea in 1972, but all is different now. American techniques are more prevalent, particularly

in the courses taught by professors who have received advanced degrees in the US. I would suppose that the students still feel uncomfortable with the system, since the high schools remain more closely identified with the traditional way of teaching. The “American way” of challenging the students with a professor who is more a guide to an investigation of a subject than an expert whose knowledge is only to be emulated and repeated in the exam. That is the Confucian tradition most commonly accepted throughout Asia.

Q: Did you follow any of these students who would go to graduate school in the United States, or would any of them do this?

YATES: We did know that Korean students going to the United States had desperate troubles. I knew some of them in Philadelphia when I was there. The bank I worked at hired a student going to Temple University, and he was having desperate troubles. He could hardly speak English. There was an occasional suicide of a Korean student who just got too far behind and couldn't manage. A student going abroad to study from Korea was considered the best, the cream of the crop, and the families usually sold the cow, as it were, to get them to go and put a lot of pride and energy, money, and resources into these students. When they got to the United States, they couldn't survive because of the difference in the educational systems. So rather than go home in shame as a failure, some simply remained in the U.S. and others even resorted to suicide.

It was hard on the students and on the schools. The instructors at these two schools understood that there was trouble. One of the purposes of my class was to give an inkling of the kind of experience they would have in an American university. Whether it worked or not, I can't say, and I have not tried to see if any of my struggling students ever made it to the U.S. for study. I would think not, simply because one course in an American style of teaching is insufficient to become really sensitized to a method which is so alien to the practices of the time.

Q: My experience in Korea was in 1976-79, and I was running the consular section. The students were going as graduate students to some of the very best schools, but I wasn't getting much feedback on how they were doing.

YATES: If they were in the sciences or math, there may not have been a problem, but it was in the liberal arts area where Korean students found the most difficulties.

Q: I would think so, because I recall one of the young women in my file room came to me and wanted some advice. Her brother was going to go abroad to school, he was an engineer, and she wanted to know which ones he should apply to for scholarships. One school was called MIT and the other was Cal Tech. I said that they were the two top schools in the United States, probably in the world, so either one would be fine. I was impressed, because I had run consular sections in other parts of the world where the students were often going to what I would call rinky-dink colleges which were designed really to take money from foreigners. But these were first rate. But it was in the sciences.

YATES: The Korean system of education, as with Asian educational systems which use rote memorization in general, is more attuned to the kind of mathematical proofs and memorization that is necessary in order to be successful in the sciences. Many don't know English, but your

skills are as good in Korean as in English when mathematics is concerned. You don't need a lot of language. There is a special international argot, anyway, to the discipline that you probably will pick up in your country. But when you get into reading historical treatises, expressing opinion, doing original research on a topic, those methods were not common in Korea. The Korean system was not to take a Korean student and show him or her how to learn. It was to teach the student what he or she should know, and when they became professors, they would take that knowledge and expand it more. They would have to learn the fundamentals from their predecessors first.

Of course, the Asian tradition of instruction also had good points that are too often overlooked in the West. For example, when I was in Kwangju, I had a good friend, Huh Baek Nyun, whose pen name was Yi Jae. He was an artist, a living national treasure of Korea. He produced magnificent work based on classical Chinese Southern Sung Dynasty principles of art. I would chat with him occasionally in his studio and once in a while, would take a new book on American art. He had long fingernails and would turn the pages very slowly. He would stop and look longer at a particular example, and you could tell he felt that particular picture was good, and usually it was. He had a very fine eye.

He was running an art school and had two sons. The younger son was a doctor and the older was with him to be trained by his father. I asked him how his students were? "Oh," he said, "they are not very good." "Why not, no talent?" "They are too impatient," he offered. "Young people don't understand. They think that you can take a brush and make art. They are wrong. It takes seven years to learn how to make a straight line with the brush. Seven years how to make a dot. After you have learned those two crafts, then you can learn how to make clouds that flow through the mountains, and that is another seven years. So after you know how to make a straight line, and after you know how to make a dot, and after you know how to make the clouds that run through the mountains, then you can begin to create art."

Q: Twenty-one years later!

YATES: That's right. What he was dramatically putting into perspective was that you have to learn the craft, and until you have it mastered, you cannot produce art. I have always taken that to heart, because I think that is a fundamental Asian view of things. A student goes to a master, sits at the feet of the master, and maybe in 20 or 30 years after studying with the master and mastering the craft, can then begin to create his own interpretation. Even then, he is still looking back at what has been done and principally repeating what he has been taught and learned at the feet of the master, before he, himself, could become a master. He doesn't even have the privilege of becoming a master until the very last days of his life. Sort of the upside down from the way we look at it now, with the idea that youth can carry the day and bring new ideas into things and create something superior to the old. That concept of endless progress is not an Asian concept. I think he had a point which showed in his criticism of the American art he saw in the books I would bring to him. He said that some of it showed promise while other examples were just junk and untutored. Until you have the skills, regardless of how good you are, it is not going to come out well. That was his important lesson of life.

Q: Did you find that Kwangju represented a seat of dissidence or dissent and were American ideas being used by the youth to see how to oppose the government? We certainly were in the period of great dissent in the United States—the anti-Vietnam feelings, etc.

YATES: It was clearly a center of dissent. They felt wronged and not a part of the major stream of things going on in South Korea. Kwangju is also the most conservative part of the country, being agrarian. Conservative in the sense of looking back to the old and unwilling to give up the traditional. If you have a chance to see a portrayal of Korean culture such as the farmers' dances, that is all stuff that comes out of the south. It is the farmer based agrarian culture, which is at the heart of the Korean traditional culture.

The bureaucracy is in Seoul. That is where the later Yi Dynasty kings sat and was the administrative seat under the Japanese. But the real folk culture is in the south. You don't have a large bubble of pressure down there of modern change. You find a grudging non-acceptance of the bureaucrats up in Seoul running around in their fancy cars and playing golf while the folk of Honam suffered down on the farm, but they kept the traditional values. The Kwangju student revolt in 1980, of course, got out of hand and led to the later scandal and terrible trauma within the country. The students were unhappy. That doesn't mean they were unhappy in the sense that they could be seen as becoming Jeffersonian democrats. Students in Korea, I would argue, don't trust the older generation, but the result of their advocacy is not necessarily what we would see as one-man-one-vote. They have a more obscure reason for rebelling, mainly because I think they feel that certain groups in the society have an unfair advantage, so they see themselves as being left out.

Q: What I got some years later was that Park Chung Hee had made a very wise decision, sort of social engineering, in that he was not going to make the mistake so many dictators do and that is milk the farm of everything in order to make bread or rice cheap in the capital city. He was going to make sure that the farmers were receiving basically fair pay for what they were producing. Was this true?

YATES: I think that is a fair statement. Park Chung Hee was a product of a rural environment. His father was a middle level bureaucrat, but the former President was a small town boy who probably felt some of the traditional resentment of a villager against those sophisticated from the city. However, he was a great reader and that was one of his principal strengths. He read about other strong, authoritative leaders. Kemal Ataturk of Turkey was one of his idols, a strong leader. Nasser was also someone he had a favorable opinion of. There was also talk about de Gaulle as being among his pantheon, but that was less clear. I think it was unquestionable that he had a great deal of respect for Kemal Ataturk. Those are people who had agrarian reforms in their basic programs.

Park Chung Hee spent a lot of time on farm issues. He saw himself as a farm boy, and I think he understood, as Mao Zedong did in China, that the fundamental part of the country is agrarian. Of course, possibly owing to that prejudice, the industrial worker didn't do too well. Korean labor was generally underpaid for a long time and essentially was the way Korea made its economic leaps forward. There were vertically organized monopolies in Korea, the Chaebol, that dominated the country for a long time.

The Koreans are basically tough people. They have had a difficult history, having been walked on by the Chinese and Japanese and had to tough it out all along. Americans appeared on the scene after the defeat of the Japanese and became a presence in their society but were not going to be there permanently. Koreans expect the departure of the Americans will come at some point, although they don't want it right now. President Carter was going to pull us out, but the Koreans got upset about that.

Q: I was there at the time and it was a difficult time—Yankee, don't go home just now!

YATES: An unusual message. The Koreans are not only tough but reluctantly understand to varying degrees that a lot of their chestnuts were pulled out of the fire because of the American willingness to fight against the communist North. Younger Koreans forget that, they don't learn much of their own history, particularly history starting with the Japanese occupation. Psychologically they want to forget that period of subjugation. It was an embarrassment and a terrible time that they would like to see go away. Iceland has the same feeling about the Danes and won't even talk about them because they were in control and that was an embarrassing period in their history. So the Koreans are reluctant to think much about the Japanese occupation period.

They don't like the Japanese for the suffering they received at the hands of their overlords for almost half a century and will continue to dislike the Japanese for the foreseeable future. In this, they are somewhat like the Chinese. The Japanese haven't quite got a clear understanding that such a feeling persists to the extent that it does, but none the less, that is the way Koreans feel. So they are missing an important part of their recent history, a basic part of their formative years as a modern nation.

Most Koreans blame the U.S. for the division of the peninsula. We ran into this all the time. Many think that the U.S. has a responsibility to put it back together again. That question is open to argument based on the post-WWII negotiations that began in Yalta, but I feel that is basically a false reading of history. The naked truth would reveal that nobody thought about it. Perhaps, that is an even worse insult: that nobody bothered to give serious consideration to Korea; it was an after-thought.

With the Japanese surrender, the American military was very reluctant to get involved in Korea. General Hodge was in the Philippines at the time and was deeply reluctant to accept the direct order to go to Korea. Americans knew little about Korea, and apart from a few missionaries, we had almost no expertise in the language or culture. In our post-war innocence, we had much to learn about the complexities of the responsibilities we inherited with the victory in the Pacific. Hodge rounded up as many experts, mostly missionaries, as he could find, and flew to Kimpo to receive the surrender from the Japanese who were fearful of having to surrender to their long-time rivals, the Russians. The story of that decision, to get to Seoul in response to pleas from the defeated Japanese, is one of the interesting side lights of the end of the war. Evidently the basic decision was made in the White House, with a few relatively junior policy makers and military (Dean Rusk, Marshall Green...) carrying the day.

I don't know whether that was a hurried and ill-considered decision or not, but had we demurred, it is likely that all of Korea would be communist today. Mistake or fortune, we were ignorant of Korea and its problems and really did not want to get involved. There was an effort in 1948 to unify the country with a UN vote, but the North pulled out of it. I don't think too many tears were shed in the South when the North pulled out. Korea is not a unified country, despite all the propaganda which says it is the most homogenous people in the world. They have very deep, historic antagonisms. The Paekche/Silla thing is only part of it. The Northerners have always been Northerners.

The split is something similar to divisions in the U.S. between the Yankees and the Dixiecrats. There is a split there, and it is going to take a couple hundred years for things to cool off. The Korean War didn't help it any. If we had fought the Civil War four or five years ago, maybe we would be able to understand the emotional scars more clearly today. I do not believe that the Koreans themselves fully understand these emotions, but they have this emotional thing in their stomach—yes, we must be united, we are all one nation, but not today. During most of the divided period, it was forbidden to teach about or study the North. Collections of materials about the North were kept under lock and key, and anyone attempting to learn about the North was subject to severe penalties under the National Security Law.

Q: Was there any discussion while you were there of what would happen with unification?

YATES: Not in the way it would be discussed today. In those days it was inconceivable because of their economies. The current discussion is that communism is dead, even in the North, and they are no longer the threat they were earlier. Certainly there remains an unambiguous military threat because of the enormous size of the North Korean military, almost three quarters of which is poised near the DMZ, ready to strike without warning. Yet there is no doubt that Southerners do not have the same fear of the ideology of communism eroding social stability there. That was not the case at the time I was in Kwangju.

At that time, there was a real fear of infiltration from the North of spies and saboteurs. There was an incident while I was there where somebody walked into a village and asked for a bank that had been in the town during the Japanese occupation. Villagers suspected that he was a former villager who had gone north and had recently been infiltrated back into the south. They shot and killed him. He was an outsider, but turned out to be just a guy who had moved to Japan and had come back looking for his old boyhood home. Unfortunately, he did not explain, nobody knew him, and he was taken as a spy. That illustrates the intensity of the feeling and the sense of insecurity at that time. Nonetheless, he should have known better than to mess around and not let people know who he was. He was a casualty of the nerves of an era. I do not think a similar incident would happen today, although we are not so many months past the submarine incident where Northerners successfully infiltrated into the South and were caught only when their submarine became beached on the southern coast.

Q: Were you having any problem dealing with communist influence and propaganda in your job?

YATES: No, the word wasn't even spoken. Communists couldn't operate. If anybody was even charged as a leftist, they would lose their career and family and be ostracized. The commotion over the real or imagined leanings of opposition leader and Honam native, Kim Dae Jung, was a good example of that.

Q: Were students coming from Seoul and spreading revolt?

YATES: After the spring semester was over, students would come down to Kwangju, where they sometimes would stir up trouble. We had demonstrations; we had threats. I was there during martial law. Park Chung Hee in 1971, I guess it was, declared martial law. I was in Chonju at a restaurant with several college professors, including several law professors, when somebody came in and said everybody had to go home quickly, because martial law had been declared. The shock of the Koreans I was with was immediate and deeply felt.

Q: What was the cause of the martial law?

YATES: I don't recall the immediate cause. They felt things were getting out of control and decided to put a lid on and ban all assembly. If four or more people found themselves together on the same street corner, they could be arrested, even though they may not have had any sort of ulterior motives. In the American Center, we had a problem with our programs, since the authorities had insisted that we cease holding meetings. However, in consultation with the embassy in Seoul, we concluded that, as Americans, we had a legal and moral right to continue our calendar of programming. That unwanted decision was communicated to the local authorities, with the invitation to the officials that they were welcome to attend as well, if they wished.

That caused great strain. Things got fairly tense. The Korean CIA had taken to posting their agents in the front of our American Center where their purpose was obviously to intimidate our library and program patrons. They would stand outside our door, taking names and attempting to stop people from coming in. Every day we had to clean up a circle of cigarette butts left in the spot where a sequence of chain-smoking goons had been posted. Yet our attendance did not fall off appreciably, for our clientele was a hardy lot of independent-minded natives of Honam. Nevertheless, I was greatly irritated by the official action of one of our close allies, and with Seoul's concurrence had to take one of my staff people, who was very reluctant to the point of outright fear, out to the Korean CIA headquarters in the western part of the city to tell them to back off.

We went to the Korean CIA headquarters in Kwangju, which was located in a secluded area. My staff said there was a snake pit in there where they threw people they didn't like, so they were most reluctant to go. I assembled my driver and Mr. Oh Hyung, my senior staff assistant, and said we were going to go along with our videotape recorder, so that we might show a sample of our programming and make the request for them to desist. I called the KCIA headquarters in advance with the request for a meeting, and they said all right. So I went out and saw the local KCIA chief.

We showed him the videotape and left some pamphlets and told him we would be happy to see him at our center any time for a discussion. Of course, we knew he never would come. After the simple demarche, his people still hung around, and the ring of cigarette butts continually marked where they had stood. Yet they did get off our backs, and USIS policy in Korea continued to be that we would not stop programming or change anything because of the dictates of martial law. It did not pertain to us. And people came. We had better attendance than we ever had. The lesson to the Korean government was clear. We could be as stubborn as they were and would not be pushed around. So on balance, the insistence to continue programming as usual was a good move.

Q: Did you get involved in trying to explain the American protest movement?

YATES: It was red hot at that time in the U.S. but not in Korea. Koreans in general didn't understand the student movement in the US. They generally supported what we did in Vietnam, because we had done it in Korea and they had benefited greatly by it. So there wasn't a great intellectual uncertainty about our actions. The Korean Government sent troops, and their people generally agreed with that. There was a lot of television coverage about their own troops in Vietnam. I don't believe that even today, they question our involvement in Vietnam.

Our programming on protest in America interpreted American society more in terms of how the American democracy works, and when there is protest in the US, what it really means. Is it like the Korean demonstration in the street or is it something else? One of the things that we did at the time was to try to interpret American mores and policies to those who were likely to become future leaders. I mentioned before the Kwangju 2nd Military Academy. There were about 2000 students there at the time. We made an arrangement wherein American Studies classes were held for the student body. I contracted with local professors from schools and colleges, who were competent in American studies in a variety of fields...literature, economics, history, etc. I went out to the Academy and offered to do a program for the cadets. I offered to pay the freight to bring in these professors to do a lecture program on American studies for the cadets. They were enthusiastic and agreed to make arrangements.

While I had expected small classes of a selection of cadets who had a special interest in American subjects, I was unprepared for the result. They put all two thousand cadets into the auditorium, all shaved head rows, not a hair in the place. You walked in and two thousand people stood up and saluted and shouted a military greeting. It was quite a sensation. You walked up and they had spot lights, recorders, new chalk, and erasers on the blackboard. They had cadre standing at the back with long bamboo poles. If a head went down, a bamboo pole would whack it. This was to make sure no one fell asleep. Certainly, one would not want to fall asleep at a Korean military academy.

I took a couple of professors with me for the opening session. I gave a short welcoming statement and then turned it over to them and left for the classes to be conducted entirely in Korean. The concept of the series worked out quite well. The professors I hired did not all have appropriate American Studies lectures in the courses they taught in their respective universities. Therefore, they had to do special work to prepare for the event. They would come to my library to do research, an important objective for our library in the first place. I paid them for the

lectures, but they would have to do all the preparations. I selected the topic, and they would have to gather the materials and get up to speed for the lecture.

Thereby, I got double value for my dollar because, being good academics, they would naturally not want to spend all that effort for just one lecture. After delivering a lecture at the academy, they would use the same prepared notes in classes for their own students. I had about 15 people from different colleges and universities do these lectures.

I had one professor come to me at my office after he had delivered his lecture out at the Military Academy, and he was very pale. I asked him what was the matter. He said, "I have just come from the military academy." "How did it go?" He said, "I have taught for 20 years and have never, never taught two thousand people at one time. I am just blown away by that. My nerves are shot and my whole substance is all gone... two thousand people listening to me?" It was really quite an experience for them. It was a great program. We did two semesters out there.

We also did a lot of videotape programs. This was when videotape was new. We had 3/4 inch videotape. We were taping USIA produced material in Korean - our own motion picture unit did the conversion for us - and took them into Rotary clubs, schools, government offices, businesses, anywhere that we could gather together a few people who were prominent in the community. At the time, television was brand new in Korea. I had a heavy, but small 12" color TV set, a tape recorder, and a transformer. The transformer would enable us to boost or reduce the local current to the nominal 115-120 volts.

Our small team would go into an office or meeting room with all our gear, set it down, and while Mr. Oh Hyung and I had the usual polite cup of tea, my driver would plug everything together. The tape was, of course, cued and ready to go. For example, many times I would go into the Governor's office and set the TV down at the end of his coffee table and do the normal tea plus greeting chat while the equipment was quickly attached. In moments, I was all ready to go. Often, he would bring in most of his top staff, and they would all stand around while I played a videotape. They enjoyed it, because of the novelty and because it broke up their day of a constant stream of supplicants and complaints.

Any time I wanted to go and see the Governor or Mayor, I would just call and say we had a new tape on something I knew they would be interested in. I could take it in and get out in about 20 minutes. They loved it. I could get in to see governors, generals, etc. at the drop of a hat. It was really effective. I could take it to a Rotary club lunch and set it up on a high table in the corner and show a videotape, talk about it, and have a question period afterwards. It was really basic communications, but you had to have a gimmick. The gimmick was the TV set, which was only a 12 or 14 inch set and was great at the end of a coffee table. For the bigger shows, we had larger 18 or 20 inch sets. My driver and Mr. Oh were pretty good at this. We would do four or five showings in a day. I would go to Chonju and hit the university, the mayor's office, and business groups, one right after the other, showing the same tape. While we were saying goodbye, my driver would re-cue the tape and pack it up, and we would then drive off to the next stop. It was a real road show.

Q: Were you married while you were there, or did you come back?

YATES: While I was in Kwangju, right at the end of my tour. We came back to Washington, mainly so my wife would have a chance to become acclimated to the American scene and complete her citizenship. I, of course, had to find something that would be of interest as a Foreign Service Officer in Washington. As it turned out, I had an unusual opportunity.

During my tenure as Center Director in Kwangju, we had a research study in country on the use of our libraries. The conclusions of that study were at variance with my experience and designs for our library, and I took the occasion to draft a lengthy memo to Seoul, detailing the specifics and reasoning behind my objections. I sent it to Seoul and forgot about it. When I came up for assignment, I got a call asking if I would be willing to come back to the Office of Research. My boss in Seoul, Mort Smith, had appended my protests to the Post response to the study, and the head of Research, Jim Mocerri, had evidently taken a shine to it. He evidently had some sympathy for what I had written. He wanted me to come back and show what I could do. So I got a year of university training for social science research in preparation for spending a tour in USIA's research division.

NICHOLAS SHAPIRO LAKAS
Economic & Commercial Counselor
Seoul (1969-1972)

Mr. Lakas was born and raised in New York City and educated at George Washington University and the University of Wisconsin. Entering the Foreign Service in 1948 he became a specialist in Foreign Commercial and Economic Affairs and served in Washington with both the Departments of State and Commerce, Mr. Lakas had assignments in Egypt, Ireland, Scotland, Kuwait, Libya and South Korea. Mr. Lakas was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: You were in Korea from 1967 to when?

LAKAS: 1969 to 1972.

Q: I just might want to point out that this promotion from FSO-3 to FSO-2 put you in the equivalent to a general in the military rank.

LAKAS: Flag rank.

Q: Flag rank. In a way, your time in Commerce... If Commerce really liked you, there is often a Commerce representative on the promotion panel. They usually just sort of sit back. I'm sure when your name came up, this set off all sorts of bells and whistles. We're talking about bureaucratic politics. It was very important. They were sending a signal.

LAKAS: That they were going to create their own service if necessary. They wanted people they

could rely on, and had confidence in people they knew.

Q: Before going out to Korea, what were you getting from the desk and all? Korea was going through an extremely important economic period. As I say, having been considered a “basket case” for so long, and all of a sudden... From the American point of view, and from the Korean point of view, it’s one of the great success stories.

LAKAS: You’re absolutely right in asking that question. Initially, there were those in that area of State who wanted to appoint one of the old lines Foreign Service officers.

Q: Economically.

LAKAS: Fewer economics. But, Thomas prevailed to such a degree that a two-page telegram was sent out to the embassy, mainly to Bill Porter, giving them a complete background history of my work in the Foreign Service since day one, and saying in essence, “You’re lucky to get him. Don’t mess with this. The Commerce Department has a deep interest in thinking that this man knew how to serve. This new position has been created just for him, and eventually, to take on a larger presence as AID declines in the embassy.” It’s not known to _____ that there has been an attempt on Clark’s life, at the time when the North Koreans penetrated the blue house.

Q: This is when a squad came - North Koreans dressed like South Koreans.

LAKAS: They arrested these people, or did whatever they did with them. They found documents that indicated they were going after Bill Porter as well, the ambassador of the United States. Up to that moment, the embassy was accommodated in a very tiny building across from the Bandeau Center, consular and political sections in a very tiny building. AID was in this magnificent building, across the street from an industry of finance. It was then that _____ prevailed on the State Department and the others in Washington to permit the movement and transfer out, the entire embassy from that small building into the AID, and to pick up quarters that were usually reserved for the AID director.

Q: Actually, what you are describing is a bureaucratic battle. What was happening, particularly in many countries... It happened in Greece for a long time... where AID was running the show, in a way, because the minister of country X would come. I mean, these are the guys with money. Why talk to these ambassadors and diplomats? All they can do is get information, but they are not giving us money. So, the AID director was running his own show and they also had lots of perks for their employees. They were running a completely different system - higher promotions, better quarters, all that.

LAKAS: Commerce was aflame over their solution to promote interest to buy American products, whereas AID interest was, “Here’s the money, Koreans, go and buy what you need at the best price possible,” which meant at times, others felt it. So, you had a commercial attache virtually powerless in light of the strength of AID, being able to promote U.S. visits. AID would turn around and say, “Don’t buy that. It’s too expensive for you. Buy that from France, from Britain, from Finland.” The job I had, again, was a challenge. “Go out there, replace AID, but do

it gently. We don't want any problems back here in Washington. You may have problems getting on the country team as well, but do the best you can."

Q: Let's talk about the political and economic situation of Korea when you arrived there in 1969. We're talking about South Korea, obviously.

LAKAS: It was a military dictatorship. We were trying to prompt them into a more democratic process of government. But, we didn't want to rock the boat too much. The military had the upper hand, in terms of its presence in Korea. The military, American and Korean, were very, very close. On our side, we were trying to be equally as close with the youngsters who were beginning to become vice ministers in the Korean government, investment office, whatever. So, in this kind of underground fossil between the ambassador and the embassy, with AID, and also with the U.S. or UN military command.

Q: Well, it was technically a UN command.

LAKAS: So, he had his hands full. When Commerce prevailed and I was sent out to be his counselor, a new job at the embassy, he was delighted. He then began to say, "You are going to attend, Nick, the July Fourth reception at my house. Nick, you are going to be on the country team. I want to see you, Nick, travel the country far and wide, looking at the infrastructure, finding out where American products are being bought, find out which factories employ AID resources and report to me." The AID director was not very pleased with this.

Q: Who was the AID director?

LAKAS: Houston, I think, was one of them. _____ very strong political appointees.

Q: When you get a chance to correct this, maybe you can insert the names, if they come to you.

LAKAS: I have documents. So, there I began a completely different scenario to undertake what will probably be the most challenging job I've had in a long time in the Foreign Service. The ambassador also dictated that I should have a residence in the same compound where he lived.

Q: This was called "Compound One."

LAKAS: Exactly. Not to be put into the compound with the military base. What the embassy did not know was that Bill Porter and I had been students at FSI. I was learning Arabic, when he was refreshing his Arabic. Eleanor Porter was a dear friend of my wife's, and vice versa.

Q: Who was the DCM?

LAKAS: I have it in my records.

Q: Well, we can insert that.

LAKAS: He was replaced eventually by a fellow named Underhill, I believe, or Underwood. I'll check that too.

Q: It sounds like one of the Underwood's of the missionary family.

LAKAS: Yes.

Q: Well now, when you arrived there, here you are studying Arabic. What kind of a Korean speaking ... because obviously you were not a Korean hand. Porter was not a Korean hand. Did you feel that the embassy had a pretty good rapport within the Korean community, as far as Korean speakers, and all that?

LAKAS: I can speak for myself, and my office of some 30 people, including AID. The other point I didn't make to you is that the ambassador said, "I want economic section of AID to merge with the commercial section of the State Department. Therefore, it would be one entire component. I had to deal with subordinates, who were AID personnel, and write their diplomacy evaluations, State Department style. Yes, your question. I have a feeling we rely a great deal on our local, national employees to bridge us to the community. I don't know what the other agencies did. That remains to be seen.

Q: We're talking about the CIA had a very close contact with the KCIA, which is always a bit problematic, particularly under a dictatorship. Let's talk a bit about how you worked within, dealing with AID, when you initially arrived. Then, talk about how it was apples and oranges. These are hostile apples and oranges.

LAKAS: Well, they very kindly invited me to join the large staff meeting of AID of all the AID folks. I remember to my astonishment, I walked into the director's office for that first meeting every Monday and saw so many directors, about 15 or 20 of them. Each one had been delegated to do such and such. I was introduced as the State Department counselor for commercial affairs. So, the economic officer of AID came over and said to me, "How nice to see you. I assume you'll be working for me." Right off the bat, they try to make certain they set the stage. I said, "I'll be delighted to work with you anytime. I have the office underneath yours, and we'll get to know each other better." Of course, he as economics officer already had an entrenched relationship with the vice minister and others in the ministry of administrative economic affairs. So I had to create this all by myself, in terms of first making my official calls. They didn't quite understand in the beginning why I needed to do that. After all, I was an AID employee. You see.

Q: Yes.

LAKAS: But, I wasn't. The ambassador simply sat on his rumpus and watched this with some amusement.

Q: Did AID seem to be getting the word at this time that... Were we getting to a point where AID was getting out, or were we seeing heel marks in the carpets of the office? I mean, trying to hang on as long as they could?

LAKAS: They were trying to hang on as long as they could. It was one of the best times for them. They lived well, very well. It wasn't until after my third and fourth month of being there where I began to take trips around the country, region by region. I went to Pusan, then to the west, east, Inchon. They were handling AID funds and producing certain items. AID really became a little upset about this, because I was taking with me in an embassy van, myself, one of my officers of my staff at the State Department.

Q: Who was that, do you remember?

LAKAS: Bobby Gallagher and Adeholt Monroe. I also took an economic officer from the AID office of economic affairs. I also took a military attache, if it was possible, and a CIA covert. So, I had a retinue of about five or six people who I felt would fit in beautifully. One of them played the guitar, and the Koreans went ga ga over it.

Q: This is sort of a social note; in Korea, at a party, you are supposed to get up and entertain. It is pretty hard for most Americans to do.

LAKAS: I began to introduce myself as the counselor for commercial and economic affairs of the State Department, Foreign Service officer. So, I was beginning to run concerts through AID. But, it was excellent.

Q: An economic counselor, is really someone who...

LAKAS: No, economic officer, under an AID economic counselor.

Q: So, in those days, we didn't have an economic counselor.

LAKAS: No.

Q: Because in my time, I got there in 1976 as consul general, we had an economic counselor. Actually the economic counselor was a State Department officer, John Bennett, who was also presiding over AID.

LAKAS: I know John. He's a very good person. The memory of being a pioneer in this, not volunteering for it, but it was assigned to me, is very strong. I had to step on some people's feet. It was unavoidable. Then, the big struggle came as to who was going to write my performance evaluation. AID said that no it was theirs. The State Department said it was theirs.

Q: I think it would be the DCM or the ambassador reviewing.

LAKAS: That's what happened, but it got so hot, that they said, "Okay, the AID director will write the thing, and it will be reviewed by the DCM." It got up to the DCM's office, and he completely revised what they said in his reviewing statement. You can get an idea now of what life was like.

Q: How was the movement to get AID to dismember its apparatus, and all that? I mean, who was

doing this? Was it coming from Washington? Was it coming from the ambassador? How was this coming along, particularly during the time you were there?

LAKAS: Initially, I sensed in the early days that no one really wanted to stand up in front, and stop this. By the second year, I began to hear rumors coming out from Washington, from Congress. These were certain areas of Congress, and the Commerce Department. The Commerce Department seemed to be building up a lot of strength, gradually, to reduce AID in countries where it was no longer necessary to have that degree of AID support. I wouldn't be surprised if the military commanders had something to say about this as well.

Q: Well, part of it was confidence building. If we kept this there, the Koreans would feel that... We weren't a full state. What was your impression of first dealing at the Sol level, when you went out, to see the Korean officials at a meeting? Their competence, the way things were going?

LAKAS: I was generally very impressed with their competence. They worked very hard, and they played very hard. I never saw so much golfing. We did a lot of work on the golf course. We did. So, by doing all this, we began to assume a place of prominence that the Koreans watched very carefully, but having seen us not demolish overnight, they decided they would play both sides, and they did. They saw and heard from their embassy here in Washington that there was this program coming on to reduce AID...

Q: Well, here you have the situation where the Koreans were very proud people, and they were getting all sorts of goodies from AID, but by doing this, they were giving up part of their salvaging. I could see a lot of ministries saying, "If we get rid of AID, we're not going to get as much as we used to, and we'll have to do it on our own," but at the same time, "We have to stand on our own two feet." I would think that there would have been a change in the balance. Were you noticing this?

LAKAS: Yes I was, particularly after we had put on a very spectacular participation in the Korean trade fare of 1969. The commercial attaché then, before my arrival, had done a superb job of doing this. The Koreans saw the businessmen from the United States eager to do business with them, but on the basis of "Proper for you, improper for me." It was a time when they were saying, "Remember we spilled blood together," therefore, be gentle, be kind, be generous. It was beginning to move away. You're not going to get American business in here on a conventional arrangement, unless there is something in it for us, and something in it for you. We drummed away at this. I remember my speech at the American Chamber of Commerce, in which I hit that, "Sign here, to see to that we promote U.S. business interests along with the protection and welfare of the Koreans." The AID representatives who were there at that moment were very astonished at this. But, you see, I spoke as if I was independent. I was not an AID person. Gradually, we kept repeating this, until they began to accept it as a fact of life. "Yes, we remember how we spilled blood together. Yes, we are special relatives. But, if you really want conventional business, which has got to come, you've got to understand that you have to offer something to the American businessman, which in return for, you will get yours." We have to compete: Citibank, Bank of America, AT&T, IBM... They all wanted to come in, but they have to be assured of protection of their investment. So, there is where the office of investment performance with top service came into place. It began to see more and more traditional businessmen coming into their office saying, "Nick Lakas sent me here. We need some help to

meet the right people. Can you arrange things for us? Can you explain your investment laws to us?" There wasn't an AID person doing that, it was us. So, they got the message very quickly.

Q: During your watch, what type of businesses were looking for...

LAKAS: Oil, finance. Then, consumer services of a higher degree. Here's an example: Greyhound Bus Service. I'll never forget the thrill, I was heading down to Pusan with my staff to do an inspection, and up comes this Greyhound Bus from New Jersey. We all screamed, "Yea, Greyhound Bus in business." Safeway type of grocery stores. We got a piece of the automobile business, manufacturing business, the jeep company. But, it was finance, it was banking, high-level consumer services.

Q: This was during the Nixon administration. The Nixon administration, particularly early on, was very sensitive about textiles, mainly because Nixon had gotten a lot of support during his first election in 1968, from places like Georgia, North Carolina and all. He was very unhappy, at that time, with the Orient, more or less, kicking out textiles, Japan and all. Did you get involved in our concerns there?

LAKAS: Yes, to a degree. But, their focus in Washington was Japan. Korea was a small role player, and also still struggling to move up. So, they didn't really want to harm Korea at the moment, because it was reaching up for bigger things, but it was Japan they were looking at. Eventually, they also hit, I think, Singapore.

Q: Singapore. Thailand, and those places, but Korea was sort of a special state.

LAKAS: 1969, 1970, 1971, it was kind of a special case. So, there would be rumblings, but it wasn't something anybody would do about backing it up. It was just rumblings. You had the Exxon Bank coming over, providing loans. You would have OPEC coming over for guarantees. They were still in that process of supporting it, kind of.

Q: Well, were you running into the problem, which is sort of endemic, thereof, the pay-off corruption, up and down the line? How did you handle that?

LAKAS: One day, Ambassador Habib, who had replaced Bill Porter, called me into his office. This was about 1971. He didn't even ask me to sit down. He simply said to me, "Lakas, what do you know about corruption?" I said, "Personally or officially?" He said, "Don't get smart with me, just tell me what you know about corruption." I said, "All I can say is, we hear, have no evidence. There are competitors providing permanent houses in Rome, are offering rebates of enormous dimensions. They seem to have doors open for them at the highest levels, but this is all rumor. Sometimes we get this directly from our prospective American businessman. I personally have not seen it, so I cannot tell you that it exists factually, but the rumors are a problem throughout the community." The rumors being, "Do you want to do business in Korea? You have to accommodate yourself to being responsive to people whose salaries are very low, and would be very happy to receive any assistance with our children going to schools in the United States, or assistance with the house." He said, "That's not the answer I want." I said, "That's all I can give you." When business people come in to see me, they don't want to see the commercial

attaché. We had two commercial attachés, but sometimes they insisted that they were of higher rank in the company when they see the boss. Who do we see to get the door open? Well, I'd say what we have here is a list of very reputable potential joint venture partners if that's what you want. We will also direct you to the government offices where we think you will get assistance, but we cannot tell you at this moment who will do what you are intimating to me. So, that's what they did. It was kind of an unhappy situation.

Q: Were you concerned with... It was sort of the insidious type of corruption that happens in Korea of lavish gifts or entertainment and all, with your own staff?

LAKAS: Absolutely. It was insidious. It was bad. Gifts. It could take the form of being a guest and a very lavish dinner. It could take the form of being a guest at the summer house of a Korean businessman of this nice young family. It could be receiving some painting at Christmas time. It could be your wife receiving some sort of gadget from the wife of Sam Stone, or whatever. It wasn't money that I saw. It was the parties, the trip down to the offshore island. We would report these events. The embassy knew we were accepting this for the purpose of engaging in more goodwill. I wouldn't be surprised if other things have happened.

Q: When I was there, I was extremely worried about real solid corruption, because I had visa officers, and people would pay all outdoors. Our local staff, foreign nationals, were... Well, we had ongoing investigations. I kept warning our people, but it's insidious. I won't say that corruption is the right term, but did you get involved or observe certain Congressmen who were great friends of the South Koreans, who arrived and from what I understand, would get themselves fitted for suits? Young ladies would appear, and maybe even cash. It was sort of disgraceful.

LAKAS: Yes, I witnessed some of that. There was a curfew on at that time as well.

Q: Yes, 10:00.

LAKAS: I had to escort some of these people back to their hotel. There was also an interest in selling Louisiana rice or California rice. That developed into a rice scandal much later.

Q: That became "ricegate" or something like that. What was his name? I can't think of his name. There was a young Korean lady, Susie something or other. I was there when finally it got so bad that they had an investigation. They sent out somebody from the attorney general's office, a prosecutor named Giuliani, who came out, and I had to administer the oath. I remember that. Senator Ellender was one of them, I think, from Louisiana. How did you handle the Congressional problem of people who were very obviously on the take? No matter how you slice it.

LAKAS: I was out of Korea in 1972. I became the office director at State for commercial affairs. It didn't really come out into the open until about 1974. It was not in my hands at any moment. Nobody called me to ask for information. It was being handled elsewhere. In a sense, I was relieved because I didn't know exactly what was going on. What impacted me was when I retired in 1975, I was asked to consider becoming president and executive director of U.S./Korea

Society. Then, it was known as the U.S. Korea Economic Council. John Bennett, I think was...

Q: John Bennett was the...

LAKAS: That's right. The chairman of the board was a Gulf Oil Company person. The then executive director of U.S./Korea Economic Council and the chairman of Gulf Oil Company were summoned by the FBI, as I recall, to Washington to give testimony on this subject. It then worked out that the board management of the U.S. Korea Economic Council thought it was best to change the appearance of the U.S./Korea Economic Council, which was not received very happily by the counterpart, Korea/U.S. Economic Council in Seoul. We eventually changed it. I was asked to become the executive director, and then later the president. We called it the U.S./Korea Society. It was a very nasty period of time. It died eventually. I made sure that in my case as executive director, I would not accept funds from Korean agencies to float this organization. Similarly, what was done for the Japan society. I knew once the Koreans had an in, they would want to run the operation. So, I had asked our people, the Americans on the board, for each company to come up with \$100,000 or more to create a foundation, money from which interest could be used to operate U.S./Korea Society, as both a cultural and a commercial enterprise. I tried for 10 years to do that, but they wouldn't be forthcoming. Today, it is just that under another former Ambassador... Again, the name escapes me.

Q: Well now, as you were dealing on the commercial economic side, the president of the country was a former General, Park Chung Hee. Unlike almost any other dictator, he took an intense interest in the economic development of the country. In fact, one can say a lot of things against Park Chung Hee, but in a way, he really turned the country around. He is a remarkable individual, because of his economic interest, and the fact that he made things go. Did you get any feel about his influence on the economic development and commercial side when you were there?

LAKAS: It was very strong. You could see it in the manner in which he would want to see his relatives and others get involved in it, commercial programs. You could see it in the manner in which the Korean officials were behaving, in terms of working long hours and being very devoted to their responsibility in moving the program, with new laws being created throughout the year I was there.

Q: I'm told he used to appear. In fact, not told, I knew he did. He was still doing it when I was there. He would appear at the economic ministry, maybe once a week or something, and sit down and say, "Alright, what have you done?" In the Korean system, you hustled. Did you sometimes feel in affairs that you were dealing with, almost desperate bureaucrats who have to fulfill something or get something done, and they needed to get you to do it?

LAKAS: Yes. Since we were learning how to put this thing together, whatever this thing is, whether it was an investment law, or whatever, they still depended a lot on us drafting for them, some of the legislation. AID was very good at doing that.

Q: In other words, and correct me if I'm wrong, but they would say, "Gee, we need a law on the investment of such and such, go to somebody on the American side." We would then go back to Washington, because you probably wouldn't have it on hand, and say "What is the model law for

this,” and then transmit it back?

LAKAS: Yes, or send somebody over on TDY, to be assigned TDY to the ministry of finance, to help prepare such legislation.

Q: What was your impression of the student strategy at this time, and the results of this? Were you seeing the... A lot of Koreans went to the United States to study, off and on, very practical things, getting masters and Ph.D.s, and economic oriented subjects. Were they coming back or were they still in the process of developing a cadre with American training?

LAKAS: We saw a large number returning, because the Korean government was ensuring that they would be given positions of responsibility, beginning at a lower rank, and then moving on up. Also, the parents of those students who own companies were reaching an age where they felt they needed to get back to take over the companies. An example: we had dinner one night with an important Korean entrepreneur who was aging. He had summoned his son and daughter-in-law, who had been in the states for approximately 10 years, attending Columbia, UCLA, Duke, and living in New York City, becoming accustomed to the American way of life, and returning and going back into the Korean way of life, because father had summoned him home.

Q: Did you find that these were good contacts, the American trained people? Did you use them much in the various ministries, and businesses, or were they, too, low a level?

LAKAS: We were wise enough to look ahead and work with them, where it was propitious to do so, and appropriate to do so, with the intention of building a passage for the future, for our relationship. But, the real clout was carried by more senior people, who may have had education in the United States, through a missionary work, or whatever, but who were very Korean. The missionaries played an enormous role in getting the kids over, back in the earlier days, to attend school in the United States.

Q: What about North Korea? They were 30 miles north, or something like that. How did the North Korean menace... and it was a real menace, we aren't talking about a made-up one of tremendous military force, under a man, Kim Il Sung, whom we couldn't read very well...?

LAKAS: We, who worked throughout the day, gave less attention to the danger, because we had other things to do. We were mindful of a shadow behind us. It was the families who stayed at home that really worried about this a great deal, my wife and others, in particular. We began to have drills at the embassy, calling for evacuation of the embassy, for example. The local employees being evacuated; some of us staying on duty at the embassy, yet it was a very real concern for us. A Congressman would come in and insist on going up to the DMZ line. I would probably be one to take them up there. My worry would be that some local yokel from Kansas, or elsewhere. By that I mean, not having any experience with the real danger of the family Jones, would do something rash, like attempting to take a photograph of a North Korean soldier, and begin to see the rifle lowered in our direction. I would say to him, “Sir, don't move, put the camera down. Just turn around and walk away if you please sir.”

Q: What about life there for you? Were your children there?

LAKAS: Yes, both were there with us. The young one attended the military dependence school. The other one was 19, getting ready to go back and consider a university. My wife didn't like it at all. She didn't like the position of the Korean woman. She did not like the local system. She really didn't know what was going on, so I would explain to her very clearly what it was. There was a very high degree of social activity between the government of Korea and us, between the private sectors of Korea and us, between the American Chamber of Commerce membership and us. But, the feeling that one had in the pit of one's stomach, me in particular, was that you were merely sought after for what you may be able to do for them. That bothered me, although I should have accepted it. It's par for the course, anywhere. It was so clearly evident in Korea, that I didn't want to return for a second tour. Although there was a great insistence on my returning for a second tour, I rejected it. It was a very dangerous gamble, because I had no onward assignment.

Q: Well, tell me about Philip Habib. He was the ambassador for a while. He's one of the legends in the Foreign Service. How did you find him? What was your particular observance about how he operated in Korea?

LAKAS: I didn't have as close a relationship with him as I did with Bill Porter. I knew of him in Washington. He came in and took office just about when the AID versus State Department issues were being settled. His house was on the hill above us in compound one. We could hear them sometimes arguing. There were arguments within the family. He was kind of brusque, very straightforward, I think, in his comments. I don't really know how the Koreans accepted him, or didn't. I have no idea. He was very genial when he was at a party somewhere. He was very even-handed and delivered great praise and finesse. I think the time he called me in and asked me to tell him what I knew about corruption, I understood his concern. He had every right to ask his commercial counselor what he knew about it, but I thought he could have handled it a little bit differently. Yet, I did not know him.

Q: Did you have much call to ask him to give support in your ongoing... I mean, you were sent out with a major bureaucratic mission. That was to begin to replace AID. Did he seem to fall within this or not, or was he looked upon as sort of staying out of it?

LAKAS: Under his administration, which for me, was brief, because he came in 1971, and I left in 1972, I didn't sense the turmoil or the effort that I sensed under William Porter. I had the feeling that Phil Habib was focused on something else.

Q: Obviously, there were major issues with that, including Vietnam. Was Korea, on the economic side, benefiting at all by our involvement with Vietnam?

LAKAS: Yes. They provided equipment, they provided material. They had a contingent of military in Vietnam. They benefited greatly. So did Hong Kong.

Q: So did Japan, very much so. What about the Korean/American community? Was this much of a community at that time? Did you feel any influence of this from Los Angeles or not?

LAKAS: The Korean/American community in Seoul and Korea or the United States?

Q: The United States.

LAKAS: I did not feel, I did not see, I did not hear much about that, until I became the executive director of the U.S./Korea Society in New York City. Then, I saw a lot of the difficulties that the Koreans were having with Koreans attending America's schools, and coming back, and not being as responsive to Korean traditions.

Q: Oh yes. Now, you left there in 1972?

LAKAS: Yes.

Q: This was partly on account of your wife not being too happy there at how things were going. I didn't extend either, because I don't think the wives are that happy there.

LAKAS: I should add one more point. I'm pleased that I did, because I was beginning to accommodate myself ever so slowly, to the Korean mentality. Corruption, we have it here in America. You didn't get a paving contract in Boston unless you knew the right people. You didn't get the contract to repair the City Hall in Atlanta unless you knew the right people, and you assisted in that direction. I began to say to myself, "Well, what is so different about what they are doing here in Korea?" That was a telling blow for me. I caught myself thinking that as I was staring out of my lovely corner office, at the mountains. I said, "Nick, you're getting into trouble here, and so it's time you left."

Q: Did you get involved in the trade that I was a recipient of, which was, people coming to you and saying, "Can you do something to help me get a visa for my classmate from high school?" In other words, how did you deal with this? As head of the consular section, which essentially was visas... I would hate to go to cocktail parties because I would invariably find myself cornered. I would try to look for a round room, so I could keep from getting cornered.

LAKAS: We only had two cases of visa requests. It's strange that you mention that, because it never reached my level. I think if it did, it reached the local level on my staff. We later found out that one or two of them had been misconducting themselves. So, they were removed, from what I heard, when I was president of the U.S./Korea Society, from their jobs. But, it never really reached in any volume at my level. What reached me was, "Can you persuade Citibank to come into business with me? Can you persuade this one or that one to do this or do that," on the business side, but hardly ever on the visa side.

Q: This brings up another question. Part of a commercial officer in any embassy, is to do... I can't remember the exact term, but essentially, check on local business people within the country they are...

LAKAS: Commercial intelligence.

Q: Commercial intelligence, as to the liability and all, you get information on banks. You must

have had a lot of that, and what were you getting?

LAKAS: We were getting a bundle of refers, periodically, from the Commerce Department, for World Trade Directory Reports (WTDR), and intelligence reports on the reputation and the reliability, and what do we know about the business aspect of this company. Will they be suitable for this American firm? Sometimes we were overwhelmed by the number of requests. So many were coming in because it had become known in America that there were opportunities in Korea. So, how we went about it was, (1) local employees would go out in the market and ask questions; (2) we would go to the banks and ask them for what they had on these people, especially American banks, who were very cooperative; (3) we would do the checks that we would find with the CIA. Sometimes we would ask the senior officers of the government of Korea for insights that we needed to have, but not very often, because you always felt it would be collusion anyway, in one form or another. Generally, our reports that went out were very good. Very rarely did we stumble. We missed something somewhere along the line, and we would try to pick it up. But, generally, they were much sought after by American business market prospects. "Will my project sell in Korea? Will my product compete with Japanese similar products, or Italian similar products?" This was an essential component of the commercial office.

Q: Did you get involved at all, in case of American businessmen who came out and were having difficulties with their Korean partners, not necessarily partners, but people to whom they are selling? Commercial disputes, where the Korean company was putting a lot of pressure, almost to the point of physical pressure on Americans?

LAKAS: Yes. There was not a lot, but yes we got them. In general, we found that Koreans were very mindful of face. They were not exactly jumping with joy when somebody from the embassy would come in and talk with them about this, because it impugned their character. Generally, we were able to get a quick resolution, mostly compromises. Yes, we got a lot of that. When it was difficult was when the American firm would not come to Korea to physically confront the Korean businessman. They would want to do it by correspondence. Therefore, you had lots of room for them to argue back and forth, and to exaggerate.

Q: Again, you left in 1972.

JOHN P. LEONARD
Consular Officer
Seoul (1969-1973)

Ambassador Leonard was born and raised in New York and educated at Harvard University. After service in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. He had several assignments at the State Department in Washington, DC dealing with a variety of issues. His overseas posts include Luxembourg, Seoul, Madrid, Asuncion, and Montevideo where he was Chargé d'Affaires. In 1991 he was named United States Ambassador to Surinam, where he served until 1994. Ambassador Leonard was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2011.

Q: You were in Korea from when to when?

LEONARD: From '69 to '73.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LEONARD: When I first got to Korea the ambassador was William J. Porter.

Q: Oh yes, one of the great names.

LEONARD: A big name, yes. He was a really good ambassador. Park Chung Hee was still in power, and our relations with him and his government were always prickly. Porter had one practice which I found very interesting and participated in once. Porter liked every now and then to go out and travel around the countryside incognito. We would drive around in a big embassy van because most roads weren't that good once you got outside of the major cities. The idea would be to just drive around and stop at country inns and talk to people. He would always take one junior officer with him to do the driving. So one time he asked me to do it. He would take along somebody who spoke Korean, and although my Korean wasn't great, it certainly was enough to get by with. So on this particular trip we took off from Seoul and drove east. We drove all the way over to the East Coast of Korea, and then headed south on a coastal road that went right along the East coast of Korea down almost all the way to Pusan. Then we turned inland again and went to the city of Taegu. In Taegu he had made some regular appointments. So he had his regular car waiting for him there and I drove the van back to Seoul. We were out on the road for the better part of three days. Sightseeing, picking up hitch hikers which in those days we used to like to do. Koreans of course, in those days, had very few automobiles. Very few people could afford an automobile, so people were always happy if you offered them a lift while driving. So we would do that. We would chat with folks about how they felt about life, how they were doing. Porter always thought that helped him keep his ear close to the ground. So as I say, I did that once with him.

Q: Did you get any feel for the relationship between Porter and the commanding general who was an American?

LEONARD: Let's see. Not really. I am trying to remember who was the commanding general at that time. It might have been Guy Meloy. My memory is hazy on that. Generally by that time our ambassadors I thought had pretty much gotten the upper hand in that relationship. This was more than ten years after the war. The Ambassador was generally acknowledged by the military guys there as the *primus inter pares*, and he certainly had the lead role in dealing with the Korean government. So generally my impression was those relations were pretty good.

Q: Were you on a rotational job, or what were you doing there?

LEONARD: My first year in Korea I had my obligatory assignment in the consular section. I worked in the consular section for a year, and then switched over to the political section and was in the political section for the next 3 ½ years.

Q: Talk a little about consular work. What was the situation?

LEONARD: We had a small consular section. We had the head of the section and three junior officers. One junior officer did all the immigrant visas. Another junior officer did the non immigrant visas, and I did everything else. In other words, I did all the citizenship services, passports, reports of birth, and the thing that took up more time than anything else was doing notarial for GIs who wanted to get married. That took up a great deal of my time. By modern standards this was a tiny consular section. We were badly overworked in that section. By today's standards you would have far more people to deal with the work load. But that is what we had and that is what we survived with.

Q: Well did you get the feeling there were a lot of fake marriages with the GIs?

LEONARD: Oh yes, there was a certain amount of that. The army took a dim view of their GIs getting married. They would get complaints from the folks back home. Why are you letting little Johnny marry this woman. Many girls were from questionable backgrounds at best, and there was certainly some fraud in the marriages in that some of the women who were getting married were just trying to get a visa to go to the United States. My view was that if the GI was of age, i.e. 21, it was certainly his right to marry anybody he pleased. I was certainly not going to stand in the way and join with the army throwing up roadblocks. If he could run the gauntlet of all the things the army demanded of him and get down to my office, that was fine. I would obviously screen people and anybody who was suspected of a totally fraudulent marriage we would not do their notarial for them that would enable them to get married, but there wasn't much.

Q: Did you get involved in protection and welfare cases?

LEONARD: Very rarely because there were so few Americans outside of the military in Korea. There were American missionaries, but they were not the kind who would get into trouble. You would get reports of the births of their children. You would issue them passports. There were a handful of American businessmen but not many. It was mostly the military and thankfully when they got into trouble which they did often, that was the military's responsibility to deal with it. So I didn't have too much of that. We would have an occasional merchant seaman. You know the merchant sea captains would come around and sign this or that seaman off their roster, but not too much of that. I did have one very amusing incident. One time I got a phone call one day from the captain of an American merchant vessel which was at the port of Pusan, which is about three quarters of the way down the peninsula. He said, "You have got to come down here right away. I have got a mutiny on my hands." I said, "Mutiny? What is going on?" He gave me some story about what was going on. I said, "Well sit tight. I will be right back in touch with you and will get down there right away." So I told my boss and quickly did up some orders and I quickly got down there to Pusan to find out what was going on. The phone rings again and it is this same ships captain. He said, "It is OK, now. You don't have to come down. It is all settled." I said, "Are you sure?" because I was kind of looking forward to this. It would be something new. "No, no, it is all set." I suspected that he must have communicated with his bosses, the owners of the steamship line and they said, "What are you talking about. The last thing you want is some guy from the embassy down there involved in our washing our dirty laundry. Turn him off don't let

him come down.” Anyway I never did go down there to Pusan and never heard back from those guys.

Q: OK, today is 22 February, Washington’s birthday, 2011, and an interview with Jack Leonard. During your time in the consular section did you do any visas and that?

LEONARD: No, I did no visa work at all. We had one fellow that did all the immigrant visas, and another officer who did all the non immigrant visas, and I did everything else. I had to do notarials for GI’s who wanted to get married. I would help them with the first step of the process of getting their wives immigrant visas. They had to swear out a document in front of me that was the first step in the immigrant visa process for the wife of an American citizen. I didn’t do any visa work myself. All I did was pitch in for both of my colleagues when they were on vacation, so I got a very small exposure to immigrant visas and non immigrant visas. Korea was a very difficult place to do consular work, especially visa work because fraud was a big problem.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LEONARD: I was there from 1969 to 1973.

Q: Aha. Did you run into the problem of while you were in the consular section with notarials, where a man, a GI or somebody, in particular not a GI because I think they were vetted elsewhere. But with a civilian who says I am going to marry Miss Kim here,” and then you would say, “When did you met her?” Then you would find out he didn’t speak Korean and she didn’t speak English, and they had met two days before. It was obviously an arranged marriage. Could you stop and not issue this certificate that they were free to get married or what.

LEONARD: Yeah. We could, and there was a certain amount of that kind of fraudulent stuff going on. That wasn’t the huge problem. You notarize these documents which the American citizen needs for marriage. They are the ones who had to swear to a document that says they were free to marry. In other words that they were not already married or if they had been married, they were properly divorced. They had to do that before the Korean authorities would register the marriage. So there was a certain amount of that, but it was not a huge problem. The GI’s who got married had to go through endless circles set up by the army under pressure from distraught family back home who were constantly badgering the army saying how dare you let little Johnny get married. On the other hand my theory and my practice always was look if they are 21 years old they are certainly old enough to decide for themselves. It is none of the army’s business about who they marry. So if they want to marry some girl who had a police record or who has been registered as a prostitute, whatever, hey they knew what they were getting into for the most part. My only concern basically was fraud. The more common kind of fraud you would come across the Korean girls if they had worked as prostitutes, they would almost always have a police record. The Korean national police kept pretty close tabs on these women for reasons of their own. So often girls would use an assumed name to get married hoping that their police records would not thereby come under our scrutiny. We and the army both would do some investigation of the girls if we thought there was some fraud going on.

Q: Well after you did the visas, the consular work, where did you go?

LEONARD: I moved over to the political section and the last three years I was in Korea I worked in the political section.

Q: What part? Did you have a particular slice of the pie?

LEONARD: Yes I did. I was the junior officer, the lowest ranking guy on the totem pole. I would do day to day liaison with the Korean foreign ministry. There was a lot of that work to be done because Korea at that time had two divisions of their army in Vietnam. So we would provide the foreign ministry with a lot of information produced by our embassy in Saigon to keep them informed about the progress of the war and to try to make sure that they saw things the way we did. Which is to say they thought the war was going better than it really was.

Q: How did you find your connections at the foreign ministry?

LEONARD: They had some extremely able people in their foreign ministry. It was a relatively small bureaucracy. The head of their North American bureau was a very able young man. He was in his mid to late 30's by the name of Kim Dong Wee, who had served in the United States. He spoke excellent English. He was a protégé of either the foreign minister or the deputy foreign minister, the vice foreign minister. Very brash and lively young fellow. His office was obviously the most important one in the ministry given our relations with Korea and their dependence on us. We had a lot of dealings with him and the people that worked for him.

Q: Was there much exchange at your level about how we saw events in China or how we saw the Soviet Union or Japan or what have you?

LEONARD: In the case of Japan in particular, yes. The second most important office that they had in their ministry was their office that oversaw relations with Japan. The military government had normalized relations with Japan, a very controversial step. They did that several years earlier. It was highly unpopular with many people in South Korea given the nature of Japan's relations with Korea, the Japanese occupation for 35 years. So many people in the general population and the political opposition lost no opportunity to criticize the military government for relations with Japan. The foreign ministry had one of its very best officers, a man named Bon No Myen who was their desk officer for Korea. We talked a lot, mostly about Korea's relations with Japan, how they were going. What the current problems were, because there were always problems, and how serious they might be. So yeah, I had a lot of discussions with this man about relations with Japan. Relations with China, dealings with North Korea; in those days South Korea had no relations with China, and officially at least they still had a very antiquated view of China's position in the world. Publicly and officially at least they would portray China as still being subordinate to or almost a satellite of the Soviet Union. They had a much clearer understanding of China's place in the communist world. When I was in Korea the Nixon administration had put out its feelers to Korea. Henry Kissinger traveled there. That was held extremely tightly. No one in our embassy up to and including the ambassador knew anything about that. When this was revealed publicly, that Kissinger had traveled to China and we were in the process of a rapprochement with China, the Korean government was stunned and angered by the fact that, as they saw it, we had pulled the rug out from under them. As suspicious as they

were, they were of course very worried at any discussions we might have had with China about Korea. They reciprocated themselves. Within a year of the time that Kissinger's trip to China and our efforts to normalize relations with China became public, the military government of Korea had put out feelers to Pyongyang. They had their own secret travel to North Korea. One of President Park Chung-hee's trusted lieutenants, Lee Hu-rak, who was head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, made a secret visit to Pyongyang. All of this was done without our knowledge. So there was a little bit of tit for tat.

Q: Did they have the equivalent to China Watchers? I am sure they had North Korea Watchers; that would be completely intelligence, but were they absorbing information from other embassies about what was happening in China?

LEONARD: Yes they did, but I don't recall that the foreign ministry had much of a hand in that. Like the function of monitoring, keeping an eye on, spying on North Korea, as I recall that function with regard to China resided mostly in the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. And the liaison with them fell of course to our own intelligence agency.

Q: How did you find, Korea some embassies and missions in the American Foreign Service have reputations of being AID dominated and others CIA dominated like the Congo and Korea. For a long time we had declared people who were head of the CIA. How did you find relations with the Agency at your level?

LEONARD: Well the two ambassadors under whom I served both had a very firm grip on everything that went on in their embassies, both over our AID mission that was still very large and over the CIA station. The first ambassador that I served under was Bill Porter, a very able guy. He was then replaced by Phil Habib who also was an extremely able guy. He brooked no funny business about not being informed about what was going on. He was a dominating personality. He dominated our relations with Korea including our military relations. Habib knew the station chief in Korea from before he came to Seoul. The U.S. military commander in Korea at the time was General John Michaelis. He deferred to Phil in all matters dealing with the Korean government.

Q: Well then what were our prime interests in Korea at that time. This is obviously the Park Chung-hee government. How did we view it?

LEONARD: We had a very difficult relation with that government. Park and his lieutenants were no fans of western style democracy which of course we wanted to see evolve in Korea. They were very authoritarian by nature, and we were constantly at loggerheads with Park and his government over the flawed direction of where that country ought to be going. For example, under considerable pressure from the United States, Park had agreed in 1971 to run for president. He ran against Kim Dae-jung who later himself became president. In a closely contested campaign that was pretty fair and open, Park narrowly defeated Kim Dae-Jung. I well remember that campaign because I and others in our embassy would go out to election rallies all over the country and listen to the political speeches. We were trying to gauge how the election would come out and see how fairly it was being conducted. Things that embassies traditionally do. In any event, Park narrowly defeated Kim Dae-Jung in that election. My own feeling was that

having gone through that experience he was determined that he was not going to take that chance again. So within months of that election he declared martial law and set about altering the constitution to make sure that he would have a much firmer grip on power and that he would not be effectively challenged. That created a considerable problem with his relations with the United States. Habib sent a message to Washington asking Washington how should we react to this? What can we do about this, and what does this imply for our relations with Korea. We had a very large stake in the success of South Korea. After all we had fought a very bloody war there. We still had about 50,000 U.S. troops in South Korea.

Q: We still had both divisions then.

LEONARD: We had both divisions, the second and the seventh were both there when I was there. The military threat from North Korea was seen as very real. That is certainly the way we saw it and the way the South Koreans saw it. Having invested so much blood and treasure in preserving the South Korean state, we were very much concerned with its future. We were convinced that as Korea matured and began slowly to prosper economically that it would be possible for Democratic roots to be put down and for things to evolve in a more democratic way. Park and his government often made that very difficult, because that was a totally alien thing for him and for so many of those around him. They were brought up under the Japanese occupation and were very authoritarian by nature.

Q: Well did you see any of sort of in your fairly junior position, any of the interplay between our military and people, our generals and all, and the Korean military?

LEONARD: I saw something a little different. My second main task in the political section was to deal with what we called status of forces issues.

Q: Oh yeah.

LEONARD: These were issues and problems arising between the U.S. military and the Korean government in the course of our having these 50,000 GIs in Korea. One of the problems that constantly was an irritant in our relations was that of the relations between our U.S. military bases and the local towns near them. Near every U.S. military base would spring up these camp towns which were full of bars and whore houses. The relations between these local communities and our military personnel could often be extremely difficult. The military of course always wanted to clean up these camp towns. Too many of our GIs were getting venereal diseases. Too many of them were getting sick on rotgut liquor. For the Korean government the problem was a little different. These towns were really dependent on our military personnel and their spending some money in them. So Korea being a very poor country at the time, they wanted to protect the ability of small merchants, bar owners and such, to be able to make money off the GIs. So we had a committee which served as a clearing house to deal with problems like this between the U.S. military and the local authorities. On the committee were people from the Korean foreign ministry, the U.S. military, from our embassy, occasionally from local authorities like the Korean national police. We would travel around visiting bases and local communities organizing meetings to try and help the Koreans and the American military get along better and deal with their problems. Very interesting work.

Q: Well did you see sort of an end to the Park government or more or less another military person would take it. Did you see any indications they were getting ready for an eventual turnover?

LEONARD: Quite frankly no. Especially after that election in 1971 in which Park had come very close to losing it was very clear he never wanted to repeat that experience. He therefore sought ways to consolidate his power. He declared martial law shortly thereafter. He started re-writing the constitution to make it possible for him to stay in power. So this was exactly the opposite direction from where we wanted to see Korea going. So it was a very difficult time in our relations. We didn't see it as likely that Park would ever willingly give up power. That simply was not the direction he was going. Our dilemma that we put to Washington, that we tried to advise Washington on, was how do we react to this situation given our broad interest in Korea. Can we disassociate ourselves, distance ourselves from his government without jeopardizing our serious long term interests in South Korea. There was a very fine line that one had to walk.

Q: Yeah this often is a dilemma we are caught in. Often, I don't want to be pejorative, but the do-gooders will announce that we are against everything and yet maybe we have oil or a strategic line. Obviously we had a strategic line in South Korea. You just didn't have the room to maneuver in.

LEONARD: Well that is right. Essentially we found ourselves in Korea. So what we tried to do was distance ourselves from Park's government, try and push it around the edges to be more respectful of people's fundamental rights but understanding that as long as Park was in effective control there were real limits as to what we could do. Park was still a relatively young man at the time so we were not looking for beyond him, who is going to come after him. As it turned out of course, he was later assassinated. He was succeeded by another military man in fairly short order. A man by the name of Chun Doo-hwan. That all took place after I left Korea.

Q: Was there a certain amount of comfort with Park Chung Hee as regards his economic policies and management of the economy?

LEONARD: Yes. I think that to many in our economic section he was attempting to move too quickly. It was really almost like a breakneck drive to economic growth. But he perhaps understood better than we did what his people and what his country were capable of. Our concerns were that they were attempting to move too quickly rather than with the general direction in which they were going. It was clear that they were attempting to model their economy on that of the Japanese, an economy that would be export driven. That certainly made very good sense at the time, given the lack of natural resources in South Korea which was an agrarian society. Those were almost all in the northern half of the country, which had an extremely hard working industrious people. As we came to understand there was no reason that they could not emulate what the Japanese had done.

Q: Well you left there, were there any crises? I can't remember when the, Oh God the ship that was taken.

LEONARD: The Pueblo Crisis.

Q: Yes.

LEONARD: The thing about serving in Korea you could be sure that at least once a year there would be some horrendous crisis. The Pueblo Crisis may have come after I left Korea. I don't recall. There was the issue that erupted in our relations when Park Chung Hee declared martial law after those elections that he almost lost.

There was another crisis that arose of a very different nature. A bunch of Japanese lunatics, communist fanatics, hijacked an airplane at one point. They wanted to fly to North Korea of all places. The pilot of the aircraft landed in Seoul at Kimpo Airport instead. There was a long standoff with this aircraft sitting at the end of the runway for a number of days. It had a couple of Americans on board. These fanatics, the aircraft hijackers were in control. Ultimately they let the passengers off the plane. I was sent out to Kimpo to keep an eye on things, to see how the Korean government would handle it on the spot. Their defense minister came out and he directed the negotiations conducted over the radio between the control tower and the people in the plane about letting the hostages, letting the passengers off the plane. The Korean government had to decide whether they were going to let this plane subsequently take off and fly to North Korea. This is what these hijackers said they wanted to do, and they were holding the crew of the plane hostage to get that done. After several days the South Koreans agreed to let this plane take off. It did fly after arrangements were made to have an air corridor to fly into North Korea from South Korea. I spent the better part of three days up there at the airport watching and trying to see what was going on. We were particularly concerned of course about the American passengers who were aboard that plane.

We got a report one day that a bunch of armed military personnel were heading for Seoul. They were apparently South Korean deserters, defectors, military personnel of some kind and they were heading for Seoul. They had somehow escaped from an island off the west coast of Korea. So the embassy immediately sent me out to our military headquarters in Seoul. It was in a compound area of Seoul known as Yongsan. Our commanding military general at the time, John Michaelis, was in his office giving orders about securing the Yongsan compound, about getting some extra security down around our embassy, and trying to get hold of the South Korean military to try and find out what in the hell is going on and who are these people. It was an interesting case. The people were indeed South Korean military personnel. They had been on this island for a long time, training to be infiltrated into North Korea. They were unhappy with their situation. They may or may not have been volunteers for their mission, but they mutinied. They commandeered a boat. They were armed and they got to the port of Inchon. They hijacked a bus. They were driving towards Seoul to demand the South Korean military authorities improve their conditions or let them out of the military, whatever the case might be. So that caused a brief flurry of excitement. You have these armed rebels, whatever you call them, who had commandeered a bus and were on their way to Seoul. Life was like that in Korea in those days.

Q: Well then you left there when?

LEONARD: I left Korea in '73.

MARCUS L. WINTER
Agricultural Economist, USAID
Seoul (1970-1972)

Marcus L. Winter was born and raised in Minnesota. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis/St. Paul. His career also included positions in Peru, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. Mr. Winter was interviewed by W. Haven North on January 23, 1997.

WINTER: After Nigeria I moved on to Korea. I left Nigeria in August of 1970 and arrived in Korea in late November of 1970. The move was a real transition in many ways, climatically, the size of the agricultural staff - it was much smaller, and the presence of a strong, federal Ministry of Agriculture. The Mission itself was quite large, but smaller than Nigeria.

Mike Adler arrived shortly after I did and Dennis Barrett came a little later. Fran Jones, whom I had met while he was in the Africa Bureau, was the Agricultural Officer. This was the start of a pattern that repeated itself again and again. A new post did not mean all new people, but reestablishing old acquaintances. AID often seemed like a large family.

On the surface the program in Korea looked similar to the one in Nigeria. There were programs in fisheries and agricultural planning, some extension staff, a small research program. So you had again, a range of agricultural development activities. When Fran Jones contracted with Michigan State to do an agricultural sector analysis, it really seemed like we were doing very similar things, although in a completely different environment.

Q: What was the setting at that time?

WINTER: Well, in the early 1970's Korea was not yet an Asian tiger. Chung Hee Park was still the president but the country was still struggling economically. Agriculture was important with rice self-sufficiency a prime objective. The country was very stable with disciplined people who worked, very hard.

This discipline and willingness to put in the extra time and effort to get the job done was one of the things that was immediately impressive. I remember preparing for a meeting between the AID Director and the Korean Minister of Agriculture to be held on a Monday morning. Late on the preceding Friday afternoon we identified for our Korean colleagues in the Ministry planning office several issues that the AID Director was going to raise. On Monday morning we had the meeting and the Korean Minister of Agriculture did an excellent job of responding to the issues with clear explanations and proposals. When we complimented our Ministry counterparts, they said they had spent the whole weekend, sleeping just four hours, making sure their Minister had the information he needed to be prepared for the meeting. They had to get this right because our program was highly important to them and our bilateral relationship was the most important one

they had.

Q: This was the central planning office? Not the agricultural planning office?

WINTER: No, it was the Ag planning office.

Q: What was their approach to agricultural development at that time?

WINTER: Their approach was directive with very heavy government involvement. Government or government directed organizations such as the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation were responsible for a wide variety of services for the agricultural sector. They formulated plans and implemented the plans. Interestingly, although industrialization was recognized as the path to development, they were still willing to invest in agriculture. They were not prepared to neglect or simply tax agriculture to enable industrialization to proceed more rapidly. So you saw an expansion of agricultural programs even though the rural population was declining.

This concern manifested itself in the form of land consolidation programs, the expansion of mechanization through new power tillers, credit programs that supplied inputs when needed and a range of other activities. There were loans to improve rural housing and funding to improve the irrigation network. For AID it was a very positive environment with a strong central ministry with an excellent local presence throughout the country. In contrast to Nigeria, you really had a center to work with and there were active programs in almost every area.

I remember when adequate storage was identified as a problem for many farmers - storage both for fertilizer going out in the spring and for the rice and other crops coming in, in the fall. It was decided that AID was going to work with the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation on a program to help them with storage construction. We would make a loan and the National Federation would contribute a matching amount. Just as the program was starting, the President, Park Jung Hee, visited a storage facility and said, "storage is a problem. We have got to solve this problem".

So suddenly our jointly-financed program to construct 320 warehouses was a top priority for the Koreans. And it went so fast. In our original planning we had said the program was going to take at least eighteen months to complete. The Cooperative Federation staff said "we are going to have these done in a year". And they were.

Not only were the warehouses completed in less time that we thought necessary but the quality was also better than we planned. As part of the procedures we inspected the warehouses to make sure they met agreed-upon standards and were eligible for AID financing on a reimbursement basis. And I can remember the USAID engineer visiting warehouses and saying, "they say these warehouses are costing this much to build. They can't build that building for that cost. It is too well constructed for this amount of money. They are paying more because it is a priority." I'm certain that wasn't always the case but it demonstrates the Korean ability to make things happen quickly and well when they were enthusiastically behind a program.

Q: They used these storage facilities too?

WINTER: A great deal. I visited several and they were using them as intended. The farmers were bringing rice and other crops to be sold or stored and the fertilizer was there for sale. The Cooperative Federation was a well managed group and obviously had political importance as well because of its presence all over the country.

Q: But it had some implementation responsibility too?

WINTER: Oh yes. It was staffed by well trained and well organized professionals and had offices and warehouses all over the country. It was really a farm input and supply cooperative that provided credit and marketing services as well. They were a very enjoyable group to work with and I had that opportunity as the AID Co-Manager of the Project - along with the USAID engineer. It was a very rewarding experience to go out and visit these warehouses and see that they were being well constructed, and see that they were being used and being able to recommend that we reimburse the Federation for our share of the costs of the warehouses constructed.

Q: They were being managed by the cooperative association, right?

WINTER: Yes. An issue at the time was that the NACF was not independent enough. We believed that in a cooperative the members should be the owners and decision-makers. And if you looked at the NACF that's how it was organized. But in practice there was a lot of "top-down" influence exerted by the government so while the farmer-members were the owners of the local activities they didn't have a choice in deciding whether the warehouse would be constructed for them or not.

The local cooperatives were being lent the money to construct the warehouses by the government and that is why as I said, our engineer who examined warehouses said quite often, "This warehouse cannot be constructed for the amount of money the group is borrowing. There is a subsidy being built in here that the government is making available."

But they were very, very efficient. I think generally all the Americans, were very pleased to be working in Korea and with the quality of the people they worked with. It was just satisfying to work with such willing and hard-working people. We had agricultural advisors in the provinces and they were often advisors directly to the Governor on agricultural issues.

Q: Of each of these Provinces?

WINTER: That's right. When I got there we didn't have them in every province any more. But we still had advisors in several provinces. I remember visiting our advisor in Pusan Province who was clearly on the governor's staff and an advisor on more than only agricultural issues.

Q: The governor listened to him?

WINTER: Absolutely. Many of the governors had been military officers at one time and were very accustomed to American advisors. Combined with the fact that many of the leaders had also

studied or been trained in the U.S. and you had a situation where skilled American advisors were appreciated and influential.

The continued development of such linkages with the U.S. based on U.S. training was an important part of our program. We had stopped sending Koreans to the U.S. for B.S. degree training but we supported a substantial number of Master's and Ph.D. students each year.

Q: Large numbers?

WINTER: For the Mission as a whole the numbers were quite substantial.

Q: How many are we talking about?

WINTER: In the agricultural area we must have been sending fifteen to twenty Master's Degree candidates off each year with a smaller number of Ph.D. students. For the entire Mission I would estimate that we were sending 70 - 90 per year.

Q: What was the overall scale of the program?

WINTER: I wish I could tell you. I can't remember what the budget was at the time. The Mission had programs in a range of areas and an American staff of 40-55. The assistance and staff levels were declining, however.

Q: But it was fairly large?

WINTER: Yes, it was fairly large. The Mission had programs in a range of areas and an American staff of at least 50-60. There was a real mix of programs including PL 480 which was important enough to warrant a direct-hire staff member or two. From the PL 480 we had considerable amounts of local currency for research grants to Korean researchers, land reclamation, water supply improvement and other rural development activities. We also were dispersing or monitoring "Cooley" loans. It was quite an array of resources. The dollar amounts were not however, at least in the Ag sector, that large.

Q: And then there were regular dollar loans?

WINTER: Yes, there were dollar loans. We had both loan and grants at that time. But as I mentioned, AID had started to phase down the program. The only new activities in the agricultural sector that were undertaken while I was there was the warehouse construction program and the sector study which led to continuing AID assistance in the area of agricultural research..

Q: Whose report was this?

WINTER: It was prepared by College of Agriculture staff from Michigan State University in collaboration with Korean academics and Ministry of Agriculture staff. The report provided recommendations for the Korean Ministry of Agriculture as well as for AID.

Q: What do you think the impact of our program and agricultural involvement? How would you assess it?

WINTER: There is no doubt that our assistance programs had tremendous impact over time. Partially that is a result of the quantity of assistance we provided in a variety of areas and partially the result of the manpower we trained. An analysis of participant training done when I was there showed that ninety-four to ninety-six percent of the Koreans we sent to the US for training came back to Korea. In the agricultural sector the same analysis showed that about 80 percent of all senior staff in the Ministry of Agriculture had been trained in the U.S. on either a long or short term basis. Over time U.S. advisors had obviously done a good job of recommending people for training and then helping them move up in the system.

While AID assistance obviously had an important impact on manpower development, that was not the only area where AID assistance was important. We helped set up the research system that eventually enabled Korea to be self-sufficient in rice with some of the highest yields in the world. We financed several of the fertilizer factories that turned Korea into a fertilizer exporter. The assistance we provided to the cooperative movement was pretty significant in that it wasn't just those warehouses, but earlier we had helped them develop the entire organization via a number of advisors at a national level. That was significant because the organization is still functioning today.

At an early stage AID had also helped establish Suwon Agricultural University, the leading agricultural university in the country. We had financed irrigation systems and roads. I managed a program that funded research proposals in the agricultural area to encourage the development of research skills.

Q: All subjects? Or was there a particular focus to them?

WINTER: There were no restrictions on what could be proposed. But our selection process looked for proposals in new or what we thought were under-researched areas. Not all of the research was significant but some of the studies were of very good quality. For a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year we got quite a bit done.

Q: You said we had been involved with Suwon University. Who was the American counterpart, do you remember?

WINTER: No. I don't, that was before my time. I just know we had been involved there.

Q: It was a self-sustaining operation when you were there?

WINTER: Yes it was. At one time AID had an office in Suwon staffed with one or more direct-hire staff. I believe they had managed the University program and the agricultural research and extension programs.

Q: Any other dimension on the impact of the Agriculture program? I guess you felt it had a fairly

fundamental impact on Korean approach to agricultural development and rural development.

WINTER: I believe the AID assistance helped Korea address the issues they were facing. I remember when I was there one of the major agricultural issues was: should Korea strive to be self-sufficient in rice? Or should they be growing other crops? At the time there was a feeling it was probably too expensive for Korea to be self-sufficient in rice. That it would be better for them to be importing. The Michigan State Study indicated that more investment in agricultural research was warranted and subsequently, through the research, higher yielding varieties were developed and Korea did become self-sufficient in rice.

AID often assisted with the fundamental analysis on key issues and then sometimes assisted with the recommended solution. I remember the issue of livestock. What should be the role of livestock in a country that has only limited land? And should livestock receive as much attention as it was receiving? And I think again, there was a feeling perhaps that it shouldn't receive as much attention as it was receiving. There were alternative uses for the upland areas such as silk worms or fruit production. In this case, I believe they did put a little less emphasis on livestock. On balance I think the analyses done with AID assistance really did help Korea make the appropriate investment decisions.

Q: There was the issue of industrialization versus rural agriculture. Was that part of it then?

WINTER: It certainly was and that is why I mentioned earlier the continued support provided to the agricultural sector. The Korean government didn't neglect agriculture as they pursued industrialization. One of the interesting conclusions that came out of the Michigan State study was that the migration of people from rural areas to cities represented a capital transfer from the rural to the center. From the rural to the urban. So that while a budget might show that you were spending 10% of your budget on the rural areas the fact that a lot of capital in the form of people was moving to cities means that net expenditures in the rural areas is really much less.

And I think they helped the Agricultural sector argue that compensating the agricultural sector in effect or allowing them to invest in the capital items they needed to replace those people, i.e.: mechanization, inputs, etc., was needed and it wasn't that you were somehow unduly benefitting the agricultural sector. It was not saying that industrialization wasn't important. The transfer of these hard-working, well-trained people from rural areas to the industrial sector required replacement resources back in the rural sector as well. And I think that happened.

Q: Was there any view about stemming the flow to the urban areas and trying to get people to return?

WINTER: There was some talk of providing incentives for people to remain in the rural areas. And they did help upgrade rural housing, for example, But it was also clear that in growth terms that Korea needed to industrialize. They don't have the land to follow an agriculture-led growth strategy. Even in agriculture, if Korea was going to be competitive, some land consolidation, some larger farms, would be necessary. There just wasn't enough land to keep people on the farm and to provide increasing incomes. So, they needed to be investing in industrialization, they should be going full speed ahead. But at the same time they were not ignoring the rural sector

which was supporting industrialization with trained people. I believe it was the Michigan State study, I may be wrong, that really put that into terms which were understood and appreciated.

Q: But you said at this time we were phasing down. Was there clear decision to cut with the government knowing that this was happening?

WINTER: Oh, yes. We were phasing down and the Koreans knew that.

Q: What was the Korean reaction to that?

WINTER: Well the Korean reaction, and I am speaking of the people we worked with, was concern. They wanted to have us remain and to provide the types of assistance we were. They were quite comfortable with our programs, at least the operational level. We really had good relations with Ministry of Agriculture staff. They weren't asking us to leave and they weren't trying to have us leave. It was just a budget question and the fact that Korea was doing well or starting to do well.

Organizationally, in some ways they were prepared for us to leave. They had institutions in place staffed by well trained people. The institutions were functioning and providing needed services for the sector. I remember a discussion we had on sustainability and on what our future links with Korean agricultural professionals should be. You could make the case that hands-on American technical advisors were no longer needed, but how do you create those links that go on post heavy involvement? I don't recall that we ever came up with a good solution on how do you do that.

Q: Links with the US?

WINTER: Yes, particularly in agricultural research where we had supported international contact among the scientific community. How do you sustain that some way? One option is to conclude it is up to the Koreans to sustain the linkages. Or assume that the American scientific community will just do it automatically. We had a dialogue with University staff about how sustain interaction. Was there some way that AID...

Q: Once the country quote, "graduates?"

WINTER: Right. Once we phase out the AID program, what happens? Do we just leave? I don't remember that we had a good strategy. And it seemed important that we have one. The country was going somewhere. Eventually, Korea developed faster than we perhaps expected but the signs were there.

Q: What would you attribute this miracle to in the sense of the 1950's Korea was almost written off as a no hope...couldn't feed itself, etc.

WINTER: I think there were three factors. First, were the people and the priority they placed on education. In Korea education was always important. So you had well trained people willing to work hard. Second, I've always felt strong leadership and stability were important and you had

that. Certainly there were some costs in individual freedoms, but it did promote growth, particularly with a leaders who were committed to Korea and the well-being of the people. They were not sending their money off to Switzerland or some place. They were focused on making things better and they had a concern for all the groups. And third, people had confidence in the government. People were not anti-government. They felt government was important in their lives and expected things from government. And the government tried to deliver.

Q: Was there an active private sector in Agriculture?

WINTER: Well, there was an active private sector of a kind. But you would have to say that the largest groups, the cooperatives, were not fully private. On paper the cooperative system was private, but in fact the government had a heavy role in how the system operated. The same with the processing facilities. Most of them were private but the government was there. Usually it was a benevolent government and I guess later on we found it wasn't always so benevolent. There were controls that none of us were aware of.

As I recall, there were a large number of equipment and other input suppliers who were private. The fertilizer factories were owned by the government or partially owned by government, I think in almost every instance. But there were a lot of private businesses in the villages that were supporting, benefitting and marketing agricultural products. So the private sector was important.

Q: Anything else about the Korean experience?

WINTER: Well, I met my wife there and that was probably...and so that brought something away besides just....some memories.

EDWARD L. ROWNY
Commanding General, I CORPS
Korea (1971)

Lieutenant General Edward L. Rowny was born in Baltimore and attended West Point from 1937 to 1941. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II including a special assignment to Liberia. He has also served in Vietnam, Tokyo, and Korea and participated in NATO Military Committee and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. Lieutenant General Rowny was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: General, you were obviously not a straight line soldier. You started out as an engineer, and you had a distinguished military career and combat with infantry. How many silver stars did you get?

ROWNY: I believe it was three.

Q: Were the stars awarded in World War II, in the Korean War, and in the Vietnam War?

ROWNY: No, in Vietnam I got the Distinguished Service Medal.

Q: You were in Vietnam when you got shot down.

ROWNY: Yes, but I didn't get any combat awards.

Q: Well, I mean you were there, and you were doing things. At the same time while you were doing this, you were obviously somebody who was tapped as a planner and a military thinker. I noted that you felt that your ideas of using helicopter troops during the Vietnam War was a bit ahead of the game. What's your impression of how this army handled people who were thinkers and advanced planners?

ROWNY: I think they handled them very well. They looked for people and put them in key positions. Of course, my number one star here is Colonel George A. (Abe) Lincoln, who became the army planner. Also, I think that the plan section was always put in one of the most prestigious spots, a staff job among the G-1 through 3 and 4, and I've been both a G-3 and a G-4. The G-3 always has a higher prestige, and within the G-3, plans and operations sections had their hierarchy with planners coming out on top.

Q: Well, Eisenhower came out through there at the beginning of World War II. Wasn't he brought back to the Philippines and put into planes?

ROWNY: He later became the OPD.

Q: Was there a conscious effort on the part of army leaders to take people they thought would be planners, or forward-lookers, and move them through good positions both with command and then staff positions to bring them up and to give them a feeling that someone was looking out for them?

ROWNY: There definitely was a guardian angel looking out for me in the person of George Lincoln. There were several others later along the way. Yes, I think that personal contacts were promoted. I was the first in my class to become a captain, the first major, the first lieutenant colonel, the first colonel, and the first brigadier general. We got early promotions and, at least from my point of view, choice assignments.

Q: I am just picking up little bits and pieces but, when Truman announced the integration of the armed forces, what was your experience? You had already been with a black engineering unit. What was your impression of the attitude of the professional soldiers on this integration?

ROWNY: I think that the majority of them were in favor of integration. A minority, whom I supposed were mostly people born in the South, thought this would not work, was not a good idea. A majority believed that this was the way to go.

Q: Did you get involved in it in that early period? What were you doing at that point?

ROWNY: I was in Korea at the time that the integration took place, and there was a battalion of Negroes, the second division, which then was later broken up and the blacks were distributed among the white units. By the time I got my infantry regiment in Korea, I inherited a regiment, which had blacks integrated along with the whites. Before then when I was a corps engineer, the units under me were white, and I didn't have much contact with the blacks. Later in Korea, I got an infantry regiment, and that regiment was integrated.

Q: Within the enlisted ranks, did that seem to work fairly well?

ROWNY: Oh, yes, I think that, as far as I could tell, it was far superior to what we had experienced in World War II when we had the all-black units with some white officers at the top.

Q: In general terms, as the Cold War developed, you were with the staff officer of the general staff from 1945 to 1947. Is it a natural thing for planners to look around for a potential enemy? Was the Soviet Union coming out pretty quickly as a possible enemy?

ROWNY: We didn't have to look too far. The evidence was coming in fast and furious. First, General Lincoln had us read Kennan's cables and study those. We had that background. Then, we had the cables coming in from Lucius Clay who was the U.S. member of the High Commission in Berlin. He had a devastating set of events to report, and he was trying to work things out. Also, at the time I remember, the original thought was that Soviet Union would take part in the occupation of Japan. There were two groups that fought about that. Generally, the Pentagon was saying, "No way," and the State Department was saying, "Oh, yes, you have to do this," because the Soviet Union had declared war or at least declared they were going to put troops into battle just about two days before the atom bombs were dropped. Fortunately, the ideas were cabled out to MacArthur who was very strong in saying that he opposed any idea of the Soviets having a part in the occupation of Japan. He insisted that he would retire or resign. He would not wish to be a member of that group. We had all these signals coming in as to what was going to be the future of our relationship with the rest of the world and, particularly, with the Soviet Union. There was the idea of the Soviets allowing elections in Poland. However, they put in their own puppet so that the Poles in London had a government in exile. That played into all this, so the Soviet Union was very much a pariah.

Q: Were you getting reports back from officers who had served in Moscow or elsewhere during the war about the attitude of the Soviets towards America or giving a great deal of aid and all that?

ROWNY: No, I don't remember getting that kind of report. I did have some reports from my next door neighbor in Alexandria who was a White House press correspondent, Merriman Smith. He had gone over to Berlin, and he told us about the pillage and raping that was going on in Berlin. I heard a lot more about all this after I went to Yale in 1947.

Q: Within the Foreign Service - certainly not at the top but within the Foreign Service - we had people who served in Moscow and Vladivostok and all, and they came away with a very jaundiced view of this. This was during the height of our aid to them in the war, and the Americans were treated like the enemy.

ROWNY: Exactly, and we had the cables back from General Dean who was the head of our Lend-Lease; he later put these into a book called *Strange Alliance*, which is my number one book on negotiating with the Soviets. He told about how difficult they were to deal with. Even though we were giving them Jeeps and ammunition and all kinds of other equipment, they were making life difficult for us. For example, when U.S. pilots were shot down over Poland or Eastern Europe, the Soviets put these pilots into prison camps. They were only released after the war. It was outrageous.

Q: It was pretty easy to figure out what the future might portend, wasn't it?

ROWNY: Yes, we formed our ideas early on that the Soviet Union was on the march ideologically and was not going to cooperate with the West. They were more interested in promoting their ideology than in moving on with the occupation policy.

Q: It must have been very difficult to be a planner during the 1945 to 1947 period and to look at how we had taken this magnificent fighting force we had and had broken it down. The Soviets had all these divisions. Was there any plan, other than if they came with atom bombs, at the time?

ROWNY: There are two aspects of that. On the demobilization, as much as I admired Marshall, I was part of a small group that felt that we demobilized too rapidly. We had torn down our magnificent fighting force, and gutted it. That was one side of the question, just our own doing. As far as the atom bomb was concerned, you called it the major influence in Washington at that time. This came from Morgenthau who was very much in favor of using the atom bomb in any tense situation. It was later our plan to make a new war department, and Washington's idea was to use the atom bomb only if our national survival was actually at stake. A lot of this developed after I left the Pentagon and was developing during the time I was at Yale. That's another chapter of this story.

In the 1945 to 1947 period, we were occupied with working out plans and implementing them for the occupation of Japan and Germany, and the restructuring of the Army and the birth of the United States Air Force, which was a major problem. We worked on the future structure of our armed forces.

Q: Was the army, as a planner, concerned that the birth of the Air Force would have Mike Norstad's Seventh Air Force? You knew that you would lose this very strong supporting strategic air fighter to fighter, a ground support outfit, and that sort of thing.

ROWNY: There wasn't much thought then that the Air Force would give close air support for ground troops. All the talk was about the strategic bombing. You remember these were the days when a number of army air corps officers and others were promoting the Douhet theory, that air power could win wars by itself. The Navy was very much opposed. One of Eisenhower's astute moves was to go to Hap Arnold, who was the number one man in the Army Air Corps, and ask that his best younger officer, Lauris Norstad, be assigned to the War Department. He became our new boss, the head of OPD, as a major general and, later, a lieutenant general in the Army Air

Corps. He promoted the idea of a separate air force. This idea of a man within the War Department being in charge of War Department plans and operations, being an Army Air Corps man, was really a brilliant move and helped bring about the creation of the Army Air Force against the objection of the Navy.

Q: Later we had the Admirals' Revolt. That was in the 1950s or 1960s, I can't remember.

ROWNY: Yes, I wasn't around then. I think it was fortunate that there was this close affinity between George Lincoln and Norstad, Lincoln being the army planner who stayed on. He and Norstad had very high respect for each other.

Norstad replaced the Army general as our chief of OPD. Norstad, having great prestige with his old Army Air Corps buddies, was able to sit on a lot of super ambitious plans that the future Air Force officers had for the battle for resources. They said, "We don't need all these armed ground troops anymore. We don't need so much navy. We are going to do it all with air power." Norstad was able to dampen that.

Q: This keeps cropping up. It hasn't died yet. After Kosova, it is still there.

ROWNY: Also, Billy Mitchell's battle over whether an airplane could sink a battleship or not entered into this argument. It was a very tense time. The original plan that was submitted by the newly formed Air Force for what they wanted was just outrageous, it was so high. They wanted about half of all the resources and, then, the other half could be divided between the Navy and the Army. Whittled down over the years, I guess it's roughly one-third, one-third, for each service.

Q: You were at Yale from 1947 to 1949. How did you find the intellectual range at Yale as far as the people who were looking at the East-West confrontation?

ROWNY: I was fortunate at Yale in terms of both civilian instructors and those who were in the military field. The people on the civilian side were really broad thinkers, like Arnold Wolfers; Heil Holborn, who had been the first historian for the Weimar Republic; and, W. T. R. Fox, who was a broad-gauge historian. We were getting a broad-gauge idea of how the future of international relations would be conducted with a heavy academic overload of United Nations and overall government. The other half of the instructors we had were the best academic thinkers on military matters in the country. The leader of the group was Bernard Brodie, who was backed by Klaus Knorr and Bill Kaufman. Bernard Brodie began writing his seminal work, *The Absolute Weapon*. There were great debates within the academic community at Yale about which way U.S. policy should go on the atom bomb but Bernard Brodie won out in the end with his book.

Q: What was the thrust of this book?

ROWNY: The thrust of this book was that we would not rely on atomic weapons in ordinary situations, that it was the ultimate arbitrator and that it would prove strategic bombing to be a success. There was some controversy about strategic bombing and surveys were made about how much damage the regular bombing campaigns had done. Now, this was the absolute weapon, and

it was to be used only in the extreme case of national survival being at stake. Brodie and Kaufman made frequent trips back to the Pentagon and talked to Lincoln and Norstad. While they were developing their theories, I think the U.S. followed the lead of what had been developed there at Yale.

Q: As a military planner and army officer, I would think right from the beginning any look at this nuclear weapon that was called the atomic bomb in those days would be just absolutely repugnant. I mean, one, it messed up the battlefield and, two, it threatened, you know. At that time we weren't thinking about full destruction of civilization but, I mean, it was almost an impossible weapon to plan around, wasn't it?

ROWNY: It was very difficult to deal with and especially in a charged atmosphere of the newly formed Air Force, which would take over and control this weapon. There was a great deal of anxiety about how all this would work out. I think with this charged atmosphere in the Pentagon and preoccupation with redesigning the new forces and with the occupation problems facing us, it took an outside agency, like academia, to lead the way on thinking. A part of Lincoln's program was to bring us back, the four of us that were sent to different universities to study international relations. We sat in on the seminars we had with the strategic planning section in the Pentagon. Some general said that he would rather go back to West Point.

Q: In the academic world in the planning, were we going on the assumption that within a relatively short period of time the Soviet Union would probably have the weapon, too?

ROWNY: We thought that they would eventually, but that we were far ahead. We had a monopoly for a long period of time. I don't think anybody predicted that the Soviets would advance as rapidly as they did in this field. The one exception was the Yale historian Fred Barghoorn, who wrote about the Soviet Union.

Q: Well, when you got out of Yale, you were sent as plans officer to the Far Eastern Command.

ROWNY: Yes, I was.

Q: The Far Eastern Command was based in Tokyo, wasn't it?

ROWNY: Yes, it was.

Q: Now, what was your impression and what was the reputation that you'd gotten inside the military of Douglas MacArthur at this point?

ROWNY: Oh, he had a very high reputation. Of course, when I was in the Pentagon, in addition to my other duties, I had been the MacArthur desk officer, so I got to read his cables. Of course, MacArthur was a legend. He had been a division commander in World War I and earned a Medal of Honor and had a distinguished career throughout the years. Except for overzealous lobbying for more forces in the Pacific, he conducted himself quite admirably during the war and with his island hopping ideas avoided a large number of casualties. I was delighted to be assigned out to his command.

Q: Well, how did you find the atmosphere on his staff? One always thinks of this “coterie,” a term that might be used to describe the people and atmosphere that surrounded MacArthur. They were extreme loyalists, and I would think that, as a plans officer, it’d be difficult. I’m talking about just before the Korean War. How did you find this?

ROWNY: It was a difficult situation. Sometimes we envied the civilian side, which was redesigning the entire Japanese government. Their relations were quite smooth. On the military side, we found that there was some tension among officers and, generally, it was caused by the simple fact that you were either an old friend of MacArthur’s and part of his personal entourage or you weren’t. If you were, you could do no wrong. If you weren’t, you’d have to fight for your positions. We’d find that atmosphere in the staff. There wasn’t an open revolt or anything but it was there nevertheless.

Q: When you arrived as plans officer, this was November 1949.

ROWNY: Yes, it was.

Q: How did you view the potential military situation in your part of the world? What were the threats and what would be our responses?

ROWNY: We were really preoccupied with the Soviet Union and China and, particularly, what would happen if the two combined forces against us. For the first 30 days I was there, I traveled around Japan accompanied by one of the members on the civilian staff, a professor, Edward Morrow, who was both a Japanese historian and an anthropologist. I had a wonderful tour and first hand look at what was going on in Japan. I wrote a trip report that we were wasting our assets by having troops out in so many villages and provinces. That view was not original with me. It was a view that was held principally by the people who were not among MacArthur’s selected few. This idea of withdrawing and pulling back our troops into central training camps was opposed by people like Willoughby, MacArthur’s G-2.

Q: In a way, it was still an occupation, which no longer needed to be an occupation, wasn’t it? Was it the idea of local uprisings, or was it just more for comfort?

ROWNY: The traditional view, or fear, was that there would be uprisings and, perhaps, difficulty in these various places; therefore, we needed American presence in large numbers but that proved not to be not the case. The emperor had good control of the situation but we did need some armed forces because there was no such thing as a Red Cross over there to handle disasters and fires and maybe even riots. The building of a Japanese self-defense force was essential to replace the U.S. Army, which was being pulled back. I wrote the first outline plan for the self-defense forces for the Japanese army.

Q: While we are looking at this, did Korea fall within your bailiwick?

ROWNY: Yes, but there wasn’t a great deal of thought given to Korea. It was a minor worry. We followed it and some of us were very much opposed to the idea of holding back our military

support to Syngman Rhee. If you remember, the Soviet Union was backing Kim Il Song and giving him their weapons. We were withholding weaponry from South Korea, believing, or at least the State Department did, that Syngman Rhee would use these forces to attack the North. The North Koreans used this as a propaganda ploy to say that they had to build up because the South was going to attack and reoccupy the North.

At Yale it was one of our courses under Gabriel Almond on decision making. There were 10 of us in the class and the professor gave each of us some incident which had gone wrong because of bad decisions. We selected 10 periodicals and magazines. The object was to study what these magazines and periodicals had said about the mistakes that had occurred. I recall that of all the periodicals, I think the *Sunday New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune* each had one out of 10. *The Baltimore Sun* and the *Atlantic Constitution* had two out of 10, and one periodical had four out of 10. If you had read that periodical for a year before, you would have been able to predict what would happen, and that was *The Economist*.

I became an avid reader of the *Economist* and had it air mailed to me in Tokyo. Sometime early in 1950, there was a report in the *Economist*, saying keep your eye on North Korea; it might attack. I flagged this and sent it in to the chief of staff for General MacArthur. Again, we got a blast from Willoughby, saying, "Look, I'm the chief here and if any information is going to be given of an intelligence nature, I'll forward it." So, I gained somewhat of a reputation as being a seer of what was to happen, which I wasn't. I was just reporting what I read in the London *Economist*.

Q: The initial attack came June 25, 1950, a date which I think all of us of a certain generation or two will remember very well. How well did you respond at that point?

ROWNY: I think MacArthur's response was rapid and correct. He immediately talked to people in Washington and was directing attention to the need for troops and also for an international group. MacArthur put his whole staff to work on how we were going to cope with the situation in Korea. We were fortunate at that time to have a wonderful ambassador to South Korea, John Muccio, who did a first-class job in his cables and phone calls to MacArthur. It had a lot to do with formulating MacArthur's ideas of what he sent back. The military was preoccupied with fighting the onslaught of the North Koreans, and Muccio was a very courageous and cool-headed ambassador deserving much credit for our initial response to North Korea.

Q: Had there been any talks between our military and what passed for the South Korean military before this happened?

ROWNY: We had a training force in South Korea but it wasn't very strong or large. We didn't equip the South Korean army very well. There was close talk and integration between the two but it didn't amount to much because of the small size of our military training force and its lack of resources to support them.

Q: Was there a concern when this thing happened that, for some reason, the Japanese might rise?

ROWNY: No, not at all. The Japanese were very much behind MacArthur's idea of calling for an international force, which worked out very well because the Soviet ambassador to the U.N. was absent. They had said they'd veto our plans. I might mention one thing in passing. I think it's on the 5th of January 1950 that Churchill met with Truman and we got a cable in which Churchill said that he had held Truman in low regard until he had met him personally and that, now, he regretted that and felt that Truman was a good president. I've never seen that in print anywhere. I don't know if you've come across it.

Q: No, I haven't. I know obviously that Truman rose in many people's estimation over the years. What about the attitude towards Marshall, the chief of staff, and Truman and all? Was there a tendency on MacArthur's staff to be somewhat dismissive, "We'll do this thing, and don't tell us what to do?" I'm talking about prior to the actual attack and shortly afterwards.

ROWNY: Well, it wasn't so much the staff. There was this tendency on the part of MacArthur to, with the help of a few of these sycophants on his staff who had been giving him bad advice, look down his nose at Truman as just an underling who had only risen to be a captain in the Army. We were happy when the cable came giving Churchill's high regard for Truman and circulated that among the staff so that we would influence people around MacArthur and MacArthur himself to have a higher regard for Truman. Truman was gaining in stature all through that time.

Q: You've already covered it thoroughly and very well. You were with the planning of Inchon, but what was your impression after you became a field officer in Korea of your Korean counterparts? Did you see them as having a long way to go to learn how to be military officers?

ROWNY: Yes. They had a very long way to go. They had not been trained well, and there was not a professional officer corps. Some of the soldiers, individually, were brave and fought well but, in general, it was not what we would consider a first-class military force. It was second or third class. Particularly, one can contrast it to the North Korean forces who were well trained and well equipped and came down in force with great capabilities, much more than the South Koreans then.

I changed that idea later when I went back in 1967 and 1968 and commanded the First Corps. I saw how the Koreans had built an academy modeled after West Point. They had built a first-class officer corps. There originally were six Korean divisions and two U.S. divisions under my command on the DMZ. It later became seven Korean divisions and one U.S. division. Those divisions, I considered, were as good as our U.S. division. To answer your question, initially, we had a low opinion of their ability.

Q: You were going to be more and more involved in working in solely-American organizations. For you and maybe for others who were making the plans, let's say we've got to start building up really professional armies on the part of Vietnam and other places. Did the lesson get to some of your political masters?

ROWNY: It's hard to say on the civilian side but I know that it was very much on our mind when the Vietnam War began. In the early days of that war, the Vietnamese followed our

experience of building an officer corps, including the establishment of a military academy.

Q: We had - what was the term? - KATUSAs, the Korean soldiers integrated into our divisions. Was that ever contemplated in Vietnam?

ROWNY: I wasn't in that element of the battle enough to know. In the time that I used KATUSAs in the second year of the Korean War, I used them largely in my engineer outfits. I don't remember integrating them into our fighting outfits that early but maybe they did. We did use thousands of them as laborers and truck drivers and, in some cases, equipment operators on our engineering equipment. They did quite well.

Q: Let's move ahead. When you were in NATO, this goes into the 1960s. In particular when you were in the 24th division from 1965 to 1966, how did we view the Soviet threat? We knew they had a lot of forces there but, one, did we see war as being able to happen on a hair trigger and how effective did we think the Soviets would be?

ROWNY: It was always a great worry because the Soviets outnumbered our divisions by at least two or three to one. The question was, could we hold them off if they attacked without our resorting to use of the atomic bomb? How would we contain the Soviets if they moved across Germany through the Fulda Gap against our inferior forces? Twelve years earlier when I was secretary of the General Staff at SHAPE, it was already apparent that we faced a threat from the Soviet Union. As you may recall, in 1956, the Soviets moved into Hungary. The worry was, who would be next? These concerns never faded. The original plans made in the Pentagon for the number of troops the U.S. had to be pared back again and again. The first plans called for 60 U.S. divisions. That was cut in half and then in half again. Even with the buildup of the Allies, the question was whether we would have time to mobilize or would have to resort to the nuclear weapon.

Q: I was in Germany in the middle fifties as an enlisted man in the Air Force at Darmstadt near Lendenfels and, then, later as a vice counsel in Frankfurt. I used to see this huge atomic cannon driving around, tactical weapons. Was this a bluff as far as the use of this?

ROWNY: No. It was not a bluff, nor was resorting to atomic weapons. Rather, it was what we called a measured response. We would move by degrees. If we couldn't contain the forces with our ground troops, we would use the 280 millimeter atomic cannon to try to stop the onslaught. If that failed, we would resort to strategic bombing from the air. We always had the feeling that we were very much behind and we were in a vulnerable position all through the years.

Q: In a way it is very dangerous to be involved in that, but also the fact that if you are looking at it from the Soviet side, you don't want your opponent to be so weak as to have the massive weapons used. They are almost automatically going to have to use it. When you were with NATO, you got involved very much in the logistics of the withdrawal of our forces from France. That was a very difficult time. What was your impression of the French military reaction? Their leader, General De Gaulle, had made the decision but how did the military respond?

ROWNY: Our contacts with the French military were first rate and, while the French were loyal

to De Gaulle, a lot of them expressed privately their unhappiness with what was going on. We had a good relationship with the French military at our level, our opposite numbers, but at the top there was this great division. De Gaulle said he would support NATO politically but not militarily and gave the U.S. a year to move its troops and supplies out of France.

Q: Did this cause any rifts with the French military?

ROWNY: I don't know what the internal politics were and what happened. I was not in a position to see any higher traffic. I only saw people at my own level. They were friendly and apologetic for what was going on. Whether there was a rift with DeGaulle, I just don't know.

Q: Back to Vietnam, early on you got involved with that from 1962 and variously involved up to 1965. Were you getting reports back of disquiet about our involvement there?

ROWNY: I didn't in the early days. There was what we considered a one-sided view of the press. Halberstam and others were writing from Saigon that the Vietnamese and Diem would never be able to succeed, and we shouldn't be backing him. After the assassination of Diem in 1963, everything went downhill. We never recovered from that. Once he was gone, there was no one to rally around.

Some of us who had been in Korea thought it was similar to the events that happened there. Syngman Rhee was unpopular in some circles in the U.S. but America backed him. Our original thought in Vietnam was that we'd better work with Diem. There was, even in those early days, what turned out later to be a very great opposition to our involvement in Vietnam.

Q: It wasn't felt very greatly in those early days.

ROWNY: No, it wasn't.

Q: Getting back to Korea where you were serving in 1971, you were commanding general of I CORPS. How did you see the military situation at that time?

ROWNY: We were quite confident that, despite the larger North Korean forces, we could hold them off. We believed we had trained our forces well enough so there would be enough time to decide whether we had to resort to nuclear weapons. There was a stockpile of nuclear weapons in Korea, which could be used by U.S. Air Force. What we didn't know is what might happen if the Soviets moved in Germany. That was another problem.

Q: When you were commanding general of the I CORPS, did you ever have any dealings with Park Chung Hee?

ROWNY: Not that I remember.

Q: How about the embassy? Were you involved with the embassy at all?

ROWNY: I just made courtesy calls and social visits. I worked for the Eighth Army commander

who did all the liaison with the embassy and the Korean government. I did keep contact with some of the younger officers that we had known, particularly on the East Coast of Korea in the Korean War in 1950-51. They had risen to high positions, including the defense minister.

PAUL E. WHITE
USAID- Internship Training
Seoul (1971-1972)

Mr. White was born and raised in Indiana. He received his education at Sacramento State College, Valparaiso University and the East-West Center in Hawaii. He joined USAID in 1970. During his career with that Agency, Mr. White served in Vientiane, Seoul, Phnom Penh, Panama City, Lima, Guatemala City, Tokyo and Mexico City. He also had tours of duty at USAID Headquarters in Washington. Mr. White was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: What were you doing in Korea?

WHITE: In Korea I was an intern, so I rotated around all of the AID offices in the embassy but essentially I worked in the development loan shop of AID.

Q: How'd you find Korea? You'd already had a glimpse of Japan and now you experienced Korea. How did it compare?

WHITE: Fantastic. The first thing I found was that, very different from the Japanese, the Koreans were very open and they were very American-like. When you met a Korean you knew up front whether he liked you, didn't like you, very straightforward. Korean and Japanese language are similar. Grammatically they're exactly the same. So learning Korean was not difficult if you had Japanese as a base. And I loved Korea. I was there at a time when we were winding down our program. Korea was starting to graduate from our program. We were closing out the mission there. So there was a lot of kind of freedom to do evaluative kind of assignments and rather than developing new projects and all of that it was more looking at what we had done and where it all might go. So the short period I was in Korea I loved it. Great mission director, Michael Adler is one of the AID greats and Philip Habib [served from October 1971 to August 1974] was the ambassador there, also a really good guy. It was an exciting time. It was the time in Korea when the North Koreans for the first time were coming down to Seoul and there was a program called the New Village Movements that was designed to beautify Korea, to put chicken and pig pens in every back yard and new roofs on the houses and a countrywide program to make sure that the corridor the North Koreans would come down was beautified first. That was an interesting program.

AID was working in really high tech ways. I had not been involved in normal AID work before. And there I found university contractors like the University of Michigan designing computerized agricultural models for Korea. We created something called the Korea Educational Development Institute, which was a big think tank for education. Just really exciting things. We created KIST,

the Korean Institute of Science and Technology. At the start of it there were like two or three PhDs and we sent a bunch of people off to the States for PhD training and now there are four or five hundred PhDs at KIST. So it's gone from being a little tiny AID project of almost nothing to a really major institution.

So it was a good time to be there but I did yearn to get back to Southeast Asia. So when I left Korea I returned to Laos, this time to work in Vientiane, in the capital city. I stayed there for a year or so, maybe not quite a year and I saw a cable from Cambodia. They desperately needed someone in Cambodia. So I went from Laos to Cambodia, studied Cambodian for a few months and then went Cambodia. So I was in Cambodia 1974 until the spring of 1975.

DAVID BLAKEMORE
Economic Officer
Seoul (1971-1974)

David Blakemore was born in 1941 in New York State. He graduated from Valparaiso in 1962 and joined the Foreign Service in 1965. He served overseas in Saudi Arabia, India, Korea, Bangladesh and Nigeria, as well as the staff director of the Board of Examiners and Deputy Team Leader in the Inspection Corps in Washington DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in the winter of 1997.

Q: Whither?

BLAKEMORE: Seoul. I keep depicting myself as a person who didn't know much about foreign affairs, and it's not really false modesty. I was certainly ignorant of Northeast Asia when I first went to Korea, and it was the best thing that happened to me in my career.

Q: You were in Seoul from '71 to?

BLAKEMORE: '74. It was probably the best thing that happened to my career. I wound up spending ten or eleven years working on Korea. After my two initial assignments in Calcutta and Jeddah it was a wonderful thing to go to a country that despite its Asianness and the terrible difficulty of the language, was accessible in a cultural, personal, professional, every sense. It was much more accessible than either India or Saudi Arabia.

Q: Can you tell me about your impression of the situation in Korea when you arrived in '71?

BLAKEMORE: Park Chung Hee had been in power for ten years by then and he was getting a little more heavy handed. He had always been heavy handed but it was getting to be a little unpleasant, a little nasty. It was harder and more awkward for us to maintain a close relationship and be quiet about the repression that was going on. There wasn't much dissent tolerated. The climax while we were there in 1972 was when Park declared martial law and threw out the constitution and wrote a new one that made it much more legitimate for him to be so repressive.

That made me uncomfortable and it made most of the people in the embassy uncomfortable to have such an intimate and close relationship with that kind of a government.

There were 50,000 U.S. troops still there and there is a very strongly worded mutual security treaty. We really have no moral option if South Korea is attacked; we are going to go in and up to our necks immediately. There was a lot of discomfort about that.

The ambassador was Phil Habib. William Porter at first but then he left and Habib came. A wonderful dynamic guy. He would have Saturday morning bull sessions with the junior officers. No one above the grade of five under the old system was literally not allowed in the room. It was a great opportunity to air our concerns: what are we doing allying with this government, particularly after the 1972 changeover to a more restrictive system? The ambassador was wonderful. He was willing to share some of his own doubts and his sense of a lack of alternatives. We would go on for a couple of hours and invariably, (I don't know if you ever encountered Habib but he was a real dynamo, badgering, foul mouthed but a very warm person with a great sense of humor) we would have a loud shouting match. Here was an FSO-6 having a shouting match with the ambassador and the ambassador was obviously loving it.

The other major professional impression coming to Korea in 1971 was being present at the birth of a miracle. I was doing economic work, and 1971 was the first year that Korean exports hit a billion dollars. The excitement in the press and in the community was akin to the fulfillment of the Kennedy goal to put a man on the moon. They were determined to export a billion dollars worth of stuff that year and they did. That was the good side of Park Chung Hee. He was personally involved. He recognized good economic advice when he heard it and left the economic advisors alone after he had approved the general approach. He supported them. His picture was in the paper every day putting a medal around the neck of some other industrialist who had met his piece of the billion dollars. November and December were just full of that kind of stuff. It was very exciting.

My responsibility in the embassy was trade and balance of payments which was, I thought, the very heart of the economy. I really liked it a lot. Again it seems to me that everywhere I've been I'm talking about mentors. USAID still had a big operation in Korea at that time and they should not have because it was not needed any more in my opinion. AID had a big economic analysis section, and Habib put it and the embassy economic section together. And so there were three Ph.D.s right down the hall from me. I again mercilessly tapped their help as to whether what I wanted to say about the balance of payments situation made sense.. I have been a cheering spectator of the Korean economy ever since. I have great admiration for what they have achieved.

Q: Talking about AID, what was your impression because this is really the first time you were up against this AID apparatus? They were in a separate building, weren't they, for a while? Weren't there twin buildings?

BLAKEMORE: Yes, twin buildings, but the integrated economic section was in the embassy building. They sit right next to each other, the two buildings. Right after I left that first time in Korea, we gave the USAID building to the economic planning board of the Korean government.

Under Habib, there wasn't any way that USAID could go down some kind of a separate road. His personality was just too big and the head of the AID mission also served as the embassy economic counselor.

Q: Who was that?

BLAKEMORE: Mike Adler, an AID officer, who worked both jobs. He really played along nicely in terms of taking both jobs seriously and integrating the economic function.

Q: What was your impression of Korean industry at that time and sort of what we were thinking about it because in the 1960s Korea was considered a basket case? We're there for political reasons, we've got to keep the North Koreans out, but Korea was considered hopeless for a while.

BLAKEMORE: Once Park provided political stability, he came to power in '61, and listened to and put in place some good advice (and USAID had a lot to do with the process of helping him identify good people to do various pieces of the job) the Korean private sector response to the capitalist opportunities presented was just breathtaking. It was a terrific response.

I ran into my first real moral dilemma in the Foreign Service at this time because the energy, the engine behind this growth initially was textiles. I was the interface with the Korean government on behalf of US negotiators David Kennedy and Anthony Jurich who in 1971 insisted that the Koreans agree to so-called voluntary limits on their textile exports to the United States. This was an amazingly unpleasant experience in many ways to be the point person for a policy which was forcing Korea to cut back exports from the sector that had pulled the country up out of poverty.

Q: This was inspired by Nixon's southern strategy, wasn't it?

BLAKEMORE: Yes I think so.

Q: Could you explain that.

BLAKEMORE: I think that is where that came from. The U.S. textile industry centered in the south was under a lot of pressure from foreign competition. Cotton textiles had been under controls for a long time, which is why the Korean surge was concentrated on synthetics.

Q: How did you go about this? You are going in saying now you've done so well that you've got to stop it?

BLAKEMORE: That is essentially what happened. We pointed out to them the path that they eventually took that made it much less painful than it looked. The restrictions agreed on limited the number of square yards equivalent they could ship us a year in dozens and dozens of different categories. There was a formula for deciding how many square yards equivalent were in a shirt, a t-shirt, or sweater. The fact that the restrictions were expressed in square yards gave Koreans the opportunity to upgrade its product over the next ten years to increase the value of each square yard shipped.. I'm not sure that it really hurt them in the end at all but

presentationally, and before they could see that they were going to be able to adjust, they were devastated. Their feelings were hurt. They couldn't believe that we would do this to them.

Q: The Koreans are not what I would call a sensitive race. They are very hard charging and very straight forward. How did you find dealing with them on this?

BLAKEMORE: All the stereo-types about East Asians fall away in one sense when you are dealing with Korea. A "you make me do this and I'll lose my job" kind of response was not unusual and was not play acting. There was no effort to hide their dismay and disappointment which really made it easier to do business. They weren't pretending. They were giving you what their reaction was.

David Kennedy, a Mormon, was a charmer and to see him at a Kisaeng party, the sort of down and dirty Korean equivalent of a geisha party, was quite an experience. I attended many of these parties with Kennedy over the course of these negotiations. Of course he didn't drink alcohol at all, but I probably drank enough for both of us. It was really kind of a bizarre footnote on this whole process because they try to be their gracious selves with him and he seemed to have a wonderful time at these parties stone sober while everybody else was drunk. Of course it didn't make any difference. The next morning his position was, "Have you made up your mind yet to do what you have to do?"

Q: Was it sort of the bottom line that the United States could still force the Koreans to do this?

BLAKEMORE: That's how it came out although the Koreans are very effective at negotiating with us. They played the special relationship and I am confident that they managed to skew in their favor the way the shares of various exporting countries were calculated. They earned some major concessions by hard bargaining within the context of a US ultimatum. They had practice at that. For example, the payoff they extracted for sending a division to Vietnam went on and on and on and was worth big bucks. It's also how they got the F-4 fighters which initially we didn't want them to have. We gave them a significant amount of incremental aid as a result of signing the textile agreement, much of it in the form of PL480.

Q: We will probably pick this up another time, but at this time, was there a Korean form of negotiating that you can think of, a stereotype of how they negotiated?

BLAKEMORE: I don't know if I could say that or not. Certainly in negotiating with us, the atmosphere never deteriorated. It never got personal. I guess the pattern was to say today that they couldn't do it, whatever it was, and then sneak around the back way tomorrow and agree to most of it. I don't know if that constitutes a negotiating style.

How about it if I talk just a little bit about what it was like to be in Korea. It seemed to me that everything was right about it. It is a beautiful country. It is hard to be out of sight of the mountains in Korea. In fact, I'm not sure it is literally possible if the weather is clear. The roads were good even then so my wife and I were able to travel all over the country on our own. People were friendly. I liked Korean food a lot, from the beginning. They have a very interesting cultural background although they don't have some of the other stereotypes of East Asia, they

certainly are culturally mysterious to Americans. There is a lot that goes on that takes a while to understand why it happens and how it happens. I really felt very attached to Korea and still do as a result of that experience.

Q: Did you run across in any of your economic work the Korean antipathy towards the Japanese and looking over their shoulder at the Japanese?

BLAKEMORE: Absolutely and their ambivalence about it was very obvious. The Koreans, like other East Asians, took pride in Japanese accomplishments: "Our part of the world can stand up to the West economically." The history between the two countries is so bitter and has been for so long that the distaste for Japanese people and the Japanese way of doing things was always near the surface but it did not keep Koreans from making money by dealing with Japan. I don't know what the situation is now. I have been away from it for a while, but the Japanese were by far the largest foreign investor in Korea when I was there. A lot of it was small investment. Not Mitsubishi so much as the equivalent of Tanaka's little textile mill with a branch in Korea. The Koreans benefitted greatly from that. It was my first glimpse of what I noticed about them over and over again over the years: Koreans are extremely pragmatic. It is unusual for Koreans to let their feelings get in the way of their best interests economically or in terms of security or whatever. Maybe that's the answer to your question about negotiating style.

Q: I have an interview with Mike Smith that I was just looking at which said that the Koreans didn't stop negotiating until he was climbing up the steps of the ladder to the plane. That's still textiles right?

BLAKEMORE: Yes. Habib used to tell stories about negotiating on the tarmac with them.

Q: In dealing with this what was your impression about how Park Chung Hee was managing the economy? I've heard stories about how he used to go to the Ministry of Economics once a week or something and say "How are you doing?" and with the BDI and have reports. In other words he would keep the feet to the fire.

BLAKEMORE: Absolutely. There were weekly briefings and he wanted detail. I admired him for not acting as if he knew economics better than the guys with him. I think he was, as you say, keeping their feet to the fire, making sure that they knew they would be accountable to him for progress or for failure. They had to have good reasons why things that they had planned to do and hoped to do didn't work out. To me it was a great model for developing country political leadership because the country was stable, the interest of the president was obvious to anybody who could read and that's everybody in Korea, but he did not act like Baltimore Orioles owner Peter Angelos here and assume that he knew more about baseball than the manager.

Q: This is Peter Angelos who has just fired the winning manager of the Orioles. Had influence come from Korean economists and others who are trained in the United States sort of penetrating the Korean economy in the way that later in Chile they had what they called the Chicago boys? Was there anything of this nature there?

BLAKEMORE: Oh, yes, and in Korea's case I guess they would be more Harvard boys than

Chicago. U.S. trained economists were prominent in every economic ministry. I left Korea in '74 and came back in '80. In that six year period there was a flood of Ph.D.s of all kinds returning from the United States to Korea because they could see the economic progress. Yes it was there in '74. By 1980 it was much more dramatic and not just in economics, but in everything.

Q: I ran the consular section from '76 to '79 and one of my joys was to look at where the students were going. I had been at places where they were going to East Texas Pilot School and things of this nature. The Koreans were going to top notch places. This was a serious generation that was going.

BLAKEMORE: They were a major element to the success of the whole program.

Q: Did you run across any of these yourself as far as in your discussions on various matters?

BLAKEMORE: Oh, yes. The transition I think was obvious in my experience in the textile negotiations. One of the higher up guys in the Ministry of Commerce was a former KATUSA, Korean Auxiliary to the U.S. Army. He had worked for the Army. If not during the war, shortly thereafter. He spoke beautiful idiomatic English but it wasn't quite right and I don't think he had more than a high school education. His deputy was a Ph.D. in economics from Tufts. You could see the changeover coming. Towards the end of my first tour in Korea, the top guy was kicked upstairs to do something else and the change took place.

Q: Were there any concerns on our part that maybe some day we might have a balance of payments problem with Korea? I think we were beginning to look at that in Japan weren't we?

BLAKEMORE: We certainly were looking at that in Japan and it was on the horizon in Korea. I think it became more of a concern in the early '80s when their shift into heavier industry began to bear fruit in terms of exports. We did worry, but not really in the '70s.

Q: Just on the general atmosphere, how during this '71 to '74 period did you, and maybe your compatriots, look at the "threat from the North?" I'm talking about the North Koreans.

BLAKEMORE: It was very serious. I think I may have gone there with some skepticism about hype and so on but it became clear to me that the threat was very real. The North Koreans were not operating on the same logical basis that we were anyway, except that deterrence worked so I guess that is logical in that sense. I never felt unsafe in Seoul. I never wondered about having my family there, I had two children by this time. If that was the point of your question that was not a problem.

Q: I was just thinking about how seriously it was taken.

BLAKEMORE: The Park government particularly, and the Chun Do Won government after him, could never resist the temptation to cite the threat from the north as a reason for the repression of the day against dissidents. The awkward position that put us in was that we never really disagreed. It was not necessarily true that there had been an increase in the threats this week and therefore that is why you had to shut down this newspaper, but the threat was there.

I wanted to say one general thing about my experience in Korea. I had always regretted the fact that as an economic officer going out in 1971, I was given zero training in Korean language. That wasn't so bad doing economic work. I don't think it really hurt me professionally. But I think it was insulting to the Koreans that no one in the economic section spoke Korean. By the end of the tour I got around reasonably well in the social sense. But it takes two years full time to learn Korean at a professional level. One three year tour was bad enough but I ended up working ten or eleven years on Korea all together and never did stop to do that two years of language. This was increasingly embarrassing when I came back as political counselor the second time. It was really too bad.

Q: I don't want to put words in your mouth, but when I was out there and I was not dealing with the political issues, but there was sort of an underlying feeling I felt that the Koreans were known as the Irish of Asia. If you gave them too much political freedom god only knows what they will do. They would be all over the place and splitting and again you would have a weak government. This is part of our built-in toleration of the Park Chung Hee thing. Was that prevalent when you were there?

BLAKEMORE: I guess so. I guess the memory of what it was like between Syngman Rhee and Park in the '60-'61 period was very fresh in peoples' minds. That is a little scary when you've got an enemy with a couple of thousand tanks poised to come across the border.

Q: Thirty miles away or something like that.

BLAKEMORE: In the event the Koreans have done extremely well in their experiment with a more democratic government.

Q: Either over time things have developed more or else we were dead wrong at not giving credit to the Koreans for putting it together, probably a little of both.

BLAKEMORE: I was going to say probably both. We are getting ahead of the story here but I was very surprised when the great changeover came in Korea and how smoothly and easily it happened. We certainly hadn't anticipated it.

Q: Is there anything else we should talk about in this particular period.

BLAKEMORE: I don't think so.

Q: Why don't we stop here and we'll pick it up the next time. You left Seoul in 1974 and we'll pick it up where you go then.

FRANCIS T. UNDERHILL
Deputy Chief of Mission
Seoul (1971-1974)

Ambassador Francis T. Underhill was born in New Jersey in 1921. He graduated from Wesleyan University in 1942 with a B.A. He received his M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1943. During World War II he served in the U.S. Navy and in 1947 he joined the Foreign Service. Ambassador Underhill's postings included Lisbon, Bilbao, Djakarta, Warsaw, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, and Seoul. He was interviewed in 1988 by Henry Mattox.

UNDERHILL: To today, I have never found out how I became chosen for the DCM job in Korea. The Ambassador was William Porter. I had never met Bill Porter before. He had never laid eyes on me. I never asked him why he chose me and it is something I regret because he died recently, before I could I could ask him that question.

I didn't know at the time whether Porter knew that he wasn't going to be in Seoul very much longer; I learned later that in fact he did know. I arrived in January of 1971 and he left in May or June to go to Paris to take over from Habib, who was the principal negotiator with the North Vietnamese. Phil Habib then came to Seoul as Ambassador.

I did know that Habib had been at least consulted because he was going to inherit me as the DCM. He told me that Porter had said, "Is Underhill acceptable to you if I pick him as my DCM?"

The main issue in early 1971 was the aftermath of the decision to withdraw one of our American divisions. There had been an extremely difficult period because the Korean Government didn't want us to withdraw troops. I think they feared it as a first step towards a major disengagement. We were trying to reassure the Koreans that the troop withdrawal did not mean a disengagement. The Koreans saw it, also, in the context of the Nixon doctrine -- letting Asians manage their own defense to a greater degree.

Kim Chung Pil actually didn't become Prime Minister until a bit later. But the job of Prime Minister in Korea was largely without power. He was an administrative lieutenant to the President.

The Koreans were extremely concerned about keeping the relationship with the United States. The thing that struck me on arrival was the degree to which Korean policy resembled a fly in amber. Nothing had changed very much since the armistice in 1953. Our military wanted to stay. The Koreans wanted us to stay. The Japanese would just as soon have us stay. Our relationship hadn't really changed for 20 years.

The Koreans however were beginning to want to put a little distance between us. For example, my predecessor as DCM had a monthly luncheon with the Chief of Staff of the Blue House, in which, the two of them went over current issues. This was a mirror of another monthly luncheon between the Ambassador and the Prime Minister. The Chief of Staff was a combination of our White House Chief of Staff and the National Security Advisor. In Korea it was one person.

When I arrived I was told that the Blue House Chief of Staff would let me know when he would

like to have our first luncheon. That time never came. Rather than say so directly they just postponed, and temporized, and "I'll call you next week." After about two months, it was clear that the Chief of Staff didn't have any intentions of resuming the luncheons. He was perfectly accessible. I could always get to see him when I had a problem, but he didn't want this institutionalized regular luncheon.

The Koreans had also changed the Prime Minister at that point. The new Prime Minister gave Bill Porter the same message, using exactly the same technique. "I will be out of town at the time of our regular luncheon. I will call you," Porter was quite prepared to end this institution, too.

So there was some effort at a modest kind of disengagement. The main problem was how we dealt with a situation in which, at least from my point of view, the American Ambassador in Korea had a pro-consular role. There was this huge American establishment that was the carryover of a period where we were the patrons, and the armorers, and the defenders of Korea. We had about 40,000 troops there at that time.

The U.S. military wanted to stay because it was a mission that they had become used to doing. Seoul had become as much of a routine assignment as going to Ft. Benning, or Ft. Sam Houston. The rationale was that the DMZ was the line standing against Communism and Communist aggression in Asia. One heard in Japan that the troops in Japan were necessary for the defense of Korea. One heard in Korea that the troops in Korea were necessary for the defense of Japan. It was the memory of the Korean War, the continued military confrontation of Communist China, and the fact that the war was going on in Vietnam. It was a place where an American policy had, to an extent, succeeded. And there was a reluctance to tamper with anything that had worked for 20 years. And finally, it was a four-star command with all of its attributes. The number of personal servants of flag and general officers in Korea outnumbered the total State Department representation in the country. We had one four-star general, and three-star generals, and more than a dozen two-stars and one-stars. It was a huge command with a hospital, and golf course, and officers club, and schools; a gigantic military encampment right in the middle of Seoul. It was very pleasant duty for our senior military.

The same was true for AID officers. We had trouble in getting them to leave. There were AID officers that had been there eight and ten years. Every year or so they would get their Korean counterparts to write a letter saying that the continued service of "Mr. X" was absolutely essential to the economic prosperity of Korea and that the prospect of him leaving Korea was just too much to imagine. They got themselves extended. It was a pleasant inexpensive place to live. It was one of the sleepers in the Foreign Service.

In 1973, when the war was winding down in Vietnam, the Republic of Korea pulled its troops out, of course, too. They did that without consultation with us. The problems were mostly of administrative. We had leaned on the Koreans very heavily to get them to send troops to Vietnam. After a fairly short period of active fighting in Vietnam, the Koreans made a sort of enclave of their camp and worked out a deal with the Viet Cong. "If you don't bother us, we won't bother you." Then they sat tight for the rest of the time that they were there, shipping back shell casings that turned into brass trinkets in Korea.

The Koreans would come to us to finance the insurance policies or the annuities of the families of the soldiers who had been killed in Korea. There were, in other words, money problems. The Korean troops were mercenaries and they were coming around to us for part of their pay. I am putting this in pretty crude terms, but this was the kind of problems we faced.

Now the other thing that was of concern during this period, was the opening up of our relationship with China -- what they called in Asia at the time, the Nixon Shock. For Korea, and for Taiwan, and for our other "intimate allies" the things that Nixon was doing in establishing relations with China raised serious questions about their relationship with us. Immediately after the Nixon visit, for example, the East Asian Assistant Secretary Marshall Green came to Korea to hold hands and assure them that no deals had been made that would damage Korean interests.

The Koreans have a very strong historical sense of uncertainty because they can point to times in history where we have, from their point of view, sold them down the river. For example, at the end of the Russo-Japanese War when Teddy Roosevelt helped to negotiate the treaty at Portsmouth, we, in effect, said to the Japanese, "Okay, you can have Korea." That was the beginning of the Japanese takeover of Korea. The Koreans felt that we also betrayed them at Cairo. In the arrangements between Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill no provision was made for the independence of Korea at the end of World War II. They felt we had betrayed them by signing the armistice in 1953. Syngman Rhee wanted to keep fighting and march north to unify the country.

The Koreans were not signatory to the armistice. Those are three "betrayals" that come to mind, and there may be others that the Koreans perceived. Underlying all of the American-Korean protestations of friendship, there are strong Korean concerns that sooner or later the United States is going to make a deal with China, Japan, or the USSR which is going to be damaging to their interests.

Trade was becoming an issue. I didn't spend too much time on it because the Economic Counselor and the AID director were the same person. Porter had brought together the AID and the Economic section of the Embassy. He called it the U.S. mission. The AID director had two hats. It was a very good thing because the same man that was in charge of providing economic assistance was also the man that went to talk to them about negotiating the Textile Agreement and honoring their Civil Aviation Agreement. In many other places these jobs were done by two people and the host government was very skillful in playing off one against the other. I was involved but it was not, I would say, a major aspect of my job. Porter worried about these trade issues. I think he felt that it was part of the change in the relationship between the United States and Korea. Korea was already in a phase of rapid economic development, but they were still thinking of themselves as a prostrate, dependent country. They felt that a flow of American dollars into Korea was the normal state of affairs. They were shocked and disturbed however when the Gulf Oil Company, after making major investments in Korea, wanted to repatriate some of profits.

Korea signed an Air Transport Agreement with U.S. When Korea got to the stage where their airlines were flying to the U.S. and our airlines wanted some aspect of reciprocity, the Koreans said, "Oh, but this isn't what we expected." In other words, they were used to a one-way street. I

think we are still seeing aspects of this attitude in current economic problems with Korea. The Ambassador felt that he had to put pressure on the Koreans to start playing by international rules if they wanted to become an important economic power.

Habib was my Ambassador for the rest of my tour. He was less interested, I would say, in economic issues than Bill Porter had been. But they were both quite ready to go to bat with the Koreans. Both were skilled professionals. Neither of them had any localitis problems.

My DCM role changed somewhat when Habib arrived. He had served in Korea before as Political Counselor. He was an incredibly active person and he knew far many more Koreans than I did. He arrived back in Korea as Ambassador with close relationships with, literally, hundreds of people. He also had the advantage of knowing them when they were younger, ten years before. He was a magnificent poker player. The Koreans love to gamble and loved poker. Phil used to stay up all night, as a young officer, winning most of the time, playing poker with them. In the dealings with the Korean Government at the upper level he knew virtually everyone.

Habib handled, you might say, the very top level stuff. We had constant streams of CODELs. Our CODELs often included some of the less savory members of our Congress. He let me pretty much handle them, assigning control officers and getting their programs organized. I often went with the CODEL to see President Park. Almost always they wanted to see Park. He left to me the general management of the Embassy. He let me do a lot of the work in dealing with the military.

The other key element in our service together was that, four months or five months after he arrived, he had a very serious heart attack. He was back in the United States for quite a while. When he returned to Korea he came to the office for two or three hours a day. During this period, and for a good bit of our service together in Korea, I was Chargé.

I don't remember that I designated anyone to be acting DCM when I was Charge. I think that I just let the senior officers at the Embassy handle the things that would normally fall in their province. But I don't recall moving somebody up to be my deputy.

Keeping my hand out of political reporting was one of the most difficult things I had to do in Korea. I enjoyed having been a political counselor. I think, in many ways, a political counselor is one of the best jobs in the Foreign Service. We had a good, strong political section, and I let it do its job. I dabbled just a bit occasionally suggesting areas that I thought might be worth reporting on. But for the most part I resisted the temptation to continue as a political counselor.

I was in Seoul when Kissinger came. It wasn't really a visit in the classic sense. Kissinger and Habib had had a long relationship, going back to Vietnam. They were quite close personal friends. Phil left Korea to be, first, EA Assistant Secretary, and then Under Secretary for Political Affairs under Kissinger. There were henceforth no special arrangements when Henry came on a visit. Kissinger actually came through twice. He came through once after being in China with a fairly large entourage. The other time had something to do with the final arrangements in Vietnam. Habib, in fact, was flown down to Saigon secretly at one point to join in persuading Thieu to accept the agreement that we had reached in Paris. It was one of the few times in my Foreign Service career when I was ordered to lie to the press and tell them that Habib was still in

Korea.

Kissinger respected Habib. Habib was not afraid of Henry and was ready to argue with him when he thought that Kissinger was wrong. I think Kissinger valued this. Phil was quite prepared to shout at Henry when Henry was shouting at him, and shout a little louder. So Kissinger's visits were much more the arrival of an old friend of the Ambassador's than a visit by a high ranking official. There wasn't the same sort of drama. If Kissinger had asked for it, Habib would have said we were too busy for that sort of foolishness.

After Korea, I went to Malaysia as Ambassador. It was curious that Korea and Malaysia reflected, it seems to me, the extremes in the possible kind of relationship which an American embassy could have with a host government. In Korea our presence was substantial with 40,000 troops, a military assistance group, 75 Peace Corps volunteers and AID mission, and a huge American complex in the middle of the city. Our Ambassador was a Pro-consul. I recall once when Habib asked me to invite the Blue House Chief of Staff to lunch. In the course of lunch, in tones which were not at all subtle, Habib demanded to know whether there was going to be any cabinet changes, or any plans for any revision in the structure of the government. When I talked to him about it later, Habib said, "Frank, you just don't understand. We have a right to know this sort of thing. We have a right to know what the Korean Government is doing because of our presence here."

In the course of the time that we were there, there were two or three major changes including martial law that came as a surprise. The Koreans had deliberately decided that we would not be brought in until after the fact. In each case Habib's reaction was one of extreme displeasure, rage almost, that they had dared to do something without telling us first. We had such an intimate relationship that the American Ambassador felt he should have been privy to everything the Korean government was planning to do.

In contrast, the American ambassador's role in Malaysia was completely different. We had no AID program there and no military assistance program.

PHILIP C. HABIB
Ambassador
Korea (1971-1974)

Ambassador Habib was born and raised in New York and educated at the University of Idaho, the Sarbonne and the University of California at Berkeley. Entering the Foreign Service in 1949 he served in: Ottawa, Canada; Wellington, New Zealand; Port-of-Spain, Trinidad; Seoul, Korea; Saigon, Vietnam and Paris, France. In Washington, Ambassador Habib held the senior positions of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia, Under Secretary, and Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State. He was also Political Counselor in Saigon and participated in the Vietnam negotiations in Paris in 1967-1968. He served as US Ambassador to Korea from 1971 to 1974. Ambassador Habib was interviewed by

Edward Mulcahy in 1984.

HABIB: I left there in the fall. I was due to leave earlier and, when Bruce left, I stayed on a couple of months and then came home. By that time, my wife was living in Paris, my oldest daughter was in college. So we came home and spent a few months waiting to go to Korea, and then took off for Korea. Arrived in Korea, if I remember, about November of '71. It was fine, found a lot of people I knew, things were moving along. Immediately sort of got occupied with the...of course, one of the things that was still occupying us was the Vietnam war. First of all, of course, in February of '72, I'd only been in the post four months, and I got ill and got evacuated to Walter Reed. I had my first heart attack, had it in Walter Reed. I was having chest pains and I went to the doctor in Korea, and he took one look at my cardiogram and put me in bed. Two weeks later I was on a medical airplane to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington. And it was while I was at Walter Reed that I had my first heart attack. It's a good thing I was at Walter Reed.

Q: Oh, he evacuated you before just on the basis of pressure.

HABIB: They were talking about an operation while I was in the cardiac care unit and I had this massive seizure, and fortunately I was there, otherwise I never would have made it. They saved me, and I spent three months recuperating, then went back to my post. They came out to the hospital to see me and said don't worry, the post is there, it's waiting for you. You get better, you go back.

Q: Who was your DCM?

HABIB: Frank Underhill. So I went back to Korea and started the recuperation. I went back in late May--remember I went to the hospital in February. In May I went right back to Korea. I remember I hitched a ride on Secretary Laird's plane, went to Korea and for the first month I sort of worked half a day, four hours, then I boosted it to eight hours, then pretty soon I began the usual...

Q: The routine of twelve or fifteen.

HABIB: Well, sporadic. Then, that fall, the negotiations on Vietnam were winding down. It was in that fall, after Henry had negotiated the first agreement, he asked me to come down to Saigon. I went down to Saigon and met him there. Then we went over the agreement, just the two of us together. He wanted my opinion about it, and I told him I thought it was as good as you'll get. It was a shame it had taken so long to get, but it's as good as you'll get and you ought to stick with it, you ought to jam it through. Of course, the South Vietnamese balked at part of it and didn't want to go through with it. That's all written up in Henry's book and then he went back to meetings with the North Vietnamese. They wouldn't make any more concessions, and that's when I think you got the Christmas bombing.

Q: That was Christmas '72.

HABIB: And they came back on, and Henry had asked me if I would come back as Assistant Secretary. And I said, "No, I couldn't do it, I was just too soon out of the hospital. The doctor

didn't think I should do it." I said to him, Bob Ingersoll was ambassador to Japan, I said he would be a good man, he's a very good, sound fellow. So Bob Ingersoll became Assistant Secretary. That would be the fall of '72 or the spring of '73, somewhere in there, anyway we were very active in Korea with this business of, first of all, support for the Vietnamese and getting the equipment down there. Then there were some conversations going on between the north and the south, and we got a little bit involved. It was a very busy time, a big embassy, lots to do, the Korean communists were moving ahead very strongly. I spent a lot of time on economic-commercial matters, business, visitors, the usual thing. And then, of course, we had the military. A large military establishment, the United Nations command, it was called the 8th Army. There were all sorts of changes going on, the relationship with the Vietnamese. It was a pretty successful time. We were hoping that Park would go, and have a proper election. But he ended up by perpetuating his rule a little longer. I'll never forget that assassination attempt on him when his wife was killed.

Q: Were you there?

HABIB: It happened right in front of me. I was there when it happened. A funny thing. They were having this annual sort of national day celebration which was traditional for him to speak in an auditorium up on the edge of town. When we drove up, there were guards all along. I remember saying to Marge, my wife, something to the effect that there were a lot of guards, wouldn't it be something if there were an attempt on him. And within an hour there was an attempt on him. It had popped into my mind. Because you always thought of it anyway. At any rate, they missed him. They killed his wife. At that point, I had already received my orders to return to Washington as Assistant Secretary. I stayed for the funeral, I represented the U.S. at the funeral, then left and went back to Washington and began the two years as Assistant Secretary, before I moved up to Under Secretary. That was a very hectic period because of the Vietnam war - the war had started up again. We couldn't get money out of Congress. I was constantly up on the Hill testifying on what was going on, trying to get funds to finance military purchases for the Vietnamese. We were doing very badly. Then of course in '74 and '75 it really began to turn bad. The North Vietnamese defeated the South Vietnamese in the highlands. You had them sneaking down across the border. I was having a great deal of difficulty with the embassy because the embassy took a somewhat different attitude toward what the hell was going on.

Q: Who do you mean?

HABIB: Well, in the embassy...I'm talking about in Saigon. Graham Martin was ambassador at this time, he replaced Ellsworth Bunker. Graham is a strange man. He was wrong about a lot of things, and he is very stubborn.

Q: He didn't come out of it very well.

HABIB: It destroyed him, it destroyed him physically and somewhat mentally too.

Q: I came back with him on a plane from Rome when he was back on consultation and I had a talk with him.

HABIB: He and I had a real falling out, we later made it up. My staff was convinced, of course, that, once that breakout began, the war was over, the North Vietnamese were going to sweep right down.

Q: Well the South Vietnamese had based their strategy on stopping them well outside.

HABIB: They came down right through. Well, in any event, the great evacuation. Then we began getting involved with the question of refugees. I was up on the Hill constantly during that period, before the fall of Saigon in our attempt to try get more help for them. But it was only American power that could hold them back even though Richard Nixon had promised them that if the agreement was broken, we'd be back to save them. Gerry Ford never got to keep that agreement, the mood of the public the way it was. I remember the famous ship, the Mayaguez, that was the end.

Q: I was back in the Department by that time.

HABIB: It was a very active time. We had the incident on the DMZ when we took some very strong measures. But we didn't do some of the things some of the people wanted to do. There were suggestions of great drastic actions, fortunately they were not carried out. I was preoccupied with a lot of things. We had China. I guess I went three times with Kissinger, and President Ford's trip.

Q: Did you go on his first trip?

HABIB: No, no. I was back in Korea on his first trip. I went on some of the negotiating trips when we were trying to negotiate normalization. And then we had Ford's trip to Japan, first trip to Japan by a President. I was Assistant Secretary at that time. Then we had the Ford trip to China. I was Assistant Secretary and I went on that, and did a lot of the preparatory work, donkey work. After the trip to China the President went to Indonesia and the Philippines and I accompanied him. There was a lot to do, I was working day and night. I think Henry and Joe Sisco had gotten along up to a point. Joe wanted out, or whether he wanted out or he didn't want out, it was about the time Joe was leaving and Henry asked me to take his job, and I took it, and I became Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and that got me involved in everything from then on, including another trip to China.

STANLEY ZUCKERMAN
Korea; Press Officer
Seoul (1971-1973)

Mr. Zuckerman was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and educated at the University of Wisconsin. After service in the US Army, followed by newspaper reporting and a position with the Governor of Wisconsin, he joined the USIA Foreign Service in 1965. He subsequently served as Information, Press and Public Affairs Counselor in Congo, Belgium, Mexico, Canada and Brazil. He also

had several senior level assignments in Washington at USIA and the State Department. Mr. Zuckerman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Well then in '71 you left, and what did you do?

ZUCKERMAN: Well I had always wanted to go to Asia and I was offered a job in Korea by John Reinhardt, who was Director for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and later, in the Carter administration, became director of USIA. It was more than an offer; I was sent orders to go as press officer in Korea. ... So with four children and 16 pieces of luggage we flew first to Washington and then Dallas, and then after a week or so on to San Francisco and Tokyo where we finally spent the night. Then we left for Seoul where we were met at the airport with two vans to transport us through this incredibly different human and urban landscape than any I had ever been in. What came to mind was the old comic strip Terry and the Pirates. We were driven through these dusty back streets to an approach to the living compound adjacent to the US military base in Yongsan, at the southern end of the city. As we approached we were struck by a pungent odor, which came from a large truck into which muscular men stripped to the waist were emptying honey buckets.

Q: Honey being manure.

ZUCKERMAN: Yes they were collecting the human excrement which, I was told, was used as fertilizer by farmers. To leave this scene and enter through the gates of a small American town with neat lawns and tidy ranch houses was a dramatic transition. We were taken to a four bedroom, furnished concrete block house built by AID some time before. It was basic housing, but pleasant and very livable. It was fun, although very different from the lovely house we occupied in Brussels on Avenue Pere Agniello near a church square called Chante de Oiseau – song of the bird, whose other name was Vogelgesang, same meaning in Flemish. There was a bakery around the corner and a wonderful cheese shop, and here, just a few weeks later, we found ourselves in this compound off the military base with a maid and gardener waiting for us, and we settled in.

We found the place was furnished. I soon got my first taste of what I came to realize was the incredible self-confidence of Koreans. In the shipment of our household goods that was eventually unloaded, we had made the mistake of shipping a washer and dryer to Korea, not having been informed that there were appliances in the house. But they unloaded the washer and a small but essential piece had broken off during the shipment, the balancing piece of hard rubber which kept the rotating barrel stable. The GSO was there and said, “Oh we are going to have to send for this part to General Electric. It will take about three months. We will lend you a washing machine in the meantime.” While this was being discussed the Korean who was unloading the shipment picked up the broken piece and told the embassy translator that he had a friend who could make a part like this. I asked the price, and the answer was “A dollar.” “How soon?” “Tomorrow.” The next day he came back with the part. They had made a sand mold of the part, poured the rubber, and it fit. We put it in and it worked. I didn’t realize at the time that it was a foretaste of what Korea was to become.

Q: You were in Korea from '71 until?

ZUCKERMAN: '73.

Q: What were you doing? What was your job?

ZUCKERMAN: Well there was an information officer and a press attaché. I was the press attaché. They did away with the information officer's job when he retired and gave me both jobs. Korea was in a period of repression during the Park Chung Hee regime that was particularly difficult for the Korean press. I was at a disadvantage because I did not speak Korean. I wasn't given Korean language training, except for some lessons I took early each day in my office in order to learn some basic phrases and to be able to give directions to taxicab drivers, but reporters and editors almost uniformly in those days spoke English. Most of them had worked in one way or another for the American press during the Korean war. My best friend, Chin Chul Soo who was deputy managing editor of the leading newspaper, Dong-a Ilbo, spoke impeccable English. He could easily have taught in an American university, or in a French one at that because he was also fluent in French. He is now living in the U.S. although, as was true of many of the leading intellectuals in South Korea are, he was born in North Korea. He taught me a great deal about the inner workings of the Korean press. It was very compromised by heavy political influence. Dong-a Ilbo, however, was quite independent, unlike most of the others that were owned by individuals with strong political ambitions and corporate backgrounds. The Korean national television network, KBS, was a very strong element in the country's communication system.

There was a Korean news service, Yonhap, which distributed its local feed to subscribers by telex or in some case by messengers. There was a great deal of interest in the press, not just in Seoul but around the country, in not just receiving press releases but actively participating in USIA sponsored seminars on press matters and on American subjects. They wanted to learn more about press freedom, as well as about how the American press did its job. They were vitally interested in anything having to do with American attitudes towards Korea. I think one of the things that made us most useful to them was when Tillman Durdin, an Asian expert and long-time correspondent for the New York Times, went to North Korea, the first American journalist there probably since before the war with the exception of any correspondents that followed the US army across the border. He had interviews all over North Korea and he wrote a very informative series of articles for the Times.

The Korean Editors' Association was to meet on the island of Chejudo, just off the south-western coast of Korea. It was a lovely island dominated by an inactive, snow-covered volcano. I was invited to attend, and we asked the Voice of America to do an interview with Durdin, in cooperation with our television service in Washington, and we supplied questions that we knew the Korean editors wanted answers to, remembering that the situation in North Korea was as little known to us or them as were conditions in China or other closed societies. VOA did an interview with Durdin, about 20 minutes worth, and I took the videotape to the island with me along with the equipment needed to view it. The editors gave it their rapt attention, and then asked that it be played over and over so that they could fully digest the interview, of which we had both English and Korean versions. All told, as a large group or in smaller groups, they looked at it five times. There was nothing more important to Koreans in those days than issues of

security. North Korea's artillery was only 28 miles from Seoul, well within range of the city. More than a million Koreans had died during the war, and our presence was vital to their defense. As one very liberal editor of a leading literary journal told me, there were no doves in Korea, at least at that time. There was no misunderstanding of who started the war or why, and no confusion about what would have happened if the United States had not intervened. They had no desire to lower their guard in any way. That is not the case today.

Q: Thirty years later there are many Korean doves.

ZUCKERMAN: That's right. Little understanding seems to remain in the younger generation of the history of the conflict or how it started. Among other thing we did at the time was to publish a magazine which included stories on Korean-US interaction and which circulated among many Korean students. Along with a young officer who oversaw the magazine, I had an assistant information officer who was very skilled in communications technology, and he took to video tape very early in the game. I think the post in Korea was the first USIS post that actively used video tape in our information program. I remember one time when Secretary of State Rogers came through. We experimented with the use of tape to ensure that his press conference was accurately reported. Many of the Korean reporters prided themselves on their knowledge of English, but it was a mixed bag. Some of the press people in attendance could make mistakes in a press conference of such importance that they could have serious consequences. So we informed them before the press conference began that we would be recording it on video tape – both the questions and the answers. Since the event was taking place in the mid afternoon and none of the reporters were facing tight deadlines, we asked them to remain in the room after Secretary Rogers left and we would replay the tape, stopping it after each question and answer to translate to ensure that everyone had a full understanding of the Secretary's words. If there were any clarification necessary we would still have Secretary Rogers' spokesman, Charles Bray – later deputy director of USIA -- in the room to help to handle it. The result was that neither the print nor electronic press was guilty of any distortion of the Secretary's remarks, perhaps a first in our experience with the Korean press, which ranged from the serious and professional to the off the wall amateurs, not unlike our own press. The technique proved to be a useful tool, one that we used when we felt it necessary.

We also started to refine our methods of getting our material out to the large number of daily newspapers in Seoul and beyond; I think at the time there must have been at least six Korean language newspapers in Seoul and two that published in English, in addition to many radio stations and as I remember three television stations. Although we still made sure that important material got directly to the key reporters and editorial writers and columnists, we started to distribute a good deal of our daily traffic through the Yonhap news service, which circulated to all papers in the country. Since it was coming to papers through their own news service, the press started using some of our materials that otherwise would have been discarded or not even read.

We also spent a great deal of time with American newsmen. There was no resident American correspondent in Korea at the time, but Don Oberdorfer of the Washington Post, and Bernie Krisher of Newsweek, Herman Nickel of Time Magazine and others were based in Japan and would periodically visit Korea. Phil Habib was a very savvy and colorful ambassador who insisted that he get to meet with the US press guys before they saw anyone in the Korean

government, and to see them again before they left the country so that he could pick their brains for any information he might not have picked up on his own.

In Korea however my ambassador was Phil Habib.

Q: Oh boy!

ZUCKERMAN: We had a Brooklyn mafia at the time. Mort Smith was the PAO. He was a very hard driving officer who spent his career in Asia. He was a junior officer in Seoul and then a branch PAO in Kwangju. Then he went away and learned Burmese and spent a long time in Burma. Then he came back to Korea, first as deputy PAO and then as PAO, and later served as press spokesman for Habib when he was Assistant Secretary for East Asia, as DCM in Singapore, and as a Deputy Director for the VOA.. He was from Brooklyn. Phil Habib was from Brooklyn. His secretary was from Brooklyn. The AID director was from Brooklyn. So everybody talked about the Brooklyn Mafia. Habib and I actually grew up in nearby neighborhoods. Habib was from a Lebanese Catholic family, but grew up in New Utrecht, which, like my own neighborhood of Bensonhurst was heavily Jewish and Italian. He told me that he was hired by his religious Jewish neighbors to turn on their lights for the Sabbath on Saturdays. He probably knew as much Yiddish or more than I did. We got on very well. He was very tough, or at least he had mastered the art of acting at being very tough. He was a wonderful person, who, along with his Ambassadorial limousine, kept a nondescript Toyota to drive around in without attracting attention. Later he bought a sports car that I think he drove only on the compound. He found out that we had a poker game going, a Korean-American poker game. There was Mort Smith and myself and Dick Peters the political counselor and four Korean editors, Chin Chul Soo and his boss Park Kwan Sang, both from the Dong-a Ilbo. (Park later became head of the Korean Broadcasting System.) There was also an editor from the Chungang Ilbo and the editor of the official government paper, Seoul Shinmun, the only one that was printed only in Hangul, the Korean alphabet. The other newspapers used a combination of the Hangul and Chinese characters.

We would play every two weeks, meeting in one another's house, first dinner and then poker. The best food was served in the Korean houses. One of the wives was a professor of home economics at Ewha University which I believe was the oldest women's university in Asia. She was a spectacular cook. We sat on the floor, ate and then played cards. Habib heard about it and said, "I'm playing." "We already have seven guys," we pointed out. "OK," he said. "Now we have eight, and the next game is at my house." So we all went over there, and he loved it as did the Korean participants, who had known him when he was a young political officer. But as a result of his being the eighth player we had to play only five-card games, and we developed a game of five card high-low stud in which you dealt cards and then you would turn the first four up one at a time, betting after each turn. The last one remained down. He was a great bluffer, but he was not as successful as legend would have it at the poker table. I don't know how, but I could usually tell when he was bluffing. His tenure in Korea was interrupted when he experienced a very bad angina attack. A young cardiologist at the US Army hospital really saved his life. He said, "Look, you are going to have a massive heart attack. If you have it here we won't be able to save you, but if we can stabilize you and get you back to Walter Reed so you can have it there, you might make it." That is exactly what happened. He was sent to Walter

Reed and returned about three months later, 30 pounds lighter and determined to exercise. Under doctor's orders he took up golf which, before he took it up, he used to chide us about as a waste of time. There was an army golf course in Seoul and he soon became an avid golfer. When he went home and I later followed, we continued a foursome playing around different courses in Virginia.

Q: How was it working in Korea at that time? I mean Park Chung Hee was at the height of his powers and as you said he was a dictator, but he was also popular., I mean the farmers were doing well. The economy was beginning to come along at this time. It hadn't reached its peak but how did you find dealing in such a controlled society?

ZUCKERMAN: Well we were not restricted as such, but the people we were dealing with had to be careful, and we had to be careful not to get them in trouble. Some of my friends were arrested by the Korean CIA, which was a very rough outfit. They couldn't talk about it afterwards. We began to find out what was happening to them, that for printing unacceptable stories they would be held for several days and be subjected to beatings of the soles of their feet with rubber truncheons. That way the bruises wouldn't show.

Q: Did this discourage newsmen?

ZUCKERMAN: Yes. Chin Chul Soo eventually left the newspaper business and started teaching because he thought he couldn't follow the government's line. He had been the leader of the press corps that was taken to North Korea during the first meeting between the Korean Red Cross and the North Koreans to arrange family meetings. He was an esteemed newspaperman, and yet even he was treated roughly. When we had heard of a friend disappearing for a few days to a notorious Korean CIA house known as Dong Bingo Dong, we would get together for lunch with him after a respectable wait to let the dust settle. We met always as a small group. When some of them were taken we could let it be known how displeased we were, and Habib communicated firmly that press repression was a strong irritant in our relationship.

During one of the worst periods in the relationship with the Park Chung Hee regime, the July 4 holiday came around, and one of the two English language papers invited the ambassador to write a column for our Independence Day. He asked me to draft something, and I tried to draft it so that it wasn't inflammatory. But in describing American democracy it made the point that at the heart of our system was the belief that the government must govern with the consent of those it governs. I sent it to him and he asked me to come to his residence. He said, "Where did you get this from. Where did you pick this up from? Is this some Agency material?" I said, "No, I wrote it." His daughters were upset with him because, they said, "how can you sign your name to something that someone else writes?" He turned to me, not to them and said, "Listen. I did the writing for a hundred people before I ever signed my name to anything, so I will sign it. It's a good piece." To my surprise it was printed without change in the Korea Herald. The paper was run by Kim Soo Duk, also known as Sugar Kim, and I was afraid that publishing it would get him in trouble. Apparently it didn't because I met him years later at an aviation meeting in Montreal on the downing of the KAL plane by the Soviets. He, like me, was spokesman for his delegation.

Q: How did you find your relations with the station chief? Again our CIA had very close relations with the KCIA, the Korean Central Intelligence.

ZUCKERMAN: I had no relations, other than socially, and I didn't consult them and they didn't consult me.

Q: I was just wondering whether or not you could go to them or pass the word that so and so had been arrested?

ZUCKERMAN: That would go through Habib. He was personally interested. He knew the Korean press guys personally and in many cases for years.

Q: How about contact with the military, the Korean military?

ZUCKERMAN: We had some, but the US Eighth Army people were the prime contacts with the Korean Army. We did some filming for a newsreel we produced on the Army's training to build confidence in the Korean population about their military capabilities. Once I flew up with a camera crew to film the first night test firing of the Honest John missiles we had given them, not far from the North Korean border on the Imjin River. It was the coldest night I've ever experienced, even including Canada, but the sky was clear and I think the entire Milky Way was in view.

We got to learn more about the Korea military when I hired a press assistant who had been the head of the defense press corps. His name was Park Seung Taek. Now each of these ministerial press corps was kind of a club, and at the right time of year an envelope would be passed to the head of the group and he would subdivide it among the others. I never thought he would accept my offer, but to my surprise he accepted, because he was tired of being a kept man receiving surreptitious handouts. He became an incredible source of guidance for all of us, both at USIA and at the Embassy. My previous press assistant was a wonderful man, but he decided after having worked for 15 years for us to take advantage of the preferential treatment he had earned to move his family to the U.S. The last I saw of him was in West Allis, Wisconsin where he worked for a bank. But Mr. Park introduced us to military information people who helped us in many ways, and I think was of very good use to the Pol-military officer in the embassy by just letting him know who was who in the military. I mean this was a dense population and culture to penetrate. It is like Japan; it is really an extended family.

Q: Did you, I mean, while you were there were any of the famous incidents happening, the Pueblo or the raid on the blue house.

ZUCKERMAN: No, not those events. During my years there were occasional skirmishes along the DMZ that created periods of tension, but the most memorable event by far was Nixon's trip to China. Just the announcement of his visit was stupefying to the Koreans.

Q: Did it have the same effect as the Shokku in Japan?

ZUCKERMAN: It was, oh yes. It was a shock. And although the event was being broadcast on

Korean television and our media and government information contacts could see it in their own offices, a large group accepted our invitation to come to our offices to watch it with us. Despite the fact they knew it was happening, and they understood why it was happening, they debated whether it should happen or not. When they saw Nixon step off that plane and shake hands with Chou en Lai there was a collective gasp in the room. They still could not believe what they were seeing, because we had been telling them for all these years that the Chinese represented a threat to their security. After all, they had come into Korea and we and the South Koreans and many other nations had to fight them on Korean soil. The relationship that counts most in Korean families is that of the older brother to the younger brother. They felt they were the younger brothers to us, and I don't know if the right word is betrayal, but it was a reversal of a dogma which they had come to accept as the basis of a mutual approach to world affairs. This was very hard to digest. Probably the government accepted it more easily. I think there was a lot of consultation. They had their own long term interest in China. Korea is a Sinitic culture. China still represents the mother culture, and even though they had their own and they fought to remain independent all these centuries, China was still the 600 pound gorilla in the neighborhood. I think it was in the minds of some long range thinkers in Korea that there would come a time that Korea would benefit from the kind of relationship with China that has now developed. There are huge Korean investments in China now, and Korean style is greatly popular in China, particularly among young people.

Q: You only stayed in Korea two years. Was that the normal tour?

ZUCKERMAN: No, I was supposed to stay for another two years, but my wife was unhappy with the high school. My son had taken up with some boys who were looking for trouble and finding it, and with a daughter approaching high school age as well we asked for and got permission to return to the US.

JAMES G. LOWENSTEIN
Staff of Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Washington, DC (1972)

Ambassador James G. Lowenstein was born in New Jersey in 1927. He entered the Foreign Service in 1950. His career included positions in France, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and Yugoslavia, and an ambassadorship to Luxembourg. He was interviewed by Dennis Kux in 1994.

LOWENSTEIN: We went out to Korea at one point and we were looking at what secret promises were made to the Koreans in return for their participation in Vietnam. We got off the plane and Dan O'Donohue, the Political Counselor at the Embassy, said, "Phil Habib wants to see you two guys right away." We said, "It has been a long flight. Can we go to the hotel and change?" "No, he wants to see you right away." It was about 8:00 at night. "My orders are that you are not to go anywhere until he sees you." So we went to the residence and Phil was in a dressing gown. We walked in and he said, "I want to tell you two guys something." We had both known him quite well. "I don't care what you find out here. You are not going to find out anything that I don't

know about. You are not going to find out anything that I don't know a lot better than anybody else you are finding it out from. And you are not going to reach any conclusions out here that I haven't reached a long time ago. So, you can do whatever you like, but my advice to you is check with me when you finish because you are not going to get anyplace that I haven't already been to."

Well, only from Phil Habib would the two of us take that. I must say, he was absolutely right. He was somebody who really did know what was going on in every respect. There were a few things that we found out that he hadn't told anybody, but he had done that on purpose, not by accident. It is just an amusing sidelight on the way Phil Habib operated. He said, "I didn't even want you going to the hotel and talking to the maid before I got hold of you."

NORMAN W. GETSINGER
Commercial Counselor
Seoul (1972-1974)

Norman W. Getsinger was born in Michigan in 1919. He graduated with a BA from Harvard University in 1941, and served in the U.S. Navy overseas from 1941 to 1946 as a lieutenant overseas. His assignments abroad have included Cairo, Rome, Taijung, Taipei, Ankara, Seoul, and Hong Kong. Mr. Getstinger was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: What was your job in Korea?

GETSINGER: I was the commercial counselor. I was very proud that I had chosen the commercial track. Rising through the Foreign Service to be the commercial counselor in Korea was a wonderful job for me, and I was working with Phil Habib as my ambassador.

Q: What was the situation like in Korea, when you arrived there in 1972?

GETSINGER: Of course, we had Korea as a client country. We had come in and we had saved them from the communists, and rolled them back to the 57th parallel. The Koreans were duly grateful. So, it was our job to try and build back Korea, economically, politically, socially. It was a terribly broken country. It was broken like very few countries have been. As you remember, the Korean war went down to the Yuseon perimeters, and back, and over to Seoul, and then back to Seoul, and back again. It was all busted up. We were going to put it back together. We had learned how to do this pretty well, because we had done some of this in Taiwan. I happened to be in Taiwan when we were putting Taiwan back together. Actually, what we were doing is helping to build the Korean tiger. We did it very well.

Q: Well, when you got to Korea in 1972, how were relations at that time? How were relations at that time? Any problems?

GETSINGER: With us?

Q: Yes.

GETSINGER: Well, in Taiwan it was very much like this. Taiwan and Korea were much the same in that the embassy was really responsible for running the country. An interesting indication of that was that the embassy compound, an embassy building was attached to the central government building by the same switchboard. I could pick up the telephone on my desk and dial an extension and get the Minister of Economic Affairs. I think there are very few Foreign Service posts where the government and the embassy are on the same switchboard.

Q: How is Phil Habib as an ambassador and what was his interest in Commercial Affairs?

GETSINGER: As you well know and certainly it has come up in other interviews, he was one of the finest ambassadors we ever had. He was a crusty, outspoken guy but he was very good for commercial work. If I had a businessman and I called up the ambassador's secretary and told him I wanted to get this man in there, because he would make a good investment, I never had any problems. Phil took me with him to view various installations around the island. It was another indication to me of the fact that the commercial work and the work of the embassy have to be so closely coordinated. I don't know how anybody who wasn't the Foreign Service officer could have that close connection with his ambassador. I'm saying that now I don't think the Foreign Commercial Service, working out of the Department of Commerce, can work that way.

Q: Were there any major investments that you worked on that worked or didn't work, while you were there?

GETSINGER: I can't think of any that didn't work because by that time American companies were doing their homework pretty well. I did have some drop-ins. Commercial officers have to handle those people who just dropped into my office and said that they happened to be passing through the country and they thought they would find out what the opportunities were for American business here. Some of those went away. No major American firms had any difficulty, because we could fix the problem. That was how good our influence was there.

Q: What was your impression of the American Chamber of Commerce at the time?

GETSINGER: It was very good. It was not as strong as I wanted. I formed a U.S./Korean business council, which was a kind of joint Chamber of Commerce. One of the things we did was to organize retreats whereby American businessmen, who were into Korea and in for a long haul, would go away with Korean businessmen at the top rank and they would spend a weekend at some hot spring in Korea. The agenda would be first, the Americans speaking about what they don't like about dealing with Koreans. Then, the Koreans would come and say what their problem is in dealing with Americans. At the end of the weekend, we would do a little report. We would come a long way to bridging even those personal differences.

Q: How was the Park Chung Hee rule, from your perspective?

GETSINGER: We could see that we were working with a military dictatorship just as we could

see we were doing this in Taiwan, but it was what we had to work with. Our job, even then, was to build up a strong country to stand with us in the struggle with world communists was a motivating factor. They were bastards in a way, but they were our bastards. So, we had to work with them. It did work to the extent we built the economy, just as we did in Taiwan.

Q: Were you watching an individual's net worth? Some countries say it is \$100.00, and others its \$2,000 or something.

GETSINGER: There were large differences in Korea much more so than Taiwan. Taiwan has one of the most even income distribution levels in Asia, probably the most even, but Korea not quite so. Korea had this concept of the old families. They had been there in Korea forever, whereas in Taiwan, you had this kind of conflict between the mainland boys who came in and the Taiwanese who were there. But, it was interesting, because you were dealing with the Koreans, you were dealing with only one group. This in contrast to my Taiwan experience, where you were dealing with two groups. You had to know whether you were talking to a Taiwanese or a mainlander. But, the Koreans were a divided nation, but not separated. Most of the successful Korean businessmen that I dealt with had been up in the north, where the industry had been. As a result of the Korean War, they were forced to go down into South Korea, which was agriculture, and build up their industry there.

Q: If you were talking, at that time, to an American businessman, getting ready to deal with the Koreans, what would you tell them about the Koreans?

GETSINGER: I would tell them that you will find perhaps nowhere else in Asia, a group of individuals who are eager to go the whole way toward working with you. The one thing the Koreans feared most was that the Japanese would come back in, because the Japanese had such a strong economy, and Korea was next door. So, they would come to the American businessmen and say, "I want you. I don't want your Japanese."

Q: How about corruption, payoffs?

GETSINGER: There was, of course. In Asia, it's a tradition. Korea was not so bad, as say the Philippines. It was on a par, probably a little bit more corruption than Taiwan. But, there was a lot. The way to do it, of course, you being an American businessman, was to have your Korean partner handle this side of the problem. You don't have to know where all the money goes.

Q: Was there the feeling that an American would come to you and say let the Korean take care of it because the government officials needed to be paid off, were they the people you had to deal with?

GETSINGER: At every level, from the customs official on up to the guy who provides the license or who signs off on the deal up above.

Q: How about... I can't remember the name but, it's something like Chao Ball, which were business conglomerates. Could you describe how they worked and their importance at that time?

GETSINGER: They were so important that you could have, and the ambassador sometimes did, a dozen of these people over. You had a major part of the Korean economy sitting around your table. When the ambassador wanted to press on about how things were going, that is exactly what he would do.

Q: Was there concern over Korean business practices, the American market at that time?

GETSINGER: You mean Korean businesses in America?

Q: Yes.

GETSINGER: No, at the time I was there, they were just getting started in coming toward the American market, but you could see them coming. They were beautifully organized. They did the same thing that they did in Taiwan. They set up industrial parks and technical centers. They were training all of their engineers in the technologies necessary to come along to the then dawning information age, which they now are an important feature of.

Q: One of the things I noticed with the Koreans was that, particularly at middle management, the Korean middle manager would be told to go get this contract or collect some money or something. He was in deep trouble if he didn't do it, so it meant the Koreans were, from an American business point of view, terribly aggressive about things. They wouldn't take no for an answer.

GETSINGER: Yes. This is the amazing thing about the Koreans over the other businessmen in East Asia, or the Filipinos. The Koreans are direct.

Because corruption was gift giving and the individual relationship was so important, it was hard for me, as the Commercial Officer, to fend off little presents that kept flooding into me. They would be handed to me in envelopes with cash in them. There would be deliveries to this little house I was living in. There were ladies who were presented to me. They could not understand where I had the influence, and I could help them. They did get to where they wanted to go, and why couldn't I, just between friends, accept the gifts. So, I kept busy in keeping track of what I was getting so that I could be sure that the record was clear.

Q: I spent three years as consul general. So, you can imagine. We had visas to give out. Young ladies would end up in my office for some reason.

Was there much of a Korean business community in the United States at this time?

GETSINGER: Yes, the Koreans were very conscience of trade balance. When they saw that Taiwan had sent a purchasing mission to the United States, they came to me and said, "We want to organize the purchasing mission." They went over and ended up signing a whole bunch of contracts to try and even out the imbalance which was definitely going to arrive. One thing I should say is... When were you in Korea?

Q: I was there from 1976 to 1979.

GETSINGER: Oh, later. The American military presence was so prevalent in Korea that you or anybody working in the embassy was really working in and through and around a military umbrella. We, in a sense, represented the occupation of Korea. But, it was good for Foreign Service officers to be there with this kind of assistance because we had a marvelous military hospital. We had schools, bowling alleys, golf courses, everything. But, it was evident that this heavy a U.S. military presence grated on the Koreans, especially the students, who didn't like to see these GIs going around with their girls. I am amazed it has continued, Stu, as it has to this day, with as little difficulty as there has been.

Q: We have had problems, but basically, we can thank our friends to the north for that. Every thinking Korean knows that within 30 miles, there were 50 well-armed divisions, particularly in those days. Today those divisions are beginning to rust and it caused a lot of damage.

GETSINGER: When we were there, they were digging these tunnels.

Q: In those days, there was a real threat.

GETSINGER: When business was finished and businessmen wanted to go up to the DMC, we would go out there. We would look through the binoculars and see the North Koreans looking through their binoculars, down into our binoculars. But, you look at that wasteland out there and think about what that peninsula would have been like if the South Koreans had lost the war. We would all be one horrible hermit kingdom.

Q: There was a phenomenon that really is true in a lot of countries, where college students were in a sort of permanent state of rebellion. But, each year, their leaders of the rebellion would move into industry, and get out of the other side of the barricades with no difficulty whatsoever.

GETSINGER: We, of course, are trapped in the embassy. We can't spend time testing the temperature of the student movement, and we can't hob knob with the students. They were, thank goodness, a force that eventually brought about a change in the policy there.

Q: You were there during the Nixon administration. One of his strengths was in the southern American states, which in those days were full of textile industry. Did the textiles ring heavily with you?

GETSINGER: Very much. It was easy to see why the Koreans could beat everybody else in the textile market or into the semiconductor market, or anything that they went into. You would go into a Korean factory, (I'm speaking of the semiconductor factory) you would see these great lines of girls lined up at their machines. The intensity with which they attacked their work made you almost feel that you were in a temple, where people were worshiping. They were worshiping at their machines, because this was their life, and they were completely devoted to it.

Q: I think at one time, around this time, it was almost a 54-hour work week.

GETSINGER: Then, they would go home to their dormitory, after having a company meal.

Q: Were the American firms or the embassy concerned about working conditions?

GETSINGER: Sure, we were, but we had to, of course, approach it gradually. We had the work in the pocket of the Koreans, who were our partners.

Q: Were the American firms, or you all, talking to the economic leaders and telling them that for the future, these working conditions really should be made better?

GETSINGER: We did. Of course, we tried. That was one of the things that came up for discussion when we had these retreats when the Americans would sit down with the Koreans, and we would say, "Your labor standards are so low." They would say, "Well, we are a broken country that is coming back from a terrible war. We have to do what we have to do in order to lift ourselves."

Q: Were you getting the feeling, as I did when I came there three or four years later, that the Koreans were on a winning streak, as far as economic? It was very apparent, by the time I was there, 1976 to 1979, that the standard of living was going up all the time. Park Chung Hee had made some right decisions. He had not starved the farmers in order to feed the city, but was bringing the farmers up at the same rate as the city factory workers. There was a great feeling that they were on their way.

GETSINGER: Absolutely. Citizens of the country and most of the people we were dealing with have been part of the Korean War, inevitably. They had been refugees. They had seen their cities destroyed and certainly they were coming back. They had this determination, I think, that only comes from having suffered as badly as they did.

Q: By the time you were there, were you noticing an impact of Koreans who had gone to the United States, gotten graduate degrees and come back, particularly in technical fields, but in economic fields? Was that apparent at that time?

GETSINGER: Yes, it was. Not as much as Taiwan, but certainly a strong presence there.

Q: Speaking about the government and the business leaders, were they looking at Taiwan, going over there and using Taiwan as a model, thinking they were a generation ahead of them, or something like that?

GETSINGER: I didn't detect any of that. I have a feeling that when you look at the geographical location, there is Japan in between, and the Koreans who have had so many of the problems with the Japanese, this was their concern. That it was hard for them to think beyond that group of Japanese islands, down into where Taiwan was. Chiang Kai-shek was willing to send troops up to fight in the Korean War. Of course, we had to cancel that. We told them to stay home and take care of the boys on the other side of the street.

Q: How much of a threat were the North Koreans felt to be at the time you were there?

GETSINGER: I think everybody felt the threat who made that little trip from Seoul up to the DMZ, and who looked around them at the way the ruins were still visible, and they were building on them. It was the presence of the American troops over there that gave them the reassurance. Do you remember, I think, it was Jimmy Carter, who at one point, had talked about thinning out our troops?

Q: He was talking about withdrawing the second division. In fact, I was there when he came in. It scared the life out of everybody, including us.

GETSINGER: The Japanese, and Taiwan, and everybody else.

Q: Was Park Chung Hee a presence in commercial activities, promoting/dealing, or was he not interested?

GETSINGER: He was active only on the very big deals. Then, you got the idea from the Minister of Finance Service, Minister of Economic Affairs, that this would require the troops of the blue house. The blue house was at the end of the street, there. It would be kicked up that high, but it had to be a big deal.

Q: There were two major incidents that happened, but I'm not sure when. One was the Pueblo capture. Did that happen during your time?

GETSINGER: That was after.

Q: That was after?

GETSINGER: I think so.

Q: The attack on the blue house was later?

GETSINGER: That's later.

DAVID T. JONES
Korea Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Washington, DC (1972-1974)

David T. Jones was born in Pennsylvania in 1941. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army overseas from 1964-1966. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1968, his postings abroad included Paris, Brussels, Geneva, and Ottawa. Mr. Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: From '72-'74, you were in INR. What was the situation in Korea?

JONES: This was the period in which Park Chung Hee moved to take full control of the government and the society again. There was a time until then when there had been the expectation by some, perhaps the hope by others, that he would step down and allow if not a restoration of democracy, perhaps more of a general switch of leadership. People were hoping that this would be the beginning of a slow transition from direct or slightly indirect military rule into a functioning democracy in Korea. Phil Habib was the ambassador in Korea. Obviously, we were disappointed. It did not happen. This was also a period of time in which we were concerned as we had been regularly every couple of years that the North Koreans were going to invade. This was also the period of the surprise '73 war in the Middle East. We extrapolated the concerns of a surprise attack, the Egyptians and others in the Middle East, into the potential for a surprise attack in Korea from the North. Here at the time, the military balance was still one in which we were not at all convinced that the North could not successfully attack the South. The North and South in military terms still seemed to be pretty closely balanced. The North also had a good deal of support both from China and Russia. It looked as if they were very effectively balancing off the Chinese against the Russians for an increasing level of support to them. Pyongyang would ultimately play its Beijing and its Moscow cards. At that time, Russia and China were themselves in intense political conflict. This was still at that point where countries played off the United States and the Soviets against each other could find ways to get more support. Here the North Koreans played one communist country off against the other. Pyongyang was able to do that.

This was also a period in which Kim Tae Jong was kidnapped. The kidnapping came at a time when we were unclear just to what degree the South Korean government was willing to interfere with its own citizenry. I'll say again that, in this juncture, I made a mistake. I was a poor judge of whether the South Koreans would have directly involved themselves in seizing Kim Tae Jong. I thought that it had been some other group that had done it rather than the representatives of the South Korean government. The North had done some of this kidnapping previously. I thought the North Koreans had been involved in the kidnap and seizure of Kim Tae Jong. But it turned out otherwise.

Q: What sort of information were we getting out of North Korea? Was this part of your province?

JONES: Yes. Frankly, much of the information we were getting was lousy. Let's say it was extremely limited information. I spent a great deal of time reading the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS] transcripts to try to get some sort of insight as to what the North Korean leadership and society was doing and how it was operating. It was largely regarded as the most closed society in the world at that time. An alternative might have been placed in Albania. It was certainly one of the most difficult areas to get any specific information on at all. We had very, very rare reporting from neutrals of one sort or another who might have visited the North. So, the information that we had would largely be regarded as sensitive intelligence type information. I suspect it remains sensitive intelligence. But the best of our information was very limited information. It resulted in us creating constructs where we had to lean always on the worst case. Most of the information that we obtained was military-oriented in one shape or form. This was the most collectible information. We simply had nothing other than what the North Koreans wanted to provide to us directly from their publications to determine what the society

was doing.

Q: One of the mindsets that was around about Korea was that Park Chung Hee is a dictator, there should be more democracy, but at the same time, Park Chung Hee was doing a remarkable job economically in taking what used to be considered a basket case and turning it into a real dynamo of energy, and that the Koreans were often called the Irish of the Orient, the idea being that if they ever got a democracy, they would be basically rather weak and divided and it might give an opportunity for the North. Was that in play at all then?

JONES: I would say the first part of your comment is accurate. There was serious discussion as to whether we should attempt to reverse Park's reaffirmation of power when he did so. Phil Habib was inclined to try to do more, more pressure, more direct and public U.S. pressure rather than the degree of public dissatisfaction that we evinced, but we never suggested that we would withdraw or reduce our military presence or our military support on the degree and level that we did subsequently in Greece. The sense remained that the stakes were still so high in Korea and that the North was so potentially threatening or that the fear that there would be a renewal of the war whether the North could win or not that we would not risk reducing our support. The potential for war by miscalculation on the part of the North was another unknown. We had no idea what the North was thinking. Since we didn't know what they knew, and we knew we didn't know what they knew, that meant that they could be thinking of anything. Their rhetoric remained very aggressive, very confrontational, very much a stimulus to worst case thinking. So, there was the fear that if we implied that our commitment to South Korea was less, we would be in the position of duplicating the hideous mistake that we had made in 1950. If then by miscalculation in this manner, we forced ourselves into Korean war reviviscus (renewed), it really would be a catastrophe, not that we didn't believe that we couldn't ultimately win that kind of a war. It was just that the costs involved in winning that type of a war would be significantly higher than we wanted to pay for the potential objective of pushing Park out even if we could - and there was no assurance that we could by upping the pressure on Park force him to reverse his decision to retain power. So, with the stakes as high as they were on the downside, as low as they were on the potential for success, and as unclear as to what the result would be if we did stimulate his departure, the conclusion was that we should make the better of a bad case.

There was no question in my view that South Korea was steadily improving itself. This was one of the areas that has interested me throughout my career in which I've had a couple of Korean experiences. I still follow the society and the operations there tangentially at least. This was an occasion of relatively short remove from my first experience, which was in 1965. Here I am, back in 1972, so I am still pretty close to it. In 1971/'72, I could tell from the statistics that Korea was really beginning to pull itself up by the bootstraps in the way that I suggested in some of my earlier comments. The society and the economics were working. I did not have the opportunity to make a visit to Korea during '71-'72. I regret this, but this was not when they had any money to send INR officers out to their regions. But I could see that things were clearly getting better. Park had made certain decisions actually against the recommendations of the economists such as building a superhighway from Seoul to the south where others had suggested that there were much more effective ways to spend his money than the ways in which they did. But the combination still of very heavy U.S. economic and military assistance plus Korean natural willingness to work extremely hard, to be entrepreneurial and to defer consumption, resulted in

spending a good 20 years plus in building a society that economically has been quite successful. Park was one of the people that pushed, led, directed, helped set up a society, and an economy, that with all of its many flaws (which an economist could happily point out to you) nevertheless clearly was starting to move the South ahead of the North. There were people in the mid-late '60s and the early '70s looking at North and South and saying that the North had the better of the potential economies, the better of the natural resources, the better of the hydroelectric power. There was the belief that its population was going to give it certain advantages while the South, which was primarily a rice growing agricultural area that had been substantially destroyed, and which had very limited natural resources was going to have worse problems. What was it going to do with all of these people and its limited opportunities?

I don't remember myself spending any time on the South Korean domestic politics as it might have been in a post-Park Chung Hee government. That was something that we just weren't reviewing or analyzing or working on at all. What I seemed to do was to spend a great deal of time writing, rewriting, and rewriting again material in INR which seemed to combine the worst of academic writing with the most labyrinthian, convoluted, and infighting directed aspects of the Department of State. You realize only in retrospect that INR is a place where they put young officers who don't know any better and old officers who don't have much of a future.

Q: What was the role of INR with policy? Was there any policy that could be changed at this time?

JONES: Of course, that was part of the problem of INR and it still remains part of the problem of INR that it has very little policy effect. As a young officer – and I'll never say that I was a particularly bureaucratically savvy officer – I did not realize how little effect INR had. I was still more academically inclined than operationally directed. With the exception of two years in Paris, my career had been an academic one. I was still interested in a Ph.D. I still had some abstract theoretical thought of teaching at a university. I looked upon INR as the State Department's research arm, the State Department's academic element. If I got a particular aspect of understanding of the academics versus operations in government, it was a recognition, at this point, that the academics have a substantially limited knowledge of what was or has happened and they are always a substantial amount, months if not years, behind the reality of what is happening. Nevertheless, it took me a while to realize that INR's influence on what is actually happening at policy levels is very, very limited. It's a function of the fact that the expertise and the immediate knowledge is usually on the desks. That is where senior policy levels are going to draw their recommendations, draw their most pertinent policy related papers. If you are a semi-academic, yes, you could write in INR. But the number of people in INR who at that time had very little knowledge of the areas in which they were operating and attempting to be and claiming to be experts was much higher than those who had had substantial or relatively recent experience in the field who were assigned to INR. The people with the expertise who had gone back and forth to the country were the people on the desk.

What I slowly got myself into doing was providing more support for the specific Korea desk officer and working with them, a man by the name of Don Ranard. Don was a very smart, tough, old Korea hand.

Q: He had a very strong point of view opposed to Park Chung Hee.

JONES: Yes. Ranard ran the Korea desk at the time when I was the Korea analyst for INR. He repeatedly called in South Korean representatives and told them in no uncertain terms that their activities with Koreans living in the United States were unacceptable.

Ranard was very professional. He was supported by another officer who went on to do work in UN affairs by the name of Wesley Kriebel. I've lost touch with Kriebel a long time ago, but he also had Korean experience, although he was doing more Korean economic work at that time.

Q: Ranard was objecting to the activities of what was known as the KCIA, the Korean CIA.

JONES: We were also very interested in the activities of Kim Chong Pil [KCP], who was a close American contact in Korea and who continued to give us a wide variety of insight as to what was happening, in his view at least, in Korean society and Korean politics at that point. We got a great deal of information that seemed to be sourced from very senior Korean officials during that period. But beyond that, there isn't a great deal. We spent more time worried about and analyzing to the extent that we could what was happening in North Korea.

Q: Did we see the opening with China which happened around this time as changing the equation?

JONES: Only in retrospect, only to the extent that we began to wonder whether Chinese support for Korea might be lessening a little bit, whether the Chinese themselves were also perhaps putting a little bit of a rein on what Pyongyang was able to do. There was some suggestion that the South Koreans might be slowly beginning to open lines of contact with China that previously they had had no opportunity to do. We were keeping careful track of the countries with which North Korea and South Korea had diplomatic contact and diplomatic relationships, trying to push the South Korean case forward and detract from the North Korean case with countries of this nature. That was one of the ongoing projects that INR studied and handled on a month to month basis and on which I put out regular reports.

One of the things that we were interested in was an opportunity for China and South Korea to reach some level of contact. There were the beginnings at this point of meetings, usually always in some third country, that suggested the beginnings of indirect contact or a lessening of axiomatic hostility, ideologically driven, by Beijing to South Korea. The South kept tossing out lines of potential contact and implying that there were economic opportunities for China to deal with the South.

Of course, this was still tied into what type of relationship South Korea had with Taiwan, which was something that obviously would have been high on Beijing's agenda. If South Korea wanted a better relationship with Beijing, it would have to reduce its level of contact with Taiwan. I can't remember the status of it at that point, but this was one of these slowly evolving relationships.

We were also concerned about the degree of contact and how South Korea and Japan were going

to develop. South Korean and Japanese relationship was very tense. South Korea had a combination of very realistic historical animosity and ongoing competition toward Japan. Japanese continued semi-disdain connected still with a “Well, we really should do something for them” not quite noblesse oblige, but “Well, we really do have to do something for them. It’s not so much we were wrong as that the Americans keep pushing us to do something.” You had this type of a gritted teeth relationship between them where the South Koreans were always eager to take offense and play the blame game.

Q: There was also a little North Korean activity in Japan which was used against...

JONES: The North Korean group of agents and supporters.

Q: I can't remember when Park's wife was assassinated, but I think the assassin had ties to this Japanese group, which didn't help matters.

JONES: I can't remember that tie, but Park's wife's assassin was certainly North Korean directed and sponsored. The North throughout this period continued to do the wildest, most idiosyncratic kinds of assaults on the South. If you had a paranoia against what was going to happen from the North, it was well-honed paranoia. Every so often, you found one of these huge underground tunnels that had crossed under the DMZ. Later they blew up a substantial portion of the South Korean cabinet while they were in Burma. It was just astonishing action.

Q: It continues. They keep picking up these damned small submarines.

JONES: Yes. Every so often, there was something of that nature. The North had regular infiltrators that were caught. It was always a bloody, ferocious firefight in which you could say that the northern infiltrators seemed to literally be quite willing to die and to kill everybody they possibly could before they died. You talk about fanaticism. If the fanatic is on your side, he's wonderful. He's tremendously courageous and outrageously brave and you think he's the perfect soldier. If he's on the other side, he's obviously a crazy, ideology driven, drug hopped up madman. Well, at the same time, if you look at it with some perspective, fanatics are also terribly courageous and you have to wonder how the society is able to motivate them to this level of activity. This was the type of person that you were getting from the North.

DANIEL A. O'DONOHUE
Political Counselor
Seoul (1972-1974)

Ambassador Daniel A. O'Donohue was born in Michigan in 1931. He received a BS from the University of Detroit in 1953 and an MPA in 1958 from Wayne State University. He served overseas in the US Army from 1953 to 1955 and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. His assignments abroad include Genoa, Seoul, Accra and Bangkok, with ambassadorships to Burma and Thailand. Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed Ambassador O'Donohue in 1996.

Q: You were in South Korea from 1972 to 1974.

O'DONOHUE: There was a Political Counselor in Seoul when I arrived. It's fair to say that we had a mutually uncomfortable relationship.

Q: Who was it?

O'DONOHUE: Dick Peters. It was an uncomfortable relationship in the sense that I was obviously Ambassador Habib's protégé. The Ambassador was almost visibly waiting for Dick Peters' tour to end. However, Habib handled this in a nice way.

Since I had been in South Korea previously and knew a large number of people, Dick Peters really couldn't ride herd on me. I don't think that he was the most likable or effective of supervisors. This showed up in his desire for control, and one person whom he couldn't control was me. However, looking at this relationship from Peters' perspective, you have to appreciate his position. At the end of almost every day, one way or the other, Habib and I would just sit around and talk. For my part, it's fair to say, I never talked to Habib about my relationship with Dick Peters. I talked about business with Habib. I didn't feel that it was proper for me to talk about relationships within the Political Section. In that sense, whether Dick Peters knew that, or had the confidence to believe it.

When Phil Habib came back to the Department as Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs in 1974, Dick Sneider, who had been Deputy Assistant Secretary in EA, came out to Seoul as Ambassador. Phil wanted me to come back to the Department as Office Director on the Korean desk. Dick Sneider had always seen himself as being in "competition" with Phil Habib, although Habib did not see himself as being in competition with Sneider. I think that Dick Sneider would have been happy if I had stayed on in Seoul. However, I thought that he would fret too much about having a Political Counselor whose ties were so strongly to the Assistant Secretary, with whom he had an abrasive relationship.

Q: Well, Dick Sneider was a very forceful person.

O'DONOHUE: He was. But, as I said, I think that Dick would have been delighted if I had stayed on in Seoul for a longer time. However, I don't believe that he was all of that unhappy when I left. Then he had me as Office Director for Korean Affairs, and he still had to live with me! I was Office Director for two, tumultuous years, following on my two years in Seoul.

This period of time [1972-1976] was dominated by the institution of the "Yushin" [emergency situation], during which President Park led a "coup from above," followed by the establishment of a much harsher regime. There was the subsequent kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung and the assassination of Mrs. Park. There also was a breakthrough leading to South Korea's dealing directly with North Korea. At the time this seemed a very hopeful development. The Korean CIA chief Yi Hu-rak, negotiated this secret agreement which led to the direct, North-South talks.

This was really a spectacularly busy period. It was a period in which we again saw the re-

emergence of major tensions. There certainly were governmental tensions, but the US Government in general and Secretary of State Kissinger in particular were not tremendously caught up with human rights issues. The US Government was forced into a position which the State Department's Seventh Floor leadership was uncomfortable with, for a variety of reasons. Phil Habib managed this period of tension brilliantly and played a very active role.

Q: At this point [1974] you had been gone from South Korea since 1964. Did you sense a difference in the "spirit of South Korea, "both how things were done, and then the military and the economy?

O'DONOHUE: There were significant differences. First of all, the economic development was mind-boggling. This hit me first in 1968, when I came back to South Korea at the time of the PUEBLO incident, some four years after I had left the Embassy in 1964. There had been an immense, physical change in Seoul, and this was continuing. South Korea was a country in terms of the economy and infrastructure, which was a universe away from what it had been, when I arrived in Seoul in 1960--and even in 1964, when there were only the beginnings of this enormous change. So that was different.

For better or worse, and I think that, on balance, it worked out well in the 1960's, there was a settled, authoritarian regime, but with enough room for people to breathe. In the 1960's, under President Park, there were all of these economic improvements which colored everything. There was a sense that this was a framework that was going to last for a while. Park had brought in, not so much a military government, but one in which civilians had found their role.

In the 1970's there were very significant tensions, essentially deriving from the 1971 presidential election, in which Kim Dae Jung had emerged, had run a race, and had always claimed that it had been stolen from him. He may even have been right. Whatever the facts, here was a relatively unknown politician who had, on the face of it, almost beaten Park Chung Hee. From then on until--who knows, maybe even now--Kim Dae Jung has been the "indigestible element" in the South Korean political dynamic. This is not a criticism of him. In effect, what happened after the 1971 election, and certainly what "drove" Park toward this "Yushin" or heavily authoritarian regime was concern over Kim Dae Jung as a Democratic political rival.

Q: The "Yushin" was the Korean term for a political revitalization.

O'DONOHUE: It was a "coup from above" to restructure the political system and core political institutions. Park already had an authoritarian structure, which was sufficient for his purposes. The drive for more power was really driven by the fact that here was Kim Dae Jung, who posed such a threat to Park. Park believed that the other politicians in the country could be bought off or scared into submission. They weren't a problem. However, Kim Dae Jung was a very different element.

Because of Kim Dae Jung, President Park first, through political manipulation, bribes, and all of that, was able to use elements of Kim's opposition party to split it. Kim Dae Jung did not control the opposition party. It was really controlled by people who were oppositionists because of the economic benefits which this stance brought them. Park had done that. Then he struck, suddenly

imposing the Yushin regime, with attendant arrests and repression. We had a little warning about Park's move, but not much. Of course, Park clamped on martial law. Kim Dae Jung was out of the country at the time. Park set about creating a situation which was politically much more repressive. He strengthened his own arbitrary powers.

The Office Director for Korean Affairs at that time was Don Ranard. I think that Robert Ingersoll might have been Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs at that point [in 1974]. Don Ranard had a very deep and emotional commitment on human rights which had grown from the time of his experiences with the first coup that brought Park Chung Hee into office.

Ambassador Phil Habib was a man who had a keen sense of what you could accomplish. Although Phil always was a democrat, in the end he took what the situation gave him. He didn't tilt at windmills. On first acquaintance with individuals he was always "ferocious." He never took what was given him in terms of actual impressions of people. In a political sense he took what he could, but his whole thrust was that South Korea would be a better place with a democratic system. This didn't mean that he didn't work with Park. Indeed, in that framework, it meant that he did what he could do to push Park towards a more liberal, less harsh regime.

Q: What was the feeling toward Habib? This is something that I picked up even later. I'm putting this in my own words to you. I understood that Habib felt that the Koreans were the "Irish of the Orient." That is, a rather pugnacious people who "couldn't get their act together." If there was a democracy in South Korea, it would be a disaster--not completely, but I mean that it wouldn't work well. Did Phil Habib have that feeling?

O'DONOHUE: I can't say that the South Koreans could "never" get their act together. If you look at the thread of American policy toward South Korea from 1945 on, essentially it has reflected an effort to create a viable, democratic, institutional framework. This policy has always been based on the assumption that, first, this objective is not easy to attain and, secondly, that there is always the security aspect.

For example, I think that it was clear that we didn't think that Syngman Rhee was the man we wanted to lead his country. However, he did lead his country, and we had to accept that. I think that, over the years during the Rhee period, the State Department wanted to be firmer with the Republic of Korea. The American military and other agencies said, in effect, "No, we have other interests." During the period 1961-1963, when Park Chung Hee was initially President of South Korea, our policy toward South Korea was initially colored, as I said earlier, by the Kennedy administration's concern about another "fiasco" after the "Bay of Pigs" episode in Cuba [in 1961]. Nonetheless during that period, the thrust of US policy toward South Korea was that the South Koreans had to establish a civilian, more democratic framework. That didn't mean that Park had to leave office. However, the 1961 post-coup environment was threatening both military and political stability, creating military and political factional crises.

I don't think that there's ever been a time when American policy toward South Korea favored a "harsher" rather than a "less harsh" regime. However, our outlook has always been tempered by what we had to deal with. In fact, if you look at the Korean people, their outlook has been measured by the same outlook. My view has always been that, in the end, the Korean people

always tended to choose stability and security over instability. Nonetheless, they have always wanted a freer political institutional framework.

During this whole period Don Ranard, with some differences from the emotional point of view, actually kept United States policy toward South Korea visibly one of support for freer institutions, tempered with concern for the security situation. I think that Secretary of State Kissinger was annoyed with those serving under him, not because he wanted a “harsher” system in South Korea, but rather because he saw tinkering with other political agencies as a fatal, American failing. He was always accusing his Foreign Service Officers of being “political scientists.”

For the first time we also had North-South talks going on. Park is a supreme realist. During the 1971 presidential campaign Kim Dae Jung was the first South Korean figure to bring up the view that South Korea was confident and strong enough to deal with North Korea. He expressed the view that South Korea should accept the existence of North Korea. Park initially attacked this view but then very quickly afterwards embarked on his own policy of opening up secret talks with North Korea. Also, that became clear when South Korea adopted its own and opposite version of the “Hallstein Policy.” In this context it meant moving toward mutual contacts and recognition. All of this followed the 1971 presidential elections.

In my mind Kim Dae Jung has been the only imaginative South Korean civilian politician in recent history. He was the first publicly to view mutual recognition of the two Koreas, not so much in terms of conceding anything to North Korea but in stating that South Korea was strong and effective enough to deal with North Korea.

Q Just for the record, since you mentioned the “Hallstein Doctrine,” I might just say that the view of the Federal Republic of Germany, up to the 1960’s, was that any country which recognized East Germany would lose any aid from West Germany. In this context West Germany had a lot more “goodies” to offer than East Germany. In other words, it meant, “Either you or me, but not both of us.” This was what you were referring to.

O’DONOHUE: So there was a variety of policy threads. It is probably true that the prospect of dealing with North Korea also figured in Park’s decision to establish more authoritarian rule. He wanted to have the firmest control he could have in South Korea. However, I think that the major factor was that running against Kim Dae Jung in the 1971 presidential elections had been a very unsettling experience for Park.

Then, in the midst of this period, which already had its own difficulties, Frank Underhill, the DCM, received a phone call one evening from Tom Shoesmith, the DCM in Tokyo. At the time Frank and I were having a meeting at around 6:00 PM. Shoesmith reported that Kim Dae Jung had been kidnapped from his hotel in Tokyo. This was a bombshell.

Ambassador Habib was superb in dealing with this matter. Don Gregg was the CIA Chief of Station in Seoul. Habib got on the phone to the US military and got Don Gregg to check in on the intelligence side. He had me contact a couple of the major South Korean political figures, including Bud Han to get a message to Kim Jong Pil, the Prime Minister of South Korea at that

time. In succeeding days we and the Japanese put immense pressure on the South Koreans. The South Koreans started out, saying that “It wasn’t us” who had kidnapped Kim Dae Jung. Habib’s instructions to us were, “Don’t argue that point. Just tell them one thing. Kim Dae Jung cannot be harmed. Don’t get into any arguments about whether the South Korean authorities kidnapped him or not. We know that they did it. There is the one message: “He cannot be harmed.”” This pressure was unrelenting.

The Japanese did the same thing in Seoul. We worked very closely with them. We put immense pressure on the South Koreans, throughout the whole governmental structure. Park, who had to have approved the kidnapping, working through the Korean CIA, was also feeling pressure coming from major South Korean political leaders. We weren’t limiting our pressure just to Park.

As a result of that pressure and Phil Habib’s efforts, Park and his supporters were left with the prospect of a major crisis between South Korea, on the one hand, and the US and Japan, on the other. Now, whether he would have had a major crisis with the Americans alone is less clear, because I think that both Ambassador Habib and Don Ranard probably...

Q: And with Secretary of State Kissinger?

O’DONOHUE: No, I think that once the pressure began to be mounted, there was nothing that he could turn off. I do not know whether a more cautious Ambassador than Phil Habib would have done what Habib did. It was interesting.

Q: Obviously, you were hitting your contacts. What were they saying about it?

O’DONOHUE: They were appalled. None of them knew about it. It was essentially an operation of the Korean CIA. Park must have approved it. The South Korean political figures knew nothing about it. I couldn’t reach Kim Jong Pil, the Prime Minister. I had to see Bud Han, his principal assistant. He was just dumbfounded. They could believe that the Korean CIA did it. They couldn’t comprehend why it was done. So the resonance of this affair among all of those outside of those involved in the kidnapping was very strong. So I’m sure that this was what was happening with Park, who was subject to the same, strong pressures. Everybody was coming in, including the Americans and the Japanese. I shouldn’t say that the Japanese reacted uncharacteristically, because this had happened in Japan. Ultimately, Kim Dae Jung reappeared in Seoul but was subject to house arrest. Without a question, Ambassador Habib was the driving force in his ultimate release. The Department of State fully supported this effort. But, whether Kissinger liked it is unclear, given the fact that Habib and Ranard acted so quickly on their own.

Q: Did you ever have any chance to talk to Kim Dae Jung?

O’DONOHUE: Actually, I met Kim Dae Jung in 1960, when he was the losing candidate in an election in Mok Po, down in South Cholla province. I met him on a couple of occasions at that time. When I returned to South Korea, he had been out of the country. When he came back after the kidnapping and was under house arrest, I did not meet him. We did not attempt to meet with him when he was under house arrest. Other people, like Paul Cleveland and others, may have met him later when sensitivities eased but I never did.

Q: What was our assessment--and your assessment--of Kim Dae Jung's background and where he was going?

O'DONOHUE: Well, I always had a high regard for him. However, I felt that perceptions were too colored by what we were hearing from his political enemies. My own view of him was that he was an immensely able, charismatic politician. Indeed, I thought that he was the only truly imaginative, civilian politician that the country had. The reason that he posed a threat--and, indeed, was "indigestible" to Park--was that the South Korean establishment had no "hooks" on him. It wasn't so much that his policies were viewed as wildly "radical," nor was he wildly radical.

I don't think that he was incorruptible. I don't think that any Korean politician is incorruptible, since they always need funds for political purposes. But what "drove" him was certainly never a need for funds. As far as most of the other politicians were concerned, I could always envisage them as being manipulated. He was of sterner stuff. He may well have been "indigestible," but I have never understood the "denigrating" of him that sometimes happens. I felt that if you took 1971, when he really appeared or became a public figure, as your point of departure, it is amazing how the sequence of domestic events in South Korea for over 20 years has been driven by how to keep Kim Dae Jung from power.

He was kidnapped. Then he came out after Park was assassinated. If you took what was going on after Park died, involving Kim Jong Pil, and the others --the group that the Korean military led by Chon Du-Won later overthrew--what was driving them in that whole period was how to hold elections that Kim Dae Jung wouldn't win. Then you had the Korean military. When they took over power they moved against Kim, and the Kwangju massacre took place. This was all linked together.

Q: And still is an issue.

O'DONOHUE: The Kwangju massacre was a watershed in our own relationship with South Korea and in the South Korean perception of the United States. Among young South Koreans we have never recovered from the impression that, in some fashion, we were associated with this massacre. However, during that whole period events were driven by Kim Dae Jung. And, finally, President Roh's decision to join with Kim Yong Sam as a more predictable political partner. So Kim Dae Jung, with all of his ability, has been the one figure whom the South Korean political structure somehow has never been able to absorb. Indeed, most of the traumatic events for 25 years in South Korea, one way or another, have been related to blocking him from coming to power. It's an amazing thing.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point? I just want to put a couple of things on the end here. Next time, before we finish this 1972-1974 period in South Korea, I would like to talk about how much we knew of the "secret" talks between South and North Korea. Also, the assassination of President Park's wife, and maybe something about how you saw the South Korean media at the time. Furthermore, drawing on your experience as a Political Officer, could you describe how we "related" to the American military and our knowledge of the Korean military?

Today is August 23, 1996. Dan, would you go ahead with the subjects we mentioned at the end of the last session?

O'DONOHUE: Among the things that you had listed, let me cover the subject that will take the shortest time. That is, the South Korean media. The South Korean media were absolutely dominated and controlled by the Korean CIA and the government. At any point in time during the Park period, the media were under heavy pressure. However, in the "Yushin" period in particular, all of the various strictures and emergency measures would have applied even more heavily. In the real world, the South Korean CIA and the government kept a very close watch and exerted pressure on the media to conform.

Q: What was your feeling at the time and what you were hearing about the Korean CIA? One always thinks of the KGB [Soviet domestic and foreign intelligence organization] and the Ministry of the Interior in the Soviet Union as being a world unto itself. Was there a Korean CIA "outlook"?

O'DONOHUE: The Korean CIA was something like our American CIA, in that it engaged in and had basic responsibility for intelligence and covert action abroad, vis-a-vis North Korea. It also had the attributes of the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], in that it handled serious and sensitive domestic issues. However, beyond that, it was the operational and action arm for President Park in a variety of areas that fall into the political area. For instance, it engaged in significant fund raising by controlling bids being run by nominally, say, the Ministry of Commerce. In fact, the Korean CIA was engaged in manipulating financial events for the benefit of the government, going back much earlier than this period. This included the organization of the Korean stock market and the introduction of the first automobiles that were assembled in South Korea from Japanese components. The Korean CIA was not so much engaged in economic policy making. However, it played a major role behind the scenes in fund raising and corruption as they related to political funds collected for President Park. For his part, Park was not a man driven by money personally. Money, combined with brutality, were instruments which he used to maintain and exercise power. In both instances the Korean CIA figured as his main agent.

Beyond that, the Korean CIA had the essential responsibility for the management of elections. As I said earlier, very early on President Park and the Korean CIA learned that you did not have to have an unduly high percentage of the total vote to accomplish the objectives of winning elections and controlling parliament. Therefore, throughout this period you never had obviously manipulated 80-90% majorities in the elections. Rather, in the parliamentary elections, they saw that you only needed a vote between 30 and 40% of the total to come up with really significant majorities. Since you were going to get some of that vote anyhow, even in a fair election, they were therefore able to operate more at the margins. Throughout this whole period, South Korean elections were manifestly unfair in the sense that the opposition never had an even playing field between legal harassment, government favorites and KCIA manipulation. However, these elections were never blatantly and visibly rigged. The government didn't have to.

President Park was not a sadist. However, from the beginning Park used brutality and fear as

essential elements of his rule. Of course, the Korean CIA was the primary entity for this. For example, a professor who was too critical was pulled in and the torture applied to him led to his death. No one was “safe” from the Korean CIA. For instance, one of the most prominent businessmen of this period and a strong supporter and financial backer of the government was a man called S. K. Kim. He was a major textile manufacturer. That is, his business was originally textiles. Then, as the country boomed economically, he became a leader of one of the business conglomerates. He was very powerfully placed. When he got “too big for his britches,” he was pulled in and given a week or so of confinement and KCIA treatment. He came out a very sobered and chastened figure, indeed nearly broken.

So the Korean CIA was the operational instrument for President Park. In the management of contacts with North Korea, the Korean CIA had the policy lead under Park, as well as the operational responsibility. It handled various and sundry sensitive issues, including, for example, the kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung and others. It was also Park’s ultimate instrument for maintaining political control and manipulation of the body politic.

Q: How did you find that our CIA Chief of Station dealt with the Korean CIA, as far as you could see? Were you getting good reflections of how the Korean CIA worked? Sometimes, you get a Chief of Station who almost “gets into bed” with the intelligence agency of the country.

O’DONOHUE: I think that there was a qualitative change over time. During the first period that I was in South Korea, 1961-1964, when Park Chung Hee took power and the Korean CIA emerged, there was a sense that our CIA Station was building relationships with the Korean CIA. During my second tour in South Korea [1972-1975], particularly after the “Yushin,” the Chief of Station was trying to keep a space between the Station and the KCIA on domestic politics and cooperation in the more traditional intelligence liaison activities. The American CIA did not want to be too closely associated with the KCIA. After the Kim Dae Jung kidnapping this tendency was intensified.

During my time in South Korea, during the period from 1960-1961, up to the coup that brought Park to power, I cannot describe and don’t know the relationship of the Ambassador and the Chief of Station in our Embassy. I was just too junior an officer. It’s my recollection that Don Ranard, the chief of the Political Section, was not privy to a fair amount of intelligence on what was going on. Therefore, we did not really have a very clear perception of whatever the Chief of Station was getting on the Korean military. However, I don’t know about Marshall Green, the DCM, and Ambassador McConaughy, who should have had better access to available intelligence.

The relations between the CIA Station and the Political Section were always pretty good. I was the most junior officer during the 1960-61 period and I often dealt with the Chief of Station. There was actually quite a collegial relationship, which was true during both of my tours of duty in Seoul.

After Ambassador Berger and Phil Habib arrived in South Korea, and afterwards, when Habib was there as Ambassador, Habib always had a close relationship with the CIA Station. Even when he was Political Counselor, he very quickly emerged as the ambassador’s prime advisor

and was the peer of the Chief of Station, not secondary to him. Then, when Phil was Ambassador, he was, of course, the dominant figure. That doesn't mean that he directed the CIA Station. There were so many things going on which were really of major and basic interest. By no means did he sit over and dominate the CIA Station. He did not ignore what the Station's own agendas were. Nonetheless, he was the dominating figure and kept a firm oversight role and clear policy direction.

In terms of the South Korean domestic situation and Korean policy, certainly as Ambassador--and even as Political Counselor--Habib was very clearly the major voice in those areas, and, to a great degree, the CIA Station worked for him. As I said, that didn't mean that they didn't have a whole series of other things which Station personnel were doing. Certainly, after the kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung, Habib's disdain and contempt for the then Director of the Korean CIA was considerable. On the whole, he didn't want US entities to be associated with the Korean CIA. This had its effect. It didn't mean that contacts didn't continue. Without question Habib's views and disdain for the KCIA led to the CIA Station following Habib's lead, rather than working at cross purposes with him. The CIA Station joined vigorously in the effort led by Ambassador Habib to put pressure on the Korean leaders to save Kim Dae Jung.

Q: In the Political Section in a country like South Korea--today and always--you want to know what's going on within the South Korean military establishment. Most of South Korea's leaders have come out of the military. Even if the leaders have not come out of the military, you want to know what's fermenting in the military establishment. Of course, on the military side, we have very close relations with the South Korean military. Were you getting very much information out of the American military who were dealing with the South Korean military?

O'DONOHUE: The American military, both by training and outlook, are not going to be too much caught up in political matters. That included their contacts with the South Korean military. So we always appreciated that the American military really didn't know what was going on in terms of factions within the South Korean military. In 1960-1961 our military advice to the civilian government clearly contributed to the coup, in the sense that we wanted to keep the South Korean generals in place. We didn't want the South Korean civilian government to view the political reliability of the South Korean military establishment as its number one problem--which had been the case during the period of Syngman Rhee.

It wasn't as if there weren't reports of coup plotting. Indeed, when Park Chung Hee's coup succeeded, I think that there were at least two other coup groups preparing coups. So we were not completely unaware of this. However, during my time in the Foreign Service, the American military has never been the best source of information on the politics within the local military establishment. There have been exceptions, in that one of the lesser-known but significant figures on the American side in South Korea, from 1945 until the 1980's, was Jim Hausman. Jim had been an Army officer during World War II. He had been very much associated with the South Korean Constabulary Officers' Training School started in 1945 or '46. He probably was on active duty in the Army throughout the Korean War. Then he left the military service to become a Department of the Army civilian employee. His role in Korea has been as interlocutor or father figure to a whole generation of South Korean military officers, as well as the source of intelligence and knowledge for the CINCUNC [Commander in Chief, United Nations Command

in Korea]. He played a liaison role, half father figure, half reporting officer.

Jim stayed so long in South Korea that the officers whom he “grew up with” were men who were “pushed out” of the South Korean Army after the 1961 coup. They were the Korean War generation of senior officers. You could hardly call them “older.” But, in that job he continually cultivated officers and played his unique role for a very long period. I don’t know when he passed from the scene--whether it was in the late 1970’s or the early 1980’s. He seemed to be the major source for the book on South Korea by John Toland. It is not a very good book, but he relies heavily on Jim’s reminiscences.

Nonetheless, Jim was a significant figure who, interestingly enough, during the periods I was in South Korea, probably had warmer, closer relationships with the Embassy, particularly in the person of Phil Habib, than he did with the American military. This was simply because of personality. Jim worked for the CINCUNK. Phil Habib--first as Political Counselor and then as Ambassador--always treated Jim Hausman as a very valued friend. As a matter of fact, it was not that Jim was in constant, close touch with the Embassy per se. However, he was in close touch with Phil Habib. He was a figure who could have been a very difficult person, if he was either pursuing his own agenda or working to help the American military pursue their own agenda. In fact, Jim Hausman was always a source of information and advice and highly supportive.

His successor is named Steve Bradner who, I think, is still in South Korea. Steve had been in the Army and then had been with the Asia Foundation in 1959-1960. He went back to the United States and then returned to South Korea, where he has been for, perhaps, 30 years by now. He is a very different personality. Where Jim Hausman was a gregarious person and not an intellectual, Steve is more intense. Over time both of them have had close relationships with us--Jim Hausman with Phil and Steve with the Embassy more broadly. I don’t know what the relationships are now.

With the exception of these two men, the American military have not been particularly useful on the internal, political dynamics of the South Korean military. In times of crisis, the South Korean generals would run to American generals. At such times we would get more from the American generals on the situation.

Q: What was the effect of the assassination of Mrs. Park? Could you explain how it came about? It happened when you were there, didn't it?

O'DONOHUE: It happened while I was there, but I can't remember whether I was on leave or not. I was fairly deeply involved in it at some point but, somehow, I think that I might have been out of Seoul at the time it happened.

Madame Park's assassination was personally traumatic for President Park. Just as on other occasions, there were two aspects to his reaction. One was the profoundly personal aspect. She was a gracious woman who obviously did not figure in politics.

Q: She was not the target of the assassination. She was just "in the way," wasn't she?

O'DONOHUE: Probably. The assassin was running down the aisle and he shot.

Q: So the man who assassinated her was also running down the aisle...

O'DONOHUE: And shot her. In South Korea there are wives who play major political roles. She was not one of them--and, indeed, his family was not much involved in his military and political roles. Their son and two daughters lived very normal lives--at least this is my last recollection of them. So, in a personal sense, it was a traumatic loss for Park, which contributed to his increasing isolation, but it was not the only factor. You could look at it and see a progression throughout the "Yushin" period. Nonetheless, her assassination contributed to his isolation. The depth of his feeling was profound. In this episode the Japanese managed to be utterly insensitive.

Q: Why were the Japanese insensitive?

O'DONOHUE: Because the assassin was a Korean resident of Japan. I think that the gun used may have been Japanese made. I think, although my recollection of the event is dim on this, the gun he used may have been a Japanese Police pistol, or something like that. By no means did the Japanese provide the pistol, but nonetheless, the assassin was a resident of Japan.

In any case, the assassin was a resident of Japan. As I said, President Park, at one level, was profoundly and traumatically saddened by the murder of his wife. That was very real. However, as Park has done in other situations, he also used this tragedy as a tactical lever in terms of the South Korean-Japanese relationship. First, he felt true unhappiness and rage at Japanese insensitivity.

Q: When you say "Japanese insensitivity", what do you mean?

O'DONOHUE: I think that Dick Ericson [a Foreign Service Officer and Japan specialist] went into this. Nonetheless, the Japanese initial handling of the tragedy involved a pro forma expression of regret. You might say that it sounded something like, "Well, there go the South Koreans, shooting at each other." I have forgotten the details about the attendance at the funeral and the rest of it. However, as the matter developed, the South Koreans and Park used it in a variety of ways. First, there was a very real unhappiness. Park used this incident to bring a close to the political fallout from the Kim Dae Jung kidnapping. Secondly, Park sought to pry from the Japanese a public manifestation of regret, in effect forcing them, however uncomfortable it made them, to genuflect toward South Korea. Then, thirdly, Park used the incident to establish or re-establish various political relationships.

This was a very difficult period--one in which we played a useful role, though I wouldn't describe it as quite as dominant a role as Dick Ericson called it. Nonetheless, it was a useful role, along with other channels that were used. All of this was going on, in terms of resolving this situation. We were one of several channels being used. This was a period when we obtained a clear perception of some of the less savory Korean-Japanese relationships and channels being used, in an effort to bring the South Korean-Japanese relationship back into balance. I think that in all issues that involved President Park there was always going to be a pragmatic resolution. Park would press along a given line, but he was a supreme realist. So, in a sense, this was not a

crisis out of control. You might say that it was a crisis being controlled by Park. I don't want to create the impression that this was a man who simply manipulated his wife's death. Quite the contrary. He was profoundly affected by her death, so his rage and unhappiness were real. On the other hand, you could argue that this was also another instance where Park used this incident to benefit the interests of South Korea.

Q: Is there anything else that we should cover in connection with South Korea?

O'DONOHUE: Well, we didn't go into what the Embassy knew about the South Korean talks with North Korea. I arrived back in Seoul in 1972 shortly after the truly secret part of these talks had been completed. I think that I mentioned that the Korean CIA ran policy toward North Korea. The Red Cross representatives, in effect, took their directions from the Korean CIA and looked to them for operational directions. We were not aware of the initial contacts. However, at a certain point the South Koreans undertook to keep us informed. I doubt if we knew everything that was going on. In fact, the Korean CIA did provide us with information. Remember, Yi Hurak, the Korean CIA chief, was the chief South Korean negotiator. They kept us informed of developments as they proceeded after they ended the secret part of the talks between South and North Korea. Undoubtedly, there were conversations that we didn't know about, but I would say that we were reasonably well informed.

Q: Then you left South Korea in...?

O'DONOHUE: I left South Korea in the fall of 1974. Phil Habib had left South Korea and had become the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. Phil wanted me to come back and be Office Director for Korean Affairs. Don Ranard was retiring. Dick Sneider had arrived in Seoul as Ambassador. We overlapped a month or two. Then I went back to Washington in October or November, 1974. Don Ranard retired, and I took over as Office Director.

Q: You were in Washington this time from when to when?

O'DONOHUE: I was there from the fall of 1974 until the summer of 1976, when Phil Habib became Under Secretary for Political Affairs. I moved with him to become his Executive Assistant.

Q: During the period from 1974 to 1976, can you describe where South Korea fit in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs? We had just had the opening to China. How did South Korea fit in?

O'DONOHUE: First of all, when I arrived in Washington, Phil Habib was the Assistant Secretary. I guess that Bob Miller was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of EA for Southeast Asian Affairs. Owen Zurhellen was there at the same time. He was the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs. He also dealt with Northeast Asian Affairs, meaning that he was responsible for Japan and Korea.

At that point, and from then on, what really struck one was, of course, Vietnam. If you asked what was the dominant, operational issue, it was obviously Vietnam. This was the period after the 1973 Paris Accords. Then came the massive North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam in

1975, followed by the collapse of the South. This was a period of immense and intense focus. By the end, in 1975, it was my impression that about the only senior US Government official who had any credibility or weight on the Hill [in Congress] on Vietnam was Habib. So he was deeply enmeshed in that.

China was significant, but the Office of Chinese Affairs itself was not only very self contained but saw itself as having a direct, Seventh Floor mandate. China was a Seventh Floor issue on which Habib certainly played an operational role, but it was a secondary one. China wasn't his area. He hadn't been deeply engaged in it. China had earlier been an NSC [National Security Council] matter, so it wasn't that it didn't affect Phil Habib. However, Phil Habib was one of the "significant" figures caught up in Vietnam, which, of course, had the whole government absorbed. On China Phil had a secondary role. So the Office of Chinese Affairs was deeply engaged, and there was the whole issue of handling Taiwan. There also was a series of issues outstanding with Japan. EA was an immensely busy place at this time but Vietnam dominated.

Now essentially, in the case of Korea, Phil Habib and I managed it. There had been a series of issues that came up. One of them was "Koreagate. This was the corruption scandal, which became very absorbing as time went on. Habib was always deeply interested in Korea. Korea has always been a demanding place to work on. Nothing ever goes smoothly--there are always various and sundry crises.

Certainly, while I was on my second tour in South Korea and then back in Washington, the human rights question was becoming a major irritant. In contrast to the 1960's the missionaries and the church groups were much more active. In the "Yushin" fallout there was an unending series of issues. There were a couple of expulsions of missionaries. Congressman Don Fraser began to focus on South Korea. So, from the "Yushin" period on, human rights became a significant focus in our dealings with South Korea. This was also true in Washington for those following South Korean affairs.

During this period we had a South Korean effort to develop a nuclear capacity, which we were able to turn off. "Koreagate" also emerged, in which Phil Habib was one of the central figures, in effect blowing the whistle. He was deeply involved in that--more so than I was. By the end "Koreagate" became a nearly totally absorbing issue. Indeed, it lasted through the time he served as Under Secretary for Political Affairs. We can talk about that later. When Phil became Under Secretary, we still were deeply engaged in managing Korean- American relationships--more than we wanted to do, because the EA Bureau was so skittish in dealing with the ROK Government after "Koreagate." Those were the major issues that absorbed us on the Korea desk.

Q: When you arrived on the Korea desk and took over from Don Ranard, he had been very emotionally involved in Korea and was very anti-Park Chung Hee, as you said before. Did you find that you were engaged in "mending some fences" around Washington? Sometimes, when you have people who are emotionally involved in an issue, they turn other agencies "off.

O'DONOHUE: No. First of all, Don Ranard had been Political Counselor in Seoul when I served as a Political Officer during my first tour in South Korea. Probably, in terms of learning about political work, he was probably the best teacher that I had. I always had, not only a deep regard

for Don, but he had very significantly contributed to making me an effective officer. While I didn't have Don's emotional approach to South Korea, when we looked at South Korea, I didn't really see the various issues all that much differently than he did. Nor did Phil Habib. It was a case of operating within a sense of what we could accomplish and also bearing in mind that there were other aspects that we would have to weigh, most notably the security relationship. So I didn't come onto the desk with the intention of "reversing" the position which Don Ranard had. The same thing was true of Phil Habib.

As Office Director, for instance, on some issues such as our military presence and so forth, Don Ranard was probably less ready than either Habib or I was to consider a change. That was the situation at first. It was not dramatically different, either in what we were doing--my views or his views. Remember, he worked well with Phil Habib. As I said, in some areas affecting Korean-American contacts, Don originally did not have much different a view of the importance of the security relationship. In some ways he was more conservative and rigid than Habib or I about what kind of a military presence we should have in South Korea.

Once Don Ranard left the desk, his views on this changed. You could say that human rights being changed into one of the issues on our agenda, rather than being the emotionally dominating issue, as it had been under Don Ranard. I always had deep respect for Don Ranard and felt that he was very poorly treated in 1961 after the coup, by the Department and the Foreign Service as an institution.

Q: You mentioned human rights. From the perspective of the Korea desk, how were you involved in matters of human rights? Could you give some examples?

O'DONOHUE: My memory for details has somewhat faded. Essentially, though, we had the major responsibility, although by no means the only player on human rights. This essentially meant we maneuvered as best we could given the attitude of Secretary of State Kissinger, who did not want us to be deeply engaged in South Korean domestic affairs. We dealt constantly with the various human rights groups in the US

Q: With Amnesty International?

O'DONOHUE: Less so. It was Ferris Harvey and the Christian Korea-focused organizations. We were inevitably the action office on any action we were going to take from the Washington end. We had a situation where the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs was as personally interested as I was. Phil Habib was equally the focus for action, since many of these people knew him. Phil, by his nature, had his door open to everyone. So Habib was at least as deeply engaged, and Habib and I saw things exactly the same way. That is, we did all that we could, within the framework within which we were operating. Also, we weren't going to "pull down" the Korean-American security relationship. In the first place, we didn't have the power to do that and security(?) saw that relationship as essential.

One has to say that Secretary of State Kissinger had great respect for Phil Habib. Therefore, Habib was probably able to do more on human rights than Kissinger was probably comfortable with. And Kissinger let Habib do this. However, Habib, from his point of view, realized that you

always have to show that what you were doing made sense in terms of “real world objectives.” This meant that you always had to have a reason when you pressed for something. It couldn’t simply be in pursuit of a broad, human rights issue. Your approach had to be, “Look, we’ve got to deal with this because of, let’s say, Congressional pressure.” Habib’s basic motivation, particularly at the personal level, was always very human and very humane.

Also, Ambassador Dick Sneider in Seoul was very uncomfortable with human rights issues. First of all, Dick didn’t know Korea in the personal sense as Habib did. Habib had been there twice and knew a large number of people. In the end Dick wasn’t going to affect his ROK government relationships by pressing on human rights issues. When Dick Sneider arrived in Seoul as Ambassador, he first spent his time becoming comfortable with the issues. Secondly, he saw himself in a more traditional sense as focused on the power structure in South Korea. He saw the human rights issue as a complication. Thirdly, I think, he found it uncomfortable to deal with human rights activists. He had no particular warmth for the opposition spectrum, whether the political oppositionists, the missionaries, and others. I hate to use the word “respect” in this regard. However, in Dick Sneider’s view, this spectrum was not very impressive. For Dick, human rights were a problem which had to be managed as gingerly as possible. He was blessed to have Paul Cleveland on his staff, who always did far better with the human rights issue.

Q: Was Cleveland the Political Counselor?

O’DONOHUE: Paul was not Political Counselor at first. Ed Hurwitz was Political Counselor. Then Ed left, and Paul replaced him. Paul had a very close relationship with Dick Sneider. Paul was much more active, gregarious, and friendly. He had been in Seoul when we were very active. So, as the Deputy Chief of the Political Section under me, Paul had both exposure to my contacts and developed his own range of contacts. So Paul WAS comfortable in Seoul.

So Dick Sneider was uncomfortable with the human rights issue. He saw it in terms of how to manage the matter tactically, while Phil Habib always saw tactics in terms of an objective, such as how to save somebody, or mitigate the ROK government’s harshness if you could, although, in some cases, you might not be able to.

That difference was a complication which I don’t think affected any major policies. However, this difference was part of the tensions between Habib and Sneider, which were clearly evident.

Q: At this time the role of Congress was very important. In the eyes of many people Congress had “cut South Vietnam off at the knees.” If you look at it from one perspective, promises had been made about a given level of support for South Vietnam. However, Congress got tired of the whole issue and, essentially, cut off most of the support to South Vietnam. In the eyes of some people this was quite instrumental in the collapse of South Vietnam. I would think that, during this period, because Saigon fell during this time [April, 1975], the South Koreans must have been looking at this matter closely. They must have been saying to themselves, “Boy, we have all sorts of promises about what the US would do for South Korea.” If they compared this to what was happening in South Vietnam, where Congress greatly reduced the support--was this a problem for you?

O'DONOHUE: Well, let me go back a little on this, because there was one episode that we didn't touch on. I think that President Park, probably more than most Koreans, had a sense that Korea couldn't completely depend on the United States. Having said that--and this is just my own view--I would say that if Park had looked from beginning to end at our relationship, the United States turned out to be surprisingly constant and supportive of South Korea. This means that, in fact, if you had realistic expectations, which Park did, we ended up being supportive. I think that for Park, and as long as he was President, there was a sense of realism, tempered by a recognition that the United States, one way or the other, had come to South Korea's assistance in one crisis after another.

However, during the period when Phil Habib was Ambassador to South Korea, and I was also in Seoul, Phil was called down to Saigon for the final stages of our involvement there. He didn't participate actively in the negotiations. He was just there as an adviser to Secretary of State Kissinger. You may recall that in the Paris Accord of 1973 there was a time frame, after which the two Vietnamese sides were not permitted to introduce additional military equipment. They were also not allowed to introduce anything that was qualitatively different. Consequently, the US was scrambling around to get as much military equipment into South Vietnam as possible before the deadline.

One day we received a message from Washington which, in effect, instructed Habib to ask the South Koreans for their whole jet Air Force, or almost all of it, for deployment to South Vietnam, within this time frame! The South Koreans had F-5 fighter aircraft, as did South Vietnam. This was a point where both Ambassador Habib and President Park were absolutely at their best. When South Korea continued to face a threat from North Korea. President Park was being told that what the US wanted to do was to take these aircraft and put them into South Vietnam, as part of the process of "beefing up" the South Vietnamese Air Force and getting everything in before the time limit set out in the Paris Accord of 1973 on Vietnam.

Q Were there substitutes offered?

O'DONOHUE: We offered to assign an additional American F-4 squadron to compensate for the F-5's to be deployed to South Vietnam. Habib read this telegram and, unlike some Ambassadors, he knew that this was something that you didn't argue about. There are some cases where you might ask the Department to reconsider its instructions, but this was one that you couldn't dispute. Habib had been told to ask the South Koreans, and he knew that he couldn't do anything other than what he had been told to do. At the same time, Habib was appalled. He realized that this was going to be an immense and traumatic shock to the South Koreans. At a minimum, what we were doing was that we were leaving South Korean Air Force pilots with no planes to fly. It was the F-5's that the Department wanted to deploy to South Vietnam--not all of the South Korean aircraft. However, for all practical purposes, we were asking for the "cutting edge" of their Air Force. Nonetheless, Phil presented this request. He did it seriously. Our best friends in the Korean Government were appalled, shocked, and couldn't believe it.

President Park was also at his best. He looked at the request as something which, given our relationship, could not simply be rejected out of hand. After all, the United States Government had made this request seriously. So he took this request, which to others was a devastating

action, showing our indifference to South Korea, and turned it into a negotiation. As I remember, we didn't take all of the South Korean F-5's. We got, maybe, half of their inventory of F-5's. Instead of our providing one squadron of F-4's, my recollection is that the South Koreans ended up getting a second squadron of F4's. In other words, they ended up with an additional F-4 squadron. So, in a sense, this exchange ended up with everybody happy. The United States got what it reasonably could expect. The South Koreans, over the longer term, were strengthened by it.

Between the two of them--President Park and Ambassador Habib--this was a perfect example of two men who had a keen sense of realism, while everyone else in the South Korean Government had reacted so negatively and viscerally. In effect, Park realized that he couldn't say "No." Then followed a negotiating process which he and Habib handled. For its part the United States Government also realized that there had to be more in this for South Korea. As for Habib, by so clearly doing what he was instructed to do, he acquired sufficient credibility for what he advised in the ensuing negotiations with the South Koreans. Washington saw that Phil had done his job. Therefore, he was in a good position in terms of where the South Koreans ended up.

Q: Credibility--where?

O'DONOHUE: Henry Kissinger, the White House and in the State Department. By contrast, if he had fought and argued against this instruction, he would have been viewed as suffering from "clientitis" and an inability to understand what his government's priorities were. So, by doing this in a straightforward fashion, knowing full well the flak that he was going to take from the South Koreans, Habib ended up being able to negotiate with Park an arrangement which met American needs and strengthened the South Koreans.

Q: After the fall of Vietnam in April, 1975...

O'DONOHUE: I was back in the Department at the time Saigon fell, not as a participant but assigned to the EA Bureau. I was impressed with the VLC [Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia] office. The office made what I thought was a very impressive analysis of the dire consequences of the cutoff of assistance to South Vietnam, and so forth. I was just an observer and, being a close friend of Habib's, I talked about it but was never involved in Vietnam. That was the dominant issue with Congress, and relationships were venomous. Habib had still managed to maintain reasonably good, personal relationships with Congress. So he could at least go up and get through a Congressional hearing. He couldn't reverse what was going on in Congress but he could at least go up and get through a hearing without being savaged.

Q: Did you find that, being responsible for Korean affairs, Congress was looking at South Korea as "another Vietnam"? Was this a sort of "isolationist" outlook that you were encountering?

O'DONOHUE: It's important to remember that Congress has always accepted the central significance of the security relationship with South Korea. During this period we had the beginnings of what was a long-term thread, of Congressional interest in human rights--whether it was Congressman Fraser or whoever followed him. However, when you looked at this more closely, in the end Congress has never been ready to take actions which would threaten our basic

security relationship with South Korea.

This was also the case with the succeeding administrations. Rhetorically, you couldn't have a greater change than that between the Ford- Kissinger approach to human rights and that of the incoming, Carter administration. On the other hand it is difficult to see where the Carter administration handled South Korea much differently than Secretary of State Kissinger did. The one exception being the proposed troop withdrawal which it finally cancelled.

Q Were you in Washington during the 1976 presidential elections campaign?

O'DONOHUE: Yes. In July, 1976, when Phil Habib became Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, I was his Executive Assistant. Phil maintained a close, oversight view of Korea. Art Hummel succeeded Phil as Assistant Secretary for EA, and Ed Hurwitz succeeded me on the Korea desk. In the case of South Korea, Phil's close, oversight attention was doubly necessary because "Koreagate" involved him so much.

Q: Before we get to "Koreagate," I'd like to continue talking about human rights. When Jimmy Carter was running for President in 1976, he was running on a platform of no more involvement in Asia. I can't remember whether he made an explicit promise...

O'DONOHUE: He said that he would withdraw a division of troops from South Korea.

Q: He said that he would withdraw the one, fully-formed division that we had there, but not all of our troops. In a way, this was appalling to many people because it seemed that if you withdraw the American division from South Korea and still say, "We'll be with you," "you raise the risk of a North Korean attack on South Korea, if they conclude that the United States might not come back to South Korea. After our performance in South Vietnam, this was not an unreasonable conclusion. How did you deal with this Carter promise to withdraw a division from South Korea which he made during the 1976 election campaign?

O'DONOHUE: You should remember that Habib always favored a reduction in the US military ground presence in South Korea--whether a division or something less. Indeed, on this issue the difference between Habib and Secretary Kissinger was that Habib saw a reduction--not a withdrawal--as part of a process of moving away from operational control of the South Korean Armed Forces, through the UN Command, which so involved us in every domestic crisis in that country. So intrinsically, Habib was not opposed to a reduction in our forces in South Korea and, as Under Secretary of State, supported it. Indeed, my last act in Korean Affairs was going out with Habib and Brown in 1977 to discuss this withdrawal.

Q: Brown being the Secretary of Defense.

O'DONOHUE: No, he was General Brown, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think that from Kissinger's perspective--and here I could be completely wrong, although I don't think that I am--he saw the troop reduction as concerned with our relations with China. That meant that if you worked with China to reduce China's commitment to North Korea, it would be easier to arrange for a reduction of US troops in South Korea. So it wasn't so much that changing the

American military presence in South Korea was “anathema” to Kissinger. As I say, there were people who looked at this issue in different ways. Kissinger saw it as a “bargaining chip” with the Chinese. Habib never saw it as a complete withdrawal, but as reduction and a shift to the South Koreans of greater responsibility for their own defense. He saw this as an essential element in getting the United States out of its constant and deep involvement in every domestic crisis precipitated by the South Korean military, which colored our whole relationship with South Korea.

So during the presidential election campaign of 1976 itself I can’t remember how we handled this proposal by Jimmy Carter. But this was partially because Habib would not have been--and wasn’t--intrinsicly opposed to reducing the level of our troop presence in South Korea. Later on, when he continued as Under Secretary for Political Affairs, he was actively engaged in the initial process of planning for such a reduction.

Q: In looking back at when you were dealing with South Korean affairs, both in South Korea and elsewhere, was there any time when there was a change, as we saw it, in the way the South Koreans were dealing with North Korea? For a long time there has been the idea that some day the Koreans would “take over.” At a certain point there would be a feeling in North Korea of, “The hell with the communist regime, “as happened in Germany. For their part the South Koreans might say, “We’re not going to ‘strike North,’ and North Korea can stew in its own juice.

O’DONOHUE: If you talk about North Korea, in the initial period up to the time when the two sides started seriously negotiating, outside of a small residual segment of the political spectrum--and we’re talking about a real “sliver” of the body politic of South Korea--I don’t think that they ever saw unification as a pressing issue. Every Korean had the feeling that they wanted unification of the country in some, abstract form. However, unification was essentially a radical student issue. Virtually all of the students were in favor of unification. It was probably a serious issue only in the sense that North Korean efforts at subversion of South Korea allowed some people to advocate it. However, public pressure was not a major factor on unification. Every government said the “right thing” on this issue, paying lip service.

When the South Korean Government started dealing with the North Koreans, this reflected a “sea change” in the self-confidence of the South Korean Government. As I mentioned earlier, I always thought that Kim Dae Jung was the most creative of the Korean politicians. He was the first one who talked about this and said that they could deal with North Korea. After Park won the 1971 elections, in effect he adopted this line. The key change is that there was a South Korean Government that increasingly had the self confidence to see itself as stronger than North Korea. This was partially because the problem of South Korea has always been the weakness of its political institutions--and this is still true today. The key change is that there was a South Korean Government confident enough to go off and deal with North Korea the way it did. In dealing with North Korea, Park certainly wanted firm control of his domestic situation. I don’t think that this was the dominant reason that he adopted “Yushin.” I do think that it was one of the reasons. As I said, I think that it was the Kim Dae Jung election threat that Park never wanted to go through again that precipitated “Yushin.” This was the central, motivating issue, but I also think that having strong control of the South Korean body politic to a counter the control that

North Korea exercised over its own body politic was another issue.

Q: You were mentioning that you wanted to talk about the SS MAYAGUEZ affair. Could you explain what the MAYAGUEZ was?

O'DONOHUE: The SS MAYAGUEZ incident involved the seizure of a container ship of US registry off the coast of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge. Subsequently, this led to a bloody action, in which the US Marines seized and liberated the ship. Interestingly enough, it had a Korean connotation, as well as providing an insight into how Washington operated at that particular time.

On a Sunday, a week before the MAYAGUEZ incident happened, I had a phone call at home from the State Department Operations Center that a Korean ship, sailing off the coast of Cambodia, had been shelled by the Khmer Rouge, who apparently made an attempt to capture it. The Khmer Rouge didn't board the Korean ship and it was not clear whether they were really attempting to board this ship or frighten it off.

I discussed this incident on the phone with Owen Zurhellen, the Deputy Assistant Secretary who dealt with Northeast Asian Affairs. The Operations Center, CINCPAC and Embassy Seoul were all involved, and an account of the incident appeared in an FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information Service] report. For some reason there was no cable traffic regarding the incident. The Embassy [in Seoul] had done all of the reporting on it over the telephone.

A week later, when the SS MAYAGUEZ incident happened, there was a sense of shock to find out that there had been no notice taken, that a similar incident had happened the week before. There was no formal Notice to Mariners, or anything else promulgated. This led to an investigation as to what had gone wrong and what had happened. In the process of this investigation it turned out that we didn't have any established procedures for dealing with an incident of this kind. Apparently, the State Department Office of Maritime Affairs and the US Navy had equal responsibility for reporting to mariners an incident of this kind, but no one in the Operations Center knew of this. That's why the Operations Center only contacted me. For my part, I had never heard of any established procedure for handling such an incident. Had I known of any of this, it would have saved some trouble, as it was a very painful process being involved in this inquiry. It was less painful for me in Korean affairs. However, for the officers on the VLC [Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia] desk, it was a very painful experience.

This incident also had another aspect in terms of Owen Zurhellen. As I said, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, but he was also Acting Assistant Secretary of State at the time of the MAYAGUEZ incident. Habib was on one of his rare periods of leave. As the MAYAGUEZ incident was unfolding, Secretary of State Kissinger was pressing for military action. Kissinger saw this as a deliberate provocation, coming soon after the fall of Vietnam. He felt that we had to show our firmness. It ended up that we used Thai airfields without Thai Government permission to support the operation which resulted in liberating the ship and its crew but loss of Marines. The Defense Department didn't want to react militarily, but Kissinger finally forced the action.

Just before the NSC meeting I mentioned, there was an FBIS report indicating that the Khmer Rouge might be willing to release the crew. Zurhellen flagged this FBIS report at the NSC meeting. This was only proper, as he was a relatively minor figure in this affair. After the Defense Department mounted the action to secure the release of the crew of the MAYAGUEZ, and it was a bloody one, Kissinger's enemies leaked that Kissinger had dismissed this FBIS report. Owen Zurhellen paid an immense penalty. He did not leak anything and had nothing to do with it. However, Kissinger didn't forgive him for having provided the script for this leak. As a consequence Owen, who was an officer of long experience, ended up being sent to Surinam as the only Embassy that he could get.

Q: You moved up with Habib when he became Under Secretary for Political Affairs. At that time, anyway, this was the top Foreign Service job.

O'DONOHUE: It was.

Q: When were you there with Phil Habib?

O'DONOHUE: We went up there in the summer of 1976. Phil succeeded Joe Sisco as Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Then I went off to Bangkok as DCM in July or August, 1977. Phil had his second heart attack about six months later and had to step down.

Q: So you were up there in "P" [Office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs] for about a year. What was your role?

O'DONOHUE: As Habib's Executive Assistant I had two roles. One, I still maintained a fairly close oversight of East Asian Affairs. Things were still fairly active--particularly in Korea, as it turned out. Secondly, I oversaw the substantive work of the other special assistant looking at the other regions. When he went up to P, Phil Habib had seen his job as involved in East Asia and the issues in other parts of the world that Secretary Kissinger wasn't interested in. Phil never had any background in nuclear negotiations, for example, and those were handled in a different channel. He saw himself as picking up the loose ends, as David Newsom, Phil's replacement, did more obviously.

In fact, Phil became very much engaged in Near Eastern issues--in other words, Arab-Israeli matters. This ended up being Phil's number one job under Secretary Kissinger. I think that that came as a surprise to Phil, as he hadn't quite expected it. However, he thrived on it. He loves negotiating and he very much enjoyed it. However, he was always closely involved in East Asia. Then he followed Africa as well, in addition to a whole range of additional issues. These ended up as the matters which fell to him in which Secretary Kissinger was not deeply interested. In those days in particular the Deputy Secretary's job was not without substance, but the Deputy Secretary did not fit comfortably into the Department structure. During this period Bob Ingersoll was the first Deputy Secretary. He was a very amiable man who truly handled what was left over from what Kissinger and his substantive players, including Phil, were doing.

Then there was a man named Robinson, a rather formidable figure who had very strong, economic credentials. He had been Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and then

moved up to be Deputy Secretary. To avoid going out of his mind, boring inactivity, he cut out niches to handle. He had a more active portfolio. Indeed, on certain areas, and we're talking here about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and not about negotiations on nuclear weapons, he ended up ensuring that the Department of State played a larger role in what were essentially areas that the Department of Energy and others were really more interested in. This happened simply because of his ability and his need to have something to do. So the Deputy Secretary of State was not an alter ego to Secretary Kissinger. Indeed, he functioned like a deputy commander in the military services. That's not really a "Number Two" position.

Phil Habib, as I said, had oversight responsibilities for East Asia, Africa, and, increasingly, the Near East. Kissinger clearly enjoyed having him as Under Secretary for Political Affairs because he appreciated the cut and thrust of the arguments he had with Phil. He also valued Phil's views. So Phil played a larger role than he expected in the Near East. Still, this was a very subordinate role as, of course, Kissinger was the principal figure. Under Kissinger Phil played a major role in East Asian affairs. Dick Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary, was much different from what Phil had been. On African and other matters Phil Habib ended up playing the traditional Under Secretary's role as the one, "Seventh Floor person" paying attention to them.

Q: Just to touch on the Kissinger-Habib relationship, did you ever sit and watch the cut and thrust of their exchanges?

O'DONOHUE: To only a limited extent, because I was mainly Phil Habib's Office Director and only a bystander or a "spear carrier." Regarding the meetings between Kissinger and Habib, Kissinger would rail and rant, usually to Foreign Service officers trying to remake countries in the American model. Habib would hang in there. There was an element of "enjoyment" in it for both Kissinger and Habib. First, Habib was realistic in what he was trying to do. This meant that he got a surprising amount of what he wanted from Kissinger. For his part, Kissinger gave Habib more "slack" than he would have given to another person and probably than his own inclinations would have led him to do. So I saw that part of the Kissinger-Habib exchanges. It's also fair to say that what I saw was always fairly controlled on both sides. There were very real tensions when they really went at each other, usually on Korean and human rights, and had to pull back. They were both emotional men, in their way. They had to pull back when they had almost gone too far. However, I was never there for those encounters--just for the lesser meetings.

Q: What was your job?

O'DONOHUE: I was Habib's Executive Assistant, the senior assistant. East Asia was the area which I, in a very personal sense, followed as well as intelligence. I had to do so, because the EA Bureau was not as effective as it should have been--particularly in connection with Korean affairs. Other than that my responsibilities were to be sure that the Office of the Under Secretary "ran" properly. In the areas that other assistants were responsible for, I knew what they were doing. I kept a fairly close look at these areas, to be sure that we were, in effect, operating cohesively and in a manner that Habib wanted. Then I spent a lot of time as his "friend," just talking about all of the issues, "kicking them around," and giving him my thoughts.

Q: How did you find the relationships of the various bureaus with the Under Secretary for

Political Affairs?

O'DONOHUE: I have to separate the two periods, under Secretary Kissinger and then under Secretary Cyrus Vance, because there were significant differences.

During Secretary Kissinger's tenure Habib's relationships with the various Assistant Secretaries were good, without a question. I think that Art Hummel, the Assistant Secretary for EA Affairs, chafed to some extent. Art would find Phil operating in areas where he would, in effect, consider Art as a desk officer, so to speak, and would differ with him. Having said that, I would have to say that Art always accepted Phil's views with some grace. He knew that Phil was going to be intervening in some EA affairs, and all of the rest of it. You can't look at this pattern and say that any EAP Assistant Secretary would have liked Phil's manner of operating. However, that certainly was manageable. For the rest, the situation varied with the other Assistant Secretaries.

The focus of the EUR Assistant Secretary. was Secretary Kissinger. For Phil Habib working with the EUR Assistant Secretary involved odds and ends. It was the peripheral issues with EUR that came to Phil Habib as Under Secretary--not the central ones. So the relationship between Phil Habib and the EUR Assistant Secretary was friendly enough but relatively distant. Secretary Kissinger had Helmut Sonnenfeldt [Counselor of the Department of State] and the people working under Sonnenfeldt. Phil's relationships with the Assistant Secretaries of AF [Bureau of African Affairs], ARA [Bureau of Latin American Affairs], and NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] were very good. I think that those Assistant Secretaries saw Phil in the traditional Under Secretary's role as "their man on the Seventh Floor."

In the case of the Assistant Secretary for NEA, Phil played an active but still subordinate role to Kissinger and his immediate circle of intimates. I think that NEA saw him as surprisingly effective. I think that both Assistant Secretaries Hal Saunders and Roy Atherton of NEA liked Phil and enjoyed their relationships with him.

When Cyrus Vance was Secretary of State in the first year of the Carter administration, the situation was different. First, under Vance, Warren Christopher really was the Deputy Secretary. There were certain responsibilities which Phil had had under Kissinger which were transferred to Warren Christopher. So you started out with a Deputy Secretary who really was the "Number Two" in the Department and was really an "alter ego" to Secretary Vance. Secondly, Warren Christopher had taken over certain issues in the intelligence area which Phil Habib had previously handled. Thirdly, at least at first, human rights were the dominant theme with Pat Derian, the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights. In the office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs we went almost overnight from being viewed by Kissinger as political scientists trying to re-do the world in a democratic form to a new administration in which we were viewed as having a conservative point of view defending authoritarian regimes. It was an absolute reversal of roles.

Q: This is sort of the way in which the "political" principal figures in the Department were looking at you.

O'DONOHUE: As I said, if you look very closely at both periods, there really wasn't a great

deal of difference between the Ford and the Carter administrations. Indeed, the administration which, in many respects, most effectively pursued the subject of human rights turned out, surprisingly enough, to have been the later Reagan administration. The Reagan administration found out that you couldn't ignore human rights and then pursued this issue with a certain balance. So, paradoxically, in the case of the Carter administration you went from a tremendous, verbal focus on human rights to supporting the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the UN!

The atmospherics under the Carter administration were such that in one case, where we had always been pressing in the field of human rights--though not always successfully--under the Ford administration we ended up under Carter in pursuing a more balanced approach.

Q: On the Korean side, in August, 1976, there was the "tree chopping" incident in the Demilitarized Zone. Could you explain what it was? Did you get involved in it?

O'DONOHUE: Well, we were deeply involved but not on the scene, because, obviously, as it evolved, it dealt with Washington approval of the CINCUNC planning.

Q: Could you explain what this incident involved?

O'DONOHUE: I'll give you my recollection of it, which may vary from the real situation, because, as I say, I was in Washington, not in Korea at the time. Essentially, there was a period of tension between the troops on guard at Panmunjom, in the Joint Security area. It all involved a tree that we wanted to chop down, because it was obscuring the view from one of the guard posts. It started out simply with the UNC wanting to trim the tree, but the North Koreans refused to agree. It became a "chip on shoulder" issue.

Finally, the UN Command mounted an expedition to go in and just chop the tree down. Remember, the American soldiers who died in this incident were killed with ax handles. The UN Command had sent in a work detail, in effect, to cut the tree down without North Korean agreement.

Q My impression was that the North Koreans sent in men with ax handles.

O'DONOHUE: Well, they might have. I've forgotten. It was my impression, somehow, that it was our own ax handles that figured in the incident. Then a brutal brawl broke out, in which two Americans were killed. Then the major focus was how to get out of this situation while maintaining a modicum of self respect. No one wanted to dismantle the Armistice Agreement. In retrospect, this matter was not well handled, because we did not want to be where we wound up. The North Koreans, just as obviously, must have been taken aback by what happened. Nevertheless, we lost two men and the tree was still standing. The UN Command then mounted an operation which involved marching a detachment into the DMZ which simply cut the tree down, as I remember, and the incident passed peacefully into history as both sides backed off from further confrontation.

Q: From the Washington perspective there was a "concentration" of troops and all of that, wasn't there?

O'DONOHUE: Oh, I think that we went on an alert and extensive contingency planning. We were determined to save face. The problem was that we always had the possibility that things would get worse and that we would have another fight there in the JSA. However, I don't think that anyone saw this incident as threatening the peace on the Korean Peninsula. I think that it was more a matter of our having lost the two men, and having to do something to show we were not backing down. This, in effect, was the price that was going to have to...

Q: Were you and Habib involved in sitting down and talking about what we were going to do, now that this had happened?

O'DONOHUE: Yes, but to be honest with you, as I remember it, that kind of planning came from our military and the Embassy in Seoul. That is, the planning was realistic. It was designed to do realistically what we could do, as I said, to save face on all of this, not exacerbate the situation. The North Koreans were also ready to back down, allowing the second tree cutting to proceed unhindered.

Q: I was a member of the Country Team in the Embassy in Seoul at the time. My "great contribution" was to say, "For God's sake, let's make sure that the chain saws work. Take a couple of extra ones along."

O'DONOHUE: My recollection of it all is that nobody was happy about the events that led to the deaths of the two men. In retrospect the first action was ill-advised and inadequately thought out. However, as far as subsequent planning was concerned, my impression is that it was done in Seoul with Washington approval and was prudent and restrained.

Q: I was just wondering about the concentration of forces near Panmunjom...

O'DONOHUE: I don't remember that this incident was viewed as a major threat, as much as a prudent reaction to the possibility that, since this kind of incident happened once, we could have the same thing happen a second time. And we certainly wanted to be prepared. My recollection of this time was more that this involved contingency planning. Everyone in Washington had a sense of doing what was necessary, in effect, to demonstrate that we hadn't been cowed. There was surprisingly little saber rattling.

Q: How about subsequent planning after the SS MAYAGUEZ incident.

O'DONOHUE: None at all. The general impression that I had is that the handling of the fallout from this incident by the Embassy in Bangkok, was far superior to the handling of the "tree chopping" incident in Korea. However, you should remember there then was one big difference-- Washington and Secretary Kissinger ran the show including forbidding the Embassy to let the Thai government know we were going to use their bases without permission.

Q: I think that the decision to chop down the tree near Panmunjom was taken at a pretty low level.

O'DONOHUE: I doubt that the Embassy in Seoul knew much about it. But the decision to send in a work party must have been approved by the military command. The first indication we had is that they hadn't made any contingency plans in case there was a North Korean reaction to chopping the tree down. There was unhappiness in Washington over this, but it was water over the dam. We were left with two dead American soldiers. That was our focus--what to do next.

Q: What was happening with regard to Japan during that period?

O'DONOHUE: During that period the major issues involving Japan were the lingering effects of the Kim Dae Jung kidnapping and the death of Madame Park. Then, there was the decision by the Carter administration to withdraw a division of troops from South Korea. I thought that this marked another watershed. Up until then, and now I'm going back as far as when I was a junior officer in Seoul in 1960, when you talked with Japan about security issues involving Korea, it was almost as if you were talking about a peninsula off the coast of Antarctica. There was a certain air of unreality and a lack of concreteness on the Japanese side. Obviously, the Japanese wanted to stay away from any serious discussion that involved security of Korea, expecting us to bear the whole responsibility.

Also, there was a sense that the Japanese clearly did not have a balanced approach, but always weighed unduly the North Korean angle. Once we announced the troop withdrawal, that changed. First, the Japanese were actively opposed to this. Secondly, the Japanese were suddenly quite willing to talk seriously to us about security in South Korea, and particularly our troop presence there. This had always been justified, in good part, because of Japan. From that point on the Japanese were more clearly associated with South Korea on security matters.

When Habib, General Brown (an Air Force general who was then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), and I went to South Korea to outline President Carter's thinking on troop withdrawal from South Korea, we stopped in Japan and met with the Japanese Foreign Minister. It was the first time, in my recollection, that we ever had the kind of hard-nosed discussion in which the Japanese were visibly unhappy and blunt. They were talking about strategic issues in a manner that they had never discussed them with us before. Mainly because they were afraid that we were weakening our Korean security involvement, and that affected Japan.

My impression was that, from that point in time, the Japanese were much more actively engaged, both with the South Koreans as well as with us, in discussing security issues. They realized that they couldn't count on the US as being an absolutely predictable buffer there. So that was a very significant change in Japanese attitudes.

Q: When you got to Korea on this trip, how did that work out?

O'DONOHUE: Park almost invariably handled issues like this one to exact the maximum advantage for Korea. He said that the United States had the right to make its own decisions. So he never challenged us in an emotional way on this issue. He indicated his unhappiness about the decision to withdraw the division from South Korea and the need to deal with the consequences of it. He was fairly restrained on what he regarded as a "fait accompli," meaning that he recognized that the US had made its decision. Now in the Embassy, both General Vessey and

Ambassador Dick Sneider opposed this decision. Dick did so less vocally, in a formal sense, and General Vessey, with utter courtesy. Certainly, General Vessey opposed it quite clearly. He always did it with utter integrity, in contrast to General Singlaub, who opposed it publicly.

As I remember it, in the discussion with Park he accepted that President Carter had the right to decide where he was going to station US troops. Park made clear he didn't like this decision and thought that the US troops should remain in South Korea. He expressed his views but he also listened to Habib. Park was being told of a decision that really had been made. He wasn't being asked for his views on a matter under discussion. Park then focused on the need to strengthen Korean forces.

Q: When the Carter administration entered office, Carter had made this campaign promise. This decision was really rooted in the Vietnam experience and developments after the Vietnam War. Were you aware of talks between Phil Habib, Warren Christopher, and Cyrus Vance about the plan to withdraw troops from South Korea?

O'DONOHUE: I remember that Habib essentially supported the withdrawal of troops. That was his basic attitude.

Q: But you were saying that he did not want to withdraw US troops totally.

O'DONOHUE: No. Habib's view was that we should have a reduced, military presence in South Korea. In fact, in the 1993 post-Yushin period, we even sent an airgram to the Department, recommending a reduction in our ground forces in South Korea to a brigade and transfer of operational control over South Korean forces to South Korea. Kissinger rejected this recommendation angrily.

However, this was not a difficult issue for Habib. Whether he would have favored withdrawing a division or a brigade or something like that, in Habib's view this should not involve a complete withdrawal of US forces from South Korea. His concerns had to do with US ground forces presence in South Korea and operational control over the South Korean forces, which he saw as something that inextricably involved us in South Korean domestic events.

South Korea was not an area with which Secretary Vance and Deputy Secretary Christopher were familiar. Vance had dealt with Park in connection with the USS PUEBLO incident and had some knowledge of the country. Nonetheless, I don't think that either of them had particularly strong feelings regarding South Korea. They were ready to implement the President's campaign promises.

In the Bureau of East Asian Affairs, Assistant Secretary Dick Holbrooke's role has always been very ambiguous, in that I think that its never been clear whether the withdrawal of US forces from South Korea was originally his idea. I don't know whether it was or not. Nonetheless, the bureau position on the withdrawal of US forces was somewhat ambiguous. The problem with the Department of Defense at that time was that it was opposed to a withdrawal of US forces from South Korea but then was stuck with having to implement the withdrawal after it was decided on. Mort Abramowitz, the EAP Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense paid a penalty in that he

was doing nothing more than implementing something that he disagreed with. But he was associated with the decision in the eyes of some people. Despite the fact that he felt quite the contrary and thought that the withdrawal was a mistake.

Phil Habib never viewed the withdrawal of ground forces from South Korea that way. He saw this issue as something that was both manageable in security terms and that we should do. Now, he had already left the job of Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs when the Carter administration reversed its position on withdrawal of forces from South Korea.

Q: What about the advent of Dick Holbrooke as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs? How did that work out? He had left the Foreign Service, made a career elsewhere, and was considered a "stormy petrel."

O'DONOHUE: Like many people, Phil Habib had tremendous respect for Dick Holbrooke's ability and intelligence. Relationships with Dick Holbrooke always have a certain tumultuousness but had been, and remained afterwards, very close. Dick came in as Assistant Secretary for EA, determined that Phil Habib was not going to look over his shoulder and be a kind of Super Assistant Secretary. Dick never suffered anything quietly. So his relationship with Habib had stormy elements about it.

As I said, Dick always reacted strongly if he felt that Phil Habib was going too far into his area. However, there were areas--for instance, the troop withdrawal issue--in which Dick decided tactically to move to the sidelines, leaving Habib more out front, so to speak. In areas like human rights, I think that Dick quickly realized that the Carter administration's human rights policies were threatening relationships throughout his whole area. So he let Bob Oakley, one of his Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State, get out in front. Bob and I would tend to be at these various human rights meetings, defending our relationships with Thailand, South Korea, or other places, against the onslaughts coming at us. This had Dick's full support, for he had, in effect, decided to remain on the sidelines, rather than be either an advocate of the original human rights policy. As I said, the thing that struck me was how in the end the policies of the Carter administration--whether regarding South Korea or elsewhere--ended up not greatly different than human rights policy under Secretary Kissinger. But did cause significant foreign policy damage in getting there.

In fact, we earlier mentioned the attitude of Congress. My impression of Congress has always been the same. That is, you had some Congressmen who were willing to take actions that would risk our bilateral relationships in pursuit of human rights objectives. However, Congress as a whole has never supported this view. Therefore, once again, Congress, as was the case during other administrations, has accepted the view that the security relationship with South Korea had an intrinsic validity which should be maintained. In the end Congress never acted in the way it did in the case of Vietnam. Even during "Koreagate," which affected Congress itself, I cannot remember that Congress ever considered actions which seriously threatened our relations with South Korea. That didn't mean that relationships with South Korea weren't "painful" and that the human rights issue was not a significant element. However, the Congressional impression of South Korea's importance seemed to mirror the outlook of the administration.

Q: Before we touch on “Korea gate, “which will probably end this session, I would like to ask one question which came to me. Of all the places we’ve talked about that involved Phil Habib, you didn’t mention ARA and Latin American affairs. Did Latin American questions come across your desk at all?

O’DONOHUE: By the time Phil was involved in Central America in the mid- 1980’s, I was Ambassador to Burma.

Q: I was thinking about this particular time, when you were Phil Habib’s Executive Assistant.

O’DONOHUE: At that time he was a Seventh Floor resource person for ARA. It wasn’t that he played a major role in ARA affairs as much as it was that ARA could turn to him for specific actions. ARA then, and still was a bureau somewhat different from other bureaus operating in its own milieu. Phil was a person that they could turn to, but as far as issues were concerned, I don’t remember any that were very significant involving Phil directly.

Q: That’s what I thought. Now, could you explain what “Korea gate” was? It overlapped both your position as Korean Office Director in EA and as Phil Habib’s Executive Assistant.

O’DONOHUE: “Koreagate” was the name that was given to the investigation of corrupt relationships involving the South Korean businessman, Tong Son Park, the South Korean Government, and certain American Congressmen. It really involved PL-480 sales of rice. As I said, it concerned Tong Son Park, who was a relatively young, South Korean businessman who had established himself in Washington in the late 1960’s. When I arrived back in South Korea in 1972, Phil Habib, then Ambassador to South Korea, had already put a bar on any association of Embassy officers with Tong Son Park. This was because of the various allegations of corruption in his relationships. When Phil saw Tong Son Park playing golf out at the Eighth Army Golf Course, he went through the ceiling and insisted that the Army bar Tong Son Park from the golf course.

So I arrived in Seoul with this atmosphere already existing. Tong Son Park had close relationships with several Congressmen. When several of them visited South Korea, in effect, the Embassy Control Officer would be out at the airport jostling with Tong Son Park’s minions or depending on the Congressmen involved, Tong Son Park would either take them over at the airport or they would show some tact and wait until they got to the hotel under Embassy auspices. Nonetheless, there was a group of Congressmen who clearly had a special relationship with Tong Son Park. Beyond that Tong Son Park had this diffuse reputation as being “Mr. South Korea” in Congress. So you had a much larger group of Congressmen who were not involved in any corrupt relationship with Tong Son Park who saw him as the one who handled things in South Korea for Congressmen.

Phil Habib would warn all and sundry about Tong Son Park. He was absolutely forthright in his refusal to have anything to do with Tong Son Park. He would tell the Congressmen that they shouldn’t have anything to do with him. Tong Son Park had a well known standing as the “Mr. South Korea” lobbyist in Washington. Actually, in the South Korean context he was a “small boy,” so to speak. Among Koreans he had no standing except that which came from his contacts

with American Congressmen. Clearly, Tong Son Park had contacts with the Korean CIA and the Korean Government.

In this case the Korean Government, in a naively Machiavellian fashion, thought that it was buying influence in Congress. My own view in looking at this matter is that the only thing involved was money. That is, the Korean Government really wasn't getting anything out of this. While we were in South Korea, Ambassador Habib had warned Chong Ii Kwon--I think that, at that point, he was the Speaker of the South Korean National Assembly--that Tong Son Park must have nothing to do with a visit to South Korea, I think by "Tip" O'Neill, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives. Anyhow, Phil went to the airport and saw Tong Son Park there. He called over to Chong Ii Kwon and told him that either he would get Tong Son Park out of there or he, Phil, was leaving the airport and would take every Embassy officer with him. He said, "In that case, you can meet the Speaker by yourself." Needless to say, the Koreans quickly put Tong Son Park on the sidelines. I think that he had a party for some of the Congressmen later, but Phil just pushed him aside. That was a measure both of Habib's integrity and disdain for Tong Son Park, when he saw this corrupt figure at the airport.

When Phil was Assistant Secretary in Washington, at one point and to keep their skirts "clean," the US intelligence agencies provided some information about Tong Son Park and his Congressional contacts. Habib said that this information couldn't be ignored. So he went to the White House and the Department of Justice. From that point the "Koreagate" investigations began. The Department of Justice handled this and worked closely with Phil. At one point there were false allegations that he was personally involved in Koreagate. Phil refused to answer such allegations, later the subsequent revelations speak for themselves. In any case the investigations continued and, eventually, one Congressman was indicted, "plea bargained," and was sentenced. The reputations of several other Congressmen were clearly damaged. The most obvious case was that of Congressman Passman, the Chairman of the East Asia Aid Subcommittee. Between the sales of Louisiana rice and other things he was involved in this matter in a variety of ways.

So the "Koreagate" issue dominated US-South Korean relations for a year and a half. There were the Department of Justice investigation and Congressional hearings. Tong Son Park had fled the country. He later came back under a grant of immunity to testify, although not much came out of it. However, in effect, for about a year and a half there were these revelations of corruption involving the sale of PL 480 rice. As I said, the allegations were that the South Korean Government was "buying influence," but they didn't get very much. They certainly didn't get any accolades for morality. What was really going on was that some people were getting a lot of money out of this whole affair, not that the Korean government was successfully buying influence.

So in this connection there was a very strange relationship between the US and South Korean Governments. Habib had been appalled by Tong Son Park's activities and, as an American, by his efforts to corrupt American Congressmen. In his own way, Habib was a realist. However, on the other hand, he had immense, personal integrity. So this really bothered him, as an American.

Q: I think that for most of us, the greed of our elected officials is legendary. In addition to money, women would also be supplied.

O'DONOHUE: Oh, they would do that if they could. That was their standard tactics for most visitors outside the State Department. I was never sure whether that was a tribute to the State Department or not. In effect, these lobbyists made sure that their visitors knew that they could have women supplied, and all the rest. Tong Son Park would simply take over some of these visitors, place them in a hotel, provide women and so forth...

Q: A tailor would arrive...

O'DONOHUE: They would just take over. Remember that we're only talking about some Congressmen. Most Congressional visitors, even those who dealt with Tong Son Park, simply saw him as a South Korean "arranger." It's important that we not accuse everyone who visited South Korea. Several of the Congressmen--I think this included "Tip" O'Neill, Congressman Bloomfield, and others--always stressed to Habib how much they appreciated his warnings about Tong Son Park. Nonetheless, it was a seamy, sad tale.

As "Koreagate" unfolded, though, the problem for Habib and me, both when I was on the Korea desk and then when I was Habib's Executive Assistant, was to bring the South Korean Government to realize that they had been caught, that this had been wrong, and that they must deal with it and put it behind us. However, within the American Government, the difficulty was to deal with the problem, but not at the cost of irretrievably damaging the basic the US-South Korean relationship. Congress was involved in this to a degree. However, in the Executive Branch of the US Government there was a sense that the South Koreans were "tar babies." This is why, to a degree that was more than we ever expected, we ended up with Phil Habib still deeply involved in South Korean affairs when he was Under Secretary for Political Affairs. This was partially also because "Koreagate" was so much identified with Habib. He was the one who, as Ambassador to South Korea, had adopted this position of not dealing with Tong Son Park; who had, in effect, precipitated the Department of Justice investigation; and whose reputation was caught up in "Koreagate" in the perverse way that Washington operates. So there was no way that another Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs could come into office and be able to deal with "Koreagate."

What we found out was that both the EA Bureau and the Korea desk were very uncomfortable dealing with the South Koreans, for a variety of reasons. The relationships were being unduly strained. They were strained enough in the real world, over the "Koreagate" issue. That was a given. However, EAP's nervousness about dealing with even reputable senior government officers and Korean embassy officers only made things worse.

Kaln Pyong-dan(?) was the Korean Ambassador to the United States at this time. He didn't drink alcohol and came from one of the traditional Protestant Christian families in South Korea. The Ambassador and the South Korean Embassy found it very difficult dealing with the EA Bureau and the Korea desk because of their nervousness about the issue and their sense, as I said, that the South Koreans were like "tar babies" to be kept at arms length.

So since Habib, in a sense, had precipitated the investigation of the whole complex of issues involved in "Koreagate," the last act for me--and, I suspect, for Habib--meant getting the

Korean-American relationship back on an even keel. As a result, the South Korean Government paid the penalty--as it should have--for its actions. However, we still maintained a working relationship with them.

Interestingly enough, "Koreagate" did fade from the scene, although Korean imports of rice did not fade away until the early 1980's. Out of all of the investigations, it is my recollection that only one Congressman "plea bargained"--in other words, plead guilty.

Q: All right, let's stop at this point. We'll pick it up next time when you left the Office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs in 1977, en route to Thailand as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission].

O'DONOHUE: Do you want to go into those matters then? There are still a couple of issues on South Korea left, if you are interested in them. One of them is the relationship between the Ambassador and the UN Commander.

Q: I think that we covered that. So we'll pick this interview up again when you were off to Thailand.

Today is September 3, 1996. Dan, you are now off to Thailand as DCM. When did you go out there?

O'DONOHUE: I went out to Thailand in July, 1977.

Q When did you leave Thailand?

O'DONOHUE: I left Thailand in October, 1978, to come back to be the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs.

Q: How did you get the job of DCM in Thailand? Usually, the Ambassador has a say in this.

O'DONOHUE: Well, Charlie S. Whitehouse was the Ambassador to Thailand. Charlie sent a cable to Phil Habib, saying that John Burke, the then DCM, was leaving Thailand to be Ambassador to Guyana. Whitehouse needed a DCM and asked Phil if he had any thoughts on the subject. So I volunteered myself. Phil didn't want me to go. However, by this time I had had enough of the Washington grind. "Koreagate," in particular, had been an emotionally exhausting experience because we went through all the pain and pressure as "Koreagate" surfaced. Then I had to play a larger role in the Under Secretary's office than I should have had to do in maintaining an appropriate balance with the South Koreans. There was a tendency to pile on, not only to exact a proper amount of pain in terms of what the South Korean Government had gotten itself into, but to overdo it. Our point was to hit a balance, in which the basic elements of the Korean-American relationship had to be maintained, essentially intact.

Q: We tend to get pretty "moralistic" on these things.

O'DONOHUE: We tend to be moralistic. The EA Bureau found it almost overwhelming dealing

with how to hit the proper balance. As I say, that's how in the Under Secretary's office we got more involved. We would have been involved, anyway, because Habib and I had such a long connection with South Korea. However, it was more than we should have been involved. So it had been a long and emotional strain. Then, with the advent of the Carter administration it was not so much the troop withdrawal issue as such, although that also exacted its toll. So, since 1960, with the exception of a total of several years spent in S/S, in Accra, and at the Army War College, I had been continuously involved in Korean affairs. I wanted to do something different. So Charlie Whitehouse readily agreed to take me as DCM in Bangkok, and I went out there.

GEORGE E. LICHTBLAU
Labor Attaché
Seoul (1972-1975)

George E. Lichtblau was born in Austria in 1920 and naturalized in 1943. He received a BS from the University of Georgia in 1942, an MA from the New School of Social Research in 1949, and served in the U.S. Army overseas from 1942 to 1945. His postings abroad include Abidjan, Seoul and Tel Aviv. Mr. George E. Lichtblau was interviewed by James F. Shea.

LICHTBLAU: Then toward the end of 1971, I ran into an old friend, Ambassador Philip Habib, in the corridors [of the Department of State], who had just been assigned to the ambassadorship in Korea. He said, "Hey George, would you like to come and be labor attaché in Korea?" And I said, "Sure, why not?" And sure enough, early in 1972, I went to Korea.

Q: Where did you first meet Phil Habib?

LICHTBLAU: I worked with Phil Habib in INR in the Division of Functional Intelligence, when he was working on developments in Communist countries, and I was working on international labor affairs, which were, of course, topics that intertwined. So on a number of projects we worked together. When I got to Korea, Philip unfortunately had just had a heart attack, but a couple of months later he came back, and he certainly proved to be one of the best and most inspiring ambassadors that I have worked for.

Q: George, it must have been quite a switch from Africa to Korea.

LICHTBLAU: Yes, in many ways, it was. Korea proved a particularly interesting assignment. I worked there until 1975, and I certainly became one of the key officials in the Embassy and apparently established also quite a public reputation, because I was not only involved in labor affairs, but also in the human rights function in which I established active contacts with the American missionary community and also with Christian leaders to the point where I was periodically invited by Cardinal Kim, who would discuss with me the problems that the Catholic Church faced. I also had similar contacts with top Protestant leaders, many of whom were Americans since the Protestant church and Protestant missionaries from the American side had played an important role in Korea, particularly during the period of Japanese occupation, as a

result of which America had a special psychological position in the minds of many Koreans.

Q: I also understand you were quite active in labor-management relations between our American troop installations there and the. . .

LICHTBLAU: I was also assigned to deal with labor relations between the Korean civilian employees of the U.S. Armed Forces as well as some American employees, particularly because the military was engaged in the habit of hiring American civilians or military retirees at low salary rates without any of the privileges. Well, they had PX privileges, but no pension rights and other fringe benefits that would have normally been accorded to civil servants. This became a rather tense issue which also involved American unions which were trying to represent these people. I got a good deal of support from Phil Habib trying to establish a pattern of great social sensitivity as subsequently the U.S. presence in Korea became increasingly resented by a lot of people.

Q: Did you receive visits from the International Trade Secretariats (ITSs) and representatives of the AFL-CIO or the Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI) at that time?

LICHTBLAU: Yes, I did work quite closely with AAFLI. We had, of course, a very serious problem in Korea because the government of Park Chung Hee became increasingly repressive and restrictive in the way it handled the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU). Also it became oppressive toward Christian labor groups, particularly the Young Christian Workers, a group apparently organized by some French Catholic missionaries. I became a pipeline of information into the Embassy on civil rights abuses and torture.

I still remember when I received information from some of my missionary contacts about the arrest of young labor leaders. My immediate superior tried to dismiss this, claiming that these missionaries were just using me. His concern was to maintain the best possible relations with the establishment. However, Ambassador Habib as well as the DCM backed me up and signaled their protest to the Korean government, as a result of which apparently the life of this young labor leader was saved, a matter which gave me a lot of status and prestige in the labor community and among the missionaries.

Q: George, how long was your assignment in Korea, and from Korea where did you go?

LICHTBLAU: My assignment in Korea went from 1972 to 1975. Then from 1975 to 1978, I was assigned to Israel. But I would like to elaborate somewhat more about my experience in Korea. Korea under President Park became increasingly a police state with everyone under surveillance and increasing restrictions being placed on the trade unions, their rights to collective bargaining, and so forth, and the surveillance of trade union leaders, with particular pressure being put on the Christian labor group, the Young Korean Christian Workers, and some of the Catholic and even some of the Protestant missionaries who were sympathetic to free labor and backing them.

I still remember being involved when the Korean government suppressed some of these missionaries, notably the American George Ogle, who had spent a good part of his life in Korea as a missionary with strong labor sympathies. He was a Methodist missionary. I remember one

day I got a call that he was being told either to stop completely his activities or he would be deported. Then he was interrogated at Korean Central Intelligence Agency Headquarters. I called the DCM, Richard Ericson, and told him about it, and he asked me to go over to KCIA Headquarters and inquire what was going on. I walked over there, which was near the Embassy Residence area, and walked in, but was told I could not go up and meet with Ogle or his interrogators. As I was about to leave, a man came up to me and said, "I show you how you can get up there," and he pointed out a stairway in the back, and he said, "Go up to the second floor and the first door on your left will be the interrogation room." I walked up there and the interrogators were rather surprised to see me walk in. However, they remained polite and after a few minutes of routine questioning, George Ogle was permitted to go home.

The next morning I received a call that the police were at his home again interrogating him, and about to deport him. I rushed over there and sat in on the continuing interrogation, and then I was told that he would be taken to the airport. Thereupon I accompanied his wife Dorothy to the airport, where he was put on a Korean Airlines plane to California.

However, this was not the only case in which I was involved in the deportation of the missionary. I remember a Catholic father who was very much involved with the young Christian workers, Jeunesse Ouvriere Chretienne (JOC), who was also deported shortly thereafter. Again, I tried to protect him and accompany him to the airport, but there was very little that the Embassy could do to stop these kind of measures.

Q: George, do you want to continue with your experiences in Korea? How were these activities received by the Embassy?

LICHTBLAU: I was involved in many other contacts, being taken to companies or being shown the kind of abuses that were going on by Korean companies, as well as by some foreign ventures including the General Motors plant where the American manager told me that all personnel questions and labor-relations questions were in the hands of the Koreans and therefore he could not interfere. Frequently, I would get reports of the arrests of young men, the failure of companies to pay wages, how workers were kept entrapped and locked in the places where they worked against their will, arbitrarily arrested.

I was impressed that so many Korean labor leaders were willing to take risks and talk to me about these matters. Very often, when I called, they would make arrangements in such a way that we would meet somewhere on the street walking around or in a park without telephone communications. Often these messages would come to me through a third person, and we would walk around and then discuss these matters. Obviously they were very happy to have a contact to whom they could voice their grievances and tell their experiences so that their message would get abroad.

Often these people would say, "All right, in case we are being watched, what shall I say that you asked so that I can reply to the police or KCIA interrogators?" After we set out the general formula, he would then proceed to tell me what was really on his mind. This happened quite often and was not only limited to labor leaders, but also to some of my clergy contacts, including one of the bishops who would regularly contact me and arrange such informal meetings.

Obviously I was constantly under surveillance and I remember one day when President Ford came to Korea and we were all at a reception given by President Park Chung Hee. When I was introduced to him, Park Chung Hee said, "Oh, I know exactly who you are." (laughter) So I clearly had a reputation.

However, Ambassador Habib made it quite clear that he had full confidence in me and that he fully supported my activities and wanted me to do this kind of work. He also told the CIA Station Chief in the Embassy to lay off my contacts because at times they would go and ask people and thereby arouse suspicions that I, too, was part of the CIA and not part of the regular Embassy staff. This was a matter that came up on a number of occasions. As a matter of fact, in some of the more radical missionary and labor circles, I was suspected of being a CIA agent, and I remember that some pamphlets were distributed claiming to expose the CIA officers in the Embassy in which not only my name was included, but also that of my wife. (Laughter)

Q: Do you want to continue with Korea, George?

LICHTBLAU: My situation changed very drastically when Ambassador Habib was replaced by Ambassador Richard L. Sneider. Ambassador Sneider was very much interested in improving relations between the United States and the Korean Government, which had become somewhat suspicious about the role of the Embassy, which in turn had become increasingly critical of the repressive activities of the Park regime. Ambassador Sneider operated in such a way that he just did not want to be seen together with me. Often this would take the form that he did not even want me to ride with him in the same elevator and would make all kinds of remarks like, "Stay away from me," and "I don't want you to go out and see these people, because that discredits the Embassy."

However, both the Department, when Phil Habib had become Assistant Secretary for East Asia, and the DCM felt I should continue my work. Ambassador Sneider pressed that I be replaced and reassigned as soon as possible. I was promoted to FSRU-2 and then assigned to Israel.

ROBIN WHITE
Economic Policy Officer, East Asia Bureau
Washington, DC (1973)

Ms. White was born and raised in Massachusetts and educated at Georgetown University. After graduation she worked briefly on Capitol Hill before joining the Foreign Service in 1973. A Trained Economist, Ms. White served at a number of foreign posts as Economic and Commercial Officer. In the State Department in Washington, she occupied several senior positions in the trade and economic fields. Ms. White was also a Japan specialist. Ms. White was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005

Q: What was your first assignment?

WHITE: My first assignment was in the East Asia Bureau in the Economic Policy Office (EAP/EP.) I didn't have any East Asia background but wanted to work on economic affairs. I began as moderately interested in Asia and ended up learning a lot about East Asian economies. That was when I first visited Japan and knew I wanted to return, as I did a few years later.

EAP/EP was a small new office that covered regional economic policy. There were three officers. It has now become considerably large because it is the office for APEC matters, but at the time it was handling transnational issues and relations with other agencies such as the Commerce Department.

Q: I imagine at that point that textiles were a major area of interest.

WHITE: This was after the major bilateral textile problems as multilateral restraints were in place by then. Issues like mushrooms, footwear and of course automobiles were starting to be problems.

Q: Was the mushroom conflict with Pennsylvania and Korea?

WHITE: Yes, Pennsylvania growers were trying to block Korean imports. That was my first experience with political pressure for specific import restraints. It was surprising for me -- having studied economics in school which never mentioned politics -- to see the power of a fairly small group of politicians who faced no opposition from other congressmen or senators because they might want similar treatment for products from their states.

During that time I took a couple of trips relating to interagency work to regularize commercial programs. I went to Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong. This travel was my first trip outside of the U.S. so my first passport was a diplomatic one.

The North Korean issue was very important throughout my three years on the desk. At that time former Secretary of Defense William Perry had started a process called the Trilateral Coordinating Group (TCOG) which brought the South Koreans and the Japanese together before and after each U.S. negotiation with the North Koreans. He was followed by State Department Counselor Wendy Sherman, who was well respected. There was a great deal of coordinating work; it worked well to keep the Japanese and South Koreans assured that they were informed of everything going on in bilateral talks. The personalities involved worked well together and I think it was an excellent exercise in diplomacy.

Q: How did you find the Japanese and South Korean relationship?

WHITE: It has always been a difficult relationship because Japan colonized Korea in 1905 and there are still many negative feelings. The Koreans remember that the Japanese punished Koreans for speaking Korean during that period. Many Koreans were sent to Japan almost as slave laborers during World War II and the comfort women issue remains very painful. However

the animosity wasn't as strong then as it is today. The TCOG process was significant because the Japanese and Koreans met together with the Americans and put aside the history problems to work toward a common goal, dealing with North Korea. It is sad that those good working relationships never spread to a wider number of officials or to the general public in both countries.

Q: What was our position at that time and what were the North Koreans up to?

WHITE: The Agreed Framework was in place at that time so the plutonium that the North Koreans had been reprocessing was under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervision. There were IAEA inspectors at the nuclear plant in North Korea and the plutonium was in fuel rods under constant surveillance. The question was who was going to pay for the quid pro quo. KEDO, the Korean Economic Development Organization, had been set up after the 1994 crisis to provide energy to North Korea through construction of two light water reactors. I'll leave the details of that to the Korea experts, but it was important to Japan because Japan and South Korea were going to pay the bulk of the money to construct the power plants to replace the nuclear program the North Koreans gave up. There were a lot of delays in that for one reason or other. The U.S. Congress never like it and delayed sending heavy fuel oil, there was suspicion about the North Koreans having an underground testing facility that had to be investigated, and the North Koreans were not particularly receptive to the South Korean technicians coming in. It went very slowly. However at least the North Koreans were not making nuclear bombs, which is not the case today unfortunately.

One incident that illustrates this is that after the North Korean Taepodong missile crisis, the Japanese decided they needed their own intelligence satellites. They thought they hadn't been given enough intelligence by the Americans -- although they probably had and certain agencies just didn't share it widely. When the idea was proposed, it seemed that a lot of the Japanese press expected the U.S. to step in and object, saying that Japan didn't need its own intelligence satellites. They seemed geared up to complain that the U.S. wouldn't give them the technology needed to build them. That didn't happen.

DONALD P. GREGG
CIA Station Chief
Seoul (1973-1975)

Ambassador Gregg was born and raised in New York and educated at Williams College. Joining the Central Intelligence Agency in 1951 he served with that Agency in Korea and Japan, as well as in Washington D.C. both at CIA Headquarters and in The White House, where served as National Security Advisor to President George Herbert Walker Bush. In 1989 he was nominated to be Ambassador to South Korea, where he served until 1993. Ambassador Gregg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Well now, sort of moving ahead because this is going to sort of concentrate on your career. You first went to Korea when?

GREGG: I first set foot in Korea in 1968. I had been in Japan for nine years. I spoke Japanese fluently. I had become very interested in Korea through, as I saw through the Japanese prism. I had become very interested, and some of my CIA friends had been stationed there. I took a trip there in 1968, spent three or four days there, took a train down to Pusan and came back via [inaudible] to Japan, was tremendously impressed by the vitality of the people. It was the only job I ever requested in my CIA career was the assignment to Korea. I was assigned there in 1973.

Q: Well you mentioned the Japanese prism. My understanding is the Japanese basically looked down upon the Koreans.

GREGG: Very much so.

Q: I mean had that, what had sparked your interest. I mean were you trying to see the world through a different perspective?

GREGG: Yes. I mean I thought of the Japanese blaming the Koreans for everything from crime to pollution to traffic problems, and yet one could see that progress was being made in Korea, I was struck by the fact that the Koreans were so supportive of us in Vietnam. They had two full divisions there for several years, over 300,000 people. So I just wanted to see a neighboring country about which I had heard a great deal from friends who were stationed there.

Q: Did you, were you able to pick up any sort of the culture of Korea at the time, I mean the first visit?/ Did you sort of change your view?

GREGG: I was just really impressed by the directness of the people, by the beauty of the country, by the strong sense of history. I have always had an interest in pottery and the ceramics are gorgeous. I bought a few pieces of ceramics. It was just a very interesting experience. I still have a letter I wrote to my mother on the way back saying that this was a country that I really wanted to see more of.

Q: Well you had also served in Vietnam. Did you have any contact with the Koreans at that time?

GREGG: No. I was in charge of the ten provinces around Saigon from '70 to '72. They were in I Corps. I occasionally saw a Korean officer, but I did not have any contact with them.

Q: What sort of feedback were you getting from your colleagues about the Koreans?

GREGG: How tough they were, and how the pacification was really very effective I think they were in a couple of provinces. They were very tough, very ruthless.

Q: Well then you got assigned to Korea in 1973 and were there for two years. What were you

doing there?

GREGG: I was chief of station for CIA.

Q: What can you talk about what you were doing at that time?

GREGG: Well the major issue was North Korea. I had been to North Korea twice now. I told them and I tell others that I think North Korea is the longest running failure in the history of American espionage, because we have not been very successful in recruiting them. My job was to try to cooperate with the South Koreans in learning more about North Korea. It also was a very touchy time for U.S.-South Korean relations because by 1973 we had withdrawn from Vietnam or had been evicted. Park Chung Hee, the dictator, military leader was losing faith in us as a strong ally. He was acquiring weapons systems without telling us. He started a nuclear program which we discovered and stopped. It was a very interesting and difficult time for the relationship. My counterpart was a man named Lee Hu Rak who was the director of Korean CIA. He had gone to North Korea in 1972 and had met Kim Il Sung. In my first meeting with Lee Hu Rak, I took an instant dislike to him. But I asked him how did you feel when you sat down opposite your lifelong enemy. He said, "Oh, very strong. One man rule. Quite a guy." Full of admiration. I think that he came back and said to Park Chung Hee, if we are going to talk to those people, we really are going to have to tighten up. So there was a good deal of tightening up.

Park Chung Hee had narrowly beaten Kim Dae Jung in an election in 1971 or '72. There were charges that the votes were rigged, and Kim Dae Jung at that point when I first went to Seoul, he had been in the United States speaking very critically of Park Chung Hee. He had went to Japan and continued his diatribes against his what was going on in Korea. So about two months after I was there, Kim Dae Jung was kidnapped from his hotel room in Tokyo, and this immediately became known. The ambassador to Korea at that time was Phil Habib, a man for whom I have just tremendous admiration. He called me into his office and said, "I know how things work here." They are not going to kill Kim Dae Jung for 24 hours, until I have weighed in, and if you can tell me where he is and who has him, I think we can keep him alive." So fortunately we were able to do that, and Kim Dae Jung was tied hand and foot in a small boat. He had been locked up and told that he was going to be thrown into the sea. An airplane flew over the boat in which he was, and I guess some kind of message was sent, and he was released or untied.

Q: What was your role in this? Did you go to your counterpart and say "don't do it?"

GREGG: No I didn't. We were able to tell the ambassador that I can't go into details about that, but it was KCIA that had kidnapped Kim Dae Jung.

Q: Well then what did he do?

GREGG: What did he do? Habib made a representation to the Korean government saying it is your own agency that has done this, and you damn well better keep him alive or it is going to be a tremendous spot on your escutcheon and it will do huge damage to our relations.

Q: When you arrived there, what was your impression as station chief of dealing with the KCIA. During part of the time when you were doing this, I was in Athens as consul general there. I had you know, very much the distinctive question that we were very much, very close to the Greek junta and their intelligence organization. In fact too close. I mean, could you describe the relationship?

GREGG: Well it was a very difficult relationship because we had KCIA federally penetrated. Which was one of my major jobs because it was an organization basically out of control. I found very quickly that they talked about North Korea as a threat but their real effort was in stemming any kind of dissent within South Korea. That led to one of the major events in my CIA career, because after it became known that KCIA had kidnapped Kim Dae Jung, riots broke out on a number of campuses including Seoul University, which is the leading university in Korea. And the KCIA arrested an American-trained Korean professor named Che, accused him of stirring up these riots on the campus, and either tortured him to death, or tortured him to a point where he jumped out of a window to avoid further torture. We also knew that. We knew exactly what had happened. So I reported that back to my headquarters. I was received and noted, and I then sent a message back saying that I wanted to protest this because I felt that it was absolutely unacceptable.

I was told that I had a message from a man named Ted Shackley who was my boss. "Stop trying to save the Koreans from themselves. That is not your job. Your job is to report what is going on." So I disobeyed orders, and I told CIA this. They know it, so this is not a secret from the agency. My other contact was the head of the presidential protective force, which would be the equivalent of our secret service. He is a man for whom I have quite a lot of respect. He was sort of a Korean samurai type. He did not like Lee Hu Rak. I knew that. So I went to him, and I said, "I am speaking personally. I have no authorization to do this. I am just speaking on my own, but I want to tell you how badly I feel about what was done to Professor Che by the Korean CIA. I came here on the assumption that I would be working with the Korean CIA against our common enemy North Korea, and here I find that they are much more intent on keeping dissent under control in South Korea." I said, "I am very unhappy working with an organization that does that sort of thing." That is about all I said. He took notes and thanked me. A week later, Lee Hu Rak was fired. He went into hiding, and was found in the Caribbean and was brought back and I think was put into jail. He is now a potter. The replacement that they put in was a man named Chin Shik Su, a former justice minister. He had me over and he said, "Mr. Gregg, I want you to know that I am going to be as much against those who break the law on behalf of this government as I am going to be against those who break the law against this government." One of his first acts was a proscription against torture. Now I think that is one of the best things I did as a CIA officer. I am very glad I did it and it I think was a major step in the relationship, certainly between our intelligence services and eventually between our countries.

Q: That was probably, Ted Shackley was well know for his time in Vietnam. In fact he was a major figure there. Was he back in Washington?

GREGG: Yes, he was chief of the Far East division at that time. I have had trouble with Shackley in Vietnam.

Q: In his book, Ambassador Lilley talks about working with Shackley in Laos. What was your impression of Shackley? Where was he coming from?

GREGG: Well he was a very effective hard line intelligence officer. I think he fully expected to be director until he ran afoul of a guy named Wilson who was more ruthless than he was.

Q: But was this almost sort of the ambiance of the CIA-KCIA relationship at the time. You just observed that you didn't get too involved in what they were doing.

GREGG: Well our job was to make sure that they didn't do anything crazy that could start a war with North Korea. I discovered and we eventually put a stop to the nuclear program. They got submarines when they weren't supposed to get them.

Q: Were we concerned that Park Chung Hee might lunge to the North?

GREGG: Yes. This was you know, five years after the Blue House raid.

Q: You might explain what the Blue House raid was?

GREGG: Well this incident was where a group of North Koreans dressed in South Korean uniforms infiltrated into Seoul, got close to the presidential mansion, Blue House, and all but one were killed. They tried to assassinate Park Chung Hee, and killed an awful lot of South Koreans before they went down. The North Koreans seized the Pueblo that same year. It is now known that the South Koreans trained a retaliatory force which at the last moment was stopped from going into North Korea to assassinate Kim Il Sung. So it was a very tense tough kind of relationship.

There were incidents along the DMZ and our ability to defend the peninsula if we had been attacked was very questionable. General Hollingsworth was there as commander of the joint ROK-U.S. I Corps. He and I had been together in Vietnam at the time of the attack in Easter of 1972. He was a tough profane combat general. He and I were very close. I had been his intelligence advisor at a very tough time in Vietnam and had given him a lot of information which he had used, so he and I liked each other immensely. I remember standing with him on the bank, of I guess, the Imjin River. We looked up north and he had a lot of Korean generals with him. He said, "We are going to kill every son of a bitch to the north end of the FEBA. Not one of those bastards is going to set foot in South Korea." That is what they loved to hear. Then he would get with my by himself and he would say, "Well I wish that were true. We are outgunned, outmuscled. I don't think we have a chance of defending Seoul." So it was a very tense time.

Q: Well I think the general feeling in the long run was the might of the West's air power and all that would prevail, but it was not going to be an easy task.

GREGG: Absolutely not. People forget that when the line was drawn and Korea was divided, the Korean peninsula is quite like the Italian peninsula. You have served there. The North has got mineral wealth and industry and the South was poor and agricultural. When the dividing line was made, the assumption was that North Korea would always be the stronger half. There has been a

complete reversal of that.

Q: At the time you were there, this is the '73 to '75 period. How, economically, how was the balance between North and South Korea?

GREGG: I don't think we really knew. The South Koreans were beginning to make ships. They were beginning to make their first car which looked as though it was going to be a disaster. North Korea was very powerful militarily. They were getting aid from both the Soviet Union and China. Kim Il Sung was a master at not getting drawn in to either orbit totally and was able to play one off against the other. So the term economic basket case was originated in South Korea.

Q: Applying to South Korea.

GREGG: Yes. So I think the feeling in the early 70's was that the North was still the more powerful half of the peninsula.

Q: Well were we getting any reading at all on the mindset of the North Koreans?

GREGG: No, It was opaque. The North Koreans were almost unapproachable. Few were recruited in dismal places in Africa but it was impossible to communicate with them once they went home. No, it was a very poor insight that we had.

Q: Was there the feeling, ...I mean Kim Il Sung... we are talking about 50 years now since the truce. There has always been the feeling that Kim Il Sung might suddenly attack. What was sort of the attack alert while you were there?

GREGG: We discovered the first tunnel that was being dug under the DMZ. I don't know how many were dug. It was a monstrous task. These were, you know, going to be invasion channels. I remember on the golf course I used to play, every fairway has poles that would be stuck up at night to keep gliders from landing. There was a curfew in Seoul.

Q: Yes. It was great if you had teenage kids, which I did.

GREGG: Yes. So there was a constant tension, a feeling that the North might come south.

Q: And there was an air raid alert once a month. Tanks in the street and all that.

GREGG: Yes, that's right.

Q: Well, what about the Korean military? Were you looking at the Korean military or was that somebody else's job?

GREGG: Well the military attaché that was his primary job. There was, and it was interesting that in both the case of Park Chung Hee and later on Chung Du Won, these were generals who had not been close to the United States. These were very nationalistic generals whom we did not know very much about. There were cavalries of generals that had very strong allegiances. There

was always the question of a coup occurring which did occur after Park Chung Hee was assassinated. But my primary focus was on the Korean CIA and on North Korea.

Q: Where did the Korean CIA get its people? Was there a recruiting...

GREGG: Yes, they had a recruiting system. Some of them, there was horrendous corruption on the part of some of the senior people. They had a couple of good people that I got to know, and they produced a man who later became ambassador to the United States, had come up through the ranks. So they attracted some good people. It was a mixture just as our CIA was but with more bad than good.

Q: Well were we looking at the opposition parties and all this, I mean from the CIA viewpoint, or was this left to the political side of the Embassy?

GREGG: Park Chung Hee stayed in office a long time. He was scared by the election that he almost lost to Kim Dae Jung. The election system was fixed so that he was assured of election as many times as he wanted to be president. One of the unforgettable times I had with him was in November of 1974. His wife had been assassinated earlier that year by a North Korean who tried to kill the president. The President ducked behind a bullet proof podium. He was making a speech, and the assassin killed his wife. But Gerald Ford had come through on his way to Vladivostok, and they had a very good meeting. Kissinger was with him.

So Park invited the ambassador, who was Dick Snyder at that point, and I guess it was General Stilwell who was head of the U.S. Forces Korea and me to play golf. I said a few things to Park Chung Hee. I had told my counterpart in the presidential protective force that I think one of the problems with President Park is he doesn't have a minister of bad news. He is very anxious. He just gets people to tell him what they think he wants to hear. So Park said something to me in Japanese, "I hear you think I need a minister of bad news." I said, "Yes, I think every strong leader does." Then at the dinner after the golf, it was astonishing because the minister of defense was there, and the general was there. They all sat like school boys with Pak at the head of the table. There was a long silence. I thought my Lord, what a waste. So I said to the president, I said, "Do you ever equate yourself with Kamal Ataturk of Turkey?" The reason I asked that is that was a man who had all power and he systematically created an opposition party and really dragged Turkey toward democracy, and is their greatest living hero still to this day. So Park sort of looked at me in sort of a rattlesnake might look at a rabbit, and said, "Well I don't know too much about Kamal Pasha, but I want to do for Korea what he did for Turkey, that is keep it militarily secure and make it economically powerful." Then he went on and said, "I am not going to stay in power forever. Some people have said that I have already stayed too long, and perhaps if I hadn't run for president last time, perhaps my wife would still be alive." So we all took that as indicating that he wasn't going to run for the presidency again, but he did. He just had worn out his welcome, and it was a subsequent head of the KCIA who assassinated him, an astonishing turn of events.

Q: When you think about all the efforts there, were there forces in this '73 to '75 time, were there forces stirring in Korea that looked like they were sponsored by the North Koreans at all?

GREGG: There was talk of that. We felt that there were agents from the North that had gone in, that it had been infiltrated. We never felt that they were able to reach out, or if some were caught by local people, the unknown feeling was how much influence they had on campuses because there were riots on campuses. Because the anti-American feeling was quite strong in some student groups, it was sort of blamed on the North. Even when I was ambassador in '89 to '93. So they certainly were trying to influence things in the South, but we never were able to really expose, not at least while I was there, a major successful effort to that end.

Q: Did you get involved even indirectly in the efforts of the KCIA to operate in the United States on Koreans living in the United States?

GREGG: No, we would be absolutely against that. Absolutely not.

Q: I mean I was just wondering whether the during this particular time you were station chief you were telling the KCIA to cut it out or something. Were things of that nature happening?

GREGG: The only think I remember about that is when Kim Dae Jung had been in the United States and speaking critically of Park Chung Hee, he had been harassed by goons who we felt had been stirred up by the KCIA. I think the agency back there through its liaison told them to knock that off.

Q: How did you find you fitted within the embassy?

GREGG: Oh, I had a very excellent relationship. I was a pretty strong tennis player at that point, and I used to play tennis with, Habib and I got along wonderfully, and Dick Snyder and I got along wonderfully. I played tennis and golf with him. I was, you know, I was declared. Everybody in town knew that I was station chief. But I went out of my way, there had been a time when the station chief in Korea was more powerful than the ambassador, and I made absolutely clear that that was not the way I operated. I told the ambassador everything I was doing. I had a really excellent relationship with everybody.

Q: What was your impression, ...how did Phil Habib operate?

GREGG: Well, he had a sense of humor. He had a tremendous sense of leadership. He called me and he said, "You know there is only one rule that I have for you, and that is you will not see a man named Tongsun Park." This was a man who had been given a tremendous amount of money who was trying to buy his way into favor here in the United States, and he had found some willing takers on the part of some Congressmen and so forth. Phil Habib just hated him. (Editor's Note: Tongsun Park was at the center of a corruption scandal investigation begun in 1977 by the House Standards Committee of the 95th Congress which implicated congressmen in taking money or gifts from agents of the South Korean government.)

Q: Did he get involved with Suzie? I think there was a young lady Suzie something or other?

GREGG: No I didn't. Actually Pak was very, I had a funny invitation to meet somebody very important, and I wasn't told who it was. I went with my antenna up, and it was Tongsun Park. I

just said, "Look this doesn't work. The ambassador has said I am not to see you and that is it." I walked out, and I told Phil. He cussed him out and said, "That son of a bitch." I thought he was terrific. He was living in the old style Korean house there, and it was about to fall down. He insisted that the embassy residence be built Korean style. It was, and it is an absolutely magnificent residence. Have you seen it?

Q: Oh yes, I have gone there many times. It wasn't much fun to live in for some of the ambassadors because everything is sort of out in the open.

GREGG: We loved it, and I thought it was just terrific. I remember waking up or going to bed after one of the many receptions that we had where everybody was raving about it. I said, "Let's name this house Habib House for Phil." So I sent a cable into the department. I knew the chief administration. He is a retired navy captain. I said, "Sweep all of the inevitable bureaucratic concerns out of your way, and let's name this Habib, House." Silence. No response. Three or four months later Phil died, and I sent another message in. I said, "For crying out loud, let's do it so it can be announced at his funeral." Silence. So I sent a third message in saying "What the hell is wrong with you people there." They said it takes an act of Congress to formally name a building. So I just put a plaque up on the front door saying "This is Habib House" and I put a plaque up on the gate, and it is now Habib House. I had had huge admiration for him. He had been in Vietnam. He was just deal honest, and a great leader. Everybody that knew him just admired him immensely.

Q: How did you relate to the political section?

GREGG: I had some very good friends. I am having lunch with a man who was political counselor, Paul Cleveland, today. He and I became lifelong friends.

Q: Give Paul my regards.

GREGG: Okay, I will. There was really no tension at all. There were some of the FSOs saying: oh you guys, you have much more in the way of expense accounts than we do, the inevitable kind of stuff. I would say look, the way we gather information is the most inefficient, expensive way there is. We are just trying to get what is not being given to us through diplomacy, and in those days, there is a tremendous amount. It was fascinating to me to go back as ambassador in '89. I knew the chief of station very well. In three and a half years there, he did his job very well. I don't think he told me one thing that was of any particular surprise or value, because the relationship had matured. The military and we were much closer. We were working more harmoniously with the Korean CIA.

We still are not very good at getting people into the North, but they had stopped trying to acquire illegal weapons systems. The nuclear program had been ended, and the relationship had matured. It was a much closer alliance than before. There was a real need for CIA to do its thing when I was there, like stopping the nuclear program and saving Kim Dae Jung's life. I mean those were two big deals.

Q: Did you observe the relationship between Habib and was it General Hollingsworth?

GREGG: Well it was Stilwell. He was the guy in Seoul. Hollingsworth was up north. I think Hollingsworth and Habib would have gotten along just fine. They were both rough cut diamonds in the rough. Stilwell had a very prickly relationship with Habib, because I think there was still remnants of the rivalry between the army, the UN command and the embassy.

Q: How did you find Snyder?

GREGG: Fine, excellent. I liked him, and I had a very good relationship with him and am still very close friends to his widow.

Q: He was sort of the prime architect of the reversion of Okinawa as a real Japanese hand. How did you find, did you see anything between Stilwell and Snyder?

GREGG: Yes, some of the same under trappings.

Q: It wasn't the greatest.

GREGG: No, it was not. I think there was some real sort of mutual hostility. Stilwell, for example, when I reported some things on the Korean army, he would argue with me and say well that is not true. Because he wanted me to think that he knew everything that was being done, and that nothing was being done that he didn't approve of, and that was not the case.

Q: Did you get any feeling for the Korean military?

GREGG: Yes, I used to play golf with the generals. I liked them. The guys I got to know, I liked because they made them selves accessible to me. They were westernized; they spoke English. I never learned Korean. I could speak Japanese to them, the older ones. But no I made some, ...Pak Sey Jik, the guy who made the Olympics, he and I became very close friends. There was a Tuesday Morning golf club. The Korean generals and the American general and me, yes, I got along with them very well.

Q: Golf was a very important aspect of diplomacy, and frankly a lot of the Far East.

GREGG: Yes, very much so.

Q: It is an interesting...

GREGG: Two of my favorite Korean stories come from the golf course. One, I had a beautiful young caddy who caddied for me every Tuesday morning, rain, sleet or snow. I remember one sleeting morning we were out playing golf and my eyes were watering and my nose was running, and my glasses were just in fog, and she stood there looking as she had just stepped out of a band box. I said to her, "Miss Kim, why is my nose running and yours isn't?" She said, "Because your nose is so big and mine is so small."

Then the second one was when I was ambassador, and we were playing. This was a beautiful

spring morning. We teed off at the crack of dawn, and there was still a moon very visible in the sky. I turned to this caddy who was 50 years old and plain as a mud fence and I said, "Oh, that moon makes me feel very romantic." She said, "Okay with me but what will your wife say?" So anyway, but no, I got to know a lot of the military people. General Kung who later became prime minister, was one of my close friends.

Q: Were we concerned at the time that the military might try playing games with a naval maneuver? You know what I mean, the naval aspect was always rather dangerous. I mean the North Koreans would come down. I don't know if they had any during this first period, if they had any submarine incursions.

GREGG: Yes, there was the Pydo island an extension of the MLL out there, a very complicated piece of water. That was one of the more amusing things because we learned that the Korean navy had acquired a midget submarine from I think it was Germany. They weren't supposed to have any submarines. I went to the admiral who was in charge of our naval forces. His name was Henry Morgan, wonderful name for an admiral. I said, "Well, let's figure out a way to get the South Koreans to tell you that they have this submarine." I said, "I'll let you know when they are going to exercise it, and you can launch several American aircraft, and then you are obligated to tell the South Koreans that you have spotted an unidentified submarine, and since the South Koreans don't have any submarines, it must be a North Korean submarine, and you are about to attack it." So that is what we did.

GREGG: Well, during the Carter Administration I think that probably the American ambassador who had the most difficult tour of anyone I could think of is Bill Weinstein who has written a book about this, because Jimmy Carter wanted to pull all our troops out of South Korea. This was regarded as a mistake by other neighboring countries.

Q: All of us. I mean I was in the embassy at the time, and you know, we were horrified.

GREGG: So that came to a halt with Reagan. The first foreign visitor or chief of state that Reagan had was Chun Doo-hwan. The price of that visit was Kim Dae Jung's life. He had been sentenced to death for, what is the word I am groping for? Sedition, treason. I had gone out with Secretary of defense Brown to talk with Chun Doo-hwan about Kim Dae Jung. Brown said, "I don't think Chun Doo-hwan is going to bring Kim Dae Jung up." I said, "Oh I think he will, Mr. Secretary." It was the first thing that Chun brought up when we went to see him. I have a hell of a problem with Kim Dae Jung," he said. "Every single general in my army wants him dead. Most of the Korean people want him dead. I know that you don't want me to kill him. I know that if I do kill him, I am going to have a problem with you, so it is a real problem for me."

The only thing that we told him that made any sort of impression on him was that we knew the North Koreans were preparing a tremendous propaganda exploitation of this. I told him that. Richard Allen who was Reagan's first National Security Advisor picked up the ball. Chun wanted desperately to be legitimized by a visit to the White House. So the trade off was if he saw Reagan, Kim Dae Jung would be, his life would be spared. That was the trade off. We did

everything we could to downplay the visit. We had a lunch rather than a dinner. We used all these diplomatic niceties, but Reagan was such a courteous person, you know there was a picture with his arm around Chun, and Chun got what he wanted.

RICHARD A. ERICSON, JR.
Deputy Chief of Mission
Seoul (1973-1976)

Ambassador Richard A. Ericson, Jr. was born in 1923. He enrolled in Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1941, but did not graduate until 1945, due in part to being drafted in the U.S. Army in 1945. In addition to his service in Japan, ambassador Ericson also served in England, Iceland, and Korea. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 27, 1995.

ERICSON: I went from the Japan Desk to DCM in Seoul. Interestingly enough, I got my orders for Seoul one week after my unpleasant Thanksgiving Day 1973 conversation with Kissinger. We did not part cheerfully that day, but I think my transfer was just a coincidence. I was overdue. By 1973, I had been on the Japan Desk for over three years, which was then the record for longevity on the Desk. I was looking for an overseas assignment and would have gone happily to either Tokyo or Seoul. Tokyo simply was not open. Tom Shoesmith was the DCM and had only been on the job for a year or so. Frankly, having recently been Political Counselor in both places -- a lot of people find this hard to believe -- I preferred Seoul. I found Seoul professionally a much more lively, much more interesting, more challenging kind of a place and frankly much easier to work in.

You could freewheel in Seoul and because of the American position in Korea, Koreans at all levels vied for American support, vied for the impression that they were close to the Americans and were perfectly willing to discuss some of the most intimate details of their political situation. For a political officer this was absolutely great. Tokyo, on the other hand, was stratified, formal, and very much a closed society in many ways and an enormous place with a huge variety of interests. The position of the United States in Tokyo was not anything like the way it was in Seoul. Besides, Seoul had a golf course right in the middle of the city, and other things of that kind.

Habib was the ambassador in Seoul at that point. He had had a very serious heart attack some months before, although he was apparently recovering quite well. I looked forward to the opportunity of working for him also. Ingersoll had returned and become Deputy Secretary in the Department. He was a businessman and a very fine ambassador. He had been replaced by another political appointee, Jim Hodgson, who simply did not appear to be as appealing a person to work with or for as Phil Habib.

I received my orders shortly after my meeting with Kissinger on Thanksgiving Day, 1973, stayed home for Christmas and reached Seoul in late December. I knew Habib was going to be absent and that Frank Underhill, my predecessor, was under pressure to leave to take up his new job as

ambassador to Malaysia. So I was told I had to get out there before the end of the calendar year. Underhill stayed for a week or two and then I became Charge while Habib finished his home leave.

By early 1974, the political situation in Korea was complicated . It had changed from the time I had left in 1968. Park Chung Hee had made his decision to remain in power, which was still up in the air when I left in 1968, although there was a lot of speculation about it. In 1972 he had forcibly changed the 1963 constitution and replaced it with the Yushin constitution, which in effect gave him the right to run for reelection in perpetuity. And he had consolidated his position very considerably. In 1968 he was still playing factions within his own support group against each other -- playing a kind of divide and conquer role between Kim Chong-pil and his supporters and members of his younger military group on the one hand and a motley collection of senior LDP politicians, retired military people, business types and former North Koreans -- a loose coalition held together primarily by their animosity toward KCP. Chong Il Kwan was thought to be on the fringes of that group. By 1974, Park had pretty much taken care of that internal rivalry, having consolidated his power to the point where he felt it was no longer necessary to put up a counterweight to any potentially threatening support group. As a matter of fact, he had taken on KCP as prime minister. He also wasn't worrying so much about the opposition. The NDP was under somewhat better control and he had found ways of controlling the students and their demonstrating propensities.

He was at that time, I suppose, in about as strong control as he had ever been, but there were problems on the horizon. One of them was the withdrawal from Vietnam and what that meant to Korea. Another one was economic dislocations which weren't looming; they were actually present -- the world wide petroleum crisis of the early seventies. Another one, of course, was a rather pervasive questioning of the American commitment to Korea because of the US withdrawal in Vietnam.

Economically the country seemed to have adjusted fairly well to the oil crisis, but it had obviously cost them dearly in terms of energy supplies since South Korea had no energy resources of any kind at all, other than imported petroleum. This inspired certain thoughts about nuclear power and all of its advantages and also set them off on a desperate search for oil resources of their own.

I think the US administration was deeply concerned about maintaining our security position in Asia in the face of congressional and popular disillusionment with the whole Vietnam episode and American involvement overseas. This took the form of major threats to our assistance programs, for example, which affected Korea directly. But our problem was how to maintain American security interests in northeast Asia and the rather shaky US-Japan-Korea cooperative mode in the face of this kind of thing.

It was hard to convince Koreans that our security commitment remained as firm as ever after the Vietnam pull out, to which, incidentally, we made them a party. It cut rather more deeply in Korea than it did virtually in any other Asian country, because they had to withdraw their own forces, two divisions and a brigade, and it was not very pleasant for them to leave the field as they did. They started to pull in their horns after we told them to lighten up on their harsh tactics

while I was in Seoul in the 1965-68 period. They went down there with the idea that they were going to kill communists and they would kill anybody else who stood in their way. Some of their tactics were a little extreme and, as I mentioned earlier, we at one time requested formally that they be less aggressive in ridding their territory of communists. Vietnam did develop into a considerable economic advantage for Korea, but they kept on taking casualties. Don't misunderstand me; they did their job but they were not taking anywhere like the casualties as they did in the early days, nor were they giving anything like the number of casualties. They settled down to see how they could exploit, it seems to me, their presence in Vietnam. The overseas remittances, payment of their troops in Vietnam, were a significant part of Korean foreign exchange earnings. However, they also learned how to exploit their presence in Vietnam by sending construction firms and civilian construction personnel down there. In the 1965-68 period, it was the individual who went down to work for Morrison-Knudsen who sent the money back to his family. They were not all that active in terms of corporate activity. But by 1973 Korean firms had appeared in Vietnam as contractors in their own name, employing exclusively Koreans and doing a fair amount of construction and maintenance work in Vietnam in support of the war effort and, of course, being paid by the United States to do so. They were a bargain, I think. The Koreans did excellent work and did it much more cheaply than most anyone else -- including Americans -- who could have done it.

So, by early 1974, foreign exchange earnings from the Vietnam operation had in large part offset some of the difficulties they had had from the oil crisis. Thus the loss of Vietnam was more than just a military and psychological defeat for ROK; it threatened also a major part of their overseas economic activities. But it didn't cause them to collapse because by that time their skills had been developed to the point where Koreans began to take construction jobs all through Asia and South Asia. And, in the next three or four years, we saw them cropping up all through the Arab world, for example, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where they earned a great deal more than they did from their South Vietnam operations.

By 1973, it was obvious that things were winding down because that whole period was devoted to the Vietnamization of the war and that involved at the very end us going to the Koreans and asking them to contribute equipment to the South Vietnamese army and air force to enable permit them -- in theory -- to defend their country by themselves. We asked ROK to give them a fair number of Northrop F-5s. We promised to compensate them, of course, by providing them with better fighters. Nothing could have been done without congressional approval, of course, but Congress was very critical of everything we were doing in Vietnam, including the involvement of the Koreans in this kind of scheme. Congress was threatening not to continue the aid programs at their previous levels and this in turn threatened our ability to compensate the Koreans, making them antsy about releasing that equipment, although they did.

The main body of Korean forces left Vietnam before the great debacle, of course. By the time of the Vietnamese collapse, the Koreans were long gone. The Korean troop presence was being drawn down rather rapidly. There was still something of a Korean presence in April 1975, because the Koreans did send their two LSTs down at the time of the pull out from Saigon, in order to take back everything that remained of their effort in Vietnam, including personnel. They also took a fair number of Vietnamese on these LSTs on their final trip back to Seoul. They put them in a concentration camp because they didn't know what else to do with them. They made

this humanitarian gesture and then suddenly realized they had taken some inassimilable people into their midst. They assumed the Vietnamese would all go to the United States, but it didn't appear that it was going to happen quite that easily.

When a newsman asked one of these Vietnamese refugees how the trip back had gone -- had they been treated well by the Koreans? -- he said, "Yes, but it was a little rough sleeping out on the deck all the time." The reporter asked, "Why were you sleeping out on the deck; why didn't you sleep down in the hold?" "Well, it was full of cars and the Koreans didn't want us down there." Apparently the Koreans loaded the holds with every modern vehicle they could lay their hands on and had brought them back to Korea for dispersal through whatever means the powers-to-be saw fit. They evidently treated their Vietnamese guests rather well, but didn't allow them to sleep in the cars.

That was sort of typical of the way the Koreans operated in the final days in Vietnam. They had turned into PX raiders. They were allowed to ship a certain amount of appliances home and Koreans in Vietnam were buying television sets and refrigerators, etc. through the PX that they would never use in Vietnam, but they were all sending them all home.

Anyway, they changed their reputation from an overly enthusiastic fighters to overly enthusiastic PX raiders. But this only reflected what Korean wives were doing back home. We didn't make a great deal of it. The Koreans in Seoul knew what was going on; they were part of it. They had very close relationships with the American military and got a lot of information through American military channels. They were also working frantically in Washington. It was a period of high activity on the part of the Korean Embassy in Washington, with congressmen and the Department. So they didn't need much in the way of individual explanations from us.

All I can remember about that period in 1975 was that there was a severe loss of confidence in the United States and a palpable change of the attitude of most Koreans towards the United States when that pullout was finally announced and the pictures of the helicopters taking off from our Embassy in Saigon became available in Korea.

Again, going back to the earlier period, they thought they knew how to fight in Vietnam and they saw the United States as choosing not to fight -- the way the fighting had to be done in Asia against Asian communists. When we finally pulled out they began to wonder if they were to be next. That persisted throughout the rest of my tour in Korea. The Koreans constantly sought reassurance that the United States commitment to them was going to remain firm and even when it was given they didn't entirely believe it. They set about to ensure their own security as best they could.

Habib left for the Department in August 1974 to become Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs and I will go into that a little bit later. In the period between January and August he was absent and I was Chargé a fair amount of the time. I forget what it was that took Phil away. He was, of course, on home leave at first and then in the spring, when we had a succession of significant congressional visits. He was away and I had the honor of escorting various congressmen to the Blue House to hear President Park on the subject of US-Korean relations. But Phil did leave finally in August and was replaced by Sneider, who came in September.

Criticism of Park was growing in the US. Park took the first step in the series of actions that revived such criticism shortly after I became Chargé attaché -- brand new and wet behind the ears -- in January, 1974. No sooner had Underhill departed when Kim Dong-jo called me in. He was then Foreign Minister, having just returned after a tour as Ambassador in Washington. He told me that within the next two days or so the President would institute emergency measures, which were provided for under the Yushin constitution. The emergency measures provision gave the President authority to proclaim a state of emergency and to take virtually any action, such as arresting people deemed a threat to the national security -- for almost any cause -- without warrants, holding them without trial and various other unpleasant things. Kim said that Park was very disturbed over the situation in Saigon and the loss of public support for Vietnam, at the unrest on college campuses, the anti-Park activism within the religious community, and the opposition's stridency and intransigence in the National Assembly. The North Koreans, viewing these signs, were obviously ready to capitalize. According to Park, the country was in greater danger than it had been for a long, long time and emergency measures under these situations were justified. He asked what the response of the United States government and the attitude of the American people might be towards such a move.

It was kind of a heavy load to place before a brand new Chargé. I told him that I would certainly transmit the information to Washington for any official comment our government might be disposed to make, but speaking on a personal basis I felt that the reaction would be almost universally negative, that this would be seen by the opponents of Korea as unjustifiable, and that Korea's supporters in the US would have very little ammunition with which to deal with charges that the ROK government was guilty of oppression and violations of human rights and that sort of thing. I said our response would probably be quite negative. Kim obviously expected exactly that.

My message went off to Washington. We did eventually express dismay to them that they felt such a step was necessary and I believe we asked them to keep the emergency measures in effect for as short a period as possible. But they went their merry way. The President did promulgate his emergency measures and he did take action under them. I don't recall if he did immediately, but they did begin arresting the most obvious dissidents under the guise of maintaining a strong defensive posture and preserving national unity in the face of a growing communist threat.

When Habib returned it was a *fait accompli*. He obviously expressed his views, as they would have expected, personally but not officially.

Many of the Korean opposition had an affiliation with the Christian church and were the most vociferous opponents of the Park regime. Two men in particular come to mind. One was a well-known poet -- Kim Chi-ha -- who had committed the grave sin of publicly expressing his attitude toward Park and his government in no uncertain terms. He was promptly jailed for violations of the emergency measures and became a cause célèbre in the US. He was going to be tried but his trial, it seems to me, hung fire for a long, long time. I don't remember the ending. Park's policy towards these things was to let the courts decide what the punishment was going to be and then to reduce it and make himself look a little better in the process. The courts, of course, were eager to please him; it seemed that if you were arrested and charged with something of this nature you

were *ipso facto* guilty and the courts were going to find you so and give you a rather stiff sentence, which under the emergency provisions could include death. But Park would always alter the sentence, reduce it, and the person involved generally would not serve anything like the amount of time he had originally been sentenced to. But this poet's trial hung fire for a long time and provided a lot of ammunition for the opposition elements to base their protests on. His case was always raised by Congressmen who came to visit at the time.

The other was Kim Tong-kil. There was this sister and brother team, very well known scholars. She -- Kim Ok-Gil -- was the president of Ehwa University -- at that time the largest women's college in the world in terms of student enrollment. It was a Methodist-affiliated school founded by American missionaries. Kim Tong-kil was a professor of American studies or history at Yonsei, another church-affiliated university. He had the temerity to give a speech in which he referred sarcastically to Park's authoritarian ways of doing business and questioned the legitimacy of his rule. The speech had been given a lot of attention in the press because Kim was a very senior scholar, a class which enjoys very high status in Confucian societies like Korea. Kim was not an activist oppositionist member, really. But he had questioned the legitimacy of Park's claim to rule, something certain to raise Park's ire. Park would accept criticism of all kinds on any policy issue, but would not brook the slightest question on this subject. Kim's remarks were deemed punishable under the emergency measures. You could not criticize the President under the emergency measures. The emergency measures purported to say that you could not criticize the Constitution, meaning the Yushin Constitution, and you could not advocate the overthrow of the ROK government. But these were pretty broadly interpreted. If you were criticizing the President, you were advocating the overthrow of the government. Anyway, Kim was thrown in jail and given a sentence for something like 20 years. He was put into solitary confinement and not permitted any visitors. And his plight drew the attention of a lot of American scholars and visiting congressmen. Rather ironically it was probably Kim who probably provided Park with much of the information Park used in his attempts to persuade visiting American congressmen that what he was doing was right and necessary because the situation was akin to that faced by Lincoln during the Civil War. Kim was above all a Lincoln scholar and may well have educated Park about Lincoln's suspension of *habeas corpus*, and the arrests without warrants of American dissidents during that period. Park was very fond of throwing this at every American visitor who tried to persuade him to be less repressive.

So, there were these two famous people, but also many members of opposition groups -- including religious groups -- who were picked up, put in jail, detained for a period of time and then usually released fairly soon. But they did go to jail and the fact that they were in jail inspired protest demonstrations by their support groups.

In this connection, let me say one word about Sneider and the missionaries. Richard Sneider arrived as ambassador in September, 1974, about a month after Habib had left. Sneider was very capable in many, many respects. He had a wider breadth of interest than Habib and he got into more aspects of Embassy operation than Habib. But he came primed to be an active ambassador, and at his first meeting with the American missionaries, which they requested in order to present their views on the human rights violations of the Park regime, Sneider chose to deliver a lengthy exposition of his own thoughts on the importance of the ROK to the US, the security threats in northeast Asia and the difficulties inherent in operating in this kind of an atmosphere, etc. He

emphasized his concern about human rights but said it all had to be balanced, etc. This didn't go over too well with the missionaries, who tended to be one dimensional in their thinking. The fact that Sneider left before they had time to deliver their own views also rankled. Sneider had another appointment and left after about an hour and a half, during which he did most of the talking. They felt cheated, and trivialized, and let it be known. It got back to the Embassy very quickly that they were very unhappy and upset at this interview. So, the new administration in the Embassy got off on the wrong foot with the American missionaries and it was something, as I recall, that we were really never able to overcome.

People have asked what the American Embassy role was in mitigating the human rights problems. It has to be remembered that we had seventy five other major problems on our plate at the time, including the actual withdrawal from Vietnam and its aftermath. We also had a horrendous problem for a while with a dangerous situation between Japan and Korea, which I will tell you about a little later.

We were not activists; we did not officially press the Koreans on human rights. We did take every opportunity we could to tell every Korean that we could that we thought, that all Americans thought and the American press was certainly indicating, that what Park had done in promulgating the emergency measures and taking action under them, was excessive. Park was being overly controlling and was violating human rights. That, in a democratic country or one that was working towards democracy, Americans did not expect this kind of thing to happen. This went against all of our values, all of our instincts, etc. And that it could not help but fail to influence attitudes in significant sectors of the American public, including the Congress, and the media, to develop anti-ROK government attitudes and that this in turn would impinge heavily on our material and psychological support for the Korean government in all of its doings. That it was a very negative thing and not in their interest to behave this way. But did we go up and take Park by the lapels and say, "You can't do this kind of thing"? No.

The major issue of 1974 was the ROK-Japan imbroglio. I never saw a great deal of playback from the American media on this and I have always meant to look up the newspapers of those days and see whether anybody paid any attention to it. I doubt they did. It was a bitter squabble between Japan and Korea and was a very complicated, convoluted kind of thing. There were no American correspondents stationed in Korea. Some of them came over during this period for brief visits, but I don't believe many of them reported it on a consistent basis.

It erupted over an attempt to assassinate Park, in which his wife was killed. I mentioned earlier that Park had a phobia about assassination. His fear was an ever-present thing. And when you talk about the Park of these days you have to remember you are talking about Korea. There were people who had differing ideas and who expounded them and who made their impression on the American media, etc. But in Korea there was only one voice that counted -- Park's. I often wondered how this little man -- who probably stood no more than 5' 2" (in his lifters he was 5' 6") -- physically tiny -- how this little Asian Napoleon, if you will, managed to dominate the way that he did, and to maintain the discipline that he did and to gain the respect and awe and fear that he did from his countrymen. He did it by sheer force of will, I guess, and by a willingness to use the control apparatus at his disposal with considerable force and promptitude. He made decisions and he didn't wait. If something went wrong, he corrected it and very quickly. People

lived in fear and trembling of his displeasure, believe me. He was a tough bird to deal with.

Somebody ought to do a really good study of Park someday because he really was a fascinating Asian leader. The American perception of him was of a character who spent 95 percent of his time running around the streets of Seoul beating up on dissidents, throwing them in jail, violating their human rights, and being very nasty in general. Many Koreans looked at him quite differently. They acknowledged that he was an autocratic little bastard and a very difficult man to deal with and not altogether pleasant. But few Koreans -- and it is interesting that in many discussions with American congressmen -- even the most violent of his critics admitted the guy was clean, not crooked, was devoted to the improvement of the standards of living of his country and that he had accomplished miracles in this respect. And the fact of the matter is that Park spent about 95 percent of his time chasing economic and security development -- primarily economic, however, because he thought that was the real basis of Korean security -- and maybe 5 percent of his time chasing dissidents. But chasing the dissidents made the headlines and aroused the liberals in Congress. The big economic headquarters of the Korean government was right next to the Embassy and during my day you would see the presidential guard and other presidential paraphernalia in the parking lot of that building two or three days a week. You knew that Park was in there, asking section chiefs what they were doing about some minor dam project way down in the Kyongsan. He had an intimate familiarity with practically every development project the government was doing.

I mentioned that our AID director during the sixties -- he was Park's economic mentor for a long time -- would have an hour or two with Park every week during which Park would ask him how things work, what questions he should be asking, what answers he would likely get and what he should then ask. He always went two or three steps beyond what any other normal political leader would do. So people well down the line of the Korean government had as much right to fear the President's displeasure as his immediate cabinet members, because he was assiduous in pursuing his economic development program down to their level and personally. I think the astounding progress Korea made as a nation during his time -- going from something in the 16th century to a modern industrial state in a couple of decades -- is a tribute primarily to Park.

Park was very much concerned about the welfare of the farmer. He had sense enough to realize that one of the strongest elements supporting him was the sturdy yeoman out there in the countryside; so he made sure they had their share of the benefits. Everything didn't go to the cities, the industrial workers, the industrial side of the economy. Being from rural areas himself, I think he paid more attention to that than people might have expected. There wasn't a lot of farm unrest. The farm income increased just as rapidly as urban. As a matter of fact we used to argue that income distribution between rural and urban Korea was about as equitable as it is anywhere in the world.

Park, as I say, did fear assassination inordinately. He also had a very strong anti-Japanese side. Part of this, I think, was his feeling that he had to be more anti-Japanese than most people because he had actually served the Japanese so well -- as a teacher in their school system and later as an officer in the Japanese army. He also had gotten involved with two major problems with the Japanese. He was responsible -- and was either condemned or praised for it -- for forcing through the legislation in 1965 that normalized relations with Japan. It took them 20

years following World War II to restore diplomatic relations. That happened in August, 1965, just as I arrived as Political Counselor. The streets were full of students throwing large bricks at the police, and claiming that the monetary reparations Japan would pay were totally inadequate compensation for all that Japan had done to Korea and its people during their occupation and besides Korea should live forever independent of the Japanese. They were very difficult riots to handle but Park put them down with some severity. But he always felt a responsibility for having served the Japanese earlier and so he couldn't be pro-Japanese; he had to continue to demonstrate that he was on guard against the Japanese.

The other problem with the Japanese arose in 1973, before my arrival. Kim Dae Jung, a major opposition leader, had been permitted to leave Korea. He had gone to the United States, but he was in Japan when he gave some inflammatory anti-Park speeches to local Koreans which the press picked up. I don't know if all the details of this episode have been made public or not, but it was common knowledge in Seoul that the ROK CIA seized Kim Dae Jung, spirited him out of Japan on a small boat, and deposited him apparently heavily sedated in his own front yard in Seoul. He woke the next morning to find himself surrounded by familiar sights, amazed at what had happened. He was kept under house arrest for a long, long time. This was, of course, a vicious affront to Japan's sovereign rights. You don't kidnap someone in Japan, especially if you are a Korean, and spirit him out of the country. There is a great deal more to that story, including the role of the United States, which I guess somebody else will have to tell because I was not there and am not totally familiar with the details. But there was a rumor that American agencies had a hand in preventing the ROK CIA from dropping brother Kim over the side on their way home.

The Japanese, of course, demanded apologies or restitution or something. They were very hard on the Koreans. As a result of this the Koreans were forced to send Kim Chong-pil, the Prime Minister, to Japan with a letter addressed to the Japanese Prime Minister in which the Koreans in effect apologized for this affront to Japan's sovereignty. Whatever the letter said, it was galling to the Koreans and to KCP in particular to have to grovel this way, nor did it cause the Japanese to forgive and forget.

So, tensions with Japan were just below the surface on August 15, 1974, which was the nineteen anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan. As a the centerpiece of the celebration, Park was to give the Liberation Day speech at the national theater, then located on the back side of Nam San, the mountain in the center of Seoul. Security was always seemingly pretty tight around these events. Put a crowd of people in an enclosed space with the President and the ROK security people began to get kind of antsy. For this purpose, the Home Minister, a fellow by the name of Chong Song-chol, whom I knew fairly well, and the chief of the presidential security guard, Park Chung-kyu, whom I also knew reasonably well, were in charge of security arrangements. Park Chung-kyu was a very interesting guy in many ways. He looked like an Oklahoma cowboy -- broken-nosed, lean, sinewy, weather-beaten -- obviously a tough character. But he had a strange soft side; he was a serious art collector and a really fine pianist. I once sat in his living room and listened to him play classical selections without reference to any score for about an hour. These two men were responsible for security and there was some dispute with the Seoul city police. The city police were disarmed. They were allowed to patrol the theater grounds but their weapons were taken from them. The speech was to be televised not only nationally but

internationally. CBS had a television crew there and several other international news agencies were going to be taping the speech and presumably showing it in their home countries. Our Ambassador was invited. Habib was within days of leaving, and already had his farewell appointment with Park when this business occurred.

A couple of days earlier a young man named Mun Se-kwan had arrived in Korea from Japan. Of Korean ancestry but a Japanese national under Japanese law, Mun had been born and raised in Osaka and spoke no Korean. And he was a member of the Chosen Soren, the League of Korean Residents, the primary front for North Korea in Japan, on whose behalf he had a mission to assassinate Park. He had obtained a passport from the Japanese government under an assumed name, aided by a couple of Japanese nationals. From somewhere or other he had obtained a pistol, which later proved to have been stolen from the Osaka police department. He had sneaked it through customs, along with a lot of Korean won. He rented a suite in one of Seoul's best hotels and a car of the kind used by cabinet ministers and rich businessmen. He had the chauffeur drive him around Seoul on familiarization trips, acting like a tourist or a businessman. And he paid the driver handsomely to bow obsequiously every time he got out of the car.

Anyway, just before the ceremony was to begin, Mun arrived at the theater in his impressive car with his pistol but no ticket. The driver bowed him out deferentially, and the security people accepted him for the influential Korean he appeared to be and didn't even challenge him. They let him right into the lobby of the building, where people milled around until asked to take their seats because the President was arriving a little early. He entered the theater at the rear of the crowd and found an empty seat in the middle of a row fairly far back in the theater.

The President made his speech from behind an armored lectern placed at the far left of the stage. On the stage was arrayed a large group of Korean dignitaries, including the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the National Assembly, our friend Chong Il Kwan. Madame Yu, the President's wife, was sitting in the middle of this group in the front row, wearing a white dress that contrasted sharply with the sober suits of the men. Park Chung-kyu, the President's security chief, had a chair at the left end of the second row.

Mun remained seated until the President was several minutes into his speech. He then rose and moved toward the aisle, trying to free his pistol as he went. He managed -- if you watch the CBS tape of this you hear can hear a pop as he tries to pull the pistol from his pocket -- to shoot himself in the leg in the process. But he reached the aisle and began to shoot wildly. On hearing the first pop or two, the President dove behind the lectern. We watched this tape several times because, except for the tragic outcome, it was kind of hysterical. Chong Il Kwan initially claimed that he had thrown himself on the President to save him. Well, the tape showed Chong rising off his chair, feet churning the air, and flopping on the floor nowhere near the President. The tapes shows Park Chung-kyu courageously racing toward the front of the stage, desperately trying to free his gun from its holster on his hip, which he failed to do until too late. Anyway, the President wasn't a target anymore and everybody else was diving for the floor except Madame Park, who sat there rather bewildered. The tape shows the back of her head exploding. And no one moved to help her. The first bulletin said that she might live, but if you saw the tape you knew she had no chance.

The security people managed to seize Mun, but not before he had fired five or six shots. They arrested him, talked to him, and said that he confessed to it all -- to being a Chosen Soren member, to having trained for this mission in North Korea, to having gone to North Korea on board a ship that went from Maizuru to Wonsan rather freely and that the pistol and Japanese passport had been obtained with the help of Japanese.

Well, they took Madame Park Yu away and Park, rather surprisingly, resumed his speech. She died at the hospital or before she arrived there. Park afterwards plunged into an emotional pit. He was reportedly grief stricken, not available for a long time to anybody. He drank a lot during this period. Madame Yu was his third wife but quite dear to him and had been a benign influence. Most people respected her mightily. She was a Catholic and stood for many values that most Koreans wanted Park to adopt. While she received rough treatment at his hands from time to time, she was obviously a good influence and personally she was extremely popular. Park did not go to her interment, but the TV cameras got a glimpse of him saying farewell as her cortege left the Blue House. She was interred on a hilltop in the National Cemetery, and her grave became something of a shrine, attracting large numbers of tourists every day. While Park was alive, foreign dignitaries visiting Seoul were expected to pay their respects at the site. Park's emotions were intensified, of course, by the fact that she has died during a North Korean attempt to assassinate him and this time the attempt had originated in Japan. So Park's grief struck a cord in the Korean people as well.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry, upon hearing about Mun's origins and actions, figured "here comes trouble." So they immediately -- and foolishly -- tried a preemptive move by issuing a statement that Japan could acknowledge no moral nor legal responsibility for this affair, or some words to that effect.

The atmosphere in Korea was a chaotic one. The involvement of Japan and North Korea in an attempted assassination of the President and the murder of the President's wife, just set off all kinds of Koreans. Many of them -- Chong Il Kwan, for example -- said that if it were possible he would go up to Pyongyang and kill Kim Il Sung himself. And he wasn't alone. And there was special anger towards Japan. The Japanese statement inspired Lee Bum Suk, who was to be killed by North Koreans himself while on an official visit to Burma, but was Chief of Protocol at this point, to say "If Mao's wife had been killed under similar circumstance by a Chinese resident of Japan, the Japanese would have crawled on their belly from Tientsin to Peking to apologize and grovel in front of Mao. If an American president's wife had been killed by an American communist resident of Japan, the Japanese would have crawled from Seattle to Washington DC. But because we are so despised and looked down upon by the Japanese, they treat us this way. They say they have no responsibility. They demean us; they demean our President." It brought out all the latent anti-Japanese feeling.

The Japanese reaction to events in Seoul was odd . But you have to remember that in Japan, during the occupation for example, whenever anything got stolen, the Japanese assured you it was the Koreans who did it. The Japanese did despise Koreans. Of course, the Japanese had never had satisfaction for the Kim Dae-Tung affair, at least in the way that they wanted to. Kim Chong-pil had come there to deliver a letter, but grudgingly and weren't very happy at what it said, so they thought well, maybe the Japanese. Anyway, whatever the situation, the Japanese

response unnecessarily aroused a hell of a lot of emotion in Korea. And their denial of any responsibility set Park off. He made it clear that he wanted the Japanese to do certain things with respect to this attack. These were in effect to admit their responsibility, to acknowledge that the guy had obtained his pistol in Japan and that the pistol had belonged to the Japanese police, and that he had been given a passport by the Japanese government. Responsibility is a very important word in the Asian culture. It became the central issue in this whole affair. But Park had other things in mind as well. He wanted them to immediately investigate the extent of the involvement of Mun's Japanese helpers and to punish them -- not only that they investigate and try the guilty, but that they punish them. He also demanded that they abolish the Chosen Soren -- that they either abolish it or severely control it -- emasculate it a way that it could never again foment attempts at assassination or the overthrow of his government. And he passed his demands to the Japanese through Kim Dong-Jo. Then he went incommunicado.

The shooting occurred on August 15. Habib was scheduled to leave on the 18th or 19th and had a farewell appointment with Park a day or two before he was due to leave. This was immediately canceled. The question arose whether Habib should stay until the President became available again. Habib thought he should. On the other hand he was anxious to get back to Washington, and Washington was anxious to have him get there. In the end he sent word that he regretted very much the necessity of departing before he could see his old friend again, but in essence he had to go. And he left. That left me as Chargé.

Park, as I said, went incommunicado for a while. And then sometime around August 27 or 28 he came to. At his first meeting with his senior advisors, he asked, as the story goes (I was fed a lot of information during this period by a lot of different people who were very worried), in a deceptively calm manner, how things were going with the Japanese. The reply was, in effect, "Well, we have communicated your desires to them and are awaiting their reply." He exploded -- went right through the roof. He accused the Foreign Minister of everything from laziness to gross incompetence and asked, "Can't anyone do anything? Do I have to do everything myself?" He then took the extraordinary measure summoning the Japanese ambassador, Ushiroku (a very nice fellow but not very assertive and not up to standing up to Park's wrath), saying he would deal with the business personally. Using Kim Tong-jo as his interpreter, he gave Ushiroku what he may have thought was a list of clear-cut demands, although it does not appear that he had them in writing. Park spoke fluent Japanese, but he refused to. He would never demean himself on an occasion like this. Now Kim Tong-jo was not the world's best interpreter; as a matter of fact he proved entirely inadequate in this particular interview. It was all done orally and Ushiroku took notes like mad but he could not understand it all. He went back and sent the message to Tokyo. The Japanese Economic Counselor, Hisahiko Okazaki, whom I knew well from my days on the Desk, called me the next morning and said, "Hey, this thing is going to be very, very difficult because the Ambassador doesn't think he really understood everything the President was saying and isn't really sure what the hell it is that we are supposed to do. Kim Tong-jo was nervous and wasn't explaining himself very clearly. We may not have gotten all of it. What the hell are we going to do?" I said, "I don't know, friend. I will see what I can do to get things clarified for you." However, about that time I was told by telephone we were to stay out of this business. Further instructions from Habib and Kissinger arrived saying that this was between Japan and Korea and we will use our good offices if that is absolutely necessary, but will volunteer absolutely nothing. In essence, we were warned to stay aloof.

It so happened that Park Kun, who was then DCM in the Korean Embassy in Washington and who had been the head of the American Affairs Bureau when I had been Political Counselor before, had come back to Korea right at that point looking for an ambassadorial assignment. He and I went out to play a round of golf the next day -- a Saturday as I recall. I told him what Okazaki had told me, I think, that very morning. I told Park, "The President left the Japanese in something of a quandary here. They really don't know what was said because of Kim Tong-jo's interpreting." After the golf game, Park Kun went up to the Blue House to pay his respects to the Presidential Secretary, Kim Chong-yom, from whom he expected help with his ambassadorial posting. He passed my message to Kim, who promptly led him into the President's office. Several others were summoned and Park Kun was asked to repeat the message to the group. The President erupted again and climbed all over Kim Tong-jo and told him to repeat the demands, this time in writing. So Kim wrote out what he thought the President wanted, called Ushiroku in and gave it to him. Ushiroku duly conveyed it back to Japan.

The thing was settled on September 19, but between the end of August and the 19th of September I think I wrote more telegrams and reports of doings than I have ever written at any other time in my career -- virtually daily there was some development or another. The problem centered on President Park. If you read the press accounts, I suppose you would conclude that this is a dispute between the Republic of Korea and Japan. Actually, it was a question of President Park, personally and individually, as a human being and as a man, how he could be satisfied. It had far less to do with his country really, except insofar as he was the country. People assume that there are all kinds of factors that bear on a nation's deliberations and decisions. In this case there really weren't; it was just Park and his anger and his grief, his feelings about Japan, what resided in the head of this one man. Nobody else could afford to have any emotions or do anything because they were all scared stiff of how Park might react.

Anyway, his demands centered around the question of an appropriate admission by the Japanese of responsibility, the destruction of the Chosen Soren, the arrest and prompt punishment of the instigators of this attempt who were still back in Japan and the promises that the Japanese would see to it that such an event would never ever occur again. Well, all of these things were very difficult for the Japanese to do. Having once said they had no moral or legal responsibility, it was difficult for them to acknowledge any responsibility. They had laws controlling subversive agencies but they didn't implement them. They didn't think they could do anything about Chosen Soren without declaring war on the entire left wing in Japan, with a tremendous effect on Japanese internal politics. In terms of admitting responsibility they, of course, were not apologizing. They were never satisfied with what the Koreans had done on the Kim Dae Jung case. Even in a vacuum it would have been terribly difficult for them to admit responsibility when they didn't really feel that they had any. Besides, the party offended was Korea, and all Japanese share special feeling of superiority toward Korea and Koreans.

Furthermore, when the thing broke out, the Foreign Minister was a guy named Kimura, who was not a terribly good administrator. He was a Diet member, of course. The Foreign Ministry was run by Togo, who was vice minister -- Fumihiko Togo, a very good friend of the United States. Togo was absent for a while so his strong hand was not controlling the early, early stages of this crisis. Anyway, Prime Minister Tanaka, himself, fouled things up in an effort to do good. He

thought it might help to defuse things if he came to Madame Yu's funeral -- very early in the crisis. And so he came, which was an extraordinary gesture for a Japanese prime minister. Unfortunately, his call on Park went very badly. Apparently nobody told Tanaka, who was a very rough hewed character, how to behave in the presence of His Excellency, the President, who thought that as chief of state he out-ranked Prime Minister Tanaka regardless of the size of the country he represented. So Tanaka had a one hour meeting with Park in which he exacerbated Park's already inflamed emotions in a number of ways. He behaved in a manner Park thought insulting and improper. Park might have forgiven any other foreigner, but not a Japanese.

So what were these heinous sins? First of all, Tanaka expressed regret and sympathy at the death of Madame Yu (he apparently got that right), but omitted the acknowledgment of responsibility that Park wanted. That was bad. And furthermore, he did such terrible things as fan himself in the exalted presence. You don't do that. He crossed his legs. You don't do that. He spoke through an interpreter, but Park understood the familiar forms of speech and address he used in Japanese. It was a truly grievous sin to address the President as if you were an equal. The President became furious. I was told about this later. I did what I could and said, "Look, fanning and sweating can at least be explained. Tanaka has a glandular problem and sweats profusely. The President hauls him up to the Blue House in the middle of August in a morning coat, full of soup and fish, heavy wool, no air conditioning, and Tanaka is soon running rivulets. Wouldn't it be natural to fan himself?" I tried what I could to justify Tanaka's behavior, but I don't know whether it did any good with Park or any other Korean.

And then Tanaka made it worse by leaving immediately after the interview with Park. He did not call upon his counterpart Kim Chong-pil, nor did he attend the reception KCP gave that evening for all foreign attendees at the funeral. He just bugged on out and went back to Japan.

So in the face of Park's demand that the Japanese do these things, now a formal written demand, the Japanese then proposed a letter which was to be sent by Prime Minister Tanaka to the President or to Prime Minister Kim Chong-pil. They agreed to show a draft of the letter to the Koreans -- who said they would not accept an unsatisfactory text -- and that was another mistake because the Koreans found it totally unacceptable. It was cast in the usual foggy, elliptical, evasive Japanese way, seemingly with an eye more on Japanese domestic political concerns than on Park's grievances. The next couple of weeks involved intensive negotiations between the Japanese and Koreans centering on the language of letter and how it was to be delivered. Each of them kept me informed every inch of the way .

We were told that we would not be involved as mediator and I was instructed on a number of occasions to make this clear to both parties and so was Embassy Tokyo, and Habib was doing the same with the respective embassies in Washington.

Every time things seemed to be moving along a little bit, something stupid would happen. For example, Kimura made a statement about half way through the negotiations in response to a question at a press conference, to the effect that the ROK government was not the only legitimate government, in his opinion, on the Korean peninsula. Of course, the fact that the ROK had been declared so by the UN was the very basis of ROK national policy. They were, they thought, the only legitimate government. He later said something in the Diet to the effect that Japan did not

believe there really was a serious threat to the ROK from the North, thus taking another whack at a basic premise for Park's domestic and foreign policies, and arousing more animosity in Seoul.

Incidentally, during this period there were also demonstrations. The situation vis-a-vis the Japanese in Seoul was getting very dicey because there were anti-Japanese demonstrations almost daily. When I went up to the Foreign Ministry -- the Japanese Embassy was just up the street -- I could see demonstrations in front of the Japanese Embassy almost daily. There were threats against the lives of Japanese businessmen; there was all sorts of anti-Japanese agitation going on. In the middle of all this a Japanese businessman was found murdered -- throat slit and blood everywhere in his apartment. I thought this might really do it, but the police promptly arrested his Korean mistress -- he was apparently trying to dump her -- and proclaimed it just a domestic dispute. At one point, after the Kimura statement, the ROK government really turned it loose. They organized a big demonstration which included a group of 20 or so people who broke -- or were perhaps allowed to break -- into the Japanese Embassy, mostly the supply room, and wreaked havoc there, tearing everything up. They did not get at the ambassador's wine, which was locked behind a vault. They went up to the roof and lowered the Japanese flag. At some point a number of them cut the tips of their fingers off and in the blood that flowed, wrote anti-Japanese slogans on the Embassy walls.

This was supposed to be a spontaneous demonstration of Korean spirit and attitude towards the Japanese. Actually, it turned out that the bloody sloganeers were prisoners who had been released from jail for the purpose. They had been told their sentences would be commuted in exchange for that finger tip. Several took the bait. This, of course, didn't please the Japanese. The Koreans were mad at Kimura, the Japanese were outraged at the Embassy demonstration and things got worse and worse.

Kim Dong-jo was Park's target for the Koreans inability to get their way in this and he caught increasing hell as time went on. He became increasingly a bowl of jelly. So at the end of things he tended to disappear, pleading exhaustion. I personally think he felt that the next time he faced Park he would probably be shot. Lho Shin-yong, who was the vice minister, took over for him, but Kim Chong-pil, the Prime Minister, stood to the side -- or apparently didn't get involved directly in attempting to advise Park -- until the last critical moment. At one point Ushiroku went back to Japan at Korea's suggestion to try to straighten things out. He came back with very gloomy feelings about how things could go.

I forget the exact sequence of all of the events. Towards the very end, the ROK let it be known that they were thinking of giving the Japanese an ultimatum. The exact nature of this ultimatum was never made clear, although they told me about some of the elements. As I recall, it was going to say that unless the Koreans were satisfied by a certain time, they would withdraw their Ambassador from Japan and sever all relations with Japan except consular relations. There was a very clear threat that they would then expropriate all Japanese property and holdings and investments in Korea and live without Japan.

About this time I recall Finance Minister Nam Duk-woo, a very distinguished and capable man, called me into his office and, pointedly gazing at a spot on the ceiling, asked me what I thought of the possibility that Korea might take such steps. What would be the effect on Korea

economically should they cut off all trade and financial ties with Japan? Wouldn't this encourage investors in the United States to fill the vacuum immediately? Wouldn't they see this as a great opportunity to come to Korea and exploit this marvelous economic opportunity?

I gave the answer which I think he expected. I said in effect that it would probably be a disaster for the Korean economy, not only for the present but for the future. Obviously good relations with Japan were vital to their future and God knows what would happen economically or any other way if this were to be implemented. As far as American investors and the United States government were concerned, we would be extremely distressed at this threat to the entire American position in northeast Asia, which depended heavily on a security relationship, unspoken but nevertheless there, between Japan, Korea and the United States. The United States Government, under such circumstances, would face the problem of having to choose between two close allies and only our enemies would benefit. Furthermore, American investors would be scared out of their minds. If the Park government was capable of doing this to Japan, on whom the ROK relies so heavily, who was to guarantee the position of any private investors in the Republic. The ROK plan not a good idea.

He thanked me politely and I left his office. I don't know what he did with his information or whether there was a mike or monitor there. But I am sure he did this to elicit the kind of answers I gave him.

Towards the very end of things, the Japanese remained adamant about meeting Park's demands and the Koreans were coming to the point of issuing their ultimatum. I was called to the Foreign Ministry one afternoon and told that they had approved a plan of action. Unless they heard by 3:00 that afternoon that the Japanese would give them satisfaction, at 5:30 or 6:00 that evening the Prime Minister would release the terms of the ultimatum on national television. Although they did not give me the exact language, they showed me huge stacks of handouts ready to go. The Japanese Ambassador also got this treatment, I might add. I had Clyde Hess, head of USIA, call the television stations and they acknowledged that time was reserved for an important Presidential announcement that evening.

Japanese got in touch with me and allowed that they had had the same information. However, they had also had a phone call from Tokyo to the effect that new instructions were on the way, and to do nothing until they arrived -- not to respond to this thing until the new instructions had arrived. The Japanese conveyed this to the Koreans and the Koreans canceled the announcement and released the TV time.

Then the telephone began ringing. The Koreans were asking me, "Where the hell is the Japanese Ambassador? We were told that he was expecting new instructions which were on the way. We haven't heard anything from him. The President is outraged. He may do anything." I kept saying, "I am not responsible for the whereabouts of Ambassador Ushiroku. I do not know where he is. I do not know what his instructions are. I can't offer you anything." Anyway, Lho's last call came at midnight. He was just beside himself. He said the Japanese were playing their duplicitous game again.

Okazaki came to see me the next morning at breakfast time. He said, "Gee, Dick, what are we

going to do? The new instructions came but they offered only minimal, cosmetic changes. In effect they said stand pat." Ushiroku had decided that he couldn't deliver such a message. He was desperately trying to get it changed but couldn't give it to the Koreans as it stood, and so had decided to go into hiding.

I had just received that morning a message from Washington which indicated for the first time that Habib had landed on the Japanese with a strong suggestion that they be a little bit forthcoming in meeting the Korean position. This was the first time that Washington had ever leaned in the direction of the Koreans. It seemed to me that Habib's feeling from the beginning was that the Japanese had come a long way in offering to send a letter signed by the Prime Minister which, even though unsatisfactory, did touch on a lot of their demands. It covered their points, even if not in ways entirely satisfactory to the Koreans. It meant a lot to the Japanese. Now, for the first time, he was suggesting that the Japanese move in the Korean direction. I said, "Hang on, let me get up there and see if this helps." I went back up to speak to the Foreign Minister and informed him of Habib's approach to the Japanese. He conveyed it apparently to President Park.

As I was leaving that meeting, and I did not report what follows here, the Minister's ante room was swarming with newsmen. Bud Han, who was Kim Chong-pil's interpreter and contact man for foreigners, fell in beside me and said, "Go back to the Embassy and come back around the other side in another car and I will meet you. The Prime Minister wants to speak to you privately." I went back to the Embassy, and changed cars and came back. This was kind of dangerous because the Koreans were trying very hard all along to entrap us into siding with them and I had been told to stay out of it. But I went to see KCP. He took from his pocket some papers -- in English -- :Tanaka's proposed letter, a Korean re-draft and a suggested text of a statement by the senior Japanese envoy who was by that time expected to deliver it. He said, "You be the Japanese and I will be Mr. President and let's see what we can do by role acting." I said, "Look, I can't get involved. It's my job and career." He said, "No, no, this is between you and me. Please, we have to solve this thing." So I agreed.

We sat there for about an hour, working over the text. We looked at various alternatives. The letter from Tanaka, incidentally, which the Japanese had steadfastly maintained that they couldn't change, had already been signed by Tanaka some time earlier, because Tanaka was due to leave on September 12 for South America; so there was a deadline here. The Japanese were now even more adamant -- they couldn't change the signed Prime Minister's letter. So the question really was how do you accept the letter but accomplish your purpose in another way. The idea had been proposed -- but not yet agreed -- that the letter might be delivered by a very senior and respected Japanese special envoy, and whether such an envoy would come or not had been a central part of their bilateral negotiations. We agreed that if the envoy, in speaking to the President, could soften the terms of the letter while explaining their real intent, and if the spoken terms were satisfactory to Park, and then the two signed or initialed a memorandum of conversation, the latter would supersede the letter and Park could get out of the hole he had dug for himself. KCP was thinking that the distinguished representative should make the presentation to the President orally and say the right things. I suggested they make a memcon and sign it. We also dealt with some of the specifics, of course. KCP pleaded for permission to tell the President that our joint efforts had the backing of the US -- or even my personal support. I refused. So I went back to the

Embassy and the next thing I knew Clyde Hess was in my office saying the Korean press was asking about an "American plan." The Korean press had been told there was a plan but not to publish the fact. And as a matter of fact, one news agency did put out a note, but nobody picked it up. I told Clyde what happened. He and Don Gregg are the only two who really know the extent of my involvement in this aspect of the thing. Years later Don alluded to it, as a matter of fact, in the Senate hearing on his confirmation as Ambassador to Seoul.

I got a call then from Okazaki, who said, "Dick, Ushiroku has just returned from Kim Tong-jo's office. He has been given a piece of paper which Kim described as the mediator's plan. He says that President Park has approved it and this is it: There will be no deviation or we will take the actions we canceled last night and will do what we threatened to do." I sort of stumbled around and Okazaki said, "Don't worry about it, Dick, this looks like it might work. It is not that bad. I know you don't want to be exposed. We will send it back to Tokyo and I think it will work."

To make this long story short, essentially that is what happened. The Japanese agreed to send former Foreign Minister Shiina, a very respected elder statesman in the Liberal Democratic Party who had close ties with Korea. He had been Foreign Minister at the time of the normalization of relations. He came on one of the shortest trips on record. He landed at Kimpo, went in to see the President, visited Madame Yuk's grave, and headed for Kimpo. He was back and forth to Japan within a matter of five or six hours, I think. But he brought with him the signed letter from Prime Minister Tanaka and he spoke to the President about what the thing really meant. The question of responsibility was covered by the fact in both the letter and the conversation the Japanese Government regretted that the guy had had a Japanese passport obtained through fraudulent means and had used a revolver stolen from the Osaka police and by the admission in Japanese, that "Nihon seifu wa sore nari no sekinin o kanzuru" -- I'll never forget those words -- which means "to the extent that it exists, the Japanese government feels responsibility" for the incident. Well, that is not very strong and you could interpret it anyway you want to, but there it was, the word "responsibility." Other points were covered in similar evasive fashion in both the letter and the conversation. Concerning the Chosen Soren, the Japanese said they would take urgent and strong measures to control efforts to overthrow the Korean government originating in Japan whether not or conducted by members of an organized group. And they expressed sincere condolences at the loss of the President's wife and his grief.

They never promised, incidentally, to try the Japanese involved and they would not extradite the one Korean who was involved who had been identified as a North Korean agent and was Mun's case officer. The Koreans wanted him extradited; they wanted to try him and put him to death, but the Japanese refused. I don't know in the end that they even tried him. They kept saying that they had no evidence except Mun's confession that he was involved. And they had no evidence against the Japanese who helped him get the passport except Mun's confession. In the end I don't think they did anything about any of these people, but they spoke in their presentation of strong efforts to bring these people to justice, etc. to the extent the law would allow.

Anyway, it was an evasive performance, but it also gave President Park an opportunity to put on the record his statements to Shiina in which he reiterated all of his feelings about the Japanese responses, etc. And Shiina, to his credit, accepted these with dignity and a certain amount of sympathy. He said that he understood the President's feelings were strong, etc. I was told that the

President had emphasized in particular his feeling that the Japanese were responsible for the attempt on his life -- and his wife's death -- because of their failure to control Chosen Soren, particularly since the ROK had formally requested strong action by the Japanese government many months before this incident -- a demarche to which the Japanese had never responded. But Shiina's visit served its purpose. Once Park had had his satisfaction, the crisis was defused and passions on both sides subsided.

Shiina came on the 19th. So the thing was pretty much settled by the time Sneider arrived on the 19th, although he got very active immediately when he did arrive in the ultimate stages. So, it was settled as much as it could be settled. I think President Park's feelings about Japan were deeply re-enforced by the incident, and the Japanese unhappiness with Korea was certainly not dissipated by it, but at least President Park did not break off all relations and expropriate all Japanese property.

This thing took over a month and during that month Park's initial emotional temperature declined considerably. People were able to talk to him, and he did come back to a certain amount of reason about these things, so that when KCP made his move at the very end, Park was willing to give some ground. But it was still dicey -- KCP showed a lot of guts and a great sense of timing.

The point I wanted to make at the very outset of this was that I did play a role in this as Chargé on behalf of the United States -- but largely without and to a degree contrary to instructions. I was talked to freely by friends and contacts in all areas of Korean life and by the Japanese as well -- by Okazaki and Ushiroku. Ushiroku didn't see me much because he was a very cautious man, but he sent his messages by Okazaki who was a good friend of mine. But this kind of access happened because first of all I represented the United States and they were willing to accept me as such. Secondly, when I first came to Korea I was suspected of being pro-Japanese because I was a Japanese language specialist and had spent all of my career in Japan, except for those years I had been in Korea as an army officer. It took a little bit of doing to get over that, but once I did, I think they came to realize that I was an American, and that I wasn't pro-Japanese and wasn't necessarily pro-Korean. But that I was going to be interested in pursuing American interests and these involved both Japan and Korea. I had played it straight with them both through the years and both had some reason to trust me in what went on. Especially Kim Chong-pil at our critical meeting at the very end saying, "You be the Japanese, I won't be mad at you for it, but you know the Japanese." He probably knew the Japanese better than I did, but he was willing to have me play that role. Okazaki was perfectly forthcoming in everything the Japanese did, said or thought.

I think this is a credit to the American Foreign Service and the way it should really operate. I think if you are going to be an area specialist, you should be an area specialist. You can do a lot of things and accomplish a lot on the basis of long experience and exposure, many contacts, proof of trustworthiness, willingness to be evenhanded and unbiased pursuit of your country's interests and not those of other countries, etc. The idea of having a language and area specialist pays off. And I think in this particular case -- I don't claim to be the major factor in the solution of this thing -- I certainly did play a role and I was able to play that role because both Koreans and the Japanese knew me and trusted me.

For example, Togo, the Japanese Vice Foreign Minister, was willing to have the Japanese Embassy do what it did because he was a very good friend of mine. He knew I wasn't going to betray their interests. And similarly with all the Koreans.

I find it very difficult to explain Washington position of "staying out of it." First of all, I saw very little evidence of the hand of anybody above Habib. Ingersoll, who had been Ambassador to Japan, was still the Deputy Secretary and his hand was not apparent. Kissinger's hand was not apparent. He probably left matters to Habib as the acknowledged expert, the brand new East Asian Assistant Secretary, and everything that we got it seemed to me involved actions or statements by Habib. It was kind of hard to separate the Japan Desk from the Korean Desk, but I thought that the Japan Desk had more input in things in his earlier telegrams. It seemed to me that the bias was towards Japan coming out of Washington. Of course, I was sitting in the midst of this Korean mess and thought that nobody understood that the problem was Park, not Korea. You were dealing with a man, a guy who had just seen his wife's head blown off by people he mistrusted anyway and he was not being given the kind of satisfaction that his psyche required. I was trying to make this apparent to Washington. Eventually, Washington did lean on the Japanese. I privately was telling -- I told them this many, many times but never reported it -- every Korean that they should have understood the political realities in Japan and that Park was asking for the moon in his demands for abolition of Chosen Soren and summary punishment of Mun's associates in Japan. On the question of the letter, it had already been signed by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, if he was acting alone, if he was a Kissinger, say, could rip up the letter and say, "Okay, let's have a new one." But in Japan, once the Prime Minister signs something it means that the whole damn cabinet has formally approved it. It has gone through a process of concurrences and arrived at this stage and in order to change even a word of it you have to reverse the whole damn process. They just can't do that. They can't do anything about the Chosen Soren, I was telling them, because that means declaring war on the entire left wing in Japan and the political situation is such that they cannot declare war. The Socialists would have loved to take on the government over this issue. They can't say these things publicly, but it was just not achievable; the Koreans were asking for the moon. On the other hand I was telling the Japanese that they had better put a clamp on their public relations activities, stop treating the Koreans as inferior step-children, take some real acknowledgment of the fact that they had a real problem in Seoul with a man who is going to be very, very destructive if he didn't receive some kind of satisfaction. It is not the whole country they were dealing with; it was one man. They are Asians and should understand the concept of responsibility and that people take responsibility. The Japanese said, "We can't acknowledge responsibility because then the Home Minister would have to resign, and the Police Chief of Osaka, everyone would have to resign." Well, the Koreans would say, "Yeah, why not?"

I can not understand why we delayed as long as we did or why our efforts were not stronger. But that is how Washington chose to play it and in the end things worked out. I have told a long story as best as I recall it -- and my memory is pretty vivid -- but it may contain some inaccuracies. There is a full account of it back in the Department's archives -- telegrams, airgrams, documents and the like.

As I said, by the time Sneider arrived, the issues were pretty well settled. All that remained in the last couple of days were refinements and we had no role in this; e.g. exactly what Shiina would

say. Incidentally, the Koreans never said during all this period what they were going to say. What Park did was to reiterate all his grievances -- his whole attitude -- and Shiina must have been pretty surprised by that, but he took it very well. Shiina was a wise man. Sneider had some difficulties to overcome. One of them was that he was a Japan specialist -- very closely associated with Japan his entire career. He had one little thing that was of interest to the Koreans, though, and that was during the Korean War when he was in INR he had gone to Pyongyang as part of a study group to analyze how the communists had imposed their regime and how it operated. They produced a rather interesting study on the North. He exploited this to a certain extent and the Koreans were interested that he had had that bit of background.

Sneider to me was a good manager. Much better than Habib in many respects. He had a very broad range of interests. He did like to get into all aspects of the Embassy's operations. He convened weekly meetings of the country team. At each meeting he would have one officer explain in detail what it was he and his group were trying to accomplish, how others could be of assistance, etc. He included everybody in this. The AID mission people -- the few that were left -- were talking, the military were talking. It was an interesting exercise because people did have to speak up -- they had to make formal presentations, it wasn't just sitting around a table and yakking. People had to formally explain and justify themselves.

I often said that my major job as DCM in Seoul for the whole period I was there was as mediator between Sneider and Habib on one side and General Richard D. Stilwell on the other. He had been a major commander in Vietnam and taken what he expected to be his retirement post at the Presidio when all of a sudden he ended up, to his surprise as Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, and Commanding General, Eighth United States Army. Now CINCUNC occupies a rather odd place. He sees himself as being responsible to the UN as well as to the United States government, and if you get a man with a large ego in that job, he looks at the Ambassador and says, "My authority is greater than his." And worse, he has his own line of communications to the United States government via back channel messages to the Department of Defense and he makes very liberal use of them. All three of the gentlemen concerned had flaming egos, very sensitive, strong personalities and not ashamed to acknowledge their own capabilities. This inevitably led to clashes. Habib and Stilwell did not see eye-to-eye. Habib resented Stilwell because Stilwell had better relations with the presidential office and many senior Koreans, who were at that time often ex-military, than Habib ever had. Also Habib had been instrumental in forcing Park to live up to his promise to hold elections back in 1963, a humiliation for Park that he never forgot. So by the time Habib came there as Ambassador, he found Stilwell playing golf with the President. Habib took up golf during this time. He was told to take up some exercise after his heart attack, and he became a golf nut, although he had always been vocally scornful of people on his staff who wasted their time chasing a ball around a cow pasture. He used to take off quite frequently in the afternoons and play with the pro out at Yongsan golf course. He really became addicted, and was really unhappy because Park never asked him to play golf, although Park played fairly often with both senior American and Korean military. Sneider was in somewhat the same position. Park never asked him to play golf either.

Sneider was an avid golfer, although he was a better tennis player, but I think he enjoyed golf more and played at every opportunity. We were all members of the Tuesday Morning Golf Club, a group Chong Il Kwan headed which brought together a select group of senior Koreans and

Americans for nine holes of golf at Yongsan every Tuesday morning, except in the winter time when it was every Saturday morning. Except in the middle of summer, when we started later, our habit was to tee off at sunrise, which permitted nine holes, a leisurely breakfast, and arrival at the office on time. We found the golf courses a very good way in Korea at that time to associate and relax with senior and influential Koreans. But Park was very chary and he never invited any Americans except Stilwell and perhaps his top staff to play with him.

Anyway, Stilwell, whenever he had an advantage, did not hesitate to rub it in a little bit and consequently his relations with the two ambassadors were not all that good. Stilwell liked me for reasons best known to him. It is popular in some Foreign Service circles -- one might say politically correct today -- to deride the military, find fault with it and all its inefficiencies. But I grew up in the army, and served in it for four years -- including that 16 months in Korea. I felt it had treated me really pretty well and that I had some understanding of the problems the military face. I was always a more sympathetic ear to the military than either of my bosses. Furthermore, during most of this period, John Murphy, who was an Air Force Lt. General and a War College classmate of mine was the deputy CINC. Murphy was a golfing friend of mine and we had lunch together every week and would exchange notes back and forth and plot various ways that we could keep our superiors on better speaking terms. He was a very useful contact and our association was a plug for sending Foreign Service officers to the War College. Murphy had no real function. Stilwell concentrated power in his own hands. He didn't give Murphy much to do, so he welcomed the opportunity to liaise with me at the Embassy.

Sneider got along reasonably well, but he and Stilwell were always wary rivals for influence on the scene in Korea. And the same was true, by and large, with Habib. So, in such relations as were maintained between the Embassy and the military to a certain extent, I was the principal liaison. I saw more of Stilwell than Sneider or Habib and we got along to the extent of that when I left Korea, Stilwell gave me a UN Command honor guard ceremony, which I think up to that point was the only time the UN Command honor guard had ever been turned out with full colors and the band and all the works for a departing American civilian. I think the main reason Stilwell did it was to be able to make a speech to which Sneider could not reply. Sneider was in the stands and Stilwell made quite a speech about -- I forget what exactly. I was so nervous that I stood there trembling and almost fell off the little slab of concrete on which the honoree had to stand. If I know Stilwell, the speech contained elements that Sneider would have wanted to respond to had he the opportunity.

Sneider was an active ambassador. He was gone a lot of the time and I can't remember why. I think in most respects Dick was a more effective operator than Habib. People question that; I know it is not a popular point of view. But I liked and respected Sneider. He was an old friend. Many of the Koreans came to know and respect him as well, and although he never quite got over his Japan designation, but it ceased to be a real problem.

I would like to make some general comments about how we perceived the threat from the North. This dates back in my experience to the sixties as well as during the seventies because the threat from the North has been a constant influence on everything we have ever done in Korea.

After the Koreans sent troops to Vietnam we were constantly leery of some action by North

Korea in support of the North Vietnamese. During the sixties, of course, when I was there from 1965-68, the North Koreans mounted a large number of provocations and disturbances along the DMZ -- the Blue House raid and the "Pueblo" incident and a series of other actions which never made much noise in the United States but of which we were very much aware, partly because we thought Park Chung Hee was unreliable and might have retaliated and engaged us in something more serious than we wanted to engage in. But that kind of thing didn't happen with much frequency or seriousness during the 1973-76 period, except for one really notable and still puzzling kind of development. The North Koreans always had a larger military force along the DMZ than the South Koreans. They were always better armed and backed by a more complete industrial base for military purposes, anyway, than the South Koreans. The South Koreans were to a great degree dependent on us for material. Every time something untoward happened, of course, it resulted in a request or demand from the Koreans for more military assistance, more modern equipment, and a request to recognize their great contribution to Vietnam.

The thing that did happen during the 1973-76 period was very disturbing and still hasn't been adequately explained. This was the discovery that the North Koreans had dug tunnels under the DMZ, beginning in or behind their side of the DMZ and penetrating into South Korean territory. The first tunnel was found within the southern half of the DMZ by a South Korean patrol, which saw smoke coming out of the ground. When they investigated, they found a rather narrow tunnel leading back toward North Korea. It was just below the surface and probably could not have supported more than one or two people at one time -- at least at its front end. There is no way of knowing what it was like on the North Korean side, of course. It was a rather crude affair but inspired General Stilwell and his people in the 8th Army to undertake an expensive and long term effort, using seismology and every other device known to science, including extensive drilling, to locate other tunnels. They located one other tunnel, much more sophisticated than the first. It was wide enough to have supported five or six men abreast. It could have accommodated small hand-drawn carts as long as the load was low enough. It was deep enough to stand up in with a little head room. You could have moved light munitions, machine guns, light artillery, perhaps, machine guns, and a considerable amount of supplies through this thing.

This tunnel was also discovered within the DMZ, in a position concealed by the ground from North Korean observation. Immediately, of course, the South Koreans wanted to send the world into the DMZ to see this thing and which they interpreted, of course, as verification of North Korea's intention to attack. The supposition was that they would use these tunnels in the early stages of the attack. If the attack had succeeded and swept down toward Seoul, the tunnels would immediately become useless. But they might have been very useful in the early stages of an attack to disrupt UN communications, to cut roads, blow up bridges, and generally wreak havoc at the immediate front. Or short of an attack, they might be used to infiltrate raiders. The Koreans immediately wanted to send all the journalists and diplomats they could to see this thing, which caused a little contretemps with us, with me in particular, as I was the Chargé. The Foreign Minister called a meeting up in the Capital building to which he invited the chiefs of mission and told them that they would be taken on an excursion to see this tunnel at such and such a time. I don't remember the exact time, but it was to happen very quickly. I had learned from General Stilwell, who was quite anxious to do this and have as much world press about it as possible, that the Koreans had not cleared this idea of an expedition with him and no one had considered the provisions of the Armistice Agreement with respect to happenings in the DMZ. Who has

jurisdiction over the southern portion of the DMZ and what procedures you had to go through with the North before you could, under the terms of the agreement, introduce anything, including a human body, into the southern half of the DMZ. Yet the South Koreans were getting ready to send in a number of diplomats right away.

At that meeting I raised an objection and said first of all it wasn't South Korean territory, that the armistice agreement gave peculiar authority to the United Nations commander to rule on what UN Command troops, including Korean troops, did in the southern half of the DMZ; and secondly, that only designated personnel were cleared to enter the DMZ and before anyone other than those specified personnel could be introduced into the DMZ you had to get permission from the other side -- the North Korean side of the Armistice Commission. I thought that that permission was not likely to be readily granted, so perhaps we could figure some other way around it. Perhaps notification of the North that we were going to do this would be sufficient, considering the gravity of their offense.

I said that we made it a practice to conform to the Armistice Agreement and should certainly at least make a gesture in that direction this time before introducing a large number of diplomats who would certainly be followed by large numbers of newsmen. This wasn't a very popular point of view with the South Koreans nor, to tell the truth, with Dick Stilwell, but he agreed that something ought to be done. In the end we held up the visit of the diplomats until we could convene an emergency meeting of the Armistice Commission and inform the North that we intended to expose their tunnel building by introducing diplomats to it and by eventually taking newsmen up. Incidentally, we did not ask for clearance for this. I recall drafting a joint Embassy-UNC message with Stilwell in which we informed State and Defense that we were going to do it. I cannot recall any reaction, except wonderment on the part of Stilwell's people, who had never known him to send messages of this nature jointly. (He was a bit of an insomniac and used the midnight hours to draft his own messages, frequently presenting his staff with a *fait accompli* that they could not amend).

In any event, this is what was done. Fortunately, as I say, you could protect this site within the DMZ fairly well because the North Koreans did not have a direct view of it and to the best of our knowledge didn't have any means of getting aerial views of it. We could put people up there in relative security and guard them reasonably well. It was felt that the chances of the North Koreans doing anything were dim and in the end that is what we worked out. The people did see the second tunnel and it did get a fair amount of publicity, I guess. Incidentally, this was an enormous engineering feat for North Korea, a country that claimed to be impoverished. They put a tremendous amount of resources into digging even these tunnels and it is very interesting that our overhead intelligence was unable to locate the northern entrance to these things. Whatever they dug out from inside that tunnel they dispersed and moved very effectively, because we never were able, as I recall, to pinpoint where they started them from. The first one, as I said, was rather a crude affair, but the second one was ventilated and lined and obviously meant for business. I suspect that the first one was just an experiment to see what could be done and the second was for real. How many other were there? Stilwell later contended that there were as many as five or six others that they just couldn't quite pinpoint. The South Koreans, of course, blocked off the second tunnel very quickly and rendered it, they thought, relatively useless. But to this day, there may still be four, five or six similar tunnels just lying there in wait.

That was the kind of thing that made the threat from the North kind of palpable. When you lived in Seoul, it was kind of a city under perpetual siege. The memories of the Korean war and the armies sweeping back and forth across the city three times were very much alive, at least in the minds of the older Koreans. Of course, President Park justified every repressive political measure he took in the name of national security and this threat. He couldn't fool around with political dissidents while he had a major threat from the North, and was fighting a war in Vietnam in response to what the world had done for Korea during the Korean War. He needed a clean deck here at home to handle his many problems and couldn't afford to give the political dissidents free rein to say and do what they wanted. Or so he always argued.

It never did seem terribly rational to me and to most Americans, I guess, who served in Seoul, to believe that the North Koreans would attack. It is true that they had superior forces to the South - - not to the rest of the world, and perhaps not to South Korea with the United States behind it -- but one-on-one there was no doubt during both periods I was assigned to Seoul, on a purely military basis, the North probably could have successfully attacked the South. They certainly could have raised hell with Seoul if they had been so inclined. Park's pitch always mentioned the fact -- which it was -- that Seoul was within range of Scud missiles and long range artillery. In my experience, many of the Southerners -- although this feeling may have been dissipated by their experience in Vietnam with modern warfare and all the rest of it -- had an irrational fear of the North. They tended to think of North Koreans as six or ten feet tall and capable of doing much more than they probably actually were capable of. We did know in numbers, types and amount of equipment that the North was very well supplied. But despite the fact that it had a better industrial base than the South, its capability of sustaining an attack against the South without massive support from the Soviet Union or China seemed dubious. As time went on, of course, the economy of the South was getting stronger and stronger and its own industrial base was improving greatly.

It was hard to see what political rationale they might have for the attack. Unification, of course, was always the overriding consideration, but would it have succeeded? What would the Northern leaders really, if they sat down coldly to calculate their prospects, what would they have concluded? Another point was, of course, an intelligence view that while the North Koreans had a lot of forces deployed in forward positions, they were largely defensive positions. Much of the deep tunneling and underground aircraft storage, etc. that the North prepared were far more useful in terms of defense than offense and they expended an enormous amount of their available resources preparing defensive positions, much more so than the South ever did, or we ever helped them do. So, I always thought that they were going to probe, to flex their muscles to show us they had things, but I never really thought that they would attack, unless -- and here we get into the element that affected both sides -- somebody or something caused them to act irrationally. The question arose, is the North capable of totally irrational acts? The answer to that is "perhaps." Kim Il-sung was thought to be in firm control, but he was an unknown quantity -- and his action in attacking in 1950 could certainly be viewed as risky if not irrational. And it was thought that unification before he died was his overriding goal and that he was waiting only the opportunity to strike. Was the South capable of totally irrational acts? The answer to that one was also "perhaps." We knew Park Chung Hee a heck of a lot better than we knew Kim Il Sung. We knew that Park got pretty close to the edge from time to time. He was an emotional man

capable of explosions in private and perhaps also in public. He drank heavily when under extreme stress. He went on binges into mountain retreats -- out of touch and control -- and we were always fearful that during one of these he might well order something irrational. Would his orders have been carried out? If, for example, in his response to the Blue House raid he had ordered an attack on the North, would his troops have obeyed him? Probably. That event itself was considered so outrageous that it might have justified an attack.

I guess that about sums it up. The looming presence of the North's concentrated power created tensions among people who lived in Seoul. As evidence of the validity of this, I understand that they have taken in recent years -- it started in the seventies -- really concrete steps to move everything that they can possibly -- government agencies, the Capitol, foreign embassies, the works -- south of the Han and restricted development north and west of it. My son just came back from Seoul the other day and says really that most the city has grown enormously around Yongdungpo and other communities south of the Han. He had to work to get up into the area of the old Capitol building. During the Korean War, when the North Koreans attacked and made such rapid progress, one of the first defensive measures the South took was to blow the bridges -- they blew half the population of Seoul into the water in the process and left the other half stranded on the northern side of the river. They just don't want that to ever, ever happen again and it has been a fixation with them.

Yes, people in Seoul did live under a certain amount of tension from this kind of thing, especially those who specialized in learning and talking about what the North Koreans were doing. I don't think the tunnels touched the average person, but people who were charged with doing something about the tunnels took them pretty seriously.

We had excellent relations with and cooperation from the CIA Station, particularly with Don Gregg when he was station chief. The exchange of information, which was pretty tightly held, was better than adequate in giving an indication of what they were doing. There were things we didn't know, of course, and things that we didn't want to know. But we had no problems with Gregg. If he was asked, he would respond. He would volunteer. He was quite frankly the best station chief that I ever worked with anywhere in that sense.

We were getting information about the Korean military. It was interestingly enough more prevalent during the sixties than it was during the seventies in my experience. In the sixties, both the Embassy's political section and the station focused heavily on the military, particularly the group around Kim Chong-pil and his Military Academy 8th class associates. That was the eighth class in the institution that preceded the establishment of the Korean West Point. This was a particularly good class, like the West Point class of 1915. It had a lot of very capable people and he was the leader. And, of course, KCP was known to have lofty ambitions -- he is still trying to become president, I am told -- this time as a politician. KCP was a fascinating study. The best organized Korean I have ever seen. He was an organizational genius -- very smooth. But his greed for power and wealth and his ambition were almost his undoing. But he did organize the Korean CIA. He did organize the DRP, which was set up to support Park in his first election. He was probably the mastermind of Park's revolution. He was Park's nephew by marriage. A very, very clever man and Park's obvious rival. He certainly cultivated his ties to his old associates in the Army. We watched him and his group and President Park had people watching them all like

hawks, because this was a very, very ambitious man with very ambitious people around him. So every movement, every assignment within the army of that group was watched by a lot of people in the South. We used to report on it fairly regularly and so did the station and the military.

There were other groups, too, that were watched carefully. For example, the group of army officers of North Korean origin -- the Hamhung group -- whose leader was Chong Il Kwan. By the 1970's, however, attrition and the Vietnam War had disrupted these cliques and the emergence of professional military from the Korean military Academy had changed the character of the army. I thought then that the army was an important power base for any politician, but that it was growing increasingly unlikely that it would be the source of a revolt or coup against Park.

To digress, one of the most interesting things that Park did to make his economic revolution effective was to place retired military commanders in positions of influence in private companies. He saw to it that these people didn't just go off and play golf, etc. These people retired young -- there was a rigid up or out policy in the South Korean army and these guys retired when their time came. But they were pretty well taken care of and the more capable ones usually ended up in influential positions in Korean business or trade organizations or national unions, etc. They were put carefully with considerable forethought in places where they could do the most good. Somebody ought to do a really good study of this because it is one of the most successful of Park's efforts. When he assumed power, the military was the only large-scale organization in the country, the only one that dealt with large amounts of equipment, large numbers of personnel, personnel and procurement systems, budgeting, etc. The only organization that gave anybody top-level executive experience. So the military gave Korean businesses a large number of capable executives that they might not otherwise have had. Secondly, it kept the military reasonably content. They knew they weren't being just cast aside. And, it kept them supportive. Eventually, of course, the business organizations and industrial concerns, began getting their people elsewhere. They began training them themselves, sending them abroad for education, etc. and I suppose the military contributes very little today to this kind of thing. But in the sixties particularly, and perhaps to a lesser degree in the seventies, very large number of capable Korean business leaders and other organizations' leaders came right out of the military.

I think such a policy would be viewed with suspicion in this country. But it worked there because there was no other large organization to recruit from -- the universities were not turning out the kind of people that were necessary, so there was no other training ground.

CIA kept a watch on the military using its methods which involve using human intelligence. You persuade somebody to report. You recruit people inside the system to keep an eye on them for you. Such a luxury is not afforded the Foreign Service, of course, so we made friends with them. We were much less effective in this than the CIA. Usually the people we were contacting were people who were not on active duty.

Our military consists of short term people, on the scene for a maximum of two years. The chances of them getting into something in depth are fairly dim. About as dim as ours, if you will, although we tended to have slightly longer terms. The military did employ some people who had been there for a long time. They had on their staff Jim Hausman, a remarkable man -- a civilian - - who had been there since his days as a Lt. Col. in JUSMAAG before the Korean War. He was a

walking encyclopedia of developments within Korean military headquarters and he knew all the key players from way back. He had fought with them as an infantry officer and had been around staffs during the Korean war. He had come across many of the senior people when he was a young officer, as were they, and was good on chores of this kind.

Incidentally, for all the surveillance of potential leaders of uprisings from the military against Park, we never really found any evidence that any of them were bent on doing that. Park's control was pretty pervasive. If, for example, some military leader began to acquire a reputation and a following of his own from exploits in Vietnam, his next assignment would likely be as ambassador to Greece. That actually happened.

I think the Korean military got a bad reputation -- a bum rap, I think -- during the Korean War. There are any number of well-publicized accounts of Korean units that collapsed, withdrew, bugged out, faltered, exposed flanks of an allied unit. When you consider they were in no way prepared for the attack and that most of the Korean soldiers who fought during the war had very little training and totally inadequate equipment and their commanders had had no combat experience, etc., I think you can understand why mistakes were made; even so they fought extremely well on many occasions and took an enormous number of casualties, and did not as a nation, collapse, which they might well have done. Of course, I have the Ericson theory of the relative effectiveness of the Asian fighting man, which is that it varies in direct proportion to a combination of the distance from the equator and the height above sea level. The further north they live, the better they are and the higher in altitude they live, the better they are. If you applied the Ericson theory here it would make the North Koreans better fighters than the South Koreans. The North did have a number of very, very good fighters. Those guys who came down on the Blue House raid, for example, were extremely well disciplined and there was a good planning effort, but when they were discovered they apparently fell apart.

As to the capabilities of the South at the time I was there, they had obviously improved enormously over their experience during the Korean War. They showed in Vietnam, against not much opposition, that they were capable of being cruel, efficient and devastating in the area they were assigned to. They certainly pacified their areas in a very thorough and prompt manner.

As to the DMZ, itself, I think we have only the testimony of the Blue House raiders to tell us what North Koreans thought of the South and its troops, because the Blue House raider who was captured and did tell us everything said that they had deliberately come through the American 2nd division because they knew they could get through the Americans but not through the South Koreans. This is testimony only on how they felt about guard duty effectiveness; it doesn't say how they would do in actual combat. Nonetheless, it does say a good deal. I personally think that certainly the best of the South Korean units were very effective and a quite capable fighting force -- and probably the best led troops in Asia. They had a good military training based on West Point and many of their officers had been to advanced schools in the United States. They took training and discipline very seriously, although Chong Il Kwan, who had a sense of humor, always said his major accomplishment in the US was to acquire more speeding tickets from the MPs at Fort Leavenworth than anybody who ever attended the Command and General Staff School. I had a great deal of respect for them. I visited a lot of South Korean military units and always found a very firm discipline, a lot of spit and polish, which may not say much for combat

but did show the Korean commanders were working at what they were told to work at. I think that in Korea they would have been a very effective fighting force, and to be honest, in the 1970's in Korea, I think a good South Korean regiment probably would have been more effective than its American counterpart because its American counterpart was always under-manned and frankly was not getting the best troops or equipment we had to offer. The best were going to Vietnam.

Let me talk a little about the Korean students. Ever since the student uprising against the Japanese in the spring of 1913, spring was always the tense period and particularly about April 30 -- the anniversary of the student uprising against Syngman Rhee. Every year you expected them to do something. Park, however, devised a fairly effective system of controlling them, it seemed to me. When his intelligence, and he did have intelligence at work among the students, brought him news that students were beginning to foment something, he would warn the presidents of the universities and tell them to take action. If they fell short, the police would arrest a few student leaders as a warning and to weaken the movement. If that still didn't work, Park would close the schools. This was particularly true in the sixties. I don't recall if he pulled this stunt in the seventies or not. We didn't have many serious student demonstrations during the period I was there. But during the sixties we did have this kind of thing and closing the schools almost always had the desired effect. Korean students do not live on campus; they come from all over the place. So if you closed the schools and barred entrance to the campus, you deprived them of their meeting places and assembly areas. It is very rare that anything spontaneously rises out of the ground; you have to gather people. And if that failed, Park turned the riot police loose with their batons and tear gas. By taking these various steps one at a time he managed during the sixties to keep the students under pretty fair control. I think Park felt that he could be harsh with college students -- the public might feel that they should know better, and the police and military, largely drawn from lower classes, were not sympathetic to college boys. But Park wanted at all costs to prevent younger students -- high school kids -- from joining their elders. He must have vividly recalled that when this happened during the rioting that toppled Syngman Rhee, the army refused to move against the kids. The demonstrations in the seventies never achieved the strength of that uprising, nor even the demonstrations protesting the agreement with Japan in 1965, which was probably the worst one that Park faced. But they did close schools from time to time and they did take casualties.

Park used one extreme that the students always bore in mind. He tore up Koryo University during one of these uprisings in the 1960s (this was before he devised the tactic of closing the schools). Hearing that students had barricaded the main gate, the police came in a convoy of 15 or 16 trucks and drove up the street outside the walls of the university and then turned around and came back. Somebody -- possibly a provocateur -- threw a stone at the lead truck and broke the windshield, upon which the whole convoy stopped. Out came the riot squad in full gear with gas masks on, throwing tear gas grenades as they came. They swept across the campus and beat the hell out of anybody in their path and tore up classrooms and generally raised holy hell, injuring a number of students -- many quite innocent -- but didn't kill anybody. The government put out the story that a peaceful convoy of riot police had been attacked by the students and had acted in retaliation. Well, it was a couple of stones versus virtual destruction of the campus. It gave the students and faculty of every university something to think about. That was the kind of measure that Park was willing to take to avoid the risk of facing something like Syngman Rhee

did.

In the sixties it was a campus by campus sort of thing. There was no inter-campus organization of any kind and as a matter of fact I don't think the students ever achieved the kind of inter-campus organization that would have been useful. You were always looking at Seoul National and Koryo as having the best kids and the main centers of possible difficulty. This is largely why they closed Seoul National's old campus in the city and moved it to the other side of the river, where I gather it is now. It was to keep the students out of the downtown area and keep them at a distance in a place where they could keep them under control. With their history, Korean students feel almost obliged to agitate in the spring; it was incumbent on them or else they couldn't be called students. That was the students' *raison d'etre* to go out and raise hell and protest in the spring time. But I don't think they were ever a serious threat to Park and the stability of his government.

A couple of more points about the missionaries. I think I mentioned earlier that Sneider started out by lecturing to the them at their first meeting rather than listening to them and I don't think he ever quite overcame that. Christians and their American missionaries -- some but not all -- some of the Catholics and the old Protestant groups, but generally not the evangelical sects -- were involved in Korean politics because of one of the roles the church played during the Japanese occupation. The churches were the one place where gatherings were tolerated. So, to a certain extent, the Koreans used the Christian churches as a front for some of their own political activities and the tie between the two became more or less solidified. The missionaries at that time were involved to a degree and this carried over.

The missionaries, bound by conscience, were genuinely concerned about the human rights and dictatorial aspects of the repressive measures that Park took and supported the reaction of their congregations. When Park actually implemented these measures and arrested church members, the missionaries felt impelled by conscience and outrage to take some kind of action. They didn't get involved directly, except on a few occasions that I can remember, but many of them were certainly willing to let their churches be used as bases of operation and to protest, at least to us and certainly to their churches and political representatives at home, when some member of their congregation fell afoul of the law. They also from time to time spoke to Korean authorities although they largely got a pretty deaf ear there.

On occasion, however, the missionaries actually fomented and led Korean demonstrations against Park. There was one protest leader -- a church member -- was arrested with his group and died in prison, apparently of police brutality. A well-known Marymount missionary, a Catholic priest, led demonstrations around the jail by the parishioners when his body was received. Then one day from our offices in the Embassy we saw a couple of buses pull up. A large number of women -- only one man, our Marymount friend -- descended and raced into the Embassy parking lot, where they produced signs and began parading around. We were negotiating with this priest and one or two of the more prominent protestors about coming up to speak to the Ambassador when the riot police descended -- uninvited -- on this group. The women were not being destructive, although they were trying to bar people from going into the Embassy. The police were in full riot regalia. They came into the parking lot and began whaling away at these women and hauling them into the bus to take them down to police headquarters to be charged. Well, I

was on the telephone to the Foreign Ministry immediately to protest this unsolicited incursion diplomatic property. I was told they were in violation of Korean law which prohibited demonstrations within a hundred yards of embassy buildings, or some such thing. I was retorting that the police had no right to enter embassy property without our approval. While we were having an argument the police were rounding up all the demonstrators but one and that was our friend the priest. The police would not arrest him and would not put him in the bus with the women, despite the fact that he wanted to be arrested and wanted to be put in the bus and taken to the police station and perhaps even put into jail. As the police van drove away we were treated to the ludicrous sight of a Catholic priest -- dark suit, collar and all -- chasing the van, furious because he hadn't been taken in too.

Things like that that bugged us a little bit. However justified the cause, he was making life difficult for us. But I suppose that was his intention. Incidentally, he did take a taxi to police headquarters and there demanded to be arrested and jailed with his lady cohorts, but the police still refused.

Another thing, of course, was that the missionaries were quite prominent in complaining to the press and people in the United States about Park's repressive measures and in the process, I think, to a certain extent exaggerating what was going on. God knows it was bad enough. The emergency measures were certainly undemocratic and were certainly employed in many cases without real justification. Nonetheless, this country was in a unique position of its own. I personally thought that a strong central government was necessary and that it could not afford a hell of a lot of dissidence, which the North Koreans were always ready to capitalize upon if they could.

The missionaries kept in touch with the media and the Congress and periodically called in at the Embassy. As I recall, Sneider always gave them adequate time. But I don't think they ever established a real good dialogue. We had an officer in the Embassy whose responsibility was to maintain liaison with the missionaries. We always had a political officer to do that, so their representations to the Embassy might have been less frequent than they could have been otherwise. The missionaries, of course, were agitating about one aspect of life in Korea -- it never seemed to occur to them to acknowledge the many freedoms that did exist -- to say nothing of the government's tolerance of their own presence and activities. The Embassy was in a much different position. It may have felt strongly about their cause, but it also had seventeen other fish to fry and had to balance one thing against another.

I have dim recollections of there being some difficulties with highly indignant junior political and economic officers. I can't recall who, what and specifically why. There were a number of junior officers who objected, and rightfully so, very sincerely to the harshness with which Park treated his people. There were one or two Catholics on the staff, for example, who in particular thought he was too tough on the Bishop when that worthy got politically active. He was never arrested or anything, but his movements were watched and his visitors were noted and restricted and the like. But nothing that ever approached a revolution of our own within the Embassy, no.

But some of the junior people were upset, I recall, during the period after Sneider arrived when missionary agitation was at its height and Park's repressive measures were raising objections in

the United States. They became somewhat restless. So Sneider started to convoke a regular (I don't remember how regular) discussion with the junior officers of the Embassy from which the senior officers were excluded. I thought it was a rather good thing. I did attend a couple of them, but Embassy section chiefs were excluded. Sneider spoke directly to his junior staff. As opposed to Habib who always managed to reserve some part of the Embassy activities for himself, Dick was usually quite open with these people and this activity did a lot, I think, to allay some of their unhappiness. But, we never had anybody protest by asking for a transfer or threatening to resign, or anything like that.

Don Ranard was the Desk Officer in Washington during a good part of this period and has been an outspoken critic of Park. He wrote fairly extensively and joined various human rights organizations -- all anti-Park -- after he left the Department. He was not in favor of North Korea taking over, but he was very unhappy with the domestic situation. Don had been in Korea, but it was well before my period in the sixties. He may have been back between my two times, but he wasn't there while I was there. But he was a vociferous critic and I think encouraged to a certain degree some of the Congressional criticism. His views would have been brought to bear not so much on the Embassy perhaps as on the Department and I was never aware that he ever carried the day on this kind of thing. I am sure there were a lot of discussions about it, but the Department would have put it all in overall context and come down on the side of "well these are the people we must work with and in many ways they are not doing all that badly." Habib, of course, was the Assistant Secretary in EA and would not have been swayed by anyone else's views on Park or Korea.

How did I feel about it? After you have been in Korea for a while you begin to get some understanding -- you develop not a tolerance for it, but an understanding for that corruption and harshness. This is a tough society that lives under hard conditions and it developed certain attitudes that aren't the same as ours.

These reports the press and media sent to the US were effective with Congress. During the seventies, frankly, one of our major problems was the care and feeding of the United States Congress' more liberal members, who came in a seemingly endless stream to investigate political oppression and human rights violation and to determine whether the United States should support a government that resorted to such measures. The Korean government always received them quite well. Park was very concerned about his reputation in the United States. I think one of his major ambitions was to be received in Washington in parity with the President of the United States on a state visit and all that went with it. He really hungered for that kind of thing and it was said at one point he offered \$25,000 to Time magazine if it would put him on the cover. He would have given anything to get recognized and received in Washington on a par with the President of the United States. It would have been the capstone of his career. He never got it, of course.

When I left in 1968 I wrote a long final report of my experiences and feelings about Korea, which never saw the light of day because Bill Porter and George Newman refused to send it. They said it was too critical of Park and his activities. I was pretty low on Park at the time, as a matter of fact. The concern at that point was whether Park was going to amend his own 1963 constitution to permit him to serve more than two terms as president and thus enable him to

remain in office beyond in 1971. I included in this *tour d'horizon* a prescription for persuading him not to. I certainly defended everything that he had done economically, etc. for I had considerable admiration for the man. But I thought he was going to overstay his time, provoked into doing so by the opposition which really behaved very badly all during this period. I said that way to get rid of Park or to get Park decently retired, was to invite him to Washington -- give him the presidential visit that he so desired -- with all the perks and trappings. Not only that, but let him address a joint session of Congress, the ultimate honor the United States can bestow on an ally and friend. It has been done a number of times since then. The kicker should be that the President of the United States should accompany him to Congress and should introduce him, and in doing so should recount Park's achievements, his loyalty in Vietnam, and all that he had done for his country and say, "When he steps down in 1972, as I know he will, he will enter Korean history as one of its greatest presidents"...or words to that effect. Put him before Congress and the world as somebody we want and expect to step down and he might well have done it. But, instead, of course, he stayed on, passed a new constitution and was finally assassinated 1979 by one of his own people. This was certainly one of the more outstanding cases in the world of a politician who stayed beyond his time.

Anyway, we did have a large number of congressional visitors and Park did receive every single congressional visitor during both of my tours with one exception. They always came with complaints, veiled warnings and threats, and Park usually responded quite patiently by trying to explain to these people the peculiar position Korea found itself in -- how memories of the Korean War were very much alive in the minds of all Koreans, and the additional strains and tensions with the North attendant on Korea's participation at our request in the Vietnam struggle, to which they had rotated by that time several hundred thousand young Korean men and had taken their share of casualties. He always expressed his feelings about what President Lincoln had done during the Civil War in suspending *habeas corpus* and arresting large numbers of people without trial. Park used to say, "I think of myself somewhat like Lincoln, sitting across the Potomac from Robert E. Lee and saying 'Gee, I can't afford to have the streets of Washington running with dissident civilians. I have a war to fight.'" He considered himself still at war with North Korea and technically he was. The Armistice Agreement was only an armistice; it was not a peace treaty.

Anyway, Park did treat a long procession of visitors quite well. I remember one that was led by Congressman Wolfe from New York, chairman of the Far East subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Steve Solarz was in that group and the present chairman, Benjamin Gilman. There were ten or eleven Congressmen on that "familiarization trip to Asia," (I still think they should have re-named the Washington basketball team the Washington Junketeers -- the Foreign Service would have loved it) and Korea was obviously their major stop. Park, who had just bought Queen Elizabeth's personal plane, was on vacation down in Chinhae. I was Chargé again for some peculiar reason. Park sent the airplane up to Seoul and flew the whole group down to Chinhae. He came to the base from his island retreat to meet with them. He entertained them at lunch, had a long private meeting with Wolfe, and then sat around and answered their questions. He got bombarded, of course, by Solarz in particular and other liberal congressmen about his policies and he answered them all quite openly and frankly acknowledged that he had to be tough on his people. At one of these meetings he said that when Korea's per capita annual gross national income reached \$1000, then he thought he could see fit to lift the

measures and give full freedom and democracy. Well, it later passed that ceiling rather rapidly without any lifting of repressive measures. But he was thinking about this kind of thing, obviously.

The missionaries had only peripherally to do with the Congressional flow. They undoubtedly inspired many of the questions from Congressmen who came, but the Congressmen, of course, had their own constituencies and own agendas and many of them felt exactly as the missionaries did. That was one of the problems with Congressmen during that period, of course, and many of those who came to Korea were violently biased against the Park government and what was going on, and came largely to seek confirmation of their views. I have in mind in particular a visit by Don Fraser, a Congressman from Minnesota and later mayor of Minneapolis. He was probably the leading liberal and human rights activist then in the Congress. His wife was a well known liberal activist also. Fraser came out, when I was Chargé again. His visit was not typical, but perhaps an extreme example of Congressional attitudes of the period. Somebody in the Seoul missionary group had written to the United States to say that Park was torturing people who were arrested under the emergency measures and that some of them had suffered terribly at his hands. This aroused considerable sentiment in Congress and Fraser had come out to investigate. He asked for an appointment with Park and implied that he wouldn't come unless he got one. That request hung fire all during the preparation for this visit. Park never did say that he would give him an appointment and in the end did not. He was so angry that Fraser became the only Congressman Park ever refused to see. Fraser wired out ahead and asked that -- he was going to arrive on a Sunday -- arrangements be made for him to see Kim Tae-jung privately and to talk immediately to a list of distinguished dissident leaders. He also asked to see Kim Chi-ha, the poet who was in jail for having slandered the President and who, it was rumored, would receive the death sentence. This one really teed Park off -- he couldn't believe the effrontery of Fraser's request to see both him and a man who was in prison accused of treason.

I scheduled the Kim Tae-chung interview for the afternoon at my house (that must have pleased Park too) and a dinner party also at my house for the larger group. Included were Chong Il-hyong, who had been Prime Minister under the Chang Myon government after the downfall of Syngman Rhee, and his wife, a distinguished lady lawyer who had founded and still ran the Korean Legal Society for people who couldn't afford legal representation in Korean courts. It included to the two famous educator Kims, Ok-kil who was president of Ehwa University, and her brother Tong-kil, the distinguished professor from Yonsei University, both Methodist-affiliated. And it included members of the opposition political party -- political leaders. There were about eight, I think, and despite Fraser's leading questions none was willing to express a view in front of the others. Not surprising. None that is except Kim Tong -kil. I think that this man had been responsible for Park's education on Lincoln, on whom he was Korea's leading authority. A very impressive looking man who, incidentally, sang like an angel at parties. He was large for a Korean with a great leonine head and a backswept mane of gray hair. A Korean lion, as Churchill was a bulldog.

Fraser was accompanied by Bill Richardson, who was then a staffer but now the Congressman from New Mexico and very active in foreign affairs, having done a number of recent hostage negotiations. Also a man by the name of Sausman, a staffer, and Bob Boettcher, a former Foreign Service officer. I will never forget that party of four. They came out frankly looking to

interview people who had been tortured. But that first night Fraser tried very hard to get this group of dissident leaders, so-called, to say things condemning the Park government and to tell him about people being tortured in ROK jails. He was looking for confirmation of his biases. It went on and on. Of course, this was bad tactics in the first place because you don't get people like that to talk in front of each other. It was hard enough to get them to talk at all, if you were an American diplomat or congressman, but getting them to talk as a group is practically impossible. But he was laboriously trying to lead them to that point when Kim Tong-kil finally said, " Stop!" and then gave what was perhaps the best summary of the Korean point of view toward Park and the whole situation that I have ever heard.

It wasn't what Fraser had come to hear. I should add that Fraser wanted to see Kim Tong-kil because he had been imprisoned by Park for making derogatory remarks about the President in a speech. It was not a violent denunciation of Park, but it mocked the President and questioned whether someone who was so stupid as to impose such oppression -- or to permit his minions to behave so harshly -- was fit to rule. There were always people under Park who, in trying to curry favor, did things he things he might not have done himself. Anyway, Park promptly had him sentenced to eight years in jail in solitary confinement. That had been about a year earlier. He had spent the first six months in solitary confinement and then gone into jail for elite prisoners for another six months and had just been released. So this man was a prime candidate for the Congressman's approach.

But he stopped the Congressman said, as best I can recall, "Mr. Fraser, you are asking too much of us. We Koreans badly want democracy and full human rights like you have in America. Those of us who know democracy want it very badly indeed. And we will work hard to achieve it. But what you must realize, Mr. Fraser, is that there isn't a democratic institution in this country. Aside from the National Assembly there are no elective offices. So we Koreans have no experience with democracy. We don't know how to handle it. We don't even really know what it is. It will probably take us a hundred years, to develop the kind of democratic society that you would be proud of, that you would want us to have. We will try. But it is going to take a very, very long time." He went on to say, "Don't come here assuming that we do not feel the threat from the North. All of us that are of an age remember the devastation of the war. Many of us had families that were wiped out. We saw the city in ruins three times and we know that these same people who did that are just 30 miles from here. We do feel the threat from the North and we do believe the President is justified in invoking that threat as a means of controlling the population." He said, "Most Koreans deep down agree we are much too much a fractious society at this stage to have anything but a fairly strong central government. Now we don't condone what Park has done. What Park did to me was not just. I should never have been sent to jail. I did not commit any crime. Jail was no picnic. Six months of solitary confinement can be devastating. But I came to know myself better in those six months and when I was put into the general prison I was in a cell with five or six others -- several of whom happened to be my students. I was given the usual privileges of a prisoner. My family visited me, fed me, brought me study materials. I was allowed to teach while in prison. It was not a country club and it was a terrible experience, but I was not tortured. I know no one who has been tortured. It is quite probable, knowing my people and my President, that there have been people who have been tortured, but I have no personal knowledge of any of them. You Americans may ask what you should do to promote democracy here. The worst thing you can do is attempt to impose your own solutions on us, because you

don't understand anything about this society and its people. And if you impose, it will fail. When it fails, you will have to come up with another solution and it too will probably fail. You will never get out of here. What America should do is to let us solve our own problems in our own way. There has to be a Korean solution. You should just continue to provide the shield, against the threat that menaces us, as you have so nobly and so well over the past years, so that these changes can take place. But it will take a long time."

The report of the Fraser mission does not contain word one of this statement. The dinner is not even mentioned. That group chased all over Seoul looking for people who had been tortured. The opposition party gave them a dinner the next night and they were an hour and a half late because all four of them had been chasing down some lead to a tortured prisoner -- with whom they had failed to link up. One of the reasons they didn't find what they were looking for is that anybody who might have spoken about the use of torture, or had been tortured, was on a long bus ride through the country. The ROKG had rounded them up and taken them out of town, which doesn't make you feel very good about the Koreans, but nonetheless you have to admit it was a fairly clever operation.

Anyway, Fraser returned home to write a report of his mission denouncing Park and all his work, but said not a word about Kim's statement. Incidentally, Kim's statement also included a long reference to Park, himself, saying in effect that while he found Park a despicable person in many ways, he could understand why he acted the way he did, and he confessed grudging admiration for him. He said that to date Park has done more for his country than any other Korean who ever lived, which is a fairly nice thing for an oppositionist to say about a man he allegedly hated. I think that was probably true of Park up to that time. For all his failings, he certainly concentrated on the economic development of Korea and succeeded amazingly -- to a degree that nobody has ever carefully examined to this day. But take a look. When I came there in 1965, they couldn't even build a steel hull fishing boat; they couldn't build much of anything. The per capita income was around \$50 a year. The country was still mired in the early colonial period. Today, the United States has a severe balance of trade deficit with the ROK, a country that makes a lot of very good industrial products. So, you know somebody did something right somewhere along the way, and I think for the first 20 years it was Park.

There are all kinds of stories about Korean efforts to persuade Congressmen and other influential Americans to see things their way. There are a lot of stories about Kim Tong-jo when he was Ambassador to the United States having been literally a bag man who carried large sums of money up to the Hill to distribute. Carl Albert, when he was Speaker of the House, had in his front office as receptionist a Korean woman whom all of the Koreans believed and said was an employee of Tong-son Park and that Tong-son, himself, was controlled by the ROK CIA. Now, you can believe that as you wish or not. The lady, herself, was a pain in the butt to official Americans in Korea, because whenever she came, and she did accompany several Congressional delegations, she adopted the role of super hostess and interfered by providing "extra" entertainment for the delegation. I can remember one occasion, again I was Chargé, when a very large group of Congressmen came -- this might have been the Wolfe/Solarz group, but I am not sure. The group was so large that we had to hold our dinner party in the garden of the house that the Ambassador was temporarily using then. My wife worked very hard in somebody else's house to put this affair on and it was going quite nicely. It was just about to reach the breakup

point when this lady appeared, uninvited, wearing a two piece dress which exposed her midriff (the Korean women -- all in modest Korean dress -- were shocked). In a loud voice, she invited the entire Codel to come with her up to the big Kisaeng house way up on the top of the hill on the northern side of the city. I went along with them to see what would happen. It was a full blown Kisaeng party -- music, girls, dancing, scotch, food. The Congressional wives were along, which was seldom the case. This was her idea of how to win friends for her country, I guess, and her guests had a great time. But all this had to be funded from somewhere. A party at a place like that for 45 people is a mighty expensive affair -- probably at that time let's say \$200 a head, which would be \$8-10,000 for that party. Somebody had to approve a voucher on that one.

Then there were the activities of Tong-son Park. Park was a shadowy businessman who ran several good size companies in Korea, and was also operating in the United States. He lived in Washington for much of the time. He owned the Georgetown Inn where he entertained Congressmen constantly. He always had a great deal of money available for entertainment. He was regarded in Korea by the righteous as a slippery and unreliable character, indeed. I am sure that he was a ROK CIA operative. Anyway, he always appeared in Korea when certain Congressmen came. There were organizations in Korea that went by names like Pan Pacific Friendship Society, which were fronts for the ROK Government and its agencies. These invited fairly substantial groups of Americans and Congressmen to come to Korea to see what things were really like. They got the Cook's tour of the better things available. A number of Congressmen came such auspices. To be cynical about it, it looked like the Koreans were buying either the useless or the converted. They were always conservative Congressmen of one stripe or another who probably would have supported the Republic anyway, but came and enjoyed a few days in a nice hotel and a nice tour of the countryside and winning visit to the race track. They inevitably collected their counterpart funds. They always had official orders from Congress and were therefore eligible. I always had our disbursing officer put a little note in each counterpart fund envelope saying this money was for their legitimate travel expenses while in Korea, which included their room and board, taxis, etc. and would they please return any part that was left over because the next one along could use it. We never got a single won back, but it was kind of fun to put the note in.

When I arrived in Korea, Phil Habib had already issued his famous order that any Embassy officer seen consorting with Tong-son Park or any member of his organization would be on the airplane back to the United States within 24 hours. There were a number of Congressmen who behaved under Park's aegis in a manner that left you far from proud of them as representatives of the great American public. I will name one name in particular, Otto Passman, who was "Mr. Surplus Rice Sales" at the time. Park always was on hand to meet him at the airport. We would always have an Embassy control officer out there and Passman would take his little information sheet and envelope of counterpart and then disappear to link up with Park. Park made all his arrangements, including hotel suites. He alone among all Congressmen wouldn't take the Ambassador or Chargé on his official visits. Nobody saw what he did in Korea, but his behavior made for some juicy gossip. Once I had to go to his hotel room about an hour after he arrived and the suite was already populated with the employees of the host agency who were there to entertain him, to put it kindly. Passman's behavior was the worst of any Congressman. I don't know how far Tong-son Park's influence went with him or his munificence to him, but certainly it was substantial.

There was another interesting episode of this kind. Park Chung Hee, in an attempt to imitate the American presidency, liked to hold prayer breakfasts which was the vogue among American presidents in those days. Once a year they would have a big national prayer breakfast and convene all sorts of leaders from one place or another. Park would have gone if he had been invited to the one in the United States. He always sent a representative to the American President's breakfast, and in this particular instance the American President sent a representative from the White House staff to Park's prayer breakfast. I don't remember this fellow's name, but he was an insignificant sort of Special Assistant to the President -- very low on the White House totem pole. But the Koreans greeted him like a long lost brother; he came from the right address and they were going to treat him accordingly so he would go back and give a good report. This was before Madame Yuk's assassination, so it must have been in the spring of 1974. His official host was Park Chung-kyu, the President's bodyguard. He was given the most elaborate treatment. He was given a picnic that my wife and I were invited to. Habib must have been out of town again because I have pictures of the picnic but no pictures of him. Anyway, the so-called picnic involved going out to the rifle range run by the Korean Rifle Association under the ROK CIA's aegis. It was a very elaborate place. We arrived to find that a fishing pond was the first stop. There were chairs and hooks already baited and poles sitting in rests just waiting for you to pick up the pole and wind the fish in. Then we had a rifle match. All the guests shot at targets. I forget what else we did but everyone was very much dressed up. We went to dinner expecting a picnic, but found ourselves sitting out in the open under a huge canopy with long tables gleaming with the Chosun Hotel's best silverware and china. The Chosun's "A" menu was supposed to have been served to us there, but it was too cold for that. The Koreans improvised very neatly. A couple of tons of firewood appeared from nowhere, the chairs were taken from the table and arranged around several roaring bonfires. We all sat around on folding chairs with four wine glasses on the ground beside each of us, being served the same meal we would have had if we had stayed to freeze at the other table. And we probably had a better time.

Anyway, this emissary from the White House was supposed to leave by plane at noon on Sunday. At about 12:30 I was shooting basketballs with my son Bill on a little court we had set up in Compound 1 when the our guest's young control officer came storming into the compound all agitated and excited. He handed me an envelope and said Mr. So-and-so got this from the Koreans. I said, "Wait a minute, calm down, what happened exactly?" He said, "Well, just before we left the hotel to go to the airport -- we had plenty of time -- we had a telephone call from the Blue House asking us to go to the golf course on the way to the airport [it was not on the way to the airport] because somebody very important wanted to speak to our guest. So we went and the President and his party were out on the course. Park Chung-kyu came to the clubhouse, said something to my guest privately and handed him this envelope. He put it in his coat pocket and said nothing all the way to the airport. When he was just about to go through the gate he handed me this envelope and said, "I think you ought to give this back." I thought I should bring it to you, so here it is." I tore open a corner and looked inside. A lot of hundred dollar bills. There were so many that the envelop clearly defined the stack and you could tell it had to be American currency. I looked at it and said, "There has got to be \$5,000 here." He said, "What do you want me to do with it?" I said, "Put it into the Marines' safe and we will give it to the Ambassador in the morning." Habib must have been in Seoul at the time; he just didn't go to the picnic, I guess.

The next morning we gave it to Habib, who in characteristic Habib fashion tore the envelope wide open, took the money out and counted \$10,000 in crisp green new American bills. I do not know what Park Chung-kyu said when he handed over the money, but our guest obviously thought long and hard about retaining it and in the end did not. Habib left the office later that day with money in hand to see his friend Park Chung Hee. Habib later told me that he had told Park to put it where it would do the most good. He was furious they had tried this stunt. But that kind of thing I suppose amounts to bribery, but not for anything specific. They were bribing people for goodwill. In the case of the Congressmen, it was hoped that they would all vote favorably on military assistance or other legislation pertaining to Korea, but that was never specified.

I should say that one time during early 1968 the Department got disturbed about corruption in Korea. They sent a message out asking for an assessment of the extent to which corruption was undermining economic development and our aid efforts. What role did corruption play in Korean society and how pervasive and debilitating was it? I don't think we ever answered that, at least I didn't, but I was thinking about doing it myself at one point. I was standing in my office looking down on the street and I saw a cop standing in the street in front of the old Bando Hotel, at that time the number one hotel, to enforce the no U turn regulation. Taxi drivers would find it convenient to deliver somebody to the Bando and then make a U turn and get on back towards the railroad station or some place else where they could pick up a fare. That would cause congestion in front of the Bando. So the police put up a sign saying no U turns and had stationed a cop there to enforce it. But here was a taxi making a U turn right in front of the Bando and right in front of the cop. I thought here is where it starts. You could start anywhere, but let's start here.

This taxi driver can make the turn because he had paid the cop to overlook it. That is corruption, but it helps both of them. He works more efficiently because of it. Now the cop has taken this money but he has paid off the sergeant so he can have this position where he can get this kind of payoff. He needs this payoff because he can't live on his pay, so he pays the sergeant a little something in gratitude for the Bando assignment which makes it possible to support his family. The sergeant needs this payoff because he wants to ensure that his kid does as well as possible in school, and so he takes a little graft from the cop in order to show proper gratitude to his son's teacher for special attention and a seat in the front row of the class. The teacher in the class has paid to get in the class so that she can get this better group of pupils and get a little extra from their parents. It starts out like that from any thread in Korea's social fabric. Wherever you start you can work your way around to people high and low, all around the fabric. It was pervasive -- all over the place. It was part of life. Koreans pay for favors or advantage. They do it in ways that we would consider to be corrupt. By our standards it is corrupt. Is it corruption by theirs? At a certain point it becomes corruption to them, but they are the ones who are able to judge where that point is.

The ROK CIA, for example, never got appropriations adequate to its responsibilities. It had to get its money elsewhere. Part of its great organizational talent was devoted to extorting funds from people to provide, and for the ROK CIA, in particular, dollar funds. The ROK CIA, for example, got a kickback from Korean participants in most of the dollar operations concluded in the Republic of Korea. They got it from operations involving foreigners. For example, they controlled and allocated bids among the firms that packed up all the household goods for the US

military and to a certain extent the Embassy as well. The guy who sold that picture to my wife, Sammy Lee, got ambitious and rather than just running his antique business, he went into the furniture packing business. He won an Embassy contract and was a damn good packer. He refused to kick back to the CIA, was jailed on some phoney charge and put out of business. He is not in business today. The ROK CIA got most of its funds from such extortion activities.

When the Japanese began to implement their reparations program to Korea in the sixties, the process involved Koreans submitting projects to the government and the government deciding whether the projects and funding would be approved. But the ROK CIA always collected its percentage off each one of these allocations. It never appeared on the books, but that is the way it operated.

But, in the seventies, there were all kinds of people telling Park his policies were stupid or ill advised. It would arouse his curiosity and he would like to do better. If you ever questioned in any way, manner or form, his right to rule, then you were committing crimes and you were going to go to jail. Now this isn't the way Americans think a government should work, and God knows it isn't. But it was a fact of life -- it wasn't because Park couldn't accept criticism, because he could -- of anything except his right to rule and the way he ruled. Then he would react violently. And God help the close associate who turned on him in any manner or form.

S.K. Kim was a very good friend of mine. He was the first Korean who really came after me when I arrived as Political Counselor. We played a lot of golf over the years. SK was described by the President of Gulf Oil Company as the toughest son-of-a-bitch that he ever had to negotiate with. His function in life was as bagman for the Democratic Republican Party. He was designated to collect, manage -- and later to generate -- the funds with which the party was run. For example, when Park ordered the construction of a super highway from Pusan to Seoul, most of us laughed. What would run on that highway?. At that time there wasn't the type of internal commerce to require such a road and it was going to be enormously expensive to build a concrete autobahn from Pusan to Seoul in a mountainous country -- a country which had practically no experience in building roads of any kind. All of a sudden one morning you were going to wake up and be able to drive from Pusan to Seoul in three or four hours? Ridiculous.

Well, SK happened to be a manufacturer of cement. He made cement for roads and he made cement for building tiles. It was also about this time that Park decreed that the old thatched roof was to disappear from the countryside and be replaced by cement tiles. Both of these projects fit very neatly into Korean directed consumption, or if you want to call it corruption, you can. But it turned out the concrete for that road was to be supplied exclusively almost by SK's huge new cement plant which he had just obtained permission to build with a heavy loan from the government. This was not primarily to enrich SK and his friends who owned the company. The profits from this operation, and from the tiles for the roofs of the farmers, were to flow into the coffers of the Democratic Republic Party, which, as you can guess, was a very expensive proposition and required a hell of a lot of money. The road was built, incidentally, and I had the privilege to drive it before I left. I was amazed. My driver drove from Pusan to Seoul at 70 miles an hour. Anyone who had driven in Korea before would understand that this was a real miracle. Interestingly enough, I counted the vehicles and trucks on that road outnumbered cars about three to one. The road engendered trade in this case and the tiles were a great improvement over

thatch, so there was social purpose, support of the party, stimulation of trade and industry -- SK's operation accomplished many, many objectives. But it was a corrupt operation by our standards.

At that point in time, without any promotion of US exports, we had a balance of payments surplus. In my day, as I recall it, was not a difficulty. Koreans were buying large American products. Nuclear power stations, road building equipment and all that sort of thing was by and large going to be American. We didn't have to push anything there really very hard. They weren't making anything. They had just started making consumer products that were of real interest to the Americans. Our problem was to encourage American companies to invest in Korea. The Koreans established an applied science center in Seoul during the seventies which was supposed to design and make available for manufacture products requiring some technological input. I have a pair of binoculars in the family room which I purchased from this organization which were experimental; they are rotten binoculars. They gave me a 35mm camera which was really pretty sad compared to what the Japanese were doing at the time, to say nothing of the Germans. But they were interested in starting to develop that sort of thing and they were promoting it from the government side. They were just beginning to design and produce calculators and simple electronic stuff. American agricultural products came in very large volume and all kinds of industrial building equipment and machinery. So we didn't have to push American products.

We did have, partly because of the exposure to Congressmen and their feelings, a number of junior officers who had misgivings about our support for the Park government. This is a misnomer too. We didn't support Park in his struggles versus the opposition; we always insisted on meeting with the opposition. When I left Korea, for example, in 1976 I got a letter from Kim Dae Jung's wife -- he was then in jail. When she told him I was leaving, he wanted her to write to me and thank me on his behalf for the courtesies that I had shown and the understanding and opportunities that I had provided for him to meet sympathetic Americans. It seemed that whenever I was Chargé we would have a Congressman who wanted to talk to Kim Dae Jung and I usually did that by having Kim come to the house for lunch. He came to my three or four times. He was not in that group during the Fraser mission, but he would come and talk privately to the Congressmen. We couldn't go to his house because it was always surrounded by government agents who discouraged visitors. But he could come to my house. The Embassy always maintained its right to see and speak to opposition leaders whenever it wanted to. Park didn't like this and made that clear on a number of occasions -- not directly, but through his advisors. However, he knew it was the price of doing business so he let it occur.

One thing I should perhaps mention, although not in any great detail, is the Korean nuclear effort and its energy problems. Park, during the seventies, of course, because of the worldwide petroleum shortage, woke up to the fact that he was at the mercy of foreign energy suppliers. Korea, had no domestic sources of energy. No hydroelectric power to speak of. Remember when the Japanese occupied Korea they put most of the industrial development in the north because the north had hydroelectric power and the south did not. There was some low grade coal in the south but no petroleum. Park, as a matter of fact, instituted a desperate search, quite expensive, for a domestic oil field. He was determined to find oil somewhere in the Republic of Korea. They spent a lot of money looking for oil and as one of the features of his talks with Congressmen was to reach into his desk drawer -- he would get up from the conference area in his office and open the desk drawer and come out with a bottle of some odious-looking stuff that

he claimed had been mined from the ground in the south of Korea. He hired a number of American firms to come over and explore, even in the straits of Tsushima. But he wasted all his money, of course; he never did find anything. But he was very keenly aware that he was at the mercy of foreign suppliers and since these were pretty capricious fellows, Koreans wanted to do something about providing a domestic base for electric power. So he turned to nuclear power and pursued it quite diligently. Then, of course, he got the bright idea that there are other things that you can do with nuclear fuel. Maybe you can refine it a little bit into weapons grade stuff. I mentioned that they had developed this scientific community near Seoul and all of a sudden we found ourselves faced with the proposition that they were going to build a big science city. Now, I don't know if they ever went through with this science city concept, but it became apparent that its purpose was not solely to develop technological products for domestic manufacture but to do nuclear research of one kind and another. And there then ensued an effort because of the nature of the equipment that they were seeking to buy and that sort of thing -- to persuade them not to go the weapons route. It was successful. I won't say any more about that, but they were headed that way.

Originally Park was just desperately concerned, I think, about the question of his vulnerability to foreign sources of energy. He had none of his own and he was developing a tremendous industry which consumes a lot of power. Anyway, I think it should be flagged that the Koreans once had this ambition and were dissuaded.

I would like to relate one episode before I left which was rather interesting, a personal kind of thing. For years and years and years the Ambassador of the United States had lived in a building that was probably built around 1880, the so-called Old Residence. Our first minister there complained to Washington that it was a "miserable hovel" with beams so low he couldn't keep his hat on inside the house. The Department allegedly responded that gentlemen didn't wear hats in the house and obviously did not accept his description of it as a "miserable hovel" because they didn't do a hell of a lot about it for many, many years. Everybody who ever walked into that building at first said, "My God, this is not suitable as the residence of the American Ambassador," even though it had its own lovely compound, swimming pool and tennis court. People said that this old building was not adequate. But, as you stayed there, it grew and grew on you so actually you liked it. I don't know of any other building that inspired as much affection as that old building did. When you talked to the Browns about it, it was a homey, comfortable place with lots of character and charm. It was very Korean with huge exposed black beams against white plaster walls and that kind of thing. It only had two bedrooms and, as a matter of fact, during one of Hubert Humphrey's trips, he had stayed in the Ambassador's bedroom and the next day Mrs. Brown noticed that the ceiling seemed to be bulging in ways that it hadn't before. She called the army. They sent over an engineer who went into the bedroom and took her by the elbow and said, "Mrs. Brown, let us move out of this room as gently and quietly as we can." When he got her outside he said, "Lady, there are umpteen tons of tile, cement, and wood on top of you and that whole thing is about to fall on your head." And the Vice President of the United States had just slept there.

Anyway, that a serious indication of dry rot in the building and it had spread by the time Habib got there. Habib was a fierce defender of the old building and he would not hear of anybody replacing it. But they found some more dry rot across the front of it in the main entertainment

area and got to exploring how extensive it was and the more they explored the more they uncovered and they finally said, "Look, we can't fix what we have done in the exploration process for fear of having the whole thing tumble down." The Korean style of building, of course, puts an enormous weight in the roof because it is made of cement tiles underlaid with thick plaster and held up by huge, huge beams. If the beams start to go it begins to get kind of dicey.

Anyway, they hired a Korean artist, a man famous for his tiger paintings among other things, to design a new building in the Korean style which was going to be the last building ever built in the Yi dynasty tradition -- certainly of that scope. After they approved the design they discovered that they couldn't obtain the basic construction material -- wood for the supporting beams -- in Korea because they no longer had any trees big enough. Some of those beams were enormous things and they all had to be imported from our West Coast.

To make a long story short, during Habib's tour they tore down the old building and started on the new one, which is why I never lived in the DCM's house. The Ambassador took that over for the whole period I was there in the seventies. The building was finished about ten days before I left Korea in 1976 and the Sneiders had just moved in. Sneider was still eager to cultivate personal ties with Park and we sent word through people around him, to the effect that we would like to show him this extraordinary Korean style residence. The exterior of the building didn't appeal to me; I thought it was top-heavy and did not meld gracefully into the landscape like the old one. But inside it was really marvelous. It features a central courtyard -- it is built like a hollow square -- and in the open center is a water course copied from the one in the royal palace at Kyongju. The king used to sit at the head of the course with his courtiers arrayed along its banks and would float little cups of rice wine to the one who recited the best poem or whatever it was. I don't think we will ever appropriate that much money for a building ever again. It was fearsomely expensive, but I think probably in the end well worth it.

Anyway this was the drawing card that was going to get Park into the Ambassador's Residence. He had never been in an ambassador's residence. A couple of days before I left he sent word that he would be pleased to come by for 15 minutes and look at the building. The Sneiders and the Ericsons were in attendance. The President showed up at about 4:00pm with his interpreter, his daughter and a bunch of bodyguards. There was a farewell party for Betty and me that night for which we had to leave by about 5:30. But he was going to be there only fifteen minutes. In the end he stayed so long that Lea Sneider was beginning to think she should invite him to dinner, but she had little on hand other than drinks and snacks. He was gracious, relaxed, talked about all kinds of things, about his early experiences with the Japanese, about his feelings about the assassination of his wife, all kinds of things that Park had never, never opened himself to before. And he spent a good twenty minutes -- we were having trouble getting the water course to run properly -- straddling that stream giving us tips on improvements to make the water run properly.

When he left, he made a singular gesture toward me. Now some people say you shouldn't accept friendly gestures from tyrants like Park, that is out of line. But he got into his car and it went ahead about 15 feet and stopped. He got back out and came up to the steps where we were and said to me, "You come back." He then got back into his car and drove away. Well, I didn't ever go back, but I was pleased at the touch.

Sneider, of course, was delighted with the fact that his was the only Ambassadorial residence the President had ever visited. I don't know if this continued or not. I have never talked to Dick to find out whether he ever played golf with the President or achieved any of his other ambitions. I kind of doubt it because Park was set in his habits of dealing primarily with the military.

As I mentioned earlier, on departure, General Stilwell gave me a United Nations honor guard parade, which was quite something. Up to that time and perhaps never since had such a parade been performed to honor an American civilian who served in Seoul. I still think the reason he gave it was not so much to honor me, but to get Sneider into the stands so he could make a speech to which the Ambassador would have no right of rejoinder. But it was kind of nice.

Anyway, we left Korea in the summer of 1976 to come back to Washington. George Vest, as I said, who was the Director of the Bureau of Political Military Affairs, had come to Seoul from Japan ostensibly to see Korea, but really to take a look at me and see if he wanted me as his deputy. He decided he did and offered me the job. Since our kids were all starting in college, and for various other reasons, I decided that I would leave the sanctity of the East Asia Bureau and venture out into another part of the Department of State.

PAUL M. CLEVELAND
Political/Military Officer
Seoul (1973-1977)

Paul M. Cleveland was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1931 and raised in New York and Washington, DC. He received a bachelor's degree in English from Yale University in 1953. Afterward, he entered the U.S. Air Force. Mr. Cleveland's Foreign Service career included positions in Australia, Germany, Korea, New Zealand, and Malaysia. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on October 20, 1995.

Q: In 1973, you were assigned to Seoul, Korea as the Politico-Military officer. Is that an assignment that you had requested?

CLEVELAND: It was indeed. It was a job that I wanted. I had asked for it specifically and Marshall fully supported my desire. I had become interested in Korea and in addition it clearly removed me from the economic field. The Politico-Military job was actually the Number Two job in the Political Section. Phil Habib was the Ambassador and Dan O'Donohue was the Political Counselor. I had not known Phil but Dan and I had entered the Foreign Service in the same class and therefore had known each other for many years. My first DCM was Frank Underhill, with whom I was slightly acquainted because he had been the Indonesia Country Director in Washington while I was serving in Jakarta. Frank was succeeded by Dick Ericson, whom I knew well from our days together in EA. So I knew the senior players well except for the Ambassador.

I had never been to Seoul before. When we arrived at our new post, we found that we were going to have to live in a compound. I have already mentioned my discomfort with those kind of living arrangements; the opportunity to live among locals was one of the reasons why I was happy to go to Jakarta. In fact, once we had adjusted, we found that in Seoul, living in an American compound was not a great hardship or disadvantage; we were able to become completely immersed in the Korean society. Our home was in Compound Two, which was a short walk to the Embassy. The housing area was surrounded by walls, but outside of that we were in the midst of Seoul residential area. I did not find that in Seoul, living in a compound interfered in the slightest with establishing personal contacts with Koreans.

In Seoul it was relatively easy to be in touch with the Korean community because there were a large number of Koreans, mostly American educated and all English speakers, who welcomed American Embassy personnel. Quite a few of them were in influential positions and were helpful professionally as well as personally. Dixie Walker, our Ambassador in the 1980s, when I was DCM, used to say that there were more graduate degree holders from American universities and colleges working in high corporate and government jobs in Korea than in any other country in the world, including the US.

I don't believe that Seoul was unique in that respect; I think every overseas American government establishment has a group of pro-American local people who want to stay in touch with Americans. I am not saying this in any negative sense, although at times I was a little cynical about some and questioned whether their motives were entirely friendly. Some were extraordinarily nice and helpful; they also helped us to meet other members of the Korean society. It is true, I believe, that perhaps the Embassy in Seoul had more of these local contacts than most other posts. But there were good reasons. In the first place, the US was an unparalleled overwhelming influence on Korean foreign relations. Secondly, we had troops in Korea to protect that country from an invasion from the North. Thirdly, we were then and are today Korea's major trading partner; we bought in the 1970s something like one-ninth of their economy. Finally, we were the number one attraction for Korean emigrants, in addition to being the main attraction for academic studies.

So Korea and the US had many, many ties which I think accounted for the large number of Koreans who wished to be associated with the Embassy. On the other side, Americans found Koreans, despite their well earned reputation for negotiating toughness and stubbornness, fun to be with. They were open, mercurial in many ways, and most were generous people. I think Americans probably felt more comfortable with them than other Asians -- although generalizations like that need to be taken with caution. We got along personally with Koreans well; they were generous in introducing us to their culture, their countryside and their history. We played a lot of golf with Koreans and drank a lot of Scotch with them.

Seoul had some aspects of a city "under siege". We had for example, monthly air raid practices, when all the citizens would have to evacuate the streets and run to the nearest shelters. If you traveled north outside of Seoul, you would run into a maze of tank traps, defensive obstacles and blowable bridges which would be used in an invasion to block roads. Everywhere one went in Korea, you noticed military encampments -- both American and Korean. The landscape itself was a constant reminder of the threat from the North. I think we all noticed this atmosphere,

although, since my job focused on this aspect of Korean life, I may perhaps been more aware of it than others. But I don't think that I personally felt any immediate threat. A study of the balance of forces on the Peninsula, when added to the fire and manpower that we could bring to bear from outside Korea, would lead one to the conclusion that the North had to be either very stupid or very desperate to start any hostilities. Of course, none of us knew enough about the North to be entirely confident that they would not make some dumb mistake. We concluded they were aggressive, but not crazy.

At the same time, I shared the view of most that the North was unpredictable. I thought that it was perfectly capable at any time of undertaking small unit actions, commando invasion efforts, etc. The North was also a very tough negotiator at Panmunjom. So a threat of a North Korean eruption was always present. It was clearly the North's policy that if any of its nationals got into a tough situation -- whether at sea in a small boat challenged by a South Korean vessel or in the DMZ when a North Korean may have strayed beyond the demarcation line -- they would shoot first and ask questions later. So that in that sense they were unpredictable and at times provocative.

On the other hand, when a fire fight would erupt -- and I observed the evolution of many -- I noticed that control of events would be quickly taken over by higher echelons, both in the North and in the South. That tended to localize any incidents. Phil Habib used to say that one would never know what was actually going on in the DMZ and I think that was correct because we could not cover the zone all the way across the Peninsula. But where we did have observation points, you could readily notice that command and control of a bad situation would be taken over by higher echelon headquarters very rapidly. In the North, that usually meant that Pyongyang would take command; it was quite clear that it would not permit these incidents to get out of hand. My guess was that the policy was that under no circumstances would the North wish to show any weakness; as I said, they would shoot first and ask questions later. But once the initial exchange had taken place, Pyongyang would exercise restraint and not further aggravate a situation by aggressively moving forces towards the South. So I never thought that a major invasion from the North was a very realistic possibility. Although that may have been due more to my naivete than knowledge, that is how things have turned out.

My view that we were far from a second Korean war was also based on the fact that there hadn't been a major outbreak of hostilities on the Peninsula since 1950. There had been a perceptible rise in tensions in the DMZ in 1968-69 with hundreds of deaths -- I learned a lot about that from Dick Ericson who was serving in Seoul at the time. Those tensions, which were accentuated by fire fights, had receded in 1969. There were incidents after that, but they were relatively minor compared to the deaths that occurred in the 1968-69 period, when we had the Pueblo incident and the Blue House raid. The assassination of Madame Park in 1973 was a critical moment but in general I believe that by 1973, relationships between the North and the South, although tense, had calmed down from the previous decade; my view was that the North was being less aggressive.

This is not to say that both the South Koreans and we did not continually harp on the possibility of a North invasion or other aggressive actions. We did. This was due in part to the need for us to be constantly alert and prepared because any sign of weakness or relaxation on the part of the

South or the US might well have led the North to make a serious policy miscalculation. (Masters of real politik, Koreans are quick to exploit weakness.) Under such circumstances, I think the risks of an attack would have risen considerably. That perception led me and most other American officials in Korea to the conclusion that the withdrawal of American forces would be a major mistake. I felt that the psychological environment on the Peninsula required an American presence and a well prepared and alert military force south of the DMZ that could be a deterrent to the North's ambitions. It was important not only that the US and South Korean forces be capable and alert, but that we publicly state repeatedly that we were concerned about Pyongyang's intentions, both to maintain pressure on the North and to insure that we ourselves did not let down our guard, which would have been the worst prescription for potential disaster. I think the validity of this thesis grew in my mind the longer I studied the situation in Korea; I am not sure that I had given it much thought before my assignment. But as I learned more about the military situation on the Peninsula, the more I became convinced that a well prepared and ready deterrent force was absolutely essential.

So in 1976, when President Carter began to talk about troop withdrawal, I thought his position was ill advised; psychologically, it was ill timed and raised risks where they were not necessary. In fact, the withdrawal of American troops might well have invited a North attack; such an event, as Habib used to say, would have lost us all that we had tried to achieve in the South.

An American troop presence, in my view, was essential to maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula. I also thought that if we were to maintain troops in Asia, they should be near the potential battle field as an indication of our resolve; that was important not only for the Koreans, but also for the Japanese who also needed clear evidence of US resolve to maintain stability in Northeast Asia. Korea provided us some of the cheapest and best training grounds in the world; furthermore, if the division was to be removed from South Korea it would have had to be demobilized because we didn't have the resources to accommodate it in the continental US. I don't think there was too much concern about Carter's comments during the campaign; there was probably some nervousness in both the Korean and American community, but a Carter electoral victory was hardly a sure thing in 1976.

But once he became President in 1977 and announced his plan to follow through on his campaign commitment to withdraw American ground troops from South Korea, then there was a major uproar. The withdrawal announcement was made at a noon White House press briefing. It was made one hour before he was to see the Korean Ambassador, Park Tung Jin, who had no advanced warning. I was as infuriated by that tactic, which showed disrespect and was in very bad taste, as I was by the policy decision itself. I think there was a general consensus in the Embassy that it was a very unwise policy decision as well as an embarrassment on how it was announced.

I must say that I was not totally convinced that the withdrawal policy was totally wrong because of my view of the threat; i.e. not as great as it had been. I thought that a well thought-out plan, implemented over a period of years and reversible at any time if a threat loomed, might be acceptable. That became Ambassador Sneider's view; whether that was his real view or a tactical compromise with the new President, was not clear. I am inclined to believe that Dick thought that the policy was essentially wrong, but he may well have reached the conclusion that to fight it

straight on was not likely to be successful and therefore he looked for some kind of compromise. So he sent to Washington a series of messages which said if the withdrawal goal was immutable, then he had some suggestions on how it might be reached with minimal damage to our position in South Korea and Northeast Asia as a whole. This became an eight or nine part series which involved many of the Embassy's senior officers. The bottom line was that Dick recommended a very slow withdrawal schedule, stretched out over years, so that a sense of catastrophe would not be generated in Northeast Asia. He also recommended that an expanded Air Force contingent be left in Korea and that as our troops withdrew, we increase our investment in the self-sufficiency of the South Korean armed forces.

In fact, that eight part series covered all aspects of our current and future relationships with South Korea; it covered political, economic and infrastructure issues. It was one of Dick's final reports because he was soon transferred to another position. It was a good series of messages, which unfortunately fell on deaf ears. I later found out from the Korean director, Ed Hurwitz, who had been the Political Counselor in Seoul for one year until 1976, that he had sent the messages to the EA front office with covering memoranda supporting the Embassy's views and recommendations, but that Dick Holbrooke, the new Assistant Secretary, had ignored them.

As I said, I was assigned to the job of Politico-Military officer and was also the deputy head of the Political Section. My main responsibility was to follow the politico-military scene in Korea. Essentially it was a matter of keeping up to date on events in Yongsan, the US military command post and insuring that political aspects of military questions were considered. I spent a great deal of my time in a liaison capacity with the US military. I had some contact with the Korean military, but that was limited primarily because our own military had such extensive contacts with their Korean counterparts that there really wasn't any need for another channel of communications. So most of my duties revolved around working with our own military on a broad range of issues, such as civic relations between the US military and the Korean communities -- e.g. status of forces. I was the Executive Secretary of the Joint Committee on the Status of Forces.

Korea is one of those places where there is a special problem for US representation. It is vitally important that the Ambassador and the military CINC work together because there have been occasions when the Korean leadership has tried to play one off against the other. The role of the US Ambassador on military issues was first established by Ambassador Muccio and mirrors in some respect the relationship of the President to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. An American military which might have proceeded without adequate consultation with the civilian side of the US representation could have gotten us in considerable difficulties. There were political realities, both in Korea and internationally, that made it essential for an American Ambassador to be pre-eminent in Korea. The range of issues went from matters of war potential -- the Pueblo incident, the murder of two officers in the DMZ, etc -- to the more mundane issues like laying a pipeline through a Korean civilian area or a crime against a Korean by an American GI. Also there were questions of US military strategy -- where our troops should be located -- that required a political input. Then there were always political questions about the Armistice Agreement and its interpretation.

There were also many questions about sales of US military equipment, and the JUSMAAG came

under the Embassy. As in all cases, we had restrictions on the types of armaments that we would sell. These were in major part foreign policy questions, not only in Korea, but in a global context. Should we give the ROKs missiles for example.

For all these reasons, it was vital that the US Ambassador be given a voice in many military matters and he take strong positions whenever necessary. But an effective US Ambassador had to recognize that he had to deal with a four-star general who was not going to be a patsy for any civilian that came along. The best US position in Korea came when the Ambassador and the CINC worked hand-in-glove, on a voluntary and continual basis. The ideal was not always reached, but we all knew what the right model should be.

The role of the American four star general was a tricky one. He was the Commander of UN Forces which included Korean Forces -- reporting to the UN through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs -- the Commander of US Forces -- reporting to Commander in Chief, Pacific Forces (CINCPAC) -- and Commander of the 8th Army -- so that all US forces could serve under an American general. All of this meant that the US was represented in Seoul by the American Ambassador -- the personal representative of the President of the US -- and a four star US Army General, who served both in a US and a UN capacity. On paper, it looked like an organizational nightmare. The effectiveness of US representation in Seoul therefore had to depend heavily on the cooperation of the two principals.

A couple of months after I arrived, General Dick Stilwell became the Commander in Chief, UN and US forces. Phil Habib had been our Ambassador for a couple of years. As everybody knew, he was an extraordinary powerful man -- almost overwhelming. He was very adept at maintaining civilian control over military affairs, which I think was quite appropriate in the Korean context. That Habib style did not encounter much resistance in Yongsan. He was an extraordinary man. Also a fine human being. Habib and Stilwell worked together reasonably well as far as I could tell, although I was just learning my job towards the end of Habib's tour. There were no explosions, although both were powerful men and I suspect that some tension may well have existed.

Dick Sneider followed Habib in 1974, after the attempted assassination of Park Chung Hee and the murder of his wife. Sneider had spent a lot of time in Japan and therefore knew the area well. But unlike Habib, he had never served in Korea before. The Sneider-Stilwell relationship deteriorated rapidly. I don't remember exactly when the problems between the two started, but tensions were high almost from the day Sneider arrived. I believe that much of the difficulties could be attributed to Stilwell's desire to be independent and in charge. He was, of course, a soldier and would follow orders, but it appeared to the Embassy and to Sneider particularly that he would often try to act behind Dick's back, both with Washington and the ROK. At times he would deal directly with the Koreans on matters that went beyond strictly military considerations. Sometimes, he would communicate with Washington, generating differences between the Pentagon and the Department of State. I don't think it would be fair to blame the situation in Seoul on Stilwell entirely. Undoubtedly, Sneider contributed to the high tensions. Dick had a strong personality; he tended to be very aggressive and assertive. If he felt that he was being subverted and that his role as Ambassador was being minimized, he reacted strongly. So the combination of these two strong personalities did not augur for a smooth relationship --

and it wasn't. Personal animosity developed; almost everything one did irked the other, down to minutiae such as methods of communications.

After a while, the situation between the principals became so tense that the main responsibility for liaison and communications between the Embassy and the US military fell on the DCMs -- Ericson and later Tom Stern -- and secondarily on me and my successors. Dick Ericson's father had been a Colonel in the Army and therefore he had some empathy for the military. He also was much more relaxed, particularly when contrasted with Sneider. As politico-military officer, I had daily contacts with the US military. The Political Counselors had some, but to a more limited extent. I think all of us below the level of the principals were very conscious of the friction at the top and tried our best to keep relationships close and effective. Ericson did yeoman service in plugging the gap. We at lower levels used to discuss the relationships of our principals quite openly; both Embassy and Command officers recognized the problem and worked very hard to overcome it.

I should make one more comment that is personally important. I think it was because of the situation in Seoul that I became thoroughly acquainted with the US military, both professionally and socially. I developed a great respect for them. As I suspect was true for many Foreign Service officers, before I came to know military officers, I viewed them as conservative and tradition bound. But my experiences in Seoul proved me wrong. I found those that I worked with to be flexible, imaginative and intelligent. They obviously had their own institutional biases and methods, but I never had any major problems in reaching some mutually satisfactory accommodations.

I found that as in every organization, the US military had its own personality problems. The most memorable of those was Lieutenant General Hollingsworth, then in command of I Corps, and the second ranking American military officer in Korea. He had his own problem with Stilwell. Hollingsworth had a rivalry with Stilwell; they both were vying for credit for having developed the concept of the "forward defense" strategy for defending South Korea. This was a radical departure from established concepts which relied primarily on defense in depth to thwart a North Korean invasion. It called for American and Korean forces to fall back as the North advanced forcing the North to extend its supply lines. The new doctrine called for stopping the North Koreans before they got to Seoul. Hollingsworth would take groups of US visitors to the front lines in his helicopter(s) and stand on one of the mountain tops of the ridge that divided North and South. He would point down at the Chorwon Valley and in his inimitable style, which always enthralled his audience, shout in his gruff voice, "Gentlemen, do you see that large valley down there? That is the Chorwon! That is where we are going to slaughter the bastards!" The notion was to apply overwhelming fire power on invaders who in fact had only a narrow route into the South. He always called the Chorwon the "killing zone." Holly was always a proponent of the use of massive fire power; he was famous for his tactics from Vietnam days, where he claimed he had dropped more ordinance during the Battle of Anloc than at any time since we had bombed Dresden and Berlin.

Our earlier military strategy was politically difficult to defend to the Koreans because it had assumed that the North would occupy Seoul. The new doctrine was much more politically palpable because it assumed that North Korean troops would never reach Seoul. The Koreans

loved Holly.

When necessary, I would go to I Corps for liaison purposes. I once took the SOFA Committee, of which I was the Executive Director, there. Most of the SOFA members were Koreans, both military and civilians. Holly, as I suggest, was a colorful character. We sat in his briefing room waiting in silence. All of a sudden the door burst open. Holly strode across the floor to the briefing podium which had on it a big I Corps symbol. Holly grabbed the cover, and flung it across the room with a great clatter, shouting: "Welcome, gentlemen, to the eastern front and the frontier of freedom". The Koreans were thunderstruck; it was a masterpiece of theater.

On the other hand, I was in Seoul when Major General John Singlaub sounded off. He was the CINC's Chief of Staff and my principal contact -- this was in 1977 after I had become Political Counselor. The DCM's -- Ericson and then Stern -- held weekly lunches with the Deputy Commander. Above them, Sneider had a close relationship with Stilwell's successor, General Jack Vessey. But much of the day to day liaison was supposed to fall to me and Jack Singlaub; we were supposed to meet weekly, but I don't think we did so with any regularity. In any case, we met frequently. I found him to be charming and fascinating. He knew a lot about the French underground with which he had operated behind German lines in France during WW II. Personally I thought we got along quite well.

On substantive issues, I found Singlaub pretty rigid, however, and quite uncompromising, but knowing that both the Ambassador and the DCM had good contacts with the military, I did not press him too far. If I ever discussed the troop withdrawal issue, I am sure we both agreed that it was not a wise policy. I was not totally surprised by the content of Jack's remarks to the press criticizing President Carter's decision on the troop withdrawal, although I must say I was taken aback by his public challenge to the President. Like most Foreign Service and military officers, I had been trained to carry out Presidential orders once they had been issued. Jack forgot that fundamental role of a military officer. Since his first comment was made on an airplane as he was returning to the US, I never had the opportunity to talk to him about his open disagreement. Some reporters apparently got to him during a flight back and got him to talk. I think perhaps he was "setup" and may not have recognized the trap he was falling into. On the other hand, he may have been fully conscious of what he was doing; I don't know. It was an unusual and awkward situation for all of us.

In late 1976, Stilwell left and was replaced by General Jack Vessey. It was a magical change. I remember going to the military welcoming ceremony, including a major parade. As is customary, the press office of the Command had issued a biographic sketch of the incoming CINC. I was struck by the fact the Vessey, although having started as a private in the Army during WW II, had only become a general 6 years earlier, and here he was with four stars on his shoulders! He was really a late bloomer; once he had gotten that first star, the rest came quickly. That was very impressive. I was even more impressed when within a week, there was a noticeable change in the relationship between the Embassy and the CINC. There was first of all a very noticeable change in the relationships between the principals; deep suspicions, anger, open confrontations had been replaced by a close working relationship. I attribute this change essentially to Vessey's diplomatic and personal skills. He was a "soldier's soldier" -- having risen from the ranks; he was one of the nicest human beings I have ever known and a great diplomat.

In my experience, he was the finest soldier I have ever met. I have always felt, in somewhat simplistic terms, that Vessey was an "Omar Bradley" kind of guy. He was greatly respected and highly regarded by his men and ever loved.

Stilwell was an "intellectual" general -- a planner; Vessey was both smart and charming and a man devoted to his troops -- a leader. He had tremendous breadth and scope in his abilities; he was disarmingly simple and straight. He always used to say, after receiving a long and detailed briefing about some battle plan, "Gentlemen, all these plans sound very good and they are well thought out, but they do not take into account the smoke on the battlefield!" As Vessey well knew, there were always unpredictable circumstances that arise in the chaos of battle. That is not a new insight, but to me as a young Foreign Service officer, it struck me as much more pertinent than the analysis that the staff had prepared and worked on for weeks and months. Vessey was both sensible and sensitive. He was always very nice to me personally, although as the Political Counselor, I was junior in the pecking order; we used to play golf together from time to time and he was a great companion.

I am sure that the Stilwell-Sneider problem had become widely known in Washington. I remember one series of exchanges between General Brown, the JCS Chairman at the time, and Sneider. Brown, after receiving a complaint from Sneider had said that he had understood Dick's problems and suggested that he just be patient and firm with Stilwell, who as the good soldier that he was, would take orders if they were clearly and firmly expressed. I suspect that the JCS had also sent a message to Stilwell urging him to be more cooperative. I assume that Vessey was well briefed on the explosive nature of the relationship between the two American principals in Seoul and undoubtedly applied all of his skills to smoothing the waters as soon as he landed. He made a major effort to give Sneider control over those matters that the Ambassador clearly felt fell into his province; he also accorded the Ambassador respect and recognition that in Seoul, the American Ambassador was the senior US representative. That was the key issue with Sneider; as long as his self-perception of his role was recognized, he was content. There was a lot of ego at stake. Vessey handled him beautifully.

I should note that my relationships with the military did not change when I became Political Counselor. In fact, I probably took the politico-military job with me. I did that in part because I thought that by that time, I had learned a lot about the military situation and had made a lot of friends among the officers. I enjoyed playing golf and was reasonably good in those days; so I would periodically be asked to join a group of senior military men. The military had started a tradition of an early Tuesday morning golf game -- which met on Thursdays when it didn't play on Saturday -- which brought US and Korean senior officers together in an informal setting. I was invited to join that group which helped to firm up the personal relationships. Furthermore, I was the official Embassy contact with the CINC's Chief of Staff. So I saw a lot of the US military in my four years in Seoul.

I should also mention, that as the Politico-Military officer, I had developed a process which would allow me to be at military headquarters whenever any potential trouble might arise, such as an incident at the DMZ. Regardless of the time of day or night, if there was trouble brewing, I would be alerted and able to be at headquarters to be the Embassy's "eyes and ears". That, I think, was a valuable service that I provided. It was particularly important during the 1976 "tree

cutting" incident, which was a seminal event. But there were other, too frequent, incidents on the border or on the seas. My presence enabled the Ambassador to be up to date on events as they unfolded. I continued this practice even after I became Political Counselor, even though another officer was assigned to the Section; I gave him other assignments and essentially kept the politico-military portfolio for myself. I had developed in the preceding years good close contacts in the US military and I enjoyed that job.

I need to go back in history a little to understand the evolution of my assignments in Korea in the 1973-77 period. As I mentioned, I came as the Politico-Military officer working for the Political Counselor, Dan O'Donohue. He left about a year later to join Phil Habib in Washington and was replaced by Ed Hurwitz. That was somewhat of a blow to me because I had hoped to be designated as Political Counselor at the time. I was behind my classmates, in part because of the unfortunate efficiency ratings that I had received earlier in my career, which I have mentioned previously. Having been in Seoul for a year and having performed quite satisfactorily, I thought I was the logical candidate to be the Political Counselor. I thought I could have handled it adequately. So I made a bid for the job with Dick Ericson -- one of the few times in my career when I "volunteered" for an assignment. But the job was given to Hurwitz, who, I was told, was a first rate language officer whom Phil Habib felt should be rewarded for acquiring that language skill. That was probably the right policy, although, as I said, I was disappointed at the time.

But Ed, because of personal problems, only stayed for a year. So the job was open again in the summer of 1975. I think Sneider, at that time, was tempted to bring in a new Counselor -- Bill Clark, I believe, then in Japan -- but that apparently did not work out and I think Ericson put in a good word for me and the job was given to me.

I mentioned Hurwitz' language skills. I had no knowledge of Korean when I went to Seoul, but I started to take morning classes. Dan O'Donohue advised me to take the 100 sentence course which would have enabled me to do routine activities in Korea -- market shopping, travel, etc. -- but he suggested that I not try to become bilingual because Korean was so difficult that I would just be frustrated. I think that was good advice. I tried to learn Korean for eight years -- both tours -- and by the end I could speak enough for every day conversation -- Kisaeng House Korean -- but I don't believe I could have carried on a very substantive dialogue. I tried very hard, and enjoyed trying, but...I remember standing in a hotel lobby one day, listening to a group of German tourists being briefed on their day's sightseeing. It had been twenty years since I had heard German to any great extent, but I was able to understand that much better than the Korean I had learned. I don't think my investment in Korean paid sufficient dividends. I would call my Korean "survival"; it enabled me to navigate in day-to-day activities, but not beyond that.

I might interject at this stage a comment about the JUSMAAG (The Joint US Military Assistance Group) and its organizational situation. The chiefs were two-star generals -- some better than others -- but all quite satisfactory. Both O.D. Street and Harry Griffith were fine officers -- the latter is a friend to this day. But JUSMAAG was always an organizational problem. The Chief reported to the Ambassador from whom he received his substantive marching orders. On the other hand, he was an Army general who lived with the other US military officers on the US base at Yongsan, whose efficiency report was written by the CINC. So the JUSMAAG Chief had two bosses to satisfy, which is not easy particularly when the two principals were barely

speaking to each other as in Sneider/Stilwell days. I think we in the Embassy were well aware of the Chief's dilemma and tried to make matters as easy as possible. The working situation improved when Jack Vessey came, but it was inherently an impossible organizational situation: reporting to one boss for policy guidance and another for efficiency rating purposes. That is bound to be a recipe for problems and in fact that this what happened periodically, with the MAAG Chief being in the middle.

As I said earlier, my contacts with the Korean military were far fewer than those with the American, partly because the US military was working with their counterparts daily and partly because I think the Korean officers were somewhat leery of the Embassy. So my contacts with the Korean military were mostly social -- on the golf course, at Kisaeng houses, etc. On the issue of military sales, although we had a large and effective JUSMAAG, I did participate a little more actively both with the ROK military and defense officials, who were civilians. We did have politico-military issues in these sales programs, both in terms of Korean wishes and the process itself -- who would pay, what technology might be transferred. We gave the Koreans large amounts of technology, which although perhaps not state-of-the-art, was much further advanced than they themselves could develop. They "reversed engineered" some of our products, enabling their R&D to progress much further and faster than it might have otherwise.

Although military sales was not perhaps the focus of my attention most of the time, I do remember that they were a concern. The Koreans always wanted to get the best equipment they could get for the least money. They also wanted the rights to manufacture their own versions of some of the equipment; e.g. tanks, guns, etc. -- without paying royalties if possible -- the biggest bang for the least cost. They were very good at reverse engineering and copying their military acquisitions. The JUSMAAG and the US military were probably more inclined to be forthcoming in satisfying Korean requests -- "the brotherhood" of the military. I probably overstate the case, but the JUSMAAG sometimes seemed willing to provide anything at practically no cost. We in the Embassy and in the State Department in Washington were considerably more cautious and restrictive both in the kinds of equipment we would release and the costs. There was some pressure from American companies on us to be responsive to Korean requests; they wanted to make the sales. But I think we in general held the line to limit Korean access to capabilities which they did not really need to have for defensive purposes; in any case, in the event of hostilities, these were capabilities that our own military could provide very quickly. The Koreans of course resented this US military checkrein.

Related to this question of sales, there were other policy issues concerning the introduction of certain kinds of military operations and equipment into Korea. The one issue which separated me from the US military was that of "aggressive behavior." Stilwell, as I suggested, was quite aggressive in his war plans. In exercises, he brought B-52s to Korea, flying them up from Guam. He flew them close to the DMZ. I didn't believe that this was a necessary act; it threatened the North unnecessarily. I recognized that the hard-liners wanted to make the point that if the North ever considered an invasion, the total might of the US forces could be brought to bear on it. I had no reason to believe however that the North did not already understand that and thought that the provocative use of B-52s was unnecessary and "over the line." I also had personal reservations about the introduction of battlefield nuclear capable missiles. Stilwell was able to convince the Pentagon to bring a battery of Lance missiles to Korea; these were dual use missiles that could

carry either regular or nuclear warheads. Vessey supported that concept, but I was opposed. It was a capability that I did not think absolutely necessary; nuclear weapons, whether strategic or theater, should be introduced with great care and only after a careful analysis which would have concluded that they were absolutely necessary. I felt therefore, under the circumstances existing in Korea at the time -- i.e. no sign of immediate threat -- the introduction of Lance was unnecessarily provocative. I think I even would probably have objected to their use in a war situation, except as a matter of last resort. In the late 1970s, we were in Korea for defensive purposes; we were there to react to a provocation, and not in the business of starting a fight. The introduction of Lance, I think raised a question of our policy; those missiles might well be considered as an offensive capability, particularly in the paranoid mind of the North Korean leadership. I think those missiles, just as the B-52s, were provocative.

"Team Spirit", which was a large joint US-ROK exercise that went on for weeks, was the center piece of our military activities on the Peninsula. It kept getting larger and larger while I was in Korea; I have already mentioned the inclusion of the B-52s. We brought the 25th division from Hawaii, so that much of the exercise was devoted to the logistical problems of ferrying a whole division from thousands of miles away. I didn't have too much trouble with the concept of a joint exercise, but I was bothered by its increasing scope. It began to raise a question in mind about the rationale for the exercise and its importance. It is true that the North Korean military capacity was growing in this period, but I had considerable concern whether the appropriate response to that activity was an ever larger joint US-ROK exercise which included increasingly provocative aspects. Some of it could be justified, but I often wondered whether we weren't "crossing the line."

As for civic affairs, fortunately, the Koreans at the time were so appreciative of our efforts that we did not have many problems with farmers whose land was thoroughly trampled or authorities whose roads may have been wrecked by our tanks. They accommodated us to a very large degree and were quite forgiving for the damage that our troops undoubtedly inflicted on their property. What problems were raised were addressed in the SOFA Committee which I left after becoming Political Counselor. Usually, appropriate compensation was quickly dispensed keeping the political damage of these exercises at a minimum. Of course the total government control of the press and closures of publications on these matters helped immeasurably.

I think it is natural that an Embassy always wants more intelligence on the host government's military plans and efforts than it is able to obtain. Korea was no exception to this rule and there were times when we could certainly have used more intelligence. I remember Phil Habib -- a very knowledgeable and wise observer of the Koreans -- saying that Koreans were very open and friendly, but that if they want to keep some information to themselves they were very skilled in keeping it from us. I think there were many things going on within the Korean military that we never found out about or only found out about after they had occurred. Moreover, I had the feeling -- despite my high regard for my military colleagues -- that both military organizations -- US and ROK -- did not share all their knowledge with the Embassy. I cannot say that we were ever lied to, especially after Vessey became the CINC, but whether all information was shared was a different question. Jack Vessey was particularly good at giving us some insights into the ROK military process; the fact that he shared information with the Ambassador was salutary all the way down the line; my own US military counterparts became more forthcoming. Vessey

made a real effort to become better acquainted with the ROK military; he actually learned some Korean and used to give speeches, or parts of speeches, in Korean. Jack, when he was a Lieutenant Colonel, almost left the military and became a Presbyterian minister; he was a genuine, decent gentleman. He will always stand out in my memory as one of the finest individuals I have ever met. I once remarked at a farewell dinner, when I returned to Korea as DCM a few years later, that Jack Vessey taught me more about being a diplomat than anyone in the Foreign Service had done.

Let me return to the issue of what we knew about the Korean military. I had a pretty good sense about how the process worked; how promotions and assignments were made; who were the rising stars and who were "over the hill." The potential stars were usually spotted when they were still relatively junior officers-captains or majors. Private companies had similar systems. They had invariably shined in schools and in their first assignments. They would be given some of the plusher assignments that a company might have to offer and unless they took a misstep somewhere along the line, they would rise to the top. The ROK military had a similar practice. I never heard "buying" promotions by any officers, I had always assumed that that merit and their backgrounds probably were sufficient. The "comers" certainly had better assignments. But in light of today's headlines -- the Rho Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan bribery scandals -- one has to wonder whether the promotions were made entirely on merit or connections. I think it was the consensus at the time I was in Korea in the American official community that some ROK military officers were doing well because they were being paid by private firms -- for unspecified "services." But I think no one really felt that promotions were subject to bribery; they were made on merit. That I think distinguished the Korean military from some of its Asian counterparts, where the assumption was always that officers bought their way into general officers' billets. I always thought that the Koreans had not engaged in those practices because in fact the security of the nation depended on a well disciplined and effective military organization. Corruption under those circumstances could have been very damaging.

As in Japan and other countries, senior officials -- civilian and military -- were taken care of after their retirements by being offered plushy jobs in the private sector. Some of these retirees may well have been on the payroll of the private industry even before retirement. One of my close Korean friends described this process to me one day in some detail. On New Year's Day, the *Chaebols* -- the large private mega firms -- would go to the offices of the senior officials and leave a white envelope. It was a custom well known and accepted by society.

The custom of providing retirement jobs for senior military and civilian officials undoubtedly had the support of Park Chung Hee. It reduced the chances for mischief by unemployed generals a concern that must have weighed on Park's mind who was well aware of the potential of a coup that might oust him. After all, that was the way he had come to power in 1961. It was therefore to his advantage to see to it that loyal senior officials and officers were taken care of in their retirement years. A happy, well paid person, even if retired from his first career, is not likely to jeopardize what in some cases was a rather plush second career by biting the hand that fed him. In fact, I am sure that the private sector gained from these employments as well, not only as a sign of its generosity for those who "played ball" with it during their governmental service, but also from some skills and contacts that these retired generals and officials brought with them to their new assignments. This "safety net" retirement process fit neatly the Korean culture with its

emphasis on meritocracy and taking care of the seniors. As I said, to the best of my knowledge, promotions in the military were not due to pay-offs; it was a system based on performance and therefore those who rose high in the ranks were "the best and the brightest."

I have mentioned "Kisaeng" houses on a couple of occasions. I should perhaps explain a little about what they were and the role they played in the social life of Korea. "Kisaeng" houses were male bastions where men let their "hair down -- in the company of usually very attractive young female hostesses. The Americans could not afford to go to these places, so we were always the guests of Foreign Ministry officials, sometimes the military and sometimes private sector people. I used to go two-three times each month. Some people would describe them as wild drunken orgies. Most of the time was devoted to eating, drinking, singing and playing games. Most of the stuff was in fact not very wild; I would describe the atmosphere more as warm and friendly. But these parties also served a serious purpose; I got to know a lot of Koreans that way. We as American officials, were in some respect their "rice bowls." We were the excuse for them to enjoy themselves at the government's expense -- the entertainment expense account. It is true that two or three drinks -- and there were often more -- tended to lower whatever social inhibitions might exist across cultural and personal lines. I don't believe that any great state secrets were made public in this fashion, but undoubtedly things were said that might not have been said in a formal office situation. But for most Americans it was a survival course. Unfortunately, I sometimes remembered the following day what had gone on to my dismay and chagrin. I had always understood Japanese Geisha affairs to be sedate and formal occasions where the "hostesses" were usually much more advanced in age than the Korean ones and where these women played instruments and were really formal entertainment. Kisaeng girls on the other hand were young and vibrant and their only job was to see that their "guests" had a good time. For the most part, the men sat cross legged on the floor and large amounts of different food dishes were served. The booze was forced on you through toasts or contests; the Koreans would constantly fill your glass and ask you to join them in some kind of "bottom ups" ceremony. The guest was made to feel that he had to drink to be courteous. If you had a good Kisaeng companion, who was trying to be helpful, she would fill your glass with barley water, which looked like Scotch, but was non-alcoholic; that helped me on many occasions. Sometimes the girls would actually drink the booze on your behalf; that was also helpful. Some of them would drink along with the men and would be drunk by the end of the evening; some of them were drunk quite often -- which was not very good for their health. I think it fair to say that the American wives did not like to have their husbands go off to Kisaeng parties. They did not appreciate either the nature of the occasions nor the fact that they were left out entirely. I think in some cases they felt their marriage threatened and in some cases they were indeed correct. I think there were American males who actually did enjoy these occasions; it was a heady experience, if I can use that term; the American was wined and dined with a young lady at his side. That was a different experience, although I know many Americans who did not enjoy Kisaeng parties; they particularly resented the amount of booze they were asked to consume.

The "Kisaeng" parties were one form of social occasions hosted by the Koreans, but the normal kind of social activity was much more frequent. We did a fair amount of entertainment at home and we also were invited to Korean homes. That I found one of the nice aspects of Korean life; they did invite us to their homes -- more perhaps than was true in other countries where I served. Sometimes we would be invited to regular restaurants along with our wives. So the social life in

Seoul was very active.

Let me now make a few comments about other aspects of my job as Political Counselor. First: relations with the Station. When I first became Political Counselor, the Station Chief was Dan Arnold with whom I got along reasonably well because I made a major effort to build a cooperative relationship. He lived next door to me in Compound II. He was a strange duck; he had been a "big wheel" in the Washington headquarters and was even bigger in Laos and Thailand after his Seoul tour. His predecessor was Don Gregg, who was a great guy and a personal friend even today. Arnold was succeeded by Bob Grealy, another outstanding officer, who is also a friend of Carter's and mine to this day. I used to introduce Bob as Don Gregg's successor; that would give pause to the audience who knew that that was not factually true, but after a few seconds understood the meaning of my comment. Arnold was in general held in relatively low esteem by the Koreans; he didn't know Korean, was not sympathetic to Korea. I remember him roaring into my office one day, completely upset about something that he felt the Koreans were doing to him. He was a Southeast Asia expert and I think felt quite uncomfortable in his Korean surroundings. He was a "fish out of water" in Seoul.

Dan Arnold or one of his staff members was at the intelligence center at Yongsan when we had a serious incident at the DMZ. I rushed to the center myself, but before I had even arrived, Arnold had heard of the incident and had reported it to Washington in a CRITIC message -- one of the most sensitive designation in the US government's telegram classification system. It is used -- or should be used -- only in the rare cases when a major crisis is about to erupt. It would have alerted all the bureaucrats in Washington. I found out about Arnold's premature report and reported it to Ambassador Sneider. As you can well imagine, Sneider did not take it kindly; he didn't like Arnold to begin with and that report was almost the "straw that broke the camel's back." He immediately called Arnold in and chewed him out. In the first place, the message designator was grossly over-stated; secondly, operational messages on overt activities of a military nature should not be sent through CIA channels; and thirdly, I think Sneider -- and I agree with him on this -- felt that such a message should never had been sent without his concurrence. Arnold lasted less than a year; his career was not damaged by his stint in Seoul, but it was not a happy experience either for him or the Embassy or the Koreans.

On the other hand, there were many positive things one could say about the CIA Station in Seoul. It was well staffed, both qualitatively and quantitatively. During my tour, they were tremendously helpful on a number of occasions. I never really worked with Don Gregg because as political-military officer, I really had no reason to have a professional relationship, but the Greggs were our next door neighbors, so that we got to know them well and I came to admire them. Don was an outstanding officer who went on to an illustrious career and eventually came back to Seoul in the late '80's as Ambassador. I did work with Bob Grealy because by that time (1976), I was the Political Counselor. Bob taught me more about what a good Station does than anyone else ever had, and I was extremely grateful to him for all the lessons. He was also a genuinely nice guy and a very capable leader of his team. He was extremely useful in ferreting out political information about what was going on behind the scenes in South Korea which was very useful to us; that was information that we would not have otherwise acquired and helped us better understand the sometime "inscrutable" Koreans. I felt that Grealy and his staff were quite open with me with the information they had collected. I remember once asking Bob to have his

people stay away from the political section's opposition friends; they were so eager to tell us openly whatever we wanted to know and it was silly for the Station to go after that information. Bob maintained that eventually these opposition leaders might come to power and therefore he should know them. I didn't want them to be tagged as CIA informers, however. This debate was indicative of the problems the US government encounters sometimes as it tries to develop the best understanding it can of political developments.

I did have someone in the Political Section who over a period of time cultivated many good contacts in the opposition. That was John La Mazza, the Labor officer. His contacts with the opposition were not necessarily part of his job description, but once he had established them, I encouraged him to proceed because he provided much useful information and some excellent analysis. Our relationship with the opposition in the late 1970s was somewhat tentative, but continual. My view was that the US was supporting the ROK government and people in so many different ways that we had a right to know what was going on the country; we were in Seoul not just to hear the well rehearsed "official party" line, but also to understand other points of view; we had the right, in my view, to talk to any Korean citizen. This view was part and parcel to my general view of human rights. I never thought that it was useful to give public support to Kim Dae Jung or other dissidents; it would not have been helpful to do so to anyone, particularly to the dissidents who already were being watched very carefully on their contacts with Americans. But I did insist that it was proper and indeed our job to talk to the opposition. Accordingly, I saw Kim Dae Jung regularly during this period.

We had indirect contact with university students through their professors. One of them, Kim Se Jung, was a professor of Constitutional Law at Seoul National University. Dan O'DONOHUE described him to me as a "cult figure." I inherited him as a contact from Dan. Physically, he was totally inept -- a round man. I remember once when he tried to wrestle a Kisaeng girl to the floor. It was one of the more memorable comic experiences I had in Seoul. But he was an extremely intelligent, sensitive person who was clearly in opposition. He and others were able to keep us up to date on the mood of the university students. So we had a pretty good feel for the campus moods, which in Korea, in the '70s were an important barometer. It is true that in the period we are discussing, the students were more quiescent than they were in the following decades, but even in the 1970s they would periodically show their displeasure with some governmental action or their anti-Japanese feelings. They rarely displayed anti-American views at that time.

In Seoul I ran into a curious coincidence. I had two Yale classmates living there. One was Steve Bradner, who was a civilian political analyst working for the CINC; another one was Ed Poitras, a liberal Methodist missionary. Ed knew a lot about what was going on in the opposition; we met frequently and exchanged views and information and maintained a good relationship even though he was not always fond of US policy. I also met other American missionaries, almost all of whom were anti-Park. I saw some Korean dissidents -- e.g. "Springtime" Kim. On one occasion I really pushed my policy of seeing the opposition. I consciously decided to attend a meeting of dissident leaders which was being held in sort of a tea house. I think they were very surprised by my appearance, but I thought it was a very useful way to send a message to the government about our intentions; going to such a meeting also prevented the government from taking retaliatory action against a single individual, which was always a risk if the Korean associated with us.

I don't recall ever being told by the government to cease and desist my contacts with the opposition. The ROKG may have made some protests to the Ambassador or the DCM, but I was certainly not aware of any complaints. As I said earlier, I saw Kim Dae Jung. We had a major interest in his welfare. Phil Habib's intervention saved his life after he was kidnaped by the KCIA from a Tokyo hotel. I remember that as I was making my first call on Kim -- this was right after his release from jail -- it suddenly occurred to me as we -- I had one of my junior staff members with me -- were on our way that I had not cleared this visit with Ambassador Sneider. I went ahead anyway and had a long conversation with Kim during which I took copious notes. As soon as I returned to the Embassy, I went to see Sneider; I told him that I had just done something that I should have discussed with him first. I apologized. Sneider agreed that I should have told him first, but he was not angry at that time. Later, when I sent a report on a subsequent meeting with Kim, Sneider really got mad. I had reported on our conversation in some detail, but I had commented at the end that obviously what Kim had said had to be taken with a grain of salt since he had an axe to grind. This did not appease Sneider. His comment was that Kim was just a political hack whose comments were not worthy of reporting to Washington. That really upset me; I threw my notebook down and shouted at Sneider that Kim Dae Jung was not a "political hack"; that he was the recognized leader of the Korean opposition and that regardless of the merit of Kim's comments, they had to be reported. Sneider was not a great fan of Kim nor many of the dissidents, as a matter of fact. I had more problems on the subject of contacts with the opposition from my Ambassador than I had from the Koreans. Nevertheless Sneider saw opposition leaders himself from time to time; he was better at that than one of his successors, Dixie Walker. Dick saw them when he wanted to send a message to the government or to the opposition, although he was always quite careful which members of the opposition he did see. I don't remember for example him ever seeing Kim Dae Jung. On the other hand I saw Kim, both at his house and ours. We had a golden retriever and I remember Kim coming the first time and when he saw our dog, he began to shake visibly. That surprised me because the dog was very placid, but apparently Kim was afraid of dogs.

The only one that I guess was really safe to see was Cardinal Kim, whom I saw periodically -- three or four times a year. I thought the Cardinal was the wisest observer in Korea on domestic political issues. But you had to listen very carefully to what he said because he was a careful speaker; once I got to know him better, he was much easier to understand. He was a very important figure in Korea. He knew what was going on; the students and the younger generation would come to his Cathedral as did the opposition leaders; so he was extremely well informed and therefore a unique source. In addition to reporting the views of the opposition, Cardinal Kim was a keen analyst. Whenever the students were beginning to reach the brink of their patience, he felt that and he moved in their direction. As the Pope's senior representative in Korea, Cardinal Kim's primary goal was to maintain a Catholic presence in Korea; so despite his own predilections, he was always careful with his words lest they damage his Church's standing. The Papal Nuncio, on the other hand, was an outright devotee of the Korean government. Cardinal Kim was recognized as a political force, and I always found his insights worthy of reporting to Washington. He was an important figure at the center of much political activity in Korea.

In the 1975-77 period, I rarely saw Kim Young Sam, the present President of Korea; I did see him frequently during my next tour in Seoul. But during that tour, I hardly ever saw Kim Dae

Jung. In the case of Kim Dae Jung, in the late 1970s it was relatively easy to see him without running risk of damaging him or us further with government -- as long as the contact was being conducted by the Political Counselor and not any of his superiors. In the 1980s, when I was the DCM, it would have been riskier for me to see Kim Dae Jung then; it would have been greatly resented by then President Chun Doo Hwan. So during my tour as DCM, we made the conscious decision that for me to see Kim Dae Jung would have been inappropriate and risky for him. What contacts we had with Kim then were conducted by our Political Counselor, David Blakemore. In the '80s Kim was not so important an opposition contact as he had been in the late 1970s.

One of the very interesting characters that I met in the late 1970s was Chung Il Kwan, then the Speaker of the National Assembly. He was a man who had held every top job in Korea except that of President. Secondly, he was an exceedingly gracious gentleman -- he was as pleasant and as nice as anyone I ever met in Seoul, not only to me but to all Americans. I think he was an extremely effective politician in the Korean context, although he never ran for office. He was well liked by most; he was always surrounded by an entourage of followers -- the famous "Tuesday Golf" game that I mentioned earlier was essentially a Chung creation. But despite his Buddha-like exterior, you had the feeling that he was probably a ruthless man. There were many stories about his misdeeds, including one about a young lady who he had sent to her death at an earlier stage of his life -- she was pregnant and probably had tried to extort something out of Chung. He had served as Army Chief of Staff three times and undoubtedly had learned some lessons in brutality from those experiences. Chung was also considered corrupt and corrupting. I can remember a young opposition politician -- Oh Se Young -- (a personal friend) playing golf with Chung and coming back five hundred dollars richer. Chung always let these young politicians win their golf games and always paid them off -- enough so they could have a good time that evening. But I am sure that he was involved in much larger corrupt schemes. The Chairman of Hyundai, Chung Ju Jung, was close to the Speaker and must have financed him.

The economic assistance program was essentially phasing out while I was in Seoul and was not much of a factor in our strategy. USIA which occupied a building several blocks away from the Chancery was headed by experienced PAO's. They also had three branch offices throughout South Korea, which were useful in bringing the US to cities other than Seoul. There was also an active program to engage University students which I thought was useful. So there were parts of the USIA program that were important, although I think in general, the Agency perhaps was not as influential on the Korean scene as other US programs like military assistance. Security issues were paramount in Korea and USIA is not a very good foreign policy instrument in such a setting. I think we were also limited in our outreach program because fluency in Korean was absolutely essential and there were not that many officers in the Embassy -- me included -- that could satisfy that requirement.

I should make some comments about my external contacts. I had never worked as a political officer and therefore learned on the job. I developed a good relationship with Philip Choi who was a brother of another good friend of ours. Philip was in the office of the "Protocol Chief" to the President of the ROK and therefore was very knowledgeable about what was going on in the Blue House. I suspect that protocol had very little to do with his job; he was more likely to have been a liaison officer with the KCIA. I also met one or two of the younger Blue House secretaries -- [the name given to staffers], usually on social occasions which I would then follow

up with regular business contact. These contacts did give me some fodder for some of my reports, although these guys were obviously quite circumspect. It was my impression that the Blue House ran quite efficiently; I always had the feeling that the cream of the Korean brain power worked at the top of the bureaucracy and in the Blue House. They knew precisely what they were doing. Of course, Korea not being a democracy reduced the amount of debates on issues; the President would decide and his staff would carry out his orders. After becoming the Political Counselor, I had several opportunities to see Park Chung Hee because I was the note taker at the meetings he held with the Ambassador. There was no question who was in charge; clearly everyone marched to Park's tune. As a newcomer to meetings with Chiefs of State, there was a certain aura and atmosphere about being in the presence of the President; it left a definite impression. Park was a stern, severe person; his military demeanor never left him. I also remember Park as being very quick; if he wanted to answer an Ambassadorial question, he would do so incisively and directly; he didn't ramble and gave a succinct and responsive answer. Park was smart, but not a friendly and warm type.

I had some contact with the neutral observers on the Armistice Commission, especially the Swedes and the Swiss. We used to see them socially quite often. As time went on, we also became acquainted with the Polish and Czech members. That was useful to us because they were in constant contact with the North Koreans and could provide some insights into the mentality of the forces on the other side of the DMZ. The Commission, staffed by representatives of "neutral" countries, was established to monitor the armistice. It could not enforce the provisions of the treaty, but it did have oversight responsibility and reported violations to both sides. In some cases, the Commission was useful in mediating some sticky points or situations. It would be used by both sides as a message transmission belt. In one case that I remember (in the '80s), the Swedish delegate played a personal physical role in saving the lives of some North Korean soldiers who had invaded the "Peace Village" at Panmunjom. They were in pursuit of a Russian defector -- a diplomat -- and crossed the border in their effort to stop the defection. As soon as they crossed the line, they were pinned down by South Korean forces. So the North soldiers found themselves in a little depression in the ground surrounded by the South Koreans. It was very tense situation which could have easily resulted in casualties. Fortunately, the Swedish delegate stepped in and rescued the North Koreans before any damage was done, much to his own peril.

During my tour as Political Counselor, I had a little contact with some American correspondents, such as Don Oberdorfer, Dick Halloran and Sam Jameson. All of these correspondents were based in Tokyo, but would periodically come to Seoul and drop in on me for update briefings. Only the "Wall Street Journal" had a resident correspondent and I of course saw him frequently. All my briefings were "on background" -- i.e. not for attribution -- and focused primarily on the Korean domestic scene, with some reference, when called for, on the military situation. I was as forthcoming as possible when the correspondents would call on me. In general, Sneider encouraged these press briefings; I never felt any constraints. The only time I ever felt any restriction was when Habib was Ambassador. He was a curious mixture of greatness and pettiness. At one time, there was a press description about some event in Seoul that didn't fit his views of the situation; then Phil almost made the Embassy out of bounds for correspondents. I didn't have any argument at the time with Habib's reaction; as a matter of fact, at the time I was somewhat surprised that ambassadors had been as open with press as many of them were. As

time went on, I learned that talking to the press was of benefit. A closed embassy was bound to be pilloried in the press; that might have been more trouble than it was worth.

Let me talk a little about our policies toward Korea in 1975-77. I have already indicated that our major objective was to deter any attack on South Korea. It was clear that Habib's maxim "if war breaks out, the US has lost" was still our cardinal rule. We recognized that Korea was the most volatile area of the world and the most likely to be the *casus belli* if there was one anywhere. There were other points such as Berlin, but the major powers had much greater control of situations of that kind than they had in Korea. The unpredictable nature of the situation particularly of the North was a matter of great concern. As I have said, I had some degree of confidence that the North was not about to launch a major offensive; that was based primarily on the US maintenance of a credible deterrence; it required the US to be seen as staunch and firm in purpose. I had absolutely no quarrel with our basic objective; I had always understood it even before coming to Korea and there was nothing that I saw in the three years that changed my mind. I believed in our basic purpose and do so still today. That is the reason that I had serious doubts about President Carter's troop withdrawal policy. Sneider's approach -- i.e. to say to the President that if he had really decided to withdraw the troops, then there were ways to minimize the damage -- I now view as probably misguided. I didn't at the time, but in retrospect, Sneider probably should have said "No way." Vessey, as I heard, actually returned to Washington and had a meeting with the President during which he outlined all the reasons why troop withdrawal was a very dangerous policy. He was up front about his opposition to troop withdrawal. As I said, in retrospect, I think Vessey's approach was far better than Sneider's, but at the time, I probably was too deferential to the Ambassador because I was still a relatively new boy on the block and had not had enough experience with Far East security issues to be able to muster a telling counter-argument to Sneider's approach. I think most of us just followed our leader.

I have already alluded to our human rights policy. I felt then as I did when I returned to Korea in the early 1980s that the protection of human rights was an important issue for the US, particularly as it impinged on people's rights to achieve a democratic society. People have the right to be the masters of their own fate and we were completely justified in supporting such aspirations. I always opposed the repressive measures that the Korean military sometimes took, which resulted in people jumping to their deaths out of windows, or the KCIA kidnaping of Kim Dae Jung. Those actions were beyond the pale and I found myself quite angry at such brutal Korean measures. On the other hand, I did not believe that active US public promotion of human rights, which tended to embarrass a foreign government, was the most effective means of achieving our goal. It seemed to me that US tactics would only result in Park Chung Hee becoming more hard-nosed. His position that Korea needed a tough dictatorship to maintain a united front against the North was probably accepted by most Koreans particularly when it was combined with a highly centralized economic strategy which was producing an "economic miracle". My view was that while I was deeply sympathetic with the human rights movement in Korea -- which I insisted had a right to be heard and which was one of the reasons that I insisted that I be seen with some of the opposition -- public flogging of the government's record on human rights would only increase repression and tensions. I have always felt that the best approach was to let democracy evolve. The middle class was clearly growing and the economic growth of South Korea almost guaranteed an ever increasing middle class. Much of that middle class was well educated and its members were no fools; they knew what they were doing and I

was certain they eventually would claim a seat or seats at the policy making table. I felt democracy in Korea should be permitted to evolve at the pace that this middle class itself set; we should not -- and perhaps even could not -- accelerate that drive to democracy. Even if we were able to step up the time table, I thought that democracy might come too early -- prematurely perhaps -- which might set it back to a much more distant future than a natural evolution might. I have been gratified to be a witness to the playing out of the scenario just as I had hoped; in fact, democracy came to Korea in a bloodless and peaceful fashion, almost imperceptible until it had reached fruition. While Political Counselor, I had to make demarches to the Foreign Ministry on some human rights issue or another under instructions from Washington. Some time, I would make a lower level protest and the Ambassador or the DCM would make them at a higher level. I felt that most of the time, our protestations would fall on deaf ears and that our approaches were *pro forma*, although on several occasions we were seeking a favorable outcome on a specific violation -- e.g. the imprisonment of a Korean dissident. In many such cases, after a while, the Koreans did release the individual in question. I didn't recognize it fully at the time, but the Director of North American Affairs in the Foreign Ministry was a deeply religious man; I think he was probably more sympathetic to our approaches than many of his superiors. So I suspect that he was helpful to us in many of these individual cases.

I should note that one of the problems we faced in Korea was that we were perceived by many as the "big brother" with all the obligations that such a relationship carried, particularly in a Confucian society. The Koreans were willing to show obeisance to their "big brother", but they expected that we show some understanding of our role in such a relationship. It was the obligations that the Koreans would mention most often. This perception often struck us as unwarranted.

This relationship is not one that we sought; it was one that the Koreans themselves either wished for or perceived. It was the way the Koreans operated; it was part of the Korean Confucian heritage which placed relationships in a familial context. We did not think in those terms. Secondly, the Koreans would always hold us accountable for having "deserted" them in 1905 and many times afterwards. They would try to place that guilt on the West; after a while, it got to be "old hat" and we came to ignore these views in a sense. I was always mindful and respectful of Korean views, but every once in a while, especially if I had been relaxed by some drinks, I would tell my Korean friends what I really thought of their attitudes toward us. No American knew where Korea was in 1905; it would be highly improbable that we then knew anything about the Japanese occupation or that we really cared. But even my temporary outbursts would not deter the Koreans from their long established cultural views of the world; they just continued to try to play on our guilt. In the Foreign Ministry and in the Ministry of Defense, however, those cultural perceptions never interfered with us conducting business in a workmanlike fashion; the officials were professional and had a good sense of reality.

During the 1973-77 period, I think there was always a strong feeling in Korea that we and they were allies in maintaining stability on the peninsula. I learned that catechism from Phil Habib; it seemed to me that, unlike the human rights issue, there should never have been any evolution of our stated purpose to defend the Republic of Korea. That was our first, second and third objective; we should always be the South's ally and should never allow ourselves to be sucked into a brokered deal, like Vietnam. I felt then, as I did in my second tour, that we should never

make concessions to the North Koreans; it would have been a foolhardy venture. I believed that we should stand firmly with the South and not fall for the efforts of the North and others to separate us. (While I think that posture was appropriate in the mid to late 1970s; that posture may not be as applicable today.) The South Koreans were always nervous about a US-North Korea bilateral negotiation; they were almost paranoid about that possibility and always reminded us how unhappy they would be in such an eventuality. Sometime these concerns arose in the context of the truce talks at Panmunjom; any concessions made there seemed to the South Koreans to be alien to their culture which demanded that there be an "eye for an eye"; e.g., if the North had its flag a little higher on the negotiating table, then the South would have to increase the height of its flag to be taller. We viewed these extreme positions to be somewhat nonsensical, but they were deeply ingrained in Korean culture. I think that Americans, being more pragmatic, would from time to time tend to make small concessions on DMZ issues, although I think all concessions were minuscule -- more form than substance. But whenever we make these tiny concessions, the South Koreans were noticeably nervous; in fact, they were downright outspoken about their fears that we would walk away from them -- as "you did in 1905." I would always tell my Korean friends that we had never heard of 1905; I am not sure that made them feel any better because they genuinely feared that we would somehow leave them in the lurch or at least deal with the North behind their backs.

That is not to say that the South Koreans did not have reason for concern. In their eyes, the future of a free South Korea depended on steadfast support from the US which could not be mistaken by the North. A tight relationship between the US and the ROK -- which left no room for even the smallest opening -- was central to their survival. The North was viewed as the real enemy and concern. I always thought that the South Koreans probably understood their "brothers" in the North better than anyone else; after all, they were kinfolk. I think if the North-South shoes had been reversed, the South would have taken the same strategy as the North tried -- i.e. to wean us away from the ROK -- "splittist tactics" is the term that was often used. The two were mirror images of each other. I have never thought that there was much difference between a North and a South Korean, if you look under the skin of the North's communism. They were all from the same cultural framework and besides the nature of their regimes, they were very much alike -- all "nationalists" to the core.

We had another triangular relationship apart from the US, South and North Korea one and that was the US-Japan-ROK relationship. The latter triangle had two very good aspects and one less desirable tension -- filled dimension. The positive aspects were the US relationship with Japan and the US relationship with South Korea. These were solid as they had been for many decades, despite the occasional frictions and the cultural gaps that had to be filled all the time. It was recognized then as it is today that the US-Japan relationship was the most important link we had in the Pacific area. The Korea relationship, although not as multi-faceted and as extensive as the US-Japan one, was also critical because of the tenuous peace that ruled the peninsula.

The relationship between Japan and South Korea on the other hand was not good. The two countries maintained working relations. They had many similarities in their administration and organization and legal framework the Korean TV programs were copied from Japanese models. But basically, Japanese and Koreans are entirely different people and in the 1970s they appeared to hate each other. There was a great deal of understanding between the two countries. But no

love. That put us in the middle, trying as best we could, to force the two to improve their relationship so that we could operate more effectively. We needed the cooperation of the two not only with us but with each other.

The tensions really built up when Madame Park was assassinated. We had to work hard to minimize the friction; Dick Ericson worked very hard and diligently to calm the waters as best he could. There were times during the 1973-77 period when we had to work as intermediaries, as Dick Ericson undoubtedly describes in his own oral history. Even when I became Political Counselor and after Dick's departure, there were occasions when we would have to intercede with the Korean government to calm waters or lobby for some Japanese policy.

We had constant contact with Japanese diplomats in Seoul. We consciously developed a policy that permitted us -- in fact encouraged us -- to discuss the Korean domestic scene with the Japanese representatives to make sure that we were all on the same wave length. We traded information with the Japanese which was useful to us as well because they had insights that we did not have. Most of this work was done by me with my counterpart in the Japanese Embassy; I used to have lunch with him regularly. Later, in the 1980s, those lunches were held at the Ambassadorial level, but in the 1973-77 period, I used to see the Japanese Political Counselor about once a month. I also found those sessions rewarding and interesting for the Japanese had different perspectives than we had. Most conversations dealt with political issues including human rights, but occasionally we would discuss security matters. I think our discussions were generally free and wide open. On a couple of occasions, I went to Tokyo to talk to our people there as well as the Japanese Foreign Office; it was mostly a matter of comparing notes and making sure that the American Embassy in Tokyo was up to date. I believed that it was important for the stability of Northeast Asia that the US and Japan cooperate as much as possible in Korean issues and that we sing from the same sheet of music, even though the Japanese did not have as much influence in Seoul as we did. We knew a lot more about what was going on in Korea, at least in certain areas, particularly the security related ones. So we kept them reasonably well informed without stepping over the line of propriety on military matters.

Let me now refer to some specific events that occurred in the 1973-77 period. The first that comes to mind was the Kim Dae Jung kidnaping from Tokyo by the KCIA. I had been in Seoul for a little over a month and was the politico-military officer. So I was not directly involved, but I was certainly interested in the incident. It became clear soon to Habib and others that the KCIA was the master-mind behind the kidnaping. Phil has been credited by those who should know with responsibility for saving Kim's life. He intervened personally in his usual forceful way and pointed out the damage that any retribution on Kim would do to US-ROK relations. I recall that later I talked to Kim Dae Jung about his experiences of August 1973 and the aftermath. He attributed his salvation to divine intervention which seemed somewhat mystical to me. But he believed in it, along with Habib's intervention; he always felt very much in debt to the Ambassador and Americans in general for the rescue. As I have mentioned, when I became Political Counselor, I met with Kim several times and befriended him.

Then there was Madame Park's assassination in August 1974. I was still the politico-military officer; Habib was leaving, as was Dan O'DONOHUE. But I remember that incident very clearly because it happened right in the middle of Seoul in a ceremonial hall. Habib witnessed the whole

incident and gave us a detailed report when he returned to the Embassy. What impressed me the most was the newsreels taken which covered every aspect of the incident. You could clearly see a person running toward the stage and when shots began to ring out, everyone on the stage dove for cover except Madame Park, who kept sitting straight in her chair and was therefore an easy target, and Park Chung Kyu, the head of the Presidential Protective Force, who came forward from behind Park Chung Hee and fired into the audience, thereby killing an innocent witness -- a teen age school girl, I think. It may have been a brave act, but a rash one which resulted in the death of an innocent bystander. The assassin -- a Korean who lived in Japan -- was immediately apprehended; he presumably had been employed by the North to kill Park Chung Hee.

Of course, when these facts became known, there were massive demonstrations in front of the Japanese Chancery which happened to be close to ours. So we got a lot of pepper fog. One of the secretaries in the Political Section became furious with me because she was convinced that I had opened my window better to see what was going on; in fact I had kept them shut tightly, but even so the pepper fog seeped through and we had to deal with it. The crowds were not only large but also irate; they couldn't get to the Chancery very well because its entrance was on a small alley -- it had been built that way on purpose just for such occasions. But one day, I was told that one person in the crowd cut off his finger and threw it into the Chancery courtyard. That tells you a little about the level of anger. We were not the target at any time of the mob's anger, which I welcomed with some relief.

Student demonstrations were another visible sign of Korean discontent. As the politico-military officer, I was not directly involved, but I did discuss the possible ramification of those demonstrations with our military command. I was particularly interested in the issue of "operational control"; and the right of the CINUNC, the American four star general to bar the use of Korean troops under his command from taking certain actions in a peace time situation. As I recall, almost all Korean forces were under the UN command, although there may have been some disparate units that were directly and solely under the command of the Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff. I believe that the documented rules specifically stated that the UN command would have to relinquish control over Korean forces. The written ground rules were quite specific about "operational control" -- its applicability, its enforcement and the means to be used to relinquish it for certain or all Korean forces. I don't remember us ever relinquishing "operational control"; I believe that whenever in the post WW II period the Korean troops operated under their own command -- if they had been assigned to the UN command -- they did so unilaterally without CINUNC blessing.

The precedent for dealing with students was taken in 1960-61 when the series of major demonstrations took place. The Korean military forces at that time essentially detached themselves from "operational control" -- unilaterally, as I recall being told. Those military detachments then were sent to confront the students in an effort to minimize violence -- which was often generated by military actions in the first place. The question of peace time "operational control" had then and for decades thereafter become a major issue which at times was always contentious even though on paper there seemed to be some firm guidelines. I recall that I was told that in the 1960 period we were very disturbed by the Korean unilateral action. Korean military units just decided that at least for the period of the student unrest, they would not be under the control of the UNCINC and operated under the instructions of their own military

commanders. The Korean military behavior in 1960 left considerable residual concern among the US military because we did not want to be held responsible for acts we could not control. In the mid-1980s, the US military was concerned about the possibility of a repeat unilateral withdrawal of Korean troops from the UN command. After reviewing the issue, we generally concluded that there was very little a CINUNC could do if the Koreans wanted to abandon "operational control" beyond jawboning. It was clear that Park Chung Hee, if he thought that his regime was in danger, would withdraw the troops from the UN command and use them to subdue any civilian unrest. We also came to the conclusion that the precedent of 1960 established clearly that the Korean troops might shoot at students once, if they had to, but never twice. If ordered to shoot a second time, those troops were very likely to mutiny. So the use of Korean troops in a situation of domestic uprising was limited because they were not reliable "keepers of the peace" - they were not likely to kill their countrymen, after perhaps a first warning volley. Those were the two conclusions I recall that the US command reached at the time.

Let me just briefly mention Tongsun Park and "Koreagate". The apex of that story really took place after I left Korea, but being in Washington, I followed those events closely. I knew Tongsun Park personally; I had met him several times and we attended some social events at the Georgetown Club that he started and owned. I knew his brother, Ken Park, very well; I played golf with him often. Ken unfortunately committed suicide later. He was extremely wealthy. Tongsun was a real "smoothie" -- a con man who had to be watched carefully; he was not trusted by the American community in Seoul. I think everyone suspected Tongsun Park of some kind of nefarious activities; he was just too slick. I wasn't responsible for Washington participation in the Justice Department investigation; that action rested with the Korea desk and Bob Rich -- its chief.

Now let me turn to August 1976 and the murder of two American officers in the DMZ. As soon as I heard about it, I headed for Yongsan to the command post. As I mentioned earlier, this came as second nature to me; any problem in the DMZ would send me racing to the command center. I set up a post, so to speak, in Stilwell's outer office. I was concerned from the beginning that Stilwell was taking a very hard line and preparing a retaliatory strike. In a way I did not blame him. I well remember that photographs of the murdered officers came to the office; they were horrendous because these guys had been beaten to death. I had never seen such brutality in my life. It was a very tense situation. I immediately phoned Washington -- Phil Mayhew, the deputy director of the office of Korean Affairs. I also called Tom Stern, the Chargé to bring him up to date. But Stilwell's view was of increasing concern to me. I felt that this was the kind of situation that cried for civilian control in Seoul and Washington. I don't remember Stilwell ever issuing orders for retaliatory action, but he was certainly planning for something -- and rather quickly. My continual reporting by phone was welcomed in Washington where obviously many people were seeking information.

At one point, Stilwell became quite angry because he found out that I was reporting events in real time. I explained to him that I was on the phone with my colleague in the Department in Washington; he really could not object to that. I do not remember in any detail what Stilwell's plans were, but it became later clear that he was moving further and faster than Washington wished. I think it was clear to Washington that Stilwell was moving ahead of the policy planners. To the best of my recollection, Stilwell was preparing to have troops move north toward the

DMZ, ready to take action. I was most concerned about Stilwell's mindset more than his actions. From the beginning, I agreed that the North had obviously exceeded acceptable limits, but the US military's posture seemed one of revenge. I had serious doubts about that approach in an already abnormally tense situation. Subsequently, a couple of weeks later, Sneider returned from vacation and then there was some "strong" dialogue between the Ambassador and the CINC.

I certainly had no objections to the Command's wish, expressed almost from the beginning, to restart the tree cutting effort. It was clear to me that we had to enforce our rights in the DMZ and that meant going back to the tree and cutting the limbs that were obstructing our view. That was a perfectly legal activity and I think it was right and proper that we follow up on it and finish the job.

I think people have to understand that in this instance the first 24-48 hours were primarily devoted to fact gathering. The first information received was certainly fragmented and it took the Command some time to nail down the sequence of events. But I remained at the command post off and on for several days, monitoring and reporting the information that was being collected and the plans of the military. I was certainly in accord with the Command on finishing the tree trimming exercise, but I was very reluctant to see us go beyond that, unless further provoked by North Korean troops. The Command was right in being prepared to take further action if provoked, but I did not think it appropriate for us to do anything more initially than to finish the tree trimming task.

I have some recollection of Stilwell being quite frustrated by the short-leash that Washington had placed on him. In fact, the Command was on the phone continually to JCS, which dictated every troop movement. I think that tight control stemmed from Washington's early awareness of the tense situation that had developed on the Korean Peninsula. I think Washington was also very aware of the risks involved in any precipitous action and the need to move in a deliberate and thoughtful way.

I mentioned that when Sneider returned from vacation (he was ordered back by Phil Habib), there was a confrontation between him and Stilwell. Dick Sneider was highly agitated and very determined from the minute he landed in Seoul that he would now take charge of the US policy and operations in Korea. This attitude was consistent with Dick's general view of his role in Seoul to begin with; furthermore, I don't think he was too happy to have his precious summer vacation disrupted. I remember quite clearly the first meeting that Sneider and Stilwell held after Dick's return from Washington. It took place in the CINC's bunker. There were, I believe, at least 25 people in the room, including a number of Korean generals. The Korean military were sitting along one side of a rectangular table; Sneider sat directly on the opposite side. Stilwell occupied one other side and his staff sat opposite him. Stilwell began with a briefing; he then went on to talk about his views. At that point Sneider exploded; he was "loaded for bear". He obviously intended to take control of the situation and to make it clear to everyone that he was in charge of all US operations in Korea. As I said, he erupted in anger and then Stilwell responded in kind. At that point, a colonel -- whom I considered to be one of the smartest US officers I had ever met -- who was standing behind Stilwell in the doorway, intervened. He suggested that the meeting be adjourned and that Sneider and Stilwell continue their confrontation privately in an adjoining room. That took the principals aback; but they agreed and went into the separate room. I

considered the colonel's intervention not only appropriate, but also courageous since he publicly reminded the two principals that their public behavior was not really appropriate. So Sneider and Stilwell -- alone -- retired to the back room; I suspect that Sneider continued to emphasize his predominance; Stilwell had no choice except to acquiesce; he had to acknowledge that the Ambassador was the personal representative of the President and therefore the top dog in the country. I think that session put issues back on the track and after that, we didn't have any more reservations about the CINC and his views. I can well remember the faces of the Korean officers to whom civilian control of the military was a foreign concept; in Korea in those days, the roles were reversed. So they were surprised and amazed by the exchange between the Ambassador and the CINC. I have no doubt that Park Chung Hee had a full report of what had transcribed within minutes of the meeting breaking up. I don't think anyone could have left the Command that day with any doubts on the role of a civilian ambassador even in a semi-military situation.

I could not know who had actually ordered the attack on the American military contingent that was sent to trim the tree. The question of whether it was just a sergeant or whether it came from higher up is still unknown today, but I had no doubt that the attack was planned before the event ever took place. The North Korean troops had been brought to the site in a truck, who at someone's command jumped out and set upon the American contingent with axe handles. It was obviously a calculated move which had not been decided on the spur of the moment; in any case, the North Korean action was a serious breach of the Armistice Agreement. The provision of that Agreement clearly gave us the authority to trim or remove any obstruction of our view of all areas within Panmunjom, (the Peace Village). The tree had grown and spread so that our observers could not view the "Bridge of No-Return" and the guard boxes that were placed at the bridge. Our military had notified the North Koreans ahead of time of our intentions and the reasons for our action. There may have been some objections from the North -- I believe that the tree all of a sudden became "holy" and therefore untouchable, but we were well within our legal rights to trim the tree.

So it was not surprising that our contingent was taken by surprise by these North Korean troops - - at least a dozen of them. It was an illegal and brutal act by the North Koreans -- fully captured on film by the way -- which resulted in the death of two American officers who were beaten with ax handles. I have no doubt that it was planned and prepared by the North Koreans. But I don't believe that any of us had any solid information to estimate who had given the orders. I think, even today, that the order probably came from fairly senior levels. North Korean sergeants do not take actions of this nature on their own. It was an incident that drew world attention and concern and I think it must have been authorized fairly high in the chain of command.

The whole incident was concluded essentially by us finishing the tree trimming. Tensions cooled after we had taken action, although we were prepared for the worst when our troops went back in with their shears and saws. Of course, the word "cooled" has to be seen in the DMZ context where tensions always ran high. For example, the DMZ is a border which the North tried to bypass by digging tunnels under it. That would have been an unusual effort in any part of the world, but in Korea it was particularly egregious. I was there when the first tunnel was found. That discovery came about when someone observed plumes of hot air rising from the ground; that air had seeped through the layer of earth above the tunnel where it was warmer. In fact a small cloud went straight across the DMZ; that suggested that something unnatural was taking

place, and led the UNCINC troops to the tunnel that was being dug under the DMZ. Presumably the North hoped to use them to infiltrate their troops unnoticed in the South. The first one, I believe came out just south of the DMZ; the ones found later exited a considerable distance behind the DMZ. This discovery raised immediate interest and concern, not only about the one found but about other tunnels which may still have been undiscovered. Through the use of listening devices and other means, we soon found other tunnels in various stages of completion. The finding of these new tunnels was the result of very intensive detection efforts. We did learn that finding a small tunnel was very much like looking for a needle in a haystack. We did find some, but no one can really be sure that all have been found, even today.

I can remember Stilwell having a long discussion with some Italian archeologist who had spent his lifetime looking for catacombs in Rome. I reported that conversation with some amusement. I think Stilwell was deeply interested because the archeologist brought some expertise to the challenge of finding tunnels. As it turned out, finding catacombs in Rome was not entirely applicable to tunnels under the DMZ. The catacombs were huge when compared to the narrow tunnels that the North was digging. The existence of tunnels remained a US concern, although by the time I returned to Korea in the early 1980s, I think everyone had accepted the existence of the tunnels and the continued search for these tunnels was no longer the head-line news that the first or even the first few had become. The discovery of tunnels became a big business. Some outfit had been established which spent its full time on searching and finding tunnels. It was the typical military approach; if there is a problem, you just set aside some resources to try to rectify the situation. I visited the tunnel-searchers one time with our Ambassador.

I never went into a tunnel. That would have been a violation of the Armistice Agreement. Nevertheless, the military developed a whole program of visitations to the tunnels. It was partly a tourist attraction, but I think it was used primarily as a propaganda device to bring to the attention of the visitors the nefarious ways of the North; the briefings emphasized the perfidity of our "adversary". Both Ed Hurwitz and I objected to the military's approach to this issue, but we were ignored. It was our view that civilians in the DMZ were a violation of the Armistice Agreement and that we should stick to the letter of the law. It is true that the North was violating that Agreement, but that was no excuse for us to do the same thing. But the desires of the Command prevailed, in part because Sneider was really not concerned about what the military was doing. We did I think manage to convince our Embassy colleagues not to visit the tunnels, even though I am sure the Command would have been glad to bring us to the tunnels. But as far as I know, no one in the Embassy at that time violated the Agreement by visiting the tunnels. I still think that bringing civilians to the tunnels was inappropriate, particularly when these visits were used for propaganda purposes. Later, these tunnels became major tourist attractions, the ROK developed the sites into regular stops for tours.

We did take VIPs to the DMZ so that they could get a feel for the situation. When General Hollingsworth commanded I Corps, those tours which included his personal briefings were spectacular. We would take the visitor to the DMZ and move from outlook to outlook by helicopter, escorted by Holly. I will never forget standing on one outlook, on top of a mountain peak, overlooking the Chorwon Valley -- which was the route that we anticipated the North would use if it ever decided on an invasion of the South. Holly pointed to the valley and said in his booming, gruff voice, "That, gentlemen, is where we will murder the bastards!!!". He did

that with such relish and enthusiasm that all his audience would also get excited and were themselves ready to plunge into the valley to defend the South. It was a great show! Holly was a very skilled briefer; he could convince even the most ardent opponents of our presence in Korea that he and his men were the only thing that stood between freedom and a return to the Dark Ages. There were very few skeptics left after Holly's briefings. I must admit that when Hollingsworth first arrived to take over his command, I was concerned because I was afraid that he would be too aggressive. He had made his reputation in Vietnam where he had dropped more ammunition on the town of An Loch than had been used since the WW II bombing of Berlin. He was indeed proud of his achievements. In fact that was his approach to battle -- overwhelm the enemy with a raging storm of ammunition. In fact, when he became the I Corps commander, he revised the battle plans to reflect his view of how the war was to be conducted. Stilwell approved those plans which were a sharp departure from the past because they called for a "forward defense" -- i.e. meeting the enemy with overwhelming force at the point of his attack into the South. The Koreans warmly endorsed the concept because it provided at least some hope of reducing the damage to Seoul. The old plans -- based on a "defense in depth" strategy -- in fact would have meant Seoul's destruction. Holly wanted to drive the North back before it could reach Seoul and rain severe damage on the city. Seoul was the heart of South Korea; so a strong defense of it was certainly most welcomed.

I took visitors to the DMZ even when I was the DCM, later in the '80's. The substance of the briefings was roughly the same. The major difference was in the truce village itself. When I first served in Korea, the entire area was open to all who were in the Panmunjom area -- both North Koreans and Americans. That situation changed as result of the tree trimming incident. A line was negotiated which separated the village into two sections: one reserved for the North and one for us. Neither side was then permitted to cross that line. I think the drawing of the line and the separation of forces made a deep impression on every visitor. It was a visible sign of tensions, which could erupt without warning. The potential for confrontation which could spread quickly was certainly palpable. That of course was one of the reasons we used to take visitors to Panmunjom; it was to impart to them the concern that we felt about the dicey situation in Korea. It was not done for propaganda purposes, but we did want to ensure that the Washington visitors whether from the Executive or Legislative Branches -- could experience first hand the tensions as we saw them. The North Korean observers would sit in their tower and take pictures of all visitors. Both sides would use binoculars to watch each other; every one peered at each other.

In the middle of the village there were some huts. One was used by the Armistice Commission for its meetings. On each side of the conference table, stood a flag. I think I mentioned before that those flags were the subject of a competition to see which would be taller. It was a silly kind of competition, but a visible indicator of the animosity that existed between North and South. There was a lot of those small incidents when one side would do something and the other side would try to top it. When that game was played long enough, both sides would eventually accept a new balance. I attended a few Armistice meetings; the North was on one side with a Chinese observer sitting at the end of their side of the table. The US was represented by an Admiral, sitting opposite the North side, with his staff arrayed along side of him, including some South Korean representatives and interpreters. The meetings were really staged; that is, the texts were prepared ahead of time and neither side veered very far off its usually narrow instructions. The North was always very strident and uncompromising, giving it a bad image that we used to

portray in our briefings.

I should make some comments about my recollections of the South's missile program. Some missiles and rockets were developed by the South, without our assistance. It was a program that was of some concern to us. We did bring LANCE missiles into South Korea; that missile was a dual purpose weapon -- i.e. it could be used with a regular warhead or a nuclear one. Our missile was a proven weapon system; the South Korean ones were all experimental. I am not sure that they ever developed a working model which was just as well because we felt sure that the South was also developing a capacity to build a nuclear weapon. Had it been able to develop both a missile and a nuclear weapon, that would have changed the situation on the Peninsula; therefore we were greatly concerned about both development programs. I remember discussing with General O.D. Street, the JUSMAAG chief, the desirability of providing short range missiles to the South Koreans. Those missiles would not have been able to reach Pyongyang and would therefore have been less destabilizing than the ones that the South Koreans were trying to develop themselves. There was some hope that if we provided the short range ones that might stop the Korean development effort for longer range ones. I should make it clear that the South Korean missile and nuclear capability development efforts were surreptitious; all we knew about them we had learned from intelligence sources. As far as I can remember, we never did provide missile assistance to the ROK because it would have involved providing drawings and plans as well as actual systems; that was going too far.

The nuclear issue arose soon after I became the Political Counselor. The question we faced was how we could get the Koreans to cease and desist in their experimental nuclear development program, which we had learned about through CIA intelligence collection. The ROK was trying to build a nuclear device. I believe that they were working on this program in Duduk, a town they had built for scientific and technical development efforts. To build a nuclear device -- or even to develop one -- depended on a supply of plutonium -- enriched uranium. We suspected that the Koreans intended to get the material from a reprocessing plant which they had ordered from the French. The raw material would come from the waste generated by the nuclear power plants which Westinghouse had and was building. Then that waste would be reprocessed and would as one of its products generate plutonium. We had no doubt about the reliability of the information we had received. The Korean source had been developed by a CIA officer. The recruitment was an extraordinary success.

There was no doubt in our minds that we had to prevent the South from starting any such nuclear development program. At the same time, we did not want to make this an open confrontation between our countries; we did not want to embarrass the ROK. But the fact that the Koreans had to procure the reprocessing plant from the French gave us an opportunity to derail the development program. Sneider started a series of conversations, starting with the Science Minister and going on to other involved ministries in an effort to stop the procurement. At first, we were met with polite, but non-committal response. The Korean ploy was to question why the US was so interested in what was essentially a domestic issue -- a reprocessing plant. I went with Sneider to all of his meetings with the ministers, except the last one, which he held with the Secretary General, who next to Park Chung Hee was the highest ranking official in the Blue House. He told me after that meeting that he had told the SG that US-ROK relations were at stake and a Korean procurement would require a US reassessment of that relationship. If the

South Koreans had had any doubt about our concern, that meeting with the SG would have put them to rest. We were greatly concerned and I think we made it very clear to the Koreans. Our conversations also, I think, made it clear that we knew why the Koreans were so anxious to procure this reprocessing plant. Only an issue of the magnitude of a nuclear device development program would have brought such a strong response from the US. Through this process of consultation, we did not openly confront the Koreans; all of our conversations were private and therefore when the Koreans finally decided to cancel their procurement, "face" was not at stake and that made it much easier for them to back away. I learned subsequently that in fact, although the reprocessing plant procurement was canceled, the Koreans did continue a very small and modest nuclear development program, but, without a source for the basic ingredient, they could not develop a device.

I should also mention that following Sneider's negotiations, we entered into a scientific agreement with the Koreans, which was a "fig leaf" that enabled the Koreans to show something for giving up the reprocessing plant. Sneider signed that agreement with the Minister of Science and Technology. I have a picture of that ceremony which has some amusing aspects to it. Everyone in the picture -- the Science Minister, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Sneider and I -- have the sourest expression that I have ever seen in a group portrait. I think it was just by accident that the cameraman caught us all with our dourest expressions on, but it was reflective of the view of both sides -- the Koreans were bitter and we were not very elated ourselves.

Beyond our general reluctance to accept nuclear proliferation, the discussion was also stimulated by our concern for the ROK taking offensive action against the North. All Koreans after all, regardless whether they lived north or south of the DMZ, were Koreans. They are aggressive people and if there was concern for the North taking offensive action, then it was appropriate for us to be wary of the South's motives and actions as well. As with many oriental cultures, the Koreans were very much concerned about "saving face" and also believed in the "eye for an eye" policy. This always therefore required a prompt response to any actual or perceived injury received from another party. Not to retaliate was seen as an invitation for further action by the adversary because he would view a lack of response as a sign of weakness. It was not that the South Koreans were looking to make war, but their view required a response of at least equal magnitude to any provocation from another party. That attitude and philosophy is bound to cause some concern for a foreign observer, such as the United States even if it was closely allied with South Korea. We were always afraid that in this charge-counter charge atmosphere, developments might spin out of control and we would find ourselves in a battle that we had not sought. Habib used to comment that no one could ever know what went on in the DMZ; it was always a powder keg that could explode at any time. He would sometimes add that it might be just as well that we didn't know all that was going on there; it might prevent any of us from sleeping at all. So the possibility of escalation was never far from our thoughts.

On the other hand, I observed over time that Koreans were almost mercurial in the way they reacted to a situation; they would be quick to return fire with fire. But it was also noticeable that these incidents calmed down as quickly as they arose, particularly the ones that occurred at sea or in the air. Those were incidents we could monitor with our electronic equipment, unlike events on the DMZ which required visual observation. It became clear to me that whenever a confrontation started, it was immediately taken over by a central command, on both sides. Once

that control was established -- and sometimes we were talking about just minutes -- airplanes that were dispatched for action, would begin to circle and cease aggressive action. So I felt that at least at the command and control level, good common sense was being exercised with a remarkable -- and correct -- dose of restraint and reality being exercised -- on both sides. These observations further fortified my view that all Koreans, regardless of the regime they lived under, were very similar in their reactions and outlook. It was probably true that the volatility that we were worried about and our anxiety about the actions of Koreans on both sides of the DMZ were probably under better control than we thought. Still, in all, they were all Koreans!

Before ending the discussion of this part of my career, I would describe one incident because I consider it illustrative of a lot of the issues that we confronted on a daily basis. One late winter evening in February, 1977 (I believe), I heard that a confrontation had taken place at sea. As was my practice, I immediately went to the command post at Yongsan. When I got there I found Admiral Hank Morgan, the head of our DMZ negotiating team and the senior US Naval officer in Korea, sitting in his office looking pensively at the ceiling. He told me a little about the incident, including the fact that there had been a number of deaths. He told me that North Korean fast patrol boats had crossed the so-called "Northern Limit Line" (NLL) at very high speed. That line was an arbitrary extension of the DMZ that had been drawn by someone, both into the China Sea and the Sea of Japan. It was not part of the Armistice Agreement and legally, the North could wander across it into the open seas outside of the 12 mile territorial limit as much as they wished. But someone, long before, had drawn this line on a map and by custom it had become a line which we and the South Koreans did not expect the North to cross. And in fact, both sides had respected this line before 1976-77 even though it had no legal status. So when the North Korean patrol boats crossed that line, it became a challenge. Morgan, on his own authority, had ordered a South Korean destroyer out to sea to intercept these patrol boats. He ordered that the North Korean boats be boarded. When he told me that, I instinctively reacted with a question: "But, Hank, aren't these boats on the high seas?". He agreed that was the fact and then I injudiciously asked whether boarding those boats was not an act of piracy. Morgan flew out of the chair and yelled at me: "Goddamn it, Cleveland, you sound just like a fucking Congressman!".

I will never forget those words. Morgan came from the JP Morgan family and had married the daughter of Admiral McCain, Sr., then the CINCPAC and the sister of the current Senator from Arizona. As you can well imagine, the tension was very high. I suggested that in fact, the Admiral just might have to talk to those Congressmen or at least that someone might have to answer to Congress for Morgan's decision. During this discussion with Morgan, I found out that the destroyer had cut a North Korean fishing boat in two and thirty DPRK fisherman had drowned. It was a tragic consequence of a very rash decision which I think was faulty. Later we surmised that the patrol boats had in fact been dispatched to round up and bring the fishing boats back above the NLL. It was a purely defensive action by the North in an effort to save their fishermen; it turned out to have tragic consequences stemming from an completely illegal order of piracy.

At the end of my conversation with Morgan, I asked him: "Hank, why did you give that order?". He answered that because if he hadn't, Park Chung Hee would have. My obvious observation was to ask why he didn't let Park take the onus for an illegal act. Morgan's final comment was: "I

made an immediate decision to take action to insure that the Command would maintain operational control over the UN forces". This exchange illustrates clearly the conflicting pressures that all US representatives in Korea faced. There were rare instances when an issue was clear cut; there were always a multitude of factors that had to be weighed. The importance that the Admiral placed on maintaining operational control is instructive because in this particular case, it became the predominant objective regardless of possible consequences, certainly including loss of life. I fully accepted the importance of maintaining operational control, but I was also very aware of the potential risks and dangers that it imposed on us. It was a responsibility that has on several occasions placed the US in very difficult circumstances and I think all commanders had to be aware of the pluses and minuses of having operational control over foreign forces. We thought we had to have Opcon in Korea as long as we were pledged to defend that country, but it was and is a responsibility which has to be handled with utmost care, sensitive to all the nuances, particularly political ones, that come with the authority. I think Morgan's stated thought processes were very interesting; he decided to maintain US operational control at all costs; he was more concerned about the loss of US control than he was of the immediate illegal action that he took. I don't think it was a very good reason to kill thirty innocent people, regardless of their nationality. I don't doubt that Morgan may well have thought that by maintaining operational control in the US command might have prevented an even greater tragedy. But he committed an act of piracy -- ordering the South Korean Navy to board North Korean ships in international waters. The second mistake, which was accidental, I am sure, was committed when the destroyer -- in heavy winter fog -- sliced through the fishing ship. Morgan left Korea soon thereafter and retired from the Navy; I suspect that his action that night may well have had something to do with his early retirement.

This incident was also a prime example of the importance of civilian control over military actions -- certainly during peace time. The action at sea had taken place before any civilian input could be brought to bear and that was most unfortunate; the outcome of Morgan's split second decision might have been far worse than it was. The North Koreans had every legal right to take retaliatory action; what the South Korean destroyer did was sheer piracy and no government in the world would or could have supported Morgan's decision. I accept that there are times when it just isn't possible to bring civilians into the decision-making process; there are undoubtedly times that the military has to react instantaneously for the protection of its own people. But that isn't all that frequently and certainly in the case I have cited, there was plenty of time to seek a civilian viewpoint. Military operational control, as I said earlier, cuts both ways: it is a necessity in the Korean situation, but it is also a weapon that has to be used very, very carefully, fraught with danger and risks.

I should also note that this interception at sea of North Korean patrol boats was another chapter in a long series of events involving the northern limit line and two outposts on the coast of North Korea -- Y-Pdo and P-Ydo. These were islands that we had fortified -- the one furthest north was heavily fortified. Undoubtedly, the existence of these fortified islands right off their coast was of concern to the North Koreans. Sometime in the mid-1970s, the North began to send its patrol boats south of the limit line, just to test our response which was forthcoming -- one way or another. There was some shooting sometimes when these incursions took place, even though, as I said earlier, there was nothing illegal about the North sending these boats as long as they stayed in international waters. Within the 12 mile territorial waters, the South could legitimately claim

jurisdiction which it did for the waters around the two fortified islands, which were South Korean territory as specified in the Armistice Agreements. Shooting at North Korean boats sailing in and around the waters of the two islands was a legitimate use of self-defense -- at least in our eyes. The North viewed it somewhat differently because it felt -- and probably accurately -- that these islands were being used for intelligence collection. The situation was further complicated because the northern island's territorial waters overlapped with the North Korea's territorial waters. So the North tested on many occasions our resolve to defend these islands and the waters around them. As I said, the mid to late 1970s was a time when the North tested our resolve on these islands on several occasions. Both Stilwell and Vessey improved the fortifications on the islands. We put Marines and big guns on the islands.

EDWARD HURWITZ
Political Officer
Seoul (1974-1975)

Edward Hurwitz was born in New York in 1931. He received his bachelor's degree from Cornell University in 1952. After serving in the US Army from 1953-1955 he entered the Foreign Service in 1956. During his career he had positions in Moscow, Seoul, Washington D.C., Afghanistan, Leningrad, and an Ambassadorship to Kyrgyzstan. Ambassador Hurwitz was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in August 1996

Q: Then you went to Korea from when to when?

HURWITZ: December, 1974 to late 1975. I had personal problems at home and cut my tour short staying not quite a year.

Q: You are back in Korea. What was the political situation at that time?

HURWITZ: There was a great deal of stability. The Park Chung Hee regime had somewhat settled down. They were in the early stages of their economic upswing. They had cleaned up Seoul to a great extent. Seoul was bustling, buildings were going up even at that time, a subway had been put in, there was traffic all over the place. When I was there the first time the only vehicles, a part from trucks on the street, were jeeps. Beggars, who were prevalent in the early '60s, were all gone. Korea was in the process of being transformed. What had been in 1961, from our standpoint, a basket case economically, was now bustling. Certain things they did were positively mind boggling to me. They had transformed those bare, scraggly, granite slopes of the mountains into lush forests. They planted fast growing pines turning the brown/gray mountains into lush green forests.

Q: They would have tree days, wouldn't they, where everybody would go out and plant trees?

HURWITZ: Yes. A lot of this was good old regimentation.

Q: Sure.

HURWITZ: That was just one example that sums up how the place was bustling. They had problems though because a lot of this economic growth took place at the expense of the workers being exploited, if you look at it from an American viewpoint--low wages, long hours, lousy working conditions. So, you did have a burgeoning labor problem and that was a source of discontent. Some of the laborers were being organized. Union members were being thrown into jail. You had cases of political dissidents. The harassment of American missionaries who were trying to work with the labor unions or these political groups. So, that was one of the major issues at the time.

You also had a new constitution propagated by the president which was very stringent, the Yushin constitution. That was a sticking point in our relationship. I think a lot of the problems never really have gone away. In Korea, as you know, you always had a very active, sometimes explosive, student movement. Some of their leaders were very left wing and we began to get examples in the press there of complaints of American domination, toadying to the West, and that sort of stuff. It smacked of communist propaganda. Some of these kids were simply naive, but some of them, the regime felt and I think with some justification, were being manipulated to a certain extent by North Korea.

Q: It is going on today.

HURWITZ: Yes. I must say I was amazed to see some of those pictures of Yonsei University recently on TV where students with iron bars were beating the hell out of a policeman on the ground. They are very easily incited and explosive and get very, very violent. It is something that the regime was always afraid of. I remember in 1964 when they were concluding this treaty with Japan students were out in the streets every day and the government handled it well, they didn't kill anybody...the only person killed was a kid who fell off a truck that they had commandeered...but it required a great deal of self control. Now, what happened in Kwangju in 1980, I don't know. That is another story, another regime. But, basically there is a problem. We may have said one thing but I think all along with the DMZ 30 some miles away from Seoul we felt there was something to worry about. The regime wasn't simply sending up a smoke screen when it talked about communist threats...Mr. X is a communist so we will put him in jail. That sort of argumentation may have been abused, and obviously it was, but it did have some grain of truth to it.

Q: How did you find relations with the US military during this time you were there?

HURWITZ: Oh, they were good. Part of the reason they were so good was that Dick Sneider, the ambassador, was on very good terms with the UN commander, Richard Stilwell. I think Sneider had a long political/military background and was very comfortable dealing with the military.

Q: He was a key person in the Okinawa reversion with Japan. He was a Japanese hand, I think. Were you having any problems dealing with the dissidents like Kim Dae Jung?

HURWITZ: Well, Kim Dae Jung by the time I got there was under house arrest, I think. He was

arrested in 1974. We saw him on occasion. He once came to lunch at the DCM's house. We kept in touch with him. But, I must say, Sneider, for what ever reason, had very little truck with the opposition, the missionaries, the labor leaders. He was very cool to them, unlike Habib who was all over the place and saw everybody. His door was open to anybody and he didn't care about offending the government in any way. Sneider was different. Personally, he simply didn't get along with these people, he had no time for them.

Q: I was his consul general for three years.

HURWITZ: Where was that?

Q: In Seoul from 1976-79.

HURWITZ: Oh, he was still there.

Q: He left in 1978.

HURWITZ: Oh, well, then you know.

Q: No, the missionaries were not his bag at all. I always felt he was uncomfortable with the so-called human rights which granted...

HURWITZ: Yes, he was.

Q: But, that wasn't big during this time, it came a little later.

At the same time they had good connections with the US military which was extremely important and really with the Park government, I think.

HURWITZ: Yes, they did, that is true. If we had done what a person like Congressman Fraser wanted us to do, I think we would have been in big trouble.

Q: It is very difficult. Did you have any connection with the missionaries?

HURWITZ: Not so much the missionaries, but with the opposition. My Korean at that time was very good and I liked to use it. I saw a lot of the opposition types. The missionaries I didn't know so well my second tour.

Q: What was the view towards the new Yushin constitution? That was just getting started when you were there, wasn't it?

HURWITZ: There was a definite feel that Park Chung Hee had turned the screws on tightening the situation and with the kind of growth and prosperity it lead to more people being inclined to question this. In the old days Koreans, apart from the students, were much more willing to take things as they came. As time went on and the country became more stable and more prosperous you had more people speaking out, and I guess that is what tipped his hand towards a

constitution with tighter control.

Q: How about relations between Korea and Japan? We have always gotten in between on this, too. The Koreans don't like the Japanese but can't get away from them.

HURWITZ: Well, in a sense they really don't want to get away from them. There is a sort of love/hate relationship with the love bit being very surreptitious. You would find down back alleys back issues of Japanese magazines being sold. Most people at that time spoke Japanese. I guess that is diminishing rapidly. But, I think any serious Korean knows that Japan is a real factor in the area and they simply can't have a Greece/Turkey kind of relationship.

Q: Were there any issues during this time?

HURWITZ: No, I can't think of any.

DONALD MCCONVILLE
Economic Officer
Seoul (1974-1977)

Mr. McConville was born and raised in Minnesota and was educated at St. Mary's College in that state. After service in the US Army overseas, he joined the Foreign Service in 1962. Specializing in Economic and Trade issues, Mr. McConville served in a number of posts abroad, including Panama and Vietnam as Economic Officer and as Economic Counselor in Korea, Malaysia, Mexico and the Philippines. In Washington, Mr. McConville also dealt primarily with International Trade and Economic matters. Mr. McConville was interviewed by Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: This is April 2, 2001. Don, you were in Korea from 1974 to when?

McCONVILLE: '77, three years.

Q: And what was your job?

McCONVILLE: I was an economic officer in what was when I first arrived there a joint State/AID economic office like I had been in in Saigon. The head of the office was actually an AID officer. He's another guy, a Ph.D. economist, another Ph.D. from Harvard, a very bright and able economist. There were, I think, a total of five of us in the economic section, and three of them were AID and two State, and we had a commercial office which was still at that time part of the State Department, but they were a separate unit down the hall. The economic counselor was also the AID director, a guy named Mike Adler. That went on for about a year and half. At the end of that year and a half, midway through my tour, they wound down the AID operation - Adler was the last director - and so during the last half, second half, of my tour there, the economic counselor was John Bennett, who came and was head of the economic commercial,

and they also put AID and USDA underneath his umbrella. He was kind of a supra-economic counselor, and an exceptional officer too, whom I learned a great deal from. That experience again in the first year and a half there was working again with these AID economists as well as back in the State Department role with their usual reporting. In fact, my focus was on finance, particularly balance of payments, and then also on trade, and these happened to be two of the very significant issues at that time in Korea. Korea was rapidly becoming, along with Taiwan, one of what would really become the economic tigers of East Asia. This was sort of becoming apparent in Korea at that time. It still wasn't all that widely understood elsewhere, but Korea as recently as the early '60s had been one of the poorest countries in the world with a per-capita income of less than 100 dollars. Then with the coup and Park Chung Hee taking over the military government, although he was nominally elected and subsequently on several different occasions. Whatever you might say about the political side of things, economically Park Chung Hee was very deeply committed to surrounding himself with technocrats and taking their advice in modernizing Korea. So they had increasing numbers of US-trained Ph.D. economists in the government. Most of them had been sent over originally by AID. It was one of the biggest benefits of the years of AID there. We had an exceptional relationship with them. The AID mission, when they sometime in the '60s - maybe in the '50s - had built these two buildings, and one of them housed the AID mission, and the identical building next-door housed what had been the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Finance. By this time it was solely the Ministry of Economy. The Ministry of Finance was building a block or two away. The AID economic people had been so closely involved with the Korean economy that we had an exceptional relationship. Now we were at the tail end of this, but it was striking in that we still had a meeting once a month - it was chaired by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) resident representative there - and meeting with an assistant minister from the Korean government and some of his staff, and the head of the US economic section, my boss, and myself, and we would meet and go over the monetary situation in Korea and a lot of their financial planning. It was extraordinary access that we still had, it was quite fascinating for me again to further my education in economics. This was during the height of the first major oil crisis, and, if you recall that period, one of the consequences when OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) had first dramatically raised their oil prices, and with all its consequences for much of the developing world including very particularly Korea, which was totally dependent on imported oil, this caused a very serious balance-of-payments problems. But at the same time one of the other consequences of this was that the international banking system had huge amounts of money that were generated by these oil-producing countries and were looking for places to put that money. And they had really begun in a major way to start lending to developing countries. Now, previously, developing countries had largely been limited to the World Bank or the other regional international lending institutions and bilateral aid as a way of financing the development since it was very difficult for them to get significant commercial funds. But because of all of this money now that the international banks had, they were beginning to really in a significant way begin lending to the more creditworthy developing nations, and Korea was one of them that fit this bill. Now, Korea again had a very significant balance-of-payments deficit, but there were those that were close to the situation who could see that they had tremendous growth potential and were growing at a very significant rate already. So a major part of my job ended up being keeping very well informed and keeping the Department and others informed about the financial situation, particularly the balance of payments in Korea. We had just a constant parade of bankers coming through, American bankers seeking this kind of information. We put out a lot of

reports on it and had them handy. They were unclassified for the most part, and we kept certain portions of them unclassified that we could pass out to the American bankers. So this was a very fascinating sort of experience. I literally became such an expert on the balance of payments in Korea that the IMF resident rep - when the World Bank people and some of the others, the Asian Development Bank people would come over from missions, they didn't have a resident there, and he would set up their meetings and so forth, and I was always on their schedule to discuss balance of payments, because I had become a pretty significant expert in this just by the fact that I became so immersed in it. That was a very, very satisfying experience for myself, and we did very, very well in the way we projected. In fact, we were at odds with the US Intelligence community and so forth, who were much more pessimistic about Korea's outlook, and we got into some rather detailed battles with them over what was happening and, in fact, proved to be correct with our estimates. In any event, then the other dimension that I had there was the international trade role. Korea at that time was still very, very heavily dependent on textile exports. In fact, of their exports at that time textiles were far and away the biggest. They were still exporting things like wigs and plywood and some fairly simple manufactures, black-and-white televisions for example. In fact, it may be one of the last places in the world where they were building black-and-white televisions. Virtually all the black-and-white-televisions still being sold in the US were being manufactured in Korea at that time. But this was all in the first wave, and they were building a steel mill at that time and shipyards that were coming on line and so forth, but it was still all fairly basic.

Textiles were hugely important to them, but this was also the period when in the U.S. just a few years earlier the Nixon administration, under enormous pressure from the textiles states, had committed itself to getting a long-term textile agreement covering synthetic fabrics, not just cotton. The long-term agreement on cotton textiles had dated back to the early 60s. In fact, if you recall, I had mentioned I had that three-month assignment in Washington before going off to my first assignment in Panama when we were held up by the travel freeze and had worked in this Office of Textiles and Fibers at that time. That was with the long-term cotton textile agreement. Here this was a decade later and with enormous pressure the U.S. had forced Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong to become significant members of what was now a long-term agreement on synthetic textiles as well as cotton textiles, or synthetic and wool, among some of the industrial nations. The EU and so forth were members. Henry Kissinger wrote an entire chapter on one of his books on this whole episode of getting those agreements established and the pressures that were used and the pressures that were being brought on the Nixon administration. This was just a few years after the agreement was in place and was functioning, but during the period I was there, there were some very significant textile negotiations with Korea at that time on extending and continuing their agreement. I was the point person in the embassy for these. Again, it was something that I found I functioned very well in. It was headed by USTR (United States Trade Representative), and the State Department had an important role along with Congress and the Labor Department, and these negotiators came to have a lot of confidence in me as being the local guy to help them understand the Koreans. So for all the negotiations in Korea, I was part of the delegation. In fact, they even talked about bringing me back to Washington for some negotiations. That never quite came about, but I got very extended exposure to it and established a pretty good reputation with these people. Being someone from the State Department, you were always under some suspicion that you were more interested in Korea's perspective than that of the U.S., but I came to be able to build confidence and trust

among them that I was pursuing the same interest as they were in helping them understand how they could best accomplish this with Korea and still do no more damage to our other interests than we needed to do. All this negotiating experience was of very considerable value to me.

Q: Could you comment on how you perceived it at the time, sort of the style of Korean negotiations?

McCONVILLE: The Koreans I found to be - and this was the reputation they had with these people as well - they were extraordinarily tough negotiators but also very pragmatic in the end. You could strike a deal with them. You probably would have to go on and on and on through the nights and have a number of sessions, but in the end they understood strength and they would squeeze you for as much as they thought they could squeeze you. The Koreans are, behind their somewhat stoic facade, a very emotional people, and you had to be careful to be sure that you respected their dignity and that you didn't offend them, but at the same time they understood and appreciated hard-nosed negotiating tactics. Once you struck a deal with them, they kept the deal. Again, if they could find any sort of loophole at all, they would take advantage. If you had some kind of power over them to be able to punish them in some way or other, they would not be happy about that but they would respect it. Now, if you were too crass in the way you exercised this power, they could get highly offended, and they were capable of cutting off their nose to spite their face, if it was something that deeply offended them. But at the same time, if you wielded this pressure in a way that they recognized it was there, they knew that you would use it, they would take it right up to the point where they felt they had gotten as far as they could, then they would strike the deal and they wouldn't be offended by it, they would feel that was the way you do business. It was an exceptional experience for me that was to pay off a lot in my subsequent career.

Q: I was wondering whether the negotiators had to keep going back for instructions.

McCONVILLE: No, this was something very unusual about textile negotiations. Textile negotiations are different than virtually all other negotiations in the United States government, in that the team is comprised of, as I say, USTR, State, Commerce and Labor. The Treasury Department would play a role sometimes. Long ago people at senior levels in the U.S. government had come to the conclusion that if they were going to try to thrash these kinds of things out at senior levels within the government, they would be bogged down interminable. So they had evolved a system whereby the team that did the negotiating basically just made all the decisions themselves. They never referred anything back to Washington, and the people who were there were empowered to simply strike whatever deal they thought they could strike. Your negotiating teams are always accompanied by advisors from the industry and union. They would not be in the negotiations; they'd be in a hotel room, and you would go and confer and consult with them, and I was exposed to them as well during this period of time. You, in effect, were negotiating with them at the same time you were negotiating with the Koreans, and you were quite aware that the Korean government was doing the same thing with its industry. The arguments within the negotiating team away from the table could be extremely heated, and again it was a matter of part of the leverage that you had within the government yourself to be able to bring to bear. But, see, you didn't have any instructions. There was never a written instruction of any kind whatsoever. You simply made these decisions yourself on the spot. You'd have to get a

consensus among the negotiating team. This was pretty extraordinary and it made for a very unusual set of negotiating circumstances. I was exposed at great length to this whole process while I was there and had earned a reputation among these people as someone who was pretty good at this game. Korea during this time continued to make great strides economically. Despite the fact of the oil prices and so forth, which was threatening a recession, I think growth was never under seven percent, and by the time I was leaving it was back up to 10 or 12 percent a year or more growth rates. We used to joke that a Korean recession was defined as two consecutive quarters of growth of seven percent or greater. It was truly exciting to see all this happening, and, again, coming away from Vietnam and Saigon where I'd seen some of these market-oriented principles work, even though they got stunted in Vietnam, and then to get all this reinforced in Korea, it opened my eyes in a huge way as to the significance of the economic policies of developing countries and their ability to be able to modernize and to ultimately climb to a level where they were at very strong self-sustaining growth and being able to transform and modernize their countries. That was a great experience in that economic office. I was there for three years, and then my next assignment was off in Washington. By this time I'd been abroad for almost seven years.

Q: I want to go back to Korea. When you were in Korea, both negotiating and, say, Congressional visits and all, were there problems of payoffs? The Koreans were used to passing money around. Did this impinge on the work you were doing?

McCONVILLE: Not really. In the textile negotiations, first of all, the U.S. textile interests were very strong in the United States; they had exceptional political influence, and they weren't about to give anything more than they had to. Now, on the Korean side there could have been corruption involved. You negotiated an overall quota with Korea product by product by product. It's a tremendous series of products that you would negotiate on. But once they had their overall quota, they divided it up among their producers, and there could have been corruption on that side of things, although, again, it was such significant interest that whoever was doing it was always going to be under tremendous scrutiny. If they were being too favorable to one or the other, there would have been a lot of counter-pressure. So there really wasn't, certainly from the American side, any kind of pressure to be corrupt or otherwise do something under the table. As I say, in every negotiation, the advisors, as they were called, were there at the hotel room and you would be consulting on a very, very regular basis. It was a pretty open process in that sense, in that in any sort of deal you struck, these people from the industry and unions were going to know every detail. It was also an education to watch these people operate. They worked the various industry associations or were with the union, and they would do a great deal of posturing when they were all together about how tough they were and how demanding they would be, but they recognized that some of these things couldn't be negotiated. They never wanted to admit to their fellow lobbyists or advisors that they would concede or be weak in any way, but they would confide to us individually - not so much me as the chief negotiator and others in the negotiation - what they could really accept. They never wanted to admit it openly, because they would have to go back to their membership and then defend this, and they would want to appear that they had battled it down to the very end and gotten the best deal that they could get. If they got back there and got too much heat, then they never wanted to be in a position of having openly accepted the deal. They would threaten to raise hell about it and so forth. It was educational too in terms of seeing how some of these process work. The chief negotiator was a guy named Tony Jurik, and

he was in USTR, which at that time didn't officially exist as such. It was a small office in the State Department. The textile operation had been set up primarily because of the significance of the textile industry, to have someone close to the White House who was going to negotiate these agreements. The State Department head of the office at that time - it was actually a division of the Office of Trade - was a guy named Mike Smith, and Mike was a State Department Foreign Service Officer. He subsequently became the chief negotiator and he decided that his best career track was to stay in Trade, and he was a major player behind the scenes in getting USTR established as a permanent agency and getting himself named as the first U.S. ambassador to GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), which was an ambassadorial rank that USTR was responsible for staffing. Mike subsequently ended up being a deputy USTR. But all of this time, he remained as a State Department Foreign Service Officer. He was quite proud of being a Foreign Service Officer, despite the fact that he would battle State about getting all of these negotiating issues transferred to USTR.

Q: Actually I interviewed Mike some years ago.

McCONVILLE: Well, Mike and I ended up having an extremely close relationship, adversarial in some ways, but I had a long, long relationship with Mike. Mike was pretty exceptional too. I learned an awful lot from him about the way he dealt with these advisors and how he handled these advisors in such a way that he convinced them that he was getting as much as they could possibly get, and at the same time it was something that he was confident that could be negotiated, and he was a master at that. But in any event, it was a pretty extraordinary experience, and I came away, again, truly impressed by what the right kind of economic policies could do in the developing world, and at the same time the political situation created under Park Chung Hee wasn't quite as draconian as some people try to suggest. It was still pretty authoritarian, although Koreans tend to like it that way up to a point, but that was becoming more and more of an issue as I left Korea. Then when I left Korea and went back to Washington, I had been hoping to then get into the financial side of things in EB but ended up taking an assignment in the East Asia Bureau. This was in 1977, under the Carter administration.

MORTON I. ABRAMOWITZ
Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command
(1974-1978)

Ambassador Abramowitz was born in New Jersey and educated at Stanford and Harvard Universities. He entered the Foreign Service in 1960 after service in the US Army. A specialist in East Asian and Political/Military Affairs, the Ambassador held a number of senior positions in the Department of State and Department of Defense. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research and as US Ambassador to Thailand (1978-1981) and Turkey (1989-1991). He also served in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Vienna. Ambassador Abramowitz was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 2007.

ABRAMOWITZ: By sheer accident the Political Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific

Command (POLAD-CINCPAC) job came open. There were a number of candidates, but the job seemed attractive that I used whatever influence I could muster, such as with SecDef to get the job. I had the necessary interview with Admiral Gayler and he subsequently offered me the job, which was a State Department billet. It was a very desirable assignment at that point with lots of senior FSO's vying for it. It was until then always filled by an FSO-1 – the highest level in grade levels existing at the time. I was only an FSO-3 but got the job.

It was, I felt, an important job because CINCPAC was deeply involved in the tensions on the Korean peninsula, and in numerous other Far East issues, less so in Vietnam. In the early 1970's CINCPAC was an important player in the policy process – much more than I believe is today. When he traveled to foreign countries, he could see any foreign official he wanted. He was a major official representing the U.S. That is less true today. The 1970's were the “hay-days” for CINCPAC. That is of course one reason the POLAD job was so attractive.

In Korea, there were great tensions between Admiral Gayler and General Stilwell. The latter disliked Gayler. He didn't believe that a naval officer had much to contribute to what would be mostly a land-war. He also trumpeted the fact that he was a U.N. commander and not solely a U.S. representative. One of my tasks was to try to ameliorate this tension. I worked with Ambassador Dick Sneider, who also was not on Stilwell's “favorite peoples” list. But Dick and I conspired to find some way to maneuver to keep the peace and get some useful work done.

The major issue in the Korea peninsula was in some ways a personal one between the two U.S. military leaders. Their antipathy was evident when we went to work on a new war plan for Korea. The new plan added a massive use of firepower – both ground and air – to try to destroy the North Koreans in the first few days of any conflict. This approach was a major addition to the existing war plan. It was not a plan that assumed that a new war would be like the old one with its slow but sure move south by the North Korean troops. The new plan was to take advantage of allied fire power superiority. Throughout the discussions of this new approach, there were real tensions. Eventually, both commanders agreed on the plan, but it was rough road. According to standard DoD rules, it was CINCPAC's responsibility to plan for war contingencies. That means that every American war plan in the Far East had to be approved by CINCPAC before it could be forwarded to DoD for final approval. That was a bitter pill for Stilwell to swallow; he preferred to deal directly with Washington and often used his U.N. hat to do so.

My second goal was to try to enhance our military position in South Korea. This was a major issue because influential senators like Sam Nunn were supporting a withdrawal strategy or a minimum realignment policy. Nunn, whom I became friendly with, wanted to move the 2nd Division away from the DMZ to the south where it would not be so exposed to a North Korean attack. We thought that was really bizarre and significantly reduced deterrence. We resisted his views with vigor. We felt that our alliances in East Asia had been negatively impacted by our retreat from Vietnam and that any additional diminution in our position with our allies – particularly Japan and South Korea – would further reduce their confidence in the United States and our influence. Our prestige had already taken a major hit; we strongly believed that any further actions would be negatively perceived and would not be in our interest. Most Asian nations deeply feared further American retreat. As a general goal, we not only wanted to maintain our alliances, but strengthen them where we could. We were concerned that any

perceived weakening of American resolve might be used by some East Asian governments as an excuse to accept possible communist encroachment into the area.

I remember appearing on the “McNeil-Lehrer News Hour” –it was my first, appearance on that program – with Ed Reischauer and someone else. I was the lone defender of maintaining ground forces in Korea.

Q: I would like to ask you to clarify your relationship with DSAA (Defense Security Assistance Agency). As the ISA deputy for East Asia and Latin America, did you get involved in military assistance programs?

ABRAMOWITZ: Often, since most of my countries were large recipients. There were times when DSAA and the Bureau for Politico-Military Affairs in the State Department would seek my advice or I would simply put my two cents in. My involvement in this program grew considerably during the Carter administration when I was asked to focus on enhancing our military assistance program for Korea to help offset the proposed American troop withdrawal. I led an inter-agency task force on this issue, consisting primarily of the logistic component of JCS, DSAA and the State Department. We produced a report despite the fact all members of the group were opposed to troop withdrawal. In fact, the only person I knew who continuously favored the proposal was President Carter. Our task force proposed a massive military assistance program to South Korea as an offset to U.S. troop withdrawal.

I tried but never succeeded in finding out who helped persuade Carter during the 1976 campaign to advocate removing U.S. ground forces from Korea. All suspects resolutely deny it, and I never asked the President, who, of course, may well have decided on his own. I do know that I got tarred with it, in great part because I was the point man for pulling the Defense side together, defending it before a skeptical military, and making the case for withdrawal on the Hill. The Reagan Republicans never forgave me until George Shultz came along. In fact, I was totally against the withdrawal and early on made my opposition known to my new boss at Defense – Harold Brown who had replaced Don Rumsfeld. My first run-in with the new administration on Korea, a month after inauguration, was on a plane to Tokyo with VP Mondale to “consult” with Japan – not South Korea – on our troop removal. In the briefing session I blurted out to Mondale “You can’t do this; we have at least to consult with the Koreans.” Mondale, a wonderful man, smiled and said “You know, Mort, there has been an election in our country.”

The withdrawal was a campaign promise, and Carter, unlike many other presidents, was determined to carry it out over the strong opposition of the bureaucracy and many senior Democrats including some in the Cabinet. At the first meeting of senior officials to discuss plans for withdrawal, Treasury Secretary Blumenthal, at the end of the meeting, got up and said “Why in hell are we doing this?”

Korea was a disaster for the President from the start. The White House initially told the departments it wanted all ground forces out in one year and the State Department as good soldiers tried to carry it out. But it produced a large uproar and after much negotiation, we got the withdrawal “back loaded” – a regiment in the first two years and the balance in 1982, after another Presidential election. At Defense, as I mentioned, we came up with a big military

assistance program to help improve Korean forces. In the end, Carter abandoned the project supposedly because CIA discovered – rather conveniently – that the intelligence community had badly underestimated the size of North Korean forces by several hundred thousands. The withdrawal effort had one major unintended consequence. It consumed South Korea and undermined President Park politically – he had lost the all important American mantle – and ultimately, I believe, led to his assassination by his KCIA chief, although personal reasons were also involved.”

This discussion reminds me of a comment that Jim Schlesinger made when I received an AFSA award. He said: “Mort and I went to Korea during my tour as secretary of defense. We had gotten some intelligence that indicated that the Koreans were working on the development of a nuclear weapon. I was charged with telling President Park Chung Hee that if such a program existed, it better be terminated immediately. And the South Koreans did. Now guess who has nuclear weapons on the peninsula? That was a wry commentary on history.

In connection with nukes, Schlesinger was the first cabinet officer to warn the South Koreans not to try to build nuclear weapons. The South’s efforts were not terminated immediately, but over a period of time. One other episode that I remember from the Schlesinger trip dealt with human rights questions. We were still in the pre-Carter days. We were sitting in Chosun Hotel discussing the issues he would take up with President Park. I suggested that the human rights issue be raised. It was clear that Congress led by Congressman Don Fraser was becoming increasingly restive about the Korean government’s repressive tactics against its opponents. Koreagate also was just beginning to percolate; Kim Dae Jung had been kidnaped from Japan and was threatened with a death sentence. Schlesinger was reluctant to take up the issue. He did not in principle at that time believe that the U.S. should pontificate to other governments on their behavior, particularly on issues which were essentially domestic political ones in a still turbulent country. I told him that nevertheless I thought that he had to raise the issue if only for our domestic political reasons. He was still very reluctant. I told him that the first question that would be raised by American reporters at his press conference scheduled after his meeting with Park was going to be about human rights. Then he would either have to say that it was not raised or he would have to lie, neither was palatable. When I made that comment, Schlesinger got annoyed – he did not like to dissimulate – but he raised the issue with Park. The first question at the press conference indeed dealt with human rights. Schlesinger didn’t talk to me for three days after that! And he has never forgotten that episode. He has said that the only person who was more to the right of him on pontificating on human rights at that time was Henry Kissinger.

I felt that the human rights issue had to be raised in part because South Korea’s standing in the U.S. was rapid deteriorating. We had to make a showing on it if we were not to seriously jeopardize our ability to maintain our military posture on the peninsula. For a senior American government not to raise the issue could have had serious unintended consequences.

In the next year Carter was elected and human rights became a central rhetorical focus of U.S. foreign policy. It must have been part of the presidential desire to withdraw our troops from South Korea. We received a directive to start the troop withdrawal planning immediately. From Secretary Harold Brown down, we all thought this was a very poor idea. The first meeting on this issue was chaired by Bill Gleysteen, then the deputy assistant secretary for EA in State –

later our ambassador to Korea. He said that we had to draw up plans to get the Army division out of South Korea within a year. I told him that the Pentagon could not go along with such a timetable. We mustered a counter-attack which eventually was successful; the time table was stretched out considerably and as I noted before, the withdrawal was back loaded – that is, much of the combat capabilities would be the last to go (after the end of Carter’s four years in office).

This withdrawal issue was a major bone of contention in the U.S. government. General Singlaub who was the chief of staff of the U.S. commander in Korea was recalled after being in Korea for only a few months because he publicly opposed Carter’s decision. Of course, he was reflecting the views of all the senior military officers in the Pentagon, as well as those of the UN Command in Korea under General Vessey. In the Pentagon, we began a rear guard action – delay it, water it down, mitigate the decision as much as possible. Brown knew what the staff was doing and never interfered. Eventually, over the next year, even State came to oppose the withdrawal. I am sure that many will have somewhat different recollections about the sequence and nature of events, but I think it is fair to say that eventually the bureaucracy came together to oppose the withdrawal decision.

My main objection to the decision was that it was premature. The stability on the peninsula was still too dependent on our military presence. Human rights did not enter into my calculations. I felt that our withdrawal significantly enhanced the possibility of Northern intervention, particularly coming after our failure in Vietnam. Carter’s decision was imprudent. It was clear that we could not reverse it, but we did manage to develop a time frame for withdrawal which made it more acceptable. In the meantime, we could bolster South Korea’s defense capability by providing a wide range of modern weaponry. As I said earlier, the withdrawal decision was finally rescinded when CIA’s analysis came to the conclusion that the North Korea’s military capabilities were far greater than had been thought. I think that perhaps one regiment was withdrawn; that was the total result of Carter’s decision – and that was made primarily to save the president’s face.

I don’t have any view about CIA’s findings. I do believe that such analyses need considerable scrutiny because they are indeed, at best, good guesswork. How many Vietcong were there in South Vietnam? How large were the North Korean forces? These have to be educated guesses; precision can not be the judgement standard. I suspect that CIA’s analysis was probably correct that the North’s forces were larger than we had anticipated; how much larger I would not vouch for. In any case, the analysis was very useful for the anti-withdrawal forces in Washington. It undermined one of Carter’s assumption upon which he based his decision.

For me personally, it was no longer a consuming issue because I was preparing to go to Thailand. On the other hand, the whole withdrawal affair became personally damaging because there were people like General Dick Stillwell and others who held me responsible for being the principal architect of the withdrawal decision. I think they misunderstood my role as “public defender” – in Congressional appearances, for example – of the policy; they thought that I personally believed in it. Once I was invited to speak to the Naval War College in Newport, RI, at its annual convocation which always attracted a large military audience. I defended the policy at great length, and I was met, so I surprisingly, with great skepticism by the overwhelming majority of the audience. Stillwell had become personally very antagonistic to me since my

service as CINCPAC's Polad; he hated Gayler with a passion. So my Congressional appearances and my Newport speech gave Stillwell plenty of opportunities to poison the Pentagon atmosphere against me, even after I had left for Thailand and notably when the Republicans returned to power.

Q: Before we finish the discussion on Korea, let me ask you about the Security Consultative Meetings (SCM) that were started when you were in ISA. What was your view on meetings of this kind?

ABRAMOWITZ: I was very positive about having the SCM, particularly the first few meetings because they were crucial to explain to the Koreans our position in Vietnam and the Far East in general. It was very welcome to the Korean Government, it made them feel more like a read ally. We thought it would help resolve some problems in convincing the Koreans that we were not diminishing our interest in their independence and defense despite our withdrawal from Vietnam. We had to convince them that the two issues were not related and that we continued to be their staunch allies to prevent and repel any North Korea intrusion. The SCMs were essentially DoD-ROK Defense Department talks, although State had a representative on our team. The meetings were at Cabinet level and I think they were useful to both sides. We had similar annual meetings with Japan, although in that case, the U.S. participants were CINCPAC and our ambassador to Japan who led the U.S. delegation. The meetings continue to this day.

Q: Did you also favor in the 1970's the annual military exercises that we conducted with the South Koreans?

ABRAMOWITZ: Yes. These were important in making our joint military efforts more effective as well as training the South Koreans. I saw it also as a continual warning to North Korea that the U.S.-ROK alliance was well and working. During this post-Vietnam period, there was real concern in the U.S. and the ROK for the North Korean threat. There were periodic shooting incidents across the DMZ; President Park's wife was killed by a North Korean commando team; there were discoveries of North Korean tunnels being dug under the DMZ; and the "tree cutting incident" that I mentioned earlier occurred. The tensions were real and palpable in the 1970's. Those don't exist today and probably haven't for some years, the South Korean military have improved significantly. The situation on the peninsula is far different today than it was in the 1970's. I should note that joint exercises were not unique to South Korea; we held them with the Thais, the Filipinos, and the Australians. In the 1970's they were certainly warranted by the existing tense situation on the Korean peninsula.

The Korean saga was only one of the major foreign policy initiatives of the Carter administration. There were others which generated the same reaction in many officials as the Korean troop withdrawal decision. We felt that some of the ideas from the White House were weakening our alliances with the Japanese, the Koreans, the Filipinos, etc. as well as building impediments to improving relations with China. We were afraid that the Asian countries would view our actions – or inactions – as an indication that we were reducing our interests in Asia; that might have serious consequences for our posture in the area as well as our national security. We felt that the initial general gesture of the Carter administration would be interpreted in Asia as the continuation of retreat from the area and reinforce the fears of the countries in the region from

our withdrawal from Vietnam. This skepticism of administration's policies and initiatives in East Asia were felt most deeply by Mike Armacost at the NSC, Dick Holbrooke, the State assistant secretary for EA, and myself.

We asked for a meeting with Brzezinski to voice our concerns. He gave us about an hour and listened patiently. At least from the outside, he didn't indicate any agreement with our positions; he was Carter's NSC advisor and always defended the president's policies. As far as I recall, he never gave an inch on Korea during the lengthy evolution of that process. He may not have had his heart in following the president's wishes, but he certainly did not fail to push Carter's agenda. Zbig always referred to this meeting as having "met with the three Cassandras." I don't recall this meeting changing any of the administration's initiatives, but we believe that our intervention might have raised some flags in Brzezinski's mind which may have subsequently affected his thinking. I can't be sure of that, but he certainly listened to our concerns and understood them.

In 1976, we had to deal with another major incident on the Korean Peninsula: the famous – infamous – ax murders that took place in the DMZ when a company of North Korean soldiers attacked a U.S. army detachment, which was engaged in pruning the limbs of a tree which had obscured our observers' sight in the zone. They axed to death two of our officers. Rumsfeld was then the secretary of defense following Schlesinger's dismissal in November 1975. General Stillwell, our CINC – and the top UN commander in South Korea – was given responsibility for handling this matter. We did keep an open telephone line from the Pentagon to the command in Korea. Our military cut down the offending tree while North Korean forces watched.

WARD THOMPSON
Political Officer
Seoul (1975)

Ward Thompson was born in New Hampshire in 1941. He received a BA from Brown University in 1963 and an MA from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1967. He served as a captain overseas in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1963-1966. After entering the Foreign Service in 1966, his postings included Copenhagen, Seoul, Helsinki and Gothenburg. Mr. Thompson was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1999.

Q: What was the Korean reaction to President Nixon's visit to China in 1972?

THOMPSON: The Koreans were always very nervous when we approached the Chinese. Of course, they were also nervous if we approached the Japanese, and most nervous if we approached the Vietnamese. So we would have to reassure them. We did that by having visitors come and so forth. You have to remember that the Vietnam War was also a context there.

Q: Yes, I wanted to ask you also about their reaction to the Vietnam War.

THOMPSON: The Koreans had a division or more in Vietnam, and others have addressed that. The Korean commitment was pretty solid at first, I understand, and then sort of relaxed a bit and they had their own agenda down there. But I do think they appreciated that everything we did in Asia was in the context of the Vietnam War, including to some degree our opening to China. And they realized ultimately as we pulled out of Vietnam that this would hurt them more than whatever we did in managing the relationship with others.

It was interesting when Park Chung Hee declared martial law.

Q: Yes, I wanted to ask you. Why did he do that?

THOMPSON: Well, he did it because nobody was expecting it. He was very savvy, and I think he probably got up in the morning and figured, you know, what can I do today, but as a shrewd politician. He was never reacting; he was always taking the initiative, and he declared martial law. It gave him a chance to mix up his government a little bit, shuffle it, and so forth. In opening it probably tightened his control. We were given about 24 hours notice, perhaps less. And I recall that because I was detailed to spend the night in the embassy cut off from my office. It was very, very peaceful. Some tanks; otherwise it wasn't very much to look at. I mean, of course, Park had no real love for America. He ignored Ambassador Habib because of Habib's earlier activities in Korea. And so he was very wary of what we might do, and he tried to neutralize us by asking us to be neutral. Well, it happened that Habib had instructions to go see him. The instructions had to do with something that was going on in Vietnam, with the forces there, and with our need to beef up the hardware, not only in Vietnam but also in Korea, perhaps to transfer some of that. This was vital from the American perspective. It had nothing to do with Korean domestic politics, but naturally Park assumed that the ambassador was coming to see him about the martial law. And so it was almost impossible to get the word to Park in a credible fashion that the ambassador was going to come up with the news media, the international press watching him, and hours after the declaration of martial law, and then he was not going to mention martial law to the president. These are the things that go on behind the scenes that people just couldn't believe.

Q: How did martial law affect the embassy's activities and yours specifically, if they did at all?

THOMPSON: I would say they didn't at all. The difference when that was imposed was not that perceptible because you already had a situation where there was a curfew at night. There were barricades that you went past. Of course, ordinary citizens couldn't do that. There was press censorship and other restrictions, and these were tightened somewhat by that. Martial law was preemptive. As I said, it wasn't a reaction to anything. It was just a good move in terms of laying the groundwork for suspending political activity and making sure that Parliament did not become uppity, and that was one impact: the political structure was reconstituted. There was a new constitution put into effect which had an ingenious system in it providing that parliament was freely elected but I think only two-thirds of it, and one-third was appointed. Now this on paper would give the opposition a chance to control things. But each district would send two members to the parliament, and in most districts, in all districts, the Government Party only had one candidate for two seats. So it sacrificed half of the mandates at the start, but in return, of course, they got these candidates elected.

Q: Their man was elected.

THOMPSON: So you had one-third of the elected legislature, 100 per cent of the one-third that they had appointed, so it was really quite ingenious.

Q: Now Secretary Kissinger came to Korea, I believe, while you were there in November of '73. Did you have any role in his visit, or not?

THOMPSON: No, it was a very quick visit. I did not have a role except probably to carry papers and things, but he did come and talk to the staff in the embassy cafeteria. I remember that. Of course, Ambassador Habib was there, and Kissinger told an anecdote about visiting Habib when Kissinger was a Harvard professor and Habib was at the embassy in Saigon. Kissinger was on a fact-finding mission and wanted to interview Habib. Kissinger said that Habib said to him, "You think you know something about Vietnam? You're going to waste my time coming here? Go out, travel around the country for two weeks and learn something about this country and then I'll talk to you." And Kissinger said, "You know, he was right. And I did spend some time in Vietnam, and I learned a lot and I went back and then Phil Habib talked to me and I got a lot more out of it because of the advice." And he paused, and then he said, "But I'd like to see him try that today."

Q: Yes, that was when Habib was political counselor, I recall, in Saigon. I presume, since you were following events in North Korea, you worked closely with the CIA station and the Agency people there. Did you have any relations with the Korean CIA?

THOMPSON: No, we assumed that they were everywhere, and I mentioned my relations with the Red Cross, for example. Even in the ministry, you couldn't be sure, we, the State officers couldn't be sure who was actually pulling the strings. But basically, especially under Habib, the jurisdictional lines were very clearly drawn, and I know once that he had read something that the CIA had generated involving one of our contacts, and he called in the station chief and said, "Oh, this is a Political Section contact, and this isn't the way we operate."

Q: Were people in the Political Section in touch with the opposition in Korea, or was that too dangerous?

THOMPSON: They were in touch, and they liked to be in touch with what the embassy stood up for in the early '70's. And even I would get involved. I would go out and cover election campaign events, even though everybody knew that the result would not be an independent parliament. Events were good because you could see the interaction. As I mentioned, there were a limited number of language officers.

Again, I would like to talk about language. I suppose they lecture at FSI to the language group try to motivate them to do well in their language classes. I think Korean was another good example. I never got up to intellectual fluency, but my wife and I both had good conversational fluency. A lot of times we used the language, and we also were able to talk with the officers in the Foreign Ministry. Only some of them did speak English. In many cases the wives did not as well, and also on these trips that I mentioned. Invariably mayors of the small towns didn't speak

English. It was always an interpreter and there was always interesting chit-chat and you did pick up a lot about the fabric of the country.

Q: How did we assess the strength of the student demonstrations, which were increasing in those years?

THOMPSON: Well, I mentioned that we had two officers in the section who were assigned to internal events, and they had good contacts with the students and the opposition parties dealing with Kim, who was the ranking Roman Catholic and was leaning to the side of dissent. He was in a very awkward position. And our labor attaché—I mentioned our labor attaché—he didn't speak, but he had good contact in the labor movement, which I think the AFL-CIO regarded as nascent, at best, but nonetheless it existed, and there were people out there working hard. I know that one of our colleagues in his oral history mentioned it. These ties to the labor movement were particularly important because that was more untainted. As I said, to be a politician, you had to play according to the rules that were passed down. But in the Korean context, which was the rules were different anyway, and I think he helped all of us political officers as well as others in the embassy. And we had some good language officers in the consular section. It helped us to go out and just engage people because you get to know their rules. It's one thing for us to go down to the market and bargain, to our great gratification with people, but to see how Korean natives go out and deal with other Koreans is instructive when it comes to dealing with Koreans on policy issues ourselves.

Q: What was our reaction to President Park's increasingly strongman rule? Did we ever tackle him on this?

THOMPSON: I would say that we nibbled around the edges. There again, in the Korean context, except for a very brief blossoming of democracy, there had only been strongman rule. The North Korean threat was very real. It was obvious that you could not have the country bickering among itself. You had to have some kind of strong if not authoritarian rule. I think probably if Park Chung Hee had been friends with the embassy, he would have gotten away with what he did with less objection from us. That's not to say that we condone a dictatorship, but we would have been able to nudge . . . we certainly couldn't nudge Park Chung Hee. Instead, we tried to develop our ties to the businesses, the Korean military. He came out of the Korean military. He knew exactly how we maintained ties with the Korean military. In fact, it was our Korean military that he overthrew in order to become president. So he knew how that worked.

Q: What was the Korean reaction to President Nixon's resignation in '73, '74?

THOMPSON: I really can't say authoritatively. I think that they accepted that because it was so gradual. And initially they regarded Nixon as a great friend. Of course, he was. But they could see what was happening. We had a very large CODEL that came out earlier, and there were people on it such as John Anderson and others who were very critical of Richard Nixon. You know, Anderson was a Republican and later ran as an independent, but I think they were making it clear that Nixon was losing his basic support, so his resignation was no surprise. As an aside, I can say that the Vice-President had resigned, Agnew, and he had visited Korea at some point

before I was there, and we got a visit from the inspector general of the FBI or somebody that they wanted to go through all of our files and look at everything pertaining to the Agnew visit.

Q: Interesting. Well, it was about this time that President Park's wife was assassinated.

THOMPSON: Yes.

Q: And did the embassy have to take extra security precautions as a result of that?

THOMPSON: I don't know whether we did, but we certainly didn't have to. I mentioned the anti-Japanese movement as a result of that. This was something that was somewhat bilateral, but it was mostly domestic. But it certainly didn't involve the United States. And I know that Dick Erickson, who was chargé at the time, was in a position of offering his good offices. I know from the other oral histories that this was not necessarily supported by the Department of State, but of course I was observing him close up, and he was going back and forth constantly between the Japanese embassy and the Foreign Ministry. This, again, I think was part of the show, an effort that culminated with the prime minister coming to Korea and apologizing for the fact that the assassins had come from Japan.

Q: And the assassin was Japanese or North Korean or—

THOMPSON: He was a Japanese-Korean man, but he had been so long over there. Of course, the Korean community was very close-knit, but I don't recall the details of where his marching orders came from, but certainly the Japanese didn't control him. I just wanted to say that there was another aspect to the domestic reaction to the assassination besides the anti-Japanese, which. . . . The anti-Japanese movement was partly orchestrated and partly just the same vestige of the long occupation and colonization by Japan. Ultimately, of course, Korea had to come to terms with that, and this assassination was a catalyst for letting off some steam. At the same time, Park lost his best domestic ambassador. His wife was very well loved, a gracious woman, very attractive, never appeared harsh or domineering or anything.

Q: A foil for the old man.

THOMPSON: Well, yes, generally loved. There was no orchestrating the funeral. They had too many people turn out to mourn for her, and even Park revealed a soft side to himself because everything was on television. And as my colleagues have described him, he became more withdrawn after she died. Ultimately, of course, he was assassinated. Koreans were very pleased about the economic miracle that was already evident at the time she was assassinated.

Q: Now in 1974, in the latter part of the year, President Ford visited Korea.

THOMPSON: Yes.

Q: That was probably his first foreign visit, or one of them.

THOMPSON: Yes.

Q: Did you have any part in that visit?

THOMPSON: Yes, I did. I got involved with a few others preparing for it. I got to go to the Blue House, which is the counterpart of the White House. It was a good visit. I think it was about 24 hours. The Koreans were very happy, that Americans cared. They made a lot of the fact that it was his first overseas trip. I think he went on to Vladivostok.

Q: Yes, and then to Vladivostok to meet Brezhnev or someone there.

THOMPSON: He went there, and that counted for a lot. And then the fact that it was snowing as he left was considered a good omen.

Q: Ah, a very good omen, very good omen. And then there was an incident where Korean riot police raided our embassy. Do you recall that?

THOMPSON: Yes, vividly. This was part of an ongoing area of political dissent which involved a group of mothers, and these were mothers of students who had been incarcerated or persecuted as a result of their own anti-government activities, and the mothers tried a lot of different things. They finally came into the embassy compound. In those days, of course, you could just drive in or walk in. There were gates, but they were open all the time. And they came in and they sat down, and the Korean police came and removed them.

Q: Uninvited by the embassy.

THOMPSON: Uninvited, and Dick Sneider was ambassador, and he was literally livid. He was running around jumping up and down on the top floor, really an excellent view, of course. He kept sending people down. "Go down and stop them." Meanwhile, he had people calling the Foreign Ministry and the Blue House, and all that to no avail. Obviously, nobody was going to respond until they'd gotten those women out of there because they were on diplomatic territory. I know that Don Gregg, who was station chief and later was ambassador to Korea, had his picture taken. I think it appeared on the front page of The New York Times. He was down there with all these women around him and the riot police taking people out, and Dick Sneider did set us up, because there was nothing we could do. And I was a little over-dramatic. When it was my turn to go down there, they had already put the women on buses, and they had pulled up about probably three or four city buses and threw the women on there, and I stood in front of the bus. And of course, the driver certainly wasn't going to pay any attention to me, and so he drove, and as he left, of course, I glided off to the street side of the bus, but to the people watching from the embassy, it looked as if I had fallen under the bus. It was an optical trick.

Q: You were quite a hero, or - a fool, I don't know which.

THOMPSON: Well, I think probably we all were very foolish. And the Koreans didn't make any points with the embassy that day. But every time they would pull something like this, of course, they would always apologize, you know. By being consistent we'd earn the respect of a lot of lower-ranking Koreans. They were highly educated, understood our culture, our political and

diplomatic culture, probably better than many of us professionals ourselves. They were very savvy in their relationships.

Q: What was the reaction in Korea to the collapse in Vietnam in the spring of '75?

THOMPSON: I was not personally dealing with the Koreans on that one. Again, I think that the Korean people took it in stride.

Q: Which happens a little before this.

THOMPSON: —because I think the Koreans were perhaps the most overeducated people in the world. By then, I think, literacy had reached 100 per cent. Everybody was well read; they knew what was going on. And the Middle East situation had come on somewhere on their radar screen, and that was more important at that point than Vietnam, in my opinion. Now on a direct personal level, there had been a number of Koreans in Vietnam, and they of course were concerned with getting them out. Now our military had arranged to get whatever vestige of their military was still there. I believe they were there after we pulled out, so that they were there in early '75, perhaps just some kind of advisory unit, but I do recall that one issue was that when they came out, they just loaded up a ship with Mercedes-Benzes and like that. There were some Korean diplomats who were stuck and I did have contacts with the Ministry, which was quite concerned about it. And in those few frantic days, in April or May, I'm not quite sure what was happening. The main concern was that they would be handed over to the North Vietnamese. So I was working in the embassy. We had no contacts with Vietnam. The embassy had been abandoned. And then eventually the Foreign Ministry said that, well, they had been in touch. And I said, "How?" And they said, "Well, we picked up the phone and called." Because the Vietcong had not severed communications. And then they got a fax - well, it wouldn't have been a fax; it was a teletype - eventually they made their way out. I think they went south and got a boat or something. They were very resourceful. So they got out. That was the main concern of the Foreign Ministry was the safety of these people.

Q: The great concern about the Middle East, was it the oil boycott that was bothering your embassy?

THOMPSON: Yes, as it did the Westernized countries.

Q: Oh, yes.

THOMPSON: And Koreans right away could see that it would be a big problem.

Q: There was no oil in Korea.

THOMPSON: No oil in Korea, and the Koreans need energy but it also happened, and this is another digression. . . . It also happened that they had decided to get into the supertanker-building business. And the timing was atrocious. They had correctly figured out how they could build supertankers and undersell the Japanese. And by the way, they brought Danes in. I remember that. They brought the vice-president of the local shipyard down to a place called

Ulsan, where Hyundai, which now sells cars here in this country, built this shipyard where there was nothing. It was sandy beach. The Koreans built this steel mill which was just up the coast, and they had an over-capacity of steel. They figured that what could they do? Well, they could build supertankers. They had no experience in large shipbuilding, but in typically methodical fashion, they went ahead and they obtained the design of the Japanese. I don't know where they bought it and how, but they got it. And they got a contract with one of the Greek shipping companies for 10 supertankers even though they had never built them because the price was low. And they put together this shipyard with thousands of people building it, and the Danes provided the expertise, and they started building. And then, of course, the oil crisis came along, and the market just fell out of supertankers, and the yard continued. They rallied and prospered. They started building these pressurized ships for liquid petroleum gas and built all kinds of things. But this was just one of the incidental blows struck by the Middle Eastern crisis. To maintain their energy supply, they did a couple of things which were very innovative and an example of how they could move quickly internationally to cover their interests. First of all, they discovered that there had been an Arab explorer who had landed on the shores of Korea in antiquity and that traditions had been handed down, and there was even a mosque there once to cater to those of Islamic faith in the area. They brought in the representatives of Saudi Arabia or some other Arab country and they showed them that this is an Islamic country we're in. And then, of course, later, without losing too many beats, they developed a relationship with the Saudis in the construction business, and so then it was Korean companies who did a lot of the modernizing that the Saudis could afford after the oil prices went up. And this was part of the deal to ensure their supply. They told the Arabs that they could provide this state-of-the-art construction feasibility and they would be very glad to do that. The price, of course, would be very reasonable.

Q: Much cheaper than, say, the Japanese could do it.

THOMPSON: Oh, yes. And in fact this is what happened.

Q: Now you served under two career ambassadors, both strong-minded, Phil Habib and Dick Sneider. Can you contrast them as to their effectiveness in the job?

THOMPSON: Well, I would say that Habib knew Korea very well. He had very good contacts. Sneider was more of a newcomer to Korea, not to Asia.

Q: Yes, Japan was his beat.

THOMPSON: He had one credential which was very impressive. During that brief period when the UN forces controlled Pyongyang, he had gotten hold of the archives, and he had studied with them, from the Communists, and Sneider was involved in that study from Washington, so that gave him some credibility, which he used. I think it was a question of style. Habib, for example, the Koreans were very big on the trappings of military rule, lots of motorcades. Habib always prohibited motorcades, for himself or for visiting Americans. Sneider, on the other hand, liked the motorcades. So that was a great difference in style.

J.D. BINDENAGEL
Economic Officer
Seoul (1975-1977)

Ambassador J.D. Bindenagel was born and raised in South Dakota. He attended the University of South Dakota and the University of Illinois. He served in the U.S. Army overseas in Germany, and entered the Foreign Service in 1975. His assignments abroad include Seoul, Bremen, Bonn and East Berlin. In 1999 he was appointed as U.S. Ambassador for Holocaust Issues. In 1998 Ambassador J.D. Bindenagel was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

BINDENAGEL: I wanted to go to Asia and since I had a political science degree with a minor in Asian studies. I was delighted that I got my wish, with an assignment to Korea. It was exactly what I wanted and Korea was the only country that I had not studied at the University. I studied of course China, Indonesia, Japan, and Southeast Asia. I knew little about Korea, and this assignment would fill a last piece of what I had anticipated would be a long career in East Asian and Pacific affairs.

Q: You were in Korea from when to when?

BINDENAGEL: 1975-1977.

Q: And what were you doing?

BINDENAGEL: I was a Junior Officer in the Economics Section, I was actually a Commercial Officer. Worked for John T. Bennett, who was the most senior economics officer, then we had Jim Marshall, John Perkins to whom I reported directly. John had a little trade center operation, it wasn't official trade center, but it had a little business promotion element, and that's where I spent most of my time. Meeting businessmen and promoting America.

Q: I would think it would have been a very exciting time to be in Korea. A country just reaching a 1000\$/capita, obviously it was going to be a interesting market. Economically rather exciting place, wasn't it?

BINDENAGEL: It was very exciting. In Germany I had personally experienced the oil shock of 1973. I was still in Army when the German Government declared driving-free Sundays for three weeks; the German Government banned cars from the streets. Seeing no cars moving in Germany was a shocking experience and made the importance of oil real and immediate. From that oil shock I had gained personal awareness of the tremendous impact the oil crisis was having on economic structures in a country like Germany. When I arrived in Korea, Korea was reaching a level of economic prosperity that was disappearing because they had no natural resources; they had to import oil. Importing expensive oil would wipe out any earnings that they had, and their economy would collapse. Coming into that Korean crisis and seeing these people with very strong Confucian ethic, very strong commitments to education, to achievement and to structured society was exciting. The fact that the local employees would work 18 hours/day without blinking an eye to achieve what they though was necessary was an infectious climate for a

strenuous work ethic. We really wanted them to achieve, and we wanted Americans to be a part of their success. We certainly were omni-present, since our commitment in the Korean War.

AID had had a large mission in Korea and was a dominant force in U.S. economic policy. However, as the AID mission shrunk, the Economic Section expanded its contacts, including to economic leaders like Kim Jae Ik and others who were running the huge economic miracle that was about to occur. The Korean future was certainly uncertain. I had no idea whether they would be able to achieve survival. However, much to the world's surprise by the end of my two years, they had weathered the storm. Some new forms of industrial organization were key to their success, including the chaebol organizations that began to dominate the economy. The Chaebol are large conglomerates, vertically and horizontally integrated conglomerates that are controlled by a very few people and worked hand in glove with the government. Politically the country still had the strong Presidency government of Park Chung Hee, who was ruthless. Before I arrived the North Koreans had sent a patrol into Seoul to assassinate Park Chung Hee. They killed his wife in an attack in downtown Seoul, next to the Embassy's Compound II, where Jean and I lived. So we had a sense the communist North Koreans could infiltrate at will, a feeling that I had never experienced across the Central Front in Europe. Although this event had occurred shortly before I arrived, there were constant reports of infiltrators being picked up. So you had a politically tense situation and an economically fascinating time.

One important story was when I was duty officer in the second week of the North Korean incident in which two officers were killed. The act "tree trimming" incident in 1976 occurred in the DMZ. The UN Force tree trimming crew had gone into the DMZ to remove tree limbs that had obstructed the UN Forces view to the North. The North Koreans came into the DMZ, isolated the two American officers and killed them. Then we massed an incredible armada and military force to go in and decided to take down the tree. A very dramatic moment in which I, as the Embassy duty officer, delivered State Department messages relating to operations orders to General Stilwell, commander of the UN Forces. With an armada off shore and squadrons of aircraft in support, we cut down the tree, then the tension eased, and we went on with our negotiations, which in the end drew a ten centimeter line across the village of Panmunjom in the DMZ separating the UN Forces from the North Koreans. That was the most dramatic time I had in Korea.

Q: At that point all was the threat for something from North Korea. That never knew was out of your mind.

BINDENAGEL: Never. The comparison, the analogy I drawn from my military time was, we noted that on the 38th parallel occasionally a helicopter would stray into the DMZ and be taken down. That happened in the Central Front often, where we would stray mostly into Czechoslovakia. But there was a dramatic difference in the kind of threat and the constant military action that was on the DMZ. We had visitors constantly. Richard Holbrooke came in 1977 as the Assistant Secretary. I remember being part of the delegation dealing with him. Another distinguished visitor was Governor Busby, who came from Georgia; we had delightful time. One funny moment came at a dinner for Governor Busby, who was a very big man, when he was complimented by his host for having very large ears. Large ears in the Buddhist tradition are a sign of great wisdom. However, the Governor didn't know this fact, and was quite flustered

as to what it meant. We were able to tell him and to assure him that this was a very high compliment. With that he, too, burst into laughter.

Q: What about on the commercial side? In many ways this is where the action was in those days. And the Koreans are an interesting group commercially. Could you tell me about how the Koreans seemed to operate on the commercial side and what were we doing? Were we pushing them to buy our stuff or were we also pushing them to sell in the U.S.? What were we doing at that time?

BINDENAGEL: What we were trying to do in the Embassy was to promote U.S. exports. Apart from selling to them, there were some joint ventures we promoted. AMPEX, for instance, had invented a video technology and was looking for a partner. AMPEX was trying to sell their videocassettes in Korea. AMPEX developed VHS technologies and was unable to sell them well in the U.S. But in Korea and more importantly in Japan were able to make inroads, and those two took over the manufacture of that video technology and the competed with us in the U.S. So we very much saw this market as a place to sell things and to help them, but they very much used it to gain technologies that we were not exploiting as fast as they could, like the video technologies and they came in as a competitor. VHS came to us via the Japanese afterward, an oft-told story in Korea. We also had some competition; for instance, the Germans built a diesel motor factory which led to other downstream projects. We encouraged the Koreans to develop their infrastructure, their talent and they were masters at beating us in our own game. The Canadians were building a CANDU nuclear power reactor, and as soon as the welders had learned that high degree of skill at the expense of the foreign investor, they would go off and set up their own companies or move to other employers. Labor was still not trained or paid at the international level. In my time Korea moved from a poor, developing country to an emerging economy as we began to call success stories in Asia.

Q: Did that make you gun shy? You know, you might be able to sell something once but then it's turned around and they compete with you?

BINDENAGEL: I was there at the earlier stage. That came in the '80s, when we had tremendous trade problems with them. The trade problems we had with Korea were with mushrooms, shoes and textiles. They were the main trade frictions we had, and later in the 1980s they moved to manufacturing and we had other trade problems.

Q: Could you explain why mushrooms?

BINDENAGEL: In part because Koreans could grow them for a very low price. More importantly, mushrooms in Pennsylvania were disadvantaged and the Senator from Pennsylvania wanted to ensure that his Pennsylvania suppliers to the market were not endangered by this low wage country's competition.

Q: Did you get involved in any negotiation one way or the other with the Koreans?

BINDENAGEL: No. I was a junior officer working on promotion, I wasn't really engaged in the negotiations.

Q: I know. I was running the Consular Section that time and I remember one of my officers, Steven Kennedy, I had to send out. There was a dispute with a Korean firm over shoes or something like that. Koreans who were involved in this were threatening to attack the Americans. I had to send Steve out with the Americans when they left, just to lend a quasi-immunity. Koreans, particularly at the mid-management, they were held accountable for anything that happened. So they could not accept losing a deal or being disadvantaged in a deal, so they got quite upset and almost physical.

BINDENAGEL: That certainly was constantly in the discussion, and when I said working 18 hours a day I meant factually as well. Koreans were intense, uncompromising, and goal oriented. You could even say that at any cost they were going to win. They were existentially threatened economically, politically and militarily, so it wasn't an issue of negotiation, it was their own existence. That sense permeated all the dealing that I had with them.

Q: What about the American Chamber of Commerce? I'm really thinking about American manufacturers, not necessarily Chamber of Commerce. But there were quite a few American firms represented there. How were they doing?

BINDENAGEL: I really don't recall. They were very active with us in terms of demonstrating their products, and with the trade and economic policy side of the section, on the trade disputes, but I really don't recall.

Q: Did corruption cross your screen at all, or was that at a different level?

BINDENAGEL: The only kind of corruption I saw was the fixation on the name Walker, because general Walker had done wonderful things in the war to protect the country and the role of Johnny Walker scotch which appeared as a gift, as encouragement, sometimes used against you, that's the level of corruption that I saw.

Q: I was wondering if there was any concern in the economic section about the role corruption played in the economic development?

BINDENAGEL: Yes, in fact we had with Chaebol, these conglomerates, economic section, commercial section work very closely to try to see how they were organized and what they were doing. They were, however, very closely held organizations and I wasn't able to penetrate them from where I was sitting. We did deal with couple of cases where we tried to expose arms sales that were connected with Chaebol, which had the potential of revealing payoffs or some other corruption. We dealt with the World Trader Data Reports - WTDRs - background material on firms. We would actually try to look at companies and interview them. We had several export control cases, where they may have diverted controlled exports and we needed to make end-user reports. But in terms of corruption, we saw little.

Q: Was there a problem of trying to get American firms to sell things to Korea, Korea being so unknown market? The reason I say this I remember one country team meeting when John Bennett or some one from the Economic Section mentioned the problem that Koreans had been

buying a lot of Japanese products and they wanted to buy some American. So they wanted to buy a fire engine. They picked an American company, but it really wasn't interested in selling fire engines abroad, they'd rather stick to the American market. Would you know of a problem...?

BINDENAGEL: I don't know that it was particularly the case with Korea. But certainly at that time exporters were smaller, percentage of exports from the U.S. was very small. The fact that John Bennett and John Perkins wanted to actually have a commercial operation to encourage Americans to come there, it certainly was to encourage and help them to deal with this market, because it was unknown to them. There was a constant theme in the discussion - how we could help? When Elliot Richardson, who was the Commerce Secretary, came and talked about American business, he sent our message back to the U.S. that he was in Korea and Korea was okay. The unknown market syndrome was certainly an issue. I am not so certain that it was a Korean issue as it was an American issue. As regards the Korean interest in not buying the Japanese, that too has a more social, historical, political connection. They didn't want to be dependent on the Japanese who had conquered them in 1905 and subjugated them, and had even abolished all Korean names. This constant latent anti-Japanese feeling did have an effect on purchasing decisions; it was helpful in selling the U.S. as a balance to becoming overly dependent on the Japanese. The same was true for investments; the Japanese sold the Koreans older, dirtier industries that the Japanese didn't want anymore. We had other newer industries for cooperation.

Q: Did you find yourself in a position of being an enthusiastic salesman to American business representatives who were coming out to look at Korea for the first time?

BINDENAGEL: Yes, I was a young, enthusiastic Foreign Service Officer, I was given a mission, and the mission was fun and worthy. The fun thing was it brought me out to the Korean community. I met Korean business men, I went to various places and met people and talked to them about what they were interested in and what they wanted to do, made connections with businessmen. For me it was an opportunity to be out with the Koreans to understand what was happening, and as Junior Officer that was ideal. It was delightful.

Q: I know from the Consular Section's viewpoint, we were giving visas to an astounding number of Koreans who were going to graduate schools at absolutely first-rate Universities. Were you seeing this in the economic field or was this at the beginning?

BINDENAGEL: That was happening in fact, you reminded me that in fact when I was at the University of South Dakota, Bill Farber, the professor that headed the Government Department, was interviewing prospective professors. He would bring in students to meet with these candidates to be professors. One of them was a Korean. His name was Zeon, pronounced "Chun." I had met a young aspiring graduate student professor at South Dakota and then I found him again as a businessman in Korea, years later. In some sense, indeed, the presence, the emphasis on higher education, the need to go the U.S., Kim Jae Ik, who was tragically assassinated in Burma a few years later, attended the University of Oklahoma, if I remember correctly. There was tremendous interaction and it did have a tremendous impact in Korea.

Q: Did you get out at all from the Commercial Section for the rice business?

BINDENAGEL: Absolutely. We have a lot of rice in the U.S., and we were selling a certain kind from Louisiana, which was not a favorite kind in Korea, but since it came under the Commodity Credit Corporation and Food for Peace programs and was supported very much by a Congressman from Louisiana, Otto Passman. His visits were very good political lessons. When Otto Passman came to visit the fact that we had a very large government program supporting his State's crops in a recipient country, the Koreans lavished him with gifts and entertainment and they took the rice, whether they liked it or not. I did see this.

Q: Did you end up sort of as an escort officer for him?

BINDENAGEL: I was around, I was never his control officer but I was around in several of his meetings and activities. Certainly the agriculture section, economic section paid very close attention to anything he wanted. It was actually AID, Dennis Barrett who was his control officer. Dennis handled him very well.

Q: There became a minor scandal, Koreagate, about rice. There was a young Korean lady who worked for the Congress - Osuzi or something?

BINDENAGEL: Yes that's right. That was a Washington event though, not a Seoul event. I remember the Koreans were very proud of this armored boat they built in 1597, it was called the turtle-ship, to fight against the Japanese. And Congressman Otto Passman was given a small, but nice replica in pure silver.

Q: I am told that a certain Congressman would arrive, and they'd brush aside the control officers and would go to a hotel where a tailor would be to suit them up, and then young ladies would arrive to soothe their nerves and what have you, and it was of this nature...

BINDENAGEL: I did see the suits, they were delivered to the hotel or the Embassy, and there were a lot of them.

Q: You left there in '77. In your impression where was Korea economically at that time?

BINDENAGEL: Korea had made great strides economically, but none politically. They still were highly leveraged, however, and had expanded their manufacturing capabilities. One stellar example was the supertankers they were building. They were determined to protect their shipbuilding industry. They had actually built a supertanker that had been launched and was of course to be the future of oil shipping. They had begun to manufacture a Hyundai automobile, the Pony, which later became simply Hyundai. They had an engine plant, they had achieved, in my view they had gone through a critical period and they needed to proceed down that path. Obviously they didn't make the structural changes and today we see the facts. But at that point they were well on their way and they had gotten through the crises.

Q: We are talking about today as most of Asia has gone through crises, about too cozy relationships between the government, banks and industry and all. So they will have to work their way out of it and it just happened, in the last few months.

BINDENAGEL: And the three sets of books that the highly leveraged structures that they had.

Q: What do you mean when you say "highly leveraged" structure?

BINDENAGEL: Businesses had many loans and always very short on cash, running on cash flow and when the cash flow runs out, you cannot pay the loans. Consequently, they faced collapse. Now, in February 1998, I understand that they are reorganizing Chaebol, their big conglomerates as well as their relationships with the government and banks.

DONALD S. MACDONALD
Executive Director, U.S.-Korean Joint Committee on Status of U.S. Forces
Seoul (1975-1977)

Donald S. MacDonald was born in Massachusetts in 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from MIT in 1938 and a Ph.D. from George Washington University in political science. Mr. MacDonald served in the US Army from 1942-1946 and joined the foreign service in 1947. His overseas posts include Korea, Istanbul and Geneva. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 25, 1990.

MACDONALD: What I actually did for the US military was to run the US-Korea Joint Committee on the Status of US Forces. In that capacity, my title was Executive Secretary of the Committee -- there was also a Korean Executive Secretary. He is now the DCM at the Korean Embassy here. It was pretty much left to me in consultation with him to determine the procedure, set the meetings, determine the agenda, arrange the documentation, see to it that all was signed, sealed and delivered, and to make sure that people showed up for the meetings. I had a staff of six or seven people to help me. We were the official archives of these proceedings.

During the period I was the Executive Secretary, the Committee met quite regularly on a whole series of issues focussing on for example the problem of the Korean border villages near Army posts -- crime, corruption, prostitution, the violence, etc. We discussed how to control these adverse factors with due sensitivity for both sides. Then there were a whole series of real estate questions where we wanted certain parcels and the Koreans wanted others. They insisted that we turn certain real estate back to them. Then there was the question of utility rates, which was a big question because electricity was a large US Forces cost. During much of my time, we were hassling over what utility rates should be charged. Then there were labor problems -- Korean employees of the US forces. And then there were contract problems, black market and the leakage of PX goods into the market. The only issue we did not involve ourselves in any detail was the question of criminal jurisdiction over U.S. offenders because by tacit agreement that was managed between the Judge Advocate of the US forces -- theoretically under the Joint Committee -- and a counterpart of his in the Korean Ministry of Justice. Other than that, the whole range of problems involving a group of uniformed foreigners living in Korea, came before the Committee.

The Park Chung Hee government until 1972 was a very good thing for Korea. It was bad in the sense that it interrupted the train of logical constitutional evolution of Korean politics, but the Koreans don't worry so much about that as we do. In terms of giving the government a discipline, a capability and a sense of mission, it brought to Korea some desperately needed attributes that had been almost absent prior to that. Rhee had no sense of economics at all. He thought it happens by itself. Furthermore, he had the old Confucian attitude that economics really don't matter and that business is not a respectable profession. Park Chung Hee was not persuaded that democratic representative government was what Korea needed, but he was persuaded that Korea needed to evolve a better political system. To some extent, he was trying to do that up until 1971. After that, it was all down-hill and Park unfortunately fell into the same mold of so many that preceded him both in Korea and elsewhere. He was cut off from his people; he began to think that only he knew what was right, etc. That wound up with his assassination seven years later. The appraisal of the Park Government has to be mixed. On the whole the good outweighs the bad, but there was a lot of bad, particularly at the end.

The relationship between the Ambassador (Dick Sneider) and the CINC (Dick Stilwell, followed by Jack Vessey) was still uneasy. Actually, one of the points of friction was the activity I was involved in. The Embassy obviously had a keen interest in the Status of Forces because it was a diplomatic problem. It had a representative on the Committee, but I had to be terribly careful in my dealings with the Embassy so that the military would not think I was betraying them. One of my most unpleasant moments there was when I tried to get Embassy support for a position that I thought was correct. When I went to the General I was reporting to -- a three star Air Force General -- he was absolutely furious that I had been at the Embassy to mobilize support. He gave me a lecture on military responsibility and whom I worked for.

While I was in Korea, the Singlaub issue arose. The Singlaub episode -- John Singlaub was the Chief of Staff of the 8th Army and was about third or fourth in the line of command -- was not a question of civilian-military friction -- certainly not in Seoul. It was created by Jimmy Carter's campaign pledge to withdraw American ground forces from Korea. This bothered everybody. Obviously, Singlaub went much further than anybody else in taking a public position against withdrawal. He was supposed to be loyally carrying out the orders of the Commander-in-Chief. After his repeated outbursts, he was transferred and subsequently resigned. Although some thought he had gone too far, everybody agreed with the views he expressed.

I didn't think that the Carter plan made any sense at all, especially since it was pronounced unilaterally. There had been a previous withdrawal of a division in 1971. Following the Korean War, we had left two divisions in Korea. There was a similar concern then, but the 1971 withdrawal was accomplished much better. It was done in consultation with the Koreans. Although the Koreans recognized that we would be withdrawing the division in any case, they were at least given time to let President Park "invite" the division to leave, which saved his and the Koreans' "face". That was not the case in 1976-77. Carter's campaign pledge had obviously been inspired by the "peaceniks" with whom the Koreans had very little sympathy. This was just another illustration for Park of the topsy-turvy world in which he was living which had begun with the Nixon-Kissinger visit to China, the Guam doctrine and all the other actions that completely changed the face of East Asia. Carter's declaration did enormous political damage

and in a sense we will never recover from it. On the other hand, I do think based on my own experience as Korean desk officer, that once our military takes a position, it is likely to hold it against all odds, no matter what. They are not about to volunteer pulling out American forces irrespective of objective pro and con arguments. I think they need to be prodded a little. But Carter's judgment was precipitate, ill informed and he himself reversed the policy.

It makes a great deal more sense to talk about this issue in 1990 than it did in 1976. One can argue that if it hadn't been for that dreadful period of 1976-77, we would have an easier time doing it now. But the Koreans, for good reason, are less trustful of us now than they were then.

I would like to add as a last thought that on the whole in my experience, the American Embassy in Korea has done a pretty good job. Its reports have been well received in Washington, although not always acted upon. There have been ups and downs. The Embassy is frequently criticized when I visit Korea now, as a ghetto of non-Korean speaking Americans who just have parties with each other. I think there have been times when that charge has had a certain amount of truth to it. I don't think that is the case now.

PHILIP R. MAYHEW
Korea Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1975-1977)

Philip R. Mayhew was born in California in 1934. He graduated from Princeton University in 1956 and served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1957-1959. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961 and served in Laos, Congo, Vietnam, Thailand, Jordan, and Washington, DC. Mr. Mayhew was interviewed on May 26, 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You were on the Korea desk from '75 until when?

MAYHEW: '77. The Korea desk certainly was a relief, to be in some place that was active and much more interesting. I, of course, had no Korea experience. I was the deputy there to Dan O'Donohue, who had a great deal of Korean experience. I dealt with the military and economic issues. It was, I think, a very interesting period.

After Dan left, in the latter part of that period, I served with 2 more country directors, Ed Hurwitz and Bob Rich.

I enjoyed dealing with Koreans and enjoyed being on the desk, but spent most of my time in bureaucratic battles here. I worked with people from other agencies who were really quite amenable most of the time. And, of course, dealing with DOD on Korea is much easier than dealing with DOD on arms control issues.

Q: Were you there during the coming-in of the Carter administration, January of '77?

MAYHEW: I was there until about mid-'77. I think we had either Jay Taylor or Mike Armacost sitting in our office for a long time doing a study, not on whether you should remove US troops, but on how to remove them.

Q: This is, of course, a promise that Jimmy Carter had made.

MAYHEW: He had unfortunately made this promise, it took about 6 months to pull back from it.

Q: It horrified the hell out of those of us who were sitting there.

MAYHEW: It's certainly another instance, like so many presidential candidates who promise to move the Tel Aviv embassy over to Jerusalem, during the campaign. It takes you a while to step back from the mistake of it.

Dick Holbrooke became Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific. I suspect early on he must have begun to doubt the wisdom of troop withdrawal. Maybe he did all the time, for all I know. At any rate, we had somebody sitting in our office doing this very long study. After about 6 months the decision was, fortunately, revoked.

I'm trying to remember whether this was the same time that I went with Phil Habib to Korea, to tell them that they had to return Tong Sun Park, or was that later? Yes, it must have been when I was on the Korea desk.

You will recall that Tong Sun Park was the Korean involved with Congress, allegations of bribery, he was a major figure around Washington.

Q: It was called Korea-gate.

MAYHEW: It was the so-called Korea-gate.

A real wheeler and dealer. He had fled back to Korea. It was decided apparently, that Phil Habib would go out and see General Park Chung Hee to tell him that Tong Sun Park had to be returned to the US, but we would only ask Park about things pertinent to investigations going on here.

We did not want this to become public. So one day I get a call that I'm going to Korea with Phil Habib. I'm told just enough so that I think there's something odd about it, but I don't know what it is. The cover story was that he was going to consult about the forthcoming SCM, the Security Consultative Meeting, that we have annually with the Koreans. By that time Habib was the under secretary for Political Affairs and it's obviously a little strange to send him out to consult on this, but that's the story, and it worked to the extent that the real reason for the trip was not discovered.

We get out to Dulles airport and I'm in the line with Habib. After a moment or two he looks around and says, What are you doing in this line? I said, I'm traveling with you in First Class. Obviously, I tell him facetiously the Admin people in EAP were so impressed that I was traveling with you, that they gave me First Class.

Well, he was outraged that I had a First Class ticket, and not Economy. On the plane, he has his own briefing book with him. He's reading his briefing book while carefully shielding it from me. After a while, the thing becomes obviously impossible and he tells me what we're doing. What could I say but -- very well.

We arrive in Tokyo, they have sent an officer out to meet Habib. They don't know what he's up to, either. But they make sure he gets all the connections. Habib is in one of his usual irascible moods, assumed or otherwise.

We get to the airport in Seoul and there must have been 300 reporters there. The Korean press knows something interesting is going on. But it doesn't know what it is. The press, of course, thinks there's something of high strategic significance that he's come to talk to Park Chung Hee about. So we get off the plane and are virtually mobbed. It was like the crowd at a football game. There was no crowd control.

The next morning we have a country team meeting on the SCM. And, of course, Habib has not read the SCM briefing book, a copy of which he had. So it ends up with him puzzling everybody in the country team, except the ambassador and perhaps the DCM, about what he's doing in Korea.

At any rate, he sees Park Chung Hee and then goes off to play golf. I do some consultation on the SCM, and we go back to the airport. We hold an airport press conference in which Habib carefully says nothing for a few minutes. We get back on the airplane, going through the same hundreds of reporters and photographers. Ironically, there is only one other passenger in First Class. His name is Park. He's the brother of Tong Sun Park. He knows Habib, Habib knows him; they have a nice conversation. And away we come.

I went back to Korea two weeks later for the actual SCM. The desk and the embassy having straightened out, in the meantime, any confusions left behind by Habib's extemporaneous comments during the country team meeting.

Q: As I recall, it was sort of worked out where Tong Sun Park answered some queries by Giuliani who is now the mayor of New York.

MAYHEW: I don't remember. You might as the consular type, whether he actually came back or did we do it by interrogatories?

Q: I think we did it by interrogatories. I gave him (Giuliani) the oath. I swore him in. It was a very peculiar thing. I think the assistant attorney general, or something, Giuliani, quizzed him; took some statements from him. Then I'm not quite sure what happened. All I remember is being trotted out to give the oath, and then moved out.

MAYHEW: I think 2 or 3 people were convicted of something having to do with bribery.

Q: There were members of Congress involved.

MAYHEW: Otto Passman, who has since died. I don't remember whether they actually convicted Otto Passman of anything or not. He was a great friend of the Koreans. It involved Korean rice.

Q: Did you have any feel for, basically, Korean corruption within the United States and Congress and all, during this time that you were there?

MAYHEW: You heard an awful lot of things. Probably most of the stories were not true, probably a great many of them were. The most frightening ones were the activities of the KCIA in the United States, which is not quite a corruption issue. Unfortunately, rice exports to Korea had become very important to some US companies, and very profitable, I guess. It seemed to lend itself to congressional intervention and, certainly, to the possibility of corruption. I do think, if I recall correctly, there were a couple of rice companies that were accused of various things. I don't recall the outcome of any investigations, that's just too long ago.

Q: Did the Koreans get after you? Koreans can be very enthusiastic about being hosts and all of this. I was wondering on the desk, did you find Korean hospitality coming at you or not?

MAYHEW: I was still a junior officer, but one thing obvious was, at the beginning when I got on the desk, the Koreans would take me out to lunch and we would go to a very modest restaurant. By the end of my time on the desk, we were going to very fancy restaurants. I always figured that was because no one else wanted to be seen having lunch with the Koreans so they had plenty of representation money. I think, toward the end, they must have been feeling pretty embattled. I think a lot of their old friends did not want to be seen with them, for obvious reasons, by the end of the Park affair.

Q: What was your impression. I mean, sometimes being the new boy on the block, this is not your area of expertise and all of a sudden you're put onto the Korean desk. What were you getting from the other Americans, O'Donohue, Habib or what have you, about the Park Chung Hee regime in Korea, at that period?

MAYHEW: I think that at that period, while it was recognized that: 1 - he was an extremely difficult leader with whom to deal; 2nd - the Korean military were, to say the least, very heavy-handed domestically. We had continual human rights problems with them. Remember, this is not too long after the kidnaping of Kim Dae Jung from Japan to Korea.

However, the importance of Korea in northeast Asia was such that we had to be very careful in how we dealt with the situation. It was one of those very difficult situations in which you have extremely strong security interests which may conflict with an interest in promotion of human rights and democratic evolution. I don't think anybody thought that Park Chung Hee was likely to become at any time a genuine democrat. I think, also, there was the feeling that if you had somebody different from Park it was probably going to be another general who might be a great deal less competent and not much different in terms of human rights.

Q: Which it turned out to be.

MAYHEW: But not having actually served in Korea itself, and known the Koreans closely, I don't consider myself as knowing the situation all that well.

Q: It does point out a certain problem that happens to all of us in the Foreign Service. Service in an area really does give a perspective that just can't be picked up by coming back to Washington, I mean just being assigned to a place in Washington, and to a geographic area.

I know, I was INR officer for the Horn of Africa at one point. I'd never served there. I read everything but it still doesn't give you that feel that you have if you actually worked in a place.

MAYHEW: I think the difference is that when you're actually assigned to a place, you're there 24 hours a day. Every time you go to a party, you're talking to people who are also there, who are interested, your shop talk is very important in a way. We tend to be great shop talkers anyway, because we find our jobs interesting. When you're actually there you are talking to people, and you're hearing so much more, and you're seeing the newspapers, or you're reading translations of newspapers, everyday as part of your daily routine. Being there gives you a great deal more, I believe, than sitting back in Washington and reading the cables and the Intel reports and reading the history books.

I'm not sure that if one said that to a budget-cutter, they would rate a feeling very high. It's very difficult to put a numerical figure on a feeling or understanding for a place. But, I still think the statement is correct.

RUSSELL SVEDA
Rotation Officer/Staff Aide to the Ambassador
Seoul (1975-1977)

Mr. Sveda was born in New Jersey in 1945. After serving with the Peace Corps in Korea he joined the Foreign Service in 1975. His overseas posts with the State Department include Korea, where he served as Staff Aide to the Ambassador and in Moscow, as Science Officer. In Washington, Mr. Sveda was assigned as China Desk Officer and subsequently as Watch Officer in the Department's Operations Center. He also served as volunteer in the Sinai Field Mission. Mr. Sveda was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in June, 2000.

Q: The Foreign Service is seductive. I'm stating my prejudice, but I've always felt that as essentially a professional consular officer dealing with law, the worst thing in the world is to have a young Foreign Service officer coming in with a law degree. They begin to see the ins and outs of law rather than a rough and ready way of dealing with it and solve the problems of Africans coming up to you and that kind of thing.

SVEDA: That's an interesting question. It's something I hadn't thought of. I'll tell you how I actually used my legal education as a consular officer working for you in the consulate general in

Seoul. I can think of two instances. One involved a woman who came to me with two Eurasian children. She was Korean. She was applying for a visa. The problem was this. She had been married to an American officer who had been killed on the DMZ. About 20 American soldiers are killed on the DMZ each year. We don't talk about it, but it happens. She had two children by this American military officer, who were both American citizens. She was applying for an immigrant visa. The problem was that her children could not petition for her until they were 21. She was applying for maybe third preference or something. She was not applying as the mother of these children, as an immediate relative, or indeed as the immediate relative of anybody in the United States. I realized that she couldn't get the visa in all probability. Whatever she was applying for, she wasn't really eligible, but I thought about it and said, "What I'm going to do is write the Department and ask them to overlook a fact in your application. I am going to ask them to do this on equitable grounds." The Department had just sent us a cable saying that it would do this in proper cases. The fact that I was asking the Department to overlook was the fact of her husband's death. If they would overlook the fact that he had died and treat her as the wife of an American citizen, then we could get her an immediate visa to go to the United States. The Department after a few weeks came back and approved this. I saw her again and said, "What are you going to do?" She said, "Well, I'm really happy to get the visa because my kids are getting to the age where they're looking Eurasian and not looking Korean and they're beginning to be beaten up on the street. They could go to the American school here on the base because they are American citizens, but they just can't live on the base because I'm not. So, we have the money from my husband's estate and we're going to go to Louisiana." I said, "Louisiana? Why Louisiana?" She said, "Well, he was from Louisiana and the grandparents are there, but the grandparents have refused to talk with me ever since I married him because they opposed this interracial marriage and they don't want to have anything to do with the grandchildren. I'm going to Louisiana anyway. You've met the kids. Could you imagine any grandparent not loving these kids?" I said, "No." I said, "What is your fallback plan if it turns out that they don't receive you?" She said, "Well, it's no problem. I have enough money to start a grocery in Los Angeles." Who knows where they wound up.

In another case, I had an immediate relative (in this case, an American soldier who was African-American) petitioning for his wife, who was seven months pregnant and sitting there in my office. I said, "Well, this is just a routine set of questions, but there are really only two things that could prevent you from getting a visa." I looked at the forms and sure enough, there was one of the two things. One of the two things was that she had had a drug conviction. I said, "Oh, for heaven's sake." Here she is, sitting here seven months pregnant and it's going to be an interracial baby and he was getting orders to leave Korea and I thought, "God, what do I do?" I asked her about this. "What were the circumstances?" It turns out that she was like 17 years old and she had had another boyfriend, who was an American soldier. He had put her up in an apartment off base which was raided by the military police, both Korean and American. Among his possessions was a cigar box and in the cigar box was \$10 American money, which she could not possess legally and, I think, a joint of marijuana, which she said she really didn't know anything about because she didn't use that kind of stuff. Well, she was brought to juvenile court and they remanded her to the custody of her parents, meaning that the court said, well, they bought her story and that was that. But the police had put this on the police report. So, I got one of my locals to call the police department and say, "Look, guys, this is a juvenile record. The case was dismissed and it should not be on the police report." We got back the same police report. I did it

two or three times. At one point, the baby was born and the guy had gotten extended but he really had to leave shortly and we didn't know what to do. I just said, "I'm going to appeal to the police again and we'll see what happens." So, we got the police report back, I think, the third time. One of the translators comes in and says, "Mr. Sveda, this is very odd. The police seem to have made a typographical error in the Korean." I said, "What is the error?" He said, "Look here. It says that she was arrested as a minor under the Drug Control Act and they left out the word 'Drug.'" So, the way it read in Korean was, "She was arrested as a minor under the Control Act." I said, "Mr. Kim, translate that exactly as it is written." He said, "But I know what it should say." I said, "No, you don't know what it should say. Translate it exactly as it's written." So, he translated it and I gave her the visa and she went off.

Q: Your first assignment was to Korea?

SVEDA: Yes.

Q: You were there from when to when?

SVEDA: I was there from 1975-1977.

Q: How was it going back to Korea this time in an official capacity? You started in the Consular Section?

SVEDA: Yes. I was supposed to be a rotational officer, but there is a story there. I resisted the assignment to Korea. I did not want to go to Korea. I had been a PC volunteer there. They wanted me to go to the Consular Section in Seoul, quite reasonably, because I spoke Korean. I now realize what they were doing. There was a man named David Dean who was an ambassador who was in charge of our assignments. Basically, he said, "Well, for you, the alternative is Cameroon." It was a particularly unattractive job in Cameroon. So, I said, "Really, there is nothing available aside from Korea?" He said, "Well, you speak French." I said, "Well, yes." He said, "Well, you speak Korean, so this is quite logical. All the other posts are in places..."

Q: And as you say, it was a difficult time because there were all these Vietnam types that they had to put.

SVEDA: And he had explained that. He said, "We really don't have all that many positions that we could assign people to." So, I agreed to go to Korea. When I got into Kimpo Airport and drove in from the airport in an embassy car, I was talking to one of the officers who had picked me up. Just to make conversation, I said, "Korea seems to have burgeoned economically since 1969. I was there in 1969 with PC. When I was last in Korea, they could manufacture a radio with old fashioned tubes or a hot plate, but nothing much more sophisticated than that." He said, "Now they're making everything that is in the Sears catalogue." So, they really had changed a lot.

My first night in the housing on Compound 2 was interesting. My friend Dick Christianson picked me up at the airport. He was my control officer. He was assigned to the Consular Section. He was a friend of mine from PC in Korea. He had insisted on being my control officer. I got to

my apartment. There was absolutely no food there, no soap, nothing in the way of bedding. I had an absolutely miserable night. I showed up the next morning to go to the Consular Section. Lois Day, who was the consul general, asked me how things were in my apartment. I said, "Well, gee, do you know where I could find some soap? I didn't bring any with me." She said, "You don't have soap in your apartment?" I said, "No." It seems that Dick had decided that he didn't want me to have things that I didn't like, so his idea was to take me to the PX so I could choose the things I liked, but he had forgotten totally that I needed something that night. So, I didn't have a towel or soap. I didn't even have a shower curtain. I somehow showered.

Q: How did you find the visa work? Were you doing immigrant visas?

SVEDA: I was supposed to be a rotational officer, by the way, which means I would have been rotated from the consular office after six to eight months to the Political Section and maybe to another section of the embassy. It turns out, however, that when I arrived, a new officer had just been assigned named Don Halperin, who everybody was bowing and scraping to. I don't know why. I understand that his father was a high administration appointee in the Department of Agriculture and for some reason this impressed people.

Q: I knew Don. Somebody had told me, but it didn't ring any bells. I see Don around.

SVEDA: He was a nice guy, but he got the job of ambassador's staff aide that I was supposed to have and he basically pulled strings in order to have me bumped from that, which did not make me happy. I heard though that it didn't work out too well for him. He was smoking his pipe in the ambassador's office. The secretary to the ambassador was a woman who had been secretary to 17 ambassadors before that. She was a very formidable person. She was a very nice person.

Q: She ran things.

SVEDA: Yes. She did not like pipe smoking. One day, he made the mistake of puffing on his pipe, walking over to her desk, dropping something on her desk, some notes, and he said, "I am going to lunch. Type these up and I hope to have them back when I come back." I got this story from Roz Fishman, who was the DCM's secretary, who watched in absolute astonishment that anybody would have the temerity to do this to this other woman. The other woman just watched with a quiet smile Don go out the door and then she took the paper that he had put on her desk as though it were a soiled diaper and she lifted it and she put it in the garbage. A few days after that, she had arranged things in such a way that Ambassador Sneider was heard yelling, "Get this goddamned idiot out of my office!" He no longer was the ambassador's staff aide and I was quickly moved in.

Q: We overlapped a bit when I came in in 1976 as consul general and then you went up to the ambassador's office. Let's talk a bit about how you found dealing with the Koreans on immigration process, which I always found fascinating. The Koreans want to go to the United States and if a Korean wants to go somewhere or do something, they do it, that's all, one way or the other. We were just a minor impediment to them.

SVEDA: I did both immigrant and non-immigrant visas and I also did the citizenship services.

Each of those has their wonderful war stories. Dealing with the Koreans... They were the most persistent people imaginable and at a certain point, you just had to eyeball them and figure that you might as well give some of these people the visa because they really were just going to be there. There was one woman who came in. She had a file that was at least two inches thick. She was a P3, which meant that she was a nurse who was going over because she had... She had been refused. It was perfectly obvious when I met her why she had been refused. She couldn't speak a word of English, not at all. A sweet person. Eight children. She brought them all to the interview. The story was given to me by the oldest child, who was the man of the family (Her husband had died), who was about 17. He walks into my office with the other seven children and I say, "Wait just a second." I knew this was going to be embarrassing scene, the mother refused again. "Get the small kids out. You can stay with your mother." So, he gets them out and then he goes to the flag in my office. He takes the flag and kisses the hem of the flag and he begins to say some patriotic speech about how good America was. He had gone to the dictionary and he had found the longest words that were the synonyms of the words that he wanted to use. It was funny. It was all nonsense. It was all I could do to keep from biting my tongue. I said, "Look, we know you speak English, but you're not applying for the visa; your mother is applying for the visa. I want you to watch as I do this." I asked her questions and she just giggled and really didn't know anything. I turned to him and said, "Look, I cannot give her the visa because she doesn't know any English. If I did give her the visa, she would be turned back by the immigration officers at the airport. So, there is no point to my giving her the visa. She doesn't qualify for the visa." He said, "Oh, but she is a very good woman and she is raising eight children and she'd be a very good citizen of the United States." I said, "Yes, I know that, but I have to know that she speaks English. Here is a piece of paper. I am going to do something I'm not supposed to do. I am going to give you the standard questions that we ask and the standard answers. I want you to show up in six months. Train your mother like a parrot to know these questions and answers. I may not be the one interviewing her. Maybe somebody else will be interviewing her." As luck would have it, I was still around when he comes back. He had trained her exactly like a parrot. She knew the answers, so I was able to give them the visa. They were just very persistent people.

Sometimes when you're tired, you give somebody the visa just out of sheer maliciousness. I had one guy come in with 11 children, all of which were girls. I looked at his P3 application. He claimed to be a population control expert. He had 11 daughters. I thought about this and thought, "This man is a blithering idiot and a total hypocrite. The worst thing I could do to him, this man who obviously was trying for a son 11 times, would be to give him 11 American daughters." So, I gave him the visa.

Q: How about documents?

SVEDA: For heaven's sakes. If you told Koreans that you would be giving visas to people who were wearing purple beanies with yellow propellers on them, if you mentioned this casually at 5:00 pm on a given day, the next morning, there would be 4,000 people outside of your office wearing purple beanies with yellow propellers. It was amazing. They were asked to prove things. In Korean law, you were able to have a proxy marriage. In American law, you actually have to have met the person you're marrying. So, we insisted on proof that they had actually met. The Koreans would show up with these doctored photographs, these people with totally

disproportionate heads on bodies from some generic wedding photo (Now, I guess, they can do it by computer and it would be very elegant). That was a constant battle. They were quite shameless.

One day when I was working in the Citizenship Services Office, I had a case, the ultimate case. It seems that a soldier had just left the Army and a day later, riding in a car with a friend, was killed in a car accident. Not a mark on the body, but he was quite dead. He was not of interest to the Army because he had just left literally the day before. They somehow managed to get the Korean morgue to take his body. There were no embalming facilities in Korea. They could fix up the body a little bit, but they would send it to Japan for embalming if you wanted that. Meanwhile, we had to find the next of kin. Also, I had to go through his effects in his apartment. Well, the apartment was cleaned absolutely spotless by the woman he had been living with, a Korean. She had disappeared. We found that he had two living relatives. One was a mother in a nursing home in Indiana. The other was technically a wife, a Japanese wife. I say “technically a wife” because she had filed divorce papers and he had the papers with him in his possession when he was killed. He was on the way to mailing them. If he had mailed them, the divorce would have become final and we wouldn’t have had the problem of her interest in his estate. But then there was another complication. It turns out that this Korean girlfriend had had a baby. The grandmother of the baby, in Indiana, wanted her granddaughter by the son who had just died. We didn’t know where that kid was. We needed to know because she had written to Betty Ford, who was then the First Lady of the United States, and Betty Ford had sent us a letter asking if we could do everything possible to reunite this grandmother with her grandchild. Meanwhile, the body was still in the morgue and the people in the morgue were very unhappy with us because they could keep it on ice only so long. This was one of those cases where you explain patiently to people that it would cost \$4,000 to have the body moved to Japan, embalmed, and taken to the United States, whereas it would cost \$4 to have it cremated and have the ashes postmarked to whoever wanted to receive them. You hear these relatives on the other end of the line thinking, “Well, \$4,000 versus... What did you say it cost for cremation?” I said, “Well, \$4 and that includes postage.” You could hear people on the other end of the line trying to sound as though they really were respectful for the remains, but the difference in cost was so absolutely overwhelming... There were very few people who opted for the full treatment. In any event, I had an Army guy working for me as an assistant in the Citizenship Services Office. I asked him to sort of root around and find out what he could about this girl. He had a Korean girlfriend. He came to me one day and said, “Look, I can’t tell you this officially, but my girlfriend happens to know the woman in question. She sold her baby to an interracial couple, an African American and a Korean (It turns out that the man who had died was African American), and you have given that baby a passport based on a false birth certificate. I can’t tell you anything more.” I said, “Well, thank you.” I thought maybe I could teach maybe the whole consular course in this one case. False documentation, selling of a baby. So, we still had Betty Ford to deal with. I wrote her a letter saying that under Korean law, the mother has full rights over the child and she chose to give her child up for adoption to an American and Korean couple and that the child would be raised in a happy environment, which it probably was. In any event, that kept Betty Ford quiet.

Q: How did you find the non-immigrant side of things?

SVEDA: It was really interesting because it was incredibly difficult. You had to do at least 100

interviews a day on the immigrant side. And the numbers were even worse on the non-immigrant side. I don't remember what the non-immigrant numbers were, but it was absurd. I had sometimes joked about myself being not a visa issuing officer but a visa refusal officer. There were times when it became really absurd. One woman came in wanting a renewal of her visa. She handed me the visa and I looked at it. The visa had been issued in Winnipeg, Canada, where we had a consulate. I recognized the name of the person who had issued it because he had been my predecessor in that job. I'd never met him but he had been my predecessor and I knew that he was very favorably inclined to Koreans. The word had gotten around that they should go to Winnipeg to get this kind of visa because he would give any Korean a visa, no questions asked, because he loved Korea so much. Well, he was not following the rules. The rules were that you were supposed to cable us, the country of origin, to find out whether we had anything on these people. So, she said that she wanted an extension of the visa and I said, "Well, this visa should not have been issued." She said, "Well, it was issued and you can't do anything about it." I said, "Really?" I took my "canceled" stamp and I put it right on her visa on her passport. She said, "That's illegal!" I said, "No, it's not. I've just done it. Now you have to reapply, but you're going to have to reapply with that canceled visa in your passport." So, there were times that were fairly rough.

There was one time when I used the power of that office quite shamelessly. One of my friends worked for USDA in Japan and her husband was a lawyer in Japan. In fact, they are right now coming back from Beijing. He wrote me a letter saying that his household effects had been shipped on a Korean ship but had never arrived. They were supposed to have gone to Washington, but they had disappeared. Could I do anything to find out what had happened to this? He had written letters to the Korean company and they just simply were not responding. He was just at his wit's end. He didn't know what to do. So, I picked up the phone and asked to speak to the president of that company. Well, if the American consular visa office calls your company, you get to talk to the president. I told him that this particular couple had lost their household effects on one of their ships and I had the documentation. I said that I would cease to issue crew visas without interviews for any crews from his company until that shipment was found and sent to this particular couple in Washington. He said, "You can't do that." I said, "I can do that. As a courtesy, we do not insist on crew interviews, but that is a courtesy and the law allows me to make my decision. Until it's found, I'm not going to be allowing any crew visas from your company." I got a letter from this guy within a day or two saying, "I don't know what the hell you did, but there was an air shipment of our household effects to Washington, DC from Korea. How did you do it?" I said, "I can't tell you."

Q: Was there a problem of attempts to use girls, boys, gifts, what have you? This is something that always concerned me about the pressures on the visa...

SVEDA: There were never any sexual pressures on me at all, but there was one time when I helped somebody from the President's House, the Blue House, on some visa matter. It was really routine. I don't remember what the problem was. But I got back to my apartment and found a very large package, obviously a Korean painting wrapped in brown paper. It was a thank you and it was from this person at the Blue House. I immediately went to the security guards at the embassy compound and I demanded to know why somebody had been let in without my say-so. Somebody had been let in to my apartment. They said, "Well, they were from the Blue House." I

said, "I don't care where they were from." I immediately insisted that they call this guy back and they take it back immediately, within the next half hour. But that was the only effort to give me something to influence my decisions. I can't think of anything else.

One of the deputies in the Consular Section of your predecessor, I believe, was taking gifts of furniture and gifts of paintings and all sorts of things.

Q: I was disturbed. He died later of a heart attack. But I was disturbed. I had this procession of people who came to see me. I'm not a shopper. My wife's not a shopper. All of a sudden, these people who ran antique shops and all would appear and expect special treatment. I was always polite to them. They were always asking me to go to their place. I'd say, "Thank you. Maybe sometime later" and avoid it. I wasn't even tempted, but there was enough there that I was concerned.

SVEDA: I was concerned because when I visited your predecessor and her deputy for social occasions, I just saw an astonishing array of very fine quality Korean antiques, porcelain and paintings and I just didn't know how they could afford it, honestly. I must say that I had my doubts about your predecessor. I had no doubts whatsoever about her deputy. It was so obvious to me that he had "friends" all over the place. Koreans didn't make friends.

Q: No. I was getting the residue and having to turn it off.

Were you noticing problems with the local staff, the Foreign Service nationals?

SVEDA: No, actually, I was not. I understand that after I left, there was an investigation and a whole lot of them were basically fired because they were taking money. I never saw any indication of that. I was looking and I never saw it. But there is no way to tell.

Q: I called for an investigation because I got nervous. The thing was that we sort of broke up one crew and I learned later that a whole new thing of forged petitions was coming through just after I thought I had things cleaned up. It turned out that that was the next set of investigations because one bright eyed consular officer noticed that petitions that came supposedly from INS San Francisco and Boston offices seemed to be done in the same type.

How about your PC contacts? You had been in Seoul. Did you find that they were playing on you?

SVEDA: Never. Not in any way related to my job, but I found that the only person who ever took advantage of me was a reporter for a British publication. I think it was the Economist. He stayed in my apartment. I had known him earlier when he was studying Korean and I was in PC. It turns out that he wound up being a reporter. He happened to be visiting Korea. This was when I was in the Political Section. Unfortunately, he broke a story that I had just mentioned to him over dinner and the ambassador did not want out. It seems that there was a congressman who was big time on the take from the Koreans who was visiting Korea on the invitation of the Korean government and who was having hot and cold running girls in his apartment, in his hotel suite, and all sorts of gifts. The problem was that he didn't want the American embassy to know

he was in town. That even made it more strange. I think he had some major position on the Appropriations Committee or one of the major committees in Congress. It just so happened that he showed up one day to marry one of these people he was being entertained with and the word got around the embassy that he had shown up. I mentioned that he was in town to this guy and that he had shown up to get married. That got into the New York Daily News somehow. The congressman was upset that an embassy source had been the one to betray his secret trip to Korea and the ambassador wanted to find out who it was. They figured out pretty quickly who it was. It was the byline that I knew this person. They were going to ship me out of Korea on the next plane. Then someone said, "Ambassador Sneider after a burst of temper that this had embarrassed the embassy began laughing and he was perfectly content that this story had gotten out upon reflection." So, the ambassador gave me a stern talk to be very careful with the media. As he was giving me the stern talk, he smiled and said, "In this particular instance, I was very happy that the news had gotten out, but just be careful in the future" and I have been very careful with the press.

Q: This was certainly a period with a real problem of corruption. You have Koreagate.

SVEDA: Tongsun Park.

Q: Corruption with the rice industry and with Congress.

SVEDA: I remember the joke when Jimmy Carter became President after the Ford administration while we were there. The joke in Washington, which was already mired in this scandal with Korea and Koreagate, that Jimmy Carter knew so little about foreign policy when he came into Washington that he thought Rock Creek Park was a Korean lobbyist.

But in any event, you asked about the PC. I did not have anybody ever importune me for a visa who was a PC volunteer. I never had anything like that. PC volunteers who were still in Korea, however, did use my apartment as a kind of a crash pad. I had a large apartment and allowed whoever happened to be in town to stay. My Korean maid would sometimes come in in the morning and have to pick her way across bodies who were on futons in the living room all over the place.

Q: Did you go directly up to Sneider's office from the Consular Section?

SVEDA: Actually, I was rotated to the Political Section and then rather abruptly rotated to the ambassador's office.

Q: Talk a little bit about Ambassador Dick Sneider and your dealings with him.

SVEDA: Ambassador Sneider was one of the finest people I've ever met in my life. Ambassador Sneider was a thorough professional. He was a Japan Foreign Service officer. He was part of the Japan club. His wife, Lea Sneider, was a wonderful ambassador's wife and a very, very, very classy lady. I remember once when we went on a trip, I opened the door of the ambassador's limousine for her to get in and she got in and she said, "Oh, don't get on the other side. I'll just scoot over." I said, "Really, I should get in on the other side because there are Korean officials

watching.” She said, “Well, as long as we know that you know the rules, you can break them.” One day when they were dedicating the new ambassador’s residence, a very strange building which looks like a major Korean temple, a very strange building with a very strange arrangement of rooms-

Q: You had to be on display if you went to the bathroom.

SVEDA: Oh, yes. In fact, it was almost impossible to open the bathroom door in the ambassador’s bedroom because the door didn’t give enough clearance to the bed. There was no basement. Here is a place where you had air raids and you need a lot of space for beer, wine, whatever. It’s absolutely insane. We were standing in the courtyard at the inauguration of this house and there is Lea Sneider barefoot. I guess we took our shoes off. I dropped my flask. I had a glass of wine. Then I watched this glass fall on the ground and by the grade of God, it didn’t break; it bounced up in the air. Other people who were watching it (There were 20-30 people around) and then it fell and shattered right at the feet of Mrs. Sneider, who, thank goodness, wasn’t hurt. She looked at that. There was a hush, an embarrassed silence led by me. Lea Sneider said, “Ah, what a wonderful idea. I think we should christen this house. Let’s all throw our glasses down.” They threw the glasses down into one area where they wouldn’t hurt anybody. But she just was a woman who would pick up like that. Once when we had a visa applicant who was a child prodigy, a girl of the age of eight who was supposed to play the piano, Marianne Newman, who was a wonderful Foreign Service officer, thought that this was something that she couldn’t show, whether the child was indeed a prodigy. Some American protestant minister had found the child and heard her play and absolutely thought that she had to come to America, with her family, of course, who happened to be another minister. Well, Lea Sneider was a concert pianist. Marianne Newman decided to ask Lea whether it was probable that this child was another Mozart. Lea Sneider refused to even hear her. She said, “It is absolutely impossible for somebody at that age to have the depth to be a good pianist. It is just absurd.” Then she said, “Tell them that if the girl really is that good a pianist, let them think on where she learned to play the piano. Obviously, she learned to play the piano in Korea, so there is no need to go to the United States.”

Tom Stern was a wonderful man. His predecessor, a guy named Ericson, was a complete jerk, but Tom Stern was a wonderful deputy chief of mission. In fact, he and I went on trips when I was ambassador’s staff aide. He and his wife were wonderful people to travel with. Tom Stern was acting ambassador at the time that the Panmunjom chopping incident occurred. I was the ambassador’s staff aide. This happened in August of 1976. It happened just a week before President Ford was to go to the Republican Convention and face off against Governor Ronald Reagan for the nomination. So, President Ford had to look strong. One day in early August, the North Korean guards at Panmunjom, the treaty village that was between North and South Korea, had killed two of our officers. They had hatcheted them to death, axed them to death, for trimming a tree that blocked the view of one of our guard posts from another guard post. They just trimmed some leaves. The North Koreans took the ax that they were using to trim the tree with and axed them to death. We had that on camera because of a number of incidents that had occurred already. All the soldiers there, just for their own safety, carried cameras so that any incidents would be recorded. So, we had it all on camera. There was no way the North Koreans could deny that. It was really marvelous from my standpoint as a staff aide to see how the

American government deals with a major crisis like that. Obviously, from the Thursday on which it began to the Saturday on which it ended, this crisis was primarily a military crisis. We had a lot of meetings with the commander of the 8th U.S. Army, who was a very fine commander. We knew of all the military plans that existed in case this incident got out of hand. But I also watched what the State Department could do in a crisis like this. It's never obvious, but what the State Department does and did in this case was to consult with the Soviet Union, with China, with Japan, with the other powers that might be interested in the region - European powers such as Great Britain - and find out whether they had backed the North Koreans (the Chinese or the Soviets) and whether they would object to a stern military action. The Chinese and the Soviets both said they would not, they had no interest in this whatsoever and they really wanted to stay clear and they had no interest whatsoever in anything that the United States would do. So, knowing that our coast was clear, the plan was, on Saturday morning, if approved, to go in and chop down the tree with 200 commandos. If the North Koreans had objected, we had 2,000 more commandos who had been flown in from the Pacific Fleet, which was off the coast of Korea, and there were a number of bombers that were ready to bomb their harbors if the North Koreans started anything. Of course, we had the 40,000 American soldiers who were stationed in Korea on full alert and we also had the millions of South Korean soldiers in full battle mode. As it turns out, thank God, nothing happened. But the tree was chopped down. I guess we got that trophy and President Ford was able to get the nomination instead of Ronald Reagan in 1976 at the Kansas City convention. So, my role in that as staff aide was to do briefing books. Ambassador Sneider, who was in New York on home leave, I guess, would be coming soon and I needed to brief him on everything. I had to do briefing books for him and briefing books for everybody. I was up for 48 or 72 hours straight. When I was finally finishing the final briefing book, which must have been about 2:00 am, I got a message from the communicator that was "eyes only" for the acting ambassador. I could either call in Tom Stern or I could go with an armed guard to his residence to deliver the envelope to him. I called Tom and he said, "Oh, don't bother with the armed guard. I'll come in." He comes in and I hand him the envelope. I simply asked, "Is it what I think it is?" He said, "Yes." I said, "What I meant was, is it an order to go to war?" I didn't state that and he didn't state anything, but he said, "Yes, it is what you think it is." I said, "Well, goodness, should I bother to go to bed if we're going to start this at dawn?" He said, "Well, if something happens, I can assure you, you will hear it. So, why don't you go to bed? You need the sleep and there is nothing you can do beyond this anyway." So, that morning, I woke up late. I knew that the action was to begin at dawn. It was 11:00 am and I was very, very happy that I didn't hear firing in the distance or anything.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point? We'll pick this up next time. Is there anything else we should cover about being ambassador's aide?

SVEDA: One little funny thing. One day around Christmas time, Roz Fishman, who worked for the DCM, was addressing Christmas cards. She was using a red pen for some and she was using a green pen for others. I walked over to her desk and said, "Roz, I really hate to tell you this, but we're going to have to take all these red envelopes, all the red lettered envelopes, and throw them out and do them again." She said, "Why?" I said, "Well, because you cannot write the name of a Korean in red ink. Koreans or Japanese or Chinese only use red for the names of the dead or for people who have been ordered to be executed." She said, "I've never heard anything like that. These are just Christmas envelopes." I said, "We'll see." So, we called in Miss Kim,

who was not far away. I said, "Miss Kim, if you saw your name or the name of your family written in red, what would you think?" Miss Kim burst out in tears and she said, "Oh, no, no, no!" Roz looked up to me and said, "How did you know that?" I said, "Hey, that's what I do. I'm a Foreign Service officer."

Q: You went from the ambassador's office to where?

SVEDA: I think I went to the Consular Section.

JOHN E. KELLEY
Political Officer
Seoul (1975-1978)

John E. Kelley was born in California in 1936 and raised in Washington, DC. He attended Pasadena City College and the University of Virginia. He then went to Hawaii with the Weather Service and joined the Coast Guard, receiving a degree in government from the University of Hawaii. Mr. Kelley later obtained a master's degree in international relations of Northeast Asia from American University. In addition to serving in Japan, Mr. Kelley served in Korea, Portugal, and Australia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 21, 1996.

Q: Today is June 3, 1996. John, was the assignment at Korea expected? Was this a normal assignment?

KELLEY: It was not normal in every sense, it was something that we had sort of concocted, it was something that I wanted and I did expect it because I had worked it out in advance. Dick Sneider, the Ambassador, had come through CINCPAC and had talked to me about coming out to Korea. So we set it up between us.

Q: When were you in Korea?

KELLEY: I was there from 1975 to 1978.

Q: Dick Sneider was the Ambassador?

KELLEY: Yes.

Q: Before we get to anything else could you tell me about your impression of how Dick Sneider (whom we both worked with in Korea) operated and approached things in Korea?

KELLEY: Dick Sneider was sort of the quintessential political operative, if you will. He was a guy who liked to have all of the strands in his own hands, he liked to make sure that he knew everything that was going on. Nobody else in his team knew as much as he did. He was completely in charge of what was happening, he was orchestrating what was happening in the

largest sense, but he wasn't trying to control every minute detail. He had very good political instincts. He would not focus on a lot of minutiae. He had been associated with Korea ever since the Korean War when he was in INR and had been sent out to Korea to collect North Korean documents, very early when we over-ran North Korea. He knew the country inside and out. He knew the North Koreans particularly well, as well as anybody from in the Western camp could know them. He was a man who placed incredible emphasis on loyalty and he gave as well as he got. He was loyal to his people and he expected complete loyalty from them. He placed a lot of emphasis on personal diplomacy, that is diplomacy in which he dealt with the highest level of government and kept a lot in his own hands personally and in which he dealt with the highest level of command in the military and kept up a great deal of political contact at all times. He was always in touch with all of the leaders. He was always going around making sure that they all knew what he thought and that he knew what they thought. He had a lot of informal contact in which he was really the sponge that soaked up a great deal of information.

Q: How did he relate from your perspective with Park Chung Hee?

KELLEY: That's a tough one because he never shared very much of his conversations with me that he had with Park Chung Hee. I wasn't on the country team so I didn't hear what he had to say in that forum. As far as I know, to the degree that he had contact with Park Chung Hee--Park Chung Hee was not a guy who was very approachable, he didn't have a lot of informal contact with anybody--he related very well with Park Chung Hee on the policy level. I don't think any foreigner ever related very well with Park Chung Hee on a personal level and I don't think Sneider was any exception. I think they understood each other very well. I think he was as close to Park Chung Hee as any foreigner ever was, but that's not saying a whole lot. I don't think anybody really got close to Park Chung Hee.

Q: How about the relationship as you observed it with the American Military Command while you were there? Who were the military Commanders?

KELLEY: I think Dick Stilwell was the military Commander when I first arrived. John Vessey succeeded Stilwell. He eventually became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. In any event, the point is that Sneider got along extremely well with the military in every situation that he was ever in, that I know about, and Korea was no exception. He was on excellent terms with the military Commanders and he put a great deal of effort into that. He would go out and play golf with the guys who played golf, he would always include them in every occasion he could. He would always include them in entertainment functions that he held at his house. He was a great party giver and would always make sure that the military guys, especially the highest level of the military, was always included in everything. He would make confidants of them, he would go out of his way to consult with them and cultivate them. I'm sure that his relations with them were of the highest order.

Q: What was your job when you went out there?

KELLEY: My first job was in the Political Section, I was in charge of Foreign Affairs, that is our bilateral and multilateral relations with Korea on the political level, not the economic level. Although I had some economic responsibilities there. I dealt with the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. That was only when I first started off, later I switched over to political-military responsibilities and handled that for the last half of my tour.

Q: When you arrived there, how would you describe the political situation in Korea?

KELLEY: I arrived there in 1975 and the country was under very tight rule by Park Chung Hee's party. There was little tolerance of dissent, almost no tolerance of dissent. Any Korean and some unofficial foreigners who tried to promote dissent or open up the political side of the society was immediately suspect and was certain of a visit from the Korean CIA and their operatives. It was a fairly tightly run authoritarian state, with the trappings of democracy. But even the members of the parliament were very cautious about how much they expressed themselves and how far out of line they got with the government.

Q: Whom did you make contact with?

KELLEY: I dealt with all of the various bureaus within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and my "beat" was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, largely. Also with the academic community that dealt with Foreign Affairs and the entities that dealt with North Korea, the Korean CIA was not really on my "beat" but they had a commission that dealt with North Korea, and they had KCIA operatives in that. So I dealt with the KCIA people who were in that commission. These were people who would negotiate with the North Koreans and things like that. So my "beat" was essentially South Korea's relations with North Korea and I dealt less with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on that and more with the North-South Coordinating Committee, and its operatives.

Q: Let's start with the relations of North Korea and then we'll move to the other countries. What was the situation between South Korea and North Korea at that time?

KELLEY: They had always been pretty precarious and it was tense. There was no real trust on either side, not even anything approximating trust on either side. There was tremendous suspicion. The relationship was characterized by constant attempts at manipulation and point scoring of the most asinine and childish type. Any kind of advantage that could be gained in the press was valued more highly than any kind of meaningful contact. I never saw the relationship deviate materially from that for most of the time I was there. There were occasional efforts. Of course I had a slightly biased perspective, I thought there were occasional efforts, sincere efforts on the part of the South Koreans while I was there. Attempts to open up the most benign kinds of exchanges with the North Koreans of mail and liberty limited visits, this sort of thing, family visits. The slightest effort by the North, anything that might smack of political manipulation or use of these contacts, or propaganda or spying, was immediately met by the most rabid reactions by the Korean CIA and military and other people. There was constant pressure on this effort that almost doomed it to failure. Any Northern initiative was immediately suspected of having ulterior motives.

Q: What about the U.S. role? Were we pushing for anything as far as trying to get the South Koreans to make more positive gestures toward the North Koreans? Or did we feel that this was sort of a lost cause?

KELLEY: Our main concern was our American alliance with South Korea, making sure that remained credible, that nothing happened in the relationship between the U.S. and South Korea that would tempt the North Koreans to think that they had a kind of opening that they had before the Korean War, when they thought that we had excluded South Korea from our zone of defense. So everything we did in the relationship was governed by that consideration and by the consideration that there was more at stake than just Korea here. If Korea were to burst into flames our relationships with other countries would be at stake as well. If the Japanese had become very alarmed there could be economic as well as political turmoil resulting from any kind of confrontation in Korea. Our focus was really on maintaining the stability of Korea and that required that there be no mistake about our commitment to the defense of South Korea. We didn't try to play games, and we didn't try to create openings to North Korea. In fact, if we had done anything that was of a unilateral nature with North Korea, it would have played right into the North Korean's hands because they wanted to try to exclude the South and deal directly with the United States. We tried to deal through the South Koreans and include them in everything during the time that I was there.

Q: I would imagine that particularly in 1975, when you arrived, just after the collapse of South Vietnam, which in part came about because of the withdrawal of American support from what we felt was a dying cause, did you find that you were having to do almost extra things to make sure that they understood that South Korea was different from South Vietnam as far as our support went?

KELLEY: Absolutely. We were constantly having to emphasize the differences: the history of our commitment with South Korea and the reasons for it, the relationship with Japan and the large alliance, the sacrifices that we had already made to keep South Korea free. All of these things we had to constantly remind the South Koreans of. I guess with South Korea it was the old saying that you're not paranoid if everybody really is out to get you. The North Koreans really were out to get them and they did have a lot to be sincerely worried about, and they needed constant reassurance. Their concern may have seemed excessive from our point of view, but there certainly was ample reason for them to feel concerned given what had happened in Vietnam. Our job as we saw it was to provide the reassurance that we knew they needed.

Q: To follow through with this theme, we'll come back to some other things in the 1975 period, but during the 1976 election campaign in the United States, at that time the Democratic candidate who was later to be President, Jimmy Carter, was talking about taking our troops out of South Korea. Were you having to deal with that issue?

KELLEY: In spades, as soon as the idea was broached in the campaign the South Koreans became almost catatonic, the alarm was palpable. Of course the Administration was opposed to this idea and it was really an idea coming from the Democratic opposition in the United States. But as soon as Carter was elected President, then the concern became almost like a tidal wave on the part of the South Koreans. Then the battle was joined within the new Carter Administration, over this issue. There were two ways that the concern was expressed by everybody in a position of responsibility for the American official presence in South Korea. One way was sort of open hostility to the idea and open criticism of it, which the Deputy Commander of the Military Forces in Korea at the time finally got fired for. Then there was the more subtle, and we thought

more effective, opposition that went on within the rest of the U.S. official presence there. This was expressed through official channels, both front and back, to Washington. I think it was shared for the most part by the professional, diplomatic and military officials in Washington, but it was not shared at the political level. Because the people who had come into the Department of State, in particular, to run policy, were people who were the authors of this idea in Carter's campaign, specifically Holbrooke and Professor Jim Morley at Columbia University, who was really the author of the idea.

Q: On the professional level, what was the proposal that had come out of the campaign and why did you oppose it?

KELLEY: The proposal was to reduce the American troops in Korea, that we were over-committed to Korea and we were over-committed to Asia in general, but over committed to Korea specifically. That we could protect our interests in Korea with a significantly smaller presence, and we should begin phasing out our presence in Korea. The embassy was totally opposed to any reduction of U.S. presence in Korea, primarily because of the background of Vietnam and what we discussed earlier about the alarm that the South Koreans felt. I mean, they had put troops into Vietnam, they knew what the situation was there. They saw everything that happened there, and they saw any reduction in our presence in South Korea as the beginning of the same kind of thing that happened in Vietnam. Vietnamization was all the rage, and originally the Nixon doctrine that everything is turned over to the local country to test their mettle first and we would provide the support. That was characterized in the Carter camp, formally decided, as primarily air power. The Carter idea was to reduce casualties, to reduce U.S. forces at risk. We thought that this was an asinine idea, that it was going to cost lives.

Q: Well my feeling, I was there about that time, was that this would take the cork out of the bottle by taking the second division. The idea being that if the North attacked, they would have to attack a full American division.

KELLEY: That's right, it was a credible military unit. It was a unit that was designed to operate as an integrated entity in combat. Other professional military people who would see this from the other side of the battle field would recognize the weakness that was being engendered by weakening this division. They would realize that the division was vulnerable and could be hit. So strictly from a military point of view, the military would be weaker in this unit and in its supporting units. From a political point of view, we didn't care whether the unit was actually capable of fighting the war or not, what we were concerned about was the reassurance that it provided the South Koreans. The South Koreans would know as would the North Koreans, that this unit was not as capable as it had been. They would see any diminution as the equivalent of total abandonment. Any erosion would alarm them, and so we had to try to somehow reassure the South Koreans that any reduction was not going to signal abandonment, so we were opposed to any reduction, but realized that any backing down on the whole concept by the Carter Administration and in particular by the people who had formulated this idea and whose political careers were tied up with it, would be a tremendous loss of face.

Q: Richard Holbrooke being not only the author, but he was Assistant Secretary...

KELLEY: And he was the implementor.

Q: Yes. Did you have any contacts at your level with people coming from Washington or writing to them, sort of working on this? Also, what were some of the other things that you might have been aware of, with how the Embassy dealt with this? It's an extreme case of an Embassy seeing disaster coming out of a political campaign promise and people who really didn't know what they were talking about, from your perspective, and trying to sort of repair the damage and save face and all that?

KELLEY: Well, as I indicated earlier, Dick Sneider really was the point man on key issues and this certainly was THE key issue for the Embassy. He was the guy who carried the ball on this for the Embassy and to a large extent for the military as well. He and Stilwell got together in the first instance and worked as a team, each working back through their respective channels to try to alter this policy without appearing to be opposed to it. Dick would go back to Washington frequently to work the system back there, to work on Carter's crown, to talk to people he knew, he knew everybody, and try to find out how he could alter this decision within the framework that he recognized existed. There were people whose careers were wrapped up in this thing and who couldn't accept total back down. So he and Stilwell were ultimately partially successful in reducing the scope of this withdrawal to the point where it was accepted by the South Koreans as not having a significant military impact. The military impact was largely contained.

Q: How did that work out? Some units were withdrawn weren't they?

KELLEY: Some units were withdrawn. There were units that were largely peripheral and whose function could be performed farther back in Japan and so we, in effect, moved out units that weren't totally integral to the workings of the division. I don't recall exactly which units now that we moved out, but that was the whole purpose, to make sure that we got enough numbers to look like it was significant for the political purposes back in Washington, but whose functions were easily performed a little further back in the chain, units which could later be reintroduced. This was an important part of this--could easily be reintroduced and operate from Korea in the event of the threat of hostility.

Q: When you were doing the political-military thing, did you see any change in the North-South relationship?

KELLEY: There was some progress in terms of trying to open up channels of communication, but I didn't regard it as significant. Ultimately it didn't amount to a great deal. I should go back to the earlier point that we discussed--another concern that we had at the time that the whole question of U.S. force withdrawal was being bandied about politically, and then when Jimmy Carter was elected President we became really concerned about it, was that the South Koreans might try to acquire nuclear weapons; that they would lose confidence in the U.S. security guarantee and they would feel that they had no choice but to buy their own security and the only way they could do that was to acquire nuclear weapons. We were very concerned about that as a likely consequence of any U.S. withdrawal or even the threat of withdrawal.

Q: I take it that this was also an arrow in our quiver in fighting the battle with Washington,

wasn't it?

KELLEY: Absolutely. It was something we kept very careful track of. There was reason to be concerned.

Q: There were American nuclear reactors there in Korea at the time weren't there?

KELLEY: I don't recall.

Q: I can't remember if they were being built or being contracted or what the status was. How would they obtain nuclear weapons?

KELLEY: I don't recall now how we thought they were going to acquire the capability, but we knew that this was an option that they were seriously considering.

Q: Again, sort of to follow through on this theme, and then we'll move to others--you were there during the July tree chopping incident on the DMZ in 1976?

KELLEY: I was.

Q: Can you tell what you were doing and what was the incident and what was the reaction both from the Embassy and from the South Koreans, and what were the issues?

KELLEY: I didn't get involved in the initial decision that led to the incident. The problem was that there was a tree growing inside the demilitarized zone in the joint control area which is controlled by both North and South Korea and the United States. This tree blocked the view from one of our guard posts to another guard post, so we wanted to go out and trim the tree and we notified the North Koreans that we were going to trim this tree. We sent a crew out with a truck and some axes and other trimming equipment, to trim the tree so that the tree itself would remain intact, but the branches that obscured our view from one post to the other would be removed. The North Koreans had always responded hostilely to this idea that we would trim this tree. They never actually told us that they were totally opposed to it as I recall. When our crew went out to trim the tree, after due notification (we took the position that we didn't need their approval, we could notify them and then go ahead and do the job, which we did), no sooner did our people arrive at the tree and start trimming it, than there was immediate activity from a barracks on the North Korean side within the demilitarized zone. Several trucks went racing down the road into the joint control area and pulled up beside our truck and the North Korean troops leaped out. They were unarmed, but they grabbed axes and other equipment out of our truck and began attacking our troops who were trimming the tree. They were hitting them with axes and other equipment. One of our guys was killed. I forget what the casualty rate was, but it was very gory.

Q: I think three American officers were killed.

KELLEY: The North Koreans were all trained in martial arts and they put the biggest and roughest and meanest people on this duty. The discipline was far from the best. They were pre-conditioned to attack, they were pre-conditioned to be on hair trigger, they were pre-conditioned

to hate and detest the Americans, and this pre-conditioning in my view and in the view of a lot of people who examined this incident afterward, was directly responsible for the total lack of control with which they acted.

Q: In other words, this was not designed to produce deaths?

KELLEY: It wasn't intended to produce deaths, but with the people that they had, it was like trying to swat a fly with a sledge hammer, you couldn't avoid damaging everything in the vicinity. So they sent these guys over to stop this tree cutting and these guys just went berserk. So death was the result.

Q: When this happened, how did you hear about it, and what was the reaction within the Embassy, and what did you see happening?

KELLEY: I got a phone call from the Political Counselor that this thing had happened. I raced into the Embassy and we immediately were trying to get a handle on what had happened. That was the first thing that we wanted to do. So we talked to the military to make sure we understood precisely what has happened. That was partly my job, but the Political Counselor was pretty much on top of that by that time. He had been called earlier by the military. Then we formed a joint team, which I was not a member of, between the Embassy and the military command and the Chargé, Tom Stern, and the military got together to try and work out a response. The Ambassador, who was in Washington at the time, was not really pleased with the way that we were responding to this thing and he rushed back to Korea and ultimately he was then involved.

Q: What was the concern?

KELLEY: I don't recall now exactly what he was concerned about. He was concerned that we weren't being tough enough and we weren't being supportive enough. And also he was concerned about what the South Koreans would want to do by way of reaction, they were incensed, of course, and didn't want to have their noses rubbed in this incident by the North Koreans. They wanted revenge. Our military wanted revenge. We at the political level understood that our reaction had to be controlled but had to be seen by the American and South Korean forces as tough and appropriate to the circumstances. This was all worked out between the U.S. military command and the Embassy at the highest levels.

Q: I was on the country team at the time and I recall that the decision was made to cut down the tree, we sent in a crew to cut down the tree. In other words, within the context, that was sort of the least that one could do, but we weren't sure what the North Korean reaction would be--which appeared to be nothing.

KELLEY: We took tremendous precautions to make sure that the North Korean reaction, both the immediate reaction and the ultimate reaction, whatever it might be, could be contained. We put U.S. and South Korean forces on a very high level of alert, as soon as this incident happened. We kept them on alert throughout our responses. We mobilized forces that we knew to be overwhelming on our side from outside of the demilitarized zone, both South Korean and American. We moved this force into the demilitarized zone. We neutralized all of the North

Korean check points (which we considered to be illegal check points that had been installed by the North Koreans within the zone, where they could drop barriers and stop our movement within the jointly controlled zone) so that they couldn't react. The plan was to go in and to saw off all of those barriers, to remove them physically, and at the same time to chop this tree down to a nub. The tree had become a symbol and so the idea was not to leave any part of it standing, not to just trim it, which had been our original objective. At the same time we made sure we had a sufficiently powerful force to block any North Korean move to interfere with this action. We had air forces prepared to intervene if necessary, as well as a very large, powerful force, which we knew to be superior to anything the North Koreans had immediately available to respond with. We moved in and took up blocking positions to block the bridge that the North Koreans had come across the first time when the incident took place. We took other forces through the barriers and sawed off the barriers and the South Koreans were with our forces and they had hand grenades with them, they tossed them into the guard posts and blew the guard posts up. They wanted to kill some North Koreans, but fortunately there were no North Koreans in the guard posts. There was no North Korean reaction. The North Koreans did not budge, did not move a muscle.

Q: Was the feeling there or thereafter that the North Koreans felt that things had gotten out of control?

KELLEY: That was our analysis. We think that the North Korean highest command was alarmed at the way that their forces had behaved, but they couldn't acknowledge that, they couldn't indicate to anybody that they were alarmed. They couldn't express any lack of faith and trust in the military forces because, the military forces would have lost face. But it was pretty clear that they were sending people from Hungnam down to the DMZ. The whole issue was bumped up to a very high level within North Korea. They were sending people down to the DMZ who had much more authority than those who had originally been in place there, particularly the military. We could see North Korean officers in the DMZ who had been particularly difficult being removed from the scene, or if not being removed from the scene, being downgraded, being superseded by other people. On the one hand they had applauded and decorated the people who were in charge, on the other hand there were clearly people being moved into position on the ground in the units that were immediately adjacent to the joint control area who were giving orders to the people who had been there before.

Q: What was the reaction to our reaction and what we were doing, from the South Korean military and civilians? The people you were in contact with?

KELLEY: Initial reaction was euphoric, once we responded. There was alarm, concern, trepidation, anger--every imaginable reaction--before we responded. There were demands for all kinds of retaliation. Then when we did react there was a sense of relief that we had responded extremely forcefully. There was some grumbling that we hadn't been tough enough, but the nature of South Korea at the time was acceptance of authority, and the authorities had decided that this was the way that they were going to deal with it and the response to this dissipated concern and provided reassurance. The people who would have advocated much stronger reactions didn't do so after that.

Q: This was an immediate post Vietnam time and our Army, because of Vietnam and because of protests and all was considered particularly weak as far as discipline went, it was a very difficult time for the Army. The next decade or so was spent sort of rebuilding our military into a more professional thing and restoring discipline and raising the professionalism of the military. Were you getting anything from the Koreans or from our own military about the state of the American military establishment in Korea at that time?

KELLEY: There was obvious concern on the part of the professional military, especially the higher levels--at all levels really, about demoralization, lack of discipline, etc., in the military units. Not only the demoralization from what had happened in Vietnam, but the introduction of drug use by military personnel. The low esteem in which the military was held by the U.S. citizens at large as a result of Vietnam and the effect of this on military discipline and military morale, all of these things were complained about by the military commanders at all levels. It was a serious problem, and it was recognized by the South Koreans as a problem too. The public, the government, the South Korean military were all concerned about how the U.S. forces would react in combat. There was open doubt expressed as to their reliability and whether they were good, there was doubt expressed in South Korea about just how good our forces were. This was obviously a concern, because if the South Koreans were concerned about it then the North Koreans were hearing about it too and it could tempt them to think that they could repeat that Vietnam experience in Korea.

Q: While I was talking to Dick Ericson in another interview who was there during the 1960's when the North sent a significant number of infiltrators in to attack the Blue House, which is equivalent to our White House, and they deliberately went through the area controlled by the second division because they felt it was easier to get through it then to go through the South Korean troops.

KELLEY: I can see why they would feel that way. South Korean forces in any event were subject to a whole different kind of discipline than our forces were, and much more willing to accept the discipline than our forces were. If a North Korean infiltrator were caught in a South Korean military zone, they would have the snout beat of them before they even got back to someplace where somebody could stop this, they would be lucky to escape with their lives. That was one reason to go through the U.S. zone. The South Koreans were possibly more alert to the possibility of infiltration than our people were. Then on top of that you had the question of just how competent our forces were. The demoralization meant that they weren't as accepting of discipline or training, they were more lax, and it was easier to get through our zones, even at the time that I was there.

Q: Turning to other element, the Foreign Affairs thing, can you talk a bit about your impression of South Koreans reach abroad through its diplomatic and other services and what its goals were, from your perspective?

KELLEY: Everything seemed to focus on the United Nations for South Korea, other than its relationship with the United States and Japan. The United States and Japan were key concerns for South Korea. China became a key concern for South Korea. The fundamental principle that governed South Korean foreign affairs with these three countries and maybe Russia as well, was

to have as many Embassies as possible around the world, to outnumber the North Koreans if possible. The military would try to have South Korean Embassies expelled from countries where they had a foothold. The South Koreans didn't try to do that, they just tried to make sure that they had as much or more representation around the world than the North Koreans did. It became a competition of AID diplomacy. The North Koreans would provide various kinds of assistance and the South Koreans would do the same. The South Koreans had a bigger economy, the North Koreans would rely more on their military. They provided guard forces for a number of heads of state around the world for example, military assistance of all kinds. The South Koreans did not provide military assistance, they relied on their economic assistance and their economic power to attain the same ends the North Koreans were trying to attain.

Q: What was the impression of the North Korean efforts abroad? One always hears about how clumsy they were, but this is probably an unfair claim. What was your impression?

KELLEY: Of course we approached these things with our own biases and I approach it with my bias, and my bias is to try to assess the sophistication of an effort in terms of how effective it is at achieving the desired objective. The North Korean approach was to glorify the propaganda approach, a public diplomacy approach if you will, was to put these ads in newspapers all around the world, several page ads, long diatribes, glorifying Kim Il Sung. And to engage in a lot of official visit diplomacy and to try to create a few showpiece aid projects, a la the early post World War II Soviet efforts around the underdeveloped world. Kim Il Sung was the last unreconstructed Stalinists around and this was his preferred approach and he was the master of North Korea. I didn't think this public relations approach produced particularly good results for the North Koreans, but certainly the military approach did. They went straight to the personal security concerns of Heads of State and in many of the underdeveloped countries of the world this was a key way to the heart of the leader and military assistance was very important to these people. They cared less about the economic assistance so to that extent it was very effective.

Q: Were there any areas where the battle was joined, during the 1975 - 1978 period, that you recall that he sort of engaged our attention?

KELLEY: Well China was one area. The United Nations of course was a key area where the South Korean effort was to maintain its representation and its recognition by the United Nations as the sole entity there, but was willing ultimately, to accept both a North and a South Korean presence in the United Nations. The North Korean effort was to just displace South Korea in the UN.

Q: I would have thought, particularly given the history and also the economics and everything else, would have been basically a non-starter in the United Nations.

KELLEY: Unfortunately, from our perspective a lot of countries had joined the UN after the Korean War and a lot of countries had joined the non aligned movement. They tended to see North Korea as non aligned rather than part of the Communist Bloc. Our efforts to point out that this was not the case, and South Korean efforts, didn't produce much result because we were essentially discredited by our involvement in Vietnam and because of our great power status, and our alignment in many cases with former colonialists. So, everything considered, there was a

great deal of blatant sympathy for the idea that both Koreas should be represented at the very least, or even that South Korea shouldn't be represented at all in the United Nations.

Q: Did we get involved?

KELLEY: We got involved very actively. Every time there was a vote on this issue, we mounted a major campaign. Every year we put up an agenda of the issues that we cared about and we would send them out to our posts around the world, and the Korea question was always one of the top two or three. We would have our people in every country in the world go in and have individual instructions for each country almost as to what they should say on this issue and how we would go about getting a head count in the first instance and how we would go about changing votes in the case where people had taken stands that we didn't approve of or were about to take stands that we didn't approve of that would be unhelpful to us. A lot of arm twisting went on in this whole process--on our part.

Q: What was your impression of the Korean Foreign Service and people at the Ministry?

KELLEY: The people at the Ministry were very good, but they were constrained by the total preoccupation with the North Korean question in their foreign affairs. It just dictated everything, except in the matter of bilateral relations with the United States and a few other very important countries. As far as relations with the rest of the world were concerned, it was all the question of competing with North Korea in various forum. Given that constraint, I thought that they were developing considerable sophistication and professionalism. They started off with a great deal of difficulty but they had people who had been trained all around the world and they had a lot of advantages because of this. I thought that they had certainly far fewer good people than the Japanese had, but they had some very good people.

Q: How about relations with China? Obviously at that time South Korea did not have relations with China, but was there a getting acquainted process going on?

KELLEY: There was, through various indirect means. They upgraded the role of their Asian Affairs Bureau throughout the period that I was in Korea. Although I ceased to have a lot of intimate contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the last half of my tour, and it was clear to me that this was continued all the way after I moved out of that job. In particular, the China office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was extremely active in trying to find indirect ways of maintaining contact with China. I remember one occasion when some fisherman had fallen into the hands of the Chinese fishing boats and this incident, like every other opportunity, was viewed as an opportunity and not a problem. There were efforts to try and get these people sent back to South Korea. The same thing happened when some Chinese fisherman fell into South Korean hands, they immediately used this as a way to send a signal to China that they wanted good relations by not only releasing these people back to China but sending the most conciliatory kinds of messages to the Chinese. There was a great deal of emphasis placed on developing as much indirect trade as possible through Hong Kong, and to a much lesser degree through Japan, with China. To try to develop a certain dependence by the Chinese on South Korea for as much as it could in the way of products that South Korea produced that might be of use to China.

Q: What about relations with Japan during this time?

KELLEY: Relations with Japan were the most fascinating bilateral relationship I think, that the Koreans had. It was really amazing the dichotomy that existed between the public perception of Japan and the official perception of Japan and the hoops that the Korean government jumped through in order to maintain both its official behind-the-scenes policy of friendship to Japan and slavish imitation of the Japanese in the economic and industrial sphere, with its open hostility and its macho attitude toward the Japanese in every public sphere. It was a wonder to behold. It was split personality, schizophrenia, personified. Park Chung Hee was a slavish admirer of the Japanese in reality. He pushed his country to imitate the Japanese in every possible way, industrialization in particular. He invited the Japanese in with open arms, he tried to get Japanese industry to come in and assist with his industry, his ship building industry for example, and then proceeded to boot the Japanese out of the world ship building industry. It was amazing. He brought the Japanese into the industrial area in the Southern tip of Korea where they had a big military industrial complex and provide the main impetus for this industrialization. They copied Japanese techniques. They invited Japanese companies to come in. The Japanese were given every advantage and every incentive to come in. They were given the best possible treatment while they were there, and then the Koreans tried to rob the Japanese blind in terms of their ideas and techniques. They tried to replicate the Japanese success story economically. Then, officially, every time the Japanese would do anything which was the slightest bit offensive to the Koreans, the outrage would be palpable. You could cut it with a knife. The Korean government would go catatonic. They would go up in arms. They would encourage mob violence against the Japanese Embassy, there was every conceivable offensive reaction that you could think of in the public sphere.

Q: How did the U.S. fit into this?

KELLEY: Very gingerly actually. We wanted to cultivate a normal relationship between Japan and Korea, and of course the Koreans because of their domination by the Japanese before and during World War II, just hated the Japanese and would not accept any kind of relationship in which they were not superior to the Japanese, where there was any implication of even equality. Although ultimately they would accept equality, their idea of equality looked to everybody else like domination on their part. We were particularly concerned about things like the military-to-military relationship and we acted in many cases as a conduit for military-to-military contacts between the Japanese and the South Koreans--to avoid incidents for one thing. We didn't want the Japanese and the South Koreans to be shooting at each other over disputed claims--for example the islands off shore--or the fishing zones, or anywhere else. If there were some trade agreement or mission from Japan to North Korea, this might be used as an excuse to provoke an incident by the South Koreans. Anything at all could flare up between the Japanese and South Koreans. Our idea was to, at least, make sure that this didn't result in some military conflict. So we tried to provide the lubricant to avoid that--to be the lubricant, or the buffer, and to be the channel.

Q: Being a Japan hand, did the treatment of Koreans in Japan raise any issues or problems during this time that we're talking about?

KELLEY: Again, the South Koreans were ambivalent about the treatment of Koreans in Japan. They were very often ambivalent about anything that involved Japan, but for a different reason--the Koreans in Japan were overwhelming sympathetic to North Korea.

Q: Why was this?

KELLEY: Most of them were from the industrial North to start off with, and then additionally the North Koreans had made much more effort through the Japan Communist party to establish contact with the Koreans in Japan. There was a whole mentality in Japan among leftists to be opposed to America and this tended to infiltrate the Korean community because the different political parties didn't pay much attention to the Koreans. Communists did, and the North Koreans used the Communist conduit. The leftists paid some attention to the Koreans, but not much. Generally the political activists in the Korean community tended to be bombarded with the leftist view of the world. The North Koreans made a particular effort to contact this community and to cultivate it to provide scholarships to the children of Korean residents in Japan who were sent to North Korea for education. The South Koreans had not done that, they had been so preoccupied with reconstructing their country and getting their own act together after the Korean War, they had not paid much attention to the Korean community in Japan. So it was really a North Korean playground. As a consequence, the South Koreans were quite ambivalent about looking out for the rights of this group. Their view was that they would just be helping out the people who were sympathetic to North Korea. What was the point of that?

Q: Did you feel any influence of the South Korean government beginning to grow--it's much bigger now, but beginning to grow Korean community in the United States?

KELLEY: It was always dicey because both Koreas liked to use the Korean community, wherever it was, as a basis for their political efforts in that country. They had a concept of control which was quite far from our concept of how a foreign community should be treated within our borders. So both Koreas were using the Korean community in the United States as a battlefield, if you will. They would compete with each other for the loyalty of this community, their operatives, the non diplomatic people, the KCIA and the intelligence equivalent in North Korea, would operate within the Korean community within the United States to try to put the people who were sympathetic to them and positions of influence and to exert control over the community, in a political sense. This by no means included the entire Korean community. Many of the people were just not politically active or very apathetic, just wanted to have good lives and blend in. But both Koreas tried to establish a political base within the Korean community in the United States. The South Koreans were more effective at it because there were so many barriers placed in the way of North Koreans.

Q: Did we ever get involved from the Embassy point of view of telling the South Koreans that they were being a little heavy handed or something like that with working with the Korean American community?

KELLEY: Several times. It was a point of friction between the two governments. Not major friction, but it was certainly sufficient friction to cause us to go to the Korean government and try to get them to tone down and back off of their efforts to use the Korean community as a political

base. It was totally inappropriate as we said.

Q: Did you get any specifics on that?

KELLEY: I really don't recall anything now. At the time that this became a real matter of concern, I wasn't really dealing with that issue. I don't recall any particular incident.

Q: When you moved over to the political military side, obviously we've discussed some of this, but were there any other aspects, equipment? By this time this was well into the Carter period, and what about military equipment?

KELLEY: We knew that there was an effort, at least on the part of some people, to try to develop a nuclear weapon in South Korea and we certainly didn't want to encourage this. We wanted to discourage it wherever we could. The South Koreans denied that there was any such effort and we had to be very careful about how we voiced this whole thing. We knew that there was a solid basis for their concern, they had reason to be concerned just based on the facts of our withdrawal from Vietnam and what they knew of our policy regarding troops in Korea. We knew that we had to provide not only indications of our disapproval of their acquisition of nuclear capabilities but also some indication that we recognized that their concern had some validity and that they should have some independent military production capability, so that they could be assured that if the unthinkable should happen and they weren't able to get equipment from the United States they had their own sources. So we encouraged them to develop their own battle tank and other kinds of equipment, but the tank was the primary focus of our efforts to direct their concern about our reliability and their desire for some degree of autonomy and self reliance. Away from the much more dangerous nuclear area into something more acceptable. So we provided cooperation in the development of armor and design and so forth, for this tank. One of my principal jobs at the time was to try to make sure that all of the efforts that we put into this stayed within acceptable political bounds. So that the U.S. military didn't get carried away with this cooperative effort and start wandering off into unacceptable areas where they were producing stuff that was to be exported and begin to threaten our exports for example. Or to export into areas of instability where we didn't want this kind of equipment to be exported. They needed to have a certain level of production with this equipment, they felt that they couldn't just rely on the domestic market. We tried to keep them from exporting it at all, and so there was a lot of friction there. So we had to make sure that any agreement that we entered into, and any assistance that we provided, always was provided with the condition that this is not for export and that this was enforced and our military did not in its enthusiasm for providing assistance to their Korean military colleagues, did not overlook the importance of making sure that this technology or equipment was not exported. We had problems with this up and down the line, all kinds of things. The South Koreans were trying to make their production economical, so anytime we provided them with technical know-how or they were always trying to find some way around our restrictions to peddle this stuff. At least some people in their organization were, and their governmental organization was not so well-coordinated that they were able to keep track of what everybody in it was doing. So we had these Korean "free booters," these businessmen "cowboys" out trying to peddle this stuff around the world and at the same time we had agreements with the South Koreans not to do this. So it was a constant concern.

Q: What about the problem of corruption from your perspective? Did you get involved in concerns over this?

KELLEY: Not really. It was the kind of problem that we were removed from by several layers of intervening Korean bureaucracy and business. It was a problem for the Koreans that we were able to contain at the time, but then ultimately caused them some difficulty. What we had to do was make sure that Americans were not tainted by this. To the degree that we could, we tried to keep the Korean government as the mediator, so that Americans would not be involved in being solicited for bribes and this kind of thing. I did not get directly involved in any efforts to make that we weren't exposed to corruption. There was some of that going on in our efforts to make sure that our businessmen generally operating in Korea did not become involved. Most of the corruption that we could find was within the Korean community, among them, and did not involve Americans.

Q: It was the task of the Political section to deal (particularly when the Carter Administration came in) with considerable new emphasis on human rights and Korea was one of the targeted areas. A close ally and with serious human rights problems. Can you speak from what you observed both how Ambassador Sneider who had other concerns on human rights, how he dealt with human rights, but also within the political section, the human rights equation?

KELLEY: The Ambassador recognized that the United States had to act in some degree as the conscience for South Korea in the area of human rights. There were a number of people who were sympathetic to the United States who were actually victims of human rights abuses whose effectiveness was being hampered by the intrusion of what we regarded quite frankly as thugs in the Korean hierarchy, and many of these people who were being interfered with in various ways were close friends of the Ambassador and personal friends of other people in the Embassy. Guys we played tennis with, and guys we knew, who were scholars that had studied in America. So the Ambassador had constantly before him reminders of the degree to which human rights were a real concern for America. They could prevent the people who were very sympathetic to the United States from exerting the kind of influence over policy they might be tainting them with a sort of anti-government caste, because they advocated a bit more freedom than the government was prepared to offer by virtue of their exposure to the United States. The Ambassador, using his informal contacts for the most part and not going in and making official and certainly avoiding open public criticisms of the Koreans, lobbied fairly constantly with the South Korean officials to let up a little bit, to lighten up some, not to be so paranoid about everything that went on in Korea politically. To recognize that they had to allow a bit of freedom of expression, a bit of freedom of political organization, that the world was not going to collapse around them if they did this. But his technique was essentially to use his extremely broad and impressive network of political connections to do this. When he was instructed to go in and pound the table, he did it, and he did it with great effectiveness. His most effective arguments were cast in terms of South Korean self interest. If they appeared to be thugs, they would hurt their own interest in the United States and it wasn't in their interest to do this. He pounded this home constantly, at every occasion with his South Korean friends--guys who liked him and admired him and thought highly of him and knew that he had their best interests at heart. I think he was extremely effective in these areas, and in a general sense, when he wasn't given some particular mission to go in and pound the table. If he needed to go in and pound the table he did that too, but I think he

did it with little enthusiasm, although I don't think he ever showed that.

Q: Did you ever get the feeling that he felt that the Bureau of Human Rights was a little bit too much of an ideological group?

KELLEY: Absolutely. The Ambassador was constantly trying to keep the South Koreans from being singled out as the most egregious violators, etc., because he knew the South Koreans well enough to know that if you rub their nose in it publicly that you would just get them to dig in their heels. They just would not change, they would be offended, and it would be just like what happened between them and the Japanese or them and the North Koreans. As soon as they were publicly humiliated or publicly held up to ridicule or singled out in anyway they would turn absolutely stubborn and you wouldn't get any place with them. It wouldn't be just the matter of applying more pressure, the more pressure the worse it got. So he tried very hard to use the quiet approach, the personal approach.

Q: Were you there when Patt Derian came out? Do you recall her visiting?

KELLEY: I don't really recall the visit, I just know that generally anytime that the Bureau of Human Rights got involved in anything in Korea it was a dicey time for us and we didn't really welcome it.

Q: Is there anything else that we should cover in Korea that you dealt with?

KELLEY: I think the relationship between the Embassy and the U.S. military is the one thing that we haven't talked about that I think we should cover.

Q: I had heard at one time that Stilwell and Sneider were two very strong personalities and sometimes there was concern more about the personalities than policies. Did you get any feel of that?

KELLEY: It's true that they were both strong personalities and that they both had their constituencies and they could be stubborn. Both of them could be stubborn at times. I don't recall any specific issue in which they were at odds, I'm sure there were some, I just don't recall anything right off of the top of my head. I know that there was always concern on the Ambassador's part that the U.S. military command would be doing something that he wouldn't know about, anything whatever it might be. Stilwell had several hats that he wore, he was the UN Commander and he was also a Theater Commander. I think there were three hats that he wore and he could use any of these to go back to Washington in one of several different ways. Sneider was always trying to keep a handle on anything that Stilwell might be doing, that he might regard as strictly his military prerogative, which Sneider would see had much the wider political implications. He wanted to make sure that he was always clued in. That's part of the reason why I got the job in Political/Military Affairs, because our personal relationship at the working level with the Military Command had begun to deteriorate because we were being a bit too pedagogic about the way we asserted ourselves with the military at the working level. The Ambassador wanted a much more cooperative relationship, and that's how I got the job. It was my assignment essentially, to make sure that nothing doubled back up through the chain to

Stilwell that got him bent out of shape with the Embassy. That the picture that Stilwell got through the chain of command, through his people, the working level people, was that the Embassy was going out of its way to be cooperative with the Military Command and that he had nothing to fear about ulterior motives or attempts to exert undue control over the military and its responsibilities, on the part of the Embassy. That we were helping Stilwell to achieve his mission, not interfering with it. So these were essentially my marching orders. We shifted over from the image of being an entity which was insisting that the Military Assistance unit come up with hat in hand to the Embassy and get clearances for everything that happened and so forth, to one in which I went to them and dropped in on them casually at all hours of the day and was available to them at their convenience to help them to achieve their mission, whatever that might be. They didn't have to hold up messages for several days for example, to get them out to Washington, just waiting for our clearance, I'd drop in and clear stuff for them in draft. They, in turn, understood that we didn't care about the details of minutiae of the everyday working relationship with their own military people back in Washington, but we did care about the big policy issues. We wanted to make sure that they were reading off of the same page that we were and that we knew well in advance when they had something going on that had a policy implication. They were very receptive to this approach and this was not only with military assistance, but I also did the same thing in the Military Command. I went to every unit that had any kind of responsibility that had any kind of political implication, dropped in on them constantly and let them know that their strictly military functions were of interest to us but we weren't going to interfere in them. But if they ever had anything that had a political implication we wanted to know about it early in the piece so that we could make sure that we were both reading off of the same page. That was a message that was particularly acceptable to Stilwell. He was happy to accept that. What he didn't want was to be told how to do his military functions, and have some civilian come along and tell him to try and fight a war or prepare for one. So we did all kinds of things to try to cultivate the feeling that we were all one family and my job was to make sure that message got through loud and clear at the working level. We'd do little things like trying to open up the Military Assistance Club memberships to Embassy employees, but that never happened--we did the opposite which was to try to open up the Embassy Club to membership of the members of the Military Assistance Group. All kinds of little things like that, trying to make us all one family. We gave the head of the Military Assistance Group an office in the Embassy so that coordination was extremely easy--just drop by once a day or so and talk to the Ambassador, he'd feel like he was a part of the country team, which he was supposed to be. That was the particular emphasis that the Ambassador tried to foster and which I think ultimately paid some real dividends.

Q: The man who replaced Stilwell was John Vessey, I think that was a pretty smooth relationship.

KELLEY: He was a much more political person, he understood the politics of military affairs and the international relations importance of the military affairs. He and Sneider got along extremely well, I think clearly better than Sneider and Stilwell.

Q: Well Stilwell was a war fighting man in a way.

KELLEY: That's right. Stilwell had been there before Sneider got there and so Sneider was sort

of the new boy on the block, whereas when Vessey got there, Sneider had already been there for awhile. So it was a much more congenial relationship for Sneider and Vessey was quite willing to accept the relationship.

Q: What was the impression that you got in all your political military dealings, if war came and the assumption was that the North could attack at any time--how big a threat did we feel it was at that time and what was the feeling on the ground about what the North could achieve and not achieve?

KELLEY: Well, of course the military looks at threats differently than diplomats do. The military looks at capabilities and if you're capable of punching through, then they had to be prepared to meet that capability, regardless of what your intentions might be. The Department of State tends to look more at intentions and to modify its assessment of threat based not only on capability but on intention. The military sees it as intentions can change. If the capability is there, then the threat is very large. So the military, focusing on the capabilities, thought that the threat was immense and that if the North Koreans decided that they wanted to launch a war for whatever reason, they could in fact punch through our lines and get to Seoul. We war gamed this, and they could. So one of the military objectives while I was there, which was supported by the Embassy, was to upgrade the defenses by building strong static defenses along the demilitarized zone that would greatly complicate the problems that the North Koreans had of coming through the zone. We put a considerable effort into trying to detect tunnels, we detected a number of tunnels that had been built under the DMZ, and we assumed that there were others that we hadn't detected that would be part of the problem. We war gamed it with that in mind, we assumed the existence of these tunnels. As a result of our war games, we built hedgehogs, that is extremely powerful fortifications that could be enveloped but still hold out, that would cause any invading North Koreans forces to have to divert considerable units of considerable size, just to contain these fortifications. We built powerful tank traps of fortified wall-like positions, made of reinforced concrete, all along the DMZ that would act like the Great Wall of China almost, against the North Korean forces. Gradually we tried to build up an ability to fight right at the point of attack right on the DMZ. Of course we recognized that if Seoul was ever taken, the carnage would be immense and morale would be devastated. Not to mention that the economy would be in ruins. So our whole focus was to try to build a forward defense and to stop the North Koreans right at the DMZ. By the time I left, we still weren't confident that we had achieved that.

BILHA BRYANT
Spouse of Commercial Counselor
Seoul (1976-1977)

Bilha Bryant was born in 1934 in Bulgaria. Bryant served in the Israeli Army and worked in the private sector before joining the Israeli Foreign Service in 1959. Bryant resigned from the Israeli Foreign Service and married Edward (Ted) Bryant in 1963. With her husband, Bryant was assigned overseas to Mozambique, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Korea and India. Bryant then began to work for the State Department and served in the Soviet Bureau, Eastern European Affairs and

Congressional Relations. Bryant was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: You left there in '75. Where did you go?

BRYANT: Since we hadn't been home for a long time, we requested a home assignment. In August '75 we went back to Washington, we got our tenants out of the house. We found proper schools for the girls; we fixed the house, which was in bad repair after years under tenants. The nine months we spent in the States were difficult but we managed to achieve what we needed to and were looking forward to a few quiet years in Washington. And then, Ted came home from the office and announced that we have been posted to Seoul, Korea.

Q: You went to Korea. We were there together. You were in Korea from when?

BRYANT: We arrived to Korea in September of '75.

Q: How did you like Korea?

BRYANT: I did not like Korea very much. I had been living in a gentle society - even Africa was a gentle society. Women were gentle, men were polite and pleasant, and our staff at home was always willing and pleasant. And we came to society that was so very different in every way.

We also had an unfortunate thing happened: Ted came to Seoul to be the Commercial counselor, but when we arrived there he was told that his "predecessor" had decided to extend for two more years and instead he will be running the U.S. Trade Center. Ted is not an outgoing man; he is more of a thinking man. So he was very unhappy with the assignment. But moreover, it started all over again-which house do we get since his job description had changed? Somebody had a little higher grade, or he had been in grade longer than Ted-and here it was: déjà vu all over. After long deliberations, we were placed in an old three-bedroom house with narrow wooden staircase leading to the bedrooms. I worried that our 4 year old would fall down the stairs and hurt herself. Later on we were moved to a nice house. So even if I were inclined to like Seoul because of the different culture, this attitude by the powers to be managed to sour me on the whole country.

Q: And nobody would call the Koreans a "gentle" people.

BRYANT: No, you certainly couldn't. I honestly think that the influence of the U.S. Army on the Koreans did not help much in their attitude. Also the English they learned from the Army left much to be desired. I remember sitting next to a prominent Korean businessman at a dinner party, who kept repeating after everything I said "No sweat, Mrs. Bryant."

Since the economy in Korea was improving at the time we were there, we had practically to beg colleagues who had servants to help us find some. As you remember, social life was quite hectic and we did have three young children, so naturally I needed help. I also must admit that I was a bit spoiled after serving in Africa and the sub-continent. You remember the servant situation in Korea. Even when you finally got someone, they definitely worked on their terms.

Our two older girls went to the school on the base, which was not a very good school. Alexi, on the hand, went to a wonderful Montessori school where half the children were Korean and the rest foreigners. There were 26 children in whole. The foreigners paid the tuition for both theirs and the Korean children. This was a wonderful experience for Alexi and she really loved it. She also learned to speak Korean and was very helpful when we shopped in the Korean markets positive.

I am not being fair to include all Koreans in my criticism. We did meet and made friends with some very interesting Koreans. We also liked our colleagues in the Embassy and saw them socially. The country sights were magnificent and we managed to see quite a bit of the country.

EDWARD HURWITZ
Korea Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1976-1977)

Edward Hurwitz was born in New York in 1931. He received his bachelor's degree from Cornell University in 1952. After serving in the US Army from 1953-1955 he entered the Foreign Service in 1956. During his career he had positions in Moscow, Seoul, Washington D.C., Afghanistan, Leningrad, and an Ambassadorship to Kyrgyzstan. Ambassador Hurwitz was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in August 1996

Q: Then in 1976 you left the counter terrorism office.

HURWITZ: Yes, because Phil Habib wanted me as Korean country director, so I was desk officer for Korea.

Q: Phil Habib at that time was?

HURWITZ: He was assistant secretary for EA, East Asian Affairs. He didn't stay very long. He almost immediately went up and became Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Art Hummel then became assistant secretary.

Q: You were there from 1976 to when?

HURWITZ: Until I had my difficulties with Dick Holbrooke. I lasted there until May, 1977.

Q: Well, let's talk about the 1976-77 period. How did you find the view of Korea first with the end of the Ford administration and then moving into the Carter administration?

HURWITZ: The big issue when I came on the desk, one I think would have strengthened Kissinger's view of the world, was the attack on and killing of the two soldiers in the DMZ. Do you remember that?

Q: I had just arrived in Korea as consul general as had Tom Stern. We had all arrived in July. Dick Sneider laughed and said, "It is nice and quiet here. There won't be any trouble, just keep your head down." Could you talk about the tree chopping thing?

HURWITZ: I technically wasn't on the desk at the time, but they brought me up from MCT to be part of a task force. That was a rather hairy situation. Kissinger was really very ticked off. We were moving troops, naval forces and were pretty close to a very, very strong reaction to that.

Q: I would like to capture this time because I think it was an important event. Could you explain for someone who wouldn't know, what happened up in the DMZ?

HURWITZ: As I remember it, the American side wanted to remove a tree that was obstructing the vision, line of sight, of the North Korean installation and post. It was important that we have visual access to that thing. So, they were in the act of chopping the tree down when they were set upon by a North Korean patrol. This is all inside the DMZ. One of the North Koreans actually got a hold of the ax and used it on two Americans soldiers who were killed. Then there were some kind of skirmishes and the North Koreans withdrew. I don't think any shots were fired. This happened when you were there?

Q: Yes.

HURWITZ: The reaction here was really very, very tough. I remember at one point, one Saturday morning, Hummel had gone in and was going up to see Kissinger and said why don't you come along. This was the only time I got to see Kissinger. The door to Kissinger's office opens and he is ushered in and he beckons for me to follow him so I follow him. He says, "Oh, Mr. Secretary, this is Ed Hurwitz, the desk officer. Is it all right if he comes in?" Kissinger said, "What do you mean is it all right, he is already in." Then Kissinger was immediately on the phone to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

At any rate, that was the first and only time I was brought into the Secretary's office, so I don't know the details of what was being discussed. But, it was a question of moving aircraft carriers, which we did move. And, it was a question of being very, very tough. I think this was just prior to the opening of the Republican National Convention. Kissinger, himself, was under attack by those in the Republican Party who didn't like him. So, for whatever reason, he was very disturbed by this incident and determined to do something. In the last analysis we didn't do anything.

Q: Well, we went in and chopped down the tree.

HURWITZ: Yes, we did chop down the tree.

Q: There were B-52s flying around and we were telling the Koreans we were there. There was a lot of toing and froing. We didn't know what the North Koreans were about. Did we get any feel for why they did this?

HURWITZ: No. I think we chalked that up to what we chalk most things up to, the inscrutable ways of the Koreans. Like six months ago moving troops into the DMZ. That may have colored, at least for the remainder of the Ford administration, our approach to Korea. If it hadn't been for the election and Jimmy Carter and for Pat Derian in Human Rights Affairs and to a certain extent, Richard Holbrooke, I suppose as forgiving as ever of any Korean tightening up in the name of stability. What happened, of course, was a complete switch.

Q: Carter made the promise during the election campaign, before he was in power, that he would essentially take our main military ground division, the 2nd infantry division, out of Korea. I know when we were in Korea at that time we thought this was a stupid move because it would uncork things, but what was the view from the desk?

HURWITZ: If the desk was me the view was pretty much, "I will do anything I am told to do." This was not a high point with my career in a sense I was very skeptical and really didn't think it was a good idea and sort of dragged my feet. People from other agencies were brought in to write up how we were going to do all this. How we were going to move out. They brought in Armacost, I don't know what he was doing at the time. A big role in this was played by Mort Abramowitz, who was at that time the DAS of ISA in the Pentagon. And, of course, Holbrooke was new. And, they were gearing up to do this paper on why it should be done and how it was going to be done.

In the meantime, we began getting through the embassies in the area (New Zealand, Australia, Philippines), expressions of deep concern on the part of the host governments. Why were we doing this? It had worked in the past. It would be a very destabilizing move.

Q: Of course, in the context we had just pulled out of South Vietnam...

HURWITZ: I have a strong feeling that the whole Vietnam experience was to a great extent responsible for this, a part from Carter's own views about human rights, etc.

Q: I think both the action and reaction were predicated on Vietnam. Carter was saying we were not going to get involved in a land conflict.

HURWITZ: Holbrooke had had a long Vietnam experience and I think this played a role there.

Q: But, also the other countries were looking upon the fact, "Is the United States a reliable ally?" So, it was Vietnam being played in Korea.

HURWITZ: Well, "Is the United States a reliable ally?" is part of it, but I think a lot of it was just very specific to this instance. Nobody knows what North Korea is going to do. This has been a cheap insurance policy. Why must they be pulled out now? We don't know what North Korea is going to do, but we have a feeling that the only thing that has prevented North Korea from moving south had been the presence of American forces. To change this now could be disastrous.

I don't know, I moved off the desk in somewhat less than a year, so I don't know how this was

dropped. It was clearly dropped. I believe the reaction of the allies had a lot to do with it.

Q: Certainly the embassy was not supportive.

HURWITZ: That probably helped. I certainly deserve no medal for heroism on this score, although my lack of enthusiasm may have been evident enough to further muddy the situation with Holbrooke. But, that was simply a clash of personalities. A clash in the sense that I wasn't his type of guy and I could see that.

Q: Well, could you tell me about Richard Holbrooke, the new assistant secretary. Now he is being touted as maybe being a candidate for Secretary of State. But, he was controversial and I know he was not viewed with any great enthusiasm.

HURWITZ: No, he sees everything that the press has called him since he has gone to Bosnia, that he is extremely intelligent, extremely creative, extremely self-confident. But, at the same time, as Tom Friedman, yesterday in his foreign affairs column in the "New York Times" said, he is a manically self-promoter, which is true. In fact, during his tenure in EA there was an article in the Washington Monthly about how his main concern was playing tennis with Teddy Kennedy. So, this is not only my opinion by any means. But he is a very, very talented guy. He was young, brash, extremely self-confident, 35 at the time I believe, and he made a big splash.

Q: I can recall when he arrived in Seoul for the first time all the dignitaries were out there and all and he appeared with a tennis racket under his arm.

HURWITZ: Koreans don't go for that. They like their leaders to be very austere.

Q: Yes. This did not signify that he took the whole situation very seriously in the Korean eyes. Well, tell me what was the clash?

HURWITZ: I simply did not react fast enough for him. I was not a bellowing by any means. I can't remember the exact details, but at one point I hadn't done something or sent something over to the White House in time, and it turned out that that was a good thing because it was a bad recommendation from the Department and was later junked. But, he had me up there and was pounding the desk. So, finally what he did was to have Bill Gleysteen, who was the principal DAS call me into his office one day and explain that Dick really wanted to have somebody else in that job. I had been there when he arrived and he would have moved me out but at that point he was being sort of kind, but now he wants to make the move. He was shifting me over to be director for Australian/New Zealand affairs. So, I spent my second year in EA in that job.

Q: This would be 1977-78?

HURWITZ: Right. By the way one should mention the very increased attention to human rights in Korea during the tenure of Pat Derian, who very frequently came to EA meetings.

Q: Could you talk a bit about Patt Derian? How was she viewed?

HURWITZ: Well, she was viewed as sort of an outsider who was coming in with these off-the-wall ideas which were good ideas but inapplicable.

Q: Was there any attempt to explain, for example, Korea and the military situation?

HURWITZ: Oh, I'm sure there was.

Q: Was Korea a particular focus?

HURWITZ: It was. We did have the problems of labor leaders, missionaries and students. You also have the problem just prior to this, and this was before the new administration came in, you had the scandals here with the KCIA and the little envelopes full of cash.

Q: Yes, and it was called Koreagate too.

HURWITZ: Right. The defection of a KCIA officer here in Washington. So, that further soured people on Korea. A lot of people, particularly in the new administration, were prepared to think the worse. I think this may have played a role in the decision to try to take the troops out.

Q: Did you get involved in the Koreagate business?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes.

Q: What type of things were you involved in?

HURWITZ: I was present during the interrogation of this guy who had defected. Slapping the Koreans on the wrists when the whole thing hit the press. Of course, no slap could be greater than that given in the American press. We certainly didn't pooh-pooh it and say, "Carry on, don't worry about this." We made a big deal out of it. Now, maybe a greater deal would have been made if Carter had been in at that point.

Q: Did you find Patt Derian or her office sort of monitoring what we were doing in Korea?

HURWITZ: Oh, yes. As I say she came to the meetings.

Q: What did coming to the meetings mean?

HURWITZ: Well, that there was a new emphasis now on human rights and that we would be a strong advocate of human rights and would call the Koreans' attention to it when we felt they had done something wrong. I think the Koreans, for their part, took it very seriously. They, as well, may have concluded that the troop withdrawal rumblings were in part motivated by their internal moves.

Q: Did you see from your perspective any movement on their part?

HURWITZ: They never shut their door to this, never kept Congressman Fraser out, for example.

We did make representations and they listened to us. I think the Koreans we dealt with knew what the problem was. At no point did they do what the Soviets would do when you bring this up--it is an internal affair don't bother us. They certainly knew they had to keep on the right side of us.

Q: When you are dealing with Korea from the desk, was there any concern or reflections of the fact that there were some congressmen who were practically on the Korean payroll, either through rice matters or?

HURWITZ: Yes, but that wasn't an issue that we followed. I wasn't about to say let's investigate Congressman X. No, that wasn't an issue in my time.

ELIZABETH RASPOLIC
Vice Consul
Seoul (1976-1978)

Elizabeth Raspolic worked for the Peace Corps in Pakistan, Thailand, and Tunisia before joining the Foreign Service in 1973. She served mainly as a consular officer in France, Korea, Ethiopia, and China. Ms. Raspolic was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

RASPOLIC: So I thought the thing to do would be to go to a post large enough to issue immigrant visas. The second thing was that I thought, at that point in my career, while I was still a junior officer, the thing to do was move around from continent to continent as much as I could, without specializing in any particular geographic area.

So I spoke to my career counselor, and he said, "Funny that you should put those two things together, because we have an opening in Seoul." I had always wanted to go to Korea, and why not? So off I went.

The Consular facilities in Seoul were dreadful. I guess that had probably been the complaint of the consular section there for years. There was a combined waiting room for NIVs, IVs, and ACS. The entrance was a side utility staircase, up the outside of the building, from the ground up to the first floor, where we were. In the American system, it would be the second floor. You walked in and there was a little small office to the left that was NIV's, and then you walked further down and there were a series of counters that handled the IV section. Off to the right was this strange little counter that was ACS.

I first went into the ACS area and worked with Bill Duffy, who was a first-tour officer, but he had had some ACS experience. We did American Citizens Services work, and we also accepted immigrant visa petitions. People came and filed them at our counter. Half of the waiting room was facing us as we worked at this counter. Bill used to refer to us as "in-flight entertainment," because customers would sit and watch us for hours, waiting for their turn to be called for whatever it was they were waiting for -- whether it was an immigrant visa or something else. We

were there at the counter trying to deal with people who were coming up, trying to register their American citizen children, or more often, trying to register their illegitimate children, as American citizens, or filing an immigrant visa petition, or just having notariats taken care of. I suppose we were rather funny. Certainly we were very active. We were constantly up and down.

In filing immigrant visa petitions, we had to be as careful as we could of fraudulent supporting documents. Obviously, the longer we were there, the more experience we had and it became easier to spot fraud and sort out the difference between what was valid and what was invalid.

We had to deal with passport applicants, many of whom were first-time applicants from the military base, and who simply had no experience in applying for passports. So we had to hold a lot of hands and get that sorted out.

We had some people who were very impatient, the usual thing. The Consular Section in Seoul was so large and had such a high volume, that it tended to wear on people's patience both the officers and the public. So if the public had been waiting very long for service, by the time they got up to the counter, quite a few of them were more than willing to tell us their opinion of our operation. That got to be hard.

Sometimes, also, people would be frustrated with either the non-immigrant visa or the immigrant visa units, but couldn't get a hold of an American officer to complain; there we were, right at the counter, so they would come over and vent their spleen at us for what they considered to be an inappropriate decision on the other side of the hall.

Just the very fact that the place was poorly laid out had a major impact on our work. It was depressing for us, it was depressing for the public, and it was terribly inconvenient. I am sure a lot of the Korean clientele didn't realize it was as inconvenient as it was, because it may have been their first exposure to an American office, and they would not have had anything to compare it to. The Americans who came in, more often than not, were simply appalled by the poor facilities, the lack of a proper traffic pattern, the lack of even a paint job on the walls, the lack of attractive office furnishings or chairs for the public to sit in.

This deplorable condition existed for always several reasons. Probably one of them was a lack of vision on the part of the supervisory officers in the section. No matter how glorious the vision is of someone in charge, if there is no money to implement a plan, then the vision is for naught. Also it was not just a Consular Section problem; it may have been perhaps the fault of the Consular Section for not working very closely with the Administrative Section, and perhaps even more importantly, a problem of the Ambassador or the DCM not supporting the needs of the Consular Section, or perhaps not understanding that the Consular Section is what the public sees when they come to the Embassy. It is really worth the investment to make the place as pleasant as it can be.

When I arrived, I did not feel that there was much contact with the rest of the Embassy, as far as the Ambassador or the DCM. There are two sides to that question. In Korea, it was the first time I had ever lived on a compound. This was compound living, and I was very leery of it before I came. But one advantage to compound living is that you do get to know your neighbors who

work in other sections of the Embassy. So a combination of getting to know them at home, plus sometimes getting to know them in the cafeteria, although I must say at lunchtime, the Consular Section tended to stick to itself and regale each other with stories of what had happened that morning; also we had a very short lunch hour, as I recall, so there wasn't much socializing going on.

I don't remember, really, there being much interest expressed in the consular section at all by the front office.

Tom Stern was not DCM when I arrived. I don't remember the name of the previous DCM, but whoever he was, he was never in the Consular Section. Tom Stern was the only DCM I ever saw that came down to the Consular Section, and he came down, I believe, at the Section Chief's invitation. He came on a regular basis and improvements were made, but there were limitations.

The way the Section was laid out was terribly inefficient, as I have said. One of my biggest problems the first week or so that I worked there was taking the elevator up. Walking in the front door of the chancery, to get to the Consular Section, you had to use the elevator. You had to use the elevator; you couldn't use the staircase. The staircase was blocked off for security reasons, even though it was only one floor away. So we went up by the elevator, but then when I got off the elevator, I had a hell of a time finding my own office. It was ludicrous! It was absolutely ludicrous! But you had to weave your way, or wind your way through this warren of offices and strange little work spaces that later on became old hat. I have a very good sense of direction, and I was appalled that I was working in a place that I could get lost in.

We rotated among the various units. I think I probably went into IVs. I did IVs for a few months, and that was my first great introduction to immigrant visas. I remember I followed the traditional path. We would start new officers off with immediate-relative categories, because they were relatively easy to do and rather routine. Then you worked your way into P-5s, brothers and sisters and American citizens, and I really became quite good at reading the family register and trying to sort out family relationships and what was real and what wasn't real, what had been strange loose papers, and I thought the name looked familiar. I looked at them, and it was a couple of congressional with replies, and they all had to do with the case that I had interviewed and approved that morning. It was quite clear that these papers had been purposely detached from the case, and that simply was not standard procedure. All of that package should have come in to me so that I could have reviewed it all before I interviewed, and known what previous questions had been raised, what had been answered and what had not yet been answered.

So I took it to Mr. Kang, who was in charge of the IV workroom. I said, "Mr. Kang, what is this?" He said he didn't know. He thought it was rather strange. So at that point, I think we were all very sensitive to what might be going on. I took it in to Mary Ann Newman, who supervised the IV unit, and then we both went the Section Chief. Then Ed Lee, who was the security officer, came down and was interviewing everyone, and he interviewed Mr. Kang. Then I was called in again for a formal interview.

Apparently Mr. Kang claimed to Ed Lee that this was standard procedure -- that all congressional inquiries were detached from the interview papers. I said, "That is garbage. That is absolute

garbage. If this is standard procedure, this is the first time." Every other case I have ever had has always had the congressional correspondence attached. So clearly, when I put two and two together, we suspended action on the case and did not issue the visa that day. We ultimately turned down the case. Whatever the problem was, the man had not yet resolved the problem, and it was quite obvious that Kang had been paid off or approached. Later, when a major fraud scandal broke, Kang was one of the first people who was fired. We called in an investigation because there was so much of this type of thing going on.

Before the end of my tour in Seoul I came back to the American Services section. That was after NIV, also. NIV was educational. I had heard a lot of very, very interesting reasons as to why people should go to the United States that simply had no relationship to reality. What we had were people who claimed to be in business, although quite often when we tried to check and use the telephone numbers they gave us on their visa application form, there was no such business. The general line -- "the party line" -- was they had to go to the United States to do a market survey, and the market survey was never going to take less than six months, and they were always going to go to Los Angeles, Dallas, Atlanta, Washington, New York, and San Francisco. There was this circuit. Invariably, there was an affidavit of support was from a Korean American -- well, we hoped they were Korean American; they may well have been another Korean citizen -- living in Flushing. Bill Duffy and I again worked together in NIVs, and we used to think that there were a series of *yoguans*, Korean hotels, in Flushing, because everyone seemed to have the same address or lived within a six-square-block area. We also saw a fair number of retired Korean military types who suddenly decided that their lives could not proceed without having an MBA usually from some storefront operation on Wilshire Boulevard. It was quite clear that these people were trying to use our non-immigrant visas for purposes other than what they stated.

They oftentimes were "blocked IV" cases -- a case where perhaps they had an aunt and uncle in the United States who were American citizens, but the person in front of me applying for the NIV, if it was his mother who was the sister of an American citizen, this fellow's mother had died, therefore he could not benefit from P-5 status. Therefore, the only way to get into the United States would be through a non-immigrant visa, and obviously the aunt and uncle in the States weren't going to let him come back. It is never easy to refuse a visa. Some of the more blatant ones were easier to refuse, but none were really easy. I don't think any NIV officer takes the idea lightly to refuse someone when you are very conscious of your decision really affecting the life of the person opposite you -- that their life will take a different turn from that point on. If they are going to pursue higher education and they are going to pursue it outside Korea, then it had to be in a third country; it was not going to be in the United States. Or if they were going to see Aunt Minnie again, it was going to have to be elsewhere. Aunt Minnie was going to have to come back here, or they were going to have to meet in a third country. There is no way that this person qualified for a visa, given the terms of our law, whatever it was at the time.

Contrary to popular belief in some countries, I don't think consular officers get their kicks out of refusing people. I don't think they get some fiendish glee that appears when they refuse people. I think consular officers really, by and large, take their responsibilities quite seriously. They are there to administer the law. I think precious few consular officers agree with our law or think that it is the finest law there is. I personally think our immigration laws are one of the most convoluted, nonsensical laws that I have ever seen. But if you are going to take on the

responsibility for administering it, then you have to administer it. You don't have the luxury of picking and choosing which parts of the law you will uphold or which parts you will close one eye to; you just have got to go with it.

On occasion, we had pressures from outside sources to issue a visa. There was one very prominent Korean family, they were very successful commercially, and they had business subsidiaries in the United States. It was amazing, but each subsidiary was run by one of their children. Their son, who was running their office in New York, wanted to bring a maid into the US. The maid had not worked in Korea for the son for the minimum of one year, which was required at that time by the law. So I refused the maid, and I refused her twice. The next thing I knew, Miss Kim, one of the three Miss Kims in the NIV section, the senior Miss Kim came running in one day about 11:30, and she said I had an invitation to lunch that day. I said, "Really? I'm not aware of it."

She said Mrs. Kim, who was the mother of the fellow in New York, who normally socialized only with the Ambassador, if she bothered to socialize with the Ambassador at all, had invited me to lunch, and lunch was at 12:30, and here was the address. I told our Miss Kim to call the Mrs. Kim and thank her most graciously for her invitation, but that I was not available. And Miss Kim just thought I was crazy. She said, "How could you refuse this woman? She's the Mrs. Kim!" I politely explained to our NIV employee that it was not me who was being invited to lunch; it was my visa machine, and I wasn't going to be part of the game. If they wanted a maid for their son, there were plenty of maids available in New York City. They didn't need to bother me or waste my time. So I ate lunch in the cafeteria that day.

There were other cases. I remember the Political Counselor at the time, who would on occasions come down and promote various cases. I would have to really basically educate him in our law. Oftentimes, not just in Korea, but elsewhere, if I saw that someone else in the Embassy was interested in a case, and if the case was clearly issuable, I would call up the person who was interested in the case and tell them I was going to issue it, but let them make the brownie points for having issued the case. Because I had no interest in making brownie points; either I issued it or I didn't issue it. I was used to being able to sleep either way. But if they wanted to make some points from it, fine, and I was perfectly willing to help them out in that case, or even to alert them in advance of some cases that they weren't even aware of or hadn't been approached about, so they might be able to gain some points. This was one of the advantages of compound living. On our compound, I was really quite close to people in USIS, people in AID, people in both political and econ sections, so it worked out well.

Actually, I thought the Consular Section worked exceptionally well. I think also we were very lucky -- at least I was very lucky when I was there -- in that the particular combination of JOs [junior officers] -- and we all were basically JOs, except for Mary Ann Newman and Olin Whitmore, who were the only experienced officers. John St. Denis had had previous tours, but not as a consular officer. John lived out in Yongsan, so he didn't socialize with us as much. Most of us were single. There were a couple of married couples, but I don't think anyone had any children, and we were all in Compound Two. So we all just ran around together in the evenings, and on the weekends, we worked together during the day. Most of us have stayed in touch, and we get together quite often. I just went to a dinner party two weeks ago with Compound Two

people. We got along together exceptionally well, and I think the section was quite cohesive.

When I went back to American Services, there was this rather peculiar system of using the notarial as a way of screening out fraudulent marriages. An American who was going to marry a Korean would have to come in and swear. That was for the person who was filing a fiancé petition, I think. It wasn't the marriage so much; it was the fiancé petitions. We would do preliminary interviews before we would approve the petition and send it on to INS. It was really very interesting, because some of the Koreans found that if they could find an American citizen who was willing to file a fiancé petition and then if that was approved by INS, the Korean beneficiary of the petition would come in and would be interviewed. At that point, they would be interviewed by non-immigrant visa people, because a fiancé visa was a non-immigrant visa. If that visa were issued, then the terms of the visa required that the beneficiary enter the United States and then marry the petitioner within 90 days of entrance. If they didn't marry, then the beneficiary was to immediately depart the United States and return to Korea.

Some of the more shady applicants would regard the fiancé petition as a way of getting someone into the United States. They might marry, they might not marry, but at least they were in. If they married, it was generally just a marriage of convenience for those people, and then after an appropriate period of time, they would divorce and each party would go off and do their own thing.

So before the petition was filed, before we would sign off and approve the petition, we would do a preliminary interview. We would ask that both the petitioner and beneficiary be interviewed and be in Korea at the same time, and we would interview each one of them separately. We would ask all sorts of questions that I suppose were something of an infringement upon one's privacy, but we sort of got down to brass tacks very early in the game. If it looked like the couple really did know each other, if they had been living together for quite some time, if there was reason to believe that they really were going to marry in the States, that was fine. We were not trying to pass moral judgment on their living arrangements. That was not our intent. What we were trying to do was sort out the couples where the petitioner was being paid by the beneficiary to file the petition, to, in effect, provide a means for illegal immigration into the United States.

We had this one couple that been interviewed I don't know how many times, and none of us would approve a petition. It was really wild. As I recall, it was an American woman from Guam. Any case that came from Guam, we were immediately suspect of, anyway. This was an American woman from Guam who must have weighed 300 pounds, absolutely homely as sin, never had been married. At least according to her, she had never been married. Who knows what the Guam civil records had. But she was petitioning for some sleaze-bag bar owner out in Itaewon, who had been married three or four times, but never to an American. It was clear -- it was clear -- that this guy in Itaewon was paying this woman in Guam to file the petition. They would come in, we would interview them, then they would raise holy hell when we didn't approve it. They would just cause a huge ruckus out in the waiting room, and we would always have to have them escorted out. They would show up again three or four months later, hoping that a change in personnel in the Consular Section would help them out.

We would ask questions like, "What kind of work do you do? What is your normal pattern of

life? What time do you wake up in the morning? When do you go to bed? Where do you shop? Where do you eat? What is the layout of your house? What colors are the rooms?" Some of these questions were things that probably INS uses when they do interviews back here. In fact, some INS people came along and helped us put together some questions, I think, at one point. "Do you have any pets? What are their names? How old are they? Do you have any children? Does he have any children? How many times has he been married? How many times have you been married?" Back and forth. Things that were usually rather quantifiable and things that the other people either knew or didn't know. It was amazing how much the other person didn't know! We would catch them up on some very funny things sometimes. Sometimes the interviews were embarrassing.

My Korean was certainly not good enough to conduct that kind of interview in Korean. When I did straight NIV interviews, if the interpreter would ask the question, I could always understand the answer, so we wouldn't have to have the answer translated. We would just proceed to the next question. But in this kind of interview, I had to be very careful of both the question and the answer, so I would use the interpreter, Mr. Kim. And poor Mr. Kim, he would be mortified at some of the questions I was asking! You could always tell; he would be off looking in the distance, looking down. But he would faithfully translate my questions. He was equally appalled by some of the answers, I know.

Ministers were a problem because of our law. Our law permitted ministers to qualify for a certain category of immigrant visas, but the problem was in determining how to identify a minister, how to qualify as a minister. Did they have to have a flock of a certain size? Did they have to represent a church that was well known in both countries? What size was their congregation in Korea? What size would their congregation be in the United States? What have pastoral training did they have?

It became a problem for us, because at one point, some "entrepreneurs," I think, discovered that it was perhaps easier to get a minister's visa than, for example, a civil engineer's visa. So all of a sudden, we had some rather strange credentials showing up to prove that X applicant was a minister of religion. I must say, we reached the point where we were trying to be consistent in the way the section dealt with them, certainly, because we always wanted to be as consistent as we could, but there really weren't that many minister applicants. So we didn't see them all day, every day. We decided that it was best to have one person handle them, so all of the junior officers voted to have Mary Ann Newman handle them. She was chief of the section. Mary Ann was the one who became quite adept at sorting out a real honest-to-God minister as opposed to a fly-by-night.

While in Korea, I still was relatively enthusiastic about consular work. I was much more interested in the management side of it toward the end, and I was much more interested in running my own section. Basically, I had had a reasonable amount of management experience before I came into the Foreign Service. During my first tour -- it was a very small post, granted -- at least I did run my own section. I had to change some gears to go into a large section such as we had in Seoul, and not be anywhere near in charge of it.

On the other hand, I went to Seoul because I regarded it as a learning post, and I wanted to be

exposed to the cases that I was exposed to in Seoul. I learned a hell of a lot in Seoul. I had cases all day long, every day in Seoul that at most other posts you would see once or twice a year. This was very useful to me in subsequent years. For one thing, the last six months I was in Seoul, I was not in the Consular Section; I was a staff aide up in the Ambassador's office, which also gave me a different perspective on consular work, because I could see the kind of pressures that other sections of the Embassy were under. Anyway, at that point I wanted to continue in consular work, but wanted to run my own section.

JOHN T. BENNETT
Economic Counselor
Seoul (1976)

THOMAS STERN
Deputy Chief of Mission
Seoul (1976-1979)

John T. Bennett was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1929. When he was nine, his family moved to Washington, D.C.. He attended Sidwell Friends High School in Washington, and graduated from Harvard in 1950. After receiving his undergraduate degree in Government, he studied at University of California Berkeley, where he received a master's, then a Ph.D. in agricultural economics. He has also served abroad in Vietnam, Guatemala City and the Dominican Republic. He and Thomas Stern were interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1987.

Thomas Stern was born in Germany in 1928. He received a bachelor's degree from Haverford College in 1950 and graduated from the Maxwell School of Public Affairs in 1951. Mr. Stern's Foreign Service career included positions in Rome, Bonn, and Korea. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1980. He and John Bennett were interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1987.

BENNETT: I had been evacuated from Saigon in May of 1975. I started getting phone calls in Manila saying they wanted me to go to Korea, and I said, "Hell, no. I will talk about it when I get back to Washington. I went back to Washington and got the Ambassador in Jamaica to ask for me as his DCM. Then the system said no, I had to go to Korea or Geneva. I said, "Well, I'll go to Korea." I chose Korea because I would have been bored to tears in Geneva. Furthermore I didn't want another economic job. I wanted to get into the program direction "cone" if I could -- to become Deputy Chief of Mission. I had previously been interested in Korea, but I didn't know that much about it. As it turned out Korea was a very good assignment. I was not concerned for my family even though we lived within thirty miles of a rather hostile group.

STERN: I got there through the typical Foreign Service assignment. Dick Ericson, who was then the DCM, wanted very badly to come home for personal reasons. I had known Ambassador Dick Sneider slightly. So, when George Vest, then the Director of PM and my boss, heard that Ericson

wanted to come home, he worked out a swap. He was assigned to my position and I was assigned to his position. I knew nothing about Korea, except that it was allegedly a dangerous place. But Ericson knew nothing about PM, so that made us even.

BENNETT: Let me add something to this. The reason I was chosen to go to Korea, in part, was because the AID Director had also been Economic Counselor and had supervised the Commercial Counselor and the Agricultural Attaché, and all economic activities. The US was beginning to phase the AID program out, so at least the theory was that I was also going to be AID Director when I went. That did not take place. USAID finally appointed an AID representative. But it made some sense in terms of my own particular experience because I had been the Deputy Director in a couple of AID missions. There was a thought that I might be more acceptable for the AID bureaucracy. That was one of those negotiations that is rather important within the State Department, but it didn't work, however, because AID refused to make me the AID Director. It was not settled when I went, although Phil Habib, then the Assistant Secretary for EA, in fact, promised it to me and gave me all kinds of assurances about what I was going to have.

STERN: I might just compare the two because mine is a good illustration of "sound career planning", whereas John's assignment was just "happenstance".

BENNETT: Another Habib specialty.

STERN: Well, Habib in one case and Sneider in the other case. That is how career planning and assignments are made in the Department of State. It had nothing to do with either career planning or promotion, advancement and little with country or functional expertise.

BENNETT: Certainly I was not assigned because of my expertise in Korean matters. My knowledge of Korea wasn't why I was there; my knowledge of AID and economics was why I was there.

STERN: I had some knowledge of politico-military affairs and particularly security assistance. Political-military matters certainly were a major factor in our relationship with Korea and became even more soon after I arrived.

BENNETT: Politico-military affairs had been important since the end of WW II. I will never forget that just before I went, one of the few friends I talked to was Bill Lewis, then working as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Security Assistance in the State Department. Bill wanted to know why we weren't going to take the troops out. I said, "I don't know, don't ask me." But this tells you something about the climate of opinion in Washington -- post-Vietnam, pre-Carter.

My immediate concern when I arrived in Seoul was the phasing down of the AID mission. That was a problem that I had to worry about. The problem of the military assistance, a military relationship with Korea, was obviously becoming an issue and was to be, I suppose, the paramount issue for the next three years for us.

Overall, I think there was a feeling that the Koreans had done very well, although they still had some problems, and that, except on the political side, things were going along pretty well. There was much concern at that time about what we now call "human rights" and "movement towards democracy." That was an underlying anxiety then and that remained an anxiety until today. But we had any instructions about how to do anything about that problem. I think that goes with being an American Foreign Service officer. You worry about these issues. You take them as they come. Some are going to rise up and have to be dealt with, and others will glide along, and you just have to wait until the time is propitious.

As far as AID was concerned, what we had were the remnants of a large AID mission which had shrunk in size. Most of what was left was providing technical assistance or administering various loan and other AID programs. There were residual loans. One had just been signed by the AID Director just before I arrived -- the last one. Then there was PL 480 (Public Law 480, under which so-called surplus agricultural commodities are given or sold to foreign countries as a form of assistance), and I don't even remember how much money was involved in that, but it wasn't very much -- substantially less, at this point. It was clear that the AID mission was going to be essentially phased out as these existing loans, the pipeline of funds, were spent. If there were going to be any further PL 480 assistance, that would probably also get phased out.

STERN: Let me comment on that question because I have a slightly different perspective on this. This is a year later, but the subject of Korea and security assistance is one that I had been familiar with for a number of years, having worked on it since 1973. Security assistance actually comes in the form of cash. It is a draw-down against which the recipient country buys military weapons, hardware or even training or uniforms, depending on the program agreed upon with the U.S. military component in the country, usually the Military Assistance Group. The role of the State Department was one of essentially being the policy maker and usually the final judge in the Executive Branch of the size of the program. The role of the military was to assist in the procurement of what the American military and the Korean military had agreed upon as a sensible program.

Bill Lewis, who John mentioned earlier, was working for Under Secretary Carl Maw. Carl Maw was essentially Kissinger's private lawyer and spent very little time on the subject of security assistance. He was not that interested in it, and he had many other things he had to take care of. So, essentially it was Bill Lewis and I who managed the security assistance for the Department. My first supervisor was Sey Weiss, whose main interest in the political-military field was in East-West relationships -- U.S.-U.S.S.R. relationships -- disarmament, questions of that kind. He also was not very interested in security assistance. My second supervisor was George Vest, who became the Director-General of the Foreign Service, who although more interested in the subject, was just breaking in and had a lot of other things on his plate. The question of security assistance and the allocation of some scarce resources were essentially left to Bill Lewis and myself. In that context, the name Korea came up quite frequently because Korea had come a long way economically. There was a persistent question of how much longer, if indeed any longer, it should be eligible for security assistance. We had, from an economic point of view, far needier cases that we had to satisfy. On the other hand, Korea was facing this tremendous military force north of its border. We were always quite aware of the potential damage that even a reduction, much less a cut-off, of security assistance might do to the political stability on the Korean

Peninsula.

BENNETT: Let me add a couple of things to that because I think there are some distinctions between economic and military assistance. In the first place, in many cases, it is not just a question of money, it is also a question of what weapons are you going to get. That breaks down into another thing. In the Korean case, they were manufacturing some themselves, and that raised the question of technology transfer to manufacture the weapons. So, what we mostly call military assistance really encompasses some of these other things that are not strictly assistance, but are of equal concern. It is all one package, really as it should be; it is all related in one or another way.

STERN: Let me make one point here, though. John is right; it is one package. But it is not a package that the State Department plays an equal role in. That is to say, it plays a leading role in the allocation of the resources. It plays a very subsidiary role, or no role at all, in the actual procurement of the weapons. What the State Department receives from the Pentagon in support of an allocation is an illustrative program, which may or may not have any bearing in the final analysis on what is actually procured. This has always been a very difficult subject. It was difficult both in Washington and in the Embassy. In neither place had we much knowledge of the kind of hardware that the Koreans were actually procuring, either with U.S. or Korean money. Much of our knowledge came either from the American military or by sheer accident. By sheer accident, I include intelligence. It was not a very neat operation, either in Korea or anywhere else.

BENNETT: But I would also carry that one step back, one step further, which is that the State Department did play a significant role in the North Korea threat analysis. That also had considerable to do with the selection of weapons and so on.

STERN: John is theoretically correct, but as we get to the story a little bit later, when both of us were in Korea at the same time, it was not at all clear that the threat analysis was the driving force behind either weapon acquisition or as John suggested before, domestic weapons development. There were other forces that drove a second set of issues, which we will get to as the story develops chronologically. Things happened between 1975 and 1977-78 which were not directly related to security assistance, but which had a major impact on the security assistance. One of the issues, that you started to pursue and I think we ought to continue, is this question of troop withdrawal. We should let John proceed.

BENNETT: As I indicated, I was sort of surprised to hear Bill Lewis raise this question. It was a question that had never occurred to me up to then. Then I get out to Korea, and I think it was an issue from the time I got there. We had the Second Division plus some other support groups -- Air Force and Navy units, and missile units stationed in Korea. It was a reinforced division, plus a lot of other things. If I remember correctly, the issue came up within two weeks from the time that Carter declared his candidacy in early 1975. I think I am correct because the election was 1976, and he ran for quite a while before that. At any rate, as I remember it was an issue from almost the moment I got to Seoul, which was August of 1975.

The question of troop withdrawal has to be seen in the context of the times. Vietnam had just

fallen, the Nixon Doctrine had been pronounced. It said that countries had to make more of an effort to help themselves because the U.S. couldn't afford to make the military efforts that it had been. Nixon had previously withdrawn a division of troops from Korea in 1972. So, there was a history. For the Koreans it just became the *leitmotif* through my whole period there, and I guess through Tom's, in the sense that no conversation with a Korean rarely failed to touch on the issue of troop withdrawal and how devastating this was for the Koreans. The concern, very bluntly, was they were going to be left to face the North Koreans alone, and that this would almost certainly, in their minds, assure another Northern attack, and, in their view, a defeat for the South. This whole discussion got more and more involved. Some people on the American side would argue that we could take out the division and leave an Air Force facility so that we could run planes back in and bomb the hell out of North Korea if they attacked. That would be certainly sufficient to win the war and therefore to deter the North. The Koreans, I think, rightfully saw, at that time at least, that a ground presence -- a substantial ground presence -- committed the American side to come to Korea's aid in case of attack. But in some absolute sense, there was no way to extricate forty thousand men and get out of Korea. We couldn't have done it, and politically in the United States, obviously under those circumstances, we would not have been able to do it.

I think the most important part, and it took me a long time to reach this conclusion, was deterrence on the Korean Peninsula. The bigger the force on the South side, and the clearer the commitment of the Americans to Korea in case of an attack, the better the deterrent. It was always possible that the South could have held off the North by itself, but I always believed, and I still believe, that the North would never attack without some considerable assurance from China and the Soviet Union of support. The North is sitting with tons and tons of munitions, and they understand that from Day 1 they are going to start firing it just as fast as they can and as they have targets. So they are going to run out of material very quickly. Without assurance of resupply, the North -- essentially the Russians resupply, but some from China as well -- and the South -- with US resupply -- could not feel certain that it could survive, much less prevail without that support.

There is an interesting parallel that just occurred to me. North Vietnam, after its victory took over enormous stocks of weapons in the South. Yet, for the last four months in Vietnam, we heard nothing but complaints about the fact that they didn't have enough of this, or enough of that. What they were doing was hoarding stuff. They would have been better off if they hadn't hoarded it, but I think when you get into that kind of situation, you do have a "hoarding" mentality, and it really ends up tying one hand behind your back.

But I think the Koreans were right about US presence. They really were uptight. I still think, I don't know whether it's a division, but that some sort of clear commitment from the U.S. side is essential to deter the North.

STERN: To pick up the story eighteen months later -- still before the 1976 election, but well into the campaign. Although not a prominent part of Carter's campaign, it was a well-known fact that he desired to withdraw the Second Division. By the time I had arrived in Seoul, which was July 1, 1976, there was considerable doubt in the Koreans' minds, as I think John indicated, about our reliability and our commitment to their security. Everybody in the Embassy was filled with

stories of what catastrophes would happen if the Second Division were withdrawn from Korea.

BENNETT: We should go one step further, though, because the original Carter commitment to pull troops out took many different forms. One of the possibilities was we would take everybody out, not just the Second Division. And people worried about that as well. It is hard for me to remember all of the metamorphosis that troop withdrawal went through over the period that I was there, but there were substantial changes.

STERN: Let me just add one thing. The Carter policy position was never really fleshed out. It was one of these campaign statements, "We should get out of Korea." He never talked about why, or how, and when, and what would be the quid pro quos. It was just campaign rhetoric.

BENNETT: There was some intellectual to the Carter position. A whole bunch of things played - - human rights record being one of them. But the fundamental concern was that we would be committed to a war without any ability to make a choice on our side -- we were there, if it started, we were involved. Many people simply didn't like that automatic commitment.

STERN: Perhaps most important of all, however, was that polls consistently indicated that the United States should not come to the assistance of South Korea in case of a North Korean invasion. That was true then; it is even true today, although perhaps somewhat ameliorated. But certainly in the 1975-76 period, there was no support in this country for a repeat of the 1950 history. So Carter was in some respects playing to his audience.

BENNETT: Playing to a popular will.

STERN: ...or reflecting the audience's views. I don't think that Ford made much of a stand on this issue because he had read the polls as well as Carter had. I am sure the State Department put out some statements saying that this was a crazy idea, but it never really became a campaign issue per se.

BENNETT: It was not a major issue in the campaign. It was simply a commitment that Carter made in passing. Then after he got into office, he decided that he had to execute it.

STERN: That is a long history, too, which we ought to get into. The interesting part about this is that today it is hard to find the father of that idea. It is like you can't find a Nazi in Germany, you can't find the father of the Second Division withdrawal proposal in the United States today. All the alleged fathers have run for cover.

BENNETT: Okay, that's fair enough. I just think it was sort of an idea that seemed worth considering at the time, given all the other things that had happened, and that kind of hope generated a life of its own. And then after people looked at it for a while, they realized that it was not a great idea. It was one of those things that initially looked attractive and looked worse and worse, the longer you looked at it.

Although this was a salient issue on the Korean side, I don't think the Embassy did much reporting on it, other than, in 1975. But I think we got more worried about it, once Carter really

began talking in terms of making good on it after he was elected in November of 1976. This, obviously, is outside of my field, in the sense that I was doing the economic-commercial stuff until I got involved with how much could the Koreans support from their own resources. What kind of level of performance could we expect out of them was another part of the question. The AID program phasing out looked like another crutch that was being removed. So that added to the anxiety about the removal of the military.

STERN: On the political-military side, the issue was not a daily subject for reporting, but periodically, we would report a conversation we had with high government officials. The U.S. military certainly did a considerable amount of reporting on this subject.

One of the things that helped us out was Major General John H. Singlaub, of current fame [this being 1987], but of unknown quality or quantity to the Embassy at the time he arrived in Korea. He arrived in Seoul on the same plane as I did. Singlaub took it upon himself to challenge Carter publicly on this whole question of troop withdrawal. That helped to raise the issue in both public and private channels. It got raised, unfortunately, in public channels, not as an issue to be decided on its own, but primarily an issue of a subordinate officer challenging his superior officer, the Commander-in-Chief. The nature of the objection was somewhat lost in the dialogue about the broader issue. I have to remind you, however, that Singlaub challenged Carter twice after Carter was elected. The first time was in late 1977 and the second time, I believe, was in early 1978. After the first time, he was requested by the commanding general in Korea, General John Vessey, not to repeat his comments publicly again. That admonition was not heeded for very long. Sure enough, Jack decided it was time to make waves again, and so he repeated his public opposition to the troop withdrawal.

What I am saying is that we didn't need to report very much on it, although we did, periodically, because *deus ex machina* -- Singlaub -- had entered into the picture, and had brought the issue squarely to the front without our initiative.

With the Koreans our line was, "Look, the decision has not actually been made yet. Settle down, don't get too upset. Don't do anything rash." Because one of the things we were worried about all the time was a preemptive strike by the South Koreans against the North. To go back to the question of weapon acquisition, we were very loath to permit the Koreans to buy weapons which could be used for what we call, jokingly, the "offensive mode," because we were never quite sure that in fact they would not be used for those purposes. The theory of a first-strike was one that was voiced, if not frequently, at least often enough by the Korean military and some civilians, to give us some concern. One of the issues about which we were particularly sensitive concerned long-range missiles -- missiles which could, from the DMZ or even from Seoul, hit Pyongyang. We did our best to prevent the Koreans from acquiring any missiles or components thereof, which they could put together. The rest of this story is classified.

The US military had the same concerns. They did not have the capability, though, of monitoring what in fact was going on in the missile development program. There were some very amusing aspects of this, because the missile development was going on in an organization which was headed by a former teacher of Park Chung Hee's daughter, who through his association with her, had direct access to the Blue House and to the President himself.

BENNETT: The missile program was always interesting to me because there were enough Americans around to see some tests. I remember seeing one of these damn things! They had fired one off -- I was down in Taechon Beach, when I looked up, and there this damn thing goes across the sky.

STERN: Yes. But they were not long-range. Those were anti-aircraft missiles.

BENNETT: Tom, when it comes off the horizon on one side and goes down the horizon on the other, that is not short-range.

STERN: Well, if you can see it going down it is short-range.

BENNETT: You could not see it going down. All I can see is it going over the horizon.

STERN: Nevertheless, things were being done that were not entirely in accordance with our wishes or our policies. But I want to pursue this a little bit because -- and I want John to join in just a second -- this whole issue of the division withdrawal created an atmosphere of beleagerment in Seoul. Particularly in the Blue House, where Park Chung Hee began to see himself as standing as "Horatio at the bridge", fighting off all the hordes, including his alleged friends. This had considerable economic consequences because this perception, and I hope John will amplify on this, took Korea off its development direction, which was not in accordance with our wishes. It had, obviously, considerable impact on both their military acquisition program and their own domestic military hardware development program. They were thinking seriously of having to go it alone. And they were beginning to gear their long-range plans on that assumption. As I suggested to you, that led them to go into ventures with which we were not particularly pleased and which had some serious economic impacts.

The analogy that some drew between Israel and Korea was not quite that, at least not from my contacts. Most of my contacts were great fans of Israel, but not because of the Israeli alleged preemptive strikes [if in fact that's what it was], but because they saw themselves becoming more and more like Israel. That is, surrounded by enemies on all sides, beleaguered, and having to do it on their own. One of the great shocks to the Korean body politic was the day that the Israelis decided to close their Embassy in Seoul. That had a real impact on their psychology. An unfortunate impact. I think the Israelis closed their Embassy for two reasons. The official reason was budgetary. I suspect the real reason was that the Koreans had not opened an Embassy in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. They were handling their Israeli relations from their Embassy in Rome and that asymmetry bothered the Israelis.

I would like to have John deal with the consequences of the threat of troop withdrawal on the economic development program, because I think that's a very interesting story.

BENNETT: It was a little bit more complicated than what Tom was suggesting in the sense that at this point in Korea's economic development, there was some logic supporting its going to more high technology and heavier industry. In fact, the decision to do some of this probably goes back to the late 1960's and early 1970's when some basic decisions like the beginning of

production of chemicals, the base for the plastic industry and this sort of thing were made. The steel industry was started in the early 1970's but the decision had been made earlier. The shipbuilding industry -- ditto, and these things all relate one to the other. The contrast is with light industry -- export driven, not very high value-added, not very high skilled but labor intensive and user of less capital. In the late 1970's they are switching to heavy capital-heavy capital and higher technology. This has, obviously, a military content in that if you can build steel then you can build military machines out of steel. Shipbuilding obviously has some naval implications. Ultimately, they were talking about designing their own tank and so on. There were a bunch of problems. One was that military investments misused capital. Another was that it pressed the available supply of skilled or highly educated people -- science people. A third thing was that they get involved in such a wide variety of things that they had problems assimilating them. In fact, some of the economic problems they got into in 1977-78, which were compounded by events in 1979-80, had their origins in syndrome. They just tried to do too many things at one time. Fundamentally the heavy military industry should have been a second order, not first order things. There were other things they could have done better. This plays out today in the sense that some of the economic policies that the opposition attacks the government for taking, had their origins in the late 1970's. The big companies are in part a consequence of the decision to go this high-tech, high-capital intensive route. And this clearly also then created a composition of trade which made for greater conflicts with the United States in its trade relations. Everything depends on everything else in this.

STERN: Our instructions from Washington had very little to do with troop withdrawal. The troop withdrawal issue was one that only cropped up occasionally, and then it was usually raised by other concerns, such as Singlaub. In 1977 the major issues we were dealing with were new ones. The Carter administration, for example, emphasized human rights, and there we were, flooded -- that is an overstatement -- burdened with messages from the home office about what a bad thing blocking all political opposition was. I mention the human rights issue because it had an effect -- I think impact is a little bit too strong -- it had an effect on the troop withdrawal issue, and on the provision of security assistance. The security assistance law had been tightened considerably to force the Administration to take the human rights situation into account as it decided how to allocate security assistance resources. So human rights had a role to play in this whole question of political-military relationship, and on the view of the Koreans about the commitment of the "Big Brother", the United States, to their security and safety.

BENNETT: Which is to say that the human rights issue we had been bragging about, that made the Koreans nervous about our commitment to them in a different dimension. It made our commitment to the ROK's security more precarious. And they were right. It did have a funny kind of effect. There are a couple of things I should add to this. Carter is in the White House, Cyrus Vance is Secretary of State, Dick Holbrooke is Assistant Secretary for East Asia, and Pat Derian is the zealot for human rights. People make a difference in these things. I think Holbrooke was put on the defensive at the very least. I think he was in the offense initially on some of these issues. On troop withdrawal, I think he was at least not persuaded one way or another. The other part is Pat Derian really felt she had a mandate to go out and make human rights terribly important in American foreign policy. I would argue that it's always been important in American foreign policy, but she was going to make it more obvious, more egregious. There is one other thing that occurs to me that is worth saying; that is, I think the evolution of the view of the troop

issue in the American Embassy took some time to crystalize. I can remember long discussions about this and my own questioning from one point of view to the other. What harm did it really do? How did it objectively change the military situation if you take out half a division, or a whole division? I came to the conclusion, and I think the Embassy came to the same conclusion, that it was a lousy idea.

STERN: Yes, it was a lousy idea if you assume, as most everybody did, that the North Koreans were unstable and unpredictable. We can get into a long discussion about this. I happen to be in the very great minority on that question, but we can discuss that question later. The point is that John is absolutely right. The proposition to withdraw troops was one that was worthy of exploration and discussion. It did not need to have the knee-jerk reaction that Singlaub had. It was a proposition that could be argued with some merit on both sides, and it depended in part, at least, on your view of the reliability of the North Koreans.

BENNETT: The Embassy viewed North Korea as quite capable of doing desperate things. We did not know enough about the North. One of the things that came out of this period is how little we knew about the North. Most of the stuff we thought we knew on the economic side was baloney. What we had came primarily from the CIA at this point. The intelligence effort that we had exerted on North Korea was scanty, scandalously poor. I was able in about two weeks to learn everything I could about North Korea on the economic side that was worth knowing. It was that poor. That contributes to one's uncertainty about the move to pull the troops out. You don't know who your enemy is.

The other part that came out of this was that it became clear that we could not move that division somewhere else and save money. It would not have saved money. It would have cost us a potload of money.

STERN: John raises a very interesting point, because one of the reasons that the military objected so strenuously to the 2nd Division withdrawal was not only that it would cost them a lot of money, but in fact there was no easy home in the U.S. for the division. All the bases in the United States which could have housed that division were already occupied. Fort Lewis would have been the normal place it would go, but that was all taken up. The best answer that the military finally came up with is splitting that division into two, having one half at Fort Drum in New York and the other half somewhere in New Jersey. That obviously did not make the military's heart beat with joy. These decisions, although they are discussed on a very high -- sometime esoteric -- policy level, often come down to the practical realities of the world. In this particular case, this is a perfect illustration of why, at least, the Pentagon would object to moving the division because they were very concerned they would lose it. If they couldn't find a home for it, they would lose it.

The strategic theory is that South Korea is pivotal to the defense of Japan, which is pivotal to the defense of the United States. It is a house of cards; if one falls, all of them fall. We have heard the same thesis for other geographic areas. It was not always clear to me that this is a good illustration or a sound theory, but that is what it has always been, and continues up to today to be the American perception of the Northeast Asia triangle. South Korea is the pivotal aspect to that because the Japanese only have a very limited military capacity, particularly on the ground, and

are therefore not able to defend themselves with what they have. Everybody has to rely on the South Koreans.

BENNETT: Let me pick up on that, because I think the evolution of my own thought process on that was that obviously that the domino theory was not a very persuasive argument. It seems to me that, clearly, there is a much more persuasive argument. You have, I think, to think of Northeast Asia as a stable area now. That is, it is like a very strong position on a chess board, where the two sides are facing each other from equally strong positions. And, in a sense, as long as those positions remain, it is stable because nobody can gain anything by attacking. I think that is what we would have lost had we begun changing the power relationships in the area. In particular we were looking at an evolution in China. There were some things happening in Russia that we didn't understand at the time, but which obviously have gone on all the way to where we are today. Japan itself; I think people felt that if, for example, the two Koreas were reunited under the North, that this would have profound political effects on Japan, which would feel threatened, and would react. I found that very persuasive. It was not, so much that overt military action in the area would lead to a blowup of the world, although that was always possible too. If you got a military action, go back to World War I, one thing led to another, and to another, and to another, and pretty soon you could have a world war where we would be throwing nuclear missiles at each other. That's not a risk that is totally to be discounted under those circumstances. I probably would not have talked to people in the Department on these issues, but I sort of absorbed it out of being in the Embassy, and listening to Sneider and others talk on the subject, and then adding my own ideas. But, I think this was part also of the evolution, or emergence of a kind of consensus that at the time.

STERN: All foreign affairs institutions in this world operate on the old simple theory: "If it works, don't fix it." And in Korea you had the stability that John refers to, and nobody was interested in doing anything to rock the boat because nobody could be quite sure of the outcome. So, if you're in that situation, you stick with what you have and rock the boat as little as possible.

BENNETT: I would have put it a little stronger than that. I would have said rocking the boat was very likely to screw things up, and the gains from rocking the boat seemed at the time to be very small.

STERN: This is where I would somewhat disagree with John, because it was never quite clear to me that either of the North Korean allies would permit Pyongyang to go very far, even if the 2nd Division had been withdrawn. The North-South Korea issue must be viewed in the context of the global situation, as John suggested. Whether Kim Il Sung wanted to invade South Korea had nothing to do with whether he would have gotten away with it. It had to do much more with US-PRC rapprochement, and the US-USSR relationship at that time. Kim Il Sung, as well as the South Koreans, were, and in part still are today, a pawn in the Big Power relationships. Had I been Carter, and wished to pursue the 2nd Division issue, the first place I would have gone was Peking, and the second place I would have gone to was Moscow. I would not have raised the question openly in a debate in the United States.

The fact of the matter is that neither of those two actions was taken, which suggested to me at the time that it was not an entirely serious proposition on Carter's part. While we are on politico-

military subjects, let me just mention the "tree cutting" incident that took place in August, 1976. It is etched in my memory forever. As, I mentioned earlier, I arrived on July 1, 1976 -- brand-new, having known relatively little about Korea. I was introduced to the Koreans on July 4, in that usual mass-gathering on the Ambassador's lawn. It was also the bicentennial, so it was even larger than usual, and I had to remember all the Kim, Parks and Lees around in a very brief time. A week later, Ambassador Sneider left for his annual vacation. His last words to me as he got on the plane were: "Don't worry, Tom, nothing happens here in the summertime. Just relax and take it easy."

A few weeks later, on August 17th, two of our officers were brutally attacked and killed in the DMZ. Now, to describe the DMZ. The DMZ is an area that separates the North and South Korean forces, averaging a mile in width, some places very narrow and quite wide in some other places. When you get toward the east coast the separation is considerably broader than two kilometers because of the mountain ranges. The joint security area, which is a part of the DMZ, is a small area in which the few and far between dialogues between the signers of the armistice take place. In 1977, this area was patrolled by both U.S. and North Korean troops, which gave rise to periodic confrontations. The area consists of a watchtower -- I am now describing the south side of the joint security area -- a couple of other small buildings, and half of three buildings -- the other half being on the North Korean side -- which were used by the conferees for their periodical meetings. On the other side was a large facade of an alleged office building which we were quite certain, however, was only a facade with nothing behind it. There were also two watchtowers on the north side, from which the North Koreans took pictures of every American going into the joint security area, so that I am sure all of our pictures are on file in Pyongyang. Whether they can retrieve them or not is a different story. The famous tree lay on the south side of the joint security area, approximately 200 yards from what was called "the bridge of no return," which had been used during the Korean War for exchange of prisoners. We wanted to prune the tree, as we had a right to do under the Armistice. The North Koreans insisted that this was a holy tree. That is, it was sacred in their minds, and therefore they were unwilling to have it touched at all. Our insistence was that we could prune it because the tree had grown so big it was obscuring our guards' vision of North Korea and the bridge.

BENNETT: Also, we had a tower down by the bridge which we had put men in, and we couldn't see them from further back. Wasn't that it? Our view of those guys up by the bridge was obscured.

STERN: That may be true, because there were some other buildings, some observation towers in that area. In any case, one Sunday morning a small detail of American troops, headed by a captain and a lieutenant, decided, after having negotiated, or attempted to negotiate with the North, the right to prune that tree -- they finally decided that was not going to be agreed to, and decided to take it upon themselves to go ahead and prune the tree. We in the Embassy knew nothing about it. It is still unclear today how far up in the chain of command that action had been approved. It was certainly not an issue of a nature which prevented the commanding general at that time, Dick Stilwell, from leaving the country for a well-earned rest in Japan. So, what you had in the American presence in Korea was a three-star air force officer who had been the deputy and a green, untried, untested DCM, who certainly knew nothing about tree-pruning and only a little more about Korea. As I recall the story, the American detail went ahead and started pruning

the tree and were fallen upon by a squad of North Korean troops carrying bats and axes. In the melee the two officers were brutally beaten and killed.

For some reason or other, the alarm was not given so that the reinforcement troops did not arrive until much later, by which time the North Koreans had pretty well taken off and gone back to their side of the DMZ. Immediately, of course, a major uproar was raised because obviously this is not the way we would like the world to behave. Cable traffic increased by leaps and bounds, and all of them NIACT -- "night action, top-priority, wake everybody up, don't let anybody rest, we have got to get an answer to this." The first messages, of course, were in the military channels. It was a couple, if not several hours later that the Embassy found out what in fact had happened. The Commanding General was called back from Tokyo; no action was taken to bring back our Ambassador, at least until the situation had become a little clearer. We were faced with a very difficult question; namely, was this a provoked attack which had been ordered by higher authorities, or was this just the act of a sergeant who was in charge of the North Korean detail who had been so attached to that tree, and felt so strongly about it that he decided to murder a couple of Americans in order to defend it. In a society like North Korea which, as John pointed out before, was completely closed, the answer to that question was not easily available, and that is somewhat akin to some situations we have today. Motivation and direction is not always easy to discern.

One of the interesting part of the episode, to me at least, was the tight control that the Pentagon and Henry Kissinger had on the situation. They immediately put monitors in the DMZ overlooking this particular area and the picture was then relayed back to Washington so that Washington could move the troops as it wished with the American General in Seoul essentially being only an intermediary to pass whatever orders he had from Washington to the commander out in the field. That monitoring system was set up within hours. The communication system was something fantastic. It was immediate, and live, and in real time. But the interesting aspect of this, and the one that really grated on General Stilwell's soul, and I am sure it would grate on any general's soul, was that he became a messenger boy. In fact, Washington had as complete a picture of the scenario as he had. They had maps of the area, they knew exactly the distances and where our troops were, and they knew where the South Koreans and the North Koreans were. Washington was able, when the time finally came to complete the pruning of that tree, to move our troops as well as General Stilwell could. They had just as much information. The real "war room" was in the Joint-Chiefs of Staff area in the Pentagon and they had a twenty-four hour watch on duty, headed of course by a senior officer. When the time came to move the troops, I am sure all the chiefs were there. Kissinger, who was not, as far as I know, in the Pentagon War Room, was in the White House War Room.

The other memory I have of this incident was also of some concern to some quarters in Washington. I got a very nasty note, also NIACT [Night Action telegram] from Phil Habib asking me whether I had seen the President. My answer was no. General Stilwell went to see him and I felt that this was essentially a military issue, and therefore I did not go along, although General Stilwell did invite me to go with him. This is the other, I think, mystifying part of this whole story. Where, in a situation like Korea, does the political arm end and where does the military arm begin? I have never been a great proponent of civilian generals, as I have never been a proponent of military ambassadors. But to draw the line becomes a very fine and delicate

point. And I, perhaps, drew the line incorrectly. I perhaps should have accepted Stilwell's invitation, and should have gone to see President Park. But my decision had been that the situation had turned to be essentially a military one and one therefore that General Stilwell ought to handle. It perhaps should not be confused by the presence of the American Chargé. That obviously wasn't Kissinger's view because he would have wanted me to be present on the front lines -- i.e. President Park's office. Nowhere, that I know of, in the training of DCMs, was there anything that would have taught me how to react in a situation of that kind. Perhaps had I been in Vietnam I would have had a better understanding of that kind of situation. But nowhere in my experience or training was I able to pick up anything that would have given me some guidance on whether I should have gone to see the President with General Stilwell or not. It would not have made any difference, because the issue was so closely controlled by Washington. Under different circumstances, it might have made a difference, I guess. It did not make a difference because Stilwell was in no better position than I was in telling him what Washington was thinking about. I guess General Stilwell just briefed him on what had happened in the DMZ. Remember, all the troops in the DMZ were under Stilwell's control, even the Korean troops that were there. I guess he just briefed Park, and then Park probably asked "What are you going to do next?" and Stilwell probably said "I am waiting for orders, sir."

BENNETT: I think, if I had been in Tom's position, I'd have had to go with Stilwell. The rivalry between Sneider and Stilwell was so powerful that you had to continue to exert the authority of the Embassy.

STERN: At that stage, of course, I didn't know that much about that relationship. I had been briefed that it was tense, but I don't think anyone told me that they hardly spoke to each other.

BENNETT: You were too new on the scene.

STERN: That is right; I was too new on the scene. I had heard something about the rivalry, but I didn't know how intense it was. I learned that a while later. But I was impressed by the fact that Stilwell asked me if I wanted to go. That suggested to me that, if there were a rivalry, at least it had not been applied to me yet and I could have some confidence in his telling me afterwards what went on. In fact, as I recall, very little went on, so it didn't make a difference.

In any case, after going through all the options, which could have ranged from bombarding Pyongyang to doing nothing, the decision was finally made that we would reassert our rights to cut that tree down, and we sent in a sizeable squad of American troops and a couple of chainsaws. Sure enough, the tree was pruned. Not cut down, pruned. The tree is still there for all to see. The Embassy had no input to this decision. none whatsoever. Embassy input in this whole episode was minimal. The Embassy was headed by a green DCM. The State Department was run by a very strong Secretary of State. We were never asked for our opinions. We kept submitting reports, of course, of what was going on in the streets, and what we could find out in the military. In fact, Paul Cleveland, who is now Ambassador to New Zealand, was sent out to sit in with Stilwell in the War Room at his headquarters. And I went over there periodically myself. But, it was a one-way street. We reported whatever we could pick up, sent it back, usually as an urgent NIACT message. But not once, except for that message that Habib sent on my inaction, did we ever hear from Washington. Of course, Ambassador Sneider was back in the US and Phil Habib

knew Korea better than any other official in Washington.

BENNETT: That was a real problem right there. The fact that you had a former Ambassador to Korea sitting in the Under Secretary's job in Washington, actually tended to pull all the power, all the decision-making into the center again, and you don't necessarily want that, because ex-officials may not be current.

STERN: And secondly, as far as I know, Dick Sneider, who as I said was on home leave, was not called back to Washington to assist with this. If there were any conversations, they were by telephone from Washington to Vermont. So, Habib did not use whatever most recent knowledge of Korea there was, even though he had it available.

BENNETT: We are getting close, here, to the relationship between those two people. Between Sneider and Habib. That happened to be fairly negative.

STERN: On the US military side I think we brought in some B-52's and we brought the navy -- the Sixth Fleet carriers -- off the shore. But there was no war hysteria. I don't think there was anybody in either the Embassy or the military who foresaw this as beginning a World War III. John can comment on this more deeply than I can because I was so engrossed in my own problems I don't know what the rest of the Embassy was thinking, but I didn't feel there was any great concern. People weren't packing up and going home.

BENNETT: I will tell you that I happened to be at Mount Sorak on holiday and after four days I got word that the Embassy had phoned me. Sorak was a mountain resort on the east coast, about four or five hours from Seoul by car. I got word that I had been phoned, and at this point I was going back anyway, so I figured I would just wait until I got back to find out what had happened. I had no idea what had happened, obviously. The immediate reason was that they tried to get hold of me because I would be useful. Then, as events played out, they had no more interest in getting me. So I continued to go fishing. I think that is probably a fair description.

STERN: Some people have raised the interesting question on whether we were much too relaxed about this incident. One of the reasons I did not feel any sense of panic or urgency was that we did not see any signs on the North Korean side of any mobilization. The military activity was primarily on our part. As John said earlier, the intelligence collection capability on North Korea was relatively limited. Nevertheless, we could have detected some movements had that been taking place. And they were not taking place, so that I don't think anybody -- either the command or in the Embassy -- felt very threatened at that point in time.

BENNETT: Some time after the tree incident, Mort Abramowitz came out because he was ISA at that point. ISA is the Office of International Security Affairs in the Pentagon.

STERN: If there were any trips, most of them were on the military side.

BENNETT: Brzezinski -- then the NSC Advisor -- came out, I remember that. At this point we now get into the Force Improvement Program and all that entailed. If you are going to take the troops out, you have to build up the Korean military, make them feel more self-confident. So, we

went down that route. I remember I was engaged in a long exercise -- it took months -- providing the economic justification for raising the level of military assistance. The Koreans met our plans with great skepticism. It didn't assuage their feelings a bit. I would talk to the Economic Planning Board (EPB) people, Kim Jae Ik, who was then the Director-General of Planning. I would talk to some people in the Blue House like Oh Won Cho who was one of our favorite buddies. I would talk to the Minister of Trade. Occasionally I would accompany somebody on the military side, and we would go talk to somebody in the Korean military, but most of it, in fact, other than providing a kind of rationale which would be useful to Washington, most of the negotiations on this thing were done by General Street, the MAAG Chief -- and his people on with the Korean military. This was one of those macro-economic exercises in which you can justify a given level of assistance based on their requirements for foreign exchange and for funds within the Korean economy. It is a very crude kind of exercise, but what it did ultimately was justify a certain level of funds that then went on for five years not because it was economically justified any longer, but because it was politically justified, given what we wanted out of the Korean side.

STERN: That is correct. The Force Improvement Program was essentially a wish list that the Koreans had been asked to put together.

BENNETT: We also imposed some things on them.

STERN: The Korean "requirements", as John said, didn't make any economic sense, and I am not sure they made any military sense either because such things as submarines were included in Korean assistance.

BENNETT: Was the "ROK tank" in there at that point, I don't remember?

STERN: No, I think that came a little bit later. That has a history all of its own. I used to discuss the FIP frequently with General Johnny Sohn, who at that time was in charge of putting the FIP together. As everything else in Korea it goes by five years. So, it was the First Force Improvement Plan, the Second Force Improvement Plan and so on. What General Sohn did was ask each of the three services what they would like to have in the way of military armaments and they, following the American practice, gave him everything they could think of, and he put it all together. There was a massive request, which we could obviously not afford to provide.

BENNETT: We sent the first draft back and said put priorities on this stuff, and they did, then we put priorities on the stuff, and we argued about which priorities should apply.

STERN: Then we decided to give them whatever we had available as "surplus". It was a long, drawn-out process which, at the end, I guess, was helpful.

BENNETT: Sure. One of the things it did was change the subject. We weren't talking about taking the troops out; we were talking about strengthening Korea's military. We spent a couple of years arguing about this thing.

STERN: The issue of troop withdrawal hung in the balance until Carter agreed to visit Korea in June of 1979. At that time he had not finally made a decision, and we in the Embassy were quite

hopeful that we might be able to get him to reverse it. So, first of all when he came, he got lengthy briefings, all of which were directed at the question of why the troops should not be withdrawn. After running around the track with the troops and visiting with them, jogging around the Secret Gardens [in Seoul] with his wife, Carter finally went to see President Park and listened to the President's plea. He also went around to see other senior officials, all of whom gave him the same pitch -- namely, "You cannot withdraw troops."

In returning from his call on the President to the Ambassador's residence where he was staying (at that time the Ambassador was William Gleysteen), they came up to the Residence and Ambassador Gleysteen asked that the President not get out, but continue the conversation about troop withdrawal. The people in the car were the President, the Ambassador, and Brzezinski. Here there were the three of them with the Korean driver in the front discussing heatedly what to do about troop withdrawal. The vote was, obviously, two against one -- the President. Minutes went by and nobody was leaving the car, nor did we know what was going on in the car. I am sure everybody was getting very nervous -- all the attendants who were standing outside chewing their fingernails, wondering when to open the door so the President could get out, standing there minutes on end. They finally came up with a compromise, part of which is classified, part of which reflects a demand that the Koreans increase their expenditures on defense up to 6% of GNP, which was the U.S. level. They were somewhat below that at that time. Not much, but somewhat.

In exchange for these considerations, the President would then suspend any further consideration on troop withdrawal. And that's the way the car meeting came out. That was the final outcome after years of debating troop withdrawal; it was all decided within fifteen to twenty minutes in the back seat of a limousine, with a Korean driver. And that is how the Second Division remained in Korea.

BENNETT: let me return to the human rights issue for a moment. This issue was there when I got to Korea in 1975. It was kind of a background issue at all times. Kim Dae Jung was in jail; Kim Chi Ha, the Catholic poet was in jail; there were a number of people who were picked up in this period for political demonstrations, or worse, who were tried. The trials went on for weeks. They were somewhat inflammatory; the American press covered them at considerable length. It was the sort of issue on which no American could really defend the Koreans simply because these were about things we accept as fundamental. We are not basically talking about torture, although accusations of that keep coming up from one time to another, but really political rights issues. The Koreans were not going to move on those and we were not going to give in either. This intensified the pressure on the troop withdrawal issue because it made the American public less sympathetic to keeping troops there for what was essentially an authoritarian, and maybe a bad authoritarian government. It never really came to a head at this point. Kim Dae Jung had earlier fled the country under threats to his life, and had been kidnapped in Japan and brought back to Korea; I think we had something to do with saving him; but there was no issue on which we could intervene at this point that would have been particularly helpful. Nevertheless, there were people in Washington who wanted us to do various things publicly. We did, for example, cover the trials pretty extensively. We kept a count of how many people we presumably considered as political prisoners. We constantly got letters about the state of Kim Dae Jung's health, and someone had to go to check this out. There was a sort of daily report, and it becomes

an issue between us and the Koreans -- a problem in dealing with the Korean government and getting information. I used to hear about it because I would talk to my Korean economic colleagues and they would say, "What the hell are you beating up on us about these human rights issues?" I would tell them, "It is very simple; we believe in this stuff." They would get it off their chest and I would get the chance to assert my own views on the subject.

The Ambassador was in something of a dilemma through all of this. Troop withdrawal issues and some other issues that we faced were, I think, higher priorities in his mind. What the human rights issue did was complicate his negotiations. In the Embassy itself there were some people who had fairly strong human rights views, and felt that the Embassy ought to be writing more inflammatory reporting on the subject. I refer particularly to John La Mazza, the labor officer.

STERN: The labor officer having been charged with responsibility for monitoring human rights.

BENNETT: The Ambassador didn't really want the staff doing this stuff because all it did was evoke more messages from Washington, and make him go and issue demarches to the Foreign Minister on human rights problems. He had to go to the Koreans and try to get a response out of them. The consequence was that Sneider really found the guys in the Embassy epitomized his human rights problem, and he wouldn't talk to them. They were non-people as far as he was concerned. They didn't exist.

STERN: It was a very difficult issue. We may well stand for human rights; we understand why we are interested in human rights. But to translate that into Korean terms, and make it meaningful to Koreans, at least at that time, was an almost impossible job. The answer was always, "Yes, that sounds very good, but don't forget thirty miles from here we have 600,000 troops ready to invade us, and if we ease up down here, they will be right at our doorsteps the next minute".

It was the kind of dialogue where the two sides just pass each other. It was never very satisfactory. At least, I never found my conversations very satisfactory, and I tended to, sometimes at least, make them rather "pro forma." There was no understanding on the Korean side of the pluses and minuses of human rights, or on our part, their concern for their security.

BENNETT: I was completely sympathetic to Sneider's dilemma. There are only certain things you can get done with a government in any given time. We had enough on our plate already, and we kept getting little add-ons like Tongsun Park. That is point one. What can you do in the human rights area? We had taken 100 years to get legal equality for blacks in the United States, and we expected the Koreans to put in a full-fledged democratic form of government overnight. It doesn't happen that way. There had to be institutional and mental changes, cultural changes that are consistent with it before you can really get reform that means anything. That just was totally at odds with what Washington wanted us to do. One of the things I used to find interesting, and I felt over the long run useful to talk with Koreans about, was the question of what did they want in a national assembly. What kind of government, after Park, did it make sense to have in Korea? We got some fairly interesting answers. I finally concluded, for example, that in my own mind, some sort of parliamentary system made more sense than a centralized, authoritarian system -- that it would solve some problems which the existing system really

created. This was actually a subject of discussion in the current (1987) proposals for constitutional change. This was not a quick process.

STERN: I would like to make a couple of quick points. Number one, I want to reemphasize what John said about Sneider's view on human rights. He was certainly a proponent of human rights. But there are other concerns involved when you are talking to a foreign culture.

Secondly, my clientele was primarily the Korean military. Now there was a group to whom the phrase "human rights" meant absolutely nothing. It was like talking to the wall. My conversations with them were, as I suggested before, was like two ships passing in the night. There was just no common ground on which to have a discussion. We paid a lot of lip service to human rights, but when it came time for day to day activities, seldom was it a concern. An embassy like Seoul has so many things on its plate day in and day out that human rights becomes part of a large show and is mentioned most often just in passing.

We used to get messages periodically from the State Department, Pat Derian's office, and we would wave the flag and that was the end of it. There was very little connection between human rights and our policy vis a vis Korea.

BENNETT: The security issue was the *leitmotif* in this period. That one went all the way through the period. That was I think the most important issue. There were other issues that came up, and then there were some we actually began to worry about -- the whole set of questions about how do you make a relationship with the North more stable, less uncertain, less dangerous.

Another one which we started to work on during this period was trying to begin the process of liberalizing, of market-opening to American investment and goods in Korea, and removing the protectionist measures. This was something Sneider felt very strongly had to begin then because it would take a long time. It is twelve years later now, and he was right. We still have a long way to go. But, if you didn't begin then, would have had a much more difficult, and a more confrontational situation.

There were lots of issues of this sort that we wanted to begin to work on with the Koreans, and we did. But, in a sense I think Sneider was very good because he anticipated problems. We didn't always succeed in doing very much, but we laid a base for later people.

STERN: I also want to stress that point. Sneider was very good. He looked at the situation in much longer terms than I think either Washington or any of perhaps us did. For example, we spent a long time developing a message concerning the need for institution-building in Korea.

BENNETT: That goes with democratic rights too.

STERN: Building a base so that political development could take place. But the fact of the matter is that each of us in the Embassy had a small piece of the total pie. We were concerned with that piece, we worked with that piece, we spent innumerable hours on that piece, and it was very difficult to see whether that piece had any relationship to anybody else's piece. Only secondarily did we worry about things that went across the board. That was true even in a small

institution such as the Embassy in Seoul, large though it may have been, it was nevertheless a small institution. Issues that cut across various segments of the Embassy were very difficult to handle. We had staff meetings, country team meetings and yet some people felt left out. The fact was that there was nothing to be left out from. There wasn't that much more going on in the political section that the economic section did not know, or in the economic section that the consular section did not know. People just thought there was a lot more going on than there really was.

When an issue of the kind we were talking about, that is, one that cut across the board like institution-building, then I think a lot of the junior officers got involved -- a lot of people who may never have been involved in issues of this kind got involved. But those were rare occasions. Most of the time we each stuck to your knitting and worried about our assignments, and that was all one had got time for.

BENNETT: You had a trade show opening tomorrow. You had a report that was due in two days, so you worried about getting it done. You had an instruction to go talk to somebody about something, so you had to get the appointment and go do it. That sort of thing. There was a lot of day-to-day work that had to get done.

STERN: The text book answer to the question of coordination is that that is why an embassy had a DCM and an Ambassador. To hell with that. The DCM has things to do; the Ambassador has things to do. He also had meetings tomorrow, and meetings the next day, he had to get ready for this and that. Time to think in an embassy is a rare commodity.

BENNETT: And one more thing about the human rights issues. We did have problems with certain local constituents, Americans in the community, Ed Poitras, for example, and so on. Those people had to be talked to, listened to, met with, reasoned with, from one time to another.

STERN: And don't forget the Cardinal. He also had to be listened to and reasoned with.

I am sorry but I have to leave now. I am sure John will tell "the rest of the story."

Q: John Bennett and I are going to talk about two topics. One is the relationship of the Ambassador and the Commanding General of the American troops. I wonder, could you explain how the command structure, not the whole fancy command structure, but how did the American military command work?

BENNETT: General Stilwell was the senior military man in the country. He was the Commander of U.S. forces in Korea, he was the joint-commander over the joint forces, and he also had the UN command. He was a very energetic personality, with considerable self-image. And he did not sleep, so he kept everybody working.

On the other hand, Sneider had the President's blessing to be the senior American in the theater, and the military had to report to him on a wide range of issues. That was an uneasy relationship because the military is an enormous bureaucracy, and the U.S. Embassy can't keep up with all the things that the military is involved in. Yet there are constant points of friction -- smuggling

out of the P.X. system, the status of forces agreement, how Americans are to be treated, what their rights are on a wide range of things. So this is constantly generating little issues, traffic accidents, etc. and the military wanted to handle them in its own way. It has its own set of interests in how they are handled, and they often went crossway with the American Embassy. What it used to get down to is that these two guys -- the Ambassador and the CINC -- used to periodically find ways to humiliate the other. They were quite brutal about doing it. For example, Tom mentioned that Stilwell invited him to go with him when he went to visit the President. Well, normally that invitation should have come through the Embassy to Stilwell. I don't know how it came, but it should have come through the Embassy to Stilwell. And, if I had been the Chargé, I would have gone; I would take the American Commander with me when I go call on the President. Stilwell was the sort of guy who would consciously come last to a meeting, walk in ten minutes late.

It is a kind of one-upmanship and it used to drive the Ambassador wild, and he started playing right back. It affected the staff, because the respective staffs had a harder time communicating, and it made one's relationship with his military colleagues more difficult because you have to worry about protecting your boss. They have to worry about protecting their boss.

Let me talk a little about the American community in Korea. First, the business community. I think the businessmen in Korea were, by and large, crybabies. They were always complaining, and they always thought that the Embassy didn't do enough. Now, to some measure I think the Embassy -- this sounds manipulative -- had to give them time. Sneider, I think, was very successful at that. He met regularly with them, he invited them to functions where appropriate. They felt that they could go to the Ambassador and get help. A lot of this was form, not substance, but the form is important. My own view of the American business community is that they are crybabies in that they expected to get much better treatment from the Koreans than they did. They expected that we would use our security commitment to enforce their interests, their economic interest in Korea, and that of course that was not the case. We were not about to do that.

I had no problem supporting American bidders against other foreign competitors. Perhaps the relationship was a little easier in Korea in that the U.S. was so large an influence, that oftentimes it was going to be an American firm that would win in any case. The only question was which American company. I didn't find that a problem. As a matter of fact, I didn't really like deals that were made on the basis of the nationality of the bidders. I really liked the American offer to be the best one, however it was evaluated.

One of the issues was how do we play the nuclear power plants, and by and large by the end, for example, it would only be Westinghouse still in the running. By the end we didn't have any problem supporting their proposals as compared to another American firm. The Koreans understood this whole process pretty well, and were able to get good offers out of the American side, so I think it worked out pretty well.

The other large segment of the American community was the missionaries. They obviously were a font of knowledge about Korea. They were also, I think, an important listening post for the American side to hear what political opposition in Korea was talking about, what their concerns

were, and what they were thinking. There were some problems with that because the missionary side has a range of views, from fairly conservative to fairly liberal. Many of them came, at some point, to regard the Embassy as the enemy, which was kind of a mirror image of what the business community had thought of the American Embassy at various times. And that was too bad, because I think their expectation was that we would use our full power in order to impose democratic forms on the Koreans. It was a lack of real understanding about how all this comes about.

I continue to keep a relationship with one of the missionary family members, Horace Underwood, who was at Yonsei University, and it seems to me his views have become more conservative in recent years, and his expectations have gotten more reasonable. He is also very helpful in keeping me informed when I go out to Korea about what is happening in the opposition and the evolution of views. I still think of Korea as a very conservative society. That is one of the things that I think the more radical missionary group simply didn't perceive.

It was not easy, but there again it was something the American Embassy has to deal with. It was one of those things that took time and a good deal of tender loving care. I don't think the relationship would have gotten much better in the time we were there because events were running against us. The human rights issues were there. I suppose the Pat Derians of the world made our lives a little more difficult; undoubtedly the liberal missionaries felt they had an ally in Washington, and that between their activities in Korea and Pat Derian's activities in Washington, they thought they ought to be able to force the Embassy to do some of the things they wanted done.

The American press was always looking for the down side of a story. I say always -- almost always -- and they could always go to the missionaries and get a good story. They could go to the American businessman and get a good story. They could always find somebody who was poorly paid, whose life was a kind of a mess, and to whom life hadn't been very nice. Those stories are anecdotal, but these are the evidence from which people make up their minds and form their attitudes.

I used to feel at the time that the press was very unfair to the Koreans. As I have gotten further along I think either they have changed or I have changed. But if you look now, most of my problem with them is that they tend to give you a zero-sum story. For every compliment they will pay a criticism. Everything positive is balanced by a negative. That is probably true in life in a sense, but the stories also bother me oftentimes.

Most of the press was not resident in Seoul. It came either from Tokyo or through Tokyo. The Japanese attitudes towards Korea were pretty negative. One of my most appalling realizations was that it was perfectly respectable in Japan to believe that the South attacked the North in 1950. Lots of Japanese believed that. It was almost a racial prejudice. The Japanese regarded the Koreans as the mafia of Japan. They were the ones who carry on criminal activity or black market activity, or what have you. Koreans have similar views of Japanese; that is, they have strong prejudices about Japanese, they are not similar views.

Those things used to affect, I think, some of the American correspondents who came to Seoul. I

suppose if you had been a correspondent and had only served in Japan, not elsewhere in the world, and you came to Korea for one week, just to get acquainted, you might have been appalled. The level of everything in Korea is considerably lower than in Japan. It is a much poorer country. Some people don't like dirt, and some people don't like poverty, and react to it. You used to run into the feeling among some of the correspondents, "Why can't these guys get it together?" They hadn't realized how far the country had already come. I had been in Vietnam, in the Dominican Republic, in North Africa and thought the Koreans had done damn well.

CHARLES STUART KENNEDY
Consul General
Seoul (1976-1979)

Charles Stuart Kennedy was born in Illinois in 1928. He received an A.B. from Williams College and an A.M. from Boston University. He served in the United States Air Force from 1950 to 1954 and joined the State Department in 1955. He served in Frankfurt, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Greece, Korea, and Italy, specializing in refugee affairs and immigration. He was interviewed by Victor Wolf, Jr. in 1986.

Q: You went to Seoul in Korea, where you were consul general from 1976 to 1979. What were the types of problems that you faced? One impression I get is that Korea is now a major source of immigration into this country. Did this figure in the period you were there?

KENNEDY: Yes. The figure had moved from -- I may be somewhat off on this, but say about 7,000 Koreans; 7,000 to 8,000 were getting immigrant visas to the United States in approximately 1970. By 1979, we were issuing over 30,000. It was because as more Koreans get into the United States, more were becoming qualified for immediate relative status, and they brought others in. Also, the Koreans wanted to get out, and their government was encouraging them to. There were a number of ways this was being done. One is just the normal way: somebody (particularly a woman) goes to the United States, marries, and sends for her family.

With the G.I.s there, both wittingly and unwittingly, the Koreans families that wanted to go to the United States were not averse to using them. We're really talking about not the upper class, but the poor people who wanted to go to the United States and better themselves. In a country where women were treated, if not as cattle, damn close to it, one female member of the family, a sister of a large family, would be designated as the bride. She would go, and it would be arranged. Either a G.I. would be paid off, an American soldier would be paid off, or just by normal attraction -- she would go out and meet him, get married, with no real intention of continuing the relationship, or if she did it, it was a begrudging one. So she had obtained American citizenship status within two or three years, and then send for the rest of the family. This was, I've always felt, a perversion of the law, because the idea is to unite families. Well, in the Korean context, when a woman marries, she moves into somebody else's family; she's no longer really in close relation to her brothers and sisters, because they move on. They are not that tightly knit a family, particularly for women, to the rest of the family from which she's born. But

using this, there was a lot of what was really, if not illicit, it was almost illicit type immigration.

Then we had a great deal of fraud. Koreans were willing to pay a great deal of money, and I had about four or five people fired after a big investigation in the consular section because of immigrant visa fraud. This is fraudulent petitions, fraudulent relationships.

Q: There were Korean national employees you're talking about?

KENNEDY: These are Korean national employees. I was always worried about our American officers, because I was concerned that they might get too friendly. They'd could be vulnerable to either gifts, sexual favors or the like, because it was that type of society where both sexual favors and gifts were readily offered. I had no knowledge of any problems, but I certainly kept it in mind. With our Korean employees, it was mainly just payoffs. After I left, there has been a sort of revolving scandal. There are always people being fired because of the problem. On the other hand, I have to say that the Koreans make good citizens, hard-working people, and really one of the successes.

Here I just might mention one of the problems of being a consul general and the head of a consular section, that is dealing with the junior officers, to get them to understand, in a way, the facts of life. Because many of the young officers come out from the academic world and have not been exposed to, let's say, the "cruel world." They're not used to being lied to, at least for official reasons. Immigrants or perspective immigrants will often lie in order to get that visa and, in a way, fair enough. I think most of us would probably do the same, because it is a major benefit to most foreign families in countries such as Korea and Yugoslavia, to become an American citizen. Yet some of the young officers would just get absolutely indignant, and not only get indignant when they were lied to, but vindictive.

I spent a great deal of my time having to get these officers to understand it's not really that awful. You treat it, you deal with the problem; you don't say, "I understand," and issue the visa. You may refuse the visa, but you have to keep it in perspective. One of my major jobs, I felt, was to act as a counselor or psychiatrist when a young officer is up against the pressures of immigration and what it does to him or her.

Q: One of the themes that is coming out of a number of things that you have discussed with regard to this theme in your several assignments, is what I would call the training function of the consular-officer-supervisor. One gets the impression that a lot of work is done by supervisors in training, or at any rate, it should be. I wonder if you could expand on that topic a little bit.

KENNEDY: Yes. I would say it's probably the major function, because when you reach a certain point, you're no longer interviewing prospective immigrants. It's not a bad idea to go in from time to time and test the waters, to keep your hand in. I have to add that I've never found it easy to say "no" to a person. It's not much fun, and it's hard work because of the need to say "no" to a lot of people, insofar as, "No, I can't give you a visa because you, for one reason or another, don't qualify."

We have usually two types of officers. One are the regular officers, brand-new, one of their first

or second assignments is in the consular section, rather naive about the world and, as I mentioned before, overly indignant if lied to or somebody's trying to put it over on them. The other one is that we still have a good number of officers who are brought in for other reasons. I'm talking about there are still officers who are not as qualified as the bright examination-type officers, the ones who passed the examinations, but the ones brought in for other reasons, minority programs, keeping husbands and wives together, promotion within the clerical ranks, and the like. These officers of the second category can be rather unsure of themselves and stick to the rules and regulations. The visa rules are such that it's quite easy to say "no," but the thrust of our immigration policy is really to say "yes." It's very difficult to bring these substandard officers to understand that they have to use their judgment and they have to be able to make reasonable exceptions in order to have a fair visa law, rather than to say "no."

Q: I wonder now if we could go to your assignment as consul general in Seoul from 1976 to 1979. The statistics show that in the 1970s, Korea became a very large source of immigrants to this country. My impression is that's fairly new. Could you give some indication of what operational problems and policy problems this posed for you?

KENNEDY: Yes. In the first place, you have to look upon immigrant visas coming from some countries, why they grow. There's always the change. The European demand has gone down; the Asian demand has gone up. It takes a while for the people in a country to get their visas. What happened in Korea would be that a G.I. would marry a Korean woman; she eventually would become a citizen; she would, getting her preference as an American citizen, send for her brothers and sisters. When they get to the United States and they become American citizens -- it could take five years -- then their husbands and wives of these brothers and sisters would then send for their brothers and sisters, also of the family, but it was the brothers and sisters who really drive the figures up. And when they became citizens, they would again send for their brothers and sisters.

Q: How many officers and employees did you have, and how did you divide their functioning as far as the various consular services were concerned?

KENNEDY: I'm guessing a little bit as far as the staffing pattern. I had one officer during non-immigrant visas, one officer doing American services, including protection of welfare passports, and about four to five officers doing immigrant visas, and then myself and a deputy. That was more or less the working pattern, and we had maybe 30 Koreans who were divided proportionally about the same, mainly in the immigrant visa process.

Q: I notice you had a deputy. Did you, the way you managed that section, delegate management of the section largely, while you did other things? If that's the way it was, what were the types of things that specifically occupied you as consul general?

KENNEDY: I've never held myself to really being a visa expert. I know the law. But I was lucky, I had two deputies, one was Olin Whittemore, and then Sunao Sakamoto, both of whom knew visa work and they knew it well. So I left the day-to-day supervision of those functions to them. I spent more of my time on looking over the major management things. We were trying to automate the system, and we volunteered to be a post to try an early Wang computer, to see if we

could automate it, because we had over 100,000 names in our files. I'd say 60% of them, the last names were either Kim, Yang, Park, or Chou. A very difficult problem to sort out who was who. We worked with the computer, but it never quite panned out, because in those days -- things have changed so much -- the computer capacity was just too small to really handle the information. The other reason was that the thrust of this was not coming out of the visa office, but out of the central -- I think it was called ISO -- the central computer people in the Department. That meant that we didn't have the full cooperation of the Visa Office. I wasn't aware initially that there was this problem, that we were actually asking for help from the wrong place. The visa office eventually did come up with their own program and duplicated very much what we were trying to do, and did it better.

Q: Did you have much fraud in Korea? If so, how did you deal with it?

KENNEDY: To use a good old American term, "oi ve!" Fraud was the name of the game in Korea. Koreans wanted to go to the United States. We had this peculiar law that disqualified all sorts of people, and the Koreans are very pragmatic people. For example, there was a section of the Immigration Law saying that an unmarried son 21 years of age could receive a high priority to get into the United States, however, if he were married, he couldn't come into the United States for a long time, so they'd divorce. They'd turn around and come in, come back and remarry. People would make up false labor certificates. You really couldn't trust birth certificates. Relationships are very tangled in Korea at the best of circumstances, because often a family would, say, without males, sort of absorb a cousin's male children into their family if they have enough money. That type of thing.

Then there's just plain outright fraud of families paying a G.I. or someone else to marry a daughter, supposedly, to go to the United States, where she would leave her so-called spouse, but maybe stay long enough to get quick citizenship, three years, then turn around and bring the rest of her family.

There were ways of getting into the United States if you had the cooperation of the Korean clerks within the visa function. When I was there, we had a major scandal. I was then concerned about what I felt were signs that there was fraud, but I didn't know. I asked the Office of Security to send in a special team, which they did do, and we dismissed about four people. It was the first, I think, really major discovering of fraud in our embassy, but I found out, after I'd been gone for several years, just when I was doing this, a whole new fraud of fake petitions was being started, just when I felt I was cleaning out the shop. I talked to my successors, and it's unending.

Here I want to tell of an effort on my part to get some control over the documentation process in Korea. The Canadian Consul, Con Adams, and I had discussed the problem that we had with all the "fly-by-night" visa brokers in Seoul. These were operators who would take a prospective visa applicant and do all the necessary work in getting documentation for both visas and passports. There was a legitimate need for this type of work. Getting documents in the complex bureaucracy of Korea was difficult and very time-consuming. It was particularly difficult for American soldiers trying to get everything for their brides. These were usually girls with little knowledge of the way to work within the Korean bureaucracy and it was only natural to hire someone to do it. The problem, as we saw it, was twofold. First, the brokers often charged outrageous sums for

their services to Americans; and secondly, they often cooked up documents and fraud was endemic, not only with the GI bride visas but with regular Korean visa applicants. The motto of the visa broker was "can do" as far as making anyone eligible for a visa.

When we would discover a case of visa fraud we would report it to the police and there would be an investigation, but the visa brokers often would pay off the investigators or just close their offices and move down the street and open another with a new name.

The Canadian Consul, Con Adams, and I approached the Foreign Ministry with a complaint and a proposal, the complaint was about the corruption in the visa/passport process and the proposal was that the Korean Government should somehow get some control over it, that it was embarrassing the Government. Within a few months the Koreans came back with a plan. Essentially it was to make some officially sanctioned visa broker offices. No one could get documents without going through one of the three private offices. Everyone in those offices would be registered so that blame could be assigned in case of fraud. Also a firm set of fees would be published so that the G.I. or the Korean visa applicant would know exactly what he or she had to pay. We insisted that allowance be made for those who wanted to do all the running around for the documents themselves, which a few did, very few.

This procedure, after some negotiation over particulars, was put into effect. It did not cure the corruption/fraud process, but it did put some brakes on it since we could and did nail people who were caught. No system can work smoothly in a country where payoffs are expected and there is pressure to get certain services, but it did help channel our investigations and to keep the American serviceman from being bilked.

I should mention here that one problem that we did not have in Korea was with fake students. In many other countries, especially in the Middle East, young men will apply for visas to go to some rinky-dink school of flying, woodcarving or the like. They were really not going to study, but paid a fee to a marginal school for its paper of acceptance in order to get student visas and then go to the United States and work. In Korea the Government would not give undergraduates visas, only graduates and they were going to the top schools, MIT, Cal Tech, Harvard and so forth.

Q: Do you believe that this terminates what we need to talk about as far as Seoul is concerned?

KENNEDY: Just one more thing about Seoul. One of the things I had to get across to my young officers, who would often be upset about the pressures and the fraud and all, was that despite it all, despite the fraud, despite the work pressure and all, not to take it too seriously. You tried to do what you could, but the main thing was that the Koreans coming into the United States, for the most part, really turned out to be the most admirable people, hard-working, made good citizens, and so you enforce the law, but at the same time, you had to keep in mind that no matter how they got in, we were probably coming out with a fairly good product.

JAMES A. KLEMSTINE

**Economic Officer
Seoul (1976-1980)**

James A. Klemstine was born in Pennsylvania in 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree from Yale University. He served in the U.S. Army from 1952-1954 and entered the Foreign Service in 1956. Mr. Klemstine's career included assignments to Germany, the Soviet Union, China (Taiwan), and Korea. He was interviewed by Jeff Broadwater on April 15, 1993.

KLEMSTINE: That was the first time I went to Korea even though I had spent two and a half years on the desk. I was an economic officer. In 1960 the conventional wisdom was that South Korea was going to be a burden on the United States for time immemorial. All sorts of efforts had been made to consider some type of unification, or something to help the economy, or hoping that something would happen.

I think there were two views about Park Chung Hee's assassination. Those who followed Korea's economy felt that Park had been its architect. He may have been an authoritarian, but he was doing a lot for the country. Those with a more liberal democratic views were finally happy that this authoritarian figure had been removed. But there was a great difference between Park and Rhee. Rhee was corrupt. Park was relatively honest. I am not saying he didn't have a finger a little bit in the pie, but compared to Rhee, or the regimes that had gone on before he was honest. Park was not a saint but certainly stuck out as much less corrupt. He was more interested in just keeping power; he wasn't interested in accumulating wealth like Rhee did, and Rhee's cohorts. That was one of the big differences.

**EDWARD L LEE II
Regional Security Officer
Seoul (1977-1979)**

Mr. Lee was born and raised in Michigan, educated at Delta College and American University. After seven years service with the US Marine Corp, he joined the State Department as Agent in the Office of Security. Mr. Lee's entire career in the Foreign Service was devoted to Security matters in Washington and in diplomatic posts throughout the world. His postings as Regional Security Officer include Cyprus, South Korea, Thailand and Panama. Mr. Lee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: Whither in October '77?

LEE: When that came along, I was assigned to be the RSO in Seoul.

Q: How did that come about?

LEE: That came about, I guess, one, I had done a very good job in Cyprus. Seoul was considered to be an excellent assignment for a mid-level officer. The powers that be in Washington had a vacancy coming up and I guess they wanted to reward me with a good assignment and so that's what happened. My wife and my two children and I went on home leave and then we moved on out to Seoul.

Q: I may have had somewhat of a role there. I was consulate general in Seoul at the time. In a '77 consular conference in Bangkok, I talked to Barbara Watson and told her that I thought we may have had a fraud problem there. I just wanted a lot of smoke. Knowing the Korean society, I knew there was probably a good chance. Frankly, I had gotten nowhere with the security officer. There was no feeling of, "Maybe I'll take a look at this." "Well, you show me something and maybe I'll do something." All I could do was say, "We're in a fraudulent system where visas cost... There are people willing to pay a great deal of money for an American visas and it's a society which does not condone the use of fraud." So, I told Barbara Watson and she said she'd see what she could do about it. So, I suspect she put in something saying, "We want to get a more energetic security officer."

LEE: Very interesting. Seoul turned out to be a very diverse assignment. We had just about everything there. We had the Park Kom Song affair.

Q: This was the Koreagate, Ricegate.

LEE: Where the U.S. was accused of bugging the Blue House. The Korean CIA was very involved in actually sponsoring some demonstrations against our embassy there during that period of time.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LEE: '77 to April of '79. I constantly was going from one post to another fixing things. As it turned out, we got heavily involved in visa malfeasance investigations in Taiwan that resulted in the termination of a good number of our Consular Section employees.

Q: I thought this time we might talk about the Seoul time. Let's talk about the thing that I was concerned about: the possibility of visa fraud. We just knew there had to be. But there had never been to my knowledge a real major investigation onto this. I was concerned. How did you look at it? What does one do when one comes into a situation like this?

LEE: I think from the standpoint of visa fraud, you have a couple of different issues. One, you have fraudulent obtaining of visa by fraudulent means, paying money for it, co-opting somebody and otherwise getting a legitimate visa through fraudulent means. Occasionally, there was the obtaining of a fraudulent visa through fraudulent means or through other means. And you had the visa malfeasance, which was really the improper conduct on the part of a consular or other employee. Often, the fraud and malfeasance obviously went together. Because of my investigative background, which I actually had had even before joining the Foreign Service, investigations were something that I enjoyed doing. I viewed these as a bit of a challenge. As we talk more, you'll see that there were a number of different areas that I got very interested in

supporting our programs at post from an investigative standpoint. When I was getting ready to go out to Seoul, I was told that the RSO that had been there was just sort of a caretaker.

Q: Yes.

LEE: And that they were looking for someone that really could either resolve if there was a fraud problem or put it to bed one way or the other. So, we began to work closely with the Consular Section in terms of what we did and did not know. We began to look at trends, at brokers, people that really were pushing visas either simply as a scam with legitimate visa seekers or possibly involved in a criminal process of fraud in obtaining a U.S. visa. We began to realize that the system that was in place in the Korean national police was really very inept, very ineffective. Quite often, if somebody needed a “no record” report from the police to submit with their visa application, whether they had a criminal record or not was really immaterial. They would simply pay the right person and get a very pretty, very official looking document that said “no record.” So, not only did we have a problem of the visa brokers that were breaking both Korean and U.S. law, but we had police engaging in bribery and document fraud on their own point. We had a lot of Korean employees in the Consular Section that were co-optable from visa brokers and a number of other people. So, we really began to put together a program of conducting investigations, looking at trends, reviewing a number of cases, looking at the people we had working in our consular section. Over the next few years, the efforts that the consul general had begun to germinate proved to be the case. In time, not only were there a number of terminations, but there was also some exposure of what the police were doing and what the visa brokers were doing and that kind of thing. On balance, it was a very effective program of looking at visa fraud and visa malfeasance. It’s probably gotten better because of the technology of visas and the way in which they’re now issued and handled and accounted for. But during the early ‘70s, it was very easy to engage in visa fraud and to a degree visa malfeasance because there really more from a policy standpoint, the Office of Security at that time, while they had a legal mandate to investigate passport fraud and malfeasance relating to that, they had not done all that much in the area of visa fraud and visa malfeasance, so we were sort of breaking new ground in developing ways to investigate that.

Q: How did you work in the Consular Section? I left there in '79 about when you did. There had been... A significant number of the Consular Section had been found to be involved, which wasn't really surprising, but it was the first time that anybody had lifted this particular stone up. How did you go out about finding out about malfeasance? What was the technique?

LEE: The best technique was information would come to us. I think we began to put out the word not only to visa applicants, we would do this often through the local guards that were in close proximity to these long visa lines. Both overtly and covertly, we would really put out the word that if you had been paying a lot of money for a visa or you paid somebody to fix a visa, we would very much like to talk to you. It took a number of months, but we did develop a lot of information. People now were beginning to come forward. Koreans themselves tend not to be terribly keen on talking to people. They tend to keep things to themselves. They’re somewhat distrustful of authority figures and that kind of thing. But I think we had a lot of good luck. In many respects, people knew that we were getting interested. Probably because the embassy and the State Department up until that time had not done a great deal, a lot of people figured, “Oh, I

guess they don't mind operating in this kind of environment." But then when we began to try to let people know that we're investigating this, we want to get the criminals out that are involved whether they're visa brokers or embassy employees – people would call us with anonymous information. They would give us the name of the case. Quite often, it would even be one visa broker working against another, thereby trying to get rid of some of the competition. We probably didn't get it all, but we really did make some headway. It was very painstaking work. It was a lot of detailed work. Sometimes, we would, for example, take the names off of a visa application and call and see whether someone even existed. Quite often, we would talk to a person who was on a visa application and they would actually be very useful in providing information that would lead to another case. Visa fraud investigations were probably one of the most complex of any that I've ever worked on. They're very unwieldy. Quite often, you end up with a lot of old or dry leads and they don't go anywhere. You usually need the testimony of someone that can tell you how to really uncover the iceberg.

Q: One of the things I was concerned about was that over the years Americans had been targets of people... People who were shoppers got special deals from shop owners. It's a quid pro quo within about 30 seconds. Also, for the Koreans, unlike almost anywhere else I've been, sex was like small change practically. If they wanted something, they would drag out a younger cousin or something like this and there she would be. So, this was a real concern. I remember pointing you towards the Americans, too. As far as I know, nothing came out of it. But it was a difficult place.

LEE: Yes. The embassy in Seoul at that time was a challenge. The embassy in Bangkok was another one which I later went on to and did a lot of investigation there in the area of visa fraud. The Philippines, of course. At that time, our visa system was very unsophisticated. It was easy to engage in fraud in many respects. No one was looking into it. You're quite right. In many cultures, particularly in Asia, what we view as fraud is not viewed as fraud in their context. It's just simply a minor impediment. It's not murder, so how bad can it be? But the use of money, of dinners, of sex, all those things were used – and probably pretty heavily – with local staff, their families being coopted and coerced, particularly in Korea, where organized crime has always operated. If you got on the wrong list, you could get into serious trouble. When we talk about Bangkok, I'll tell you a very funny story where a visa broker dropped a whole box of banded crates over my back fence. These were very poisonous snakes. The idea was to send me a message to not pursue these investigations.

Q: In Korea, did you find much interest on the part of the ambassador, DCM, or anyone else?

LEE: Apart from the consul general, yourself, there really was not that much interest. The one thing that the DCM and the ambassador did not like were the long lines. They viewed those as an eyesore. Probably from the standpoint of the ambassador and the DCM, they did have bigger fish to fry. They had major policy issues – the Koreagate, the corruption, the human rights abuses, which were a big issue at that time-

Q: And then the minor threat of an all-out war.

LEE: Sure. And of course, during that period of time, it was the Singlaub period, where an army general became very adamant about the threat from North Korea. But I think to really answer

your question, there wasn't a lot of pressure for us to do anything. There was pressure from Washington, from Barbara Watson, the Assistant Secretary's office, from the security side in the Department. Fortunately, the consular side and the security side at the post that realized this was a problem and probably in many respects, these folks broke a lot of ground that would help in the future in terms of dealing with visa fraud.

Q: I have to laugh because while we were working on this fraud, a new set of fraud was just beginning, the matter of fake petitions coming in from the United States. That was on somebody else's watch.

LEE: Yes.

Q: What were some of the other things you were having to deal with? You mentioned Park Tong Song. What was that and what was your role in that?

LEE: Park Tong Song was a businessman, a trained businessman. He was accused of selling favors, working both sides of the street between the U.S. and the Korean side. About that time, there were allegations that the U.S. CIA had bugged the equivalent of the White House in Seoul. There were some state sponsored demonstrations against the embassy whereby the government was behind them. They mainly wanted to send a signal to the embassy. In a couple of those cases, demonstrators did get into the building despite our best efforts. We had some rather tense times when those took place. Then we had a number of Justice officials that came out that often were mobbed by protestors and press and that kind of thing.

Q: One was Rudolph Giuliani.

LEE: Yes, exactly.

Q: Now the major of New York.

LEE: Yes. Another facet related to what I did in Korea was work very closely with the military investigative organizations. Quite often, Army or Air Force soldiers would become involved in marriage fraud whereby they would agree to marry a woman with the idea that the marriage would be walked away from the moment that they got to the States and got their visa and passport and what have you. That was another facet that we worked on quite a bit. Again, going after visa brokers and that kind of thing. We had a drug problem to a degree within the U.S. youth community and I worked with the military on that a good deal. Despite the aggressive nature of my work that involved going after the police on the fraudulent police records, before I left, I did get a rather prestigious award from the Korean national police just generally because that's their way of doing things. That was sort of nice.

Crime was relatively low. Korea at that time would best be called a benevolent police state where nothing is going to happen anywhere without the knowledge of the government.

Q: Park Chung Hee was in control. In late '79, he passed from the scene, being killed by the head of the Korean CIA.

LEE: Yes.

Q: But at that time, it was...

LEE: Yes. Seoul was the kind of post that has everything. Any facet of Foreign Service life that can happen happens there. You've got every piece. You have enormous trade, just all kinds of political issues, particularly relating to North Korea. No matter what function you have at the embassy, it's a very broad base of experience that officers develop.

Q: The Koreans were probably one of the most aggressive, although I suppose Japan was just as bad, with bribery in commercial cases, did that impinge at all on you or was that just something that didn't affect the official community?

LEE: It really did not affect us a great deal. What was interesting was that during our assignment in '78, the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act was passed by the U.S. Congress. That really made it much more difficult for U.S. companies to use intermediaries to pay bribes and that kind of thing, probably in competition against foreign companies that are more than willing to do that in many cases. But the bribery aspect of the government never affected us that much. It was more the internal disruptions of the post from the visa standpoint.

Q: Were there any other areas within the embassy that fell in your purview that were concerns?

LEE: One issue that we were always concerned about was protecting classified information. Anyone that ever thought that a North Korean could not function and assimilate in South Korean society would be fooling themselves with the skill levels of fraudulent documents and what have you. We were concerned about intelligence operations against the U.S. We were very concerned about bugging, particularly after the allegation that the U.S. had bugged the Blue House.

Q: How was that settled?

LEE: Basically, time settled it. There was a lot of consternation. The Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, Richard Holbrooke, came out and tried to smooth some ruffled feathers. It was sort of interesting that Richard Holbrooke of late has been very involved in being a negotiator of various political/ethnic strifes in Eastern Europe. He has been the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs for the last couple of years. He's been around over a large period of time. A rather interesting side note: when Holbrooke was getting ready to leave Korea during one of his many visits to Seoul, his first or second visit, the foreign minister was at the planeside waiting for him to come up and shake hands. He walked right by the foreign minister and never said, "Goodbye." I think that no matter what level of government you're in, you have to be very sensitive as to who people are and protocol and cultural nuances, which is something that in the era of the '90s we take for granted.

Q: South Korea during those days was known as one of those places where our CIA had a very strong presence. Did you find yourself tripping over them? How did that work?

LEE: The presence in Seoul at that time was quite large. We did have some rivalries. They did often get in the way. Fortunately, I had a good relationship with the management people there. But they were all over the place. Unfortunately, it became somewhat disruptive for other sections that were having to sort of make concessions for the way in which intelligence operations worked. Some sections weren't nearly as productive because representatives were doing other things.

Q: One of the things that concerned me... In the Consular Section, we were sitting on well over 100,000 visa records, which included personnel backgrounds and all that. I couldn't help feeling that we had not done a good job in June of 1950 when we pulled out of there, that we had an awful lot of information on South Koreans, legitimate information on them, not only there but other places, all of which could have been deadly in the hands of the North Koreans. The common sense was that within three days, the North Koreans could probably take Seoul. Then the hope was that they would suffer a tremendous defeat thereafter. But we were just too close to the border. What about plans for response to a North Korean invasion? That must have been quite a problem for you.

LEE: It was a problem that I worried about a great deal. I knew that we really were not prepared in that regard. Our embassy in Seoul was one of the largest in Asia. You really have to look at the fact that we had this enormous military presence in the country, we had air bases all over the country, we had American military all over. I think there was the belief that the North Koreans would never come south, that the infrastructure of the U.S. military would be so massive that they wouldn't do it. But as we've seen in other countries, things change very quickly. They become very fluid. We have a way politically of underestimating the capability of our adversaries.

Q: We think they'll behave the way we think a rational person would behave.

LEE: Right. Yes.

Q: In our interpretation.

LEE: A good example: we've seen a civil war in Colombia for the last 30 years. For the first time ever, that country is in dire risk of literally coming unglued because of the superiority that the rebel groups now have. We've seen it in other countries. For example, El Salvador in 1989. No one ever thought that a rebel group could take over the city. They did it. I think that in the '90s and as we go into the millennium we need to be a little tougher in making our own political assumptions about these kinds of things. I think you're right, that with all the information that was available in the embassy and various other U.S. offices in Seoul, it was a big risk.

Q: Were you able to deal with this at all?

LEE: No one was really interested, not from Washington, not from the upper levels of the post. Their view was, this is business as usual, this is a very safe country, the military (both U.S. and Korean) are going to solve any problems that happen, so let's not worry about something that's not a problem.

Q: It didn't turn out to be, but that's a cloud that... It's still not settled, but now the preponderance is no longer with the North, but at one point the North had more military clout than the South.

LEE: One thing that always did bother me both in my office and also in the Consular Section was that so much of this information was available to so many people. We really had very few controls on a lot of it. For example, we in our office did an awful lot of investigations of Korean nationals. We had file cabinets upon file cabinets of reports that we had done, sometimes background checks, sometimes for misconduct. It was my belief that the large investigative staff that we had probably used that information to their own benefit. We tend to forget those things. We tend to think about operating within our own system but we don't realize how other systems work. On a humorous note, because I worked with Koreans almost exclusively, or a lot because of the investigations we did, you would go to work in the morning and of course most Koreans would eat kimchi for breakfast. This is a very odorous cabbage... After a while, I finally said, "I think I'm just going to join them." I started eating it as well. It was a very fascinating assignment. There were a lot of interesting things that were happening at that time. The visa fraud...

Another investigative activity that came up which probably people that hear this would find incredible is that towards the end of my assignment, I became heavily involved in investigating diplomats, people assigned to the post, that had profited from the sale of their automobiles.

Q: I got \$50.00 for mine.

ALOYSIUS M. O'NEILL
Consular Officer/Staff Aide to Ambassador
Seoul (1977-1979)

Mr. O'Neil was born in South Carolina and raised there and in other states in the U.S. He was educated at the University of Delaware and Heidelberg University. After serving in the US Army in Vietnam, Mr. O'Neill joined the Foreign Service in 1976 and was posted to Korea. He subsequently served three tours in Japan as student of Japanese and Consular and Political Officer. He also served in Burma, Korea and the Philippines as well as in Washington, where he dealt primarily with East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Mr. O'Neill was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: What sparked your interest in Korea?

O'NEILL: Well, again, harking back to my Vietnam experience, Asia seemed quite interesting to me. As I put it recently, if you could get interested in Asia as a result of the Vietnam War, you know it must be a pretty fascinating part of the world. I saw Asia as a region of huge importance to the U.S., and a region with great and interesting variety in terms of language, culture and

history. I hadn't specifically thought of Korea at first, but among the positions opening up for our class Seoul sounded pretty interesting, particularly with the language training thrown in. I had known a lot of people in the Army who had served in Korea either during the war or after, and I knew of the general situation between the North and South and the economic boom that was beginning in the South; so that made it pretty attractive. I think it was my second choice on my bid list, and I was very happy that I got it.

Q: You were in Korea from when to when?

O'NEILL: That time was August 1977 to July '79.

Q: Unfortunately for you, your first job was where?

O'NEILL: I was in the consular section working for one Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Tell me about consular work there. In the first place, describe the situation as you were getting it before you got there from your reading and from your instructors. What sort of a South Korea were you going to?

O'NEILL: I was going to South Korea under President Park Chung-Hee who was very authoritarian, a former general who had taken power initially in a *coup d'état* in 1961. It was a Korea that was really beginning to take off economically because of Park's policies and the industriousness of the Korean people. It was also a Korea that was unsettled by Jimmy Carter's campaign promise in 1976 to pull out all the U.S. ground forces.

Q: Which meant essentially the 2nd Infantry Division.

O'NEILL: The 2nd Division was the centerpiece unit but there were others as well. Carter's campaign promise, sight unseen, was to take all U.S. ground forces out of Korea and, I would emphasize, without seeking any concessions from the North Koreans at all. It was a Korea that was beginning to make its mark among other places like the Middle East because you had these huge Korean companies like Dae Woo and Hyundai landing gigantic contracts in places like Saudi Arabia and Libya for seaports, container facilities and air ports. It was a Korea that was beginning to find a new place for itself in the world. It was a pretty interesting place.

Q: What were you getting from your colleagues and your own observation about Park Chung-Hee, a leader who was a military dictator, but in a way of a different caliber than so many of that type? ?

O'NEILL: He was very definitely an authoritarian figure. He had rigged elections, he had, in fact, rigged the whole National Assembly. When the assembly existed, which was intermittently, he had rigged it with an appointed group called in Korean *Yujonghoe*, which guaranteed him a majority no matter who got elected from the opposition parties. The main opposition figures at that time were Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-Sam, both of whom became presidents of Korea in succession in the 1990's.

Park's policies were obviously ruthlessly anti-communist, ruthlessly directed toward anybody who he decided under the National Security Law were leftists or in any way out of the Korean mainstream as he defined it. Both Kims — Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-Sam spent a good bit of time either under house arrest or in jail, I think mostly under house arrest, and they were allowed out from time to time.

There was very strong press censorship. In fact, what was then called the KCIA, the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, took a very hands-on approach, shall we say, to the news media. Usually the editorial rooms of newspapers and the TV stations had KCIA officers assigned to them to make sure that they: a) printed the right things about President Park and his policies, and b) essentially ignored the opposition almost entirely except occasionally to excoriate them. The KCIA had been established by another Kim, Kim Chong-P'il, a very close associate of Park Chung-Hee who was a principal organizer of Park's 1961 coup. So it was a very authoritarian society and yet one in which the middle class was beginning to take a big role in the economic life in Korea and would later take a similar role in the political life of the country.

Q: As I recall it, during that time, and I may be off, the average income of the population had reached a thousand dollars, and a thousand was a big deal in those days particularly in Asia. Every expectation was going up. At least at my level as consul general, I think conventional wisdom was that Park Chung-Hee might be an authoritarian, but he's taking a very unruly country and making it very strong militarily. Far more than that, he had very good economic plans which probably couldn't have been carried out in a more rambunctious democracy. Also, he was seen as a transitional figure. I'm not sure that was really the case, at least how I and some others perceived it.

O'NEILL: That's basically true. He did a lot of good and an awful lot of harm. In the now nearly 30 years after he was assassinated, a considerable number of Koreans have a much more positive view of his time mainly because of the economic transformation that he brought. They tend to downplay the harshness of his rule which was quite harsh, indeed, if you were on the wrong side. But they also look at Park himself. He was from a very poor family, had graduated as a lieutenant from the Japanese Manchurian Military Academy, served in Japanese forces, which is another thing a lot of Koreans held against him, then became a ROK Army officer immediately after liberation from the Japanese.

Q: ROK is R-O-K.

O'NEILL: R-O-K, Republic of Korea. But many Koreans also look at aspects of his personality like the fact that he was an extremely abstemious person. He had essentially no personal wealth. When he was assassinated there were no bank accounts or gold bars in his safe or anything like that. In fact, he was more or less penniless which fit the Confucian ideal that Koreans hold up as a model.

Also, although you saw his unsmiling picture in government offices there were no gleaming statues of Park Chung-Hee all over Korea. The closest he came to that was identifying himself with a late 16th Century Korean hero, Admiral Yi Sun-sin, who defeated the Japanese in a couple of naval battles using iron-plated oared warships that are known as turtle ships. Park had a huge

statue of Admiral Yi Sun-sin erected on the main avenue, Sejong-Ro in Seoul and refurbished shrines to Yi around the country. Everyone knew that Yi was a stand-in for Park, but Park himself didn't have statues all over the place. He had a complexity that is getting evaluated better by a lot of South Koreans in the years since his death. His wife the First Lady was assassinated in 1974 at the National Theater. A Korean from Japan who was working for the North Koreans tried to shoot Park with a pistol and missed him and killed her. Her family name was Yook, and she was always known as a tempering influence on Park, so there was a great deal of genuine sorrow when she was murdered, even among the political opposition.

Q: One of the things, too, that make Park's regime successful was that he made the decision that he wasn't going to play the usual game of "tax the peasants and cater to the city workers." He made working on the soil lucrative for the peasants which, looking at trends in other parts of the world made very good sense.

O'NEILL: In fact, one of his programs that is in recent opinion polls now seen as a real landmark was just that. It was called in Korean the "*Sae Maul Undong*," which means New Village Movement. It was a means of transforming traditional village life in Korea by providing loans for new houses, for motorized roto-tillers and other farm equipment, etc., and for distinctly improving the lives of Korean farmers. To some extent this was Park's way of paying homage to his impoverished rural childhood. *Sae Maul* definitely transformed rural Korea.

Q: You arrived and you were put in the consular section. Could you describe the consular section when you arrived in '77 and what you were doing?

O'NEILL: I was in a junior officer rotational program in the consular section. I did a six month rotation in non-immigrant visas and then another six months in immigrant visas. I never got to do American citizen services because of the demands of the rotational program in a two year tour.

The non-immigrant visa workload at that time was very much shaped by Korean government policies. It was extremely difficult to get passports to go abroad simply for tourism, and there were foreign currency restrictions on a person who did get out for tourism. In general if you were below a certain age, under 60, as I recall, it was particularly difficult for a husband and wife to get passports at the same time. If they were over 60, husbands and wives could get passports to go as tourists together.

Much of our workload was in other visa categories than what it is now, with the current huge B-2 (visitor) visa workload in Seoul. We had a fair number of business travelers. Also, there were a number of official visitors whether they were going on Fulbrights or on other U.S. official exchange programs.

We had a large number of transit visa applicants for work on cruise ships in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Largely they weren't merchant seamen themselves; they were people who wanted to work as waiters or cooks or busboys, etc. There was also a fairly booming business in fiancée visas for young Korean women who wanted to go marry GIs whom they had met in Korea. In these two areas, fraud was a major problem.

I was dealing with quite a number of transit visa applications for the men who wanted to work on cruise ships. In large part, these applicants were an unheralded sidelight of Carter's plan to withdraw all U.S. ground forces. The majority had been working on U.S. military facilities in various service capacities, cooks, etc., and as a result of Carter's announcement many saw their livelihoods coming to an end. As things developed, of course that enormously ill-advised policy was stopped after only one U.S. infantry battalion was withdrawn. But those men didn't know that and they were just looking out for themselves. We discovered an enormous amount of fraud in that whole business of the cruise ship job offers. We wound up working with INS particularly in Miami to authenticate the letters of employment that these visa applicants were bringing in. I also figured out that in the Embassy's commercial library there was something called The American Bureau of Shipping Register, a compendium of the world's merchant ships. One revelation from that register sticks in my mind. One of the alleged Caribbean cruise ships that supposedly was offering employment was actually a ferry in the Oslo harbor.

We had a lot of fraud in other categories of visas. There were a number of religious workers who were going to the United States, members of the many Christian denominations in Korea who were going either for study or work. Many of them were bona fide applicants. Others, despite their religious inclinations were a little shadier, and that was also a rather delicate problem to work out. We had huge numbers of notices from INS of people who got to the U.S. as alleged temporary religious workers or students who were quickly adjusting to immigrant status. We had a big box full of those kinds of fraudulent applications, separated by denomination. There was a tangle of good applicants and very bad applicants in those religious cases.

Q: How did this impact on you?

O'NEILL: It was not a lot of fun. In those days the consular section occupied the entire second floor of the chancery. We had about 30 minutes to eat lunch in the cafeteria on the first floor. At the time the cafeteria wall was all plate glass and the stairway to the consular section was right next to it. You would be wolfing down your lunch as the line was forming for your afternoon's work. That wasn't a terribly restful way to spend your 30 minute lunch. There was certainly times when it was extremely difficult to keep your temper. Most of the time it was pretty tough.

Q: How about, you might say, extra-curricular activities? Did you find outside the consular section attempts of bribery or attempts of offered sex or antiques, what have you? That whole...

O'NEILL: Not a lot. I would say a little bit of both but surprisingly not that much given the general *modus operandi* of Koreans who wanted to get something for themselves. Maybe that was just my personality. Maybe other consular officers seemed to be more attractive prospects for such attempts. I can say there were a few but not a whole lot. It reminds me of another thing. I wanted to drag on too long about Seoul.

Q: No, no, that's all right.

O'NEILL: At the time one of the biggest visa pushers in Seoul was the Honorable Benjamin Tirona who was the Philippine ambassador, the dean of the diplomatic corps, and one of the original Philippine Foreign Service officers trained at FSI.

Q: Trained at FSI!

O'NEILL: Yes. Ambassador Tirona was shameless about pushing really bad visa cases. I remember one time consulting you because he wanted to invite me, a mere third secretary and vice consul, to the Seoul Plaza Hotel for a big steak lunch. The last thing I wanted to do was get indebted to the dean of the diplomatic corps cum major visa pusher. Your guidance to me was, I recall, "Enjoy the steak and do what you're supposed to when it comes to visa applications." So that's what I did. I knew Tirona's reputation from other colleagues in the consular section like Liz Raspolic who was a wonderful consular officer. Anyway, that was all part of the strange atmosphere for visa operations in Seoul.

Q: How did you find the local staff?

O'NEILL: They were very helpful. I found them very knowledgeable and very helpful to me. Also as far as I could tell, they were quite upright – in most cases. There were a few who were not and some of the Korean consular staff were fired for corruption.

Q: How did you find student visas?

O'NEILL: That's an interesting thing. They fell into two categories as far as I was concerned: *really* good and *really* bad. The really good ones were, for example, young Korean musicians going to Julliard, of whom there were more than a few. Also, one of the sons of Hyundai Group founder Chairman Chung Ju-yung was going to Columbia, and I interviewed him. He had no problem getting his visa of course. He later became a national assemblyman and was a sometime presidential candidate.

Others were really awful including people who had the student visa approval, called I-20's, for alleged institutions of higher learning that as far as I could tell occupied an upstairs room someplace in the United States. Those applicants weren't quite sure of the name of the institution of higher learning, and their English was really shaky.

The other really bad collection of student visa applicants was a really sad group. There was in Korea at the time, and I think still is, a Chinese minority mostly based in Seoul and Inchon, and I suppose there were some in Pusan. These people had Republic of China (Taiwan) passports. They were discriminated against by the Koreans in the same way that Koreans in Japan were discriminated against by the Japanese. They had a precarious existence largely running restaurants in Seoul and Inchon, and their sons and daughters were trying to get out of that dead end.

Because of peculiarities of Taiwan or Republic of China law, they didn't have any "right of return," to use an Israeli expression, to Taiwan. They had to get visas in their Republic of China passports from the ROC embassy in Seoul to go to Taiwan. That meant that they were cut off or at least not guaranteed a place to go to outside of Korea and they had little reason to return to Korea. That made them unfortunately, bad bets for U.S. student visas.

But many of those young Korean-Chinese were trying to get student visas. In many cases they

really trying to work at their uncle's or aunt's restaurant in California or Washington and many of them had very little English. Their I-20s were for pretty shaky schools. You felt very bad about keeping them in the rather dire straits which they were in, but under the law you had no real choice but to refuse them a student visa.

Q: I can recall one time one of the young Korean ladies in our file room came to me and said, "Oh, Mr. Kennedy, my brother has a chance at some sort of scholarship to two institutions. Which one do you think he should take?" I said, "Well, what are they?" She said, "One's called Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the other's California Tech." I thought, "Oh, my God!" The Koreans are really a remarkable people.

O'NEILL: "Goal directed" is an expression that keeps popping into my mind when we talk about Koreans.

Q: Over on the immigrant side. You talked a little about your experiences as an immigrant visa officer.

O'NEILL: I spent six months as an IV officer. It was during a period that you probably remember not so fondly when we were beginning to armor the consular section with that very tasteful battleship grey armor plate and the bullet proof glass called Lexgard. During the whole time I was doing NIVs and I'm sure for years before that we just had the applicants come into our little offices for the interviews. There was really no security as such other than the Marines in the waiting room.

Q: The Marines weren't even in the waiting room.

O'NEILL: Not normally. It was easy to get them sometimes when that was necessary, too. But there was essentially no security. Anyhow, while I was doing immigrant visas we were working in industrial conditions, I guess you could say, with many workmen all day hammering, riveting, banging, and sawing to wall us off from the applicants we were dealing with.

Doing immigrant visa work in Seoul in that period presented its challenges, too. I would say that the overwhelming majority of cases were family related, as is always the case in the U.S. immigrant visa structure. A great number were brothers or sisters of American citizens and parents of American citizens, etc. A great deal of this had its origins in Korean women who had married GI's, gone to the States, and after becoming Americans, were petitioning for the parents, brothers, sisters, etc. There was a real mixed bag in terms of educational levels and work history in this. To over-generalize, we were not getting the cream of Korean society as IV applicants in those days.

There was also a great deal of fraud. And also because of the peculiarities of Korea, there were a lot of documentary problems resulting from the Korean War. The basic Korean document for immigrant visa purposes, for family reunification, was called the family register, in Korean *hojeok tungbon*. This was not an individual document like American birth certificate. This was a Confucian record of an entire family with the patriarch of the family, usually the oldest male still living, at the top of the register and his wife and children and his brothers and sisters, etc. and

their children and on and on and on. It was, if you will, a kind of official family tree. This was what was kept by families and local offices to show relationships, births, marriages, divorces, deaths, etc.

In some cases you got the impression that the North Korean army spent the entire three years of the Korean War blowing up offices where those records were kept because so many of them had been reconstructed after the war. Also, because of the large number of South Koreans whose family origin was in the north, and there were millions including people in quite high places in government and business, accurately assessing the necessary family relationship in an individual case could be very difficult. You had a lot of missing links so to speak, and you had to think of the situation of the war and aftermath and consult with the FSNs and others to make sure you were coming to the right decision. It was a challenge but you soon learned what to look for and what questions to ask and what ancillary documents to ask for, like school and church records.

There was a lot of fraud. Some of the fraud came from the fact that a lot of Korean men in that era and certainly before had concubines and children by these concubines. Their documentary connection to the families especially if they were female children of the concubines was shaky. You had to drag in other records, school records, family photos and all these other things to try to figure out whether the person really had the necessary relationship in U.S. law or was a fraud. That was very frustrating, but since we were all dealing with it, it gave us visa officers a certain perverse amount of camaraderie.

Q: I was going to say that the visa office, well, the consular officers, were a very good crew. I was very impressed.

O'NEILL: We went out and hung out together a good bit in the off hours as well. We'd go on picnics on weekends with the Korean local staff and have parties or dinners around our apartments and that kind of thing. That helped a lot. I think we were very cohesive group. I remember very much the feeling of fighting a two-front war in dealing with these visa applicants. More than a few of them were legitimate applicants; others were distinctly not. That was the first front.

The second front was with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the U.S. The impression I certainly had, I think many of us had, was that once somebody, however fraudulent, got through the turnstile at LAX, they were home free. That was it. You felt very distinctly being undermined by the people in the immigration service who seemed to let really egregious frauds stay in the U.S with little or no trouble. I'm sure they thought they were all dutifully trying to do their jobs. But that is an impression I still have 30 years later and it affected our morale.

Q: I had the same impression. One of the stories that came to me from one of you all was that there was somebody who presented family registers that showed she died and then was born again a few days later. Apparently she had been born in an inauspicious day, so they killed her off and had her born a few days later.

O'NEILL: I'm not surprised by that at all. That reminds me of a very strong Korean prejudice against multiple births, twins, triplets, etc. In the Korean ethos this was associated with litters of

animals. It was not unusual to see in a family register that a woman had given birth to one child on a Monday and four days later had given birth to another child. Then you asked, “Are they *ssangttungi*?” which is “twins,” and the answer was always yes. Very bashful, very embarrassed, but that’s what it was. So these things were, again, part of what you learned.

That resurrection thing also came up in the enormous family dislocation in the Korean War. Often you had a family of North Koreans who more or less cohesively got down to the south but with some people left behind or presumed dead or whatever. If they came across a missing relative much later, often the way that person would be put into the family register was “resurrected” or brought back from the dead. I’d see this in the English translation, and I asked one of the FSNs one time, “What does this say in Korean?” She read it, and she said, “It means ‘brought back from the dead’.” You ran into things like that all the time, the results of that devastating war. I actually got to be fairly good at reading family registers which were written mostly in Chinese characters and also partly in *Hangeul*, the Korean alphabet. But I was certainly no expert at it.

I can’t remember any case where that kind of odd entry turned out to be fraudulent. There were other things where people sort of miraculously arrived on family registers in their 20’s, 25 or so, and it would be very suspicious particularly if the person was a male. You could imagine Koreans forgetting for 20 years or so to register a daughter but not a son. Indeed, those almost always were found to be fraudulent. In visa work you had to learn a good deal about Korean culture and realities if you were going to do a proper job.

Q: You’re making a case which I’ve always felt was valid was that somebody who learns rigid rules and particularly if they have a legal background. I’m talking about Americans on the visa officer side, and somebody who’s so afraid of making a misjudgment or mistake wants to be sure to obey the law especially just being rigid. You can’t do it in some cases. You just sort of have to operate to a degree by sense and touch.

O’NEILL: You have to look at the big picture, as frustrating as it was and considering that the work load was pretty overwhelming. I can’t remember the daily caseload, but it was large. I think they were at most five officers doing IVs at the time. I seem to recall doing about 1,000 IV cases a month for those six months; so I did about 6,000 in half a year. Some of it was relatively easy and straightforward work, but a lot of it was not.

You had to do a lot of consulting with your colleagues during the course of the day, too, in part because of the Federal poverty guidelines for immigrant visa applicants so they would not be a “public charge.” You’d look at paperwork for this family, and the former GI and his wife in the states who were the petitioners would have a modest income. You figure, “Well, according to the poverty guidelines, they can just barely make it over the wire.” Then you realize that this same couple in the U.S. was petitioning for another family that John was interviewing and another that Harry was interviewing, too. So you really had three different families, all of whom were supposedly going to be dependent on the same modest income. That became pretty tough. You’d wind up usually insisting that there be some kind of job arranged for the family, and that became yet another element of difficulty later on. They were supposedly going to LA and the job offer was in Fairbanks, Alaska. It was tough work, it really was. You’re trying to be fair because you

really didn't want to refuse somebody who was eligible, but you also didn't want to vandalize the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Q: I know after I left in '79, shortly thereafter they exposed a major fraud ring. You might explain what this is.

O'NEILL: I forget what triggered it the discovery, and I don't remember the details, but it turned out there was an enormous amount of fraud among the FSNs doing immigrant visas. I don't recall that it affected any of the non-immigrant visa FSNs, but it was deep and pervasive on the immigrant side, and they were making bundles of money in helping to fake documents and all that kind of thing. A lot of FSNs on the immigrant visa (IV) side were fired, including many that I had worked with without suspicion.

Q: Moving from that what did you do after you had a year of that?

O'NEILL: And now for something completely different, as Monty Python says, I became the ambassador's aide. In those days there was a staff aide to the ambassador as a six month rotational position for first tour junior officers. Later the inspectors knocked that out for a long period which I thought was a stupid thing to do. Then after a gap of many years the staff aide position has since been restored in Seoul. I got to be the staff aide for Ambassador William Gleysteen. He was an Asia hand *par excellence*, for one thing having been born in China of missionary parents.

Q: I think there were three Gleysteens in the Foreign Service.

O'NEILL: There were; he and his brothers Dirk and Culver. He was the only one I knew. He was the quintessential Foreign Service officer as I had imagined them. I think he went to Yale. He spent a great deal of time working on China. His Chinese was fluent by the testimony of Koreans I knew whose specialty was China. He was a perfect gentleman and a fine person to work for. I learned a lot from him.

He did a number of things that I think impressed the Koreans a great deal from his arrival that summer of '78, replacing Ambassador Richard Sneider. Ambassador Sneider, incidentally, was also a career officer with an enormous amount of Asia experience, Korea (including during the war), Japan, and back in Washington, too. Ambassador Gleysteen became the first American ambassador to call on the director general for North American Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, who in the normal course of things was the natural counterpart of an American ambassador. But because of the peculiar setup in Korea, American ambassadors before him had never gone that "far down" in their round of courtesy calls. It made a big splash in the Korean press that he would do this. The other thing was that he didn't fly the flags on his car unless he was doing something like going to the Blue House or to call on a senior ROK official.

Q: The Blue House meaning the president's offices.

O'NEILL: President's offices and residence, yes. Or to some other major ceremonial occasion. In the normal course of things, he didn't fly the flags on his car, which was partly his being self-

effacing, the other aspect being his way of signaling less of a pro-consular image to the U.S. presence in Korea, to treat Korea on more of an equal plane.

Q: If I recall, we were trying to disengage from this idea that we were running things. We were pretty comfortable with the Koreans trying. It had looked before like we were manipulating them.

O'NEILL: Right. Overt manipulating almost invariably backfired on us because as anybody who has dealt with the Korean government over the decades knows, they don't get manipulated, at least not easily. In fact, much later on, about ten years ago or so, Ambassador Gleysteen wrote a book about this, and the title was Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence. That sort of epitomized where we were in Korea at the time.

I know he could see that by looking like we were the proconsuls, it was easy for Koreans in opposition to Park Chung-Hee to blame us for so many things that President Park did. A lot of Koreans blamed us then and still do now for support to dictatorial governments under Park Chung-Hee and his successor Chun Doo Hwan. So we were gaining few of the benefits and much of the opprobrium for the relatively little influence that we really had. This was true on the military side as well as on the embassy side over the decades.

My next comment is no reflection on the leadership of the consular section, just a fact: when I went from the consular section to the ambassador's office I felt like I was going from the engine room of the ship to the bridge. This was in terms of what I, as a junior officer, could see about how the U.S. mission in Korea interacted with the U.S. forces, the 37,000 U.S. military people under a four star general and with the Korean government.

It was an eye opening experience which is one of the reasons why I thought that the inspectors made a big mistake when they eliminated that staff aide spot for quite a number of years. I don't know how much help I was to Ambassador Gleysteen, but I know I learned a great deal from him and also from Tom Stern the DCM, not only about dealing with Korea but also how you deal with foreign policy situations in general.

It was a period of considerable turmoil in U.S.-Korea relations because of two things: One was President Carter's determination to withdraw U.S. ground forces, a position that he wound out having to drop almost entirely in the months leading up to his 1979 visit. But it was also the period of the so-called "Koreagate" scandal in which the Park government, through a fixer named Park Tong-Sun, (no relation to President Park) was funneling large amounts of money particularly to the House of Representatives. I don't recall that any senators were involved. It was a huge scandal and reverberated to the detriment of U.S.-Korea relations. The Koreans presumably saw that other rather unsavory governments were buying influence in Congress and apparently thought they should do the same but they were not very subtle about it.

I should also say that President Carter came into office with the idea of making human rights a major element of his foreign policy, so this put him on something of a collision course with Park Chung-Hee who was not a fan of human rights, certainly not as interpreted by President Carter. So being the ambassador's aide at that time was a very interesting learning experience, and I found it very valuable.

Q: If you're interested you can go to our website, the Library of Congress, and we have an interview with Ambassador Gleysteen done by one of our volunteers named Tom Stern.

O'NEILL: That's good! I'll look that one up.

Q: Did you get any feel about military- embassy relations? You understood the military thing from the inside and you were seeing this relationship.

O'NEILL: Yes. It was, I wouldn't say unique, but it was certainly very different from what I saw later in Japan in terms of scale and influence. The U.S. military organization in Korea was and still is a multi-layered thing. The senior U.S. military person had the title of Commander in Chief, UN Command, the CINCUNC (pronounced "sinkunk"). He was also the commanding general, 8th U.S. Army and commanding general U.S. Forces Korea, including the other services. In 1978, he got another four star "hat" as they say when the U.S.-ROK — Republic of Korea — Combined Forces Command (CFC) was established as the overall war fighting command for the Korean peninsula. So he had these four major responsibilities.

The impact of the U.S. forces on the Korea situation was such that every week the CINCUNC and the ambassador would have a breakfast that would alternate between the general's quarters and the ambassador's residence. This was a fixture of their schedules when they were both in the country. There was a lot for them to discuss all the time. The Koreans had over the years got more or less used to the idea of that American military behemoth headquartered in Yongsan in central Seoul and its influence on the Korean political scene, etc.

There was often a good bit of friction to work out with the command and a good bit of cooperation as well. The U.S. armed forces wherever they are, are so large, so self-sufficient and so self-contained that they sometimes forget there's anyone else around including other Americans.

One example of this was when Defense Secretary Harold Brown was visiting Korea, the then CINCUNC was going to host a dinner for him. As the ambassador's aide I was trying to get the seating chart from the protocol group at US Forces Korea. Time was getting short, and I was getting frustrated because I had been asking for the seating chart for quite a while. When it finally did come, I saw that the Army protocol people had General Vessey and Harold Brown together side by side at the center of this very long table that had sort of a block U shape to it. Then they had many U.S. assistant secretaries of defense ranged alongside them, and then finally around the corners of the table were the Foreign Minister of Korea and the ambassador, below all those assistant secretaries, who were of course much lower ranking than the ambassador and the foreign minister.

I had to get on the phone right away to USFK protocol, told them that they couldn't possibly have the seating arranged this way because the ambassador was actually the highest ranking American civilian in Korea. He technically outranked the secretary of defense although he obviously would defer to Brown as a visiting cabinet member, but he had to be seated next to Vessey and Brown and the Korean foreign minister had to be right next to the top Americans,

ahead of all those assistant secretaries of defense, unless they wanted official ROK protests at the insult and screaming outcries in the Korean press. Controlled as the press was, that would have been a major insult, and any nationalistic Korean KCIA censor would be happy to show up the rudeness of the Americans to a senior ROK official. In the end order was restored and the banquet went off without any untoward incident.

Let me backtrack to something that happened when Ambassador Richard Sneider was still in Seoul. Again, it shows the testy relationship between the U.S. and Korea even under a military dictatorship like Park Chung-Hee's. It was spring of 1978; Ambassador Sneider was giving out awards and I was getting a 10 year service pin for my eight years in the Army and two years in the Foreign Service.

At the moment that was taking place upstairs, representatives of the Korean veterans' associations, all very conservative pro-government groups, burst into the chancery and trashed the lobby. They were protesting against an incident a few days before in which former ambassador William Porter had said to a U.S. reporter, *a propos* of nothing as far as I know, that before he had come to Korea in the early 1970's we used to routinely bug the Blue House, presidential mansion. Of course, that wasn't being done during his time as ambassador, he said. Despite the stringent controls that the Korean government had on access to the chancery and who could demonstrate and all that, somehow all these war veterans managed to burst in through the outer chancery perimeter into the lobby in front of the Marine guards. They trashed the place while shouting anti-American slogans and then as ordered by their commander, they left. Nationalism trumps most anything in Korea. Korea was an interesting place: always was, always will be.

Q: What were you getting from your contacts and also general talk about the northern threat at that time?

O'NEILL: Good question. It was certainly accepted doctrine that the North was a huge threat, and in those days it really was. Whether or not they would actually attack the South, I was certainly questioning that even at that point, but you couldn't rule it out. Certainly it was only around 1975 or '76 that South Korea's GNP had begun to surpass the North's. It was difficult to compare the two because the North Korean GNP was so heavily focused on industrial/military production to the detriment of the general public where South Korean GNP was more evenly spread. In fact, the ADB, the Asian Development Bank, and World Bank were giving South Korea high marks at that time for the relatively narrow gap between the top and bottom incomes in the country.

This was also the period during which a number of tunnels were discovered under the DMZ, and the belief was there were many more that were as yet undiscovered. The belief was that each North Korean division along the DMZ had to build a tunnel for infiltration in the event of war. And then as now, the main North Korean forces were heavily weighted toward the DMZ in what a U.S. intelligence analyst at the time told me was "a classic Soviet offensive array."

There were a number of incidents including a famous one which caused quite a shakeup in Korea. In the fall of 1978, a group of three or four North Korean infiltrators was dropped off by

boat near Pusan. And over the span of the next few weeks, they traversed the entire Republic of Korea from southeast to northwest. This was known because they were killing people along their route. These were villagers, for example, who were gathering ferns and herbs in the mountains, as part of traditional Korean cooking. If they happened to blunder upon these North Korean infiltrators, they'd be killed. This was how the Korean Defense Security Command (DSC), the Army and the police were keeping track of more or less where the North Koreans had just been. What exactly their mission was, I don't know. It was certainly not to kill people gathering herbs in the mountains but they did that to cover their tracks.

They eventually exfiltrated in the vicinity of Inchon and got back to North Korea. Meanwhile, the entire police force, the armed forces and the reserve army were all out trying to find them. Once it was known that they exfiltrated, there was a huge shake-up. The lieutenant general commanding the Army's Defense Security Command was sacked. A lot of other senior military people and senior police were fired, too.

Then an unknown — at least to us — major general named Chun Doo-Hwan became commanding general of the DSC in the aftermath of that infiltration scandal. That appointment, as it turned out, positioned Chun Doo-Hwan to take over the ROK government a year or so later, following Park's assassination in October 1979. So in a bizarre way you could say the North Koreans put Chun in a position to run South Korea.

Remember this period was not long after the axe murders at Panmunjom in August 1976 in which two American military officers and some Korean workers were killed by the North Koreans. You had a very distinct sense of ominous and unsettling situations along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). I don't know what the North Koreans' actual intentions were at the time. They certainly would have liked to take over the country by force but they obviously decided that they couldn't do it. Attempts to subvert the ROK from within may have offered more promise, especially since it was rather easy to rally opposition to Park's authoritarianism.

As part of the atmosphere at the time there was a curfew at midnight in Seoul and all but one of the provinces. Only in North Chungcheong Province there was no curfew because there was no sea coast. Armed Korean soldiers manned roadblocks in Seoul. We could be out after curfew because of diplomatic IDs and diplomatic plates on our cars, but I knew from my military experience that I didn't want to be out around armed guys who couldn't get out of guard duty after midnight, especially determined young Korean soldiers. I was only out after curfew twice in two years. Once was inadvertent; I was being driven by somebody else and couldn't get back from Yongsan before curfew, so we drove very gingerly back to our embassy housing area near the Blue House. The other time was during the Carter visit and I was couriering classified documents back and forth between the embassy and the hotel where the White House party was staying.

Q: As I'm sure I told you and everybody in my section, having been a GI myself and knowing who ended up on guard duty after midnight that he's not the swiftest guy in the world.

O'NEILL: I was a big believer in that. I remember your advice at the time. During Park's time the government was taking other actions besides the curfew to rally patriotic

feeling and alertness against the North Korean threat. As a minor example, each day at 5:00 pm, the national anthem was played over loudspeakers throughout Seoul. I don't recall that cars had to stop but pedestrians certainly did. There were also air raid and civil defense drills at least monthly, some of which were quite elaborate, including columns of tanks and armored cars driving up the main avenue, Sejong-ro. And lastly, there were hortatory slogans everywhere. On the front of Seoul's central rail station, a big placard warned "*ban kong, bang cheop*," which means "oppose communism; defend against spies." This was all part of the atmosphere in Park Chung Hee's Korea.

Q: I think we'll stop at this point. This is an important period. I'm not going to let it go. I wanted to end now, so we'll discuss some things the next time. One: the social life and your feeling about Koreans and off-office hours. The other is about the Carter visit because this is an important one, about Carter and your impression and the whole thing about the 2nd Division. That was significant. I think all of us figured that Carter had made this promise about withdrawing the 2nd Division out of reaction against Vietnam. We'll talk about that and then about human rights and our feeling about human rights. It so happens that I'm going to a small dinner at Tex Harris's house tonight with Pat Derian, Carter's former assistant secretary for human rights.

O'NEILL: Okay.

Q: Today is the 3rd of September 2008, and this is being done with Al O'Neill. Al, as I recall we left this off, you were in Korea from when to when?

O'NEILL: Summer 1977 to summer '79.

Q: We covered a good number of things, but let's now talk about the presidential visit. You said you had only a small part of it, but you were there picking up the atmospheric, so let's talk about that.

O'NEILL: Carter was scheduled to visit Korea in July of 1979. On the Korean side, there was a combination, I think, both of anticipation and worry because Carter had made Park Chung-Hee an object of his human rights policies. Park was very authoritarian but was at the time same time working very hard to prime Korea's economic development. There was a good bit of tension about the arrangements for the visit, especially since Carter had made that famous campaign promise, with no apparent knowledge of Korea at all, to pull all U.S. ground forces out. In the end, actually only one battalion from the 2nd Infantry Division was pulled out — the 2nd Battalion 9th Infantry Regiment nicknamed the "Manchus" from its Boxer Rebellion service.

The Defense Intelligence Agency was developing studies of North Korea which showed the North Korean forces were much larger than originally estimated and were growing. This was used by cooler heads around Carter in his White House, NSC staff and the State Department to cause him to be able to back off that promise. That campaign promise was quite unsettling to Park, and I think quite unsettling to the general public in Korea, too.

Also contention over human rights was shaping up as a major issue. I think the Park government wanted to reinforce with Carter the need to have a strong U.S. military presence. Plus I think they wanted Carter to assert that the U.S. commitment to the defense of Korea was very strong

and do that all while in Korea.

Incidentally, this was a period that spring in April of '78 there was an incident which a Korea Airlines airliner was shot down by the Soviets on a flight that was supposed to fly from Paris over Anchorage to Seoul. The pilot had made the worst navigational error in civil aviation history, was over the heavily defended Kola Peninsula near Murmansk and was shot down by a Soviet fighter. This pilot who had made the worst navigational error in civil aviation history was nonetheless very capable as a pilot. He actually brought his heavily damaged airplane, a 707, down on a frozen lake on the Kola Peninsula. Only two people were killed, a Japanese businessman and one other. (Note: the actual date of the incident was April 20, 1978)

The strange thing about this and the reason I mention it is it had an impact on Korean foreign affairs. The first reaction generally in Korea to this incident was one of horror and shock that the Soviets were going to turn over the Korean crew and passengers to the North Koreans. I'm sure that was never part of Soviet thinking at all. When it became clear that the Soviets were not going to do that, the second reaction in Korea was, "How can we turn this incident into a bridge to perhaps develop relations with the Soviet Union?" Little if anything came of that notion at that point, but it was an interesting sidelight on Korean thinking, this belief that the Soviets and the North Koreans were so in league that that's where these crew and passengers would end up. Then the second reaction was more practical: "Let's see if we can develop this to our advantage."

In any case, aside from that in the run-up to the visit there was a good bit of work between the U.S. and Korean governments over the events and also the substance of the visit, too. One of the things I didn't know as a very junior officer in the political section that I only learned from Ambassador Gleysteen's book Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence is that out of the blue, Carter decided it would be good to invite Kim Il-sung to come to Seoul during his state visit with Park Chung-Hee; so they could all meet together. One, this idea was further evidence of Carter's astonishing naïveté towards the Korean peninsula and its problems and two, it's a little bit ironic in that in July 1994 Carter as an ex-president became the highest ranking American to meet with Kim Il-sung, a month before Kim's death. Gleysteen says in his book that he so totally opposed this notion that he told the NSC he would resign from his post rather than acquiesce. I don't know to what degree the Korean government was clued in on this at all. My guess is that they couldn't have known because that would have caused a gigantic blowup.

I was assigned as the embassy event officer for the main welcoming ceremony at Yeouido, the big island in the Han River where the National Assembly building is. Tens of thousands of people lived in high-rise apartments there, and there were tall office buildings as well. It was between Kimpo Airport and downtown Seoul.

The visit was a bit strange. Carter was going to Vienna, then Tokyo then Seoul, as the last stop. We had an advance team from the White House that was, well, a motley crew is the best way to describe it. It was the least capable and least organized of the advance teams I ever dealt with in presidential visits, including two by President Bush 41 to Seoul and Reagan in the 1983 visit to Tokyo. For example, the person that I was working with as the White House advance person for the main welcoming ceremony was a Teddy Kennedy campaign worker from Boston who kept

saying over and over, “I can’t wait for Teddy to declare,” because he wanted to be part of Teddy’s challenge to Carter for the Democratic nomination for 1980. I had to work with him on that very public ceremony.

The site at Yeouido was originally a Japanese airfield which had been paved over and named May 16th Plaza in honor of the date of Park Chung-Hee’s 1961 coup. We were to have a large throng of Koreans, the National Assembly, the cabinet and other luminaries there. Part of the security package for this event was a brigade from the Korean airborne division out of sight behind the buildings.

The ceremony and the sequence of events were bit odd in that Carter had arrived the day before. His first event was to visit the 2nd Infantry Division headquarters near Uijongbu just south of the DMZ. From there he was to helicopter down to Yeouido, so he would have been in Korea overnight before he met with Park which was a little strange. As it happened, fog prevented him from helicoptering, so the U.S. party came down by car.

The ceremony itself went off very well. The Koreans arranged the crowd size that the White House advance team thought was necessary to fill the plaza so it would look good on television, always the central consideration in any presidential visit. Park and Carter reviewed the Korean honor guard in Park’s open limousine. Then the two presidents changed into Carter’s closed limousine for the motorcade from Yeouido through downtown Seoul to the Blue House for the first round of meetings. At least once Carter had the motorcade stop and had the roof of his armored limo opened so he could wave to the cheering throngs. To the best of my knowledge, this was totally unplanned by anyone including our Secret Service. It certainly wasn’t Park’s style. The Korean people were very glad to see an American president and I’m sure more than a few of them were glad to see a president who had a record of trying to push for better human rights in Korea. The meetings between Park and Carter, in which I was not a participant, were very contentious. There was a heated discussion between the ambassador and the president.

Q: There’s something about Carter and Gleysteen staying in a car a long time.

O’NEILL: They were in Carter’s limo at the ambassador’s residence just south of the Blue House. One of my friends who was there said he saw the car actually shaking as the two of them were carrying on their discussion about U.S. policy towards Korea.

The visit itself in terms of logistics went quite well, as the result of a lot of hard work. The political counselor at the time, the late Bill Clark, tasked me with doing the wrap-up cable on the visit which I thought was a nice thing for him to do for a junior officer. This was distinct from the extremely restricted cables on individual meetings between Carter and Park and other senior officials and their Korean counterparts.

In the final analysis, I think Carter’s visit succeeded on several levels. He reaffirmed the U.S. security commitment to the ROK after he had worried a wide range of Koreans with his ill-advised troop withdrawal notion. The general understanding in Korea was the wholesale removal of U.S. ground forces was over. He was able to confront Park Chung-Hee directly over human rights and also made clear to the Korean public U.S. support for Korea’s democratization. And,

Carter did get a chance to see what Seoul looked like and what the area between the DMZ and Seoul looked like, probably a more realistic view by car than he would have by helicopter.

Q: What's the distance between the DMZ and Seoul?

O'NEILL: It's 30-some miles. It's not much of an hour's drive between the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom and Seoul. The usual analogy is the distance between the Capitol Building in Washington and Dulles Airport. Carter got to see that on the ground.

Q: It's very impressive by the sheer propinquity of the capital to North Korea. At that time I think it was the general assumption was that Seoul would fall to the North Koreans and then there would be a surge back.

O'NEILL: It would have been a much tougher fight for the North Koreans than it was in 1950. Whether they could have held on to Seoul for any length of time no one will ever know. Certainly the extent of the damage to Seoul would have been tremendous whether or not it fell to the North Koreans. It would have been huge, indeed.

Q: Carter, although he was a Naval Academy graduate, had shown a certain naïveté about the political and military situation in Korea. There's nothing more sobering than to drive up from Seoul to the DMZ and seeing how close you are and look at the North Korean border guards and then be told how many artillery pieces were pointed at Seoul.

O'NEILL: The drive, particularly in those days, between Seoul and points north brought you under many concrete camouflaged archways that were rigged with demolitions to bring huge blocks of concrete down on the roads. That would have somewhat inhibited truck traffic. It might not have done so much for tanks which could go around them. I accompanied Ambassador Gleysteen by Huey up to the 2nd Infantry Division, when he was the reviewing officer for the parade in which the 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry, stood down before going back to the States. We were flying over tanks in revetments. You could see plenty of artillery pieces and all sorts of other military equipment. It was a very heavily defended area. Still is.

Q: How stood your Korean at this point?

O'NEILL: I'd had the year at FSI for 44 weeks before going to Korea. I had a speaking rating of S2 plus and a reading level of R2 when I left FSI. In my consular work I wound up using it a good bit. I probably had, although I didn't test, an S3 in consular Korean, but in my work both in the ambassador's office and the political section later, I was mostly dealing with Foreign Ministry officials and other Koreans whose English was so good it was pointless for me to try out my clumsy Korean on them.

There were some odd moments using Korean in visa work. It was interesting that with some Koreans I could speak in Korean, and they would understand me well enough. I spoke with an American accent and obviously did not speak like a Korean, but they could understand me enough that they would answer me coherently in Korean. There were other Koreans who did what I call "listening to my face." They would see this Caucasian face and were paralyzed. They

assumed that whatever noise I was making couldn't be Korean. There was a total mental block.

One of the weirdest examples of this was one immigrant visa interview where the beneficiary — the direct applicant — was a woman with her husband and a son who I guess was in his late teens or early 20s perhaps. The woman spoke not a word of English, so I was speaking to her in Korean. She clearly didn't understand a word I was saying. The son repeated my questions to her in Korean, and she answered me based on the son's reiteration of my question. So we had this triangular situation: I'd ask a question in Korean, the son would repeat the same question in "real" Korean, she would answer me based on the son's reformulation of my question. No English was spoken during this entire interview. She was just totally paralyzed by the Caucasian face.

Q: Did you get any impression of what I call the "Korean hands," mid-career junior officers who specialized in Korean? In Japan there's the Chrysanthemum Club. I don't know what you'd call it. The Kimchi Club?

O'NEILL: I'm trying to remember how many people there were in that group in the embassy. There were not many. The real origin of a cadre of Korea hands in the Foreign Service was Peace Corps Korea. Kathy Stephens, who just arrived in Seoul last month as the Ambassador was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Korea in the mid-1970's. Another State officer via Peace Corps was Doug McNeill, who was extremely good in Korean. Among other State FSOs from Peace Corps Korea were Dick Christenson, Roger C. "Chris" Nottingham, Dennis Halpin, Ted Kloth and Joe Donovan, also Mark Mohr, whom I met later and who became mainly a China hand. There were USIS officers including Nick and Mary Miele — Nick was the officer — who were Korea Peace Corps veterans. Bill Maurer was another. Jim Pierce had been in the Army in Korea in military intelligence and was in Korea at the time that I arrived. He had been in Korean language at FSI the year before I got there. David Straub, an A-100 classmate, arrived in Korea as I was leaving in 1979 and went on to a distinguished career in Korean affairs. The Korea hands in the Foreign Service were a new group at that point. It obviously has gotten a lot better and more widespread, and there is now quite a large number of people who have developed that expertise.

There were several people including Bill Clark, the political counselor who had a lot of Japan experience. Spence Richardson came as the deputy in the political section in 1979. Spence had at least a couple of tours, maybe three tours, in Japan, in Tokyo, Fukuoka and also good Japanese language skills. One of the difficulties with developing that Korea Hand cadre was a combination of the extreme difficulty of the language coupled with the fact that for State officers you only had the embassy in Seoul. There was a consulate in Pusan but I think it had only one State FSO position. There were more US Information Service branch posts in those days, which gave more scope for USIS officers.

DAVID BLAKEMORE
Korea Desk Officer
Washington, D.C. (1977-1980)

David Blakemore was born in 1941 in New York State. He graduated from Valparaiso in 1962 and joined the Foreign Service in 1965. He served overseas in Saudi Arabia, India, Korea, Bangladesh and Nigeria, as well as the staff director of the Board of Examiners and Deputy Team Leader in the Inspection Corps in Washington DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in the winter of 1997.

BLAKEMORE: I left there in '77 and took up residence on my fourth desk in the State Department. This is consistent with my reluctance which I noted earlier to go overseas, or relative reluctance among the FSOs that I know. From '77 to '80 I was the deputy director of the Korea desk. I was responsible for political-military affairs, and supervisee the first full-time economic officer on the desk. Those were the two things that I was most involved in: political-military and economics.

Q: '77 ushered in James Edward Carter and he had made certain pronouncements. I was parenthetically consul general in Seoul at the time. Mr. Carter focused our attention on our military relationship there. Could you talk about the reaction to Carter coming in and all that?

BLAKEMORE: To be specific, the President came with a campaign promise that he would get U.S. ground combat forces out of Korea.

Q: The second division.

BLAKEMORE: There was a lot of discussion about what exactly "ground combat forces" might mean. It was clear that he was going to leave the Air Force components. There were 40,000 U.S. troops in Korea, or 44,000 probably, when he came to office, and he wanted to withdraw about 30,000 of them.

The origins of this campaign promise were a little obscure I think but appeared to grow out of his personal disgust with the Korean human rights record. Park Chung Hee's government, by the time Carter came to power, had been in power for 16 years and while certainly stable and promoting miraculous economic growth, it had begun to get nasty around the political edges in terms of the heavy-handed ways it kept its opponents in check. That was the conventional wisdom about what was bugging Jimmy Carter who, after all, as the governor of Georgia probably hadn't been focusing an awful lot on foreign affairs. But human rights was something he made a lot of noise about from the beginning and of course he established the human rights bureau at the State Department when he came into office.

This plan to withdraw U.S. ground combat forces was put forward without benefit of any kind of analysis of the military impact of doing so, or the political impact for that matter. I would think it is fair to say that it really frightened those of us in the State Department and Defense Department who worked on Korea and knew something about Korea. It was very disturbing and we spent a lot of time over the succeeding two years trying to help the President find a graceful way to back down from this position which he had taken, an ill-considered position. Of course one of the problems was that he didn't think it was an ill-considered position. He was quite stubborn.

Even when an analysis of the implications of withdrawal, and how disastrous it could be militarily were pointed out to him, the President was not prepared to accept it. I was closely involved over the next two years with a lot of bureaucratic scurrying and planning and calculating on this effort, trying to get the President to change his mind. It was something that he eventually did, not terribly graciously, but he did towards the end of 1978 putting forward at the same time a proposal for tripartite talks: North and South Korea and the United States. The South Korean government mightily resisted and resented the tripartite idea, but eventually accepted as a quid pro quo for backing off troop withdrawal. It was fascinating to me to see how people responded when they thought that the President had publicly taken a stand that was disastrous to U.S. interests. State and Defense worked together reasonably well.

Q: Can we talk in as much detail as you can recall because this is a very important take? It was not a minor issue it was really a major issue. Most of us felt that if this happened it would escalate the possibility of war on the Korean peninsula considerably. Could you talk of the battle for the mind of the President, what you recall going on?

BLAKEMORE: It seems to me that the strategy had two parts to it. One was to launch a new intelligence community assessment of the order of battle issues in North and South Korea and to determine what difference it made whether we were there or not on the ground. At the same time we tried to persuade the President to slow down his timetable because by the time he came to office somebody, and I don't know who it was, had put together a fairly concrete timetable for the withdrawal of various elements of that ground combat force that was his target. That timetable was moving inexorably down the road. In order to get him to slow that down, he did finally agree to the intelligence reassessment and then it was logical not to take major units out. If you admitted that it was worthwhile to take a look at the whole thing again, that it didn't make sense to take major units out while you were looking. We did a lot of fighting over the withdrawal of minor units trying to persuade the White House that whatever unit we were looking at today, and it got fairly specific, small units ought to be allowed to stay until the intelligence assessment was complete.

The mysterious part of the intelligence reassessment was an effort by the Defense Intelligence Agency to go back over old satellite imagery of North Korea and in doing so, they "discovered" significant forces that they had not known were there. Key to those significant forces were tank units. By the time we got done with this intelligence reassessment we had counted well over 2,000 tanks in North Korea, twice as many as were in the south. I think there was an increase from 600,000 to 800,000 in the estimate of the number of North Koreans under arms. You can imagine the cynicism with which this was greeted particularly since it was largely based on reassessment of old imagery rather than on new information.

There was a tremendous amount of cynicism over where those troops and those tanks came from. I don't have the answer to that. I have no idea, no sense, as to the honesty with which that reassessment of that old imagery was conducted but I do know that by steadfastly sticking to its guns and shrugging its shoulders and saying "we know it doesn't look good but this is our best estimate. Are you calling us liars or dishonorable men now?" By sticking with that new assessment, I think that is what really turned the President around. The tripartite negotiation

proposal which I mentioned before was his fig leaf because that's what the South Koreans conceded. I think what really turned him around was that in the end he couldn't get past the overwhelming military superiority of the North Koreans as reflected in the new estimate.

Q: How are you in the political-military side analyzing what all this meant? I am talking about in the North. This is just a big question. Every night we'd only hear a bang which is usually one of these Black Hawk reconnaissance planes going overhead. You jump out of bed and you think, "My god, this is it." Were you trying to figure out what does Kim Il Sung want, what is going to happen? As you know this truce has gone on and continues since 1953.

BLAKEMORE: I think the fact that it has gone on since 1953 was an important consideration in getting the President to change his mind. North Korea is surely the most difficult intelligence target in the world. At least the last time I worked on Korea, we knew pathetically little about what goes on and certainly pathetically little about the dynamics of the political system or any other system, the human system, of North Korea. What we knew was based mainly on overhead imagery.

It's very easy to demonstrate that Kim Il Sung was an irrational leader. Why was he putting 20 to 25 percent of the GNP into the military? Was he really afraid South Korea and the United States were going to attack? It didn't make any sense. Lots of other things about the regime seemed very irrational to us but as you say the truce has been in place since 1953 and therefore you could say that Kim Il Sung is logical enough, rational enough, to be susceptible to deterrence, to say "No, there is too large of force arraigned against me on the southern side of the DMZ, I am going to wait a while longer before I launch some kind of an attack."

There was a strong argument of "if it ain't broke don't fix it" because with such a difficult intelligence target, it is very difficult to know which piece of the deterrence really operated on Kim's mind to say "I don't want to tangle with that". Was it the US Air Force A 10's? Was it the trip wire, the fact that if you had U.S. ground forces in a forward position some would inevitably get killed in an initial attack and therefore the whole military might of the United States could be expected to follow? Was that what deterred him? Most people would have guessed the tripwire was what deterred Kim, and therefore the President perversely wanted to withdraw what many people thought was the most effective element of deterrence, the ground combat forces. All of those things were involved.

I certainly did not do anything that would be mistaken for military analysis of the balance of forces on the peninsula. That wasn't my job. I sat in on a lot of fascinating meetings on that subject but our concern on the desk had much more to do with the management of the South Korean reaction to what was going on. You said you were in the embassy in Seoul in 1977 and found the President's declaration frightening. You had a lot of South Koreans who were more frightened than you were because you were leaving after three years and they were not going anywhere. I think managing that reaction was our major contribution.

Q: Were you at the desk consciously trying to build up the Korean self-sustaining forces, tanks, artillery, that sort of thing, so that they would eventually be able to stand on their own?

BLAKEMORE: Your memory is working better than mine. Yes. Thank you for recalling that. The modernization of the Korean forces was a five year plan that was just getting under way in 1977. Another significant argument we used in trying to get the President to back off was “do it but don’t do it now, they are not ready yet.” Yes, during the time that I was there, there was some major upgrading, not so much increase in quantity but in quality of Korean forces across the board. F-16s became very important in their arsenal during that period, for example.

Strangely, on many days when I came to work on the Korean desk, this was not the top issue that I had to look at because the Tong Sun Park scandal was going on simultaneously. While we were trying to persuade the President that these Koreans were good guys and that we ought to continue to stick our security neck out despite their human rights record, Congress was uncovering the extremely ugly evidence of corrupt Korean influencing of U.S. congressmen. Tong Sun Park was the Korean point man in that effort. It seemed pretty clear to me that he was being funded by the Korean government. I don’t think that it was ever clearly demonstrated but Tong Sun Park didn’t have the kind of fortune required to spread money around the way it was being spread around. It was designed to prevent exactly the sort of thing that they were faced with, the precipitous withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Q: Of course our congressional representatives, a number of them, did not cover themselves in glory. They sort of rolled over their backs and took the money.

BLAKEMORE: Yes, Park had some very willing collaborators.

Q: A lady named Susie something or other.

BLAKEMORE: She was in Tip O’Neill’s office, right?

Q: Yes, something like that.

BLAKEMORE: She was a Korean American. It really created a very negative impression of Korea at a time when Korea could not afford, on the security front, to have that negative impression.

Q: Did you get involved in the negotiations to have an inquiry of Tong Sun Park?

BLAKEMORE: No, that was already underway by the time I came to the desk.

Q: I got on it a little. I had to swear a man, and I remember meeting our assistant attorney. It was a man named Giuliani who came out there, who is now mayor of New York.

BLAKEMORE: That’s right. I had forgotten that he was involved in that business.

Q: How did you find the American military? You say they were working in solid concert or something with the State Department on this thing. Was everybody pretty well agreed that this whole thing was a bad idea?

BLAKEMORE: Yes. There really wasn't any disagreement. The only disagreement between State and Defense would be over tactics on a particular issue. Richard Holbrooke was the Assistant Secretary for East Asia at the time. A man of great antennae and skill who was very good at public relations and management of the Congress, Congressional relations. Occasionally I think Holbrooke's sensitivity to Congressional reactions to various steps would sometimes put us at cross purposes with the military. I have a lot of respect for the military from my entire exposure to Korea and certainly from this period. They had strong feelings and they backed them up very effectively.

Q: There was a general whose name I forget, who spoke out.

BLAKEMORE: Singlaub.

Q: Yes, General Singlaub who was the deputy military commander in Korea. Could you explain about that?

BLAKEMORE: Again, that happened before I got to the desk. He spoke out, as I recall, very bluntly in public against the withdrawal plan and he was removed as a result. He came to symbolize the right wing opposition to the President's plans. This was a three ring circus. The withdrawal of U.S. troops and the Tong Sun Park scandal. The third ring of the circus was that Jimmy Carter had set up the human rights bureau in the State Department with Pat Derian as the first Assistant Secretary. She was a very effective, acerbic, energetic woman who thought, probably with the encouragement of, if not the President, then of at least some people in the White House, that Korea was a logical initial target. What were we doing in bed with a country with such an ugly human rights record? That was the third ring of the circus that the desk tried to manage and I spent a lot of time putting out fires.

I can remember the struggle over the initial annual report card on human rights in Korea which came out during my tenure, the effort to get a balanced presentation. It was not unnecessarily insulting but had no context to it. Human rights issues tend to polarize people into very strong views. The Pat Derian Human Rights Bureau didn't see a lot of gray it was mostly black and white, mostly black. It was three years of feeling quite beleaguered actually. In the same storm-tossed boat were some very competent people from the Korean Embassy one of whom later became the Korean ambassador to the United States, Park Kun Whoo. A very competent man and it was an interesting exercise working extremely closely with the Korean embassy.

Q: Do you think they understood the complex American politics of this? It is sometimes very difficult for somebody to understand.

BLAKEMORE: Yes they did, I don't have any doubt about it. The political counselor, Park, and Ambassador Kim Yong Shik, who was ambassador during most of this period, and was an extremely experienced Korean diplomat, a former foreign minister, yes they understood. Great nuances perhaps not, but they certainly knew what they were caught up in and they knew that they had to work together with us to encourage the government of Korea to swallow some of its feelings of outrage and resentment and not add fuel to the fire by firing off a lot of public broadsides. In that they were extremely effective, very effective.

Q: During this time here you are defending a country which had a bad human rights record and a military president and all that, did you find yourself running into I don't know what you want to call it, but within the White House and within the staff of Congress the equivalent to strong peace proponents, anti-militaristic younger people who came out of the '60s? Often they end up in the White House doing political things or in the staff in Congress. Did you run across this group?

BLAKEMORE: To some extent yes. I don't know where the missionary-like fervor for human rights issue came from. I don't know whether those people were '60s radicals who had toned down but not very much, or not. I can remember though interacting extensively with Senator Ted Kennedy's staff. The senator was extremely interested in human rights issues. His attention had been attracted to some problems, I think mainly by Methodist missionaries who had gotten to his office in some way. The problems were real, I wouldn't want to minimize them. In that case the Kennedy staffers were able to, in the end, temper the human rights concerns with the security concerns. I had feared that they were going to be sort of what you had said, crusaders for improved human rights conditions and not interested in other subjects. That was not the case. They showed some very nice balance in the end I thought.

Q: Do you have any feel for the two ambassadors there during the time, Richard Schneider and Bill Gleysteen?

BLAKEMORE: Yes, of course. I though Schneider was a very effective operator. He had good relations with the U.S. military for the most part. He was a flamboyant man.

Q: He didn't get along too well with Richard Stilwell, the military commander. They were good opponents.

BLAKEMORE: That sort of tarnished the end of Schneider's time in Korea. A very knowledgeable man on military affairs and also on Korean affairs. A good guy too with Korea. I had a much more personal relationship with Bill Gleysteen because my next assignment was to be his political counselor. In terms of personality, a very different man from Schneider, much more low-key. He was effective in dealing with the U.S. military presence in Seoul but not in any confrontational way, certainly not public confrontation. Gleysteen is a true gentleman and a diplomat whom one could very well model a career after.

Q: Did you get at all involved in human rights?

BLAKEMORE: Oh, yes. It was not possible to work on the desk and not get involved in human rights.

Q: I had the feeling that human rights were sort of a new thing. There had been aspects of human rights before. Human rights burst forward and if you are sitting in Seoul 30 miles away from all those North Koreans, human rights kind of moves down the scale. Certainly Richard Schneider viewed the human rights side with a certain amount of, I won't say disdain, he really wasn't very interested. He had a labor officer, John LaMazza, who was trying to do his duty and

report and it was an uncomfortable relationship. Did you pick that up?

BLAKEMORE: Yes. It is always awkward if what the desk perceives as the political reality in Washington is not accepted or shared by the embassy. I know that we had more trouble with the human rights bureau because of Schneider's disinterest than we would have if he had at least been doing some more posturing about it, saying some of the right things and then saying "but." That course correction was clearly made when Bill Gleysteen got to Seoul. Partly because that is the kind of man he is. But also partly because, as the senior deputy in the East Asia Bureau he was the one at that level who was getting all the crap from the human rights people. He saw that there was a way that the embassy could help reduce some of it and then he asked them to do that.

Q: It was one of the, you might say, more confrontational times in some ways between the embassy and the President.

BLAKEMORE: I think it was, on the combination of troop withdrawal and human rights, yes.

Q: You would not have been there during the tree incident on the border, on the DMZ?

BLAKEMORE: That was in '76 I believe.

Q: How about the sudden demise of Park Chung Hee? Was that during your watch?

BLAKEMORE: It was. It was what we referred to with gallows humor as the shoot out at the ROK Corral when Park Chung Hee was assassinated by his intelligence chief at a dinner party. Yes, I was on the desk. It was a frightening time because the North Korean reaction was always so difficult to predict. The concern was that with so many forward deployed forces and the recent disagreement in the United States about whether Korea was worth supporting or not, then with the demise of the guy who had been in power for 18 years in Seoul, there was a lot of concern that that would constitute an invitation to Kim Il Sung to start an adventure of some size. We deployed a carrier to the Sea of Japan immediately and made some very tough sounding statements about how no one should see this as an opportunity to move, and obviously it was a successful response. Maybe we didn't need that response. Maybe Kim was never any closer to moving than he had been before the assassination, but it was a very tense week.

Q: What was the initial analysis of why the head of the Korean intelligence agency would kill his boss?

BLAKEMORE: I don't know what we thought the reason was. Park had certainly become more and more difficult for everyone to deal with and that certainly included his major lieutenants like the intelligence chief. I don't recall what we thought at the time and I don't have any good explanation for it now. There was no provision for succession. It was really a shot in the dark. It was a great surprise to everyone and precipitated what was then called the "Seoul Spring". Harking back to the Prague Spring of 1968 when everything appeared to be heading towards a great liberalization.

Q: The assassination took place I think October 26, 1981?

BLAKEMORE: 1979. The three Kims as we called them, three guys named Kim stepped forward and began jockeying for the opportunity to succeed Park Chung Hee. There was a caretaker government. Everybody knew there was going to be a caretaker government in place immediately after the assassination. Kim Chong Pil was a long-time ally and lieutenant of Parks', a skilled politician whom many people assumed would be the front-runner. Kim Dae Jung was a south westerner from the Cholla area. His origins were a strike against him in terms of being freely elected to national office in Korea because of the prejudice against that region in the country. He was a liberal, outspoken fellow who it appears the Park government had tried to kidnap and murder in 1975 or 1976. He was the second Kim. The third Kim was Kim Yong Sam. Another southerner but from the right part of the south, from Pusan. We thought, "This is great and we are going to have the breakthrough in political maturity to match the economic maturity which Korea had gained over the last 20 years. Park was a good guy in many ways but thank God we will get out from underneath this human rights problem."

Then Chun Doo Hwan stepped forward and stopped all of that on the 12th of December, 1979. He was a Korean Military Academy graduate, a 3 star general at the time that he took over. He came from an intelligence position which gave him a good jumping off place for the coup that took place. U.S. forces were essentially frozen. I don't know what they could have done anyway but they simply sat and watched. There was some effort on the part of the embassy to talk him out of his precipitous move. Discussions went on for a few days as I recall, but in the end it was obvious that he had planned this all along. Since the assassination, that is what he was going to do and he could not be dissuaded from it. He was going to bet that we would not play our ace and withdraw our security support.

I was watching from Washington and I found the events and our response to them dismaying. I can recall sitting in an interagency meeting chaired by Richard Holbrooke and I think Rich Armitage was there from Defense and Mike Armacost was there from the National Security Council staff. The issue on the table was what, if anything, we were willing to do to dissuade this guy from just smashing this Seoul Spring and taking over. (It wasn't spring as you pointed out.) The answer was that we weren't willing to do anything. I can remember being quite mouthy about that. I was vocal in the meetings, saying that we ought to have the courage of our convictions and that this was a golden opportunity to help Korea move in a different direction politically. I was essentially shouted down on the basis of security considerations. It was too risky and the only thing that we could do to influence Chun Doo Hwan would be to pull the security umbrella away from him and that was too risky to do that, so we stood by and watched. He consolidated his power through the spring of 1980 leading up to the Kwang Ju incident.

Q: You were still in Washington. Let's talk about Kwang Ju. Firstly explain what it was.

BLAKEMORE: Kim Dae Jung was one of the three Kims vying for power in a period of time when it looked as if an elected government might be possible. In fact, if you were good at kidding yourself or if your glasses were rose-colored, you could believe that that period of liberalization and movement towards a free election took up much of the spring of 1980. It was clear to us and I think to the people who were a little more hard headed in Korea, that December 12, 1979 was the end of that. But Chung chose to exercise power through the interim government

for the first several months. He did not simply step forward and have himself anointed president until late spring. By May it was clear that was what was going to happen. Anybody with eyes could see that was going to happen. I can't remember precipitating incidents anymore.

In May of 1980, the large southwestern city of Kwang Ju in the south Cholla province essentially revolted, I guess you could say, against the central government. It started with young people demonstrating and the military garrison in the area was essentially nudged out of town.

After the military withdrew, they weren't physically driven out but they thought it was wise to withdraw from the town, a stalemate ensued for several days. I can't remember exactly for how long. During this time people were frantically trying to figure out what might be done to restore the status quo ante without slaughtering a lot of people. Bill Gleysteen, as I recall, spent a lot of time talking to General Chun Doo Hwan about the dangers in U.S. public opinion, let alone on the ground in Korea, of any kind of a precipitous military response to the Kwang Ju incident as it was called. In the end his efforts were to no avail.

One of Chung's Korean Military Academy classmates who was the commander of special forces sent special forces down to Kwang Ju and they essentially took the city back by force and a lot of people were killed. The official number of what "a lot" might mean was set after a commission of inquiry by the Korean government at something over 200. The opponents were sure that it was well over 1,000. There were a lot of eyewitness reports from foreign missionaries who were there. It was a mess. It was an ugly, nasty situation of Koreans killing Koreans, with the military killing essentially unarmed civilians. The civilians had taken the guns from the armory but they were no match for these special forces.

It is going to take a long time for Korea to get over Kwang Ju particularly because the victims were citizens of a part of the country that has a long history of being discriminated against for reasons which are about as obscure as that kind of discrimination always has been anywhere in the world. If you know any Cholla people you know that there is nothing about them that merits that sort of attitude.

A great fallout from the Kwang Ju incident from the United States perspective was the widespread misunderstanding in Korea that because Korean forces are under the operational command of the U.S. commanders should the North Koreans attack, that must be the case in a domestic squabble like Kwang Ju too. Therefore the American general would have been able to stop the Korean forces from going back into Kwang Ju if he wanted to. If he didn't stop them, that meant that the American government was in cahoots with Chung Doo Hwan and his obvious rise and march towards the presidency. Not only that, here is an incident of local democracy that we went along with smashing, this showed what we thought of the Cholla people, and on and on and on.

A great conspiracy theory emerged that I am sure is still common in Korea. Of course since the government has now been liberalized I am sure it is much less of a sore point. We spent a lot of time in the arcane business of trying to explain that for domestic purposes, Korean troops were never under the command of the U.S. commander. Besides that, the special forces who did all of the dirty work, even under wartime circumstances were not under the command of the U.S.

Nobody wanted to hear any of that stuff. We said it over and over again but it didn't make any difference. Kwang Ju did a lot of damage to the public perception of the United States in Korea. I don't know whether the damage persists today but it stayed a problem for a long time.

Q: What was the response from Congress?

BLAKEMORE: I can't recall that there was any concerted response from Congress. There were some people who could always be relied upon to raise a lot of noise about something like this, like Senator Kennedy. I don't recall any hard to manage Congressional response.

Q: Did the media go after you or was this taken care of by the public affairs office?

BLAKEMORE: Oh, no, we had a lot of media interest. I think it is fair to say that the western media in general were able to understand the distinction and the operational control arrangements in a way that the Koreans chose not to understand. The western media did not proceed on the premise that we could have stopped it if we wanted to. I think there was a feeling though that the United States could have interfered with Chun's inexorable movement towards becoming president. This leads back to what I said my own position was in Washington councils after the 12th of December when Chung became more visible in his objectives.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover? When did you leave the Korean desk?

BLAKEMORE: In July of 1980.

**WILLIAM CLARK, JR.
Political Counselor
Seoul (1977-1980)**

Ambassador William Clark, Jr. was born in California in 1930. He graduated from San Jose State College with a B.A. degree in 1955. He served in the U.S. Navy intermittently from 1949 to 1953. In 1957, he joined the State Department, serving in Sierra Leone, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, India, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on January 11, 1994.

Q: In 1977, you were assigned as Political Counselor in the Embassy, Seoul, South Korea. Had Seoul been one of your assignment preferences?

CLARK: This assignment came after one of the more interesting clashes that I had ever had with the Office of Personnel. The ego of the people sent to the National War College tended to expand all out of proportion with their realistic prospects. That of course did not apply to me! As it happened the Inspection Corps team had made a proposal that the Political and Economic Counselors positions in our Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, should be combined. That position would become the No. 3 in the mission. That kind of assignment appealed to me because I had experience in both fields and thought that a combined job would be very

interesting. So I applied for the position -- many of my colleagues were wishing to be considered for DCM positions or higher. I became the Bureau candidate for the KL job. There was another candidate who was a good personal friend; he was supported by EB. The assignment panel met for six -- six -- sessions before there was a resolution. I was called one Friday and informed that the panel had finally agreed to assign me to KL. My son was also very pleased because he had visions of swinging through the jungle, as most young men would do. The following Monday, I received another call from Personnel reporting that it had just found a telegram from our Ambassador in Malaysia who had decided that because of the physical structure of the Chancery it was impractical to combine the Political and Economic Sections. But, the person in Personnel, quickly added, I could still be assigned to KL as Economic Counselor. I was not thrilled, even though it was the No. 3 position in the Embassy. I didn't cherish the thought of becoming a tin, rubber and palm oil expert. I told them I would consider it. That evening, at home, I got a call from Dick Sneider. There were two Dick Sneiders in my life: one was a Japanese language officer and the other was by then our Ambassador to Korea. I assumed it was the first, who had retired in Washington, and was very surprised to hear the voice of the second. That Dick Sneider said that he was looking for Political Counselor. As could be expected, if you knew Sneider, he said that he had made all the arrangements and had already gotten everybody's blessings for the assignment. It was of course an invitation that you declined at your own peril. Nevertheless, I said I would think about it, although it was clear to me immediately that I would accept. When I went to the Department the next day, I found that Sneider had indeed cleared the assignment with all who counted; so then I talked to Bill Gleysteen, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary, and told him that I would go to Seoul. So I got to Seoul through a somewhat circuitous route. The EB candidate did not end up in KL either. I should note that of the thirteen officers in my War College class, three of us had onward assignments by graduation; I actually had had two.

I had followed Korean affairs to some extent while working on Japanese issues. Through my work with the American military in Sapporo, I had some familiarity with our military activities in Korea. But I had never been there. Furthermore, I had worked with Dick closely during the Okinawa reversion process. I was a little surprised by the briefings I received before my departure. The Korea Country Director was a Russian and Korean language officer. Even though I was going to Seoul as Political Counselor, he never found time to meet with me, except for five minutes one time, before he had to run off to something else. That seemed to be a little curious. That Country Director was shortly thereafter replaced by Bob Rich. I did spend time with other officers on the desk. At the War College, we would occasionally an afternoon off which I would spend in the Department reading up on Korean issues. So by the time we left for Seoul, I was probably as well prepared as I have even been for any assignment up to that point. I viewed the assignment as Political Counselor to be a major step forward in my career.

By mid-1977, we had an interesting policy towards Korea. I had been at the War College during the 1976 Presidential election and the subsequent transition period. One of the issues I reviewed closely was the President's decision to withdraw American troops from Korea. I discussed this matter with a number of people in Washington and found that the decision was not universally supported. But that was the US government position when I arrived in Seoul. It seemed firm and indeed one American general had already been brought home from Korea for voicing public disagreement with the Presidential decision on at least two occasions. On the economic front, Korea was expanding rapidly. That was not true for political development. President Park Chung

Hee, after a good start, was distancing himself increasingly from his people and becoming more imperial in his approach to governing. That did not sit well with the Carter administration. It was looking at Korea as a police state, under the dictatorship of Park. Before I left, I heard many comments about human rights and its importance in US foreign policy. I did not talk to Pat Derian, but I did talk to some of her staff members. They were particularly offended by the Park regime.

My preparations had been thorough enough that I was not initially greatly surprised by anything I found in Seoul. We knew what the chancery and our living accommodations would look like. I was struck to some extent to the differences between Japanese and Korean societies. Koreans are much more direct and franker right from the beginning. I was surprised that Korea was not nearly as an oppressive police state as one would be led to believe from the media.

Q: Tell us please how you spent an average day as Political Counselor?

CLARK: Our house, which was in a compound, was relatively close to the Chancery. That made for a nice walk in the morning. I rarely drove. We would report for work between 7:30 and 8 am. I had about eleven officers and three secretaries working in my section, which made it a rather large unit. Of course, it included a variety of "political" officers. I would start the day by reading the English language press; I could read the Korean headlines, but not much more. We also had the daily Korean press translations provided to us by USIA. Usually there was staff meeting around 8:30. They tended to be brief and very focused; Sneider particularly was action orientated and was anxious to have useful work done. Depending on the day, normally I would see visitors thereafter; two or three times each week I was out the UN/US military command talking either to military officers. There were several components in our military establishment: the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), the 8th Army, the Commander in Chief -- United Nations Command (CINCUNC) and the Armistice Commission, under a Navy Admiral (Bill Penley was the second one I worked with). So I spent considerable time with the US military talking about the DMZ, the tunnels, warning time, the Korean political situation, etc. The US military had in its employment some very knowledgeable civilians who had lived in Korea for many years (Houseman and Bradford, who is still there). They knew a lot about Korea and were specialists in the machinations within the Korean military.

There were almost daily visits with Korean politicians either in their offices or in mine. Then I spent a lot of time supervising the staff and reviewing their reports -- I ended up editing many of their products. When I arrived, I found a curious situation. My deputy was the politico-military officer in charge of relations with the US military. The officer who was responsible for liaison with the Foreign Office had great contacts, but couldn't write very well. The politico-military officer also had good contacts with the Foreign Ministry, wrote well, but did not have good rapport with the military. So shortly after my arrival, I had the two officers swap their assignments, much to the relief of both, I think. That change worked well. So some of my time was spent on management and administrative matters.

Jack Vessey was the CINCUNC when I arrived. The relationships between Vessey and Sneider were very good -- much better than the Sneider/Stilwell relationships that had existed during my predecessor's time. Dick and Jack had a common interest in golf and other sports; both were

strong men, but understood the overriding need to work together. I enjoyed working with that kind of relationship. The diplomatic/military relationship in Korea was close during my tour, but it depended very much on the personalities of the two principals. As I said earlier, I understand that this close relationship had not always existed.

Q: The Carter administration was known for its emphasis on human rights in the conduct of its foreign relations. It was not happy with the Park Chung Hee regime. What did it expect the Embassy to do about it?

CLARK: It expected the Embassy to take an active role on behalf of the Korean dissentients. We were expected to keep in touch with them. The American dissidents were primarily the missionaries and they were easy to contact. This task had some curious aspects to it. The Political Section had had a labor officer who used to convene the missionaries periodically. When he was replaced as part of a normal rotation, the missionaries decided that the new labor officer was probably working for another organization; in light of that assumption, they thought that they couldn't work with him, which annoyed me no end because a) there was absolutely no basis for their fears and b) he was a very good officer. I shared my views with the missionaries, but I did agree that I would attend a monthly breakfast so that they could know that we, the Embassy, were listening closely to their views. I would meet with them in any case because they had been quite critical of the Ambassador, for reasons that I found less than admirable -- they felt that he had not understood their "Christian Mission." (Sneider was Jewish).

We were on occasions quite forceful in our pursuit of the human rights issue. If we heard that Kim Dae Jung was suffering in jail, we would try to help him. If he was cold, we would send a heater to the cell. Fortunately, the Director of North American Affairs in the Foreign Ministry was a very good officer -- Park Sun Yun, who later had a very successful career in the Korean foreign service. We worked closely with him on the human rights issue and held several very frank discussions with him on that issue. On occasions, we were told that the Korean government would not follow our advice or request. We were not inhibited from seeing opposition leaders or from commenting on the situation in Korea. Interestingly enough, the US Ambassador and the Political Counselor could make comments, but I remember a Canadian Ambassador who, while making his farewell call on President Park, decided to give his views on human rights in Korea. Park told him that he had to take criticism from the Americans, but he did not welcome it from Canadians and curtly terminated his conversation with the Canadian Ambassador.

We had good relations with the Foreign Ministry and other Ministries. When the Park Tongsun matter arose, we entered into negotiations to get him back to the US. This would normally have been an Ambassadorial responsibility, but because we were not anxious to give our discussions any visibility, I ended up negotiating with Park Sun Yun. Tongsun Park was a Korean citizen who had lived in the US and had been accused of dispensing cash favors to American Congressmen in the infamous "white envelopes". He came from a wealthy Korean family which was, among other things, involved in importing of American rice into Korea. Allegedly, Park was paid a commission for these transactions which he was supposed to use for lobbying efforts. He was rather flamboyant; the Koreans, for a while, were quite pleased with the results of Park's efforts, until it blew up. I remember one time, at a party, a Korean telling a Taiwanese that he didn't know how to "influence" Americans. The Taiwanese smiled enigmatically and I am sure

that a couple of years later was laughing uproariously. This issue also brought us into contact with the Ministry of Justice. We didn't have an extradition treaty with Korea, so we used a "good offices" arrangements in lieu. The Tongsun Park case was interesting because there was a very vocal group in Washington that raised the specter of Park corrupting the whole US government and most of academia and the business community -- all with a fund of \$ 790,000. That would have been a real bargain if he could have achieved their dire predictions! But the Park affair did cause considerable stir in the US. We were anxious to have Park return to appear before a Congressional Committee. We could only achieve that with the concurrence of the Korean government and Park himself, of course. Park had to worry about his family; his mother lived on a farm, but his brother was a prominent Korean businessman, who for sometime had a close relationship to the American Embassy. It was that brother (who later ended up tragically) that negotiated with the Ambassador from a familial point of view. The negotiations really revolved around what Tongsun would be willing to do. To put pressure on him, Treasury decided to investigate his tax returns and put a lien on his two houses. Finally, we agreed to give Park immunity from prosecution for his dealings with Congress, but we could not stop the Treasury investigation. I think in the final analysis, Park lost his houses either through sale or by confiscation. Park did return to the US, after a Justice Department team, headed by Ben Civiletti -- then the Deputy Attorney General -- had come to Seoul to interview Park. It was a limited interview, conducted under Korean rules, with no Americans present. One day, while looking out of a window of the Chancery at the Ministry of Justice, I noticed a caravan of black cars leaving. I reported that to the Ambassador; we assumed that it was the Justice team heading for the airport. For the first and only time, Sneider offered the use of his Cadillac and told me to tail it out to the airport to find out what was going on. It turned out that Civiletti hadn't gotten what he wanted and was leaving in high dudgeon. Despite this fiasco, we did get Park back to the US for his Congressional testimony.

I thought the US government, on the whole, handled the Park affair reasonably well. Congress was making more of it than was warranted, although I would not deny that Tongsun probably violated US law. I suspect that his reports to Seoul were probably inflated making it look like that he was more influential than he really was. After several days of his testimony, there were only two Congressmen who were convicted and they confessed. There were no trials stemming from the Park case, which leads to believe that both Seoul and Congress thought there was more to the story than finally came out. There was too much to do about some violations.

Q: Wed had a number of interests in Korea, in addition to human rights. What were they and what were you able to do about them?

CLARK: We had regional security interests. That meant that we had to try to improve understanding between the Japanese and Korean military -- not an easy task, as you can well imagine. After working hard on this issue, I was told by a Japanese friend that they were doing most of what we wanted done, but were not about to tell us formally because they didn't trust us to keep the information confidential. In other words, cooperation between the two military could occur as long as it did not become public. If it became public, the two parties were afraid that we would take credit for it and then it couldn't continue. That was one surprising development that I hadn't expected.

Then we had disagreements with the Koreans on economic policy. It is true that during my tour banking regulations were eased. Curiously enough, as Political Counselor, I spent some time trying to sell American nuclear power plants; the French were exerting considerable pressure for the sale of their plants and the Swiss were competing as well. I became good friends with the Westinghouse representative in Seoul.

The strategic issues always got first priority. Our military position in Korea effected all of our relations with that country. The Carter "withdrawal" decision was very unpopular with the government although Park Chung Hee said that if we wanted to withdraw, he would not stand in our way. The most vocal opponents to withdrawal were the dissidents who felt that such action would inevitably result in stronger repressive measures since we would lose whatever leverage we might have had on the Korean government. The presence of US troops provided some protection to the dissidents and limited the human rights violations. So our military presence in Korea had to be the top priority on our list of concerns since that was the cornerstone of all of our policies.

Q: I would like now to ask you about the North-South Korea relations during the 1977- 80 period. How would you characterize it?

CLARK: It was basically one conducted over the airwaves. There had been a few minor face-to-face exchanges; there had been a couple of meetings just prior to my arrival in Seoul. A Seoul representative had gone to Pyongyang and some North Koreans had come to Seoul. By the time I arrived, those contacts had ceased. During my tour, there were no official exchanges; in fact, there weren't even any unofficial exchanges despite a couple of kidnappings. Later, in 1980, there were some activists -- students -- who wanted to march to the DMZ to show their solidarity with their Northern "brothers".

I tried to watch the intelligence warnings and indicators to see whether we could glean any signs of the North's intentions. The military estimate consistently was that, with luck, we would have seventy-two hours notice of an invasion. I must admit that I was never really very comfortable with that prognostication. I didn't think that the North would or could undertake such a major military action, at least on a rapid time table. The indicators assumed that all of the North's hardware that was observable -- tanks, personnel carriers, guns, etc -- were in peak condition just waiting for an assault. I had doubts about that; it did not seem to me to be reasonable to assume that the North was always ready. As history now seems to confirm, we made the same mistake about the Soviet equipment -- it looked good from the air, but there were no engines or wheels for the equipment on the ground.

The I Corps, led by General Cushman, which was placed close to the front lines, was a devotee of war games. He used them periodically for training purposes. I remember the first one I participated in because I noted that the ROK officers who had been assigned to play the role of the North's military, seemed quite uncomfortable with their assignment. By the time I participated in one of his last games, the ROK officers were wearing North Korean uniforms and were participating as the "enemy" as enthusiastically as their comrades who were playing on our side. It was an interesting evolution. Of course, the South always won -- by definition. The games were designed to show the ROK commanders, in a gentle way, that they were interacting

poorly with each other. That could not be openly said because it would have been greatly resented, particularly if the message were delivered by an American. But Cushman managed to get the same thought across through the war game technique. But because the outcome was always predetermined -- i.e. a South victory -- the games had a limited utility.

We were also concerned about the possibility of ROK aggressive actions. In talking to some of the ROK generals, you sometimes got the feeling that they were itching to move north, confident of a total victory. This was not a majority view and for some of them I am sure it was more a matter of bravado than an actual desire. I don't think anyone seriously considered an attack on the North because it was not an option that had a certainty of military victory. I always viewed our position in Korea as a *Janus* operation -- two faced viewing both sides to assure that neither the North or the South moved against the other. Our role in restraining the South was never articulated in any policy statements, but it was certainly a factor in the back of my mind and an Embassy concern.

We had contacts with the ROK military, which depended in large measure on them contacting us. We were always concerned that we did not know what the officer corps -- major, colonels and generals -- were thinking. Many were not stationed in Seoul and in any case discussions with the Embassy were discouraged. That prohibition was also extended to the UN Command, although of course they had to have daily contacts to meet their work requirements. We spent a lot of time worrying about increasing our knowledge of the ROK military and the internal dynamics of that group. But for the three years I was there, there was essentially no improvement in our intelligence collection capability on this subject. We knew that the ROK military used an "old boy" network for promotions and assignments. One of the colonels, while I was there, was caught selling promotions which not only ended his career, but that of his commanding general. So we knew that there may have been an element of corruption in the promotion system, but we didn't really know how wide spread it really was and what effect it may have had on the morale of the ROK army.

I might at this time talk a little about the Carter's administration's troop withdrawal policy. Vessey -- I am pretty sure after conversations with Ambassador Sneider -- launched a study of the troop withdrawal issue which concluded convincingly that the policy did not make much sense. This reaction to a Presidential commitment was done very skillfully. We all participated in one aspect of the study or another. It took about a year to complete it. Finally, during Carter's visit to Seoul in 1979, the policy was reversed and the President told Park Chung Hee that the US troops would remain in Korea.

President Carter arrived in Seoul, prepared to dislike the Korean "police" state or the tin-horn dictator that headed it. Fortunately for the Koreans, Carter arrived in Korea after a visit to Japan, where, because of Japanese concern for security, he was surrounded by Japanese troops and police during his whole stay. Japan really looked like a military dictatorship. Carter arrived at Seoul's international airport late in an afternoon and immediately boarded a helicopter that took him to Camp Red Cloud, an American base near the DMZ. There he had dinner with the GIs and spent the night in the camp. The next morning he jogged with some of the soldiers and officers -- I always admired the commander of the Second Division who jogged on a different track and didn't join the President on his morning outing. Then Carter came to Seoul again for the official

arrival ceremonies. The weather was closing in, so the US military sent Carter and his entourage on a helicopter, but the baggage came overland. One of the President's aides was furious at this turn of events; he called the CINC to demand that a helicopter be sent to Camp Red Cloud to fly the baggage down to Seoul. Then the White House called the CINC to tell him the same thing. The officer who answered the phone -- the CINC not being available -- told the White House that if he was ordered to do that, he would of course comply, but if any US soldiers were killed just to transport the luggage, that that would become publicly quickly. About fifteen minutes later, the White House called and told the officer to ship the luggage by road. It was an interesting experience in staff excess.

When Carter arrived in Yoido -- an island in the middle of the Han River -- he landed in a large plaza near the Parliament. He was greeted by about a million Koreans -- ordinary citizens. The police presence was almost undetectable. American flags were flying, people were cheering and smiling, obviously glad to see the American President. After the arrival ceremony, Carter and family got into a motorcade and drove to downtown Seoul along streets jammed with eager watchers -- probably as many as another million. They were also waving American flags. Carter stopped the cavalcade, somewhat to Park Chung Hee's chagrin, got out of his limousine and shook hands with the crowd. That was not Park's *modus operandi*, but Carter loved it and was greatly impressed with the reception and his ability to meet some of the common folk -- as contrasted to his "captivity" in Japan. Then Carter and Park met; during that meeting, Carter was supposed to inform the Koreans that he was changing his policy on troop withdrawal. Before Carter's arrival, all of us in the Embassy had warned our Korean contacts that the President would change his policy, but that Park would be well advised just to greet Carter and not initiate the conversation on troop withdrawal. Unfortunately, Park Chung Hee could not resist the opportunity to give Carter a lengthy lecture on the folly of troop withdrawal. That caused Carter to change his script; he did not at that first meeting tell Park that his policy was going to change. In fact, he was so upset by Park's lecture that as he left the Blue House -- the Presidential Palace -- he said to the Secretary of State and Ambassador Gleysteen that he would not change his troop withdrawal policy. I was at the Embassy monitoring the motorcade. So we knew when they left the Blue House and we knew the American party was headed for the Ambassador's Residence. We had to get in touch with the Ambassador and tried to do so. We were told that we would have to wait until the Ambassador got inside the Residence. Time passed and the Ambassador did not call us. More time passed and still no call. Forty-five minutes later we were informed that Carter, Vance and Gleysteen were still in the limousine, now parked in front of the Residence. The three of them and Brzezinski were talking about the troop withdrawal issue. Finally Vance convinced Carter to wait for a few hours before making any final decision. Vance and Gleysteen worked all afternoon to set matters right again and at breakfast the following morning, Carter told Park that the US was not going to withdraw any troops.

It was during this visit that we made an effort to get in touch with North Korea. Bob Oakley, then at the NSC, and I worked on that. Carter decided to offer three party conference -- the two Koreas and the US. We didn't have a representative in Pyongyang, so we had to find an intermediary who had diplomatic relations with both the US and North Korea. That turned out to be Indonesia. We ran into a slight hitch. Our Ambassador, Ed Masters, was in Bali preparing for the arrival of Cy Vance. Ed Mulcahy, the DCM, was on a plane going from Jakarta to Bali to help, leaving the Embassy pretty well denuded in its leadership. That episode, by the way, led to

a new policy which prevented the Ambassador and the DCM being away from post at the same time. We finally had to go through the Station Chief to get a message to Suharto with a request that he forward Carter's proposal to the North via the Indonesian Ambassador in Pyongyang. It was a very messy procedure not helped by the ineptness of the Indonesian Ambassador. In any case, the North Korean very bluntly and curtly said they had no interest. However, as often will happen, eight years later, the North resuscitated the idea and proposed that the three way talks start. Then we said that they had missed the boat; at that tie, we were no longer interested.

The President came with a mind set to dislike a "police" state. He was surprised by encounters with the Koreans. I think he came to like them. Every politician responds positively to a crowd that cheers him; Carter found many such crowds. He met with some leading dissidents, about twelve of them -- Cardinal Kim and others. The group was not made up entirely by dissidents because it included Billy Kim who was a protestant minister and very close to the commander of the Capital Security Command, which was the main control group for Seoul. Kim had been invited because he was a personal friend of President Carter; they had met somewhere during one of Kim's trips to the US. He became known as the "Billy Graham of Korea". I think Carter made a poor choice by asking Kim to start the discussion. Cardinal Kim had to leave before the end of the meeting; so the session was interrupted for a few minutes while the whole group assembled in the Ambassador's Residence's garden for a group picture. I think all of the participants thought that they would get a signed copy of that photograph, but I certainly never saw it and I don't think anyone else did either. That also disappointed the participants.

The human rights certainly was on Carter's agenda. He discussed it with Park Chung Hee. He wanted the meeting with the dissidents to be highly visible and widely known. The American administration showed great concern for political rights. But, as we always seem to do, we neglected entirely the progress that was being made on economic development which is also a human right. The Samuel movement, which tried to improve the rural standard of living, was in full swing by the end of the 1970s. Roads were being build to improve access of farm goods to city markets; new housing was being constructed at a very rapid pace. All these efforts brought the rural communities to closer involvement in the life of South Korea and not only in political terms because even today elections for local government officials are not an absolute standard. But the villages participated in the country's economic development because government officials would make periodic trips to the countryside to see what the inhabitants wanted. If a bridge or a school was requested, the government would provide the cement with the villagers contributing their sweat and labor. It was a good program from that point of view. Some denigrated as merely another attempt to subjugate the rural population, but in fact it markedly improved the standard of living of the rural communities and fostered the spirit of self-help. Years later, when I accompanied George Shultz on his final trip through Eat Asia, we went to a golf course near Osan. He observed the countryside scenery and asked how far from Seoul we were. It was about twenty-five miles. He then noted that this was the most prosperous countryside he had seen throughout Asia. He also commented that there wasn't anything comparable twenty-five miles from Moscow. That really caught my attention because what Shultz was saying was that the Koreans had done a better job of rural development than one of the two super-powers. My principal point is that our policy in the late 1970s ignored the economic progress that Korea was making and particularly in what had been a very impoverished rural community. But to recognize that progress would have diminished those

aspect of human rights -- the political -- that we were emphasizing such as the right to freedom of speech.

Q: Tell us a little about the Embassy in 1977 and how it may have changed when there was a change in ambassadors in 1978.

CLARK: It was a very friendly place to work. It had a lot of collegiality. I had a good working relationship with other Embassy staffers; the various sections worked well together. I didn't have any fights with the Economic Counselor; the Commercial staff was relatively small. It was a very effective team. At the time and I suspect historically, there was a lot of pressure to obtain visas to the United States. There were a number of operators who for a fee would promise to obtain the visas for the paying customers. But the Political and the Consular Sections were well clued in and helped each other out to try to prevent as much fraud as possible. So there was good collaboration among all of the Embassy's sections. This good working relationship extended to other US government agencies, such as the USIA, which although not located in the Chancery was only couple of blocks away, in the old Chancery.

We did have some problems. One was the government owned housing at South Post. Most of our staff literally lived on a military compound. That almost by necessity made that staff part of a large American community, using the military base as its source of food supplies and entertainment. That might have been acceptable for a number of Embassy staffers, but it did create a barrier for the political and economic officers who might have mingled more with the Korean society had they lived in Seoul proper.

I had an interesting relationship with the CIA station since about 27 of its staff allegedly worked for me. Most of them were technicians, with whom I had very little contact. I would occasionally meet someone who said he had just met one of my "staff", whose name, much less face, I really didn't know. I probably met each one when he or she first arrived; then I would never see them again. We had some first class Station Chiefs and had a very good working relationship.

The officer who probably had the toughest assignment in the Embassy was the Military Attaché. He was expected to perform as a normal attaché, but in light of the overwhelming American military presence in Korea, he was usually over-looked. I suspect that he must have been greatly frustrated. I think he was used primarily for decorative purposes and as a tour agent for those who wanted to visit bases and the DMZ.

I was always struck by the ambivalence we showed about the DMZ, as, for example, epitomized by the North Korean tunnels. The DMZ was a dangerous area. We were always on alert, looking intently for any movements on the other side of the border. Yet we would take bus loads of Congressmen or other VIPs into the Zone. We would take them down into the tunnels that the North Korean had dug under the DMZ and which we had discovered. That was a technical violation of the truce agreement, since only peace-keepers were supposed to be in the Zone. I always made it a practice to get out of the bus at the demarcation line and letting the visitors go on. So I never saw the tunnels, but worst was that on a couple of occasions in the winter, I almost froze. So the irony was that on one hand we maintained that it was a very dangerous area and on the other we used it as a tourist attraction. That was also true of Panmunjom where the two sides

actually met from time to time in barracks that straddled the border.. The North Koreans made it interesting by photographing all visitors and watching all movements on the South Korean side with their binoculars and telescopes. A few yards behind their end of the barracks, the North had built an office building which was one room wide; that was always interesting to look at.

I was always intrigued by the continuing concern for a renewal of hostilities. In some ways, we viewed the next outbreak as a repetition of the previous one. For example, we maintained a "stand by" Chancery in Pusan as if we would be forced to fight around Pusan again. If we had really been concerned about another war, it would have made more sense to have the UN Command in Tokyo or in Pusan, but psychologically, it had to remain in Seoul; we could not overtly admit that Seoul might not be defensible. That factor tended to warp the "war games" we played and our battle plans because the defense of Seoul had to be among the highest priority. It was true of course that one-fourth of the Korean population lived in Seoul and surroundings and that its protection had to be taken into account. But this notion of "Seoul first" came under real scrutiny later on when the Korean military decided to build its headquarters south of Seoul after it felt that the South's confidence level was high enough to permit such a sharp break with the past. But the American military hung on to its Seoul property and fought moving every step of the way. If one really believed that war was imminent or that it was a real possibility, you wouldn't want a headquarters only twenty-five miles from the battle front. But Seoul had its conveniences which over-rode any concern for a North Korean invasion. So we always were faced with a dilemma: preaching the danger of an unpredictable North Korea, but not taking any action which would visibly support that concern. Although I never shared this concern for the immediacy of a war, I understood the role of the military which was to be always ready as if a crisis was looming the next day.

On the other hand, this alleged concern about North Korean aggressive intentions gave the US military policy makers in Seoul an opportunity to develop strategies and tactics that may not have been entirely in accordance with Washington views or which Washington may not have known about. In fact, sometimes even the Embassy was not aware or fully aware of what the US military was doing, although this was a rare circumstance. But I should emphasize that while I was in Seoul -- which was not necessarily true for the periods before and after my tour -- I had the feeling that the Embassy, under Bill Gleysteen and the UN Command, under both Generals Vessey and Wickham, worked very closely together. Neither was trying to out do the other and trying to obtain Washington support for their own points of views if they differed from each other. We had some differences, but were always able to resolve them in Seoul without reference to higher authorities. It is furthermore true, I believe, that this specter of a North Korean invasion gave the US team in Seoul an excuse to rebut or delay the implementation of Washington decisions, such as Carter's troop withdrawal policy. That is not say that the Vessey study on the effects and modalities of troop withdrawal was "cooked"; I believe it was an honest appraisal. It should be noted that on the issue of troop withdrawal, there was absolutely no support through Asia for such action. In fact, since Carter's pronouncement in 1977 to today, we have not made any major cuts in our troop strength on the peninsula. At the time I was in Seoul, I think there were 42,000 American soldiers in Korea; today there are 36,000. So our military presence has been a constant. Furthermore, the possibility of a North Korean invasion forced us to overlook certain South Korean domestic policies and activities which we would have found egregious in other countries. We viewed some of these policies as necessary to maintain discipline in the face

of an a potential aggressor. The Koreans used that rationale on several occasions. We heard it during the Park Chung Hee era, but not as often as it came up later. It was true that during Park's era, he used the invasion threat to take some actions which seemed entirely unnecessary such as building a wall along the border and counter-dams to force water back into North Korea if it were to blow up a dam which it was constructing -- many South Koreans viewed that dam as a means to flood the South whenever it might have been militarily or politically strategic. These were patent efforts by the South Korean government to play on the fears of its population, even though the projects made very little sense economically or militarily. They were more a symbol of population control.

Q: What was the Korean attitude towards the United States?

CLARK: The military, after Carter announced his withdrawal policy, was concerned about US resolve as were the dissidents. The latter wanted the American troops to stay in Korea while, at the same time, being more vigorous in urging greater human rights for Koreans. The relations with the government were pretty good as were the Embassy's relationships with the dissident community. However, both parties wanted more from us: one, greater show of our determination to defend South Korea and the other, more vigorous pursuit of human rights.

There was a group of Koreans, particularly younger ones, that worked very assiduously to be close to the American Embassy. Many of them joined the government later; most were American educated. When I left, I received a plaque from the NSPA (used to be known as the KCIA) much to my chagrin. That gift was inspired by some of the younger Koreans I mentioned. Most of them were very good people. Some of that younger generation -- e.g. Foreign Minister Han Sung Jue, the current Korean Ambassador in Washington -- were all part of the group. Most were academics, particularly political scientists. Many stayed out of government until President Roh Tae Woo was replaced in 1992. Now many are part of the regime. I think they represented a group that was essentially pro-Korean, but at ease with Americans. They had their own agenda which did not always parallel ours. They criticized us at times, as well as their own government. This group was not monolithic; there were shades of political differences. Some would adamantly not work for the Presidents Park, Chun or Rho. Some were already in the National Assembly in the late 1970s, such as Park Chung Soo and his wife -- both Ph.D.s from the US. This group of younger Koreans were generally bright people, who tried to build bridges between the Korean military and the business community. They were very active and interested in change, but in a different direction than the dissidents.

I would have preferred greater contact between Koreans and the Embassy. But that is a desire of every Embassy; it always wants more. We would have liked to know more what was on the mind of the military, particularly the younger officers. We always wanted to know more about what was going on. There is never enough information, partially because an Embassy can not always be sure what it is it wants. But in terms of other embassies I have worked in, our Embassy in Seoul had very broad contacts. As I said, we had good contacts with the dissidents, even those that didn't like us very much. We had breakfasts with the missionaries; we saw the Reverend Moon or at least his wife who would tell us all we needed to know about the Reverend's fate and that of his like-minded Koreans. I met one day with a dissident who wanted to show me that he had been detained for three days. The police didn't want him to turn any further to the left, so

they beat only the left side of his body. I met with all of the opposition leaders. We had contacts with the labor unions, some of which were tame and some very radical. I met the mother of a textile worker who had incinerated himself to death. I think our contacts were sufficiently broad to enable us to develop a balanced policy. Had our contacts been only with the young Koreans or only the dissidents, then we might have had a skewed policy.

I think over a period of time, we did have an influence over the Korean government's human rights policy. Before Park's assassination, in fact, the government was becoming more repressive, primarily because of the growing insecurity of the regime. There were some riots in Pusan in 1978. The Korean government sent first some troops and then the Marines to quell the uproar. So in 1979, there was considerable incipient unrest which drove the regime to more restrictive policies trying to keep the lid on. Of course, the greater the repressive pressure, the greater the counter-action. Students took advantage of this situations and marched in protest. Then came Park's assassination, which scared the Koreans and moved them increasingly to the conservative side. That brought Chun Doo Wha to power.

Q: Let me now turn to October, 1980 and the events that took place that month and the months thereafter. President Park was assassinated on October 26, 1979 by Kim Jae Hah, the head of the KCIA. Do you remember where you were that day?

CLARK: It was evening and I was at home. I got a call from an Embassy officer requesting that I come immediately. He would not tell me what it was about. So I rushed to the Chancery where I was told that, on relatively good authority, we had heard that Park had been assassinated. This happened sometime before midnight. The CINC immediately set up a command post at the UN Command. I sent some of my officers to join the American military staff already on duty. As you can imagine, there was considerable confusion on whether the deed had been in fact consummated and whether Park was actually dead. The DCM, John Manjo, was out of town in Pusan at an annual cemetery memorial ceremony. Tony Geber was the acting DCM. As it turned out, the assassin was one of our better contacts, but that didn't become apparent until early in the morning. At around 2 a.m., I looked out of the window of my office. I noticed a military convoy riding down the main street in front of the Embassy. It stopped at our guard post. One of the men in the lead truck of the convoy got out and began to converse with our guards. He then left and the convoy moved on. It was obviously a convoy of troops from out of town because we were informed by our guards that the leader had stopped to ask for directions to the Blue House -- the Presidential Mansion. As we found out what had happened, we began to alert some of the key Americans in the country. I called Manjo about 5:30 a.m. only to find out that he had already been advised. The Korean government did not announce the assassination until about 7 or 7:30 a.m., but in Pusan, everyone could receive the news from Japanese TV stations. They released the news at about 5 a.m.

I believe that our Station Chief was the first to hear of the assassination. He had been alerted by one of his staff who had heard it from one of his sources. Actually, it was somewhat ironic that it was the KCIA chief who was the perpetrator. He was a somewhat unique chief because he had talked a lot about democracy. He carried many messages from us to the President on human rights. His credentials were so impressive that there was considerable discussion about him becoming President. As far as we could tell, the plot, if it was such, did not seem very planned.

He had to leave the dinner to borrow the gun he used to shoot Park. Then he had to leave again to get some more bullets when he shot all that he had. It was not a well planned coup attempt.

In the Embassy, the Ambassador's office served as the crisis center. Phones began to ring. Fortunately, I had called home and had told my wife, Judith, what had happened so that she was able to field a lot of the questions she was getting during calls from the US and Europe. She was able to tell people that the city seemed calm and that there was no shooting. Then the press inquiries started. The October 1979 crisis was different from any that I experienced in other countries. The large presence of the American military made the Embassy's role far different than that I experienced in Cairo. As I said, it was not an operation such as I set up years later in Cairo; this was run out of the Ambassador's office.

The first question to which we sought an answer was: "Who is now in charge?". That was crucial to the next decision on what US attitude might be. The following morning, the Ambassador and I went to call on the Acting President -- the man who had been the Prime Minister. At the meeting was also the PM's chief of staff -- a very accomplished diplomat who had many assignments. We told the Acting President that the US would support the new regime; he did that, I think, in light of some telephone conversations he had had with Washington. We were essentially trying to establish a point of contact with the new regime. We also hoped to foster and support an evolution towards democracy which, as time passed, we knew did not happen with the Park assassination. The Acting President was a weak man who really didn't want the job. The military encompassed a group of younger officers who thought that the time had come to "retire" a lot of senior officers who they thought had passed their prime. That eventually did take place.

We had an open line to Washington so that it could be apprized of developments in real time. There was not yet a system of special crises management task forces in the Department; those came along later. We didn't get much guidance from the Department. It was primarily concerned about the "what and why has it happened?" questions and what our expectations for the near term future were. We were not really in a good position to answer these very sound questions immediately. There was some concern about North Korea being tempted to take advantage of the uncertainties in the South. As soon as the assassination became public, the Command went on full alert (DEFCON 1). It was a dicey situation since the Korean military had weakened its front line posture to some extent by bringing troops into Seoul. That risky maneuver was even more noticeable later when the military coup took place. In any case, there was considerable confusion in Seoul giving even greater rise to anxieties of North's intentions. One senior Korean officer Johnny Sohn) -- a veteran of the Pusan defense, who was later assigned to Washington as the KCIA station chief -- came to my office in fatigues asking where he should go. I told him to return to his office and await developments. He thought that we would know what was going on, as did many other Koreans who called us. This period of chaos lasted about twenty-four hours. Then the full story began to appear and the assassin became known, as where the names of people who were involved in the events of the previous days. There was considerable speculation about the Defense Minister, who was at the time of the deed, in a house near the assassination place waiting for Kim Jae Kyu. He was not involved, but his proximity raised many questions. There were a lot of plot theories; I mean a lot! The assassination was tailor made for Koreans most of whom always see plots of one kind or another. I don't believe that anyone really understood events for a long time. In fact, I don't know that even today, any of us understand

why Kim did what he did. People found the simple, but true, explanation hard to accept. It was a single gunman; there was no wide spread plot. The Koreans found it as hard to accept that simple explanation as some Americans find the generally accepted version of the Kennedy assassination. The Koreans found it hard to accept that someone would assassinate a President without a plan to take over the government subsequently. Kim did in fact come close to taking over, at least for a brief moment and perhaps he did really have a coup in mind. But since he was hung for his deed without ever giving a full public explanation, we will never know what went through his mind.

The assassination took place in late October, 1979. That spurred the younger military officers to position themselves for a power take over. One was the Commander of the Capital Security Command -- General Chun Doo Wha. He began to travel around Seoul in an armored personnel carrier. Then there was Chung Yung Ho, who was in charge of the Special Forces. Included also was Rho Tae Woo. There were two other officers who eventually became the core of the coup. These generals marshaled the support of the younger Korean military officers and men. They all a command or other. The generals were all from Taegu, which was Park Chun Hee's stronghold. They all had attended the same high school, all had entered the military at about the same time, all had served in Vietnam and all had been young staff officers in Park's entourage. They knew their way around the Blue House and the government. Once Park was assassinated, they looked at the military and their position in it. They saw a lot of generals, more senior and much older than they. They compared the ages of their senior commanders to the generals in the American army and found that the Koreans were, on the whole, much older. These younger officers found that an unacceptable situation. Between the end of October and December 12, the Korean military consolidated some of its forces, presumably further decreasing the advancement opportunities of the younger generals.

In that Fall, we had too little information about the Korean military, as was true for other times as well. We knew some of the unfolding drama and perhaps subconsciously hoped that it was not true. We gave the civilian government strong support, even for a time refusing to meet with Chun Doo Wha. We publicly stated our preference for civilian rule; we gave maximum publicity to Ambassadorial calls on President Choi Kyu Hah. We asked the President if we could be of assistance. We distanced ourselves from the Korean military, particularly the younger and restless military elements. The Defense Minister at the time was a perfect example of the kind of senior leader that the young officers held in contempt. He had been a full general for twelve years including Army Chief of Staff and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs before becoming Defense Minister. He had hung to power for a long, long time. That was the kind of officer that the younger generals wanted retired. The Deputy Commander of the Combined Forces Command, General Lew -- later Korean Ambassador in Washington -- was also viewed as one of the antiquated military leaders. These senior officers were very vocal in support of the civilian government on December 11; by December 13, they changed their tune. In any case, the younger generals were able to build up their command in and around Seoul.

The coup was well planned. I was at a dinner on the night of December 12. I left the part rather late, but certainly did not see any changes on the way home. The plotters, as I said, weakened the Korean military units along the DMZ and strengthened their forces around Seoul. They were concerned that the forces south of the Han River would remain loyal to the civilian government

and oppose their entry into Seoul. So the coup leaders loaded some of their troops on busses and drove them to the center of the various bridges that cross the Han. They parked them sideways, effectively blocking the bridges. Korean drivers, as all of us who have experienced them know, seeing traffic backing up, decided they would try to get around the busses. Within a half an hour, traffic across the bridges was at a complete standstill; nothing could have passed over the Han that night. The coup troops told people to go home; that they were just not going to get through that night. People just got out of their cars and walked home, thereby permanently blocking traffic across the river.

Unfortunately, because we did not want to believe what was going on, were not always on top of a very fast moving events. Ambassador Gleysteen might disagree with that assessment, but I had a sense that we didn't really believe that a coup would take place. We certainly did not want a military dictatorship and did everything we could think to let the Koreans know our views. We did not know what would happen the night of December 12. When the coup occurred, I went to my office. It was very quiet in Seoul during that night. As a matter of fact, the whole period leading up to December 12 was very curious. In the period right after the assassination, there tended to be a certain amount of nervousness among Korean. The military tended to use armored personnel carriers more. The 8th Army golf course was still in use. Many Korean generals had courtesy privileges at the club. One day, probably in November, Chun Doo Wan visited one day, escorted by a large force of bodyguards. The American manager of the golf club told Chun to leave because he was not going to have his course trampled on by all of the followers. That did not make Chun very happy.

The Ambassador, as I said, tried to have as little contact with Chun as possible. We did have channels to him, but we were certainly not going to be seen with him nor were we willing to meet with him, unless absolutely necessary. We did not know for sure what Chun's position among the plotters was; as I said, there were five generals that were suspect -- known as the Taegu "Seven Stars". The Presidential candidate could have been any of the five; we really didn't know who was the leader. But in Seoul, Chun was the key military figure because he was in charge of the Capital Command forces. After the initial period of upheaval, the situation appeared to be calming, even though Choi was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with his role. We wanted him to take stronger positions about the desirability of a civilian government than he took. Because we did not know all of the machinations that must have been going on, we couldn't fully understand Choi's reluctance. We knew much of the backstage maneuvering, but probably did not know the full extent. We did believe that stronger statements about maintaining a democratic regime were in order; we certainly would have been even more vigorous in our public statement of support if the civilian government had been more forthcoming.

My impression was that the CINC and the US Army components felt somewhat constrained by the prohibition against talking to some of the Korean generals who were clearly in control of the military. The US general policy was not to be seen as courting these younger generals. Of course, since some of them were in command of important segments of the Korean army, some discussions were mandatory. But all contacts were to be strictly for professional reasons and US policy was to be expressed by the civilian component of the US representation in Seoul. General Wickham, the CINC, performed superbly both as a soldier and a US representative.

I would describe the period before December 12 as one of uncertainty, but outwardly calm. On December 12, the younger Korean made their move. They decided that the Defense Minister had been a collaborator in Park's assassination; therefore they marched on the Ministry and occupied it. As I suggested earlier, the coup leaders were concerned by the Korean forces south of the Han River; they were not under their control and might have moved into Seoul to prevent the takeover. I already mentioned how they blocked the bridges. The December 12 coup surprised us; I had no intelligence that suggested a coup on that date and as far as I know, neither did anyone else.

On that date, I was at a meeting somewhere and drove back to the house. I was unaware of what was happening at the Defense Ministry nor did I know about the blocked bridges because I had no reason on that day to be in the vicinity of the river. I went to the Embassy, where we heard that there had been a fire in the vicinity of Yongsan, the US military base in Seoul. Ambassador Gleysteen went to the UN bunker so that he could better monitor the unfolding drama. One of the major concerns was of course the safety of the American troops and their possible involvement in the coup. So the Ambassador and the CINC were together, along with some of their staffs, including me. Manjo, who had the flu at the time, was left at the Chancery to run that end of the Embassy operation. He did a fine job under very trying circumstances. A crisis team was established in the Embassy on that day. Lines were opened to Washington and communications channels were made available exclusively for messages on the crisis. The Embassy went into an around-the-clock operation. The crisis team slept in the office more or less. We used a network of "wardens" to alert Americans, both private and official, of what was going on and to suggest caution if they had to leave their houses. This network had been established many years earlier just for such a crisis. Then began the laborious task of trying to find out what was going on. According to hearsay, General Lew came to the bunker vowing that the coup would not be successful. In the following days, he had converted to the support of the coup and was made Korean Ambassador to Washington.

Since a fire had broken out, one decision that had to be made concerned what to do with the three International Schools. The fire which took place about 3 a.m. could be seen from the Yongsan base which was almost right next door to the Ministry of Defense. The decision was made to recommend strongly to the principals of the schools that they not open the next day. I called them and explained the situation; they all agreed to keep the schools closed. That was announced on AFKN (the American military radio network in Korea) early in the morning of December 13. The Korean government later told us that they had resented this action because it felt that the situation was under control and the children would not have run any risks. I told the Korean official that I would prefer to apologize to him than to some American parent whose child might have been injured or worse. I found it interesting that the Korean government was bent on maintaining that nothing unusual was happening; in fact, the situation was abnormal and a coup was in process.

In the early morning hours of December 13, another troop convoy entered Seoul. It also stopped at the gates of the Embassy; this time the convoy commander asked for directions to the Hanguk Ilbo (one of Korea's leading newspapers). Our guard gave directions. I went out to the guard. I asked what the convoy commander wanted. He looked at me blankly and said: "Who?". I said: "The convoy commander!" Then the guard told me. Everyone seemed bent on considering all

that was going on as completely "normal". Later that early morning, tanks had drawn up at the end of Seoul's main street where the Embassy was located. Their guns were aimed at the avenue. I believe that was true in other parts of Seoul; the coup plotters had buttoned down the city. Some of the Korean forces that occupied Seoul were actually under the UN Command; that upset General Wickham greatly and he made his displeasure well known to both the Defense Ministry and the coup leaders. They had been assigned to occupation duty without his approval or indeed without any discussion with him. He was furious not only because such a move had broken a firm understanding of the CINC's peacetime command role, but also because the diminution of Korean forces in the front lines could have had devastating consequences for the defense of Korea had the North wished to engage in hostilities at that moment. As far as Wickham was concerned, the coup leaders had broken the military chain of command and their responsibilities to the CINC. We still were not certain who the coup leader was; we knew who the four major players were, but were entirely certain of who the leader was. We thought that Chun was the leader, but the situation was so fluid that we couldn't be sure. We knew who the leaders were because we knew what troops were occupying Seoul.

I think it was probably on the fourteen that we found out that Chun was in charge. Our intelligence was still rather sketchy even by December 14. I don't think that even today anyone knows how many were killed in the occupation of the Defense Ministry. The official word was that no one had died during that firefight; I have great skepticism about that report. There was a lot of shooting that morning not to have some casualties.

We tried to keep Washington advised; we told the Department all we knew even though our information was incomplete. It was interesting to compare the reaction from the US at the time of Park's assassination and the coup. On the first occasion, we had lots of calls asking whether everybody was alright even though only one person had been killed. On the occasion of the occupation of the defense Ministry, when a major fire exchange took place, there was only mild interest from the US; we didn't get many calls from the States. It was curious. I think that was a reflection of the differences that people put on varying events. When Park was assassinated, there was considerable concern about the future of South Korea. The events of December 12 were perceived as intra-Korean military rivalry which would not result in chaos in Korea. I found those perceptions as curious. Washington, at Gleysteen's recommendation, finally issued a strong statement about US policy towards military dictatorship. We held that position for several weeks; we did not believe that our stance would change the situation in Seoul, but we believed that it was important for the US government to be on record so that there be no doubt about where we would stand in the future.

The streets of Seoul were quite calm during those few days. We moved to and from our residences without interference. No one was ever hassled.

At some stage, the Korean coup leaders decided that Chun would become President. That was no surprise to us because over the days following December 12, it was clear that he was becoming the main figure. We continued to hope that he would remain in the background, "advising" the civilian government, while allowing at least the semblance of a democratic government. Even after the occupation of the Ministry of Defense, there were a lot of people, both Korean and American, who hoped that democracy might be realized. The Koreans were quite open about

their wish; newspapers became a little more outspoken; the students were slowly, but surely, make their preferences known. The majority of the Korean people, I should hasten to add, appeared to have some concern with this outbreak of democracy. They all remembered the overthrow of Syngman Rhee in 1960. He was followed briefly by an elected President, PoSun Yun, who was deposed in 1961 by Park Chung Hee. Furthermore, the North was a much greater threat in 1979 than it had been in 1960; that was always a concern for the South. The students did demonstrate and when chased by the police would find refuge in the Yongdun Cathedral for sanctuary. It was always interesting that that sanctuary was always respected. After a while, people became tired of the continuing student demonstrations which would spill over into one of the major shopping areas of Seoul. The shopping area would be filled with tear or pepper gas, making very uncomfortable for both shoppers and shop owners. That began to have an effect on the Korean psyche. By this time, the troop had been withdrawn and it was the police which was responsible for maintaining law and order. The police were drawn from the same pool of young people as the troops; they were in fact drafted. Included among them were undoubtedly university students and I always found it interesting that students therefore in fact fought on both the anti-government and the pro-government sides. There were probably some who had thrown stones at the police on one day, with kerchiefs across their faces, were soon after finding themselves on the receiving end of the stones and shooting tear gas back at their former comrades. They did their best whichever side they happened to represent on a given day. That was an interesting twist.

These student demonstrations were occurring in the middle of an electoral campaign, with Chun being one of the candidates. That was the Spring of 1980. The phenomenon of the three Kims really came to the fore. They had been around for many, many years, but now, with a "free" election looming, they really blossomed. The three were Kim Dae Jung, a long time opponent of the Park regime, Kim Young Sam, a tepid opposition figure and now President of Korea, and Kim Jong Pil, a sometime ally of Park's. They were known as the "three curses of Korea. None of them would withdraw from the campaign, therefore splitting Chun's opposition three ways. We had contacts with all of the Kims trying to understand why they continued on their political paths which would surely guarantee Chun's election. Kim Jong Pil, after a while, did not pursue his campaign very vigorously. Kim Young Sam agreed that the students should not be encouraged to continue their demonstrations; that was not Kim Dae Jung's tactics; he did speak on campuses. Those campus speeches finally became the alleged reason for Kim Dae Jung's arrest.

Even by the Spring of 1980, I did not feel that we had sufficient intelligence about what was going on behind the scenes. We knew very little about the students and their leaders; we had some contact with the students, but not enough. These contacts were conducted mainly by one of my staff -- John La Mazza -- and some people in the UN Command. We made major efforts to increase our contacts with the students, but found it very, very hard to make a breakthrough. Some wanted to talk to us; others were adamantly opposed because we were perceived as opponents of democracy and proponents of fascist dictatorships. We were not targets of any students demonstrations; they focused on the government, whose Prime Minister had offices only a half a block away from the Chancery. So we saw a lot of demonstrations, but we were essentially observers and not targets. During one period, there were three days of demonstrations. On the first day, the students got down the main avenue almost reaching the Embassy. The police

fired its gas, which of course drifted into our offices. In 1980, the Embassy was still surrounded by a low fence. Students vaulted that fence and entered the Embassy compound; we escorted them out the back gate away from the confrontations which were taking place on the main street. So in fact, they were not attacking the Embassy, but merely trying to get away from the tear and pepper gas that the police was firing. On the second and third days, the main avenue was blocked off a couple of blocks away from the Embassy. A few got through, but it was a mere trickle and of no consequence. So none of the Americans ever really felt that they were the targets of the students demonstrations. We stayed on the roof of the Chancery watching the proceedings, but never felt threatened. We never had any problem going back and forth from our residences.

We had a little better feel for the military, but not enough -- we knew the senior generals, but were woefully deficient on our knowledge of the thinking of the colonels and majors.

Q: This leads us to the Kwangju incident. Where there any indications that there might be a major disturbance outside of Seoul?

CLARK: We certainly were aware of unrest outside of Seoul. I had been in Kwangju about ten days before the uprising. At that time, there was a great hope in the city and surrounding countryside that Kim Dae Jung would be elected as President. He came from the Cholla Do province and was viewed as potentially the first important spokesman in Seoul for that area which had been neglected for hundreds of years, according to its residents. I remember talking to a priest in Kwangju, who was also the editor of the city's leading newspaper. I suggested that Kim Dae Jung's election would bring Cholla Do in better balance with the rest of the country. He looked at me as if I had come from another Planet. "We don't want balance", he said, "We want Cholla Do to be the preferred area!" He was totally serious and I must say I was a little surprised by that attitude -- Cholla was going to be the first province of the country and was going to get compensated for all the years of neglect. So if I had to bet where serious trouble might erupt, I would have picked Pusan, a large port city in the South. Trouble had erupted there before. Wherever it was going to break out, we were anticipating some disturbances somewhere.

So the Kwangju incident did not come as a complete surprise. It is still a matter of debate whether that incident would have happened if the government had not tried to close the down with its Special Force troops. These young soldiers were in a constant state of anxiety, always ready for trouble -- real or perceived. They were sent into the city in such a manner that if any uprising was being considered by the population, their occupation would certainly trigger it. In fact, the population rose up, drove the troops out of town and then all hell broke loose. Kwangju was under the control of the city commune for at least a week. We had a USIS library in Kwangju, whose director was in the city for the first two days, until he was ordered to leave by the Ambassador. He reported to us from his house which was away from the center. We received a lot of information from the missionaries, of which there were quite a few in Kwangju. They mostly communicated with their brethren in Seoul who then relayed the information to us. I am not sure that we therefore didn't have a somewhat skewed and perhaps even overstated view of the situation, but that is all we had.

The Embassy then returned pretty much to its crisis *modus operandi*. We deliberated on what position the US should take. To his eternal credit, Bill Gleysteen put pressure on the Korean

military to insure that the actions were held at a minimum. I am sure that the Special Forces would have been inclined to "pacify the village" -- using an old Vietnam term. After all, that is where their officers received a considerable part of their training, as well as the generals in charge of the government. The Ambassador, almost single-handedly, managed to extend the dialogue with the Koreans thereby preventing what undoubtedly would have been a blood bath. He talked directly to Chun Doo Wha. Wickham did the same thing. He has been criticized in Korea because some people thought that troops theoretically under the UN Command were being used in Kwangju. In fact, unlike the December 1979 period, that was not the case. No Korean troops under the command of the UNCINC were used in Kwangju. The Special Forces were never under Wickham's command nor the 20th. division -- there is some question still whether the 20th Division was really used or whether these were really Special Forces troops in 20th Division uniforms.

We kept Washington informed as best we could. We passed all the information that we had, which by no means gave us a complete picture. After the first couple of days, both American and Korean correspondents went to Kwangju to report. We did not send any of our employees because a) there wasn't really much that we could do; b) we did not have any agreement among ourselves and Washington on whether we should mediate. There were some Koreans in Kwangju who wanted the US Ambassador to serve as mediator, but since this was essentially an internal matter, it was not a situation which lent itself to that kind of activity. We were of course tempted to come to the assistance of the Kwangjuians to try to bring the situation to a peaceful conclusion, but I think if we had tried to intervene in any way, the situation would have deteriorated much more rapidly with far greater casualties than actually occurred. The idea of a mediation by the American Ambassador was kept alive by the people in Kwangju and others and, as a matter of fact, arose again later as the Kwangju events were reviewed by various interested parties. Gleysteen agonized for a long time about the idea, but finally came to the conclusion that it just wasn't possible under the circumstances. I certainly agree with that conclusion; I believe that any American interference might have made matters worse. It certainly would have been an unprecedented move by an American ambassador and probably illegal in terms of international law.

Our interests in the Kwangju affair were first of all, the evolution of a democracy in Korea. That had been one of our goals even going back to the Syngman Rhee days. The "Seoul Spring" -- when it appeared that democracy might actually flourish in Korea -- and the all the work we had done to try to insure a fair election came crashing down with Kwangju. The second interest was the defense of Korea, which we thought might be compromised by internal uprisings and repressions. Thirdly, we were concerned about the safety of the Americans living in Kwangju. Fourthly, we were anxious to minimize any loss of life in Kwangju. To reach the last two objectives, we asked the American in Kwangju to leave; some left in convoys and some flew out. We broadcast alerts to people over the AFKN network and tried to call people. I called John Underwood, who was living in Kwangju. He said that I could not instruct him to leave; I told him that my job was to advise him very strongly to depart. It was then up to him to decide whether he would take my advice. In fact, he didn't and stayed, fortunately unscathed. His report was probably the best that was ever written on the Kwangju incident. He even gave us some information during the tense period, whenever we could get through on the phone which was not that frequently.

Initially, we only got bits and pieces of disconnected information. Then a German TV team got into the city and Henry Scott Stokes began to report. That provided a clearer picture, although we still had gaps. It was not the kind of situation which lends itself to a complete picture. For example, we had no source in City Hall where the commune had made its headquarters. The Korean desk in Washington was anxious to be fully informed; it was very helpful to us in getting approval of the many recommendations that we sent in. Bob Rich, the then desk officer, did a good job.

The crisis in Kwangju lasted for about a week. Then early one morning the 20th Division moved into the city and occupied the city without much resistance, except for the City Hall, which was shelled giving rise to a debate on whether that action was really necessary. Eight or nine years, we wrote a report on the Kwangju incident. That report was sparked by the continuing debate that had taken place in Korea about the US role; in fact, the US role had become a football in Korean politics, with a succession of factions using their versions for ostensibly the support of their cause. In any case, Gleysteen always wanted to have the record made clear; he had made many public comments on events, but was anxious to have history be recorded accurately. In 1986 or 87, some Korean students had invaded the USIS building in Seoul and had refused to evacuate. Harry Dunlop, then our Political Counselor, spent a lot of time with the students trying to explain to them what the US role had been. Harry thought that he had been quite effective, although the police finally had to attack the building in order to dislodge the students. So Harry was also anxious to have a report written. The problem, in my mind, was always that the release of a written report, unrelated to any official Korean request, would raise more difficulties than warranted, especially since it was bound to be quite negative about a government with which we were allied. I felt that we had to have a reason for issuing such a report; it would have been a serious mistake if we had just issued it on a whim.

Harry Dunlop wrote an explanation of Kwangju which he submitted to Washington. The Embassy wanted to release it to support what Harry had told the students. The Department rejected that suggestion -- I should note that I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary in EA in charge of Korean affairs. What I wanted was a report written by people who had actually participated in the events of 1980. I asked the Historian's Office to take a crack at a first draft. We preferred the Historian's Office to INR because that was the most neutral office in the Department on matters such as this. The events were sufficiently removed so that much of the material had already been placed in archives and historians are more comfortable with that kind of research than the officers in INR who work essentially on current problems. Once the Historian had written a draft, we -- that is those of us who had been in Seoul at the time -- began to work on it. That included Bill Gleysteen and John Wickham. Harry Dunlap had by then returned to Washington to be the Country Director for Korea and he also made contributions. We worked on that draft until everyone was happy with it. Quite by accident, the newly elected National Assembly asked the US government a series of questions about Kwangju. The National Assembly also asked that Gleysteen and Wickham be made available for testimony before one of its committees. That of course was totally un-acceptable, but we said that we would be happy to respond to their questions, which is what they did. Harry then did a superb job of going through the report and excerpting those sections that were responsive to the various questions. If there were lacunae, he provided an appendix which responded to the questions even if it didn't seem to

fit into the body of the report. We sent the full report to the Embassy with instructions to provide a copy to the Korean government twenty-four hours before it was to be given to the National Assembly. This process was probably unprecedented because I am not aware of any other circumstances in which the US government was involved or was perceived to be involved in a domestic political issue of another country. We also broke some new ground in having the Department write a report on events that had taken place seven or eight years earlier.

I am glad to say that I found that the written record was a pretty accurate reflection of events that had taken place as I remembered them. In part, this was due to the fact that both Ambassador Gleysteen and General Wickham had worked on reports during the Kwangju episode which were quite ample. So we had had a access to records written personally by the two principal Americans in Korea at the time. That gave the historian a good base not only for tracing the actual events, but also for the atmosphere within which these events were taking place. The historian drew on those reports, but supplemented them with interviews with people such as myself. The largest gap was probably in an explanation of the military command structure, which all of the American writers in Seoul assumed that all readers would know. In fact, that was not the case; the command rules were so complex that probably few in Washington and probably in Seoul as well ever understood them. There were some fine points of that structure and the responsibilities of the UN Commander that were indeed somewhat murky. The question of control of Korean forces in peace time had never been seriously examined, leaving some doubts about the CINC's rights and authority. I think that the UN Commander was clear in his own mind what his authorities and responsibilities were; whether the Koreans had the same understanding was an issue that had never really been examined. Wickham certainly was clear in his own mind what the rules were; that is one of the reasons his contribution to the final report was so important. He was quite certain what he could or what he could not do as UNCINC. He viewed his role as being in charge of the defense of South Korea from outside aggression; he was not in charge of policing Korea. That was the role of the Korean government. So Wickham was never in doubt what the US should do in the Kwangju situation.

I should note that by the time all the participants had a crack at the original draft that the Historian's Office had written, it did not have much resemblance to the original product. It took us over three months to redraft the original text. We had to build into the report the circumstances within which the actual events had to be examined. That was not an easy task because for example, my view was somewhat different than that of the Ambassador or the CINC. But we tried to get as many of the participants in the 1980 events involved in the drafting as we could find. The original draft also had to be made more readable; that was a matter of style, not content. The report had to read well because we knew it would be viewed with great skepticism by a number of people. Also, the historian, working from documents written by newspapermen at the time, tended to give a sensational flavor to events that we in the Embassy and the Command had not really felt. The reporting gave the impression of a much greater crisis than we believed warranted.

We thought the report was a good one. It was not very complementary of the Chun government. Chun, by this time, was nearing the end of his regime. When his government was given the report by the Embassy it did not show much appreciation. When the government read the report, it started to put together a fairly high level delegation which was supposed to come to

Washington to try to pressure us not to release the report. As is often the case in such events, serendipity took over and someone in the Korean government leaked the report to the press. That of course wiped out their plan to come to Washington. That benefit was in part offset by the unhappiness of the National Assembly which resented that the report appeared in the press before it was delivered to it. Once the report was made public, it caused very few ripples. Gleysteen had been right. Such a report was essential and it became the basis for examination of the Kwangju incident ever since. It became extremely useful in explaining the US role and why we did what we did or why we didn't do some things. It essentially undercut all the "US plot" theories that some Koreans had bandied about for those many years. Our document became a vital part of the Korean debate and remains so to this day. If we had had an opportunity, I think we might have released the report before eight or nine years had passed, but such an opportunity just had not knocked on our doors.

The Korean government raised objections to the tenor of the report. It did not like the strong suggestion that the Kwangju uprising was in large measure provoked by the actions of the government. There was never any dispute about the facts as we had stipulated them in our report. It helped to clear the air. It was also helpful that the report was issued just as the Chun government was phasing out a new government was taking over. The new President, Roh Toe Woo, could start his regime without having to engage in the debate over Kwangju. In Washington, there were a few revisionists, mostly in the academic community, who thought that the report was not complete and may have left out some salient details. But the reaction in the US was rather muted. We had briefed certain Congressional members before the release and there was no reaction from Congress.

I enjoyed my tour in Korea. Strangely enough, it was very useful to me later when I was in Egypt.

MAURICE E. LEE
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Seoul (1977-1981)

Maurice E. Lee was born in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1925. He served with the European Theater during World War II. He received a master's degree from George Washington University and went to Paris, France to learn French. Mr. Lee's career with USIS included positions in Germany, Japan, Vietnam, South Asia, Washington, DC, the Philippines, Korea, and Israel. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on February 9, 1989.

LEE: My next assignment after the Philippines was to Korea in 1977. I spent four years there as the PAO and it was probably one of the most interesting -- I must say, my whole career has been interesting -- but this was one of the highlights of my period in the agency. At the time I arrived there, President Park was President of the country -- a very strong dictator. It was Ambassador Dick Sneider who asked me to come to Seoul. But he remained there just a short time after my arrival. And then Bill Gleysteen came out, who was an outstanding Ambassador in my judgment.

During my tour we had an official visit by President Carter and his wife. At that time, or just prior to his visit, I guess even during the campaign, Carter had pledged that he was going to pull the troops out of Korea -- American troops that were stationed in Korea, about 43,000 men. This had the Koreans very, very upset because they saw our troops as the main bulwark against North Korean invasion. Obviously, 43,000 couldn't hold out 600,000 troops, but it certainly would not be very smart of the North Koreans to invade South Korea when they had to face American troops up there in the DMZ.

So when Carter arrived, the main purpose of the Koreans was to change his mind on this subject. So it was -- in addition to all the ceremonies, which were very pleasant -- a pretty testy visit until finally Carter relented. I was in the advance party for this visit in which members of the Korean government and people from the White House and several of us from the Embassy flew around the country and decided where the President should go and not go. There was one amusing aspect that wasn't so amusing at the time because it took a heck of a lot of time to resolve. President Carter was insistent that in the ride from the airport to town daughter Amy would ride with the Carters and President Park. And the Koreans, I imagine out of some cultural reasoning, objected strongly. The Carter White House just would not give in so it ended up that President Park's daughter rode in the procession also. That's how we resolved it.

After Carter left, I guess the next big event that happened was the assassination of President Park by his CIA chief. And following that the coup of Chung Doo Hwan, who later became President. The coup was a very interesting event, personally speaking. The night that it happened the Press Attaché, Norm Barnes, and I were at a friend's house for dinner when Norm got a call from a newspaper reporter stating that there was gunfire being heard in several streets of Seoul. He had heard there was an uprising out at the base in the south part of Seoul and that perhaps a coup was underway. We immediately went to the Embassy. When we got to the Embassy we found that the Ambassador had already gone down to the base to see what was going on, and the DCM, the Political Counselor, Norm and I stayed at the Embassy. It was rather interesting because Ambassador Gleysteen only had one telephone at the site where he was and he was reporting events as they were taking place to Washington on that one telephone line. Since he couldn't talk to us at the Embassy because he only had one line and he had to keep it open to Washington, Washington was sending us NIACT immediate telegrams telling us what was going on down the road two miles as recounted by the Ambassador to Washington.

Another funny thing occurred while we were waiting at the Embassy to see what was going to happen. I looked out the window of the Ambassador's office and saw an army column come down the street and stop in front of the Embassy. I thought to myself, "They wouldn't dare try to do anything to the Embassy." Our Korean guard went out and talked to the leader of the group and after a while he went back to his guard post and the patrol proceeded up the street in their armored cars. We sent a Marine down to find out what was going on. He came back and said the Koreans were lost, they were looking for the DongA Ilbo, which was a newspaper they wanted to capture.

There was a lot of confusion all through the night and no one was quite sure who was in charge. Then that morning my senior Korean press local got a summons from Chung Doo Hwan whom

he had known in school. Chung Doo Hwan called him to his quarters and told him that he could report to the American Embassy that he was in charge and that they can deal with him from there on out. It is interesting that a USIS employee was the one who got the final word. And of course we got the word to Washington immediately.

The Kwangju uprisings which followed later were a very, very testy period for us. This was when the students protested against Chung Doo Hwan. We had a cultural center in the city of Kwangju. We don't know to this day how many hundreds were killed in that uprising but it was a dicey situation for about a week. We lost contact with our branch PAO, Dave Miller, who was hiding out. The local employees were hiding him in different places each night. They finally found a way to get him out of town and we got him back to Seoul safely. The rioters did not touch our building, either.

During that period we had student uprisings in Seoul, too, and I remember one night, early evening -- we had to close our building, of course -- standing on the roof of my building right next to the city hall and looking down the street at about 200,000 students marching in our direction. I tell you, that is a hairy experience, particularly when you have no way of escaping. As it turned out, the police were able to stop these people short of our building and the city hall and I was able to eventually get home that night.

Students were our principal customers at the center because of the large library we had. But the time I was there the anger of the students was directed towards the military in general and Chun Doo Hwan in particular. After all, under Park they didn't have much freedom either. But at least he was ensconced as a President fairly legally. Chun Doo Hwan cracked down on a lot of things. Most of the student riots with the exception of the period during the Kwangju incidents were confined to the campuses. And if it got too bad they just closed the school and dispersed the students. Their anger was directed principally, while I was there, at the Korean government and not to the Americans. There is a new hitch now because of the desire to reunite the North and the South. At the time I was there that was almost unthinkable. People talked about it. But no one saw it as a practicality because of the attitude of the North.

There was some criticism of us in liberal circles -- that we were not tough enough on Chun Doo Hwan and his violations of human rights. While we could exert some pressure, you must remember we were dealing with a sovereign country. I know that the Ambassador had some very strong conversation with Chun Doo Hwan at that time. I met Chun Doo Hwan, who kept a pretty low profile initially, just once when he gave a garden party. He was a very formidable looking guy -- very, very stiff. He was the sort of person I wouldn't feel comfortable around. The Korean situation in some respects resembled the Philippines. We were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. We had to keep both sides of the aisle content to achieve your objectives. Human rights in Korea, of course, has always been a problem. I see in today's paper for instance that the current President is being criticized because he is not tough enough on the students. So it is a no win situation in many cases.

We had a large utilization of your libraries by the student population. I never was a head counter in the library. Only the people that came from Washington were. I was interested in who was in the library, not how many. And I knew that we were getting the right kinds of students and

adults. Now, just as in Japan in the earlier years, in Korea there was a great demand for English teaching. I mean, you could set up an English school on a corner and make a helluva lot of money. I know that my daughter and son taught English and made something like ten dollars an hour. Great demand. And Koreans are smart, quick people. They catch on easily. And they realized, you know, that their country was emerging as a major industrial power. Industries needed people that had knowledge of English. We also had a huge number of Koreans going to the States to go to school.

We had very good speakers programs, too. I was very happy with the program in Korea. I felt those programs were well attended. By that time the Agency was getting top notch people. They were the caliber of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Mike Armacost to mention two I remember.

ROBERT G. RICH, JR.
Korea Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1977-1981)

Ambassador Robert G. Rich, Jr. was born in Florida in 1930. He attended the University of Florida and Cornell University. Ambassador Rich entered the Foreign Service in 1957 and during his career has served in Korea, Indonesia, Trinidad, the Philippines and was ambassador to Belize in addition to various assignments in the State Department. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1994.

RICH: This was a fascinating period in terms of policy development in Washington if you look at the issue of Korean troop withdrawal during the Carter administration. It is one that I have actually written a rather long research paper on when I was at the Senior Seminar after I left the Desk.

When I was still in Trinidad Secretary of State Cy Vance and Under Secretary Phil Habib came down for an OAS meeting, and Phil Habib stayed behind a day. I had worked for Phil in Korea many years before when he was political counselor there. After a private dinner as he requested, Phil said, "I want you back in Washington next week." I was Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at the time. He said, "I want you to take over Korean affairs, as we have a little problem." Well, the problem he had particularly in mind was not troop withdrawal, but something that became known as Koreagate, which at that early stage Phil Habib was handling sort of out of his pocket on the seventh floor. It was getting too big for that, and for reasons I have never known or wished to inquire, he did not feel the leadership in the Korean office at that time was such that he wanted to turn sensitive problems over to them.

I explained that I had a new ambassador on the way, a fine career officer was coming and he wasn't there yet, and at a small post anyone below DCM was pretty junior. Did he want me to turn over the post to a junior officer or could I wait a couple of weeks? Well, he agreed that I could wait a couple of weeks, but he asked me to leave the day after the ambassador arrived. I said, "Well, as long as you explain that to the ambassador, fine." I didn't want to say "Hello, I

am leaving tomorrow.” That is how I got back into Korean affairs in July 1977, some five months into the Carter administration, and less than 24 hours after my return to Washington.

During the campaign President Carter had advocated withdrawing U.S. forces from Korea, later modified to U.S. ground combat forces. I think everyone in the State Department working on the problem assumed that this would be a negotiated outcome with some *quid pro quo* demanded of North Korea, or at least that we would not just do this unilaterally. It soon became apparent after the President took office, however, that this was to be simply a unilateral American withdrawal. We weren't obtaining a *quid pro quo* or anything else to reduce the danger of destabilizing aggression. So there were efforts in the Spring of 1997 to try at least to work out a mechanism that would mitigate the problem, but the results were minimal.

I thus came on the scene in a very difficult period in US-Korean relations. The Koreans, having seen us already pull out one division unilaterally earlier, and seen the collapse and our withdrawal from Vietnam, had come to the conclusion that their basic national existence was at stake in trying to maintain some credible U.S. forces presence in South Korea as a deterrent to the North. In the process of trying to maintain that deterrent, however, they used methods that were not acceptable in an American political society, and thus “Koreagate.” I don't fault their motives, but I certainly fault their methods.

The media very quickly came to describe this in terms that led the general public to believe that perhaps half of the Congress had been suborned by foreign, wily ways. The reality, of course, was far less than that, but certainly in the public mind it appeared that it could be a major scandal of our government.

I was thus essentially tasked with two critical problems in this period while I was Director of Korean Affairs. I originally had a two year tenure in that position and then was asked to stay on, so actually held the position for 4 ½ years, more than two years longer than any other Director before or since. Essentially at the request of the assistant secretary, Dick Holbrooke, and with the acquiescence of Under Secretary Phil Habib until his heart attack, and then later working with Secretary Vance, I essentially dealt directly with all the rest of the government on behalf of Korean issues. This was how the “country director” system was originally supposed to work, but more often the directors are too layered in the bureaucracy. I did not even report through a Deputy Assistant Secretary after Bill Gleysteen moved from that responsibility to become Ambassador to Korea.

Q: Bob, those were certainly critical days in our relationship with the Koreans. Besides discussing Koreagate and the troop withdrawal question, I think it might be useful if you added a word about the Korean reaction to the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights.

RICH: The Korean reaction was primarily a concern that the American attacks on handling of human rights were leading to American disengagement from the defense of the peninsula, which for them they felt was a life and death matter as they were still threatened by a dangerous, antagonistic, totalitarian regime in the north. The United States had been effective from time to time in mitigating the authoritarian regime's excesses in South Korea. I say mitigating, not eliminating. The difficulty in the Carter administration was largely compounded by the sense

emanating from the White House that this was a regime that we didn't want to be dirtying our hands by associating with. The new Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, Pat Derian, had earned her spurs in the American civil rights campaign in the South and brought to foreign affairs the same highly public, confrontational spirit of condemnation, pushing a policy of public criticism of our friends. Given the stakes involved with security in Northeast Asia in particular, this made it very difficult at times to do business on a respectful basis. I felt that one of the real pluses of diplomacy in this area on both sides-and I count here a number of key people on the Korean side as well as people on the American side (the American Ambassadors and others in Washington)-I felt that one of the main successes that those of us had who were tasked with trying to maintain the vital interests of our two nations in the relationship was to somehow manage these problems amidst such a volatile and high toned public environment of antagonism in charge and counter charge.

I would like to say a little bit about how Koreagate and the troop withdrawal issues interacted at this time, because certainly the efforts to influence the American Congress, misguided and improper as they were by Korea, came out of a deep motivation in Seoul that maintaining the American support was absolutely vital to their national existence. At the same time, the American political backlash to that effort came close to destroying the very support that was important to both nations. That atmosphere made it very difficult for the Congress to act in a reasonable manner on some of the issues that had to be placed before the Congress under our law to implement the troop withdrawal program in a relatively safe manner.

We moved to a major reassessment of the troop withdrawal scenario in the last two years of the Carter administration. This reassessment was sparked by an intelligence re-evaluation of North Korea and a build-up in North Korean military assets that led us to be convinced that there was a far more dangerous situation on the peninsula than had been perceived while American attention was diverted by the Vietnam War. We instituted significant new policy studies in which the State Department was given the lead under my direction, but with very important roles by the Defense Department and the intelligence agencies. This high-level policy review, conducted without any public leaks so that President Carter would not feel backed into a corner, led eventually to a trip to Korea by the President and to virtual abandonment of the troop withdrawal program. Although it was played low key by the White House, it was a significant change in policy.

That decision was not behind us very long when President Park of Korea was assassinated and transition to a democratic government was again aborted by an internal power coup in the military led by General Chun Doo-Hwan. This, in turn, led to a major incident in the southern part of Korea in the city of Kwangju. Ever since it has been known as the "Kwangju incident." That was important for the United States in several ways. It was Korean forces brutally putting down a popular protest, but many Koreans perceived the United States as being culpable or involved because of the command relationships that existed in Korea on the military side. There was very little public understanding in Korea of the limits to which the U.S. command structure extended. In fact, the UN command, which is headed by a U.S. four-star general, does have tactical command over the Korean armed forces in time of war when it has responsibility for deployment of forces against external attack. But not all Korean armed forces are seconded to the UN command in time of peace, and the forces that were used by General Chun in Kwangju were not forces under the UN command, nor did he have any obligation to ask our permission in any

way.

Q: On that point, Bob, was there ever any tension between the UN commander (the American four-star general) and our ambassador on issues such as this?

RICH: I think far less than there might have been. There had been a period of significant tension between our ambassador and our commander in the early to mid seventies. At the time that I was dealing with our ambassador and commander in Korea on these policy level issues, I would say there was not. This includes the two successive UN Commanders during those years, General Jack Vessey and General John Wickham, both of whom went on to be Army Chiefs of Staff (and Vessey later to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs). This period included at the embassy part of the ambassadorship of Dick Sneider and all of the ambassadorship of Bill Gleysteen. That period was one of great harmony between the two senior American officials on the ground. I believe it is the only place in the world where we have a U.S. Ambassador and an independent U.S. Forces Commander whose jurisdiction is over exactly the same piece of territory. We have other places where we have independent forces commanders, but they don't usually have quite the same piece of real estate that they are responsible for. So there is obviously a need for a great deal of diplomacy and cooperation between these two individuals, and I saw it work very, very well in Korea during the Carter administration. There is a period slightly before the time I was directly involved when it worked very, very poorly, but at the time of crisis with the Chun coup and the Kwangju incident, the coordination and mutual support was absolutely outstanding between the commander and the ambassador. My own experience of those years informed the later positive dealings by Mike Armacost and myself with the U.S. Air Force Commander (Clark Air Base) and Navy Commander (Subic Bay Naval Base) in the Philippines.

The Kwangju incident has remained a problem in some respects in US-Korea relations because of the Korean public perception of U.S. complicity. The U.S. role was one to try to mitigate the actions of the Korean government and the Korean military, while focusing our greatest concern on deterring any North Korean adventurism during a time of South Korean turmoil. There was a point at which order had to be restored in Kwangju after the bloodbath. We then made it very clear to the Korean military that they must not break the rules of the UN command. This is something that our commanders and ambassadors have always insisted upon, because in time of war you have to know what you can count on. In this case a more chastened General Chun decided that he needed to use a more experienced group to go down and restore order after the debacle that had been created by troops that were untrained for riot duty. He turned to a unit which had been so trained and which was led by a commander native to the Kwangju area. This unit was seconded to the UN command at the time, and a request was made for the release of the unit with promises made that it would carry out its responsibilities in a peaceful manner. The United States acceded to that request. Technically, the UN commander couldn't have done otherwise unless he needed the forces to oppose an enemy, but we recognized that even that acquiescence would be seen as a political gesture. Nevertheless, order was restored virtually bloodlessly, and those were not the troops that created the problem.

In Washington, we were following these events with great concern because instability had been created, and the U.S. role, other than to try to mitigate internal Korean behavior and try to restore some semblance of constitutionality and continuity as soon as possible, was external. One danger

always in Korea was that North Korea would take advantage of any instability in the South to launch aggression with the tremendously powerful military machine they had sacrificed so greatly to build with over 20 percent of their GNP devoted to the military. Some analysts have even said it was 40 percent. The reality may be 25 percent or so through the 1970s; it is hard to estimate. So the United States did take steps to warn North Korea not to intervene, stationed a carrier in the area, and sought in other ways to be sure that the crisis was not expanded by outside intervention.

Q: I am curious about one thing, Bob. During this period, or subsequently, were we embarrassed in our actions by the activities of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, who received a great deal of publicity in this country and has his own public relations center?

RICH: Yes, but not to a significant level. It was one of those things that I felt I didn't want to touch with a ten foot pole. It was largely something going on on the sidelines, in the background. It did not have any major impact on actions by either government. It was one of those things that you wished would just go away.

Tom, perhaps I might say a few words about the Koreagate scandal, and of the cooperation between the State Department and the Justice Department. I found this unique in my career but very intense at the time. We were working directly with then Deputy Attorney General Civiletti, with Speaker Tip O'Neill at the House of Representatives, and with the two ethics committees of the House and Senate. This was a process in which each day we were trying to get further cooperation from the Korean government on evidence that was needed to help determine clearly what degree of culpability existed in our politicians, or Americans of any stripe, improperly having been bought or influenced on behalf of foreign interests. This was very sensitive because it engaged the senior political levels of both governments. It also involved problems of distrust which helped poison the troop withdrawal issue as well, because each of those issues made the other more difficult. And yet, I would say that the cooperation within our administration between Justice and State at that time was excellent. I did not ever feel that there were institutional suspicions or bureaucratic backbiting or anything of the sort. It was a common effort to deal with the problem.

I took on additional staff simply to do detailed archival research to back up the various investigations underway, but personally coordinated with the State Department's Assistant Legal Advisor for East Asia, Elizabeth Verville, and Deputy Attorney General Civiletti's right-hand man, Paul Michel (now a Federal Appeals Court Judge), and drafted almost daily instructions to our Ambassador in Seoul. Coordination with Seoul on this and the troop withdrawal issue was also enhanced by almost daily secure telephone conversations I held with Ambassador Gleysteen. These conversations enabled us both to assess the political and bureaucratic nuances at the other end better, principally so that the Ambassador could phrase his recommendations in a manner most likely to receive a positive hearing in Washington, and at times so that I could add postscripts to Washington instructions that no one wanted to put directly into writing.

Washington coordination following the assassination and Chun Doo-hwan coup was also enhanced by the establishment of a special telegraphic channel by Secretary Vance to be used as we engaged in the delicate process of trying to move Korea back toward democratic government.

This channel was managed out of my office with copies going from me directly to the other key players in the White House, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the CIA without getting the messages into their bureaucratic systems. In the State Department, of course, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary Holbrooke received all these messages. This process built a strong relationship between key players in the cooperating agencies at a sensitive time, but later led to some miffed reactions by some of those who had not been in the know but thought they should have been.

KATHERINE SCHWERING
Consular/Commercial Officer
Seoul (1978-1980)

Ms. Schwering was born in Wyoming and raised abroad and various localities in the US. She was educated at Northwestern University and Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). She joined Chase Bank, where she was trained as an international economist, and worked with them until joining the State Department in 1978. During her career Ms. Schwering worked primarily on international economic, monetary and terrorist matters in Washington and abroad. Her overseas posts were in Burundi, Yugoslavia and Turkey. Ms. Schwering was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

SCHWERING: Where, for Korea?

Q: Yes.

SCHWERING: There always was a scam of one sort or the other and probably still is – that is a Korean thing you know.

Q: What was your first assignment?

SCHWERING: Consular. You were my boss.

Q: This was August of '78. What did you do in the consular section?

SCHWERING: I started out in immigrant visas. I absolutely loved consular work. I should also tell you that as part of this new junior officer program, we were not being “coned,” as they call it. That is why you were to go through two or three cones, and after three or four years the department was supposed to look at you and decide where you fit best. Almost all the Junior Officers in Korea were thrown into the consular cone. I remember two guys who were an exception: one had been in the consular section for three months and had talked his way out and into the political section; another young man had gone straight into the commercial section, but the rest of us stayed in consular. I did immigrant visas and non-immigrant visas. I don't know if you were still there then, because you were only there for a year of my tour.

Q: I left in '79.

SCHWERING: Then Lou Goelz, who had just come from Iran where he had been taken a hostage briefly, was the consul general.

I was fraud officer for six weeks or a couple of months. By that time we all knew the consular section was as corrupt as they come. Some of the petitions, of course, were false. You know the stories. They were legion. We, if you remember, we had Korean investigators in the fraud section. At one point I had one of them walk up to me and hand me a typewritten confession of all the bribes he had been taking. That was apparently because he was on the verge of being caught. So you couldn't even trust the investigators. You also worked with the military. There was a 'great' X-ray substitution scam going on. I worked with the CID (criminal investigation division of the army) a lot. We had a really experienced INS officer assigned to post at the time. He knew there was a petition scam when he was presented with an INS petition signed by what turned out to be a new junior consular officer, rather than by somebody in the U.S.

Q: I have to say my experience was that when I got there there was an awful lot of 'smoke.' When I went to a consular conference, I went to the head of consular affairs and got her to send a new security officer to Seoul. It was like peeling an onion. While we were solving one problem, a new one, the petitions scam, was going on.

SCHWERING: After I left post in 1980, they fired most of the immigrant visa employees because they were all in on the petition thing. They found piles of money and blank forms in one person's apartment. We all knew these guys were not only dishonest with us, but weren't translating things correctly as well.

Q: The previous consul general was a great antique shopper. I was very worried about that connection. All sorts of people would come up to me, and luckily neither my wife nor I were really very interested in shopping. But there was always this possibility of corruption among the Americans. Did you run across attempts or presumed attempts to enlist you in this?

SCHWERING: Not in corruption and not with any of the officers at that time. We also had staff people. I remember there was one man in non-immigrant visas who was a staffer. They eventually did away with that category. He had been there for years. None of those people were corrupt; although, a couple of them would do things off-hours that they were not supposed to do. It wasn't anything criminal.

The pressure that was put on us as consular officers was in the form of return favors. I soon learned that any time a Korean invited you out to lunch, he or she would be able to ask you for a favor later on; it was Korean culture. That became a real headache. So, any time a Korean began approaching me as a friend (they really don't have friends in our concept) I would beat them to the punch and I would invite them to lunch, usually at the embassy, which was a real status symbol at the time.

Q: It was just a snack bar.

SCHWERING: Then they had to do something for me. They had to do something to match, and then they had to do another favor in order to ask one. So I headed off most of the requests.

Q: You say you started out in immigrant visas. How did you find that? Also, was there a collegiality among the officers? Was it a good fit when you got there?

SCHWERING: Absolutely. We loved each other. There was no problem. We were all in the trenches literally. But it was tremendous stress. I remember a Foreign Service Staff (FSS) visa officer who worked with immigrant visas who contracted tuberculosis as a result of interviewing people. He was there when you were there. A woman who came in '79 began having heart palpitations from the stress. I began to talk all the time, from the stress. We were under tremendous pressure to issue X number of immigrant visas a year. It wasn't welcomed if we didn't meet that number. It was really tough because there had been court rulings saying we had to issue the number available. But you know so many of the applications were fraudulent.

The petitions were always nuts. The documentation they provided was the family register. All they did was pay the local village clerk and he would put anything on there they wanted.

Q: I remember somebody told me one time that they ran across a petition where somebody had been born on such and such a date, and then it showed they had died and then they were born again. The reason given was that this was a luckier day than the original one.

SCHWERING: Well, that could have been true, but most of it was just to get the visa.

Q: And also you had children from the 'little wife' I guess.

SCHWERING: That was often it. Frankly, most of this emigration stemmed from the prostitutes who married the GIs. They would petition for their parents first, and then their brothers and sisters. We did have leftovers from the Chinese culture – concubines. What would usually happen if a man had a woman on the side when his first wife died was that he would marry the second. The problem was the petitioners in the U.S. were the children, and they would petition for a brother or sister who had been born within several months of them. We would turn these down and then they would come clean. You would have to have the parent go to the U.S. and then have them petition for these other children. I am sure you are familiar with it all.

Q: Yeah, well I am just trying to get some of this.

SCHWERING: That is also when we investigated Sun Yung Moon. We used to see big black limousines pull up to the back gates of the embassy. People we had just interviewed in the NIV section would walk out and talk to someone in the back seat of the limousine. The whole thing was so corrupt.

Q: For me the saving grace of the whole thing was that most did fairly well when they got here. These are hard working people.

SCHWERING: Yes. However, they bring their culture with them, and that is not good for the

United States. For example, a lot of them had criminal records. Most of the women were prostitutes. The number of women who never showed up in the U.S. and never reported to their GI husbands was heartbreaking.

Q: They ended up in massage parlors.

SCHWERING: Well, they stopped most of the prostitution rings around military bases. We had a lot of criminal records and stuff. They don't play by the rules. I understood at the time the Koreans had taken over, had a mafia on candy distribution and some sort of a gang in California. Nobody could break into it. They do work hard, but they don't believe in rule of laws. You get a lot of these fraudulent marriages.

Q: When you moved over to the non-immigrant visa section, did you find Koreans were always using contacts in the embassy to get a visa for a niece or nephew or somebody? Did you run across that?

SCHWERING: No, very little. They may have contacted you more because you were the consul general. There were several mitigating factors. Number one, the Korean government didn't allow tourism at the time. They were afraid North Koreans would get the passports and sneak in. Therefore, only businessmen or journalists could get a Korean passport. Then, once they came back from their trip, they had to turn the passport in. They would be issued a new passport for every trip. In fact, we didn't have vast numbers of Koreans applying for non-immigrant visas. Occasionally, there would be one who would try to take a daughter or son. We didn't have much contact with the other officers in the embassy. They had a colored paper referral scheme. I don't know if you are aware of this.

Q: No.

SCHWERING: I later served in the commercial section, so I became acquainted with the system from in and out of the consular section. We had two colors of referral slips. If you filled out a green one, they knew you were endorsing this. If you filled out an orange form, they knew you were not endorsing it, but would tell the guy you would contact the consular section. This is when I realized the brilliance of consular officers being absolutely independent. Even the ambassador did not have consular authority and could not tell us what to do. That continues to be really important. I found out that is true for other consular corps, as well. The Swiss I believe, do the same thing.

Q: Yes, we are essentially law officers.

SCHWERING: Yeah, we are law enforcement, implementation.

Q: The ambassador can't force you to issue a visa, but you usually try to find a work-around. But, sometimes, it would get very difficult, because Koreans at a certain level were told by their boss to get something done, and if they didn't get it done, they were in very deep trouble.

SCHWERING: Or deep kimchi as we say.

Q: Deep kimchi. They would come in and I would say, "No, we can't issue a visa like that." And I would see the sweat pop out on their face. All this was because they knew they had to go back and explain that there wouldn't be a visa. It was a difficult place, particularly in the visa business. I hated to go to receptions at the ambassador's house, because I would always get cornered by people. Nobody wanted just to talk to me. They wanted visas.

SCHWERING: They wanted the favor. Right, as I say, I headed off most of the possible visa requests by inviting people out to lunch first.

Q: How did you find social life in Korea? This was your first time abroad in the Foreign Service.

SCHWERING: I loved it, but I was about the only woman in the embassy who did. I just loved it. I had more fun. Two new consular colleagues and I took a course run by some Korean organization to familiarize you with Korea. We knew it was actually funded by the KCIA (Korean Central Intelligence Agency). They took us to temples. They had various government officials lecture us. It was wonderful. Then I took a lot of trips with the Royal Asiatic Society.

Interestingly, I really got in with the Koreans. I mean as a woman, which was unheard of. Part of it was Frank Han, my colleague from Chase, who had been assigned to the Chase branch in Korea. I got to meet with a lot of important businessmen through him. He had gone to school with a lot of important officials, who were at that time vice ministers. He used to go to lunch regularly with the vice minister of the KCIA. I don't know if the DCM knew this, but it was very funny.

When I was invited to these people's houses for dinner, I was always treated like a man and I was allowed to sit with the men in the front. However, I could also go into the kitchen where all the women were.

When Han went out to lunch or dinner with any significant Korean, it would be very funny all through the meal. There would just be three of us. Frank, whoever his friend was, and me – I was the honorary male as the Koreans didn't go out with their wives. However, the fourth chair at the table would be pulled out and throughout the meal; waiters and other people would deposit gifts on it. By the end of a meal, whoever this important Korean was would have an armful of gifts. Half the time, when we walked out they'd turn to me and say, "Do you want this?" and they would hand it all to me.

As I said, Frank Han had been an important government official under Syngman Rhee. So, he had connections that went way back, and he had gone to the right schools. So, I just really lucked out. That is how I learned from one of the vice ministers that Hok Turn Hee's assassin would be tried, found guilty and hung, which turned out to be true, but then the Koreans I met in the Korean foreign ministry also seemed to take a liking to me.

I don't know if you know, they all had these monthly dinners. Korean university graduates had their group of friends and they all went out. It is their alumni club, if you will, and once a month ten or twelve of them at a time would go out to dinner. I started being invited to these, and was

even invited to become a member. One of the guys from the Korean foreign ministry would call me up. I guess I was a curiosity – a three headed giraffe. However, I got along like a house afire with the men and the women. I had no problem.

I really got an insight into Korean life, because, of course, most of these young men were unmarried or newly married. I learned a lot about how the parents would set up the marriage and how they would select the wife. I had one or two of these young men consult with me, because they were upset at being forced into marriage. They were in love with someone else they really wanted to marry but were being forced to marry someone else as they had been matched up with someone by their parents. I don't know what it was, but the men felt free to talk with me.

Of course the women did as well, because in Korea, once you are there, you are immediately absorbed into the group. I still remember most of the women in the consular section swarming around me one morning saying, "You look awful. What happened?" There are no secrets. It was comforting; it wasn't an offensive, "You look awful." They just wanted to know what was wrong and help. I taught the ladies English for months, at one point. That is when I learned a lot about the Korean educational system. Korea is rightfully known as the hermit kingdom. They never looked outside their borders very much. I don't know if they have a map in their schools. At that point Korean companies were starting to work in Saudi Arabia for example. They were doing a lot of construction in the Middle East. This was just after the second oil crisis, and there was money to go around. I asked the ladies if they knew where Saudi Arabia was. Well, they kind of did. I said did they know how big it was? No. Compared to Korea, which is small, Saudi Arabia is quite large. They didn't believe me when I told them that. I brought in a map and they all gasped. These were all university educated women. They had never heard of the concept of Eastern Europe. Outside of Japan and China, mostly because of the Chinese citizens in Korea, they just didn't seem to know much about the world.

Q: You moved from the consular section to where?

SCHWERING: The Commercial section.

Q: By the way, because of your background, did you have a feeling that you eventually wanted to end up in the economic field?

SCHWERING: Not particularly. At that point, I was just enjoying myself. I was having a great time, went all over Korea, and had Korean friends. Remember Mrs. Byung, the antiques dealer, the one who sold to everyone in town? She became a friend eventually. I helped a professor translate a book into English. These men would take me home. Oh one thing I don't know if you knew about it. This woman who had come into the consular section after me, whose name was Pat, and I were invited to a kisaeng party. After President Pak's assassination, foreign tours into Korea had dropped dramatically and the tourism companies were doing everything they could to show that Korea was okay to visit. They started inviting women in the embassies to the kisaeng parties, which are like geisha parties. That is the episode in Korea that took the most diplomatic skills, because they assigned a young woman to feed me, play the drinking games, dance with me, and tell me how beautiful I was, the same with Pat. I have photographs to prove it. This was hilarious. And it is the first time these kisaeng houses had ever had women. But it was typical

Korean thinking, you know – straight line. They don't know how to be creative. It wouldn't have occurred to them to line up a guy for me. It was really like I said – an inside experience most women had never had and never will have.

Q: What did you do in the commercial section?

SCHWERING: Mostly letters. That was such a busy section. It was busier than econ. There were six or seven of us. When we made an inquiry about a company, the Commerce Department staff would send an inquiry. Then the Koreans would research this Korean company that was being asked about and write it up. I would review the letters and send them up. I would also write certifications for goods that were being shipped.

Q: Did you get any chance to go out and see firms?

SCHWERING: No.

Q: On account of the dollar.

SCHWERING: No. Actually I got to see more in the consular section. I also got to visit jails. My favorite trip was when I went to sign a crew on a ship down in Pusan. It was February. It was a blizzard. The hotel I stayed in down there was full of mosquitoes. Korean mosquitoes, just like all Koreans, are as stubborn as hell. I should have known when I walked into the room and there was a can of bug spray in the hotel room. I was dive bombed all night, so I slept under the covers.

The next day I went to the dock in one of the big shipyards...It was a real blizzard. There was an American freighter, and the only American on it was the captain. The steward, of course, was a Filipino. The rest were Koreans or Chinese or something, but that is a consular duty. The only problem was they didn't have a gangplank between the dock and the ship, and the ship was rocking back and forth up next to the dock. I was told the time to jump, which I did. If I had missed, I would probably have been crushed between the ship and the dock. I wasn't, so we signed the crew on.

There was another interesting thing. I also worked in American citizen services. I handled at least three cases where families in the U.S. were looking for men who had disappeared from their lives years ago. They had joined the military and had been assigned to Korea. Most of the soldiers, I don't know if you know this, would sneak back under the SOFA illegally, (the status of forces agreement), and live off the black market, because they had PX privileges. They would usually move in with a prostitute, buy things and sell them to the Koreans illegally, to make a living. They were usually alcoholics, so tracking them down was difficult. Almost always, someone had died like a son or a father and they wanted to let this person know. Well, we had to observe the privacy law. We weren't even allowed to tell these families in the U.S. that this individual was in country.

I had a scene straight out of a Humphrey Bogart movie, again in Pusan. I was trying to find this man. One of the local employees in American citizen services was able to find out that he was

living down in Pusan, and that I could get in touch with him in a bar down there. So, after I signed the crew on the ship, I went to deliver this official letter from the embassy that I had written to they guy saying, "Please contact your family and this is why." I walked into this bar in the middle of the afternoon. It was dark. The bartender was wiping the bar with a rag. He spoke English. He was a Korean bartender of course, but he handled the GIs down there. I said that I understood that a Mr. Joe Wilson, or whatever his name was, happened to frequent there. The rag paused for a second when he said, "Why do you ask?" I knew I had hit pay dirt. I said, "I just want you to give him this letter." I said a little bit more about his family trying to get a hold of him. So the guy took the letter. I knew it got to the guy, but it was fun trying to figure out how to do these things.

Something else interesting did come up at that embassy, because most of the senior officers were not aware of the new junior officer program. They tried to keep me in the consular section even though I was supposed to rotate – all junior officers were. Nevertheless, I was called up by the DCM, Tom Stern.

Stern called me up basically because it was time to move people around in the embassy. He said they would like me to stay in the consular section. It was blatant discrimination – no two ways about it, because the men were all being moved about to the other sections. I asked him if he was aware that, under the new program, if any junior officer spent an entire tour in one cone, their tour was cut to 18 months, at which point he blanched, because, as you know, we were swamped in Korea and we needed every possible person. I said, "Yes, I am going to have to leave in a couple of months." I had already been in the consular section 14 months, which I wasn't supposed to have been. I was supposed to have been moved out at the end of a year. I was not putting up with that. But he didn't want to lose anybody; it wasn't me personally. So I said, "You know I know of two junior officers who haven't served in the consular section at all. You could switch me with either one of them," which he did. He switched me with the one in the commercial section, who had ducked most of his consular duty. But it was only a threat on my part to get out of the consular section, although I loved it. It is still I think, the most favorite work I have ever done. Consular is the most interesting – and the stories you can tell. It is absolutely amazing.

Q: What was the commercial section like?

SCHWERING: It was pretty cut and dried. They didn't particularly take advantage of my knowledge. I do have to tell you one thing though. With the possible exception of you, every single male colleague of mine, sooner or later asked me how I got into the Foreign Service. They must have thought I was an exception or something. I didn't know there were any other ways to get in, but there were at that time. They were recruiting women, black women. One black woman I know got in through an ad in the Wall Street Journal; she didn't even have to take the exams. The woman Pat, who was in consular with me, had never taken the Foreign Service exam. They took her in on some basis or other.

Q: Well, of course, I came right out of the board of examiners where I was giving oral exams, to Seoul. This was just part of life for me. We saw quite a few women when I was giving the oral exams.

Q: But it was a period of time when there were several things going on. In a way the question was, "Were you a real Foreign Service officer" or not.

SCHWERING: Yeah I got that impression.

Q: It is natural. In the military, they take a look at whether you are military or you are reserve.

SCHWERING: Right. Well I was dismayed to learn about this mid-career recruitment program for women, which I didn't learn about for a couple of years, because that is how I should have been brought in. I should not have been brought in as a junior officer.

Q: I am interviewing Pru Bushnell right now, who was ambassador twice. She came in mid-career.

SCHWERING: Yes, she did. Well, I clearly should have been in. So, to the day I retired, I never had the kind of responsibility and trust from the administration at the State Department that I did from Chase when I was there.

WILLIAM H. GLEYSTEEEN, JR.
Ambassador
Korea (1978-1981)

Ambassador Gleysteen was born in China of Missionary parents. Educated at Yale and Harvard Universities, he entered the Foreign Service in 1951. After service in the State Department's Executive Secretariat, Mr. Gleysteen studied Chinese and was subsequently posted to Taipei, Hong Kong, and to Seoul, Korea, where he served as Ambassador from 1978 to 1981. He also served in Washington with the National Security Council and in the State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. The Ambassador was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 1997.

Q: I think that brings us now to 1978 and your appointment as Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I recognize that you have covered this period your book on some of your experiences there and I will try not to duplicate that. Tell us first of all, how the appointment came about?

GLEYSTEEEN: I was in a good position to know about upcoming ambassadorial vacancies. I knew what the Ambassadorial Committee was up to, and Holbrooke, who was well informed, almost always took me into his confidence on these matters. He relished his involvement in ambassadorial appointments - a kind of patronage device even within the career service. As I recall, he raised the possibility of my replacing Dick Sneider in Korea well before Dick had announced his plans. I was one part of a program involving quite a few ambassadorial moves. Holbrooke talked to Vance about these, and with some exceptions the plan was carried out.

I should remind you in this connection that Holbrooke's his first inclination was to "clean house." He wanted to control the bureau's activities and therefore wanted to have his own people in key positions. He had some ideas about who should go to the PRC, Korea, etc. Some of these ideas never materialized, because the White House went into high gear politically for some of the EA posts. I don't think either of us knew about Leonard Woodcock who was destined to become our ambassador in Beijing. This took care of one of my anxieties. Mansfield had wanted the China job, and I felt he tended to be too uncritical about the PRC. For those posts that were of relatively little interest to the White House political operations, i.e. uncomfortable ones, dangerous ones, and ones with lots of real work, Holbrooke consulted me about career officers and generally I think he made very good selections.

My nomination was cleared by the White House without any delays. My confirmation hearings went smoothly. I was expecting a difficult time from Senator Helms, but the hearing turned out to be quite jocular and friendly; Helms in effect decided to save his treatment for someone else. As I recall four members of the Foreign Relations Committee were in attendance. The hearings were rather brief and very superficial.

I arrived in Seoul in June, 1978. I did not get a chance to delve into Korean affairs in great depth before arrival, because I kept working as the senior DAS until the last moment. We had been preoccupied with China in the spring of 1978, and, as I have mentioned, I went with Brzezinski to Beijing in May. Thanks to my colleagues and considerable travel to Korea, I was not really surprised by what I found in Seoul. I knew very well what was on my predecessor's mind; I had stayed in the residence; and I had met President Park Chung Hee when accompanying Secretary of Defense Harold Brown. My most recent visit to Seoul was on our way home from Brzezinski's trip to China. Over a long career I had come to know many of the officers in the embassy. However, as in any assignment, challenge becomes more vivid when you actually arrive at post.

A special challenge was the relationship with the UN Commander - the American four- star general in operational command of all US and most Korean forces. When I arrived, General Jack Vessey, who later became the chairman of the joint chiefs, was in charge. He was well respected by the Koreans, as he should have been. Although I had given much thought to how best to manage the relationship, I still found that the process required time and effort. I had seen the CINC-ambassador relationship when Stilwell was the commander and Sneider was the ambassador. Relations between the two were strained. From my Washington vantage point, I thought that Sneider had been energetic in his efforts to make the relationship work, but Stilwell was an unusually difficult man - very full of himself. He knew he was very important to the Koreans, because "he" provided security and military assistance to them - not to mention use of the Command's golf course and clubs. The embassy, on the other hand, was usually the source of complaints and problems for the ROK.

Besides personality clashes, the tensions between what I have termed "proud ambassadors and powerful CINCs" reflected a range of institutional conflicts that could easily focus on the leaders of the two institutions. In the command's case, it had manpower and resources, which made it a key player in ROK affairs. The ambassador had few, if any, goodies to hand out; in the 1970s and 1980s he was almost always the bearer of bad news. The ambassador was supposed to be in

charge of everything except operational military matters. Many military officers had trouble with this mandate.

I must say that I was prepared for considerably more difficulty than I actually had. I was pleasantly surprised by Vessey, who was a gentleman and tried his best to work closely with Dick Sneider and then me. He never challenged or undermined my authority, which was crucial since he had direct access to President Park Chung Hee on command matters. Vessey stuck to his military agenda, keeping out of my business as much as possible. For example, he behaved very modestly when Carter visited Korea, essentially limiting himself to a strong pitch against any further withdrawal of our troops.

Vessey was succeeded by John Wickham. This time I was the "old timer," which helped, but Wickham was also a remarkably cooperative officer, respected for his military skills and savvy about the political scene. Wickham and I went through a period of political tumult and tension that required maximum coordination between the embassy and the UN Command. We both worked hard to get along, and I think our relationship was close to ideal. Both Vessey and Wickham were exceptional officers. Neither abused the CINC position for ego satisfaction. I did my best to reciprocate their cooperation.

Another of my concerns on arrival was Koreagate, which was quite a preoccupation in those days involving, on the one hand, Korean and American venality of a disgusting sort, and, on the other, counter tactics by the Justice Department that sometimes bordered on what I would term "un-American practice." Ben Civiletti, the deputy attorney general and basically a very civilized man, was pushed by Congress into using American law and standards in pursuit of foreign officials, who while apparently guilty, were, nevertheless, protected by diplomatic immunity.

The origins of Koreagate were simple and one could have some sympathy for President Park's objective though not his means. Alarmed by the way we were extracting ourselves from our Vietnam commitment, Park apparently decided to try to "buy" a more favorable U.S. policy toward Korea by bribing members of Congress and the administration. Allegedly, significant amounts of money passed hands, and Kim Dong Jo, Korea's ambassador at the time, was presumed to be at least aware of the Korean CIA's activities, even though the actual payments were made by agents and rascals such as the notorious Tongsun Park. Other circumstances added to the American sense of outrage. The Korean regime had lurched to the right with the highly authoritarian Yushin constitution that Park imposed in 1972, and in 1973 Korean CIA agents had kidnaped the opposition leader, Kim Dae Jung, from a Tokyo hotel room and almost killed him. The U.S. media and Congress pounced on Korea for these actions. This was the environment when the Koreagate scandal splashed into public knowledge during the 1976 U.S. election campaign. Korea became a political pariah, almost obscuring its earlier image as an economic tiger.

If the tumult in Washington had been limited to outrage over the alleged pay-offs, it might have died down sooner, either through neglect or prosecution of the guilty. But a significant minority in Congress, mostly Democrats in both houses, was already bashing Korea, condemning Park Chung Hee for human right abuses and questioning the wisdom of our security commitment. Their views reflected what they heard from American missionaries and the network of anti-Park

dissidents. In addition to thunder from these people, there was a tendency in Congress to keep the finger pointed at Korea so as to deflect attention from the Americans with dirty hands.

The administration faced a tricky situation. Elements of a divided Congress were being exceedingly demanding and uncooperative. Yet, given Korea's sovereign rights, there was really no effective way we could get to the heart of the matter. We could only do our best to pursue the alleged culprits on their home turf in Korea. The first stage of this, the interrogation of Tongsun Park, supposedly a private Korean citizen and not a government agent, had already taken place by the time I arrived in Seoul, and it was less than a success. After cross examining Tongsun Park in Seoul, Civiletti then wanted evidence from Ambassador Kim. The Korean Government was shielding him.

While wanting to be helpful, the State Department and embassy Seoul had serious reservations about Civiletti's effort. On the one hand, we had little doubt that the Koreans were guilty as charged. Their behavior was most reprehensible. On the other hand, we needed the cooperation of the Korean government to obtain evidence for prosecution of the Americans involved, and if such cooperation was not forthcoming, there wasn't much we could do about it. We could have threatened punitive actions against Korea, but our demands on Korea exceeded the norms of the international system. If, for example, the Koreans had asked us for permission to interrogate U.S. officials in the U.S., we would have turned them down flatly. In fact, ten years later when the Korean National Assembly subpoenaed General Wickham and me to talk about Kwangju, the State Department rejected the request - while, to be sure, offering to be fully cooperative in other ways.

Pressuring us to do the impermissible was Leon Jaworski, counsel for the main congressional investigating committee and a man famous for not letting anything get in his way. The result was enormous amounts of talk and demagogic threat from the congress forcing the administration to do things that were unlikely to be productive. We tried to figure out a minimum level of interference that we might request of the Koreans, providing Civiletti with the necessary information without doing irreparable damage to US-ROK relations. I think Civiletti understood our problem. As deputy attorney general, he was he was faced with bipartisan congressional demands for drastic action. Yet he was too smart not to recognize that nothing we could do could be very successful. He was quite proper in his relations with the Koreans; he certainly behaved far better than some of his Justice and FBI colleagues, not to mention the Congress.

When I left Washington for Seoul in June 1978, Congressional committees were still trying to subpoena former Ambassador Kim Dong Jo. On arrival in Seoul, I was handed a telegram at the airport instructing me to see President Park and convey the latest demands of Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill. Since I had not yet presented my credentials to President Park, I had to settle for the foreign minister and the secretary general of the Blue House. I had no doubt that Park got a full run-down and made the decisions. O'Neill was requesting, really demanding, that Park receive two House members as the Speaker's emissaries and be given access to Tongsun Park and Kim Dong Jo. The Koreans were reluctant to deny the request, yet determined to deflect it. We finally reached a compromise: no emissaries, but willingness of Ambassador Kim to respond in writing to questions submitted. Kim's responses proved close to worthless.

I came to believe that the only solution to Koreagate was to let it grind down. Also I had been told by perceptive observers that the congressional elections of 1978 would have a mitigating effect, as indeed they did almost overnight. During the entire process I was never informed authoritatively about the grand jury findings so I don't know how many Congressmen were really suspected of accepting bribes. As I recall, only one, Congressman Hannah, was actually prosecuted and a few others slid out of the way by quietly retiring from office.

Not long after I got to Seoul - probably in early October - I was called back to Washington to testify before the House Ethics Committee on Koreagate. The chairman of the committee was Lee Hamilton. The committee met me in executive session - limited to members only, no staff and no record. I was the only one present who was not a member of the committee. The session lasted about three hours. Members were not personally unfriendly; they treated me quite courteously. In fact, this was the beginning of a long and good relationship with Hamilton. At the end of the hearing, the chairman asked me to return the next day to see him and perhaps one or two others. That I did; I saw Hamilton alone for about an hour and then he invited the ranking Republican member of the committee to join us. I found the committee to be quite responsible. I was able to be very frank with them. Most of the members were understanding, if not entirely sympathetic. It was during these sessions that I was told the affair would probably die out after the elections.

The Korean leadership never publicly admitted any involvement nor did it express any regret. The foreign minister, came close to it in our private conversations, but the government did nothing. President Park was stubborn. He undoubtedly looked at the misdeeds as a Korean would; i.e. honorably motivated acts conducted in a style that was routine in Korea's political culture. He greatly resented the attacks levied on him in the U.S. Congress. He viewed American claims of innocence cynically. Whatever exonerating concerns there might have been, the president's behavior was only one of many signs that he had been in power too long and was out of touch with realities. At the beginning of his regime in 1961, Park recognized the need to civilianize his government. He did that, and the government functioned very well for a number of years. Later he became paranoid about potential threats to his regime - particularly after his wife's assassination - and he adopted an increasingly autocratic style. By the time I arrived in Seoul he was quite insulated; he depended almost exclusively on the KCIA and information from his other special organizations such as the presidential protective force and Defense Security Command. History has shown that this was a very dangerous way to govern.

Let me turn to management of the embassy. I never considered myself a whiz at management, but I had some confidence in my style after having it tested in supervisory positions both in Washington and the field. Some of my experience had involved special challenges, e.g. the China analysis operation in Hong Kong, INR with its personnel difficulties, and Taipei with the problem of interagency coordination and supervision, not to mention changing policies. I had some sense of how the activities of an embassy should be integrated. I had seen a lot of bad examples that I was determined not to follow. I was sensitive to situations that needed improvement, and I knew when the engine needed a tune-up, even if I couldn't do it myself. My main goal was to make the embassy as good and as internally coherent as possible.

I was a stickler for the sharing of information - a principle that I was occasionally forced to

violate under orders from Washington - so that all appropriate officers knew what was going on. I had seen several instances in which the political and economic sections were barely on speaking terms. I wanted a collegiate, well informed staff. I also believed in delegating responsibility as it had been delegated to me in Taipei and Washington. I thought the DCM should be managing as much as he or she could and that section chiefs should be responsible for much of the workload. As for ambassadorial models, my objective was to follow the style of some excellent leaders with whom I had worked. I knew that an ambassador could not be effective unless he had his or her bureau in Washington's full support. The reverse was also true. There is a premium on close relationships between an ambassador and his main associates in the Department of State.

I was quite satisfied with the support I got from the Department. I felt I was given special treatment. The secretary and Holbrooke trusted me; the deputy secretary tolerated me - conceivably he may have liked me. From my EA experience, I knew most of the Department's senior officials. Even after I left Washington, my relationships with them helped in getting approvals for various things as well as access during my frequent returns for consultations. Since the bureau recognized my interest in several EA countries, I was provided information that normally would not have been sent to our embassy in Seoul. I have absolutely no complaints about the support I received from Washington.

Although I was determined to share as much information as I could with the senior staff, I had some problems after President Park's assassination. Washington began to restrict information quite severely, complicating our efforts in Seoul, but I think I showed my DCM virtually everything and the appropriate section chiefs most things. I did so even when told not to, sometimes resorting to letting them read but not keep messages or telling them the gist. I followed the same procedures with the station chief and the CINC. It was vital that key persons know what was going on if they were to provide advice or carry on in my absence. Generally, I kept Holbrooke and Rich informed about how I was sharing information. Sometimes I violated the rules, but we had an excellent record for keeping secrets in Seoul.

A few months after the assassination, there was a rebellion in Washington against the over-rigid rules for information sharing (or non-sharing), and the Department agreed to appoint two senior FSOs - John Holdridge being one - to review the entire file and recommend what information could be given wider dissemination - within the Department and to agencies as well. With good reason people in CIA felt that they had been cut off from important information. I think that we were far too restrictive about Korean developments as well as the process of normalization with China.

I was determined to have effective relations with other agencies, probably more so than most ambassadors. I wanted to be sure that the U.S. military and CIA followed US policy without putting their own spin on issues in ways that might cause problems in Washington or Seoul. Previous experience had made me very sensitive to the problem. Fortunately, the leaders of both the military and the intelligence components in Seoul were exceptionally cooperative. I have already mentioned Generals Vessey and Wickham. Bob Brewster, the station chief, was equally cooperative. At my request he initially gave me a very thorough briefing of all of covert and overt activities and then kept me fully informed, often seeing me several times a day. Although I

was bit astounded by some of the station's past activities, I think we struck a good balance of need versus common sense during the critical years of 1979-81. For this kind of inter-agency coordination, it was, of course, essential that the Department support my goal, and Holbrooke did so firmly.

Management of the Foreign Service was different from inter-agency coordination. An ambassador has to use a variety of techniques for this. There's an art to doing it well. Some ambassadors are very good at it, some are not. I would rate myself as okay. I should note that I was generally satisfied with the staff I had inherited from Sneider. In fact, it was more capable, certainly at senior levels, than I had anticipated; better than those I had encountered in many other places. I had no interest in cleaning house. Of course, there were some officers who were not as strong as I would have liked, but that is true in all institutions. In general, I found the embassy well run, and this efficiency became especially important following Park's assassination. Without a very good staff, we would have been in serious difficulty.

From my experience in Taiwan, I was aware of the possibility of fraud in the consular and administrative sections, sections which handled money. So I kept an eye on both of those operations. There was no way an ambassador, DCM or section chief could be alerted to fraud unless there were periodic audits of the activities of all employees who handled cash and documents provided to the public. When GAO or other auditors visited, I welcomed their efforts as salutary. I would ask them specifically to look at our cash receipt and disbursement operations. Unfortunately, some consular malfeasance did occur on my watch. A number of visa fraud cases traced to members of the local staff were brought to my attention while I was ambassador; there was a serious problem involving an American employee in AID that I learned about several years after leaving Seoul; and USIA had an employee married to a Korean woman who received benefits that aroused our suspicions. We investigated this couple only to find that what we knew was only the tip of the iceberg. Needless to say, the American employee was transferred out and ultimately fired.

My book is primarily about events leading up to Park's assassination and its aftermath. It touches only tangentially on economic matters, so let me expand a little on US-Korean economic relationships. In the 1970s, Korea had enjoyed rapid growth and international acclaim as a model for developing countries, but by the end of the decade this dazzling performance was fading. The rate of growth was falling, workers were restive, and Korea's development scheme was in some trouble. Inflation was beginning to get out of control, and in 1980 the Koreans found themselves in a significant recession.

To some extent this setback was brought on by excesses stimulated by Park Chung Hee. For example, the huge new defense industrial complex in Changwon was built impulsively without adequate review. Motivated in part by hubris and in part by military security considerations, Park wanted to concentrate much of the ROK's production capability south of Seoul. The new factories, while state of the art and capable of supplying some of Korea's own needs, were not of a scale or managed to compete against highly efficient competitors in the international market. The second oil crisis also had a crippling effect on the Korean economy, which was highly dependent on oil imports. Fuel prices sky-rocketed, causing severe hardships for the population. Fortunately, there was no wide spread unemployment, and both the government and business

community were still confident the economic set-backs could be dealt with. This over-all economic situation had serious political consequences, since economic progress had for years softened complaints about Park's harsh rule.

I was familiar with trade complaints, having worked on them while in Washington. I spent a lot of time in Seoul working on textiles, shoes, colored television, electronics, etc.- in almost all cases protecting over-paid American workers from low-cost competition, which left alone would have forced healthy structural changes in the US and brought improved working conditions in Korea. I also supported Westinghouse against the French and Canadians as the Koreans expanded their nuclear power supply. We even managed to get this item on the Carter-Park agenda when they met in 1979. This was a time consuming effort for me and many others on the staff. I didn't get involved very much in the automobile business. In those days, the Korean auto industry was no threat to American manufacturers.

Like our system of quotas, agriculture was another politically sensitive area, especially rice, which was peddled to Korea by a rugged lot of Korean and American agents reinforced by extremely pushy members of Congress. At the beginning of my tour, the problem was rice imported into Korea from heavily subsidized Japanese producers. Later, the problem was a crude American effort to strong-arm Korean consumers. In general, American rice was highly competitive in terms of price, but we had limited amounts of the short grain kind preferred by the Koreans. Rather than let the Koreans turn to Australia and other short grain suppliers, our rice politicians tried to bully the Koreans into buying cheap American long grain varieties. I learned more about rice than I ever wanted to know. I considered our position selfish, and I felt some of the Americans involved, both the businessmen and members of Congress, engaged in extremely highhanded and sometimes illegal behavior. We did quite well on other agricultural sales. The problems of recent years had not yet surfaced.

I did on occasion feel that the pressures we applied to Korea on economic issues might have been a detriment to our political and security goals, for example the pressure to increase defense expenditures in 1979 that were already very high. Usually I was well aware of the pressures on the Department and understood the reasons for my demarches. I am glad to say that Washington never pushed trade issues to the point of jeopardizing the fundamental relationship.

It took Korea many years to restart its economic engine. After the recession in 1980, there was minimal growth in 1981 and not much better performance for several years thereafter, particularly if compared with the 1970s. Then growth resumed at a 5-7% rate.

Korea's recovery and our own recession caused problems after I left in 1981. The Koreans began to accumulate a large current account surplus with the U.S., which made sense for a country that had borrowed so much money from abroad. Disregarding this principle that had benefitted us in the past, we began to treat Korea more and more as a fully developed country like Japan. We pushed hard for rapid financial deregulation, import liberalization, and currency appreciation - all worthy goals, but in Korea's vulnerable condition they struck me as unfair. Compared to Japan, Korea was still at an earlier stage of the development cycle. Furthermore, Japan was a much larger country that had in some respects reached developed status even before the war. The Koreans looked on themselves as a developing country, and we should have treated them that

way. There is a parallel in our policy toward the PRC today. In the WTO arguments we may have applied our standards to the PRC prematurely. In both cases we would have been smarter to press first for a decade of serious effort toward bank and regulatory reform as well as progress toward the rule of law.

In any event, I think we have been very self-centered and stingy in comparison to the approach taken after World War II. Then, as the only country that had the resources to assist others, we did so with the Marshall Plan, etc. This enlightened generosity brought enormous benefit to our security and prosperity. I recognize that the world has changed. Much of the wealth is now elsewhere; others need to do their part; and no country should have a free ride to developed status. But the timing of pressures associated with the OECD and, to a lesser extent, the WTO should have been managed more skillfully.

I know these comments reflect my bias. Yet we should keep in mind that our pressures contributed to the recent Asian financial crisis. Of course, the Koreans and other Asians do not have clean hands - e.g. borrowing money far above their repayment capabilities. During my tour in Korea, I felt that the administration had some appreciation for the Korea's economic vulnerability. In the Reagan administration, this diminished.

While I was in Korea, our concerns about Korea's nuclear weapons program had pretty well abated, although we felt that it still had to be carefully monitored. We never found any evidence that the Koreans were restarting their program. Their capacity had not been dismantled; it remained "stood down." But we were concerned by the strides the Koreans were making in a missile development program that was in high gear. I worried about this, because I was concerned that if the ROK were able to build a reliable missile force capable of reaching Pyongyang and beyond in North Korea, then the temptation to develop a nuclear capacity would be far greater. The Koreans were trying to use the Nike-Hercules guidance system for their own missiles and probably could have launched a few toward the North. We pressured them to limit the range and retain less sophisticated guidance systems. Our military officers were less steady than the embassy in this effort. Some of them were more anxious to help the Koreans than I found wise.

I endorsed the Korean objective of developing a powerful and credible army, somewhat smaller and modern than the army of the late 1970s. The army was the main defense against North Korea; it deserved our maximum support. I approved many kinds of military supplies procured in the US - e.g. tanks and artillery. The kind of tanks became an issue. Were the Koreans getting their money's worth, or were we dumping our surplus older models while we equipped our troops with much more modern versions? I saw no problem with the Army's being equipped with short range missiles for defensive purposes.

My general approach to most questions about ROK military capabilities was: give the ROK everything that would improve its defensive capability; be wary of items that were more powerful than necessary for defense. I subscribed to the general American view that discouraged ROK acquisition of submarines, although I really didn't feel very strongly about that issue. I thought it was important for the ROK to have a strong coastal defense force to defend against formidable North Korean threats, so I favored construction of frigates as a response to the threat

of North Korean PT boats. Whether the ROK needed bigger warships was a question I never really had to face. In addition I firmly supported the co-production of F-5Es and less eagerly the sale of F-16s to the Korean Air Force. I didn't think the latter was a very urgent matter and I was mildly concerned to avoid giving the Soviets a pretext to supply new fighters to the DPRK. Moreover, the ROK did not have the resources to buy and maintain many.

Much of my support came at the request of my military colleagues, which I gave gladly since I saw no valid objections to the introduction of these weapons systems into Korea. In general, I went along with the consensus that developed both in the Embassy and the Command. I think I was much stricter than anyone else, however, on the nuclear and missile issues.

While on this general subject, I should mention that the MAAG's dual role posed no problem. It was part of the embassy and part of the command as well. The MAAG chiefs - I think we had two while I was in Seoul - understood their delicate position and were always responsive to both the CINC and myself. That was very unlike Taiwan where the MAAG chief played games behind our back and got fired.

Now for other programs. I thought the USIA program was pretty good, comparing well with other operations I had seen, except perhaps the complex program in Japan that was endowed with some of the Agency's best talent. USIA was very helpful to me in the handling of the press. The PAO himself, his deputy, and the press attache were extremely responsive; they played a crucial role in helping me get our message out to the public, especially during the Kwangju crisis. They monitored the military broadcast facilities effectively. I always sensed they were doing their best for me, often very imaginatively.

Other USIA activities seem to have been handled alright, although I did not really have enough direct experience to judge them fairly. We had a branch PAO in Kwangju and later in Pusan. I found the pattern of concentrating our efforts in Seoul detrimental to our knowledge of what was going on in Korea as well as to getting our message spread to the people. Unfortunately, our establishment in Kwangju folded when the crisis arose there, and we had no one on the spot to observe what was going on. Although Pusan was an important center for political reasons as well as commercial ones, it was a major battle to get Washington to approve the establishment of a USIA Branch and later a consulate in Korea's second largest city.

My general impression is that we covered Korea quite well with our roving embassy officers and military presence in many parts of the country. Thanks to the logistic support that the command provided, I flew frequently to Pusan, Kwangju, Taegu and other major centers. I could go places and come back in one day. Sometimes I traveled by helicopter with the CINC but usually by car or train with Bill Clark or someone else from the political and economic sections. Most embassy officers traveled quite a bit; moreover, we sent people on long details to Pusan so that we could cover events in the south.

I made many public appearances - often with a speech. We never had to seek out invitations. I gave only a few major speeches, one to the Korea-America Association dealing with human rights and then perhaps four or five others. I wrote these myself to discuss my views on a major policy issue - relations with the PRC, North Korea, human rights. I wanted to engage the

audience or Koreans in general in a dialogue on the themes of my speech. I always had the Department's approval. I recently re-read some of my speeches and thought they weren't bad.

I remember one in particular. I was anxious to foster more enlightened South Korean attitudes toward North Korea - just as I had encouraged objectivity in Taiwan with regard to the PRC. I didn't have in mind softening the ugly image of Kim Il Sung's regime, but rather to encourage South Koreans to seek better information about the North - more factual and less propagandistic. Their understanding about the north depended almost exclusively on information coming from the government which demonized the place. South Koreans would not even use the proper name for North Korea. As a modest effort toward greater objectivity, I gave a well-advertised speech discussing how both the US and the ROK might seek to ease tensions on the Peninsula. For the first time a US official had ever done so, I used the proper name for North Korea, "Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)," throughout the text. Despite some initial Cold War reflexes, the Department had approved the text, and my audience, a group assembled in Seoul by the *Financial Times* loved it because it was controversial. Paying little if any attention to the topic, the Korean language press made a big fuss over the terminology issue; President Park complained to me in person about my use of the term DPRK, admitting, however, that it was not the end of the world. I think President Kim Dae Jung was the first important Korean to take on the crazies who for decades exacerbated the anti-North Korean animus among South Koreans. Until recently, objectivity was often equated with being pro-North Korean.

A few words about President Park Chung Hee. I had met him and had talked to him, at least superficially, before being posted to Seoul. During my assignment in Korea we had many talks mostly about difficult subjects. While recognizing his major deficiencies, I was always an admirer of his nation building. In dealings with me he was modest, and he never berated me for delivering unpleasant messages. I had the impression he respected me for dealing with him in his own way. The real test of our relationship came at the Summit meeting in 1979. Although Park was incredibly difficult during his sessions with Carter, he appreciated what I and others had done for Korea, particularly on the troop withdrawal issue, and he was extremely responsive to my urgent requests for help to save the summit.

My assessment of Park Chung Hee does not differ much from the prevailing one. He had obvious faults as a leader, which became increasingly severe toward the end of his rule. By then he was running an abusive authoritarian regime and his days were numbered. In addition to increasing authoritarianism, the regime was crippled by Park's reliance on bad advice from his intelligence flunkies and the lack of constitutional arrangements for a peaceful succession. By 1979, his deficiencies were increasingly evident to all.

On the other hand, from the perspective of Korean misery in the 1950s and 1960s, Park Chung Hee contributed enormously to his country's progress. He was a visionary leader who brought about a remarkable advance in Korea's economy and security. He understood what the unsophisticated majority of the people wanted in those days - economic security and a sense of progress. He was shrewd and perceptive about the outer world, as one would expect from one of the world's longest surviving leaders. I remember his tour *d'horizon* with Dick Holbrooke in March 1979. When they got to our post war problems with Vietnam, Park described Vietnam as an "adolescent" country, an apt description with its implied criticism about the parent as well as

the child.

Over the years, I observed evolution in Park's thinking, mostly in foreign relations. I leaned hard on him to improve relations with the PRC. He was still negative about a *rapprochement* even after we recognized the PRC; he worried about the impact on Taiwan. Yet, he was already more reasonable and thoughtful about China than in earlier days. He talked of a future shift in policy, and he welcomed my idea of visiting Beijing to promote some contact. The Chinese were eager to reciprocate. Naturally, his assassination disrupted all that thinking, but the evolution of Park's views made it easier for Chun Doo Hwan a few years later to adjust policies - shedding anti-communist rhetoric and engaging the PRC. Park understood the importance of economic development for his people's well being, and he appreciated the relationship between economics and politics. In historical terms, I consider him one of if not the greatest Korean leaders in recent centuries.

I stayed in Seoul until June 1981 - six months into the Reagan administration. It was Reagan's policy to break with Carter's approach and get along with Chun Doo Hwan. This posture ensured final success in our long effort to get Kim Dae Jung's death sentence commuted and brought Chun to the White House as President Reagan's first significant foreign visitor. Our acceptance of Chun's leadership was inevitable, but the way Reagan handled the change of policy troubled me, as I have explained in my book. I have never regretted the deal we struck over Kim Dae Jung. That was a conscious policy of two administrations. I do regret the speed and warmth of Reagan's embrace of Chun; it intensified suspicion and anger among the people of Kwangju. Nevertheless, if you read my messages, you will note that my own thinking had also evolved by this time. Once Chun was elected under the new constitution in 1981, there wasn't much we could do except to acknowledge reality. He was the duly elected leader of the Korean people, who had accommodated themselves to his rule. Although there was resentment among many Koreans, there was little support for radical opposition. I had to swallow hard as we accepted Chun in this role, because I had worked so hard for a more progressive outcome of the leadership crisis.

Note-The following article by William H. Gleysteen, Jr. was written for the Japan Foundation and published in the Autumn 1995 issue of *Kokusai Koryu Quarterly*.

THE AMERICAN ROLE IN POST-WAR NORMALIZATION OF
JAPAN-KOREA RELATIONS: REFLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMAT

The Setting for American Involvement

Although quite aware of deep-seated problems in both countries, the United States pressed vigorously during the 1950s and 1960s for eventual normalization of relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) and, as a more immediate concern, for more friendly interaction of the two societies.

U.S. - American interests in this effort were quite apparent. Occupation of Japan and South

Korea after World War II had demonstrated considerable American realism about Japan's - if not Korea's - strategic importance. But the combination of a spreading Cold War, a communist victory in China, and the strength of communist forces deployed south during the Korean War convinced Americans of the need to contain the communist countries by means of a broadly deployed, forward, American military presence in the West Pacific.

Japan was geographically key to this effort, while Korea was the front line where huge military forces still confronted each other under a fragile armistice. Hospitable basing arrangements for the U.S. were essential as were the freedom to maintain military mobility among the peripheral countries of East Asia. These were active concerns. For example, the sensitivities Americans originally encountered in operating from Japan during the Korean War seemed likely to continue handicapping operations under Peace Treaty arrangements unless the Japanese and South Koreans could be convinced that their fates were inter-connected. In short, it was the perception - often exaggerated - of a massive communist threat which motivated the Americans to offer good offices for the Japan-ROK normalization effort. As far as I can recall, economic considerations, so important today, played little role.

Korea - The view from Korea and Japan was rather different. When I arrived in Tokyo in the summer of 1958 Koreans still had first hand memories of Japanese colonial rule. These were usually bitter and reinforced by current knowledge of the way Koreans in Japan were treated as second class members of society. The South was a very poor, very undeveloped agricultural society devastated by the war. Exports were insignificant, and the country was heavily dependent on large amounts of American aid, which seemed ineffective - in contrast to Japan's rapid economic recovery. Americans talked foolishly and ignorantly of Korea as a "basket case" of foreign aid. Foreign criticism and ridicule reinforced Korean feelings of insecurity and resentment. Koreans secretly envied Japan's post-war success and openly resented the economic benefits Japan reaped without sacrifice from Korean War procurements.

In these circumstances Koreans developed an almost universal feeling that Japan owed their country an enormous debt for which it would have to pay huge compensation. To make matters worse, President Syngman Rhee deliberately stimulated anti-Japanese nationalism, sometimes with the same fervor he directed against his mortal enemies in the north. Fortunately, not all Koreans were so extreme, emotional, and backward looking about Japan. Many recognized that the Korean War had underscored Japan's importance to Korean security. Looking ahead, some saw Japan as an economic model, and they kept their resentments under restraint in hopes that Japan might someday be pressured and/or tempted to provide help for Korea's development. The most prominent of these was General Park Chung Hee who came to power through a military coup in 1961 in defiance of the U.S. and democratically elected leaders. His perceptiveness about Korea's needs for economic development as well as his strength were decisive in the ROK's agreement to the 1965 settlement.

Japan - Japanese views were complex because of sharply opposed attitudes toward defeat in the Pacific War, differing assessments of the communist threat, and the division of Korea into a zero sum situation of north versus South. Although all political parties accepted the restraints of Japan's pacifist constitution, elements associated with the Liberal Democratic Party sensed a real, if indirect, military threat from North Korea, resented the bullying posture of the Soviet Union,

and recognized the complications posed by the PRC for the United States, especially in dealing with Taiwan. These views were reflected in the newly revised Security Treaty arrangements which allowed the United States to undergird its military presence in Korea from Japan. At the other extreme, the Socialist Party and the large left wing trade unions were unrelenting in their literalist interpretation of the constitution and militantly opposed to even indirect Japanese involvement in South Korea's defense. Whatever their personal views, these left wing Japanese collectively identified themselves spiritually with Communist China and North Korea, not the U.S. and South Korea.

This cleavage, which peaked with rioting and turmoil during Diet ratification of the Security Treaty in 1960, has virtually disappeared. But, for those of us physically present in the American Embassy in 1960, Japan seemed bitterly, almost violently, divided within itself over this defense issue. Combined with upheaval in Korea it was clearly the low point for our effort to reconcile Japan and the ROK.

Prevailing Japanese opinion about the Korean people and Japan's past behavior also complicated the process of rapprochement. While large numbers of Japanese felt remorse over their country's colonial occupation of Korea, some tried to defend Japan's 19th Century actions as "learned from the West" or "beneficial to the Koreans." Even some of the remorseful Japanese felt Japan had done considerable good for the Korea during the colonial era; others barely disguised or openly voiced doubts about Korea's capability to govern itself. These Japanese sentiments infuriated Koreans, compounding the problem of pervasive discrimination against the Korean minority in Japan.

Such was the bleak situation existing between our Japanese and Korean allies most of the time I was assigned to Tokyo. Nevertheless, although often feeling battered and discouraged, we kept up the pressure on Japan and Korea for a whole decade before the settlement was ratified in 1965.

The Issues

Fishing rights and ship seizures - More or less parallel with DPRK practice, the ROK claimed control over fishing in a vast sweep of international waters around Korea. While these control zones would not be judged completely outlandish by today's Law of the Sea, they were considered abusively large in an era when territorial waters were limited to 3 or 12 miles and fishing zones in international waters were generally not recognized. Moreover, the ROK established these zones unilaterally, included traditional Japanese fishing grounds, and enforced the zones with armed vessels supplied under U.S. military aid. Although the Japanese Government refused to recognize the ROK zones, it tried to keep its fishermen away from ROK territorial waters and generally concentrated in traditional fishing grounds.

During President Rhee's time, the Koreans seized large numbers of Japanese fishing vessels and imprisoned their crews, often for years, using their periodic release as leverage in the negotiations. The pattern of seizures was not only arbitrary, but also dangerous, because Japanese fishermen were usually under surveillance by vessels of Japan's maritime coastal force. Fortunately, even though these escorts were often faster and as well armed as the attacking

Korean vessels, they were under orders to stop short of shooting confrontations.

The U.S. Government's position was unequivocal. We were opposed to seizures in international waters. After having checked facts with both sides, we would always make a strong protest in Seoul calling for release of the ship and crew. The protest would be reinforced in Washington, sometimes at a fairly high level. During the Rhee period I cannot recall a single instance where the Koreans responded promptly to our protest by releasing a ship and its crew. Even so, I suspect our efforts restrained Korean actions, and they were certainly appreciated by the Japanese. After Rhee was forced out of office, Korean policy moderated, even more so after Park came to power.

Claims and compensation - Compensation to Korea for losses and wrongs of the colonial period was, of course, the core issue in the long drawn out negotiations. ROK expectations were high, while Japan wished to keep the figure "realistic" (low), partly because of the direct precedent for North Korea and other Asian countries. Thus, to offset Korean demands Japan emphasized the great value of substantial Japanese assets left behind after the war. While my successors may have had better luck in the final stage of the negotiations, we had great difficulty during my assignment in assessing the nature and extent of these claims and demands. We had virtually no official documentation, and neither side was forthcoming in discussing a matter that might compromise their bargaining position. Nevertheless, since the issue was so central, I worked hard with Korean and Japanese officials in Tokyo as well as with my colleagues in Seoul to assemble a long and rather comprehensive report as one of my last acts before leaving Tokyo. My personal sympathies leaned toward the Korean position.

Treatment of Korean residents in Japan - Again this was an issue where Americans tended to side with the Koreans. Yet American influence was obviously limited in resolving largely domestic problems which stemmed from Japanese prejudices, Korean poverty, conservative regulatory machinery, and North/South Korean rivalry. Koreans residents, most of whom were forced to come to Japan, wanted the right to stay or leave, to choose Korean or Japanese citizenship, and in either case to enjoy full privileges of citizenship plus some extra privileges, particularly Korean language schools. Koreans were bitterly divided between leftists in Chosen Soren, totally identified with North Korea, and conservatives in Mindan, generally identified with South Korea and factions of the LDP (including some venal elements). We argued strongly with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and LDP figures for equality of treatment of these people, but we had no contact with the Japanese in actual control. American credibility regarding treatment of minorities was not, moreover, very high at this time.

Repatriation of Koreans to North Korea - Koreans in Japan who wished to return to South Korea had already done so or were relatively free to go back, but the pre-war and Korean War period prevented repatriation for those wanting to go to North Korea. Around 1959 the Japanese Government decided to facilitate such repatriation, causing a strongly negative reaction in the ROK, which alleged the probability of coercion by leftist Koreans if not Japanese authorities. Actually, South Korea was worried more that voluntary (or apparently voluntary) repatriation would redound to the credit of the communist regime in the North.

Coming at the height of the Cold War, ROK concerns triggered alarm in Washington, and we

were ordered in Tokyo to try to stop the program or ensure that Japan included adequate safeguards. After much pulling and hauling between Tokyo, Seoul, and Washington, the Japanese Government arranged for careful interviews of each potential returnee by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Substantial numbers of Koreans returned to the DPRK from the port of Niigata without significant incident. South Korea lost a little face; North Korea gained some potentially troublesome new citizens; and we Americans took full credit for "the defense of freedom." Perhaps more involved in this affair than any other American, I must say I never had any fear that Japan would allow any forced departures. Yet, I also have no regrets about our actions, because Japan was protected by the special precautions we forced it to take.

How the United States Intervened

By the late 1950s the U.S. good offices effort was a significant feature of our policy, sometimes supported by the President himself and frequently by members of his cabinet in discussions with the Japanese and ROK governments about the virtues of cooperation and the dangers of confrontation. However, our Embassies in Tokyo and Seoul were the principal locus of our efforts. The ambassadors and their deputies were heavily engaged in both places, and they deserve much credit for any successes. Although assigned to the political section, I effectively worked directly under the ambassador on the Korean issue, and knowledge of this allowed me considerably higher contacts among Japanese and Korean officials and politicians than would have been otherwise possible for a junior officer. Most regular work, such as identifying problems, contacting officials, making suggestions or carrying out protests, and assessing progress, was done by me and my counterpart in Seoul. Periodic ambassadorial involvement in the entire range of issues helped reinforce our work and get necessary attention at the level of the Foreign Minister or occasionally Prime Minister.

Both embassies suffered from local bias, evident at all levels, including mine, but quite pronounced with some of the ambassadors and their deputies. We in Tokyo were relatively sympathetic to Japan, while it seemed to us that our colleagues in Seoul were often too soft on the Koreans. Although this was for the most part mild and to some extent amusing, it pains me to remember that it occasionally provoked some very ungentlemanly vitriol recorded in official messages between our posts. In a few instances I suspect it distorted Washington's basis for judgement - never dangerously - and more than once in Tokyo it was carried to the point where I felt I had to risk my career by directly confronting a superior about his veracity and civility. The fairness normally manifested by our Washington colleagues, combined with friendly interchanges of officers between Japan and Korea, kept this problem under control.

Conclusion

For a decade before the final Japan-ROK settlement in 1965, the United States played a commendable role, stabilizing and buffering tensions between Japan and Korea as well as serving as an "honest broker." In this sense, the effort I have described was never wasted, and it was often beneficial - at least in moderating extremist actions. Nevertheless, U.S. efforts were not decisive in moving the two countries toward the ultimate goal of fully normalized relations. The decisive factors in realizing this objective were probably: 1) growing Korean pessimism about the prospects for continued American aid; 2) new Korean awareness of Japan as a source

of capital and technology as well as an appropriate model for rapid development; and 3) leaders on both sides sufficiently strong and enlightened to break through the impasse. Japanese governments had long wanted to reach agreement; Park Chung Hee was the first Korean leader who not only understood clearly how rapprochement with Japan could benefit Korea, but also had the strength to complete the process in the face of widespread protest.

ANTHONY GEBER
Economic and Commercial Counselor
Seoul (1979-1980)

Anthony Geber was born in Hungary in 1919 and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He joined the Foreign Service in 1949, serving in Germany, Austria, Indonesia, France, Korea, and Washington, DC. Mr. Geber was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in 1993.

GEBER: My next assignment was as Economic and Commercial Counselor to Korea. That fit right in with my previous job where I had been following East Asian affairs very closely. I was asked to take that job by our Ambassador to Korea, Bill Gleysteen who had just gone to Korea after being the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs. I only stayed in Korea for one year. The mandatory retirement age of 60 for Foreign Service officers was suspended at that time but the issue was before the courts. I was 59 and a half years old when I went and I and my wife were reluctant to go unless we could stay for at least a two year term of duty. I received assurances from Personnel, but not in writing. The Supreme Court reinstated the 60 year retirement age four days after my 60th birthday. The Department let me stay for another six months but no longer.

From a professional point of view Korea was one of the most fascinating places. The Korean economy was booming. Korea was becoming one of the most important trading partners of the U.S. Korean businessmen were flitting around the globe -- to the U.S., to Europe, Africa, Latin America, making deals. The economic team which managed the economy was most impressive. The government still had a very intrusive role in the economy. The President received daily reports and held monthly meetings on the export performance of the Korean economy. The labor force was highly disciplined and hard working. Education was the obsession of that Confucian society. A great deal of attention was given to an equitable income distribution -- with reasonable success. At least ostentatious living was discouraged from the top. But what impressed me most was the "can do" spirit of the Korean entrepreneurs. Industrial parks were being built on a scale I have not seen in America or Europe. There was no hesitation to plunge into the development and manufacturing of the most sophisticated technologies.

They learned how to make automobiles at that time. There were three or four companies, including a joint venture with General Motors. A few years later Hyundai cars invaded the American market with an unprecedented initial success. Color TV set manufacturing started in the late 1970's and output doubled and trebled each year, despite the fact that their sale was not permitted in the home market.

There were strains to be noted. The economy was getting too big for the kind of centralized management and planning that was being used, and plans were made to decentralize economic decision making. The organization of the financial markets lagged behind the manufacturing sector. The export-led growth strategy produced some strong protectionist pressures despite the better judgment of some of the principal economic planners. Most importantly, the economy became overheated during my year in Korea and when the brakes had to be applied, the economy had to pay a heavy price. Companies went bankrupt, some of those gigantic manufacturing projects had to be abandoned and the growth rate declined. The growing middle class was becoming increasingly restless. President Park Chung Hee was able to maintain his politically repressive regime as long as he could post economic successes, but paid with his life when the country's economic fortune declined.

As I said, there were strong protectionist pressures still at work in the Korean economy, and sometimes we had some difficulties on that score. But we also had some strong cards we could play. After all, we were the security guarantor of Korea, and we could put political pressure on the Koreans. That was the case with Westinghouse's bid on one of the nuclear power plants then under negotiation, against strong French and German competition. We urged President Carter to raise that issue during his state visit to Korea, and the Koreans gave us a nice Fourth of July present by informing us on that day that they awarded the contract to Westinghouse. Similarly, we won a major telecommunications contract when we gently twisted the arm of the Koreans.

Another advantage we had was that the Korean government was anxious to shift procurement from Japan, with which they had a chronic trade deficit, to American suppliers. Unfortunately, there we were less successful, mostly because American suppliers were unable or unwilling to fulfill Korean requirements. The first request was for diesel engine automobiles to replace the Seoul taxi fleet in light of Korea's great dependence on imported oil. Instead of 200, GM offered 3 diesel engine Oldsmobile cars; perhaps just as well, since they turned out to be lemons. When we learned that the GM and Daewoo joint venture car manufacturing was greatly expanding capacity, and that they have ordered machinery from Japan, we asked and have gotten a request for a second and even a larger order. A speedy request through the Commerce Department to GM and their suppliers remained unanswered. It was a boom period for the U.S car manufacturers and the suppliers of machinery were unwilling either to divert some to Korea or to expand their production. The same happened on a long list of chemicals the Koreans wished to buy from the U.S., despite Korean assurances that they would be willing to enter into long-term supply contracts, and the American suppliers could ship these products when domestic demand cooled off. And so it went.

I must tell you one more of my activities in Korea which bore fruit about 10 years later. Shortly after I arrived in Korea I noted that the Koreans, despite their great economic achievements, felt isolated and lacked an appropriate multilateral economic forum in which they could effectively participate. With their growth rates they were talking about being soon eligible to become members of the OECD. I did not think that even if the OECD would be willing to expand its membership, that that would be the right solution. With my experience in East Asian affairs and in the OECD, I thought that time has come to organize a consultative economic organization for countries of the Pacific rim. I had in mind a greatly scaled down OECD, concentrating on regular

review of members' economic policies, including trade, with such additional projects which members would be willing to approve from time to time. It should be an intergovernmental organization, with a small permanent secretariat. I was aware of the reluctance of the bureaucracies, particularly the American, to contemplate yet another international organization. I also knew that while our officials were quite willing to fly 7 hours to Paris, they had a great aversion to flying 20 hours across the Pacific. Still, I thought that given the growing importance of the Pacific region, time has come for such an organization and the burden on officialdom could be reduced by phasing out some existing organizations which were no longer very useful, e.g. Colombo Plan, and consolidate our many commitment to other multilateral and bilateral consultations in the region. I sent a cable from Korea outlining this proposal. Unfortunately I explained my ideas orally earlier to one of our backstoppers in Washington, on his visit to Seoul. whose name I prefer not to divulge, He sabotaged my recommendations by suggesting that the consultations be only among entities of the private sector, such as academics and research organizations. Much as that was useful, it was no substitute for the participation of government policy makers. Gradually the desirability of government involvement became recognized. About three years ago the Asian Pacific Economic Council (APEC) was formed and President Clinton convened a summit meeting of the Council in Seattle last year. I attended a briefing session organized by the Asia Society by those closely involved in the preparations for the Seattle meeting, and was pleasantly surprised how far my recommendations of fifteen years earlier have matured. But I was perhaps the only one in the room with the institutional memory who remembered that about 40 years earlier President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles travelled to Seattle to be hosts of a Colombo Plan meeting. I wish the new organization greater achievements and longer durability.

LOUIS P. GOELZ
Consul General
Seoul (1979-1980)

Louis Goelz was born in Philadelphia on February 25, 1927. After military service he graduated from La Salle College and Georgetown University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1955. He served in Lima, Hong Kong, Sao Paulo Belen Para, Mexico City, Nuevo Laredo, Tehran, and Seoul. He also served at INR, and the Visa Office and was assigned to the NATO Defense College for a year. He retired in 1992 and was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in July 1992 and February, 1993.

GOELZ: I was in Seoul from 1979 to 1980 for only 14 months. My predecessor had gone through a period of getting rid of people and had discovered just as he was doing that, that a whole new fraud ring was just getting set up. I had similar experiences. There was always fraud going on, or at least we knew there was fraud. We weren't always able to prove it, but we kept trying. The people succeeding us have found the same thing. I presume they are still working on it, but that's the way it was: a fact of life. One of those things I call facts of life; that is the way they are, and you have got to live with it. There was nothing different than had been going on as far as I could tell. We had to fire some of our local employees; we had to be able to prove they

were taking money on the side and doing all sorts of other things. We just had to fire them and start hiring others to train, and wait for them to go bad. The opportunities were there. A lot of people made a lot of money, but a lot of them got caught.

Over a period of time there were some Americans officers who had been involved but I didn't find any when I was there. The majority of them are no way near thinking about it. Dealing with the Korean government on matters of visa fraud was always very interesting. They were outwardly extremely helpful as best they could because they were interested in the fraud aspects too. These were their government documents, passports, visas, and other items, that were being counterfeited and they wanted to know all about it. However, there also seemed to be a sub rosa feeling that they were glad their people got away with the thing. They were glad to get the people out to the United States. We tried to help the ROK wherever we had the information, but usually, of course, we couldn't do any investigating locally. It had to be up to them. Whatever they turned up if they chose to give it to us, fine. If they didn't choose to give it to us, we never knew it existed. So they were very much in charge of everything going on in Korea itself.

The Koreans managed almost every type of fraud that you can think of. They were very adept at changing photographs, doctoring documents, and manufacturing documents sometimes. And then, of course, you had the usual relationship problems. There were some investigations being made, interestingly enough, on the West Coast in California and Texas, into rings that were established actually setting up a prostitution ring. They were based on mostly wives of GIs who came back, got picked up by these people and suborned one way or another, and put into a prostitution set-up. Some of them came only for that purpose; others, after they were there were suborned into a life of prostitution. These girls would work, say in Texas, for six months or so and then they had be transferred to another place. They had them in Honolulu, in Los Angeles, and probably several other places around the United States. A lot of them were involved in those days in what was known as Oriental Massage Parlors. They had all kinds of friends for these places, I understand. But we were never able to get sufficient information to enable them to successfully control the situation.

When I was there one of the hardest things was to deal with the GI marriage because you couldn't really say, "they're not in love," and "they're not going to get married." They would, but it would be often purely a monetary arrangement. The gals were so much sharper than the kids. I was never so shocked as the first time I went out to look at the immigrant visa load of one day, and saw these elderly -- I would consider elderly, or at least older women -- who were marrying young GIs, and going to the States. You know there was something wrong there.

One of the things I found most interesting there, one of the most successful programs, at least from my point of view, was the Korean orphans who were being adopted at a sizeable rate. It was well set up and worked very smoothly. I didn't see much in the way of fraud in that program. I always suspected that there was something wrong with it, but from the looks of it, it turned out to be a very legitimate business all the way along the line. The Korean government had set up certain organizations that you had to deal with, and we were able to deal with them. The adopter paid his or her money and got a baby. There were noises made by the Koreans every year or two about cutting the adoption program. It would come up practically annually during the time I was there. They had go through working on this business and there would be campaigns in the

newspapers, and speeches in their congress. But to the best of my knowledge during the time I was there, it never ever amounted to anything as far as the numbers were concerned. The numbers continued.

We tried to work on using computers and modern technology. At that time we had an officer who devoted his full time to working with the computer and trying to see what we could do with it. We were getting information concerning lawyers. We would check out the law firm involved in the petition in many of these cases. And you could sometimes see a pattern there, or maybe not the law firm but the address to which they were destined.

DAVID BLAKEMORE
Political Counselor
Seoul (1980-1983)

David Blakemore was born in 1941 in New York State. He graduated from Valparaiso in 1962 and joined the Foreign Service in 1965. He served overseas in Saudi Arabia, India, Korea, Bangladesh and Nigeria, as well as the staff director of the Board of Examiners and Deputy Team Leader in the Inspection Corps in Washington DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in the winter of 1997.

Q: So you went to Korea then?

BLAKEMORE: I went to Korea and I had Richard Holbrooke to thank for that. I had been assigned to some dull seeming job in the European bureau and someone else had been assigned as political counselor in Seoul. Holbrooke decided that he thought I would do a good job in that position. He asked me and I said of course. I wasn't the right grade. I was a grade too junior. It was an OC position and I was an FSO-1. Dick essentially forced me through the personnel system, and worse than that I feared was the fact that the person that personnel wanted and who was moved out of the job was also Ambassador Bill Gleysteen's choice. I went off to Korea with a little trepidation about what that might mean for me. I need not have worried.

Before I went, Bill Gleysteen was back in Washington for something and he and I got together. He went out of his way to assure me that he understood exactly what had happened and that I hadn't engineered it. He told me that he had confidence in my ability from our working together in Washington the previous two years and let's go forward. It was something that I greatly appreciated.

Q: You were in Korea from '80 to '83. How did you find the situation in Korea? Kwang Ju had been how long ago?

BLAKEMORE: Kwang Ju had taken place in May and I got there in July. Things were buttoned up pretty tightly. Just before I got there for example, 81 or 82 professors had signed a really quite innocuous declaration of academic freedom. The government's response, and we were still

operating with Chun as the puppet behind the interim government, was to ban all 82 of those people from doing academic work. They were no longer able to earn their livelihoods as teachers. I mention that because I had a very close friend who was affected but it was also typical of how tightly buttoned down things were in that period. It was two years at least before there was any kind of relaxation of, tolerance of, anything that might even resemble dissent. The answer to your question is that it was a pretty grim time politically in Korea.

Q: How did you find the relationship between the embassy and the government?

BLAKEMORE: Distant, cool, correct. There was no lack of communication but Gleysteen had established a fairly cool interaction.

Q: Were you there when the Carter visit came?

BLAKEMORE: No. Carter visited in 1978 briefly at the tail end of a visit to Japan. That put the last nail in the coffin of the troop withdrawal plan. I was on the desk at that time, not in Korea.

Q: I think but I can't remember if it was an interview with either Hal Stern or Paul Cleveland talking about in a way the whole matter was thrashed out in a car with Carter and I don't know who else. There was a great argument while the Korean driver was just sitting there. Everyone was waiting for him to come out of the car and they were arguing over it.

BLAKEMORE: I have a vague recollection of that but I am sure that Paul had a lot more details than I do. I remember now. Carter was a reluctant, reluctant supporter of Korea all the way through.

Q: You get out there in 1980. How did you operate as a political counselor? You are supposed to be glad handing those and meeting people.

BLAKEMORE: I did the things that political counselors do. I tried to ingratiate myself with the colonels at the gate. It was obvious that because the relationship was going to go on in a very complex and extensive way, we had to have ways of talking to each other. I don't think my behavior was any different. I think what was different was the other people's behavior. These colonels particularly had not been through this kind of a drill before. They weren't sure why I was coming to see them or how influential I might be or what they might safely say to me about anything.

Q: When you're talking about colonels who are you talking about?

BLAKEMORE: I'm talking about Chun's personal staff in the Blue House. Hun Hwa Pyong was the most influential of those men. A charming guy, but he and his colleagues didn't know what they were doing in this non-military environment. While they were typically gracious to me at first, they certainly were not willing to be developed as contacts for me. They weren't going to let that happen for the very reasons that I wanted those contacts. I wanted information about what was going on and they didn't want to tell me.

Of course the relationships with the Foreign Ministry were close and extensive. Park Kun Woo, the man that I had worked so closely with when he was political counselor in Washington and I was deputy on the desk, became head of the Americas Department in the Foreign Ministry sometime during that first year or so. That was fine. In many ways we were shut out from the kind of intimate relationship that we had been accustomed to. Fortunately, Park Kun Woo had no problem with an intimate relationship with an American diplomat, or with any of his people having an intimate relationship.

Q: What did you find that the role of the CIA was before and after the assassination? From your perspective, how would appraise this?

BLAKEMORE: I don't think I can say anything intelligent about before, but after the CIA was useful to the rest of us in the sense that they had a better understanding of army personal (or personnel) politics and relationships and who was beholden to whom within the army. A matter of no great consequence to anybody before but now it suddenly became very important because Chun put military people in all of the important jobs: generals as ministers and colonels as operating people at various levels. We, the State people, didn't know any of them. The kind of cultivation of the military that political officers might do in a country like Thailand, for example, or Indonesia, had not historically been done in Korea because the U.S. military had all the interaction with those people that the U.S. government needed, thank you very much, and of course they were right until the change.

Q: Were they frozen out too?

BLAKEMORE: They weren't frozen out, but they were extremely reluctant to talk to their military colleagues about anything but military issues, strictly business that was appropriate to people in uniforms on both sides of the table. It was hard for them to be expected by the rest of us to relate to these same colonels in a different way than they always had. They didn't want to ruin their relationship by "G-2ing our allies" as they would say. It was strained, it was cold and very unlike the traditional U.S.-Korea atmosphere.

Q: Usually in many ways they were much more alike, more blunt than any other oriental. That's my experience.

BLAKEMORE: Let me say something before I forget it. You like to talk about policy and I like to talk about personal reactions. Let me give you a personal reaction about what it was like to live in Korea in 1980 as a foreigner compared with 1974 or 1971 when we got there the first time. In that period of time that I was here in Washington with the Canadians and the Bangladeshis and the Jordanians, a huge number of Korean academics who had come to the United States and had forgotten to go home, looked back home and said, gee there are some interesting opportunities there. I think I will go back and try my hand as professor, businessman, economist in the government, even politician.

When we came back in 1980 we were quickly in contact, through tennis as it turns out, with a group of 18 or 20 couples who met this criterion that I just set out. They stayed in the States, after graduate school, and then decided to go back. They were an absolutely delightful set of

people for my wife and me to be around and were atypical of Koreans in many ways most important of which was that the wives spoke English and were accustomed to talking to men other than their husbands. If you had a dinner, you could have what we would think of as a more relaxed and enjoyable dinner. It was a real pleasure to find this group of people. Several of them are still good friends many years later.

This group of people turned out to be wonderful contacts for me in a professional sense. Among this group of people who happily coexisted with each other on the social level were a signer of the academic freedom declaration who was a real outcast as a result, several professors and people who were with the Korean CIA. A very interesting collection of people.

Q: One of the things we talked about with Park Chung Hee was that while not an economist himself, he really took an interest in the development of the economic world. He made sure that corruption did not deviate the growth of Korea and that people when given a task would do it and relied heavily on foreign trained economists and all that. Did you see a difference?

BLAKEMORE: Yes I think so. First of all it was a much easier task. The engine was running at high speed already by the time Chun took power. It is easier to keep it running than it is to get it started. I don't think he was as interested in economic issues as Park. He was more interested in corruption, I think, than Park was. Of course he has been publicly disgraced since he left power on the corruption issue and spent some time in jail. His younger brother was publicly disgraced while I was there while Chun was still president.

I hesitate to talk about Korean corruption as if I or anybody in the U.S. government really understood the extent and the nature of it because I keep seeing new revelations about it. For example in the last week the press has been talking about the way bank loans are allocated among the major Korean conglomerates which has helped precipitate the economic crisis of the last few weeks. This has always gone on from the beginning. A lot of it, I think, probably could be labeled as corruption from our perspective. I guess there has always been a lot more of it than I realized and while it was more visible under Chun occasionally. I doubt if it was any more of a problem than it had been under Park Chung Hee.

Q: What about the political leaders, the three Kims and all that? Did you have much to do with all of that?

BLAKEMORE: Yes. Kim Jung Pil, the Park loyalist kind of faded, disappeared, and became inactive. The other two Kims tried to maintain some kind of presence. Kim Dae Jung was under house arrest for at least the first year of my time there. In the second and third year, both he and Kim Yong Sam came to lunch at my house a couple of times. In a very quiet, private setting like that they were willing to talk about what was going on. The trouble was they didn't know what was going on. They had no connection with the government and virtually nothing was going on in the opposition area, really nothing at all.

Q: What about newspapers?

BLAKEMORE: Very heavily controlled. There were a lot of planted stories. When I was in

Korea the first time, the government owned a major English language daily and that's where you found the government line. If you wanted to know exactly what the government thought about any issue it was there but the other papers exercised a significant amount of freedom within limits which they understood pretty clearly. Certainly nothing that appeared to be in aid of North Korea was tolerable in the Park years either.

Under Chun it was a very insidious form of censorship. That is censorship without guidelines so that editors were blindfolded and when they screwed up they could be jailed. Nobody told them what they couldn't put in print but when the government didn't like something they would be shut down for a few days and the editors would be thrown in jail. Some of them were beaten up in the process. That didn't have to happen very many times before the papers became very tame.

Q: How about every spring, were you watching the students?

BLAKEMORE: Oh, yes, but that is sort of a rite of spring in Korea. It goes on under the democratic governments as well these days. I don't think they were particularly active during the early Chung years, I think they were a little more cautious because people were jailed and disappeared for long periods of time.

The next major event in my career in Korea happened in the spring of 1981 when Bill Gleysteen went home and President Ronald Reagan sent out a South Carolina Republican loyalist by the name of Richard Dixie Walker to be his ambassador to Korea. Dixie, a very likable man in many ways, was an academic from the University of South Carolina with excellent credentials in East Asian affairs. He was very conservative in his assessment of East Asian things with Nationalist Chinese connections and that sort of thing and a complete neophyte in the world of diplomacy.

It was a rude shock to me and to a lot of other people in the embassy to make that shift from Bill Gleysteen the consummate professional, to somebody who knew a lot about East Asia here and there but didn't know what the hell he was doing inside of an embassy. The conservative credentials meant something although we didn't know exactly what in terms of reporting on human rights for example. There was a state of confusion that wasn't unique to Korea in the early Reagan years as people were faced with things like the Congressional mandate to produce a human rights report. You knew damn well the president didn't want to see any of that. So we were all puzzled as to what we were doing with these conservatives.

I developed, I think, a reasonably good working relationship with Dixie and working with first John Monjo as a DCM, and then Paul Cleveland. We were able in almost all cases temper Dixie's gut responses to particular things that happened so that the embassy did not appear to be shooting from the hip, at least not very often. What happened was, as I recall, that he began to separate his own reactions to things and provide them in special cables to the president or to whoever else he was sending them to. Therefore he did not feel the need to color the embassy's run of the mill reporting with his somewhat more conservative slant on the world, which was a good solution. It worked out well that way.

Q: When you say a conservative slant, a conservative slant does not necessarily mean enjoying a military dictatorship or was he more comfortable with it?

BLAKEMORE: That would be a nice diplomatic way to put it. He was a lot more comfortable with the Chun government than I was and more than Paul was. More to the point, he had not had to shift gears as dramatically as I had to in the change from Carter to Reagan. My personal predilection to be cool towards this military government was fully reflected in the instructions from Washington under Carter. Now under Reagan there was kind of an atmosphere of “what’s all the fuss about? This guy is doing a good job. He’s got a stable government, the economy is booming still. What’s the problem? What is all the hostility about? Let’s be a little warmer and get a little closer to these guys.” Dixie was all for that and I think in a sense he was captured by some people who were aware of that and wanted to make sure that he was extremely well treated by the Chun government.

Q: Were these Koreans?

BLAKEMORE: Yes. I don’t think it really created a problem but as I say, he didn’t have to make that major course correction that I did and others did in the way we bridged the transition in U.S. presidents.

Q: What did you do about the human rights reports?

BLAKEMORE: I don’t remember the specifics. I can remember that the front office of the embassy was much more interested in them after Dixie came than before. Gleysteen was interested but his interest was to make sure that what we were saying was really founded. “How do you know what you are saying here?” Walker’s attitude was a little more like “Do we have to say this? This isn’t really important. Why is it phrased in this way?” Political in a sense that he was more attuned to, to be fair to him, to make it palatable to the new president and his men. The new president wasn’t going to read it obviously. Carter no doubt did read it. Carter was a tremendous nit picker and micro manager. So that was a major change for me.

Q: During that time were there any other things happening in Korea? Did you find for example that Walker would listen to you?

BLAKEMORE: He always was willing to give me a fair hearing. Actually it was a fairly quiet time politically in Korea. On the security side there were incidents but not anything really alarming. There was a steady buildup of South Korean capabilities during that period with the improvement of their air force particularly and their tank fleet. U.S. forces were beefed up. The A-10 anti-tank aircraft came in during that period. It was a formidable weapon in the Korean context. The tanks that the U.S. forces had were upgraded nicely during that period. In terms of comparison with the previous three years ending with the 12th of December 1979, it was a quiet three years.

THOMAS P. SHOESMITH
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs
Washington, DC (1981-1983)

Thomas Shoemith was born in 1939 and raised in Pennsylvania. His career in the State Department included posts in Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and an ambassadorship to Malaysia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

SHOESMITH: For most of the time, until late 1982, I think it was, John Holdridge was the Assistant Secretary; then Paul Wolfowitz took over. I was the senior deputy, with responsibility for Japan, China, and Korea. The long, extended, and convoluted negotiations on China and Taiwan took up so much time that, unfortunately, I think, I was not able to give the attention to Japan, much less Korea, that I probably should have. Although in neither case were there serious problems during those two years when I was the DAS. There were problems. There are always problems when dealing with Japan. And, to some lesser extent, in dealing with Korea. But they weren't of a magnitude that took up a great deal of my time. And I really had just so much time. I think I must have spent 60 percent of my time on China and Taiwan.

We did have a problem with Korea that took up a lot of time on rice imports -- not with Japan, but with Korea. But this was a problem that arose out of a decision by the Korean Government to diversify its rice purchases among American suppliers. At that time Korea was importing rice. It had for many years -- one group of rice producers in California had a virtual monopoly on the Korean market. And the Koreans sought to break that monopoly. Our involvement in that was in trying to support a decision by the Korean Government. We felt that the Korean Government should be able to make this decision on its own. They should not be forced to buy from any one particular producer or group of producers. This got us into a great deal of difficulty with Congress. There were certain people up on the Hill who sought to represent this one group of rice producers, and to frustrate the efforts of the Korean Government to diversify sources of supply. That, I remember vividly, because it took up an awful lot of time. And it was very contentious for a while. Certain members of Congress sought to bring heavy pressure to bear on the State Department and on the Department of Agriculture. There were threats to investigate allegations that we were somehow in cahoots with the competition, and so on. They can make it very uncomfortable for you.

WALTER A. LUNDY
Economic Counselor
Seoul (1981-1984)

Walter A. Lundy was born in Georgia in 1933. He received a BA from the University of Georgia in 1954 and an MA from Georgetown University in 1961. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a first lieutenant overseas from 1954-1958. Mr. Lundy has served in Colombo, Saigon, Hue, New Delhi, Tehran, and Seoul. He was interviewed in 2005 by Raymond Ewing.

LUNDY: In 1981, I went back overseas after six years in Washington. I was again lucky; I went to Seoul as economic counselor. I was not a member of the Senior Foreign Service at that time,

and the position was classified as a senior job. I was lucky to get it. I was in Korea during a period when many things were happening. The Korean economy was growing very rapidly, and these boom times were encouraging political change as well. I had a very satisfying three years there.

Q: I suppose being in the EAP bureau in Washington helped you to move from your previous job on to Seoul. You were known to the bureau, certainly.

LUNDY: I would have had little chance of getting the job without the bureau's support. As it happened, I was assigned rather late in the 1981 assignment cycle because they had to try to find a senior officer for the job. In those days the bureaus had more power in the assignments process than was the case a few years later when I worked in personnel. It wasn't so much that the bureau was holding out for me as that the candidates personnel suggested for the job seemed not to be especially impressed with Korea. Outside of East Asia how fast Korea was growing was not generally recognized. Perhaps the type of senior officer the bureau would have liked for the job did not think it would be sufficiently career enhancing. I almost lost the job because the bureau's first choice was offered the economic counselor slot either in Cairo or Seoul. Luckily for me, he picked Cairo.

Q: Seoul was probably a better job in many ways at that time.

LUNDY: Perhaps, but that would be debatable; in the wake of the Camp David accords, we were increasing our aid program in Egypt enormously. He may have found the issues there more interesting. .

Q: Yes, it wasn't too long after Camp David.

LUNDY: Right.

Q: And some of the other developments that were taking place.

LUNDY: And as part of the deal we had offered Egypt an enormous amount of economic assistance.

Q: OK, so you went to Seoul in 1981 at the beginning of the Reagan administration. You did not have Korean language training?

LUNDY: No, I did not. I took morning classes at the Embassy, but I did not get beyond formal greetings and a few useful words and phrases in Korean.

Q: Was that a problem?

LUNDY: Not really. There was only one language officer position in the econ section in Seoul, and he used Korean infrequently. South Korea is one of these places where they begin learning English very early in elementary school, and students continue studying it at nearly every educational level. Those with whom I needed to work in the government and the financial and

business sectors all spoke English. Many of them had been educated at the undergraduate or graduate level in this country. It would not have been worthwhile to take off the necessary two years to reach a useful level in Korean in terms of how it might have enhanced my job effectiveness in the country.

Q: OK, why don't you talk a little bit about the size of the economic section and...

LUNDY: Besides me, there were only three full time officers: an officer who concentrated on the financial reporting and the banking sector, another responsible for foreign trade and industrial developments and much of the macro-economic reporting, a junior officer who backed everyone up and did the bits and pieces such as civil aviation, maritime affairs, telecommunications reporting etc. It was another place where there were so many things going on that we could keep busy just putting out the brush fires, doing whatever the needs of the occasion demanded. From time to time we crossed over to do each others jobs. We were all very, very busy.

Q: Now to what extent were you responsible for commercial work?

LUNDY: I wasn't responsible for commercial work at all except that all of the economic officers helped out with commercial work because there was so much business interest in Korea. Frequently visiting businessmen wanted to see both the economic and commercial counselors and maybe the ambassador or the DCM as well. We had no trouble developing and maintaining a good relationship with the commercial section, which was staffed by a commercial counselor, an FCS officer, and either three or four commercial officers. They were as big or bigger than the economic section, but we managed, I think, to have a reasonable working relationship. There was also a full time agricultural attaché whose position later was raised to counselor status.

Q: And both the commercial counselor and the agricultural attaché reported directly to the DCM?

LUNDY: Yes, not to me.

Q: And was there still a residual AID presence of some sort?

LUNDY: The last AID officer in Seoul had left about three months before I arrived. Four AID local employees remained, and they came under the supervision of the economic section.

Q: Who worked for the economic section or for these other commercial and...?

LUNDY: No, they were part of the economic section. One of the officers in the section was responsible for supervising them, and they reported through him directly to me. Eventually those jobs were phased out. As people retired they were not replaced.

Q: OK, why don't you say who the DCM and ambassador were at the time that you were there?

LUNDY: Most of the time our DCM was Paul Cleveland, a good manager unafraid to delegate, an experienced highly competent officer who later became ambassador to New Zealand and then

to Malaysia. All of his overseas service was in EAP. The ambassador was a political appointee, Richard L. Walker. Again, I was very fortunate in the people for whom I was working. They were first class professionals. Ambassador Walker had been head of the International Relations Department at the University of South Carolina, but he was not without bureaucratic experience. He had held various temporary appointments, some of them involving short overseas assignments with the CIA, but as I understand it these were overt arrangements under contract in no way involving clandestine work. His specialty was East Asia; he was well qualified to be Ambassador to South Korea. His academic background was Ivy League, Harvard and Yale. He apparently never felt comfortable in New England--perhaps his political inclinations were a little too far to the right. He had started the international relations program at the University of South Carolina, which had been a big success. He had been chairman of the first President Bush's 1980 campaign in South Carolina. Vice President Bush, I'm sure, used his influence to get him the appointment as ambassador to Korea. He was a well known East Asian scholar and had written a number of books.

Q: OK, why don't we just pause for a minute and turn this over. I think you've pretty much given the setting for your assignment to Seoul. Why don't you talk some about some of the issues and your relations with the government, what you did, how you did it?

LUNDY: We did standard economic and financial reporting. The banking and insurance sectors presented interesting challenges. South Korea was willing to open up its economy, but only gradually. It had followed pretty much the Japan pattern of export led economic growth strongly guided by government policy. At that time the country was still groping for a peaceful means of transition from authoritarian rule to a more open and more democratic society. In the three years I was there South Korea did not succeed in completing the transition, but certain steps were taken. The foreign business community in Seoul for the most part consisted of unhappy campers. They felt that the government was much too restrictive. They knew South Korea was a place where money could be made. Most American firms were having notable success, but their aim always is to urge the U.S. Government to do more in their behalf. This is understandable, but not always feasible. The American bankers were especially unhappy. The Koreans were glad to have representative offices and even some foreign branch banking, but only on their terms. The banking sector urged the Koreans to remove all restrictions on foreign banks which would enable them to make a great deal more money.

This was the period of the developing country debt crises throughout the world, but Korea was not one of the countries with a serious foreign debt problem. Many of our visitors, however, were American bankers wanting to see for themselves that this was a country to which it was still safe to lend money. Other business visitors wanted to be reassured that equity investment in Korea remained viable.

There was a big problem with our agricultural trade with Korea in which I was very much involved. This was both a bureaucratic and a political problem. It dated back to 1980 when Korea suffered from a very cold, wet summer which reduced the all important rice crop. The Rice Growers Association of California had contracted to plant in 1981 a great deal of rice acceptable to the Korean palate which would not be easy to sell elsewhere. It turned out they planted more rice than the Koreans wanted to buy. They had over estimated their needs. The

weather in 1981 was very favorable for rice growing. They produced...

Q: In Korea?

LUNDY: In Korea. They produced more rice than they expected, and needed to import less.

Q: Probably a good year in California too?

LUNDY: Yes, a very good year in California as well. The rice growers of California had a surplus, which they thought the Koreans were obligated to buy at a price that the rice growers of California would set. The Koreans didn't think so; they thought they should get a better price and not have to buy more rice than they needed. This caused disagreement between the Departments of State and Agriculture. We felt that Agriculture was simply representing the interests of the California rice growers. They did have a side to the argument, but requiring the Koreans to buy rice they didn't need would create a problem in US/Korea relations. The rice was marketable elsewhere but not at the price that the California rice growers thought they were going to get in Korea. The disagreement continued to escalate. There were many American visitors to Seoul representing both sides of the dispute, those defending the California rice growers and lawyers representing the Koreans. My relations with the agricultural counselor deteriorated. He was taking orders from the Department of Agriculture; the embassy was receiving instructions from the Department of State. Things were eventually worked out, but not without some broken crockery. The dispute eventually reached the courts. I don't think that the Rice Growers of California ever received any redress for the money they felt they had lost. I am inclined to believe this simply meant they didn't make the kind of profits they expected from the deal.

Q: Were there other trade policy disputes, issues that you got involved with at that period in terms of Korean exports to the United States or other trade negotiations?

LUNDY: Textile exports to the U.S. were a continuing problem. There was a bi-lateral agreement setting annual quotas for our imports of garments from Korea. Our negotiators came to Seoul. There also were representatives of the textile industry, the hangers on who came hoping to influence the negotiations from the periphery. The Koreans were getting into the steel industry in a big way, and there was pressure from U.S. steel companies to keep export levels down. We had one economic section local employee who did nothing whatsoever but monitor the various categories of Korean steel exports to the USA. This was a lady with indispensable detailed knowledge of trade data.

Q: Were you along with others in the embassy quite involved with the American business representatives in Korea?

LUNDY: All the time.

Q: Were they organized as an American Chamber of Commerce?

LUNDY: They had a very good organization with a full-time executive director, Brick Krause, a retired Army brigadier general. Most resident American business representatives were

knowledgeable, experienced individuals. There also were a very large number of Congressional visitors; they always wanted to meet with the U.S. business community. We had regular monthly meetings with American bankers in Seoul to keep each other abreast of current developments.

Q: And you were probably used as control officer for quite a few of those delegations?

LUNDY: Yes, or someone in the economic section was.

Q: To what extent, if any, did you take an interest in what was happening in North Korea?

LUNDY: Hardly at all. What little we knew about North Korea was handled by the political section where one officer followed developments in North Korea. At that period in history perhaps only Albania was as closed a society as North Korea. Hardly any information filtered across the border.

Q: To what extent were you involved with South Korea's external economic relations other than with the United States, with China with other parts of the world?

LUNDY: One of the economic section officers made some excellent contacts on South Korea/Mainland China trade. We did some reporting which was much appreciated in Washington. Two-way trade between Mainland China and South Korea was just beginning, and very little was known about it. Back then there was some political opposition in South Korea to trade with China which stemmed from memories of the Korean War. Now the two countries are huge trading partners.

Q: How about South Korea economic relations with Japan, with Russia?

LUNDY: We reported on South Korea's other economic relationships, but we in no way could have any direct involvement with them. Unhappily, Korea had a growing trade surplus with the U.S. which was used to finance the country's very large trade deficit with Japan. This was the same pattern as Taiwan's. The American trade deficit with Japan also was gigantic, but the Japanese were not opening their markets to anyone.

Q: To the Koreans or anybody else?

LUNDY: Yes, not for manufactured goods, not to Korea or any other country.

Q: To what extent had the Koreans begun to use their surplus with the U.S. to buy U.S. Treasury bonds or other financial instruments?

LUNDY: They were not doing much of that when I was there, but we were starting to see the early beginnings of equity investment in the U.S. Plans were being made to move some of their automobile production to America as the Japanese already were doing. These were carried out after I left the country.

Q: Did the South Korean's host any major international economic organizations or conferences,

meetings when you were there?

LUNDY: No, Korea was not a major center for international meetings or regional headquarters. The big event while I was there was the announcement Korea's bid to host the 1988 summer Olympics had won. The games, of course, did not take place until four years after I had left, but the Koreans were ecstatic, particularly because they had won over the Japanese--Osaka/Kobe was one of several finalists. National morale received a tremendous boost.

There were Arab visitors to South Korea. Many Koreans were working abroad in the Middle East. Needless to say, Korea wanted to attract Arab capital. Many Arabs came to Korea for various training programs. There also were numerous Nigerian visitors.

Q: Where were they getting their petroleum imports in that period, the Middle East mostly?

LUNDY: Probably mostly from the Middle East, as was and is the case with Japan. It is sometimes very hard to identify the origin of petroleum imports, however.

Q: I was in Japan around 1960-'61, at the time that the Japanese were gearing up for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, and I remember not only the euphoria, the sense of prestige and honor but the incentive that gave to build highways, to build hotels, to create infrastructure, to try to...and that went on for years before the actual Olympics. I don't know if that happened in South Korea during the period...?

LUNDY: It was not so noticeable while I was there, but I remember reading about grandiose plans. Construction and other infrastructure improvements accelerated quite a bit as the time drew nearer. They built an entire Olympic village. A new international airport was opened, more hotels were built. There were not so many tourists while I was there, but no doubt that sector has grown as well.

Q: The American visitors were mostly business visitors then?

LUNDY: Yes, mostly business visitors. They also tried hard to attract Korean War veterans with a campaign called "Reunion in Korea." Korean Air Lines offered incentive packages with special rates.

Q: What U.S. airline access was there to Korea? Were aviation negotiations a major problem for you?

LUNDY: No, not a big problem. Northwest had most of the market; United kept talking about coming in but never did. Pan Am had service to Korea for awhile.

Q: And not yet United, because I think United went in later?

LUNDY: Not yet, United had a representative there, but service had not started.

Q: You could report on the Korean economy from the capital in Seoul, but obviously elements of

the industrial strength were outside of the capital?

LUNDY: A great deal of it was in the South, around Pusan, to which I made several trips. Their biggest steel mill was on the coast north and east of Pusan. I traveled quite a bit officially and on a personal basis. Korea is a relatively small country; I went to all the province capitals at one time or another. I also took part in retreats on various aspects of economic development and/or Korea/U.S. economic relations. Sometimes these were sponsored by U.S. business, but more often they were organized by a very enterprising USIA Public Affairs Officer, Bernard Lavin.

Q: We had a consulate at the time in Pusan?

LUNDY: We opened a consulate in Pusan while I was there.

Q: But they weren't doing much economic reporting?

LUNDY: Not quite true. In fact, an economic officer was our first representative at the new office. I had little supervisory responsibility but did write the officer's efficiency report. The post was not called a consulate at first; it was known as the Pusan Branch of the American Embassy economic section. The status of the office was elevated to consulate early in 1984. We continued to maintain a USIA branch office in Pusan. We also had USIA branch public affairs offices in Taegu and in Kwangju.

Q: And you got up to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) I suppose but never into North Korea?

LUNDY: Never into North Korea. My one trip to the DMZ was with my family on a special tour offered to civilian officials posted in Korea. There was no possibility in those days of going to North Korea. It was some years later when American officials began to travel to the North for special negotiations. We are still trying to work out a way to normalize relations with North Korea. Since I left there, an enormous amount of economic interaction between North and South Korea has occurred. The big South Korean conglomerates have invested in manufacturing in the North.

Q: OK, anything else? It sounds like a good assignment, and interesting...

LUNDY: It was an excellent assignment.

Q: A good ambassador a good DCM and...

LUNDY: A superb work situation, I could not have asked for anything better.

Q: And living in Seoul was all right?

LUNDY: Living in Seoul was very, very pleasant. The USG had invested in housing there early on. We lived right downtown, about a ten-minute walk from the embassy.

Q: From an embassy owned house?

LUNDY: From an embassy owned house. There were two embassy compounds within ten minutes or less of the embassy. The other one was a little closer.

Q: And you were in a compound?

LUNDY: I was in a compound. It was the only time I've ever lived in an American compound, the only time we did not have foreign neighbors living close by.

Q: But you didn't feel particularly isolated?

LUNDY: No, we didn't. Representationally, it was never a problem; you simply had to give the guards at the gate a list of your guests, and they would be admitted after showing some identification. Our compound was near the center of town, close to most of the Korean government ministries and the business district. Much of my representational entertaining was carried out with small lunches at home.

Q: For government officials?

LUNDY: Government officials mostly, but some other South Korean contacts as well. I frequently needed to give small luncheons for visiting Americans.

Q: And access to both government officials and business was fairly easy?

LUNDY: First class.

Q: No problems?

LUNDY: No problems at all. Their doors were always open to Americans. Korea was dependent on the U.S. for military assistance in case of another North Korean attack, and we continued to deploy combat troops in the country. While it was to their advantage to maintain good relations with the USA, the Koreans in economic negotiations could be very tough indeed. There was always open communication, however, good working relationships. There was a U.S.-South Korean joint economic commission which kept us talking to each other slightly above the operational level.

Q: At the cabinet level or sub-cabinet?

LUNDY: Sub-cabinet and assistant secretary level. There were enough inevitable problems in a growing bilateral economic relationship to justify this kind of semiformal official mechanism. It enabled busy higher level officials to get to know each other and develop understanding for each others' concerns. Enhanced communications were a benefit to both sides.

Q: And would that commission try to meet once a year in either Korea or the U.S.?

LUNDY: Yes. In 1983, I came back once to Washington to participate as a member of the U.S.

delegation.

Q: Anything else about your time in Korea? Things were really booming in the Korean economy, and Korea's economic place in the world was expanding. I suppose you could only anticipate that would continue at the time you left, but later on there were problems. To what extent did you begin to sense some of the problems at the time you were there?

LUNDY: I'm not sure which problems you are referring to?

Q: The debt crisis that effected Thailand and Southeast Asia and I think Korea.

LUNDY: No, I can't say we anticipated those problems which came later, in the late '90's after my retirement. One of the main things that worried us while I was in Seoul was the debt position of the big conglomerates and their relationship to the central government. Depending on the definition, there were nine or ten of these huge diversified companies. The largest and best known were Hyundai, Samsung, and Daewoo. Most of them were heavily in debt to the Korean government, which of course gave the government considerable leverage in keeping the conglomerates in line. We used to say that in the USA most of these companies wouldn't have been able to stay in business; they would have gone bankrupt. We wondered whether the system was not so fragile it might collapse or at least get into serious difficulty. Throughout, however, the Koreans seem to have managed it quite well. Sometime after I left, the government did let one or two of the conglomerates go under. The general feeling was that they made examples out of a couple of the weaker ones to encourage the others to clean up their act. The South Korean economy continues to thrive. As has been the case with Japan, the unique relationship between government and the private sector seems to have functioned well. It has its disadvantages, its drawbacks, but in the East Asian context it works. One can't argue with success.

Q: OK, anything else about your time in Seoul from '81-'84?

LUNDY: I think we covered it. Professionally, those were my happiest years.

PAUL M. CLEVELAND
Deputy Chief of Mission
Seoul (1981-1985)

Paul M. Cleveland was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1931 and raised in New York and Washington, DC. He received a bachelor's degree in English from Yale University in 1953. Afterward, he entered the U.S. Air Force. Mr. Cleveland's Foreign Service career included positions in Australia, Germany, Korea, New Zealand, and Malaysia. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on October 20, 1995.

Q: In 1981, you went to Seoul as DCM. You have already told us how that assignment came about. Tell us a little about the Embassy at that time?

CLEVELAND: Dixie Walker was the Ambassador. I have already mentioned my long standing acquaintance with him. David Blakemore was the Political Counselor and Walt Lundy was the Economic Counselor at the beginning of my tour -- he was followed by Don McConville. I knew these people -- some better than others. For example, Blakemore had been in Seoul during my previous tour. He was a top notch officer -- very bright -- and he wrote very well. Our Administrative Counselors were old pros -- first George Knight who was followed by Gerald Manderscheid. Both were wonderful officers -- solid and competent. The Consul General was Ken Keller. He was one of the most interesting persons in Seoul at the time. He turned down two opportunities for promotion that I know of because he knew he was going to retire after his tour in Seoul and didn't therefore want to take up one of the MC slots. He was one of the most brilliant people I have ever known. He had a photographic memory; he could visualize pages and pages of Korean names. That was important at the time because during my tour, we undertook the largest single visa anti-fraud operation ever attempted by the Foreign Service. Fortunately, it was very successful and I want to discuss that in greater depth later on. The Station Chiefs were Bob Kennedy and Jim Delaney. The PAO was Bernie Lavin, who was also a very good officer.

I think in general the Embassy staff in this period was outstanding. Korea has always attracted some of the best of the Foreign Service because it was one of the hot spots in the world where the US had major interests. We had some language officers -- e.g. Spence Richardson (now in Seoul refreshing his language skills in preparation for an assignment to Pyongyang), Don Nichols who was a CIA officer. We of course had Korean employees who had been with the Embassy for many years. They may have worked for the KCIA, but I expected that all of our Korean employees did some work for that organization, and we were therefore careful about what was said to them and what access they had.

I don't remember Dixie ever sitting down with me to give me his ideas of what he wanted from his DCM. I guess I just did whatever I thought would be useful. Dixie was a political appointee - - very intelligent and conservative. On that latter trait, that fitted in very well because Korea lent itself to a conservative approach, although at times he was more conservative than the rest of us. I had two advantages: I was a seasoned officer and I had served in Korea before. I focused on the day to day management of the Embassy, filling in whenever I saw gaps. Dixie provided overall management and did a lot of the representational work -- public appearances. That left me with a large task which I managed as I saw fit most of the time. I thought Dixie was a great manager -- he listened and took advice and gave the staff considerable leeway. I couldn't have asked for a better set-up.

I also spent time covering the waterfront. I had my own contacts in the Korean community and did some of my own reporting. Most often, I passed the drafts to Dixie; he made very few, if any changes. So I kept my hand in the substantive reporting area. The government officials whom I saw on a regular basis were Yi Song Okay -- the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs -- Gong Rho Myong -- the Assistant Minister for Political Affairs then and now the Foreign Minister -- and Park Gun-Woo -- the Director for North American Affairs, currently (1996) the Korean Ambassador to the US. I saw Park most frequently; he was an old friend. The North American Directorate in the Foreign Ministry was by far the largest component of that institution and Park was beginning to expand its function to include Politico-Military affairs. The Foreign Ministry

did not have a Pol-Mil Bureau, but Park saw the need and he started to take on the liaison responsibility with the Defense Ministry. I think in part we (the US), were responsible for forcing the Foreign and Defense Ministries to work much more closely because we raised issues that cut across neat jurisdictional lines. Park Gun Woo saw the future; he understood that the Foreign Ministry would have to acquire greater responsibility and therefore greater knowledge as Korea became an increasing force in international relations.

Outside the Foreign Ministry, I used to have regular contacts with the Trade Ministry -- Park Pil Soo, an assistant minister and some of his staff. I had regular contacts with Blue House staff members -- Choi Kwang Soo, Kim Kyong Hwan, Lee Bum Suk (he was later killed in the Burma assassination when he was the Foreign Minister). I also saw officials in the Defense Ministry and played golf continually with some Korean generals. Unfortunately, my language competence was minimal; I studied it incessantly, but I could remember my German -- learned twenty-five years earlier -- far better than Korean; I did learn enough Korean to get along in the Kisaeng house and in the market places and on the golf courses with the caddies. I could probably even maintain some kind of dialogue with an old Korean general who didn't speak much English; between his broken English and my broken Korean, we could maintain some kind of dialogue. But I found Korean a very, very difficult language.

Dixie maintained contact with the CINC. Unlike my previous experience, he had a good relationship with the CINC and the American military in general. We did not face the tensions that had existed in the mid to late 1970s. There were of course differences in views between the diplomatic and military arms of the US government, but that was to be expected. I think Dixie's relationship with both Bob Sennewald and Bill Livsey -- the two CINCs while I was in Seoul -- was pretty good.

That gave me more time to pursue my own interests; Dixie had no problem with that because he knew that I had good contacts from my previous tour. Also, the fact that I played golf was an asset. It enabled me to talk to high level people, like Cabinet ministers, in an informal setting; it would not have been appropriate for me to call on them in their offices, but out on the links, good conversations could be held. The availability of a golf course -- in Yongsan -- and my interest in playing the game gave me access to many people whom I might not have been able to see, except perhaps the highest level -- the President. Dixie and I shared the contacts; he knew many members of the cabinet and the business and academic community and he focused on those, while I cultivated the bureaucracy.

In addition to this contact/reporting function, I also was the overseer of the day-to-day Embassy operations making sure that we were responsive to the Ambassador's and Washington's wishes. As I suggested earlier, the consular operation became an increasing work load for me, although the details of our efforts were left to Keller.

In general, I think the Embassy sections worked well together. There was a little friction periodically between a couple of the sections, but that didn't interfere with our tasks or our productivity. I can remember one funny situation involving Walt Lundy and the Agricultural Attaché. Walt was skinny and the son of a peanut farmer. Jim Freckmann, the Ag Attaché, was fat and the son of a dairy farmer. He always used to complain about the lack of rain. Lundy on

the other hand used to say that his father had always complained about too much rain. So there were differences -- particularly about the size of the next rice crop. The continual bickering ceased after I called both of them into the office and told them to cut it out. But that was a very minor situation; on the whole, I think the Embassy worked well as a unit despite the many disparate Washington agencies represented in Seoul.

Carter and I lived in an old Japanese house which was on Compound 1, right in the middle of town. I used to walk to work; sometimes I walked home for lunch. The security strictures in this period were not particularly onerous; I did not use a personal guard and never felt threatened, even towards the end of the tour when the security issue got a little more attention. We may still have had the monthly practice air raids for a while after I arrived, but I believe they were suspended before I left. The curfew, which was in effect during my last tour, had been abolished unfortunately, because it meant later hours in the evening. The curfew was very beneficial to diplomats because you could be certain that almost all social occasions would end by 10:30 or 11:00. In fact, life in Seoul during the 1981-85 period was very relaxed. Of course, we were always busy; there is something about Koreans that makes life always interesting from a professional point of view. If there wasn't a crisis in the morning, you could be sure that there would be one by the time the day ended. The social life was always busy; there were very few nights that Carter and I spent at home alone. Some of the occasions were stag -- Kisaeng parties -- but most were with Carter. So we were busy, but it was most enjoyable.

The city had changed considerably in the intervening five years. The Lotte Hotel had been built right opposite City Hall. I was stunned on return by the change; new buildings had sprung up all over the city. The buildings were marble faced -- not just concrete as had been true in the 1970s. It was the third generation of buildings in Seoul, following funny buildings ten stories high and then some high-rise buildings which had little grace. The new buildings were impressive; the Koreans were beginning to use new materials and new architecture. By the mid-1980s, traffic was still manageable because the Korean car manufacturers had not yet developed production lines for domestic cars. Motorcycles and small Hyundais were quite popular, but the major surge of traffic didn't really begin until the late 1980s and the early 1990s. So in the early 1980s, one could still drive through town at a reasonable pace. The pollution was as always atrocious, caused primarily by the "Ondol" heating and the diesel buses. The buses downtown looked like railroad trains -- one after another in an endless stream. When I walked to work in the morning -- particularly in winter time -- I could cut through the pollution with a knife and could feel the impact of that stuff on my lungs.

During the 1981-85 period, Korea was still under a dictatorship, following a military coup led by Chun Doo Hwan. I don't believe that Chun's background was a disadvantage to us; that is, unlike Park Chung Hee, he did not show preference for discussing issues with the CINC rather than the Ambassador. In any event, Bob Sennewald was a top flight human being, and I didn't notice any competition between the CINC and the Ambassador for Chun's attention. I also didn't notice the Koreans trying to play the two elements of the US government one against the other. Of course, in a situation such as existed in Korea, the US military has an advantage because it maintains close contacts with its Korean counterparts, many of whom were close to the President. I think in general, the US Embassy in Seoul probably has never known enough about the Korean military, but I don't think, at least in the period we are discussing, that had any direct effect on our policy

and actions. It was not an issue that I spent much time on.

We still had a JUSMAAG, run by a succession of major generals. There was always, as had been historically true, some friction about who was in charge of the JUSMAAG. On paper, that unit was part of the Embassy, but the general's efficiency report was written by the CINC. That made for a difficult situation for the JUSMAAG chief; some were more skillful than others in bridging this organizational divide. One of the chiefs -- Hugh Quinn, who was there for much of my tour -- became a close friend of Dixie's. That helped smooth any ruffled feathers that might have arisen.

While I was in Korea the second time, we established a consulate in Pusan. For many years, we had had a USIA branch library and offices there, just as we had in Kwangju and Taegu. The Pusan USIA operation was the largest -- Pusan being Korea's second largest city. We decided to add a consular officer there because it was such a key center. He became the senior US government representative in Pusan, causing considerable dismay among the USIA staff, including and perhaps particularly among the USIA local employees, who until then had been the masters of the ship. I don't think that USIA felt comfortable working under the supervision of a State Department official; we were well aware of the possibility of that reaction when we reached the decision, but we felt that Pusan needed a State Department official in light of the increasing demand for services, such as consular, commercial and political reporting. Pusan was a city of 3 million people with a view that was different perhaps than Seoul's with which we needed to be more familiar. Major Korean firms -- Daewoo, Hyundai, etc -- were all headquartered in the Pusan region; that became an increasing matter of interest to us. Had we only had a consular workload, I don't think we would have established a post in Pusan; in fact, the consular section in Seoul had concerns about establishing a consular operation which would have been outside their day-to-day supervision. It was concerned that if Pusan refused to issue to a visa, the applicant would try in Seoul and vice-versa, increasing the need for more policing of applications lest we have even more fraud than we were encountering. In fact, I am not sure we ever did issue visas in Pusan. Also there was a growing American population in Pusan -- both military and civilians. They needed to be supported by an American official and that was one more reason for our action. Our one officer therefore offered a US presence, provided US citizen protection services, did some political reporting and assisted in commercial work.

I maintained contacts with the press, probably because of my own preferences rather than of necessity. The 1981-85 period was relatively quiet and we did not have many situations that raised the interest of the press. The government controlled the Korean press, of course, and was inclined in this period to maintain good relationships with the US. It therefore protected us from the local press to some extent; I don't recall that we ever had a confrontational moment with the Korean press. I thought that it was unfortunate that the Korean press was not permitted to be freer; it gave us a free ride, and I am not sure that was a good thing necessarily. I dealt a lot with the American press; I was quite open with them -- most of the time -- on a "background" basis. The American press was not major work-load because there was only one resident American newspaper man -- from "The Wall Street Journal" in Seoul during this period. The other newspaper were covered by reporters stationed in Tokyo who would visit Seoul from time to time. Sam Jameson, of "The Los Angeles Times" was very well informed about Korean matters having covered Korea for many, many years.

Human rights in Korea was always a big story with the press. Here is an illustration. When Pat Derian returned to Korea with Kim Dae Jung in 1984 or 1985, she was escorted by a mass of newspaper people. We had our hands full. It was quite a story, when this troublesome lady got off the plane with Kim Dae Jung.

Pat Derian was well known because of her service as Assistant Secretary for Human Rights during the Carter Administration. She was a strong liberal, if not a radical. She was well remembered for the fervor with which she pursued human rights violations -- actual and alleged. I can remember meetings chaired by Warren Christopher, then the Deputy Secretary and now the Secretary of State, held in the late 1970s when he would have to ask Derian to restrain herself, particularly when she advocated actions that may have seemed justified from her human rights' point of view, but would have caused severe damage to US interests in some foreign country. In any case, Derian and Bob White, a former US Ambassador in Central America -- well known for his extreme liberal views -- accompanied Kim Dae Jung when he returned from the US after a long period of exile. They felt, I suppose, that their presence would save Kim from immediate arrest or some other provocative action. In fact, the KCIA -- stupidly -- immediately rushed to the plane and after a brief scuffle, took Kim off in a car, leaving Derian and White standing alone at the bottom of the stairs. There are tapes which record Derian screaming, presumably at some KCIA agents: "Get your filthy hands off me, you-----." Derian and White came to the Embassy and raised hell with Dixie. Then they went to the press. As a counter, I was holding "deep background" -- no attribution whatsoever, even to an "Embassy official" -- briefings for the press. Clyde Haberman, a very good "New York Times" correspondent somehow managed to get a quote from Dixie which described Derian in something less than flattering terms. That quote ended up in the "New York Times" giving its editorial writer food for a very nasty piece about US ambassadors criticizing Patt Derian. Dixie was the subject of several negative comments in the US press. That was too bad because I felt that both Derian and White came to Seoul to foment trouble and Dixie, with his comment, fell into their trap and gave them an opportunity to create mischief.

The bottom line: this episode was a twenty-four hour story in Korea; it had no impact on Korea's human rights policy, which was not good. The human right situation in Korea in the early 1980s was not a nice picture, as it had not been for a long time. But Patt Derian did nothing to improve it.

I might just say a word about our policies towards Korea in the 1982-85 period, primarily as a contrast to the policies that existed during my tour five years earlier. In the first place, as it had always been, our principal objective on the Korean Peninsula was the maintenance of peace and stability. That had been true for decades and still is true today. The US could not afford to run the risk of an invasion from the North; too much investment in the well being of the South Koreans could have gone up in smoke in a very brief moment.

Our second objective, within the security context, was to pressure the ROK government to take as enlightened a political path as possible. There were two major political fault lines in Korea: first, North vs South and second, the Korean military -- or government -- vs the South Korean people. We worked as best we could to impress on the military and the government the need to

modernize the political process and minimize the human rights violations. We did this by continually talking to the government and sometimes even, on background, giving our views to the press. The Korean government of course always connected the two divisions; that is to say, they used to point out to us the dangers from the North as a way to alleviate the pressure we put on it for opening the domestic political process. The Koreans always maintained that their political restrictions were imposed because of the threat from the North. My personal view was that democracy in South Korea was on its way and that sooner or later, democracy would come to that country. The people were highly educated -- thousands and thousands had had their education outside of Korea, most in the US. Those people brought back with them democratic concepts that they had seen work well in other countries. It was obvious to me that the 5,000 or so graduates of the Korean Military Academy could not hold out forever against the tens of thousands of their countrymen who had personally witnessed democracy and an open political process. The military had been very useful to the country because they had technical proficiency which was essential to economic development and organizational skills also required for economic development. But by the early 1980s, the civilian population had acquired the same skills -- perhaps even more sharply honed than the military's. So the contribution that the military had made to economic development was no longer a necessity for South Korea. So I felt, as I said, that democracy would come to the fore in Korea sooner or later. I must frankly admit that I didn't know whether the advent of democracy in South Korea might be a security risk; the opening of the political process could be a messy process and might invite some kind of adventure from the North. I just didn't know the answer to that question, but it did make the timing of the opening a matter of vital importance.

The real issue was whether the advent of democracy should be forced. I was opposed to pushing the process ahead of what the Koreans themselves were willing to try. It was up to them to dictate the pace of political development. Democracy is not an easy process; the Koreans themselves had to be satisfied that they were mature enough to handle it. Democracy does not come naturally to Koreans as shown by the way their culture and society worked. But inevitably, as the middle class grew -- as it was doing rapidly -- it was clear to me that enough people would have the desire and intelligence to wish to be in charge of their lives. I was sure that eventually this middle class would eventually demand a greater and greater share of the governmental power. I was confident enough in this judgment that I was willing to let this process develop naturally; that is without overt, outside interference or pressure. I did not believe that it was the US' role to force the pace of the process. I thought that we promoted democracy the best when we stood as an example. This is not to say that we should not have remonstrated about human rights violations; we should have and did, often quite forcefully -- I always believed in speaking in strong terms to Koreans because that was the way they communicated with each other. I had no objection to being tough with the government -- but privately, not publicly. Again: I thought the question of democracy and the pace of political development had to be decided by Koreans themselves. If South Korea were to become a true democracy, it had to be done by the citizens on their own and for themselves. To do it just to please the Americans, a) would not have worked and b) would not have lasted.

I was not overly concerned that the process of democratization would increase instability on the Peninsula because I think the Korean military, as it had done so often in the past, would step right in and quell any movements that might endanger the security of the nation. In any case, I

did not believe that there would be a revolution. I did admit that it was a possibility; I was willing to grant that there might have been a repetition of the 1960 student uprisings. I thought that if such an event were to occur, let it happen; it might have been necessary for the political development. It would have been a case in which the Korean people might be taking serious risks, even endangering their lives. I fully expected that some blood might flow in the streets. I felt very strongly that the US, in no way or shape, should have promoted that or even given any kind of sign of approbation. I fully anticipated another 1960 uprising, but I certainly was opposed to us being cited as an instigator or opposer under any kind of pretext. One could see the political pressure building up as the middle class grew. All of my Korean contacts would essentially give me the same message -- in carefully phrased words. It was time to open the political process. Toward the end of my tour, there were occasional student uprisings, but I think the prevailing mood in the middle class was that of anger and resentment and disrespect for Chun Doo Hwan particularly, but no desire for open confrontations.

Neither Chun or his wife ever won the respect of the Korean people -- at least those with whom I had contacts -- the middle class, academics, business people and even some military. All of them referred to Chun Doo Hwan in disparaging terms; they called him "stone head" -- he was bald. They thought that Chun's wife had a very sharp chin -- i.e. they thought that she and her family were deeply involved in major corruption. This was a strong negative under-current, which grew as the middle class grew and felt stronger and stronger. I think that at least some of the government officials understood what was going on in Korea. On one occasion, Park Gun Woo at a session at the Nadja Hotel coffee shop -- where we met when we had important matters to discuss -- literally broke down and cried. I was stunned; I had never seen a Korean cry and to have an official do so was unforgettable. Park had just been in the US with Chun Doo Hwan on a visit. He and the Foreign Minister had during the flight back been called into the President's cabin for dialogue. Park said that the only thing Chun could talk about was "his personal survival." He was deeply embarrassed and outraged that the President of his country would be so obsessed with that issue. It was clear to Gun that his government had become so dictatorial that the leader of it was solely concerned with his own survival. He thought that Korea deserved better than that. And he sobbed.

That much was very different from my experiences in 1974-77. I never had (then) a Foreign Ministry official break down like that. It is true that even during my first tour, I would occasionally pick up rumblings of discontent with Park Chung Hee, but they were not nearly as audible as during my second. That in part may have been also the result of not knowing the Koreans as well during the 1970s as I did in the 1980s, but I don't believe the contempt that my contacts showed for Park Chung Hee was anything compared to that which they exhibited towards Chun Doo Hwan. It may well have been that as Park tightened the political screws, people got madder and madder, but I think Park always commanded more respect than Chun.

As I said, there were rumblings about corruption at the highest level. But I must confess that I was not aware of the depth and extent of the corruption as has been subsequently made public. I assumed, as my Korean friends used to tell me, that corruption was part of Korean life and that contractors were paying some bribes in exchange for being given business. The Korean business process was just rife with that kind of corruption. I was once told by a business leader that every New Year's Day, he would pay calls and leave envelopes stuffed with money on the desks of the

bureaucrats he and his corporation did business with. But I don't think I really understood the extent of this practice. I didn't know of instances of corruption. American firms were banned by US law from participating in these practices and I think few if any firms behaved in corrupt ways. They may well have had Korean agents that did the dirty work for them, but I don't know that for a fact. I don't think we ever had evidence that US companies were involved in bribery; I talked to many American businessmen, whom I knew well and trusted, who told me that there probably were Korean agents that paid off officials in order to get contracts for American firms. Of course, these agents made a handsome profit themselves if the awards were granted and could well have shared their profits with some Korean officials, but we never got any specifics or even allegations that we could pursue. However, the Station Chiefs may have specifics.

There was one exception to my general comment, which concerned me deeply. In Korea, there was a *Saemaul* (New Village) movement -- started many years earlier by Park Chung Hee and designed to help the rural communities. Chun Doo Hwan put his brother in charge of that movement. *Saemaul* was always a grass roots operation; the participants all wore distinct baseball hats with logos on them. I always thought that it was essentially a political movement. Money was given to members somewhat akin to "walking around" money known in some US cities. These funds were intended to buy for the government political support in the communities -- by 1982, it had spread far beyond the rural areas; you could find subgroups belonging to the movement in every city and even in the government's ministries. But when Chun's brother took over, it became clear to me that he was using this organization to corrupt the country politically -- it became an enforcer of government policies and a propaganda tool. *Saemaul*, in 1982, was a much more powerful and more worrisome organization than it had been in the 1974-77 period, although even then I was concerned about the possibility of the movement being perverted to suit the President's political motives and becoming a troublesome political issue. Under Chun's brother's aegis, it reported directly to the President and became a tool for his repressive regime. So it was more powerful and more insidious.

There was a government party of which Chun Doo Hwan was the leader. But the *Saemaul* movement became a personal, political and economic arm of the President's through his brother. It became an avenue through which the President could exert influence and pressure on the population. That concerned me deeply. There were three Ho's -- three people with the same last name who had been colonels and who Chun had brought into the government in key jobs. One of the Ho's -- perhaps the smartest and the toughest -- was assigned to *Saemaul* after Chun's brother took over.

One day, in the summer of 1985, Carter and I were virtually summoned -- "It would be in your interest to be there" -- out to *Saemaul* headquarters -- a large park near the Seoul airport with lots of exhibits -- for its annual celebration. I thought at the time that the request for my appearance had somewhat of a threatening tone to it.

Our "invitation" may have come because I may have been reported to the government as having been critical of the movement. An American company was getting involved with the Chuns on a very sensitive government contract and I was following that deal closely. There was an "open" bidding procedure, but it became clear to us that Chun's brother was being used to help this one American company to win the competition. Westinghouse, Combustion Engineering (CE), and

General Electric were bidding for the contract to construct two new nuclear power plants. Combustion Engineering had come to me at the beginning of this process and I had given them the standard briefing about the situation in Korea. Westinghouse had been in Korea for many years and therefore didn't need the briefing. Soon after that briefing, Combustion Engineering brought a consultant to Seoul from Southern California. That gentleman told me a little about their strategy which included somehow joining forces with *Saemaul*, which would make the President's brother their agent. I immediately told him about my concerns about this movement because a CE alliance with *Saemaul* would involve the American company in some of the darker parts of Korean politics.

Later, the Seoul representative of CE came in to see me and I again repeated my concerns about his company's plans to use Chun's brother as their agent, using *Saemaul* in some way or other. I told him that if CE wanted to use brother Chun and the movement, that was CE's business, but that the company should be aware of my concerns about getting in bed with *Saemaul*. I told him quite a lot about that movement -- the CIA as well as many of my own contacts knew a considerable amount about what was going on -- including specific case citations which were the cause of some of my concerns. I told the CE representative that he and his company were going to run some serious risks by using Chun's brother. I had no doubt that it might have been a good way to get to the President; on the other hand, if the whole story were told -- as it probably would be eventually -- there was a serious possibility that CE would be barred from doing any further work in Korea. I thought that CE should have all views before it reached a decision. I was rather blunt in my assessment and the CE man left thanking me profusely. I think he was grateful for the information.

In about two or three weeks, the CE consultant from California came to see me again, furious -- he was close to threatening me. He pointed out the stakes for CE and the involvement of a lot of high level people in the Korea deal. He told me that Judge Clark, the former Assistant to President Reagan for National Security affairs, was a member of the consulting firm. So this was a high stakes game. I might add that this representative of the consulting firm had also worked in the White House. I suspect that he had a hand in the "invitation" I received from *Saemaul*. I frankly cannot remember his name. As I said, the "invitation" to the *Saemaul* celebration came almost as an order, in threatening tones. I did go with my wife, Carter. She was sort of bemused, but I wanted her there as a witness. We were given a lot of time and attention by Chun's brother, shown around as VIPs, etc. I was given the "premier" tour with all the propaganda about *Saemaul*'s great achievements and deeds. It was a Potemkin Village operation if I had ever seen one. I listened carefully and smiled everywhere. My assumption was that Chun's brother and Ho had heard of my misgivings about the movement and were trying to influence me to take a different point of view.

Following the tour, I was asked to come see Judge Clark. I should mention that at the time I was the Chargé -- the Ambassador was away. I went to the Chosun Hotel to meet with the Judge. He talked to me in his most gracious and disarming manner -- about nothing that was of great interest to me (essentially about all the projects he was involved in, including the "Three Gorges" project in China which he had just visited). Finally, in a very soft voice, he said that he hoped that the Embassy would support the CE bid. I told him that since three American firms were bidding, we certainly couldn't favor one over the others. He said he understood that, but he hoped

that we would give CE advice and support "as appropriate."

As I was being ushered out -- still wondering what this little act was all about -- out of the suite's second bedroom appeared another American. I immediately recognized him. It was Lynn Nofzinger -- a major player in American politics. We had never met, but I knew him immediately from photographs that I had seen in the press. He came over to me, put his arm around my shoulder as we were walking to the elevator and said: "Paul, we are not going to have any troubles, are we?" It was obvious that he was referring to my concerns about *Saemaul*, about which he had undoubtedly heard from Combustion Engineering. I knew that at that time my name was in the White House as a candidate for the ambassadorship to New Zealand. There was no question in my mind that Clark and Nofzinger knew that too. I was furious with their tactics, but there really wasn't anything further I could do. I felt that I was personally threatened and that in their subtle way, these guys had put me on notice that my future in the Foreign Service was at stake. I think that Nofzinger in fact even referred to my "golden future" in the Service. I certainly felt that a message was being sent to me; I resented that deeply and was furious. I have told this story to many people, including the press -- on background. I am still mad about.

What upset the consultant firm I presume was that I was giving advice to CE -- as well as them -- which was at odds with what it was saying to CE -- in fact they told me that outright and that was confirmed to me by CE. As I said, the CE representative in Seoul had listened very carefully to me and appeared appreciative of my briefings. He had obviously reported what he had heard back to headquarters in the US. It was the same comments that I had made to the representative of the consulting firm. In any event, CE hired Chun's brother as their agent and did indeed win the contract for the nuclear plants. So my advice may have not been good, but it was clear to me that any American firm that asked should be given the benefit of all of our knowledge about *Saemaul* and my concerns about the risks of dealing with Chun's brother.

There was another major business transaction that was very much alive during my tour. I refer to the F-16 vs. F-18 competition, which actually began when I had been in the Political Section in the 1970s. I remember when the General Dynamics people first arrived in my office in the mid-1970s. At the beginning of the competition among American manufacturers of fighter aircraft, Northrop with its F-5 was also involved, but it dropped out of contention fairly early in the game. So by the time I became DCM, it was General Dynamics' F-16 vs. McDonnell and the F-18. I don't remember any allegations of illegal activities involved in this huge sale potential. Both companies used to come to the Embassy for briefings and discussions. I was always as even-handed as I could be. In fact, there wasn't very much that the Embassy could do in that situation. Representations on the companies' behalf was really unnecessary; both had good connections with the Korean military and the Ministry of Defense. We would just tell them what we had heard when they came to the Embassy and the representatives of both companies would tell us some of what they knew.

The 1982-85 period was quite active on the commercial side. There were many American companies eager to do business in Korea. The corruption that was rife in Korea -- unrelated to US business -- was partially known to us, although, as I said, the magnitude that was uncovered later came as a surprise to me. It was well known that Chun's wife and her family were involved in bribery. I suspect that the corruption was probably worse than it had been during my previous

tour. That may have been due to Chun or perhaps I was simply more knowledgeable about Korea during my second tour than I was in the first. I think the Chun regime was more venal than Park's had been, just as I thought it was more dictatorial than Park's had been. I never had the same respect for Chun Doo Hwan that I had for Park Chung Hee. But I could be wrong. Neither were kind and gentle rulers; both were very tough; and Park was very smart as well. It is this intellectual capability that I think distinguished Park from Chun.

We did initiate a long term battle with the Korean government in those days over what we considered unfair trade practices -- import restrictions, high tariffs, etc. These practices of course were in effect when I served in Seoul the first time, but by the early 1980s, the Korean economy was bigger and US commercial interests in Korea had increased greatly. That meant that as a government, we became much more active in the 1980s in trying to get the Koreans to open their economic system to US investments and imports. Korea exported about one-third of its GNP of which 1/3 went to the US. That made us a major market for Korean exports. But the trade was not reciprocal. As I said, there were major barriers -- both tariff and non-tariff. The Koreans were also stealing our intellectual properties. The IBM representative told me one time that the Koreans were such good copiers of memory chips that they used to even mark the US patent number on the chips they manufactured -- without paying royalties to the US patent holder.

So we faced major trade impediments, as there had always been, except that by the early 1980s, Korea was beginning to be a major producer in the world, no longer dependent on hand-outs. I decided that it was time to go after the Koreans on their trade practices. I started to chair a weekly meeting with the three senior economic officers in the Embassy -- the Economic, Commercial and Agricultural Counselors (Don McConville, George Griffin and Dan Conable). Initially, this meeting was intended to bring them up to date on political issues which they felt had not been adequately brought to their attention. But it became very apparent that they really weren't that interested in political issues; so we made trade issues the main agenda topic. I think it was one of the best things I have ever done in the Foreign Service. The three officers began to vent their frustrations and I began to understand the major barriers that the Koreans had erected against imports and investments. Finally, I asked the three to develop a series of messages to Washington, describing the problems as they saw them -- in detail -- and concluding with a series of recommendations on actions that should be taken. I also charged them to draft a speech for the Ambassador which would be delivered to an audience of top Korean economists and industrialists. The tone of that speech was to be tough because we did not want Korea to become a second Japan -- highly protectionist. It is true that for years, Washington had raised these issues with the Koreans, but they weren't really pursued very diligently. I wanted a different, more comprehensive, more public approach to an old subject.

So we put together some massive documentation of Korean delinquencies. I think we really stirred Washington up with this series of telegrams. In fact, we must have been the first -- or among the first -- to take a host country to task for its commercial behavior. Washington seemed to receive our communications with some pleasure. So over the years, starting in 1984, we started a major campaign to break Korean protectionism. Dixie's speech was the first shot. Nam Duk Woo -- the former Deputy PM and senior Korean in the commercial field -- was visibly annoyed by Dixie's speech; he was not accustomed to an American ambassador calling "a spade a spade." When I asked him about the speech, he shrugged his shoulders, suggesting that if the

American Ambassador wanted to talk that way, he couldn't prevent it, but it would not be taken very seriously. I think the speech was only a first step and by itself, would not have made much of an impact. It was followed by a comprehensive enduring program which through our actions was to make it clear to the Koreans that we would do everything within our power to prevent them from becoming another Japan. I think Washington came to the conclusion that if an embassy could do this -- an institution not known as an aggressive combatant of host country mistaken policies -- it should join in. I don't know what the Washington institutions did on their own to pressure the Koreans, but I do know that they welcomed our proposals and supported us fully.

As I suggested, our program started about 12 months before my departure. I was not there long enough to see the fruits of our initiative, but I was very pleased that we started the ball rolling. I can't say enough for the efforts of the economic counselors. Dan Conable -- a nephew of the Congressman and World Bank President -- was our Agricultural Counselor; George Griffin was the Commercial Counselor following a stint as a Political Counselor in India -- where he was accused by Indira Gandhi of being a CIA agent, forcing him to change specializations for a while -- and Don McConville, the Economic Counselor. The three were superb and worked together in admirable fashion. The reports to Washington and the recommendations were essentially theirs; I served primarily as a catalyst. The local American Chamber of Commerce was appreciative of our efforts. The days of "kudos" from US private business had not yet arrived fully, but the Chamber was supportive. I used to see a lot of the American business community; the Embassy's doors were always open to them. Dixie had excellent rapport with the business community. He spent a lot of time with them. We saved the Chamber on one occasion when it may not have been altogether happy with us. It had prepared a booklet of a 150 pages or so of "do's and don'ts in Korea." Fortunately, they brought the draft to us to read before issuing it. That was fortunate because had it been published as written, American business in Korea would have been dead for many years thereafter. It was a most undiplomatic document; it referred to Koreans as always smelling of "Kimchi", as being "back stabbers", etc. I found it hard to believe that anyone living and doing business in Seoul would have written that sort of stuff. Not only was it wrong on its merits, but that anyone would have ever dreamed of saying things like that about their hosts was hard to believe.

I might note that I did detect some change in Korean attitude towards the US in those days. I think that the students' resentment of US policies in the early 1980s was greater than it had been in the mid-1970s -- certainly I was more aware of it. In my second tour, everything was somewhat more radicalized; there was no question that political pressures were building as I have suggested. The Kwangju events of 1980 were still resonating in those years as indeed they still periodically surface even today. The students would not let go of that subject; that increasingly put us on the defensive trying to explain why we were not responsible for the actions of the Korean military because we had not released those troops from the UN command. It is doubtful that even if we had wished or commanded, that we could have stopped them from marching on Kwangju and committing the mayhem they did. I think it was clear that if the ROK military decided that it was needed to quell domestic unrest, no orders from a US general would have stopped them. But the question of US involvement or complicity kept arising, particularly during the student riots in 1984. Kwangju became a political football, used by the opposition parties to bring pressure on the government. I remember that Steve Bradner, who was the CINC's

political advisor -- whom I have mentioned before -- and I worked very diligently on a "White Paper" which was intended to be a description of the actual events of 1980. The bottom line of the paper was that the US was absolved of any responsibility for the actions of the Korean military for the reasons I have mentioned. In fact, 1980 was somewhat of a repeat of 1960 when we had also found that we had no control over the Korean military when it was faced by prospects of domestic unrest. Then, Park Chung Hee had taken troops right out of the front lines on the DMZ and moved them into Seoul to occupy strategic places. In any case, when Steve and I finished the report, we wanted to issue it publicly, but it was not. I believe the Department thought it wiser not to, that it would create more controversy and not resolve the issue. We wanted to issue it because we thought it desirable to be out in front with our story to try to head off any more adverse publicity. In fact, after I left Seoul, a "White Paper" was issued by the Department; I think it would have been better if we had done it earlier because when we did release it, I believe it was under pressure from the National Assembly and then it looked like a rationale, rather than a forthright statement of events and the limitations of the UN command structure. Both Steve and I assumed that sooner or later, the US would have to publish a written commentary and we thought sooner would be better.

As I said, the Kwangju issue never seems to be buried. Most people have a natural instinct, and that is certainly true for the Koreans, to blame someone else for their own misfortune. Kwangju is also a convenient issue for those who would use it to pursue their own political agenda. Some people -- like Americans -- blame their government for their problems. In the case of Chun Doo Hwan, there was certainly cause to blame the Korean government for some of the misfortunes that afflicted the Koreans; but it was also convenient to blame the US because we did have a pro-consul image in the minds of many Koreans. We did indeed help sustain a series of Korean governments that might not have passed the "democratic" standard. We did maintain a relationship with Chun, Park and Rhee because the stability of the Peninsula was our most important objective. So in the minds of the opposition and the students, we were seen as power behind the throne and therefore subject to their criticism. I think historians will have a major debate on whether we unnecessarily propped up dictatorial regimes thereby placing political development in Korea far behind stability and security. I think if we were prepared to use the full range of our powers -- using only legal means -- and if we were prepared to run the risk of a North attack, we probably could have undermined the Chun regime. We would have had to use economic sanctions, troop withdrawals, etc. and even a public attack on Chun. Then, we might have brought Chun down. Such actions, however, even if successful, might not be responsible in light of the risks that they engendered. I don't think that there was any sentiment in the US government to take such drastic actions, given the risks and in light of the economic development blossoming in Korea, which was going to create a base for gradual political development. As I said, it was always my opinion that democracy would come to Korea when the Koreans themselves were ready for it -- i.e. when economic growth had resulted in a critical middle class mass.

I believe that in fact that is how matters developed in Korea. The peaceful passage of political leadership from Chun Doo Hwan to Rho Tae Woo to a complete democratic process really was beyond my wildest dreams and hopes. I had anticipated a violent passage from autocracy to democracy. If the US was responsible for anything that went on in Korea then we should be given credit for assisting this expansion of political rights to the Korean people. We assisted first

in the economic recovery of the country after the war, then in its economic development and then in its political development.

The issue of political growth in Korea was an issue that we discussed frequently in the 1982-85 period. I wrote about the size of the middle class, its continuing growth and the political demands for power that it would eventually make on the government. During the 1984-85 period, I saw Rho Tae Woo periodically; he was then the head of the Olympic Committee. He was much more reasonable, accessible and diplomatic than his classmate Chun Doo Hwan. I thought that Rho was undoubtedly a powerful figure who might be instrumental in some way in bringing change to the Korean political process. I viewed him as someone who could be a good influence, although I had no idea that he would succeed Chun -- after I left Korea.

David Blakemore and I felt very strongly about the need for increased political power sharing to include the ever growing Korean middle class. After Dave's departure, our faith in Korea's future was really tested. In 1985 -- I think -- a group of students took over the library in our USIA building. They sat down and refused to leave. They started to write political messages on the windows. That started a major debate with the Korean government. The police immediately wanted permission to enter the building and drag out the students. I opposed that vigorously; I wanted to try to see whether we couldn't convince them to leave peacefully. So we sent Harry Dunlop, our Political Counselor, to start a dialogue with the students; that lasted three days. He just kept talking to them. He did a magnificent job. In the meantime, in the Embassy, there was major ongoing debate. I, Steve Bradner and several other senior officers wanted to continue the dialogue; there were others, like the Station Chief and the Security Officer, who wanted the students ejected forcibly. We did not want to use the police; we thought that given time, we could talk the students out of the building. We had a very responsible and thorough discussion, chaired by Dixie. He was a great chairman listening patiently to both sides and maintaining order and civility. The pro-police action people were concerned about the US image -- we looked "weak" and "vacillating." The Korean government would certainly never have permitted this "disorder" to continue. In the final analysis, Dixie sided with us "weak kneed diplomats", even though the government -- including the Foreign Ministry, I believe -- began to apply increasing pressure on us to let their police into the building to drag the students out. The government felt that the incident was an embarrassment to Korea, as I suppose it was.

By the third day, the events at the USIA building were becoming well known throughout Seoul, even though the media was not allowed to give it any coverage. The students wrote their political testaments on the windows so that all passerby knew what was going on. Of course, with each passing day, the number of Korean spectators increased, so that what the US was doing about the student invasion was well known throughout the city.

While Harry Dunlop continued the dialogue with the students, we also talked incessantly with Washington. CIA experts on "hostage" situations were brought in to counsel us over the phone. There were questions about whether we should bring food and liquids to the students. I talked to Paul Wolfowitz, the Assistant Secretary, on a couple of occasions. We received a tremendous amount of attention and good support. One day, when I had to go to the USIA building to talk to Dunlop, someone took my picture which then appeared in the "New York Times". Then I got calls from all over the US, from friends who wanted to know what I was doing. I think the US

press gave us very good and favorable coverage. My Korean friends -- like Yi Hong Goo (recently the Prime Minister and then a university professor), who were essentially spectators, gave me good feed-back. They advised us to continue down our path; it was good advice which we followed. Eventually, the students left the building and the issue was resolved peacefully and I think to our credit.

My motivation during those days was my belief, shared by Steve Bradner -- who essentially represented the UN command -- and many others, that the USIA incident was an opportunity to show the Koreans how democracy really works. It is a system that required dialogue and patience and certainly abhors force such as the police would have undoubtedly used -- when the issue was a political one. The great irony was that when Dunlop, after three grueling days, finally talked the students into leaving the building and we had negotiated a peaceful exit and departure, as the students hit the street, the police grabbed them and threw them in paddy wagons. You could see the billy clubs flying inside the wagons, but we made strong representations and most of the students were released by the police within 12 hours and sent home. Some of the ring leaders were jailed and sentenced to jail, even though we did not press trespassing charges against the students.

All this happened in a period when we were having problems with hostage taking in the Middle East and other places. Our situation was not a hostage situation, but some saw it as US inability to protect its own people and property. In fact, it was a signal lesson on democratic development, which rarely moves without some disruptions.

Let me now return to comment about the security situation on the Peninsula. By 1982, we had passed through the time during which President Carter had announced plans to withdraw the 2nd Division. Although that never materialized, the very announcement raised the threat of a Northern invasion. Our intelligence indicated that the North had moved more troops and equipment to the front lines. Whether the North's movements were linked to Carter's words or happened coincidentally, I don't know, but it was clear that the North was strengthening its position above the 38th Parallel. By 1982, the North was in a much more threatening posture than had been true in 1977. Nevertheless, I did not believe that the North was a greater threat than it had been earlier. In fact, I remember Dick Ericson telling me that in about 1968, the North had really been aggressive and that there had been many serious fire fights with many casualties. That was followed by the "Blue House raid" and the "Pueblo" incident. So in the late 1960s and early 1970s the tension were very high. I did not think that that was the situation in 1982.

My concern for the troop build up was also always ameliorated by the fact that there hadn't been any prolonged major instances of North-South violent confrontation either along the DMZ or anywhere else. There were incidents such as the one in the China Sea that I mentioned earlier. I mean there were always minor incidents of fire exchanges -- in which people died -- but I didn't feel that any ever developed into serious situations. The South of course always painted a very dark picture of the threat; after all, it was in Chun's interest to do so since it gave him reason to maintain a high state of security alert and to repress his own people in the name of "security". In my mind, the Korean government's continual harping on the threat from the North became something like the little boy who continually cried "wolf." It kept talking about the imminent major attack, which of course never came. After a while, I think that line ceased to have much

impact on me, although from time to time, tensions along the DMZ rose and fell, as they had done since the end of the Korean war. There were periodic clashes, but, as I suggested, none that indicated that the North was considering any major attack. Our intelligence collection capability had increased technically from my previous tour, but we never had agents in the North and therefore lacked real good intelligence. Without that input, it was very difficult if not impossible to divine the thought of Kim Il Sung and his cohorts. What we knew -- which was militarily important -- was from technical means observations, but on political questions, we knew practically nothing.

One event that I can well remember was Private White's defection to North Korea. That raised a major concern for General Sennewald, who took it as a real blow to our military, and it occupied the command's attention for an extended period. Another was the defection of a young Soviet diplomat, who was on the North Korean side of the truce village and all of sudden dashed to the South across the line that had been drawn down the middle of the village after the "tree cutting" incident of 1976. He was chased by a horde of North Korean soldiers, who were immediately surrounded by Southern troops. Fortunately, the Swedish Armistice Commission representative happen to be there at the time and at some risk to his own life, managed to prevent any further collisions -- probably the death of the North Korean guards who were shooting ducks surrounded by our and South Korean troops. He ordered the North troops to get back to their side of the line and the incident never developed further. The Soviet defector was taken by helicopter to Yongsan, where he was placed in a golf cart and driven across the golf course to a safe house. He was there for several days, undergoing interrogation both from American and South Korean representatives. When he was released by our authorities he went to Boston, attended Boston University I believe and put himself through school by being a waiter. He was very bright; I think I met him briefly while he was in one of our guest houses. He was well guarded the whole time he was in Seoul for his own protection as well as ours. As a relatively junior officer, he was not a fountain of information, but he was important as a Soviet defector.

I have previously mentioned my opposition to taking visitors to the tunnels that the North had dug under the DMZ. In the first place, it was a violation of the truce agreement and secondly, it just reinforced that atmosphere of tensions that "could break out in major fighting at any time." As I said, I didn't think that to be the case at all and therefore never took visitors to the tunnels nor did I go myself. The US military did and some of our Embassy people may have done so. When Livsey succeeded Sennewald, the South Koreans proposed the construction of a restaurant in the DMZ, along with observation towers to look at the "perfidious" tunnels. It was a sheer propaganda effort. The South felt that since the North had violated the truce agreement by digging the tunnels, the South had the right to build a restaurant and observation tower so that people could see concrete evidence of the North's aggressive behavior. My opposition was overridden and the building was begun in the DMZ.

Cardinal Kim was still a major figure in Korea. I used to see him in the 1982-85 period as I had done earlier. As he was in the earlier period, I still found the Cardinal to be one of the keenest observers of the Korean political scene. He was very reliable, although he was very careful in his choice of words. You had to listen very closely to understand his message. I certainly had the impression that he felt that the domestic political situation was more tense than it had been during my earlier tour and that in fact the situation was becoming increasingly tense. I am sure

that my views, as I have expressed them earlier, were greatly influenced by the Cardinal's observations.

I don't believe that our relationships with the American missionary community improved much from the mid-1970 period. We were not in close contact with the radical element, although we saw all of them and got along well with those espousing more conservative views. I doubt that the more liberal missionaries had any more favorable view of the Embassy than they had during my previous tour. I think we had less contact with them, partly because the Maryknollers led by Father Cochran were somewhat less vigorous in their condemnation of the South Korean regime.

Father Bransfield -- a scion of a rich brewery family -- would come to see me periodically. I liked Mike, and he used me as sort of "father confessor" which is a strange role reversal in itself. He found it useful to talk to me. He worked with Korean teenagers in Inchon; many of them apparently needed a lot of help and the Father was doing his best. He did get involved to some extent in "liberation" theology, which was alive and well among the Maryknollers. He came to me one time because he had published a book, the writing of which I think was still within tolerated limits. What was not acceptable was the drawings in the book. One that I remember well was of Christ on the Cross, with a thousand bleeding mouths all over his body. It was strange and horrifying, drawn by a Korean youngster who in his anxiety to make a statement, had gone over the bounds of decency. There were other drawings of big fat businessmen sitting on small people from labor unions, etc. The drawings were just too much for the regime and the book was banned. The government had suggested some remedial action that might have taken the Father off the hook. He was faced with being expelled -- essentially -- or doing what the ROK government had suggested. He wrestled with the issue for a while and decided to accept the Korean government's suggestions and stayed for a while longer working with the Korean kids.

There were many incidents of that kind in the 1982-85 period. I once attended a dinner meeting of radical Korean ministers. I did that partly at least to irk the government. My attendance was well noted and a lot of people got really upset with me. I admired those people who risked their lives to pursue political issues about which they felt very strongly. I did spend a lot of my time on political dissidents, such as Kim Dae Jung, Moon Il Kwan and other "professional prisoners"; i.e. people who dared the government to put them in prison. Some, like Moon, I thought were kind of nutty, but I gave considerable thought to what the US government could do about those problems of human rights violations. I knew that we could only have a marginal impact, but every once in a while, when some outrageous action had been taken by the government, I would go to a Ministry and pound my fist on a desk.

I had known Kim Dae Jung from my first tour when I used to have regular contacts, but in the 1982-85 period Dixie and I made a conscious decision that it would be inappropriate for either the Ambassador or the DCM to see Kim; it would have inflamed the government without any benefit either for Kim, the cause of human rights or the US. But the Embassy did maintain contacts with him through the Political Counselor. We also saw Mrs Kim at the Embassy on a couple of occasions. In retrospect, perhaps I should have put up an effort vis a vis KDJ, but it was clear that Dixie didn't want either of the top officers of the Embassy to be seeing Kim Dae Jung. At one point, I think we received a cable from Mike Armacost, the Under Secretary for

Political Affairs asking whether either the Ambassador or the DCM shouldn't make an effort to see Kim. Our response was that any such action would bring a major response from the government without benefit to anyone; it was not worth it. On the other hand, I did see Kim Young Sam all the time; the two of us would occasionally go to a "Kisaeng" house -- places which I knew; I would arrange an evening there with him, although he didn't drink very much so that it was more or less a "working" social occasion. Both Kims, I believe, came to the Residence at least once for a Fourth of July party in 1985. Kim Young Sam came to my house for lunch a couple of times. He was an opposition leader but the government didn't fear him nearly as much as it did Kim Dae Jung. In light of the political situation in Korea at the time, it didn't really seem that either of the Kims nor any of the other opposition leaders had much of a future.

I must say that I viewed Kim Young Sam as a political opportunist. His reputation, particularly among some of my academic friends, was that he was not too smart. I suspect that that feeling may not have changed even now that he is the President. My first hand impressions were not quite as stark as that; I don't think we ever got many insights from him, but I suspect that he felt that it was worthwhile having people know that he had contact with the American Embassy; it was probably a plus for him. He always tried to cover all the bases -- that was a *modus operandi* that he had developed much earlier in his career, and he kept it up for as long as I knew him.

We had very good relationships with the Japanese Embassy. Ambassador Maeda had served in Korea when he was a young man; so he knew the language. Unfortunately, he also had learned to speak English, but his pronunciation was so bad one could hardly understand him. Nevertheless, he, his DCM, and we had a "home to home" lunch arrangement; one month we would meet at his residence and one month at ours. I always felt that those exchanges benefitted the Japanese more than they did us; we always had better information about Korean affairs, which is understandable in light of the bitter view the Koreans and Japanese had of each other. This was particularly true on military matters, where we obviously had a major edge since we worked with the Korean military on a daily basis. We tried to keep the Japanese informed on matters that raised tensions on the Peninsula such as tunnels or planes flying near or over the DMZ or events in the Sea of Japan. On the other hand, I think they may have withheld some material from us. They viewed the Koreans through a different prism than we did. But the Japanese did cooperate with us and I think in general it was a very profitable relationship for both of us. There was not any discussion of commercial issues -- an area where we competed with them in Korea.

That brings me back to the nuclear plants. We did have European competition for the construction of additional plants -- the French and the Swiss. Framatone and Asae Brown Boveri had been bidding for nuclear plant contracts for many years and they were still involved in 1982-85. But I don't think we ever had to complain about an "uneven playing field" or "unusual" French or Swiss tactics. The French Ambassador was a very good personal friend -- he just retired as Consul General in New York and I don't ever recall complaining to him about any Framatone tactics.

I mentioned earlier our major anti-fraud visa efforts. I would like to talk at greater length about that. Ken Keller, the Consul General, and I arrived in Seoul at about the same time. My first reaction to Ken was that he was a somewhat dour man; he was certainly taciturn. He was born near the Idaho-Canada border where he lived on a "stump" farm -- i.e. where all the trees had

been cut down leaving just the stumps. As I mentioned, I learned that he was in fact a brilliant officer; he had graduated from the University of Montana with a straight 4.0 grade average. As part of my general routine, I used to have regular meetings with Ken, during which he would keep me informed about the operations of his section. Bruce Beardsley was Ken's deputy. They set up a rigorous system of inspections of the visa operations. There had been rumors about fraud in the Consular Section for many, many years with allegations being made that it was possible to buy visas. Ken apparently had done a lot of work on this issue even before he arrived and when he arrived, he issued a set of guidelines for his young officers. Following these guidelines not too many months later, one of these young officers -- Mark Fitzpatrick, a brilliant fellow who later worked for me in Wellington -- was reviewing a visa petition from Los Angeles, in support of a Korean trying to emigrate. It looked funny to him; so he reviewed the previous day's visa petitions and found a petition filed allegedly by someone in New York. He concluded from the identical "typewritten signature" that the two petitions must have been typed on the same typewriter. That brought him to the hypothesis that in fact both petitions had in fact been typed in Seoul, down the street in one of the many visa broker's offices.

That was a first clue. By going through files, Keller and his staff found approximately 1000 fraudulent visas -- immigrant and non-immigrant -- that had been issued in the previous six months. This was the result of a careful, thorough step by step investigation which finally resulted in the termination of 11 local employees and police raids on four visa brokerage firms. Among other things, we found that our messenger, a Korean employee who used to deliver the unclassified mail in his shopping cart, used to screen all the visa material that had come from the States. He would take all interesting visa correspondence to one of these brokerage houses, turning those outfits into replicas of an Embassy visa office -- filled with all the forms and petitions. In fact, these brokerage houses could process all visa applications with these, forging all the required documents. Whatever official assistance they needed, they got from our Korean employees.

With the assistance of those eleven corrupted employees, the brokers were making small fortunes. They were charging \$10,000 for an immigrant visa and \$5,000 for a non-immigrant visa. Ken Keller deserves the full credit for unmasking and pursuing this fraud; it was brilliant work. He recruited assistance from a variety of intelligence and military units. He managed to penetrate one of the fraudulent operations. From time to time, Washington experts would come out and provide advice, but it was mostly Keller and the Embassy.

There was minimal assistance from the Korean government; that was very frustrating and upset me no end. I took Ken to see then Secretary General Lee Bum Suk -- a friend and a well known Americaphile, who was unfortunately killed in Burma along with many of his colleagues in that North Korean terrorist action. In any case, Lee listened, but nothing happened. The ROK was just not interested; it was in its interest to have as many Koreans leave Korea as possible; perhaps it made control easier. In any event, it didn't care that someone got an illegal immigrant visa or that one person moved ahead of his or her fellow citizens in the long wait for a visa. It was no skin off the government's nose. What actions the government did take were symbolic at best. At the root of all the problems was of course the fact that although we issued 30,000 immigrant visas each year to Koreans the demand far outstripped the legal limitation. Given that situation, there was bound to be bribery and malfeasance; I don't know how far it went, but it

certainly did involve a number of our own employees -- almost entirely Korean although there was at least one American suspect. There may over the years have been more Americans involved in this traffic, but we will never know.

Keller was very distressed by his predecessor's lack of action. In fact, that officer went on to Manila where I believe he was caught in a corruption case. Apparently he was not a paragon of virtue. Ken's serious pursuit of the fraud started in 1982 and lasted through my tour in Seoul even after Ken was replaced my last year by Andy Antippas. It was Ken's view -- a correct one, I believe -- that you can never in a Korean situation completely eliminate fraud and bribery; you just had to be continually vigilant. Andy was not quite as diligent about the issues as Ken had been; neither were some Ambassadors who followed Dixie. These people I think were much too cavalier about caring whether someone illegally went to the head of the waiting list; their attitude was almost "Oh, well, they are all Korean and what do we care which Koreans get in?" I think that was a totally unacceptable view. The last person on the waiting list might come up for eligibility in ten or fifteen years; if he or she kept getting bypassed by line jumpers, they would never get an immigrant visa. The applicant who jumped the waiting list did so by bribery and obtaining fraudulent petitions. I think it was an entirely unacceptable practice which we, as Americans, could absolutely not condone. It may not have made any difference to the number of Koreans who would have immigrated into the US; that was set by law, but it did make a difference to which Koreans were admitted, when.

In addition, there were non-immigrant applicants who through these fraudulent brokerage systems obtained visas with full intention to remain in the US and then apply for "green cards" or somehow set up permanent residence in the US. Again, there were too many of our staff who were not sufficiently disturbed by that practice. They couldn't care whether the Koreans cheated on each other or even on us. As I said, I think that view was erroneous and damaging to our own image. By the time I left, we had cleaned out the corruption in our own visa section -- at least that we knew about. But the pressure to get a visa continued and I suspect that some of the fraud was still going on and probably still does today -- as it probably does in every visa issuance establishment where demand exceeds supply. My view was that although I knew that we would not put an end to the fraud and abuse, we had an obligation to pursue it and minimize it to the greatest extent possible. That was Keller's view and he convinced me of its correctness.

Let me now briefly comment on my recollections of the KAL 007 incident. I believe that the first report of the incident came from our military, although it took a number of days before we really knew what had happened. It was a tremendous tragedy that brought shock to all. I knew the sister of one of the victims; many of the people in the Embassy knew someone who was either in the plane or was related to one of the victims. So the tragedy was heartfelt in the American community, as well as the Korean one. The first days were consumed by general grief and concern. Dixie was at his best under such circumstances. Then began the difficult task of reconstructing events. We knew fairly early that Flight KAL 007 had gone down, but why and precisely where took time to discover. It was the Indication Center at Yongsan (a military intelligence unit) that began to put the pieces of information together. From Northern Japan -- a listening post -- it had taped the conversation between the Soviet fighter pilots and their ground controllers. That gave us clear evidence of what had happened. The pilot had been ordered to shoot by a controller in Central Russia. I believe that the incident was not a deliberate

provocation by anyone, but rather a Russian error in judgment -- that is confusion about the nature of the plane that had wandered off course. The Soviets simply made a wrong decision to shoot it down, and I think the tapes proved that.

Washington was soon heard from trying to get information. We then became very busy trying to fill in the blanks. In a few days, President Reagan took to the airwaves blasting the Soviet action in his characteristically "evil empire" fashion. He blasted them for purposefully shooting down a civilian flight and killing many innocent civilians. I was not at all happy with the Reagan speech because by that time we in Seoul had come to understand the error that the Soviets made; I thought Reagan's accusation did not altogether fit the facts -- at least as we knew them. I don't condone the Soviet action; it was bad judgement and they should be held accountable. But they were not guilty of the perfidious behavior of which Reagan accused them.

I think that Washington over-reacted to the downing of KAL 007 and I thought that the President was espousing his hard line for political reasons -- not necessarily supported by the facts, at least as I knew them. He exaggerated the Soviet iniquity; I thought that that was unfortunate. Somewhat in contrast, the South Koreans were not nearly as bombastic. They were never as concerned about the Soviets as we were; they were much more paranoid about North Korea. I am sure they were happy with the Reagan speech and they may well -- behind the scenes in Washington -- have urged that the President give a speech of the sort he did. One of the problems of being in an Embassy such as Seoul is that you are never certain what is happening in Washington.

I had early confirmation of my view of what happened by talking to the director of intelligence at the command in Yongsan -- a brigadier general. I had a long conversation with him during which we reviewed all aspects of the incident and he agreed that the exchange between the Soviet pilot and the ground controllers was evidence that the shoot-down was a tragic accident and not a deliberate mass murder. The Soviets didn't fully understand what they were doing; they also had obviously been concerned by the presence of one of our "spy" planes which had been spotted some hours earlier.

Soon after the accident the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board people came out. They were very careful in their analysis and very professional; I was greatly impressed. I knew something about flying safety and procedures, having served as an Air Force pilot. I thought that their findings as provided us in their last briefing was right on the mark. They thought that the Korean pilots of 007 had probably accidentally programmed a 10% error into their computers before they left Anchorage and that despite the checks that were made before flight, it was perfectly possible for the same mistake being repeated three times during the three checks that a pilot goes through before take off. It was clear that this scenario was most likely if one looked at the track of the plane from Anchorage until it went down. The plane was continually 10% off in its flight path before and after it left the Alaska Air Defense Zone and that mistake was never corrected. I think that is what Seymour Hersch concluded in his book on the subject, by the way.

Charlie Cho was the CEO of Korean Air Line and came under a lot of fire. Dixie was close to him personally and knew what troubles Cho was going through. I think KAL acted responsibly; it tried to get information out as soon as possible and then to help the families as much as

possible. It was clear that KAL had a major problem on its hands; Cho was under tremendous political and public pressure and condemnation. The downing of KAL 007 was a major tragedy, especially in Korea. There were many rumors about why the plane had wandered off course. One of the suppositions was that the airline or the pilot was just trying to save fuel and took the more direct route which would have taken him over Soviet territory. In fact, Cho had offered incentives to his pilots to try to speed up their flights at reduced fuel consumption. That just added fuel to the speculation that KAL was trying to "cut corners." I think that was a cynical Korean view of fellow Koreans, which horrified us to some extent. Because there were some Americans on board, we had to pursue this issue for several months after the incident, but that was not a major problem for us.

While on the subject of tragedies, let me talk a little about the Burma assassinations. The North Koreans perpetrated a terrorist attack on a Korean official delegation, headed by Chun Doo Hwan. It took place at a major Burmese shrine -- pillars, domes, etc. The explosion collapsed the roof killing 16 members of the Korean delegation, including the Foreign Minister Lee Bum Suk and Kim Jae Ik, the senior economic expert in the Korean government, Han Byung Chun, the former Korean Ambassador to the US, and the Trade Minister. We knew most of the deceased and some were very close friends of the Embassy and had been for many years. Chun Doo Hwan, the presumptive target, was late in arriving for the ceremony at the shrine and therefore was never in danger.

The first thing that had to be done was to figure who was the perpetrator and capture him if possible. We assumed that it was the North Koreans because the target surely was Chun Doo Hwan. I think we put all the troops on the DMZ on alert because we didn't know what the North Korean follow-up actions might be. In fact, there was not any change in North Korean military posture. What was interesting was the exchanges about the terrorists -- two of whom had been captured by the Burmese. As I recall, we in Seoul had a lot of exchanges with Charlie Salmon, then our Chargé in Rangoon. One of the captured terrorists had a grenade and had tried to blow himself up. Finally, the Burmese got confessions from these two terrorists. Dixie did a wonderful job during this period; he paid his respects to all of the families of the assassinated Koreans. He spent a lot of time with them and I think, in light of Korean culture, this was a tremendously important gesture which was warmly appreciated not only by the families but by the Koreans generally.

I was horrified by the North Korean action. It was a terrible heinous deed. It was such a clumsy effort to try to over-throw Chun Doo Hwan. I think they expected to destabilize the South through their efforts and perhaps bring to power a regime more to their liking. I don't remember that tensions had risen in the previous few weeks or months, but I think it was probably more an opportunity to take a crack at Chun Doo Hwan because he didn't travel outside of Korea very much. Burma was a country which was accessible to North Koreans and where security was not as strict as it was in other countries. It was an incredible act which reinforced my view that the North Korean regime was brutal and cruel. In fact, the attempt on his life gave Chun some sympathy from his people that he would not have gotten otherwise. Unfortunately, as I remember, Chun came back and gave a speech in which he gloried in the fact that he was still alive and that therefore all was well for his country. I think that seriously dampened the sympathy that might have lasted longer had he not opened his mouth; the speech made it clear

that he was primarily concerned about himself and only secondarily about his government's officials who had given their lives in the service of their country. I suspect that Gun's tears when he had coffee with me at the Nadja Hotel -- an incident I have described earlier -- stemmed from the characteristic showed by Chun's reaction to the Burma incident. Chun was an egomaniac and a terrible human being besides. He deserves his current address -- jail.

In retrospect, I think the 1982-85 period was one when we pursued our fundamental objectives of stability on the Peninsula and the maintenance of good relationships with the South Korean government with moderate success.

1) First of all, peace was maintained.

2) We served to a limited degree the cause of human rights, although probably not as vigorously as any of us would have liked. The Chun Doo Hwan regime was not a plus for Korea in this respect. There was obviously a growing desire among Koreans for more political participation, but it was repressed by the regime. As I said, it was not clear what the US could have done to accelerate political growth; it was a Korean issue that had to be resolved by the Koreans themselves, which I think by now they have done.

3) The political cooperation between the two countries was quite satisfactory. For example, semi-annual talks between the Department's Policy Planning Staff and its Korean counterpart started during this period. There were also meetings between representatives of other sectors of American and Korean society. Parliamentarians visited back and forth. We had some academic exchanges and meetings. There were meetings between businessmen, journalists, etc. There weren't as many such meetings as there are today because Korea was not as significant a power as it is today. But even in the 1980s, I went to conferences in Aspen and Washington on security and other issues on the Peninsula. Then of course there were the annual meetings of the Korean Defense Minister and the Secretary of Defense. Korea has always been a pet subject for warriors. I am not sure these confabs produced many concrete results, but they did stimulate thinking and kept Korea in the forefront of top US policy makers.

4) We served our interests beyond the Peninsula during this time. We were always aware of Northeast Asia regional security concerns. Whenever I went through Tokyo, I would take some time to discuss Northeast Asia issues with my colleagues in the Embassy. There was considerable exchange of views among our embassies in Northeast Asia and even in Southeast Asia. These were a plus.

5) The economic relationship, in which we pursued diligently the opening of the Korean markets, as we are still doing today, was conducted in our mutual interest. In general, I think both the political and economic US-Korean relationships progressed during this period, providing a base for both economic and political growth in South Korea. We added to the base for the progress that took place subsequently and which I think will continue to take place.

For me personally, my tour as DCM was the most fulfilling and rewarding assignment of my Foreign Service career, even including my two subsequent tours as ambassador. As I think all of us who have served in Korea have noticed, if things seemed quiet in the morning, you could be

sure it would not last for a whole day. It was always a five ring circus: political issues -- stability and human rights -- economic, consular as well as security were a constant. In addition, there were two other matters that kept us engaged. One, which had been a thorn in our sides for many years, was the need to obtain a new Chancery. When there was nothing else to keep me occupied, I could always tackle the building issue. I could always find a new angle to work on, as is still true today. We still have not built a Chancery and are still occupying a ROK building that according to written agreement we should have returned to the Korean government certainly by the end of the 1970s.

Then there were always administrative problems of all sorts that could take up my time. I enjoyed administrative challenges. I used to meet once a week with Jerry Manderscheid, the Administrative Counselor, to see what was on his mind. For example, some of our houses had asbestos in them. We worked out what to do about that -- remove it! Then one time we had one American employee who tried to kill another. We had a man who molested his daughter. There was never any lack of administrative problems. So Seoul was never quiet. If it wasn't some substantive issue, then there were many others to keep me busy. Not only was I busy all the time, but I learned all the time, so this was a period of personal growth. Being an Ambassador in New Zealand was not nearly as challenging nor as active as being the DCM in Korea. I certainly preferred to be the Number 2 in Seoul than being the Number 1 in Wellington, although the perks that go with an ambassadorial post as well as the credit that is given you are better than those of a DCM. But from a work stand point, Seoul was more fulfilling. I suppose in the end though it was due to the fact that there was a great difference in the importance of Seoul to US Interests. If things went awry in Korea, that could have major consequences. I was not especially consciously cognizant of the consequences of our actions while in Korea, but in retrospect I have become aware of this fact.

BERNARD J. LAVIN
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Seoul (1981-1985)

Bernard Lavin was born in New York in 1924. He received a bachelor's and a master's degree from Boston College. Mr. Lavin entered the Foreign Service in 1952 and the USIA in 1953. His career included positions in the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Nigeria, Indonesia, and South Africa. Mr. Lavin was interviewed by Mike Brown in 1988.

LAVIN: While still in South Africa, I picked up the wireless file one day and I saw the assignments list. I almost leaped out of my chair. I saw that for July 1981 they were looking for a PAO in Seoul, Korea. Well, I went running home to my wife and I said, "Guess what?", and I told her about it. And I said, "Let's put in for it." And she said, "You bet." So I called up the personnel officer in Washington and said, "Look, you don't have time to get a PAO who is familiar with the Korean language, who has a rating in language. I've got a "2-2" on my own without any formal training from the Agency and I picked it up an hour before work started during the years that I was in Korea. So why not consider me for that job?" And the answer was,

"You have another year to go on your three year tour or two more years to go on a four year tour. And so it is impossible." And I said, "Look, all you have to do is give me a four or five month brush up in Korean and just put my name in and I am ready to go. You want the person there in July. I will be there July 15, 1981."

About two weeks later the call came back and they said, "You know, that was pretty good planning." And that was the way it came about. And I found myself back in Korea, very happily.

It was remarkable to see all of the development that had taken place in Korea. Many of those wonderful educators that I had worked with so closely had gone on to positions of great authority. Some had become high officials in the Ministry of Education and at the Blue House (the equivalent of the White House). Some had become deans of the colleges in their universities. They had published books. They had become great scholars. And as I mentioned, Dr. Lee Yung Duck became the head of the Korean delegation for the talks with North Korea.

There is one man I will never forget. I think he is the finest person I ever met in my entire life. His name was Dr. Kim Jae-ik. When I was in Korea the first time, when I was Director of the Seoul Center, I started English classes on my own time with my prime target -- the most excellent students of the best universities. And I asked the deans for the names of the best students that they could find within the liberal arts colleges and colleges of law, education, commerce and so forth. I had found in my experience and from what I knew about Korean history that those who go on to the highest positions in government and in business in later years are those excellent students that come from the best universities. So I targeted them.

Well, out of this one group of 90 that I taught there were about 15 who were truly extraordinary. Of the group of 15 there was one who was extraordinary beyond all the rest. He was the most intelligent, the best informed, the best read, the finest human being you would ever want to meet. And his name was Kim Jae-ik, a student from the Liberal Arts College of Seoul National University.

He and I were associated as teacher and student for years. I developed a book club which eventually became The Junto. Have you ever heard of the Junto? Benjamin Franklin said that of all of his great accomplishments in his life the most valuable to him was the formation of the Junto. He formed a group of ten of his friends, and they would meet in a pub house every Friday night and they would discuss philosophy and news over tankards of ale. This enabled him to keep his finger on what was going on in Philadelphia, and it became a lifelong association of friends and became the starting point for many of Philadelphia's finest institutions.

One of the books I assigned to this reading club that I had selected from of the best students in the English classes was the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. One of the students reported on that and the other students showed interest in the part about the Junto. I suggested that we think about something like a Junto ourselves. And they agreed. And every Friday night as long as I was in Korea, we would meet at the USIS or at my home and we would do what Franklin did, i.e. discuss national and international affairs, philosophy, etc. We called ourselves the Junto.

The Korean government got very curious about this Junto. (It sounded to them like Junta.) The

PAO called me in one day and said, "The Korean government has leveled a charge against you that you are meeting regularly with a group of student leaders and you are inflaming them against the government." And I said, "This is ridiculous." I asked for proof of the charge. Here is what happened. We had a rule in the club that no visitors from outside could come in unless one of the members of the Junto would invite them in.

One Friday night one young lady from one of the very good universities invited in these two guys. They appeared more like thugs than friends of a college student. We later learned that they were both in the Korean CIA. The young lady, a member of the Junto, later explained to me that she didn't know them but they had intimidated her before the meeting and said they would cause her much trouble if she didn't invite them in. They reported to their superiors that I was inflaming the students against the government. I became concerned. I thought I could be thrown out of the country for this. The PAO said, "This is a serious charge. How can you show proof that you didn't do this?"

One of the rules that we had in the club, as Benjamin Franklin had, was that a member would write down all the minutes of what happened in the course of the meeting. That particular night we had as guest a professor, a Korean professor, who had gone to the U. S. under a U. S. grant and he had returned. He described his activities in the United States and his studies. I had the record to prove that. So then the PAO accepted that. And then I said, "Now, I want an apology from the Korean CIA because I am not going to be accused of something like that. It could be very damaging to me." And the PAO said, "Oh, forget it. It is all over."

But now let me get back to Kim Jae-ik. I told you about the Junto. Kim Jae-ik was really the star in the group. We all listened to his views because he was so sensible. After graduation he went on to get 2 MAs at Stanford and the University of Hawaii in economics. So when I got back to Korea in 1981 he had become the economic counselor to the President of the Republic of Korea.

Not long after my return he called me up one day and said, "You have been away from Korea for 14 years. I want to bring you up to date on what has happened here." So he invited me to the Lotte Hotel which is now a magnificent hotel right across from USIS. We dined in a private dining room overlooking the mountains and the City of Seoul -- just the two of us. And for three hours he gave me a review of what had happened in Korea right down to that moment.

I, of course, wrote all of this up in a "memcon" because it had such interesting history of Korea's economy. At the Embassy they said this was the single most important conversation that had been recorded in their memory because Dr. Kim went into all the background on the AID program, what it meant to Korea, the recommendations that were made about won exchange rates and so forth and how dramatically U. S. politics helped Korea to "take off" economically.

During the five years that I was in Korea, Dr. Kim was very helpful in some of the seminars we held such as the seminar between American businessmen and Korean government officials. The American businessmen said, "Hell, in one night at this seminar where we all got together for drinks at the end of the day we had more information exchange than since our arrival in Korea. We never had a chance to meet these officials before." Were it not for Dr. Kim, it would have been impossible to arrange such a seminar.

We held this seminar in October 1983. At the conclusion of the program we were in the bus coming from the seminar site back to Seoul. We sensed that something was wrong because people were acting strange in the streets when we got to the City of Seoul. When I got home, my wife was in tears and I too burst into tears when she told me the North Koreans had blown up the Korean presidential delegation in Burma. Dr. Kim Jae-ik was one of those killed. I wept as I did for the others whom I knew in the group. The Koreans lost seventeen of their finest people. But anyway, I had so many memories of Korea. In that personalized sense I will just never forget Korea and its people.

I ought to tell you that just before I left Korea to retire I made a recording of Korean songs. The album is called Songs Koreans Love To Sing. Here is how it came about. There is an old Korean custom that after dinner parties Koreans sing their favorite songs. Everyone is expected to sing a solo and some- times it is hilarious. I would always listen to see what songs the Koreans sang that were most meaningful to them; songs that made Koreans cry or made them feel sentimental or nationalistic -- old songs from their hometowns, love songs, funny songs, songs that reached the Korean personality and national character.

I collected eleven of the songs that Koreans love to sing. A Korean publisher learned that I had translated these songs into English and suggested that a recording be made. He hired an orchestra and engaged two famous Korean female singers. The publisher insisted that I sing the English version and the girls would do the Korean. The recording session started late in the afternoon and continued to about two o'clock in the morning. But we got it done just a couple of days before I left Korea. It has been on sale in Korea and about 8,000 copies have been sold. The agreement I made with the publisher was that no money would come to me. Whatever money would normally come to me in the Korean royalty system would go to the Fulbright Commission in Seoul. So some of the budget of the Fulbright Commission in Seoul owes a small amount to that particular recording.

And when the Political Counselor, Harry Dunlop, came through in Hawaii two years ago, we spent the day together recalling all the old times. It was he who was with me for those three days and nights when the students took over the USIS in Seoul in May 1985. He told me that just before leaving Seoul to come to Hawaii on vacation, he and his family made a trip down to Kyoungju which is a very famous cultural site in Korea. He said that on the tourist bus they heard the recording which had been made into a tape.

Even though we didn't have a chance to go back to Korea to be there for the Olympics, we knew it was going to be a magnificent success. The Koreans prepared so well that even two years before the Olympics were held they could have held the Olympics at the drop of a hat. They did in fact have an opening ceremony for the International Olympic Committee and many thousands of Koreans came. They put on a show that was just fantastic -- two years before the Olympics!!

And I knew then that it was going to be a great success. This may be a good point at which to begin to conclude this interview. The idea of hard work brings me back to the very beginning when we got to Korea in 1958. Even though everybody was poor and the clothes they wore were of very poor quality, the country was still trying to pick itself up and put itself back together

again after the war. I said to my wife within the first few weeks of being in Korea, "This country and these people are going to make it. I never saw anybody in my life work as hard as the Koreans do." And hard work has paid off for the Koreans. And that is why they have what they have. If you look around the world these days, how many countries are still getting aid from the United States and have been getting aid for perhaps 30 years and are still basket cases? Korea doesn't get a cent of aid and they haven't since 1976. And look at what they've done.

I would like to end this interview with stories about university students since so much of my career in USIA was student related. Beginning in 1958 I made special efforts to work with Korean university students. As noted earlier in the interview I formed the Junto. The following story is a spin off related to the Junto. The historic "Korean Student Revolution" of April 1960 resulted in the overthrow of President Syngman Rhee. (I could make another amazing interview on that event to which I was an eye-witness.) In June, 1960 President Eisenhower visited Korea. He sent word ahead from Tokyo that he wanted a Korean university student to be present at a breakfast with community leaders at the Ambassador's residence. This sent the Political Section and our CIA into a tail-spin. They were fearful that some wild-eyed radical could misrepresent the event to the President. I suggested to them the name of one of the Junto members from Seoul National University who was level-headed, who had actively participated in the revolution and was in excellent academic standing at his university. His name was Lee Tae-sup. With great relief the Political Counselor accepted Lee's name. At the breakfast President Eisenhower asked Lee to explain the student role in the April revolution. His reply -- which was exactly to the point -- was "Mr. President, the Korean students made it possible for the government to be put into the hands of good people." This quotation was given great publicity by the Korean media and "a star of the April revolution was born"! Lee was lionized by the press and by his peers. To this day (1989) he is remembered by Koreans as one of the "Korean hero students" of April 1960. He became the first Korean student to earn a Ph. D. in Chemical Engineering at MIT. He returned to Korea, became Vice President of an industrial engineering company and then went into politics and was elected to the National Assembly. While I was in Korea on my second tour he was appointed Minister for Political Affairs. He was of great help to me in many ways. Just before I retired in April 1986, we had a farewell luncheon for the Junto members, most of whom still live in Korea. We had a wonderful time but it was with heavy hearts that we remembered Kim Jae-ik who was killed in Rangoon; in a special way my heart was also heavy to leave this wonderful group and especially Lee Tae-sup. As some of them pass through Hawaii they visit me.

Going back to 1958, I told the members of the Junto that I was very eager to get to know the real student leaders of the radical group called The Mintong (MINJOK TONG-IL YONMAENG) -- but that it was difficult to make contact because the students were quite anti-foreign. Through the SNU students of the Junto I eventually met the top leaders of the group. I cultivated them by meetings at my home and introduced USIS and Embassy officers into the meetings. The Korean government considered them communists but I found them to be dedicated nationalists (but I kept a wary eye out for communist leanings). I even included them in factory tour groups of university students to industrial sites which had received U. S. aid -- to let the students see that Korea was in fact rebuilding after the Korean War. (Word was out among many students that "things were better in North Korea.") On one memorable factory tour I found that the most hot-headed radical of the Mintong had detached himself from the group and was handing out leaflets to the factory workers. I quickly got him back under control.

In the year of chaos that followed the April revolution, the Mintong was among the most active groups that resisted the weak rule of Chang-yun. The top leader of the group was a student by the name of Yoon-sik. It was he who concocted the idea of organizing a Korean group of 10,000 students to march on Panmunjom to negotiate reunification with their Korean brothers. That ridiculous idea gave General Park Chung-hee the excuse he needed for a coup and in May 1961, he took over the government in a military coup. Yoon-sik and his buddies were imprisoned. I was so convinced that the students were not communists that I asked for the PAO and Ambassador to approve my visit to the prison to see Yoon-sik. My rationale was that I wanted them to understand our concern for them not only in the meetings we had but in their tragic imprisonment. The Korean government gave permission for the visit. Accompanied by those two KCIA "thugs" referred to earlier in this interview (I guess I was their special assignment) I visited Yoon-sik in prison and brought him books. We discussed his situation and he was naturally discouraged. To make a long story short, the prison sentences for Yoon-sik and the others were shortened from seven years to eight months. Upon their release from prison, much to my surprise, all of them visited my office at the Embassy to thank me for what I had done. They claimed that the Korean government canceled their prison terms because of the interest and concern shown by the American Embassy because of the efforts made to have me visit.

The sequel: All of the Mintong members have succeeded in Korean society as government officials, journalists, labor leaders and businessmen. Yoon-sik was appointed to the National Assembly in the 1970's. Then he joined the Economic Institute which is sponsoring his sabbatical at the University of Hawaii. After my retirement here in Hawaii in 1986, we saw each other a number of times and he visited my home. We had much to talk about! He told me that his greatest mistake was dreaming up that idea of organizing a student march to Panmunjom!

The last student-related story deals with the occupation of the USIS building in Seoul May 23-25, 1985. Seventy three students, in a well coordinated move, overwhelmed the Korean police guarding our building, and barricaded themselves in our large library. The Political Counselor, Harry Dunlop, and I chose the path of patience, dialogue and persuasion. We were getting advice from Washington, the Korean government, Ministry officials, the Korean police, Korean professors and so-called experts in how to deal with the students. The advice ranged from "Throw them out," "Call in the Army," "Turn the police loose on them," "Starve them out," "Drug them" to "Let them stay there till they drop" or "Tear gas the rascals." Ambassador Walker, despite very heavy pressure on him from some circles at State and the Blue House, supported the position Harry and I had taken. During the three days and nights of discussion, Harry did a masterful job in firmly but diplomatically rejecting the absurd demands. On the second morning I talked to the whole group and reminded them that earlier generations of students and their professors had often used USIS for exchanges of opinions with Americans. I told them there was no need for them to use violence to get our attention. Their demands should have been directed to the Korean government but they felt the U.S. was a good vehicle for attracting attention. I used the names of many of the students and professors who had come to USIS in the past, peacefully. This seemed to impress them and Harry later reported that this appeal to the 73 students had a palpable effect.

Emotions were high all around. Some of the students threatened to kill themselves in front of the

TV cameras or to cut off their fingers or poison themselves. In my talks with Harry and the Ambassador I urged patience. I felt there was a serious possibility that some of the students might be injured or killed because the police, as they told me, were itching to get their hands on the students. The Korean government had been embarrassed by the event and media coverage world-wide. My final argument was that if a student were to be killed, for years afterwards, on the anniversary of the death, flowers would surely be brought to USIS -- hardly a welcome prospect to associate USIS with a martyr.

The students were finally persuaded to leave. At 12 noon on the third day they formed up in the library, put on their head bands, sang songs, hugged each other and marched out to the TV cameras. They were quickly taken by the police. In Washington there was ecstasy that the ordeal was peacefully resolved. The Ambassador and DCM came over to my office to join Harry and me and the staff which had performed superbly throughout the 3 days and nights. Mr. Wick called the Ambassador to congratulate him. Harry was given a Superior Honor Award by State as I was by USIA. I also appreciated the fact that State also gave me a Superior Honor Award. The Korean press was highly laudatory as was the academic community of "the wisdom and skill of the U. S. government in handling this explosive situation." All was well that ended well.

EDWARD W. KLOTH
Consular Officer
Seoul (1982-1983)

Mr. Kloth was born in North Carolina and raised in New York. After service in the Peace Corps and private business, he worked with the Department of Defense, later joining the State Department. In his career with State, Mr. Kloth served several tours in Japan and Korea, In Washington assignments he dealt with East Asian, Political/military, Economic and Environment matters. He also spent two years on Capitol Hill as Department of State Pearson Fellow. After retirement, Mr. Kloth continued as advisor to the Department on variety of matters and served a tour in Iraq as Economic Officer. Mr. Kloth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: Well, that thing started bout '79, I think. The reason I say this is I was consul general. I had just gone to the head of the consular affairs, Barbara Watson, and said I think we have some real problems. She had our security officer replaced and brought a guy in who really went to work there. We uncovered some stuff, and we felt pretty good and all the time this other stuff was coming in. The Koreans are very good at this.

KLOTH: They have been a bureaucratic society a long time and have developed a lot of finessing skills to live with their own labyrinth of rules and paperwork.

Q: You know I used to tell the officers there, you know this is awful, we've got to do what we can to stop it but basically fraud or no fraud we are getting very good people in.

KLOTH: Right.

Q: Which we were.

KLOTH: Yeah. There were some other things that happened too. President Chun Doo-hwan, the coup-maker of 1980, began a program of liberalizing certain aspects of the society. One of them, for example, was making passports for tourism available; you had to go with a group or to see relatives. Until then it had been extremely difficult for Koreans to get a passport. A major reason was that the Korean government wanted to conserve foreign exchange. So, for example, if you wanted to study abroad it had to be a graduate school. You took not only the TOEFL and GREs, but you also had a Korean government exam to pass.

There were other things, the high school students wore uniforms whose origins goes back to actually 19th century Europe and then were Japanese educational standard during the colonial period. Japanese kids still wear uniforms, although they wear them in a style that is quite different from the old days with loosened ties and various other signs of protest – or fashion. The Chun government said schools could set their own dress codes and students no longer had to wear uniforms.

So the government was easing up on the social constraints by the prior government without letting up at all on the control of politics. It also reflected the development in the economy and that there were people who were not just the “super rich” in a poor country, but middle and upper middle class that did have enough money to go see relatives or take a group tour to Europe. We also had through the ‘70s a phenomenon of increased immigration from Korea to the United States because of changes to the immigration law in what the ‘60s, so more Koreans had friends and relatives to visit here.

For that reason the consular section in Seoul was under the gun, and I had Korean and a lot of experience there, so there wasn’t really a question of where they could use me best. As I looked at other people in our class’ assignments, many were assigned to where they had been. When new people come in, there’s no guarantee that a slot will be open in Korea, even if you speak Korean, so the JO people need to manage expectations, of course.

Q: Yeah. Also, in the business I’ve been on both sides of this. You have to be careful when people come in, they might have majored in Mongolian studies and they are going to go to Mongolia. Well, there might not be a place or maybe the feeling is particularly sometimes there is more to diplomacy for a professional than Mongolia. You have people who really aren’t very moveable but again when the rubber hits the road and if you’ve got a consular crisis or something, I mean they throw everybody at it.

KLOTH: Right. But we also lose people like a good friend who was in Chinese studies, but when they offered him the job he said, this was in that same early ‘80s, the recruiter read the standard line which is “we probably won’t send you where you’ve been. In fact, we try to send people to different places.”

My friend had just got an offer from the CIA to work on China. They said, “China, that’s what

your background is.” So he decided to do that. Clearly for the Department there is a tension particularly when you look at the hard languages. Now our desperate need for languages like Arabic is swinging the pendulum the other way.

I went to Seoul my first tour. I was in Seoul and my wife had her Fulbright, so that was very good and we could be together. I have a lot of friends there, so that was interesting. The visa work was hard, though. We interviewed visa or passport applicants from early in the morning to 3:00 or 4:00, when they closed the doors and then you had an hour to clean up paperwork, and 5:00 we were out. The management of the section was very tough minded about that which was good for the officers. We had huge lines around the block and couldn't keep up; there had not been an increase in officers to match the increase in applicants. Nevertheless, the feeling of management was that, looking at the numbers, staying until 6:30 or 7:00 every night was not going to make a significant decrease in that line. Unlike every State job I had afterwards, evenings were our own.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

KLOTH: Dixie Walker, who had been a professor from the University of South Carolina, a China scholar and the first political appointee to ambassador to Korea. My first ambassador when I was in Peace Corps had been Habib, Philip Habib. I only met him once; he had dinner at the Peace Corps director's house with about 20 of us. He was a very impressive guy. It was good chance to share impressions of Korea. The volunteers' relationship with the embassy was basically distant. That was fine with everybody, and Peace Corps guidance. Koreans assumed we “reported” to the embassy, so we tried to dispel that notion in words and action. But it was useful to hear how the embassy saw things and to feel we had a chance to share our thoughts.

I found later as an FSO that no matter how much you get out, as an embassy officer, you need to hear as many sides as you can get. You need to hear from a range of people doing different things. It's too easy to fall into a rut with the “usual contacts.” One incident I remember from Peace Corps stayed with me as a reminder. The one time I remember where we PCVs reached out to our embassy concerned the Chevy trucks USAID had given to the “combat police.” As I recall the embassy's brief, the original idea was that the combat police were specially trained to combat North Korean infiltration of armed agents, a real problem. The trucks provided mobility and were to be used primarily on the coast. But the combat police were used in the cities as riot police. The riot squads stationed in front of universities drove up in the trucks with big USAID logos on them. I remember one student coming up to me and saying, “Why did you give them those trucks to come and beat us?”

At one of our regular Peace Corps meetings, we said to the Peace Corps director, “You know, we try to talk about the U.S. government policy of not supporting dictatorships [and avoid criticizing Park, by that time an elected President, directly), but you've got those USAID branded trucks out there.”

The Director told us that the embassy asked the Korean police not to use the trucks for such duties. The Koreans responded very quickly - they repainted the trucks and replaced the USAID clasped hands with the national police logo!

Q: Well let's come back to '82. Who was the consul general?

KLOTH: Ken Keller. He had been a political officer in Europe who found it so frustrating working on Eastern Europe where “nothing seems to change” that he decided to do something “more hands on.” He moved over into the consular business.

At any rate, he was under the gun in the sense of a sudden jump in the number of applicants because of the Koreans opening the floodgates to tourism and others.

Q: We didn't really have walk-ins.

KLOTH: Right, they also eased up on student passports. If you wanted to apply to go to a high school or even an elementary school in the U.S., you could do that. Yes, there were some who were going to good schools and clearly good students, but there were a lot of other folks who, and this is still a feeling among some Koreans, thought, “Well, my kid isn't doing well, not going to be able to pass the exam in Korea to get into a good university here, so I'm going to send him or her to the U.S. to live with a relative or just going to get an apartment myself, and we are going to send him to the local high school, because then they'll be able to get into a university in the States. When they come back to Korea, they'll speak English well or maybe they'll just stay in the States.”

Plenty of other people wanted to seek their fortunes in the U.S. as well. So we had a flood of people of dubious academic backgrounds, dubious job prospects in Korea, say, working in jobs in Korea in small companies or under-employed who wanted to live in America. The visa brokers could make really authentic looking Korean and even U.S. documents of all kinds.

The vice consul's job of deciding in 2 minutes whether you were being lied to or just talking to a nervous but legitimate applicant who just wanted to see Disneyland. We had 20 percent refusal rates. We also had long lines around the embassy, and it was hard to meet even old friends without hearing complaints.

Q: Did you get involved with fraudulent marriages of people getting an Asian wife and that sort of thing?

KLOTH: Well, fraudulent marriage was a problem but hard to catch if people kept their stories together. I recall one case of an American resident in Korea for some time with a perfectly legitimate job where all seemed on the up and up. A few days after I issued the spouse a visa, the Immigration and Naturalization Service representative in Seoul came in and said, “This guy called me up and said that it was fraudulent. His actual girlfriend had some financial issues and borrowed money from somebody she shouldn't have. She and her boyfriend were told they could clear the decks if her boyfriend would engage in a fraudulent marriage.”

We called Korean immigration and told them to stop the visa-holder. They discovered that the person hadn't left country, so maybe they lost their nerve too. Consular work is tough because you know you'll inevitably deny some legitimate people and issue visas to some who will never

return. But the pressure must be immense post-9/11, but illegal immigration, not terrorism, was our chief concern in a place like Korea of the 1980s.

Q: You really change their lives.

KLOTH: Yeah, but again Ken Keller, our consul general, was very good in terms of training us and our section chiefs continually kept us informed of the latest usually scams.

There was also the challenge within the embassy of people in various sections coming down to refer people who it turned out they really didn't know in order to help out an official contact. In general the section chiefs handled all those cases. When I returned in the political section in the early '90s, the shoe was on the other foot. Speeding someone through the visa process was a useful favor to be able to do. On the other hand, if I got involved in anyway and the visa was refused, that didn't help me. Having been a visa officer, I had some idea of the "bad case" warning signs and refused to get near those requests for assistance. We had a sharp NIV chief, and he set up a very useful system where you could ask that a person be given an interview appointment, if you didn't know the case well enough to "refer" it to the consular section with a note that you knew the person well. Getting a call from the visa section to come in for an appointment at such and such a time sure beat waiting for hours in line, so it was appreciated by your contacts. On the other hand, my credibility was not on the line with my consular colleagues or, if refused, with the person who had asked for the help for say a constituent.

Let me finish by noting that working the consular section gives a new officer from any cone a lot of experience that she or he will use in the Foreign Service. You have to learn to gather the facts and analyze them fast. You have to make decisions quickly and be able to justify them. You also learn to work with interpreters. It's often said that foreign negotiators who speak English have an advantage of American counterparts because the foreigner can use the translation time productively to consider the response and may pick up nuances lost in translation. On the visa line I found it true. Although I speak Korean, in tough cases, I would call an interpreter over to give me more time as well as to be sure I did not miss anything. I could also check on the quality of interpretation. Another often unrecognized skill learned on the line and useful later is how to work with an interpreter, even if you do not speak the language. You have to speak clearly so the interpreter can understand and to be alert as you listen to the English interpretation back to you as well.

Q: What was the situation in Korea at the time?

KLOTH: Now to leap to the politics. In 1979, when I was still a grad student in Seattle, Park Chung Hee was shot. That set in motion a succession process that turned into a slow motion coup. In the end Major General Chun Doo-hwan, head of the Defense Security Command, was in the key position when the chief of the KCIA shot the president. The head of the KCIA was not part of an extensive coup. I mean there was not a coup group, including military leaders. When the generals realized that this guy didn't have any army divisions behind him and none of them were with him they arrested him. But then Chun Doo-hwan and a group who had gone through the military academy with him slowly expanded their control, shoving aside the three civilian Kim's -- Kim Jong Pil, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam -- who were competing with each

other politically and other players out there. The prime minister when Park was shot was not a strong enough individual to deal with this very difficult situation.

KLOTH: In March 1980 I had started in DOD, so I was in the U.S. government when the Kwangju incident happened. The Kwangju uprising was the result of Korean army units' brutality when they clashed with students protesting Chun's seizure of power. The army then retook the city. The repercussions are still out there both for Koreans' attitudes toward the Chun Doo-hwan group and toward the United States as well. In 1982, the wounds were still fresh and resentment toward the U.S. at higher levels than I had ever seen. Koreans of all political shades believed that we were "actively complicit," because we had a four-star general in Korea who was the UN commander. How, many asked, could Korean military units have moved and been used in the coup or in Kwangju without his authorization?

The change in Korean's feelings toward the United States was palpable. There was an escalation on the negative side of Koreans' attitudes towards the US, reflecting their fundamental dislike of their own government as well. Part of the mix was the Reagan administration's position that the Carter administration had been naïve about the fundamental struggle between Communists and non-Communists in many countries around the world. As a symbol of the change in the Reagan administration's policy from what it considered the naïve attitude of the Carter administration, Chun Doo-hwan was the first foreign leader who visited President Reagan.

The issue illustrates a key foreign policy dilemma. The challenge for the U.S. in dealing with governments such as coup d'état governments or other dictators is that they have bet their lives. If a coup fails, the odds are good the participants will get death sentences. When we try to exert our influence, we are playing poker with a guy who's bet his life. When the ante starts to go up, we're going to have to fold in most cases because we won't be willing to bet it all – whatever that happens to be.

Q: That covers the "big picture" then, but I'd like to pick up the tale of what an FSO does. Did you get involved in the protection of Americans and all that? American services? Were there many problems there or was this mostly notarial or passport type of thing?

KLOTH: Yes, I did three months in that as well. We did a fair number of passports, including lost passports. There were some touching individual cases. The most touching ones involved people in some kind of distress. One little girl visiting relatives fell off a second story balcony of an apartment and was hurt. She broke her ankle – you can imagine when her mother described what happened at the start of the call, I feared much worse. Her folks wanted to get her back to the States for medical treatment of her broken ankle and wanted a U.S. military medical evacuation plane. She was not in a life threatening condition. I had to explain that those were for our soldiers and that we would help her parents get in touch with the civilian airlines. At first, though, there was a lot of discussion with her parents. They assumed, as did many other Americans, that the U.S. Air Force would zoom them home. The U.S. airline they had come in on was very solicitous, however. I checked with the family just before departure to make sure everything was on track, and they were much relieved.

DAVID LAMBERTSON
Korea Country Director, Bureau of East Asian Affairs
Washington, DC (1982-1984)

David Lambertson was born in Kansas in 1940. He received his BA from the University of Redlands in 1962. He entered the Foreign Service in 1963, and his assignments abroad included Saigon, Medan, Paris, Canberra and Seoul with an ambassadorship to Thailand. Mr. Lambertson was interviewed in 2004 by David Reuther.

LAMBERTSON: Well, he had his blind spots. But he knew Korea well and he had good insights into Asian culture in general. One kind of funny thing I remember, shortly after I'd joined EAP/K, I went out to Seoul as country director for one of those security consultative meetings, the big annual...

Q: The SCM...

LAMBERTSON: Yes, the big annual get togethers that we had that alternated between Seoul and Washington. I went out on the airplane with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General David Jones. I remember he actually piloted the plane on takeoff from Andrews with his staff kind of keeping their fingers crossed hoping he still knew how to do it.

In any event we got to Korea. Weinberger was there and Rich Armitage was with Weinberger. The first thing on the agenda was a briefing at the residence by Dixie Walker. We went there and sat in his living room and Dixie and his staff briefed us, but basically it was Dixie who did the talking, and he went into much more detail than anybody needed to have. Weinberger was falling asleep in his chair. Anyway, it eventually ended and later Rich Armitage kind of zinged me for letting my ambassador go on so long. I was in the position of defending one political appointee to another political appointee.

Q: Now this is March of 1982 with Weinberger; you were saying that General Powell was also on that trip.

LAMBERTSON: No, that was a different trip.

Q: Oh, was it? Okay.

LAMBERTSON: In the fall of '83 there were three events that dominated my working life. The first was the shoot-down of KAL-007, which was a traumatic thing for Korea, with a Korean airliner shot out of the sky. For the Korea desk it meant a lot of additional work. Primarily it was the Soviet desk that was dealing with our reaction to it, dealing with Moscow on the issue. But there was much more to do - everything from organizing a memorial service at the National Cathedral to unending meetings, keeping the Koreans informed, writing papers. Then about the time we got all that cleaned up I was down in North Carolina on a much needed vacation and Spence Richardson, my deputy, called me around midnight and said, "There has been a bombing

in Rangoon and half the South Korean cabinet has been killed.” I went back up to Washington. That was indeed what happened, a North Korean plot designed to kill Chun Doo Hwan. The bomb missed him, but it killed six or eight really good people including the wonderful foreign minister and a young economic advisor named Kim Jae Ik who would have been hugely important in Korea if he’d lived.

Weinberger was our representative at the funeral for those people and that's when I went to Korea on Weinberger's airplane. Colin Powell was on board, Weinberger's military assistant, and we made the round trip in 56 hours. If Dixie briefed us, I think he was wise enough not to stretch it out.

Q: Or there would have been a 58th hour.

LAMBERTSON: Right. That was when I first met Colin Powell. As I mentioned to you I was struck by the traveling style of Weinberger versus George Schultz. I had been on George Schultz's airplane by then at least once.

Q: Under what circumstance?

LAMBERTSON: Going from Seoul to Beijing earlier in '83. I went because there was a possibility of a Korea subject being raised with the Chinese. I got to stay at the Diaoyutai guesthouse and do one of those Great Hall of the People banquets. Shultz's airplane was incredibly crowded. I contrasted that with this later trip with Weinberger. It was basically a 707 cargo plane with one of those pods put in it. There were very few people aboard. It was very bare bones - and I was favorably impressed. Why can't everybody travel like that?

Q: Without a large entourage.

LAMBERTSON: Yes.

Q: You were saying that Powell even handed out sleeping pills.

LAMBERTSON: Right. That was one of his jobs. He also cued up the tape recorder to play Willie Nelson's On the Road Again when we took off.

Q: One of the, as the director of the Korea desk, now when you're first starting in January of '82, what are you seeing as some of the major issues that you're going to be working with?

LAMBERTSON: A major issue in a sense all through that period, even though sometimes it was obscured by other more immediate problems, was the political situation in South Korea and the U.S. position vis-à-vis that situation. In other words, the nature of Chun Doo Hwan's military regime, human rights questions, democratization and to what extent could and should the United States pressure the Korean government to do better. That was always an issue on our bilateral agenda with the Koreans whenever we had high level visitors going there. It was always something of an issue for the desk and we would have congressional critics and others around town focusing on that issue. We had to respond to them.

Q: In one sense wasn't that issue highlighted by the Kwangju circumstance, that had happened in 1980 and prior to this and that became the poster child for these issues?

LAMBERTSON: That was certainly a key event in modern Korean history and in U.S.-Korea relations. Human rights issues loomed large. Shortly after I took over the desk, Kim Dae Jung came to the United States for a period of exile, having been let out of jail just a few weeks or months previously. Probably having been saved from execution by a promise to invite Chun Doo Hwan to visit the United States early in the new Reagan Administration - do not kill Kim Dae Jung. This I understand was the bargain that Dick Holbrooke and Mike Armacost had worked out.

In any event Kim Dae Jung came to the United States and spent a good deal of time, mostly in Boston. When he came to Washington I had breakfast with him and I am quite sure that I was the only State Department official to see him. That was wrong, a mistake; my mistake. He should have been received at a much higher level because he was an important man. If you know Kim Dae Jung's history, we perhaps saved his life in 1980, and certainly did so a number of years earlier when Phil Habib was the ambassador and Don Gregg was the station chief. Kim Dae Jung had been abducted from a Tokyo hotel and was aboard a Korean fishing boat about to be tossed overboard when we intervened. Those issues were ever present I would say.

At the end of 1983 there was a Reagan visit to Seoul, which some human rights advocates in the United States said was inappropriate, but I thought it was very good. It was good in the context of the rough autumn they had had, with KAL-007 followed by the assassinations and bombing in Rangoon. The Reagan visit helped to end the year on a positive note. I wasn't as involved in the planning for that visit because I was in Washington. Paul Cleveland, the DCM, was of course deeply involved. I went out a couple of days before the visit, and I was quite impressed with the way that advance team worked and the rather smooth way in which it all went. The desk had a role in the visit, of course - lots of papers were produced - but the embassy was much more deeply engaged.

Q: That trip probably wasn't just to Korea. It probably included...

LAMBERTSON: It had been a Japan-Korea trip.

Q: Yes. Looking at a presidential visit from the Washington side is different from the receiving side?

LAMBERTSON: It's much more relaxing as I recall. Much easier. I was there for it, but mostly as a spectator. I remember sitting in on the last meeting of the advance team as they went through their final checks. I remember the advance man saying to his people that the next day President Reagan would be in a motorcade before the largest crowd of his Presidency, which I guess it was.

Q: By this time there wasn't any more movement on withdrawing troops from Korea? It had all blown over.

LAMBERTSON: No. That's right. Talk of withdrawing troops had died away.

Q: On the political evolution side, here you have this authoritarian structure. Were there any besides Kim, were there any other allies internal to the Korean system that were voicing more modernistic approaches? I mean its one thing, it seems to me, to tell an authoritarian regime it can't keep shooting people and another thing to actually talk about the political maturation process where other actors are beginning to develop.

LAMBERTSON: That was certainly beginning to happen in South Korea. There were other actors, including very seasoned politicians, not just Kim Dae Jung who was still in the United States, but Kim Young Sam, and there were degrees of modernity among the military. Not everybody was a cave dweller, politically. I think Noh Tae Woo himself is a good example. He succeeded Chun Doo Hwan as president, but he was a very different kind of general. He really was the first in the democratic, so to speak, line of succession. There were differences within the ruling elite. Some who were more liberal than others. Chun Doo Hwan himself in the end made the right decision. He essentially agreed to allow a peaceful transition at the end of his term instead of sending troops out to confront the demonstrators. That happened a couple of months after I left Korea in 1987. At that time, in 1983, there were still a few more years of Chun Doo Hwan ahead.

Q: Right. As you were saying there was a kind of a long-term thing that would pop up from time to time. One of the issues that would pop up fairly importantly was the rice issue.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, indeed. I still think it was the single hardest problem I ever dealt with in the Foreign Service – maybe because it was as much a domestic issue as a foreign policy issue. In a nutshell, in 1980 the South Koreans had a rice shortage. They had to buy rice somewhere. The United States didn't have a surplus that year, oddly enough, so we agreed that they, the Koreans could buy the rice they needed from Japan. Ordinarily Japanese rice, by agreement, was kept off the international market because it is so lavishly subsidized. We allowed that sale on the condition that the Koreans would agree to buy 500,000 tons of the 1981 crop of California rice, which is their preferred variety.

They agreed to that condition and by so agreeing were committed. That commitment having been made, a particular rice broker, Grover Connell of New Jersey, who had long represented the major California rice co-ops, basically got their agreement that he would be the broker and he would sell the rice for them. The Koreans, however, refused to deal with him because they had dealt with him in the past and disliked him intensely. You know, Korean rice issues go way back. If you remember Tong Sun Park, or people like Otto Passman. It's a rich and colorful history. In any event the Koreans said no, we're not going to deal with Grover Connell. Grover Connell, however, had control of the rice, so there was an impasse. The congressional rice lobby was unleashed and that's when the heat began to build on EAP/K and myself. There were calls from congressmen. There were letters to the president, letters to the Secretary of State about these nefarious Koreans who were refusing to follow through on a commitment that they had made. There were other, more insidious pressures including a visit to my office that I didn't know about until after the fact by a prominent West Coast politician and big man in the rice lobby, who

basically threatened the career of one of my officers. We were perceived as supporting the Koreans. We, the State Department, and I think the East Asia bureau in particular. This had all happened with very little reference to the 7th floor, and for a long time, for months, the highest-ranking guy in the Department dealing with it was Tony Albrecht. Did you ever know Tony Albrecht?

Q: No.

LAMBERTSON: A wonderful fellow and fine officer. He was the DAS for economic affairs. I think his career was more European-focused for the most part, but he was in this job in EAP. He was tough and principled, and he was completely unafraid of anything. Basically we just kind of kept shielding ourselves as slings and arrows from the Hill headed our way. We did attempt to convince the Koreans to go ahead and go through with the purchase but they were absolutely adamant. They were not going to deal with Grover Connell. They were being stubborn, as Koreans can be.

Ken Dam eventually got involved. He was the Deputy Secretary of State at that time. I came to wish he hadn't because he seemed to me to be overly responsive to congressional pressure and basically tended to transmit that pressure to the Korean government, which I believed to be unproductive and maybe counterproductive. But then he got back out of the issue.

Paul Wolfowitz was the Assistant Secretary at the time and he had not been involved and we got him involved finally. I think the precipitating event was a hearing called by the rice lobby, by Congressman Bill Alexander of Arkansas, and Paul was going to testify for the bureau along with the Undersecretary of Agriculture, Dick Ling – a very savvy guy. We all went up there to the committee room and they made their prepared statements and when all that was done, klieg lights came on and Bill Alexander announced that he would now “swear” the witnesses, and there would be sworn testimony from then on and it would be televised. It was going to be a kind of congressional shooting gallery. Wolfowitz and the Undersecretary basically stood up at that point and said, no, we're not going to do that, those weren't the ground rules. We were prepared for a hearing, not an investigation, and we went home. I liked Wolfowitz's performance that day. He was tough and knew what he was doing. The Agriculture man also was very good.

In any event we were at this impasse and there was very intense congressional pressure, which was the reason it was a very hard problem for me as a desk director. We were saved by nature, because the issue went on so long that the 1982 crop was harvested and began to pour into the bins of California. You can't tell 1981 rice from 1982 rice when it's in the bin. In that sense it's a fungible commodity like water or milk, it flows together. And about that time the co-ops themselves realized they'd been shooting themselves in the foot for Grover Connell of New Jersey for a year. The co-ops broke free of Grover Connell, the Koreans readily bought 500,000 tons of unidentified vintage rice and the problem went away.

This experience was very interesting because it was an illustration to me of the way those kinds of lobbies could work. The rice lobby has always been one of the more tightly knit and effective ones on the Hill, I think, and it includes members from California as well as from the South.

Q: That's an interesting demonstration of the interaction of the role congress plays in these games. Here you were in Tokyo and you had to deal with the Japanese response to Korean issues. Here you're on the desk and you're as much concerned with the congress as the Koreans.

LAMBERTSON: Absolutely. I don't recall any particularly outstanding ones during the years 1982 to 1984 quite frankly. It was always an active part of the desk's portfolio, but I don't think we had any major crises. We had a defection across the demilitarized zone, I remember that. A young army private from St. Louis decided to try life in the People's Paradise. That was a strange happening. We had regular military exercises – huge in scale. The North Koreans of course regularly protested. There were always real estate issues of one kind or another to talk about with the Koreans, but I think nothing of great consequence because the troop withdrawal issue had pretty much been put to bed and would not come up again for a number of more years.

Q: One of the things that I have on the list here that I've come up with is fishery issues..

LAMBERTSON: Something about tuna fishing. The San Diego fleet?

Q: Yes.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, I do recall a conflict there, but I don't remember the details. That, too is an industry group that can muster a good deal of clout. I think John Negroponce by then was Assistant Secretary for Fisheries, or Oceanic Affairs, and he had done a good deal of negotiating on those issues. I remember him somehow being involved in a Korea-related problem, but I can't think of the details.

Q: It's illustrative of the fact that you never can tell what's going to come up bilaterally and that you have to make some adjustment to it. I mean you often find people who don't see foreign relations as managing small things so they don't become big things. That's why I had it on my list. For example, one other thing that was major at that time on the commercial side, was Control Data. It was having some problems in Korea at that time. The company got kicked out or their license was suspended or something and the desk got involved.

LAMBERTSON: I also remember there were labor issues. Korean labor was very much constrained in those years, but nevertheless labor issues would arise and occasionally they involved an American company. It seems to me there were instances where American plant managers were briefly held hostage, for example. Control Data may have been one of those.

Q: Did we talk about who was on the desk with you at this time?

LAMBERTSON: My deputy when I started out was Bill Breer who I worked with in Japan, and then he moved on and was replaced by Spence Richardson, who I had known since Saigon. The first economic officer was Bob Richmond and he was succeeded by John Hoog. There was a North Korea watcher - now it's a whole section of that desk. I believe just about the whole time I was there Barbara Harvey had that job, a very good officer. We had a junior officer. At least part of the time it was David Straub, who is the country director now and I think the best Korean speaker in the Foreign Service. (Spence Richardson and John Hoog are now my colleagues in

KEDO, in North Korea.)

Q: Your view of the world of course is Korea centric, but during this time a lot was being done on China issues. Did any of that impact on you?

LAMBERTSON: I don't recall them impacting upon me, but I remember thinking that Bill Rope was doing a hell of a good job on the China desk under a lot of pressure from a lot of different quarters. This was what, the time of the second Shanghai communiqué?

Q: Yes, '82 August yes.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, and it seemed very complicated and very intense and it just seemed to me that that desk was performing very well. As I know it had under Chas Freeman. When was Chas the country director?

Q: He was there '79 to '81.

LAMBERTSON: Yes. Didn't Chas initiate the practice of official-informal weekly summaries?

Q: I wouldn't be surprised.

LAMBERTSON: Then all desks started doing them. Something out to the embassy each week just to give a status report on where various issues stood, and that was a new innovation. In any event, I admired Rope and I always thought he should have been better rewarded.

THOMAS P. H. DUNLOP
Political Counselor
Seoul (1983-1987)

Country Director for Korea
Washington, DC (1987-1989)

Mr. Dunlop was born in Washington, D.C. and raised in North Carolina. He was educated at Yale University and the University of Berlin. After serving in the US Air Force, he entered the Foreign Service in 1960. His foreign assignments took him to Saigon and Seoul in the Far East and to Belgrade and Zagreb in Eastern Europe. In Washington, he also dealt primarily with matters concerning Romania and Korea. Mr. Dunlop was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

DUNLOP: I was assigned to the Embassy in Seoul as Political Counselor. I had no previous experience with South Korea and knew very little about it. It turned out to be a fascinating time. I spent most of the rest of my career dealing with Korean affairs, one way or the other.

Q: Korea is a fairly complex place, and a very sensitive one. The Political Counselor is the

person who looks at the political environment, which is a difficult one. You really weren't an "East Asian hand," apart from your time in Vietnam.

DUNLOP: I wasn't really any kind of "hand." I had experience in Europe and in Vietnam.

Q: Anyone who would look at your career might say that you were a "Balkan hand," or something like that. Did you have any feel for why you were assigned to the Embassy in Seoul?

DUNLOP: You know, the personnel processes in the Department, even for those of us who have survived many years of them, are still something of a mystery. At least they are to me. I can only say that I had obviously done well enough. I must have done well in Belgrade and had a good "corridor" reputation. Larry Eagleburger, who had been Ambassador to Yugoslavia when I was Political Counselor there, was the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs at that time, I believe. He had gone back from Belgrade to be Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. Then he was lifted one level up to the Seventh Floor [where the offices of the Secretary of State and of his principal advisers are] as Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs. I have no sense that Eagleburger played any kind of role as a "patron" in this assignment. His name was never mentioned to me, and I never called him and told him that I had a problem with an ongoing assignment. I always found it very difficult to lobby for positions in that way. I probably didn't do it well enough during my career. I might have had a few more years if I had. But no. The short answer, which I probably should have given you in the first place, is that I really don't know why I was assigned to Seoul as Political Counselor.

Q: You served in South Korea from when to when?

DUNLOP: From 1983 to 1987, and then I returned to the Department as Korean Country Director.

Q: From 1983 to 1987. Korea was not your "area." That is, Northeast Asia, but particularly Korea. How did you prepare yourself before you went out and, before you went out, what did you see would be your major responsibility?

DUNLOP: Well, those are good questions. I was told of my assignment to Seoul while I was in Mexico City with the Senior Seminar. I received a phone call from Personnel. That was in March, 1983, so I had three months to prepare to leave for Korea. I think I was told that I had to be there by July 4, 1983, in time for the Embassy reception! [Laughter] I don't know what contribution I could have made to putting the reception on, but they wanted me in Seoul by July 4, if possible.

That precluded any serious language study. However, I persuaded the Department to give me some "survival Korean" training, at 7:00 AM each day, before the Senior Seminar program for the day began at 8:00 AM. So I did that for a couple of months. It took me a little while to persuade the FSI [Foreign Service Institute] to do that. They had to find money to cover this training. I think that I had a pretty persuasive case. I must say that, in retrospect, while that training in Korean was useful, it wasn't anything like enough. I never felt that I could speak Korean, even though I also took the 100 Hour Course that was available at post.

Q: In the range of languages that the Department teaches, I think that Korean ranks up among the hardest...

DUNLOP: That's right. It's one of four languages that the Department teaches for two years in the regular course at the FSI [Foreign Service Institute]. The second year is spent in Korea, putting one's language training to use. The other three, really "hard" languages include Arabic. I think that the training is given in Tunisia, Chinese (in Taipei), Japanese (in Kobe), and Korean (in Seoul) are the other three "hard" language overseas FSI branches.

I felt very uneasy about not knowing how to speak Korean. This was going to be the first place that I would receive a US Government paycheck for working where I did not feel that I had at least some ability to speak the local language. I had some French and some German when the US Air Force was paying me to work in those two countries. Then I had studied Serbo-Croatian before going to Yugoslavia, and I had studied Vietnamese before going to Saigon. Here was a country, Korea, where I was not going to be able to speak Korean. The position of Political Counselor in the Embassy in Seoul was not "language designated." That is, service in that position did not require that you know how to speak Korean.

After I got to Seoul, I realized that there were some excellent Korean language officers in the Political Section. All but two of the officer positions in the Political Section, including my position, were "language designated." I made it a point to try hard and succeeded, although it was not so easy as you might think, in getting the Political Counselor's position "language designated." Since it takes two years to prepare an officer for a "language designated" position in Korea...

Q: And a senior officer, too.

DUNLOP: And a senior officer, too. The "language designation" did not apply to my successor as Political Counselor. It happened with my successor's successor. All of the Political Counselors in Seoul since then, and I think that I know all of them, have had the full, two-year course in Korean. If they haven't, they should have.

South Korea is an interesting country from the language point of view, in that the "elite" in the country speak English pretty well. We have had this long and intimate association with South Korea since the 1950's, and Koreans, insofar as they look outwards for anything, including security and economic assistance, markets, travel, immigration, tend to look to the United States. America has been, by far, the most important country to them. English is taught widely in South Korea. Certainly, almost all of the bureaucrats in the Foreign Ministry and in other, senior positions in the South Korean Government speak English, although this is not totally true. Even so, it's much better to be able to speak the language yourself. As you well know, the ability to communicate directly with people and to hear what they're saying to each other in their own tongue is very important. I could not do that.

Q: What did you feel were the main concerns that you would have, as you got ready to go to South Korea?

DUNLOP: I asked David Lambertson that same question. Dave is an old friend from my Vietnam days who was then the Korean Country Director. His answer, and he was quite right in this, was that there were three things to be concerned about. After I had been there for a little while, I understood that they were the most important issues that I would have to concern myself with.

One was the relations between the Embassy and the US military command. It is a very senior command in the American military establishment and it is always held by a four-star general. Sometimes the commander of the US military command in South Korea goes on to be Chief of Staff of the United States Army. Two of them at least have done that. The command itself does not have a large number of people assigned to it, but the American commander of US troops is also the "Combined Forces Commander" and so has direct, operational command of a significant element of the South Korean military establishment.

So the "Combined Forces Command" is an integrated command, unlike NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]. The different elements of NATO come together under an integrated command only when war starts. The "Combined Forces Command" is an ongoing, every day activity. Forces in it practice together and have exercises of one kind or another constantly. It "interfaces" with the South Korean military at many levels and in very important ways.

At the time I arrived in Seoul in 1983 the South Korean military had been running the country, in effect, since 1960. South Korean military generals, Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan had seized power on two separate occasions. Chun Doo Hwan was the President of the Republic of Korea when I arrived there. The South Korean military was very important, and there were significant political, as well as security implications in our relationship with the South Korean military.

So Dave Lambertson told me, "You will be the operationally responsible person for the political-military relationship. The Ambassador's relations with the US commander are extremely important. You have to foster that relationship and to make sure that your staff gets to know and to be respected by the US military in South Korea. They will respect you," David said, "if you know your job, if you know what their job is, and if you respect them." That was absolutely true. Therefore, I arrived in Seoul knowing that one of my important responsibilities was going to be the political-military relationship with the US military. Secondly, Chun Doo Hwan had seized power in a coup d'etat in December, 1979. People had been killed in the course of this seizure of power. He therefore was an "unlawful" ruler if you look at it from the viewpoint of many South Koreans. He had forced the adoption of a new constitution and an election on the country and had himself elected for seven years. He had promised to step aside at the end of the seven years, and this was a constant theme in all of his public pronouncements which dealt with that issue. He would say, "I'm here for seven years. I will stay for seven years and will go at the end of seven years." Dave Lambertson said, "Make sure that he does that." [Laughter] So it was very important to get Chun out of power!

It was Dave Lambertson's view, and it quickly became my view also, that if Chun sought to perpetuate himself in power, as Park Chung Hee had done, this would be a very serious

detriment to our relationship with South Korea. It was already difficult to deal with the South Koreans. It had always been very difficult to deal with them going back to when Syngman Rhee was President. He was a very difficult man. Park Chung Hee had been a very difficult ally. The relationship with Chun Doo Hwan was also very difficult. To have Chun perpetuate himself in power, as Park Chung Hee did, would be to give those people in the United States who thought our relationship with South Korea was the "wrong" relationship to start with, a very strong argument in their support.

Our policy was that the relationship with the Republic of Korea was very important, no matter who the President of South Korea was. Dave Lambertson and I felt this, the President felt this, and the Ambassador believed in it. Therefore, we had to do what we could to minimize the domestic threats in the US to our established policy. Part of that picture involved the domestic threat, that is, the pressures on the Reagan administration either to sever our relationship with the Republic of Korea, pull our troops out of South Korea, or at least significantly cut back on our military presence in that country. There was also the perception by some people in the US that we were the sole support for Chun Doo Hwan. This was an incorrect perception but, nevertheless, this view was widely held in the United States, especially on the Left and among human rights activists.

So that was the other side to this situation. That is, the human rights or civil liberties side. There were other considerations, but the principal criticism of our relationship with the Republic of Korea came not only from the Left in the United States but also from some groups which take an active interest in civil rights and human liberties. Goodness knows, there are a lot of them. These groups were very vocal in their criticism of the Chun Doo Hwan regime. Insofar as they perceived the US Government to be indifferent to that issue, they were also critical of us.

The personality of "Dixie" Walker, the Ambassador, played something of a role in this. "Dixie" was not a career Foreign Service Officer. He was the first Ambassador to the Republic of Korea since we established diplomatic relations in 1948 who was not a career Foreign Service Officer. He was a Republican academic with very strong credentials in Asia, particularly in Northeast Asia. Chinese was his first foreign language, he spoke adequate Japanese, he had lived, done research, and published in both China and Japan, and he knew Korea as a function of his knowledge of Japan.

However, "Dixie" was a political appointee. He had also been active in the Republican Party in the US as a consultant for the Reagan campaign, for example. After his election, President Reagan appointed "Dixie" Walker as a political Ambassador to Seoul. Reagan, of course, was hated by the Left in the US and despised by many people for what they perceived to be his indifference to the human rights and civil liberties side of our policies. The Left leaped ferociously on "Dixie" as a man who had obviously been sent to South Korea to placate and prop up this absolutist dictator, the "despicable" despot Chun Doo Hwan. In fact, for his part "Dixie" also hated Chun Doo Hwan and hated everything that he stood for. I used to call "Dixie" a "closet liberal," which he didn't like to be called. He really was. He just didn't like Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina] at all. So he really resented this criticism that he supported Chun Doo Hwan.

Anyway, Dave Lambertson briefed me on all of this. It turned out that "Dixie" and I developed a very warm personal relationship. I felt a lot of affection for him as well as a lot of respect, and still do. He did a very good job as Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. However, I was told that "Dixie" was terribly sensitive about this criticism of him on the human rights side. Dave said that I would find "Dixie" genuinely and personally interested in the human rights issue. However, since we didn't run South Korea, there were going to be a lot of abuses and other things going on that would subject "Dixie" personally and the Embassy collectively to criticism. Dave warned me about that.

So we had these two components to be concerned about: the political-military relationship and the human rights and civil liberties side of the picture. The third major, "big picture" issue that Dave Lambertson discussed with me, and there were other, ongoing practical and operational matters, of course, was North Korea.

Insofar as we did any observation of, reporting on, and predicting developments in North Korea, this would be the responsibility of the Political Section. Dave Lambertson told me, which was very true, that we had almost no intelligence sources inside North Korea. CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and the Korean Central Intelligence Agency [KCIA] were virtually helpless in collecting political intelligence on North Korea. They had been defeated at every point in every effort to develop sources in North Korea. Without exception, they had been unable to get intelligence agents into North Korea. We had no human intelligence, or "Humint," sources in North Korea. The only North Koreans that we could talk to were those who voluntarily defected, and there were surprisingly few of those. This was unlike the case, for example, with the Soviet Union, where there was a steady flow of defectors. North Korea was so hermetically closed that people just did not have the opportunity either to learn about the outside world or to have the opportunity to establish contact with the outside world. Therefore, our intelligence on North Korea was almost non-existent, except for "technical means" of intelligence collection, and that means overhead photography and, to some degree, that collected by electronic means.

Q: Listening in on radio transmissions.

DUNLOP: Satellites could also collect information, but we didn't devote a lot of satellite time to North Korea. One of the things that I found out when I got to Seoul was how little satellite or "imagery" time was devoted to North Korea. I always complained about this. The intelligence chief for the US command, during most of my time in Seoul, was Frank Church, a very nice and competent Air Force Major General. He went from Korea to be head of the Defense Intelligence Agency [DIA]. I would lament over this situation. Gen Church would say that he was trying hard to get more satellite time on North Korea. However, the available time was being devoted to other places, like the Middle East, the Caucasus Mountains, or missile bases in Kazakhstan. The SR-71 [supersonic reconnaissance aircraft] flew missions about four times a week.

Q: The SR-71, or "Blackbird..."

DUNLOP: It was a tremendous aircraft. It flew at tremendous speed, in excess of 1800 mph. It could take photographs. One of the problems with a plane that flies that fast is getting a camera to take pictures that fast. However, it had the necessary cameras to do that. It had that

technology. The U-2 [an overhead reconnaissance aircraft originally developed in the mid 1950's] was also available to us. I think that I can say, without spilling any beans, that as a matter of policy we did not overfly North Korea, although the North Koreans constantly accused us of overflying their territory. In fact, we never overflew North Korea. We never came close enough so that there was any legitimate reason to suspect that we might have made a navigational error and overflew North Korea by mistake. The flight paths for the SR-71 and U-2 flights were very carefully drawn. In fact, the tracks were always taken physically to the Embassy by Maj Gen Frank Church and shown to me and to "Dixie" Walker, the Ambassador, if he had the time to review them. We would approve the tracks every month for these two types of flights. Sometimes they would reverse course, sometimes they would fly at different times during the day, and sometimes the flights would be at different altitudes and speeds. However, the actual, physical track of the aircraft was always "cleared" with the Embassy. I think that we can say "cleared." We may have said, "No, don't do that" on a couple of occasions. Rarely.

North Korea was the third major issue involved in my duties in Seoul which Dave Lambertson discussed with me. Because we knew so little about it, our ability to predict what the North Koreans might do in terms of military activities, sabotage, or terrorism was very limited.

We knew that North Korea [the Democratic People's Republic of Korea] was implacably hostile to South Korea and to us. If there ever was a case on this earth when a country was our enemy, it was and is North Korea. North Korea has an enormous military capability that is deployed extremely close to the border between North and South Korea, which is called the "Demilitarized Zone," or the DMZ. So Dave Lambertson said, "You've got that problem." There were various subsets of that problem. One of them is the paranoia of South Korea regarding North Korea. The fact is that the South Koreans might overreact some day to some accident that happens in North Korea and get us involved in military action, in a war, or in some crisis, which neither side intended to happen.

For example, if there were an incident along the DMZ, the South Koreans might, in good faith, interpret it differently from the real situation. This was the case, for example, with the first stages of a putative "surprise attack." A "surprise attack" was one of our preoccupations, as well as obtaining warning of a "surprise attack." Most of those reconnaissance and intelligence collection flights were directed at military targets in North Korea, in an effort to give us reassurance that they weren't coming South, the fearful words "Here they come!"

The military situation on the Korean peninsula was always tense. If anything, it became tenser during the four years that I was there. North Korea's military dispositions became ever more threatening. That is, North Korea was clearly repositioning its forces, which required an enormous amount of energy and effort. A lot of these North Koreans were moved from one underground facility to another underground facility. Through photography we were able eventually to discover what was going on, in the physical sense, of where these forces were. The repositioning of these North Korean forces inexorably moved them closer to the border and gave us less and less time to react in the event of an attack.

Q: Before you went to Korea, what estimate were you getting of what the likely outcome would be, if a North Korean attack took place?

DUNLOP: Well, you would hear different answers to that. The US military would always tell you that we could "contain" a North Korean attack. I think that is sort of the way that they are. I found very few US military officers who doubted that we could "contain" a North Korean attack. I had a different view from them in answer to your question, because I had a different view on how the North Koreans might fight a war against South Korea and what their objectives might be.

The US military view was that if the North Koreans attacked South, they would do what they did in 1950. The North Koreans would come across the DMZ on a broad front and in as much mass as they could deploy. And that attack would be really "massive." The North Koreans would come down the West Coast, the Center, and the East Coast of the Korean Peninsula. Of course, Seoul lies near the West Coast, 40 miles South of the DMZ. The US military said that the North Koreans would probably bypass Seoul, because their real objective had to be quickly to seize Pusan, the southernmost port of South Korea. This would be to prevent us from retreating to the South, establishing a perimeter, and reinforcing again, as we did in 1950. So the US military saw North Korea looking at a possible war in the 1980's as if it would be like the war which began in 1950. That is, a war for Pusan, essentially, aimed at getting the Americans off the Korean Peninsula.

Well, the North Koreans might think differently. I had another view of that. However, when the US military looked at this question, they said that the North Koreans couldn't repeat what they did in 1950. They could cause a lot of havoc, inflict a lot of casualties, smash through the defensive lines around the Demilitarized Zone, etc, but they couldn't get all the way to Pusan before we "obliterated" them. That was a very confident point of view. I don't know what the South Korean military thought about that, but that was the basis of the war planning in the US military command in South Korea.

By the time I arrived in South Korea in 1983, we had about 42,000-43,000 troops there. By the time I left in 1987, I think that we had about 38,000 troops there. That was not a significant change. Our forces weren't there to "fight the war" on the Korean Peninsula. They were there to be a guarantee to the South Koreans that we would fight and bring other forces to South Korea from the United States to help them fight the war on the peninsula, along with them. They were a guarantee that North Korea could not invade South Korea without meeting American forces and engaging us in hostilities. The US battle plans were focused on reinforcing our troops from outside of South Korea. Every year there used to be a very large defense exercise called "Team Spirit," in which this operationally difficult logistical process involving repositioning American forces from Okinawa, from Hawaii, and even as far away as from Ft. Lewis in the State of Washington was practiced. Holding this exercise was an important thing to do, because it was not easy to do. The US military rotates people in and out of positions every couple of years, much as the Foreign Service does. Every year about one-third of the officers and men participating in "Team Spirit" were doing this for the first time. So this was an important way that we practiced reinforcing South Korea, in order to defend South Korea. Not in order to attack North Korea.

Every year North Korea cried and screamed about this "aggressive" preparation for the invasion

of the North, as they called it. I regret to say that there were leftists in the US who echoed this ridiculous assertion. It was not this. Team Spirit was a demonstration of our intention and our ability to reinforce the defensive battle in South Korea.

Where I differed with our military colleagues and probably still do, as I doubt that they have changed their view, is that North Korea might consider another strategy as worth the candle. That would not go for Pusan but to go for Seoul, seize Seoul, where one-third of the whole population of South Korea lives, cross the Han River, which flows through the middle of Seoul, which is the first major physical barrier to an invasion of South Korea, and then hold 14-15 million South Koreans hostage there. They could tell the South Koreans, "We have to talk about this situation, but the Americans have to leave the Korean Peninsula." This strategy, if successful, would destroy the South Korean Government, probably to a greater extent than the North Koreans did in 1950. It could have presented whatever was left in South Korea, after this massive psychological, political, and military defeat involving losing Seoul and 14-15 million people, with a decision which would force them to negotiate with North Korea, at an enormous disadvantage. At that point, we would also be in an excruciating military and political vice. That was my personal nightmare.

People might say, "Well, what about the nuclear weapons?" That is precisely why North Korea now has developed a nuclear weapons program, to deter us from using nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. People say, "Why on earth does North Korea want nuclear weapons? What are they going to do? They throw one nuclear weapon at us, and we'll 'incinerate' all of North Korea. We'll burn it to a crisp." We probably would. However, the North Koreans wouldn't have to use nuclear weapons. Just by having them, they might well believe they would deter us from using our nuclear weapons. They would be holding Seoul as a nuclear hostage.

To me, that is an alternative strategy which explains why the North Koreans have a nuclear weapons program and why they are constantly repositioning their forces to gain surprise. An attack of this kind would have to be done quickly and massively before we could resupply and reinforce South Korea. This may be one reason why the American confidence that we could resupply South Korea could be irrelevant. However, I could never persuade my American military friends that this alternative scenario should be taken seriously. Hopefully, we'll never find out whether this is the case. But I still have these grave concerns.

Q: Was there a feeling at that time [1983-1987] that the relative efficiency of North Korea was improving, in terms of equipment and so forth? We're talking about North Korea now when, obviously, it's a decaying force. Also, what about the efficiency of the South Korean armed forces?

DUNLOP: I think that the US military probably had a healthy respect for both North and South Korean armed forces. I accepted their judgment in that regard. For example, I didn't try to second guess them about the effectiveness of the South Korean military. For economic and budgetary reasons the South Korean military had not gone as heavily into armor and artillery as we thought they should have. Partly also they believed that we could and would resupply them quickly in the event of an emergency. The South Korean Army was still overwhelmingly an infantry force. That was the US military judgment, whenever their advice was sought, and their counsel was

often sought, they would advise the South Koreans to improve the balance between armor, artillery, and infantry to the advantage of the armor and artillery.

The North Koreans had long since made their army into a force which was "heavy" in armor and artillery. The North Korean military forces were enormously and heavily mechanized. Again, this applies particularly to those units closest to the front line. The North Koreans had first line equipment. They had the same basic armor and artillery that the Soviet Union forces had, but without the same rocket capability. The Soviets had developed and deployed various types of rockets for battlefield use. They called these rocket forces, Katushas. That is a generic term used now for many different kinds of such rockets. The North Korean artillery and armor, obtained from the Soviets, was perhaps not composed of as advanced versions of this kind of equipment. However, Soviet armor has always been good, going all the way back to the old T-34 tanks of World War II. The North Koreans have the equivalent of about the T-62, Soviet-made tank. This tank has a 105 mm gun on it. If effectively commanded and used, it is a formidable, battlefield weapon. I forget what the proportion was, but the North Koreans had about 8-10 heavy tanks to every heavy tank the South Koreans had on the Korean Peninsula. Our force -- the II Infantry Division -- had some add-ons of armor and artillery, but is insignificant by contrast to either North or South.

So the North Koreans had a formidable force. The record of both North and South Koreans in combat, when they were well supplied and commanded by competent officers, was well demonstrated during both World War II and the Korean War. They were very good. The South Koreans were very good in Vietnam, for that matter. So I think that both sides in Korea would have fought very well and tenaciously, had war broken out again on the Korean Peninsula.

Perhaps I should mention another geo-strategic factor which enormously complicates our military situation. As I mentioned, Seoul with its 14-15 million people lies 40 km south of the DMZ, about as far as Dulles airport is from the White House. Seoul today lies within rocket range of its enemy. If the North so chose -- and why shouldn't they so choose? -- the North could lob a couple of hundred rockets into Seoul at the very onset of an attack. If those rockets were to release some evil-looking smoke, and North Korean radio and agents spread the word of a poison gas attack -- well, the likelihood of panic is dreadfully real. Imagine the populace north of the Han River trying to force their way across the Han River bridge, perhaps as the ROK army was dynamiting them...

Q: When you arrived in South Korea in 1983, could you describe how you saw the Embassy and the relationships within it?

DUNLOP: The first thing I saw was very indicative and very positive. Ambassador "Dixie" Walker came out to the airport to meet me, which he did not have to do. I was the Political Counselor, not his DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. He might have gone to the airport to meet the DCM. "Dixie" Walker is a warm and caring human being. He demonstrated this in all of his relations with his staff. If somebody made him mad, he might have gotten mad at them. However, basically, he was a very good man and a nice guy. When I saw him at the end of the airport passenger exit, I almost fell over, because it was such a surprise, but a very pleasant surprise.

"Dixie" had a very able DCM, who knew South Korea well. He had spent a lot of time there. One day Dave Lambertson, the Country Director for Korea in the Department, told me that this guy was a good Political Officer who knew South Korean matters well. Dave warned me against getting upset when he "gets into your knickers." Well, I never had any problem in that regard.

Q: Who was this DCM?

DUNLOP: I have a block on his name but I'll remember it in a few seconds. He went on to be Ambassador to New Zealand and Malaysia.

Q: Paul Cleveland.

DUNLOP: Paul Cleveland, yes. He was a big guy who looked just like John Wayne, the movie actor. He was genial and smart. He did not always show the best of judgment in his personal life, but that's another story. I think that I was fortunate or just smart enough to know that Paul was a resource to make use of. I was the new guy on the block in the Embassy in Seoul. It wouldn't have done me any good to tell Paul Cleveland that he didn't know what was going on in South Korea.

Q: He had been Political Counselor in Seoul when I was there in the Embassy.

DUNLOP: He had also been Country Director in the Department of State, or at least one of the desk officers. Paul was a hard charging, hard working, basically very effective person. He showed a lot of interest in the Political Section. After we got to know each other, we developed a good working relationship.

I had a good staff in the Political Section. In terms of language qualifications, they got better while I was there, not that I had anything to do with it. A couple of Political Officers left Seoul who never quite made it "over the language hump" and never became good Korean speakers. A couple of Political Officers came out to replace them who really spoke Korean well.

I had a good deputy chief of the Political Section, Dave Engel, who was later on replaced by David Pierce. The Section was functioning smoothly when I got there. I didn't have any overlap with my predecessor, David Blakemore, who went back to Washington to be the Korea Country Officer. There weren't a lot of things broken that had to be fixed. I didn't have to do much fixing in the Political Section. It was a very hard-working bunch of officers. This was a good thing, because we had a lot of work to do.

Q: What about contacts? How did you go about establishing contacts, and where were the contacts?

DUNLOP: That was not difficult, even, as I say, without my being able to speak Korean. Most South Koreans, whether in the opposition, the government, or those sort of on the sidelines, wanted to be in contact with the Embassy. There was a very vocal and active opposition which included all kinds of groups of people. The South Korean Government generally didn't

discourage this kind of contact, although once in a while there would be some kind of feeble effort by some idiot in the South Korean security services to hamper the establishment of contacts. I say some idiot, because these efforts never succeeded and were never a major problem. An 'idiot' of this kind might try to tell some politically active dissident not to talk to people in the American Embassy. These dissidents would always come to us and say, "Here I am, bravely talking to the Americans." We could and did bitch back to the South Koreans about such ham-handed efforts to discourage our making contacts. We tried to ensure that this would not further complicate the life of the oppositionist involved.

Whatever the South Korean security authorities thought about our contacts with the opposition or whatever they might have liked to have done to limit such contacts, they didn't handle this successfully. For example, I quickly got to know Kim Yong Sam, who is now the President of Korea. At the time he was a prominent opposition leader. That is the only chief of state who, I could say, I was ever on a first name and friendly basis with. I drank a lot of his scotch whisky, ate a lot of his food, and listened to him. He was very articulate and loquacious. He would hold forth literally for hours and hours on all manner of subjects.

Our principal contacts on the civilian side, of course, were with people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry was staffed with some superb people. They were absolutely first class people. If anything, they were better than the people in the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who were pretty good themselves. Taking a job in the South Korean civil service was a high prestige matter for university students.

There was a "pecking order" among the ministries, as, I understand, there is in Japan. All of these ministries gave very tough exams, but they could choose among the very top people. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and probably the Ministry of Finance, as in Japan, and later on the Ministry of Foreign Trade, were the three "premier" ministries in the South Korean Government.

Something which Dave Lambertson didn't say to me, although he would have said it a year or two later to somebody going out to the Embassy in Seoul, was that there would be a fourth issue of continuing concern to the Embassy. Perhaps a Political Officer wouldn't be quite so much involved with it, but it would still have very broad implications for the Korean-American relationship. That was the area of trade and commerce. South Korea was already in the take off stage of economic development. I knew that it was already an Asian "tiger," but it was a comparatively little tiger. The principal trading partner of South Korea was, guess who? The United States. It was evolving from a relationship in which we had been the country whose trade balance was a matter of concern for them to being a country whose trade balance we worried about. That question became an increasing preoccupation for the Embassy during my tour in Seoul. Although I was not directly involved in that area, or had responsibility therefor, trade and commercial questions sometimes had political implications. We certainly had a lot to be interested in, and that was something for us to watch.

Q: How did you find that Americans were viewed by influential groups in South Korea at that time? Things had begun to change.

DUNLOP: About half way through my tour in South Korea [1983-1987] I suggested to DCM

Paul Cleveland that we do an analytical, "think piece" on anti-Americanism. Paul was a little leery about this, more because of the title than because of the substance of the issue. Perhaps he had a little more political sensitivity than I did on how this subject might echo around, back in Washington. We finally did this piece. I don't recall whether "anti-Americanism" was in the subject line or not. I think it was.

The reason that we did this piece was that there were a lot of manifestations of it among the university students. We didn't understand why this was the case. I think that, to some degree, that is still true. I don't think that I can say with total confidence exactly why some of those students barricaded themselves at Yonsei University in July, 1996. They had to be winkled out by the police. They were basically espousing the North Korean "line" on reunification and blaming the United States for preventing this. This was one of the underlying themes of the student protest movement.

However, this attitude existed, and as the Chun regime drew to the close of its seven-year term, which was to end in 1988, student protests became more and more violent. Normally, the kind of protests the students engaged in only rarely attracted much public support. However, during my last months in South Korea, they did. We were very much engaged in trying to figure out "why," as well as what we could do to alleviate this feeling. We tried to find genuine things we did that were real irritants in the Korean-American relationship.

One of the things that we constantly looked at was the American military presence, including how American soldiers behaved off base and their interaction with the Korean people. I want to give full credit to the senior staff of the US military in South Korea for being very much concerned about this. Well, you were Consul General in Seoul and you know the kinds of things involved. You were also Consul General in Naples. Sailors come ashore and raise hell, sometimes. However, the things that US soldiers did in South Korea which seemed to irritate people were far less serious than what they actually did. It was more a matter of their just being there. I think that it's unpleasant but it's also fair to say that there is a strong, xenophobic, ethnocentric, and racist component in the Korean psychology. They really think that there is something special about the blood that flows in Korean veins. They think it is "better." To have Americans, foreigners, sitting around in the center of their cities is just an irritant in and of itself, no matter how much they may or may not behave like Boy Scouts when they go off base on leave.

So we looked at our troop presence all of the time. Some of my most interesting conversations with senior US military officers reflected this concern. I give them real credit for trying to deal with this problem. I think that they were as successful as they could have been in handling this problem. I don't think that we have anything particularly to be ashamed about regarding the conduct of our soldiers, most of whom behave themselves, although some of course don't.

However, there was one major irritant which I do criticize the US military for in South Korea. I also criticize the State Department, not so much for "playing along" with the US military but for failing to be strong enough to win the argument with the US military. I refer to the matter of the relocation of the military headquarters of the US forces from the center of Seoul. The US HQ base is called "Yongsan." It's a big base, with a golf course on it. The South Koreans have built

through highways which come up to the 13th tee, where they have to stop because they can't build the highway from the 13th tee across to the other side.

In Tokyo in 1964 we moved all of our people out of Tokyo. This was called the "Kansai" relocation plan. We did this for the same reasons then that we should have done it at least 20 years later in South Korea.

Q: When land prices were still within reason.

DUNLOP: The South Koreans offered to build us a brand spanking new headquarters complex, including a golf course. There was even some thought given to making it a 36-hole golf course, if we would just get the hell out of downtown Seoul and move where they had already moved their own South Korean military headquarters. One argument the US military always use is that they have to be near their local counterparts. Well, their South Korean counterparts had left downtown Seoul. They were down near Caejon, which is about 60 miles South of Seoul. This is the one area where I really had arguments with the US military, and I think that I made myself somewhat unpleasant, because I really felt very strongly about this. However, the US military was very adamant about that. They did not want to make that move. They weren't entirely honest with us when they told us that they were willing to do so, but...

Q: Why wouldn't the US military move out of downtown Seoul? They were on the "wrong" [northern] side of the Han River, if you wanted...

DUNLOP: That was another reason to move. What the hell do you think would happen to those bridges over the Han River during the first hours of a possible North Korean attack? I think that there are some issues for bureaucracies that are "sacred." I think that golf course, that golf club, and being right across the street from the Itaewon shopping area were, somehow, "sacred," that's all. They just weren't going to move. The US military still has that space. They still have it to this day. The South Korean Army headquarters is gone south, as it should have, the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff then left, the South Korean Navy and Air Force left Seoul a long time ago. The South Korean Army Headquarters and their Joint Chiefs of Staff office were still in downtown Seoul when I arrived there in 1983. They are both gone from there now. They have all gone down to the new, military complex near Taejon, which they were willing to give us land adjacent to, so that we could build a new headquarters down in Taejon. We should have.

Well, that was the one aspect of our relationship with the US military where I felt that I "failed." I failed to persuade my Ambassador and my employer, the Department of State, to be tough enough on this issue. Ambassador "Dixie" Walker would go right up to the well, and then not drink the water. I know why. He knew this was a sensitive issue with the US military, and he regarded his relationship with the command as more important than moving our military command out of Seoul. If he had to cave on this issue in order to keep a smooth, easy, and friendly working relationship with the senior US military commanders out at Yongsan, he would go up to that point but not beyond it. However, I would have gone beyond that point and I don't think that there would have been any irreparable damage done to our relationship with the US military command. This was the right thing to do, and we didn't do it.

That's only a partial answer to your question. I'm not sure that I have the full answer to it. Let me talk about anti-Americanism in another way and place it in another context. It is true that there is a lot of anti-American feeling in South Korea. I think that some of it is racially and ethnocentrically motivated. Some of it is motivated by some things that we should have done but didn't do, like move out of downtown Seoul. However, it doesn't matter very much. It's not all that important a political factor. Five years after the university students rioted and threw stones against the South Korean Government and shouted anti-American slogans, they peacefully took their examinations and are now in the Korean civil service. Or, if they are smart, they have been "snapped up" by Sam Sung, Gold Star, or other large companies and are following along in their fathers' and mothers' track. There is not a politically effective, organized, anti-American element, such as there was in France, for example.

Q: There is no intellectual group in South Korea, sitting around on the Left Bank or the Right Bank of the Han River, smoking cigarettes, writing books, and things like that.

DUNLOP: Most of these students are in their early 20's, have hair down to their shoulders, and are sort of going through a "rite of passage." This is another way of "guessing" what is going on, because I admit that I can't understand it.

Q: That's the closest that I can come to it. One can understand the "racial" motivation of this attitude. For example, I think that a very good indicator is that, for centuries, there has been a Chinese component in Korea which has never been absorbed. It sort of sits there like an undigested "lump." It's not very big, and it just doesn't go anywhere.

DUNLOP: I think that it's fair to say, and I've said this several times to people who know China well. They all agree with me, after thinking about it for a minute. I don't believe that there's another example of a country which is physically contiguous to "Han China" that does not have large Chinese elements in the population doing things like running the rice mills in South Vietnam, building cities like Penang in Malaysia and Singapore, or owning fishing islands off the coast of other countries. Korea was the "hermit kingdom" for a reason. The Koreans were squeezed in there between Japan and China. They had difficult and unpleasant relationships with both of those countries. When the Yi dynasty became dominant in Korea, when China was reducing its foreign involvements, and when Japan had become a closed kingdom, the Yi dynasty in the early 17th century chose that time to seal off Korea.

So North and South Korea became the "hermit kingdom." For 250 years, woe betide a Portuguese (or any other) sailor washed ashore on a Korean island. He was promptly executed. It was against Korean law and was a capital offense to have any contact at all with a foreigner, except to kill him. You were permitted to do that. And that system worked for a long time.

Q: This isn't my time, but I can't resist giving a fiscal manifestation of this, which became clear to me in the course of consular work in South Korea. One of the things that we used to do, and maybe we still do, is that in the course of processing someone for a visa, we have a blood test made. We used to do this all over the world, or we were doing it. I was told by people who do this that Korea is very "difficult." In other countries there is always such a mixture of blood types and so forth. It is quite easy to come up with an identification of blood types. However,

Korean blood was always so "uniform" that you just didn't have those other variations. You couldn't come up with differences that you could find in other places. When you say, "it's in the Korean blood," in fact it IS in the blood.

DUNLOP: As you know, and as anybody knows who has had anything to do with Korea, there are very few, family names. There are 12 major family names. About 90% of all Koreans are named "Park," or "O" or "Yi," or another of these twelve names. There are 12 of those names. That's another reflection of how conscious Koreans are of their history.

One of the nice, bright, "fun" people to be with in the South Korean Foreign Ministry once came over to my house for lunch. For some reason or other the conversation took a personal turn. I told him that my father's family had lived for many generations in one place, in one house, here in the Washington, DC, area. He asked, "How many generations was that?" I said, "Well, if I could claim to have lived there, and I visited there many times, it would have been seven generations, but I am not sure that I can claim to have lived there." I was sort of visiting my father, who lived there, and so there were six generations, plus me and my brother. I said, "Well, how about yourself?" His name was "O." He said, "Let me think. We have a written record for 15 generations. However, we have an 'oral' record for another 15 generations." [Laughter] I thought, "My God, he goes back to Methuselah, or something like that!" I don't think that his family could really have records going back for 30 generations. I don't know how far back you can go. 30 generations takes you back to the Stone Age or something like that. So he was exaggerating that, but he probably wasn't exaggerating the 15 generations in the written record. He probably could go somewhere and find some scroll that had the family history going back at least 15 generations.

Q: One of the things that Foreign Service Officers are, or should be, renowned for, and particularly Political Officers, is knowing where the power is in a given society.

DUNLOP: That's what we're supposed to do.

Q: What do you feel were your particular targets in South Korea and why?

DUNLOP: Of those who wielded power, it was the South Korean military, under a civilian President, who had "civilianized" himself after seizing power as a military officer. These were the most important, single element in making decisions in the country. Korea itself is a highly hierarchical society. It's a little bit like an army in that respect. There have only been four Presidents since the end of World War II. That is, Syngman Rhee, Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan, and now Kim Yong Sam. I suspect, although I don't have any personal knowledge of it, that President Kim Yong Sam also runs his government on a very rigid, hierarchical system. He gives orders and doesn't consult others very much. That's how he ran his opposition party before taking office. He probably has his favorites who are his instruments for doing his will. Woe betide you if you "cross" one of them in the wrong way. So there is the South Korean military and its "civilianized" leadership at the top. In fact, the "civilianized," military leaders didn't much use the title of "General," although they were career military officers, in every other respect. Chun, of course, was at the top in this regard.

There was a handful, later a double handful, and later a bushel and a peck full of industrial leaders, the so-called leaders of the "Chebol", which is the Korean word for "large, industrial organizations." Those people clearly had a great deal to say about who would be wielding political power. Any President in South Korea, up to Kim Yong Sam, and we may find out that it hasn't been so different with Kim Yong Sam, is co-opted by the "Chebol" to some degree. Politics in South Korea is an enormously expensive business. I was always surprised when the figures were quoted to me of what it cost, for example, a member of the National Assembly to run for office. The figure was in the millions of dollars! Now you can say that is true in the United States. However, I was always surprised that it was that way in South Korea and that the figures were so large.

The South Korean military and the "Chebol" were the two major elements of power. I must say that we didn't do very well in establishing contact with the "Chebol." Ambassador "Dixie" Walker had a couple of good contacts through Korean Air, Hyundai, and, perhaps, Gold Star. The leaders of those three large business firms were among people that he saw. However, it seemed to me that these contacts were more on a "social basis" than on a basis that would be very productive for us to get to know who was really the most influential.

For example, as we came to the end of President Chun's term of office of seven years, one of the things that I always wanted "Dixie" to tell me was who his friends in these large business firms said that they wanted to have as the next President of the Republic of Korea. What did "Sammy" from Sam Sung have to say? What did "Charley" from Korean Air have to say? "Dixie" would say, "Well, they don't talk about that very much." So we didn't find out very much about that. The Agency [Central Intelligence Agency] was useless in all of that.

Q: I was going to ask about the role of the American CIA, because South Korea has often been known as a "CIA country."

DUNLOP: When Gen Park Chung Hee took power by a coup d'etat in 1961, I guess, a very short time after Syngman Rhee had been forced out of power and a very ineffective group of civilians was in office as an interim, caretaker government, the South Koreans did not have their own CIA in any meaningful way. I can say this because people who were there at the time have told me this, but I can't point to any written record. I can't find it in any of the declassified material which has been released. I might also say that we had bad relations with Park Chung Hee at the beginning, as we had bad relations with Chun Doo Hwan at the beginning. We didn't like Park Chung Hee's coup and we didn't like Chun Doo Hwan's coup, either. However, it soon became apparent, in any event, that Park Chung Hee was going to be the ruler of the country. If we were going to have any relationship with the South Korean Government, it would have to be with Park Chung Hee's government. One of the things which, I think, was deliberately done to develop a closer relationship with Park Chung Hee was to persuade him that the Americans could organize a "CIA" for him that would be useful to him. So the Korean CIA, the KCIA, came into being in the 1960's, to all intents and purposes as a modern state security service.

I do not know whether our CIA people felt that they could "construct" a CIA for Park Chung Hee like our CIA, whose writ would only begin at the borders of the country. If they thought this, they were very naive. It didn't work out this way, of course. The KCIA has always been an

instrument of political control in South Korea, as well as an organ for population surveillance and control. At times it has been an instrument of terror or near terror, although it has probably not been as bad as might be thought in some circles in the United States.

The KCIA does not operate primarily as an intelligence collection agency working against North Korea, for example. Yes, it has that function, just like our CIA. It has failed in that function. It has on occasion operated against anti-government Koreans abroad.

However, the KCIA became a significant instrument for President Park Chung Hee. When you asked me to list the "sources of power" in South Korea, I didn't mention the KCIA, because it is essentially an instrument of the South Korean Government and is very responsive to the President of South Korea. So there is not much point in singling it out, unless it plays a separate role. I'm not aware that it has ever played such a separate role. Now, maybe that is something that we don't know.

When the KCIA came into being, it was under the close supervision and guidance of the United States. At least the guidance of the United States. "Supervision," perhaps, is the wrong word. A lot of training was provided to it in making audio intercepts, telephone "taps," and other, relatively modern things like secret writing. I don't know what all our CIA trained the KCIA in, but they trained them in a lot. Therefore, the CIA Station Chief in Seoul has traditionally had a very close working relationship with his South Korean counterpart in the KCIA. South Korea is one of those countries where CIA operations are "declared." That is, the Chief of Station is officially known to the South Korean Government. His relationship is supposedly on an official, agency to agency basis.

That degree of intimacy or close relationship, if you will, that marked the first years of the Park Chung Hee regime and the formation of the KCIA, which was handled by Kim Jong Pil, has eroded since then, to some degree. In fact, by the time I arrived in South Korea in 1983, the relationship with the KCIA was not all of that close. The CIA Chiefs of Station always claimed to be very close to their counterparts in the KCIA, but I think that relationship was under the control of the South Korean side. Certainly, the degree of intimacy was under South Korean control. As in so many countries, where I had to deal with internal affairs and the "locus of power," the CIA Station wasn't very helpful. Perhaps they tried in good faith to be of help, and I liked the people whom I knew and worked with there in the CIA Station in South Korea. However, I cannot look back now on the four years I spent in South Korea [1983-1987] and say, "There was one time there when the Chief of Station told me something that was really important and which we wouldn't have known otherwise or couldn't have figured out otherwise."

KCIA operations against the civilian population of South Korea were very much like those of the Japanese police, although the South Koreans never admit that they have learned anything from the Japanese. The very "un-American" component of that attitude is that they believe that they are responsible for knowing what everybody is up to, all of the time, whether people are politically active or not. So the policeman on the beat is supposed to know all of the households on his beat. They have these "police boxes" on every other street corner.

If a South Korean individual get involved politically in a way that the government doesn't like,

they will watch him carefully. At some point he will get a phone call from somebody whom he may or may not know, who will say that he would like to talk with this person. He will introduce himself as a representative of the South Korean security services. He will say, "We're aware of what you're doing and we think that you're doing too much of it. Wouldn't it be better for you and your family to stop?" That kind of thing is very alien and distasteful to us, but it's very much the way the South Koreans operate. I suspect that it will take a long time for that attitude to change. They would say that is acting like a "good steward," with a place for everything and everything in its place.

Q: What about your relationships with "dissenters" and the opposition? How did you handle these and to what extent did they have any effect?

DUNLOP: We had a lot of contact with the opposition. I mentioned Kim Yong Sam. During my four years in South Korea the two most prominent members of the opposition, and the ones best known outside of South Korea, were Kim Yong Sam and Kim Dae Jung. They were very different people, from different parts of the country. They thoroughly detest each other, so there is very little cooperation between them.

When I arrived in South Korea in 1983, Kim Dae Jung was in exile in the United States. He had been sentenced to death after the Kwangju incident of May, 1980. Part of the "deal" in regularizing our relationship with the South Korean Government, which was very much disliked by us and with which we had very little contact at that time in the early days after the coup d'etat, was that if we let that relationship to assume a more normal posture, Kim Dae Jung would be released from jail. His death sentence would be commuted, and he would be allowed to go wherever he wanted. Of course, he wanted to go to the United States, where he was supported by various elements on the Left. He was very much a "guru" [leader] of the opposition and very much a pet of the American civil liberties lobby, if you will, or at least those taking an interest in the South Korean side of it.

On the other hand Kim Yong Sam was in South Korea. He too had been in and out of jail a number of times. He was out of jail when I went to South Korea in 1983 and never went back into jail. One of my jobs was to get to know Kim Yong Sam. As I said, I got to know him quite well. I saw him frequently, usually in a social setting. However, clearly, our relationship was a business one -- he to influence us, if he could, we to learn as much as possible about him and his activities.

What kind of "business" was the South Korean opposition doing with us? Mainly telling us what they were up to, or what they wanted us to believe they were up to, and hoping that we would like it. They were very critical in public of the United States' supposed "support" of Chun and all his dictatorial ways. However, in private they really knew what the situation was, that is, that we didn't have any control over Chun's actions in the field of civil liberties. Where we could influence the situation, we did so in a way that the South Korean opposition would approve. That is, liberalizing the political system and making the South Korean opposition's role in it more important and easy. On a personal basis, they were always happy to see us.

Some efforts were made by the South Korean police at various times to "control" our access to

the opposition at the very top. That is, to Kim Yong Sam. However, that never worked. We were always able to contact the opposition. When Kim Dae Jung returned from the United States to South Korea, an "arrangement" was made with Kim. This arrangement with Kim Dae Jung was made by a very bright guy in the KCIA, whom I knew quite well. This KCIA official went to the States and struck a deal with Kim Dae Jung in 1956, I believe, and later told me about it. Actually, we got this information from different sources, but I was one of them. Under this arrangement, Kim Dae Jung would be allowed to come back to South Korea if he would promise the South Korean Government that he would do nothing to stimulate the violent activities of the students. That is, Kim Dae Jung would not promote any further violence.

Under this arrangement, Kim Dae Jung could say anything that he wanted, although at first he was kind of restricted or under a form of house arrest, but that was kind of a joke. In effect, he held court in his house, so it was not really house arrest. There was freedom of access to Kim Dae Jung by anybody who wanted to go out there, including American journalists, who visited him fairly frequently. For a while, he actually liked the idea of being under house arrest. I once told him that, and he gave me a very sour look. I said, "It's not all bad that you're here under this so-called 'house arrest.' This gives you a kind of status."

However, once Kim Dae Jung came back to South Korea, we had access to him, and I was the guy who handled that. The Ambassador was a little too high-ranking, and Paul Cleveland, the DCM, didn't want to do it. I was the Political Counselor. Everybody in the South Korean Government accepted that this was my job, so I did it. Of course, I enjoyed meeting with Kim Dae Jung. It was a lot of fun and great stuff to be doing.

I must say that the day when Kim Dae Jung returned to South Korea was one of the worst days that I ever spent in the Foreign Service. It is worth recounting this in some detail.

Q: I was wondering about this, but go ahead.

DUNLOP: His return was much heralded in advance. There were all kinds of stories about "He's coming, he's coming." He came back to South Korea on a Korean Air aircraft, accompanied by some Americans. There were two Members of Congress with him, a Congressman named Feighan and another Congressman from New Jersey, who has acquired some notoriety. Now I remember, he was Congressman Torricelli [Democrat, New Jersey].

The two Congressmen were a sort of "honor guard" for Kim Dae Jung's return to South Korea. Also with him was the lady who had been the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights under President Carter...

Q: Patt Derian.

DUNLOP: Patt Derian. Mary, of the rock concert group, "Peter, Paul, and Mary..."

Q: They were a political "protest group" from the 1960's.

DUNLOP: She had continued her activities in that direction. There were also a couple of other

strap hangers from the very vocal group in the United States who made a living out of criticizing American policies in South Korea for supporting "dictatorship," and all of that.

Why did they feel that they should come back to South Korea with Kim Dae Jung? Well, they persuaded themselves that Kim Dae Jung's life was in danger, just as the man who had been shot down on the tarmac in Manila...

Q: Senator Benigno Aquino, who was assassinated...

DUNLOP: As he deplaned, right. Well, perhaps you could say for the really naive among them that may have been a real concern. However, for anyone who knew anything about South Korea, the safest person in the whole Korean Peninsula was Kim Dae Jung as he got off the airplane.

However, there was a very loud backfire and a great commotion at the airport in Seoul...

Q: Was it an automobile or something like that?

DUNLOP: I'll tell you about it. We knew that there was a potential for a problem because we thought that Kim Dae Jung wanted turmoil at the airport. We knew, from talking to his supporters, that a great crowd was going to assemble at the airport. We also knew that, "Hell, no, they weren't," because the South Korean Government was going to keep them away. There was going to be a modest little deplaning ceremony, Kim Dae Jung would pass through customs and immigration formalities, and then he would be taken in a car to his home. There already was an element of confrontation at the airport. Particularly after talking to Kim Dae Jung's supporters, we had every reason to think that this airport confrontation was not undesired by these people. If there wasn't a confrontation, they appeared determined to make one. Well, we thought that this wasn't a good idea, with the Congressmen coming on that airplane and a lot of "pushing and shoving" going on around this. So we said, "Let's see what we can do to prevent that."

We talked with both Kim Dae Jung's supporters, who were awaiting the return of their "hero," with the South Korean security people, and with an officer from the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs at great length on this. I was kind of the point man, along with a couple of my Political Officers.

The officer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Park Chung Woo, who is now the Ambassador to the United States, is a wonderful man. He quickly understood that turmoil at the airport would be bad for everybody, including his relationship with us and our relationship with the South Koreans. We devised an elaborate "Fail Safe" plan, which nevertheless failed at almost every step. It involved having somebody from the group of Americans who were to accompany Kim Dae Jung fly out to South Korea in advance, because the State Department was talking with these people. This person would go over the game plan for the arrival. Then he would go to Tokyo, get on the plane with Kim Dae Jung and the others, and explain the "game plan" to the others, because they were in different parts of the US and couldn't get together.

So what was the "game plan"? The plan was that the South Korean Government would send a team of customs and immigration inspectors, from these two different services, onto the plane,

process Kim Dae Jung's documents on the plane, and then take him directly to a car, which would take him home. Anybody on the American side who wanted to could go with Kim Dae Jung. However, they would have to go through customs and immigration in the airport terminal first. A government vehicle would be provided for them, too. They wouldn't be getting a South Korean police escort. In other words, the government was going to facilitate Kim Dae Jung's arrival in Seoul in this perfectly reasonable way. If these Americans just understood that, they would understand what happened when Kim Dae Jung, and his wife, who was with him, would be separated from these Americans at the terminal because the South Korean authorities insisted, for sovereignty reasons, on treating their citizen -- Kim -- differently from the way they treated these Americans.

I don't know how many times I explained this to this very nice but rather vague and unsophisticated woman from the group who came out to Seoul ahead of time. Then she flew back to Tokyo and got on Kim Dae Jung's plane. At the last minute the South Korean authorities decided that they had better have a Korean Foreign Service Officer on Kim Dae Jung's plane from Tokyo who could help. So the South Koreans included someone from their Embassy in Tokyo on Kim Dae Jung's plane.

The plane was due in Seoul at about 12:00 noon. We had two Korean-speaking Embassy officers, Dave Engel and Kim Quinones, very level-headed people who had permission to go through the police cordon to the place in the "Arrivals Area" where the passengers from Kim Dae Jung's plane would be coming through. They would be there to welcome the Congressmen and explain once again anything that was still unexplained.

Well, Park Chung Woo, the officer from the South Korean Foreign Ministry, and I were uneasy. We had a bad feelings about this. All these plans had been made, including getting someone on the plane in Tokyo; having the procedure explained; separating Kim Dae Jung and his wife from his American "escorts," if only for a short time; and having Dave Engel and Kim Quinones there at the Seoul airport to explain what was going on and allay any fears. So Park Chung Woo decided that he and I should be together some place. So we decided that the best place to meet was at lunchtime, and I invited him over to my house for lunch. Dave Engel and Kim Quinones would keep us informed by telephone.

We got the phone call all right. It was from Patt Derian, who was screaming, "They're beating us up! They're beating us up!" In fact, Patt Derian had made herself so obnoxious that the South Korean police had thrown her up a downward-moving escalator, or down an upward-moving escalator! This is too long a story. Kim Dae Jung had refused to be separated from his American "escorts." He had refused to be processed on the airplane by South Korean customs and immigration officers. He had insulted them both, in Korean, as we later found out, by calling them something like, "Filthy, mangy curs of Chun Doo Hwan." He said, "You will not touch my passport," deliberately provoking them. They took him physically but not violently into an elevator, holding him by the elbows and moving him and his wife down to that damned car.

Meanwhile, the American escorts started screaming, yelling, pushing, and trying to get into the elevator. They were pushed back, to the point where Patt Derian had her unwanted trip the wrong way on the escalator. There was total chaos. The press was at a distance, with their telescopic

lenses and all of that. All of this was to the total delight of some of the Americans in the escort party, who wanted this to happen. Of course, Kim Dae Jung wanted it, too, and had deliberately provoked it, to make the Korean government look as bad as possible, at least on TV. I do not say that the South Korean police acted with their usual discretion and gentleness in all this, but nobody was hurt. However, in their own view, the American escorts were abused.

Ambassador "Dixie" Walker had arranged to meet the American escorts at their hotel at 5:00 PM. They came into the room where the meeting was to take place, and these people were all really ready for him. They more or less sprang at his throat. "Dixie" didn't handle this situation very well. He didn't like these people any more than he liked the Jesse Helms's [Republican Senator from North Carolina] of this world. That showed. Anyway, it was a bad day at Black Rock, for me at least.

Congressmen Feighan and Torricelli came to breakfast at the Ambassador's the next day. They were a little bit sheepish about all of this in my opinion, but not enough. [Laughter] We had to do a long series of cables on this, because this was all played up by the press. There were headlines like, "American Congressmen Beaten Senseless in Confrontation with South Korean Security 'Goons.'"

Well, there were all kinds of South Korean opposition people. There were other oppositionists like Kim Dae Jung and his supporters and Kim Yong Sam. They all wanted the ear of the Americans, so we didn't lack for opportunities to talk to them.

Q: As you were looking at this situation, did you consider that, of the two South Korean opposition leaders, you had more or less "written off" Kim Dae Jung as a serious leader or not?

DUNLOP: I wouldn't quite put it like that. However, I certainly came to the conclusion that Kim Dae Jung was the less likely of those two opposition leaders to have a political future after Chun left office. Chun was in office as President of the Republic of Korea through November, 1987. It did not seem possible that either Kim would be allowed to run for a major office with any chance of winning.

I didn't know Kim Dae Jung before this incident at the airport, because he wasn't in South Korea. After he came back to South Korea, I got to know him better. I felt that Kim Yong Sam was far and away the "savvier" politician, mainly because Kim Dae Jung didn't know how to rid himself of this picture which people had of him as a kind of Count or Duke of Kwangju. That is, a man who was associated inseparably with Kwangju Province. Kwangju is only one of the five great areas of South Korea. It is the least prosperous and does not have the most voters. Kim Dae Jung never learned how to speak as a national politician. This was an error for him. Kim Yong Sam was also identified with the Southeastern area of South Korea. He came from around Taegu, from Kyongsan Namdo, in Kyongsan Province. However, he was able to project a broader view of himself. So people from Kyongsan northwards or from around Seoul or down in Pusan were better able to think of Kim Yong Sam as representing them, whereas Kim Dae Jung always looked like "that guy from Kwangju."

There were a couple of other things which acted as a "plus" for Kim Yong Sam and as a "minus"

for Kim Dae Jung. All politicians are egomaniacs, to some degree. Kim Yong Sam is less of an egomaniac in this respect than Kim Dae Jung. Kim Dae Jung was, perhaps, the most egocentric person that I've ever dealt with over any period of time in this type of situation. Everything that went on around Kim Dae Jung was like a medieval court. This was something which seemed totally to have escaped his Leftist admirers in the United States. He made enemies, even in a country which understands that politicians are egocentric people operating under a hierarchical system. Kim Dae Jung may not even have known how many enemies he was making, but in fact he was making enemies all the time, simply by acting like, say, the Duke of Bedford at the time of Elizabeth I of England. This just wasn't appropriate. The South Korean political system was modernizing. It was the last thing to modernize in the country. The economic system, water systems, and electricity systems had all entered the 20th century, while politics, at least during the Syngman Rhee era, was unchanged. Syngman Rhee was a feudal politician. Kim Dae Jung also could not play any other role than that. Kim Yong Sam knew how to play a more modern politician's role, and that's why he's President of the Republic of Korea today.

I personally didn't like Kim Dae Jung, because he lied to me about a dozen times. I don't remember any time that Kim Yong Sam lied to me. I mean, he wouldn't tell me "the whole truth and nothing but the truth." He would change his mind or do something differently, but I never thought that this was a case of deliberate deception. Kim Dae Jung would lie like a trooper if he thought that it was to his tactical advantage. However, whatever tactical advantage he gained by this behavior, in the long run it wasn't a plus for him. So I thought that Kim Dae Jung would not become a politician at the national level, because he didn't know how to behave as a national politician.

Q: You mentioned Kwangju Province. The suppression of political activity there in 1980 still surfaces from time to time. How was this issue and the alleged American role in it "playing" at that time? Could you explain what the Kwangju incident was?

DUNLOP: As I said, Kim Dae Jung is from Kwangju Province. He is the "Prince of Kwangju." If the people of Kwangju had anything to say about it, he would be elected "President for Life." In fact, the people of Kwangju haven't had any say about it, but they have protested many, many times on behalf of Kim Dae Jung and against the South Korean Government. Not necessarily always on behalf of Kim Dae Jung but for other Kwangju leaders or in support of other things that have occurred. The people of Kwangju regard themselves as living in the province most ignored by people in power in Seoul. They believe that their province gets less of the development "pie." They think that their province is more deserving but receives less in the way of whatever goodies the South Korean Government has to hand out. So there is resentment against the central government in Kwangju Province, which is the political base of Kim Dae Jung.

Kim Dae Jung had been a Kwangju politician who opposed the Park Chung Hee government over the years. The Park Chung Hee government and the KCIA [Korean CIA] in about 1974, although I am not absolutely sure of the year, arranged to have Kim Dae Jung kidnaped, while he was in Japan. I've heard Kim Dae Jung tell this story, which is probably true. According to him, a KCIA kidnap squad grabbed him, drugged him, put him in a bag, and placed him on a fishing boat to take him, as he believes, out to sea where he would allegedly be dropped over the side.

(In another interview in the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program former Ambassador Dan O'Donohue has described this incident in detail.)

The CIA Chief of Station in Seoul at that time was Don Gregg, who has since become an Ambassador to South Korea. He replaced Jim Lilley as Ambassador, who is another former CIA officer. At the time of the kidnaping of Kim Dae Jung, Phil Habib was the Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. Gregg told Habib that he had learned about the kidnaping from somebody in the KCIA, and the American Government went bananas to try and save Kim Dae Jung's life. There was shouting and screaming, and Ambassador Habib got in touch with South Korean President Park Chung Hee literally in the middle of the night. Kim Dae Jung believes that those representations saved his life. He says that he was bound and gagged on the fishing boat. His story is, and for all that I know, it's true, that a plane flew over the fishing boat and dropped a message to the people on the boat. He claims that he heard them talking about this message. Although Kim Dae Jung never saw the message, he heard that it said, "Don't throw him overboard. Bring him back. The Americans are mad about this incident." I am not sure how this message was conveyed or whether the KCIA kidnap squad ever intended to drop Kim Dae Jung over the side or not. In any case, Kim Dae Jung was returned to prison by the Park Chung Hee Government. He was subsequently let out. This is all relevant to the Kwangju incident, although perhaps it doesn't appear that it is.

Kim Dae Jung is grateful to the Americans for saving his life. Many years later, when Gregg had been nominated as Ambassador, he told Ambassador Gregg, and I saw the letter, "So glad that you are coming out here. I'm looking forward to meeting you. I want to thank you personally for the role which you and your government played in saving my life." So Kim Dae Jung was allowed out of prison when Park Chung Hee was assassinated on about November 27, 1979, not long before Christmas that year. Kim Dae Jung thought, and perhaps there is some reason to support this, that the death of Park Chung Hee and his replacement by a military junta which promised, as most juntas do, free elections and a reinstatement of democratic rule, would give him, Kim Dae Jung, an opportunity really to begin to have a chance to play a role in elections. So Kim Dae Jung immediately went into action. Same thing with Kim Yong Sam.

There were demonstrations in Kwangju Province in support of Kim Dae Jung's reemergence as a political figure following the death of Park Chung Hee. On December 12, 1979, Chun Doo Hwan, Ruh Tae Woo and another group of generals from Chun's class at the Korean Military Academy, the famous "11th Class," took power in a violent coup d'etat. Several people were killed in Seoul, and this is the event for which Chun has recently been tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. By May, 1980, it had become apparent to any observer who understood what the signals were, that the military junta had no intention of allowing a democratic, political process to emerge. Chun was going to be "chosen" in some farcical election process, perhaps to be "President for Life," just as Park Chung Hee had been.

Beginning on May 19, 1980, there were violent anti-Chun demonstrations in Kwangju Province. Chun sent in South Korean Special Forces personnel who acted with particular brutality, not only against the demonstrators but also against the civilian population of Kwangju City. For seven days Kwangju City was in turmoil. It didn't take the Special Forces troops very long to beat the people off the street. However, a number of people holed up in the City Hall. There had already

been bloodshed. Reportedly, as many as 200 people had been killed by May 21.

The American role in all of this was "zero." We didn't know in advance that this act of repression was going to take place. When we heard what was happening, Gen John Wickham, the commander of US forces in South Korea, and Ambassador Bill Gleysteen personally and through various members of their staffs in contact with the South Koreans urged them and plead with them to remove the South Korean Special Forces from Kwangju, since they were behaving so badly. They urged the South Koreans, "Do not storm the City Hall and kill everybody in it. Try and negotiate a solution and use other troops to do that." The Republic of Korea 20th Division was then sent down to Kwangju City to replace the Special Forces detachment. The 20th Division was normally under the South Korean Combined Forces Command but it was removed from this command for this operation. A message was sent from the South Korean Army to Gen Wickham saying, "We are exercising the authority that we have under the agreement. Arrangements have been made to remove this division from the Combined Forces Command and place it solely under South Korean Government control. It will be returned to the Combined Forces Command as soon as the situation in Kwangju permits."

The 20th Division went down to Kwangju and replaced the Special Forces detachment. In fact, it acted in a much more "proper" role. Eventually, the City Hall in Kwangju City was taken back from the insurgents, as they were then called, I guess rightly so, with some violence but without the excessive force and the bloodshed that would probably have attended this operation, had it been carried out by the Special Forces detachment.

Throughout all of this our role was to urge the South Korean Government to act with the greatest degree of circumspection possible. However, there was a widespread perception that we had approved of the whole course of action in Kwangju. This perception was deliberately spread by President Chun. He had leaflets distributed, and I've seen copies of them, which said, "The American forces in the Republic of Korea call on you (that is, the "insurgents") to surrender immediately." There were references to an impending North Korean attack, attributed to the Americans, in those leaflets. This was a total fabrication which was deeply resented by Gen. John Wickham and Ambassador Bill Gleysteen, with whom I have talked at great length regarding this incident. This was bitterly resented and was more than an irritant. It was an obstacle to normal relationships with the Chun regime as long as the Carter administration was in office. During this time we did not have a normal relationship with the Chun Government, and this was not restored until President Reagan entered office in January, 1981.

When I arrived in South Korea in 1983, the Kwangju incident was a relatively recent memory, as it had taken place only three years previously. This incident was part of the rhetoric of the Left in the United States about the "brutal dictator," Chun, and the alleged role of the United States in this incident. The Kwangju incident was also raised in the streets of South Korea, when the students demonstrated against the Chun Doo Hwan Government.

My personal involvement with the Kwangju incident was limited to learning about it in a rather superficial way before I arrived in South Korea. I observed this component as an element in the student protests, but not much more than that. On May 25, 1985, I was having lunch in the Seoul Plaza Hotel, not far from our USIS [United States Information Service] building when the phone

rang. This was a lunch which I periodically had with diplomatic colleagues. On this occasion I was the host.

The waiters called me over to the phone. My secretary was on the line. She very properly told me that something was going on over at the USIS building and suggested that I go over there and see what it was. I excused myself, asked my Japanese colleague to "pick up the tab," and I would pay him back later.

So I walked over to the USIS office, which was only a short distance from the hotel. The USIS office was on the ground floor of the building, which also housed the USIS Library on the second floor. 73 Korean students had forced their way into the Library and barricaded themselves there. They demanded that Ambassador "Dixie" Walker come immediately and speak to them. I walked in there to face some unknown faces behind a barricade of bookshelves piled up at the doorway. As I noted before, I did not speak Korean, although I wished very much that I could do so. Not only just to talk but to listen to what the students had to say to each other.

The students had handed in a list of five written demands. The first was that Ambassador "Dixie" Walker come to the USIS Library and personally apologize for the "slaughter" of an alleged 2500 people in Kwangju. The other demands concerned matters like the removal of American nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula and our immediately ensuring the peaceful reunification of Korea by withdrawing our troops from the South Korea. There were "simple" little demands like that.

Q: "Easy" to resolve.

DUNLOP: Yes. I was so grateful that they went "right to the bone" of US- South Korean relations. Well, we finally got an interpreter there, who turned out to be incompetent. We had to change interpreters at least once. However, since I was the first American Embassy officer on the scene, I became the negotiator with the students. It took us three days to get them out of the USIS Library. These were three, very tension-filled days. First of all, they were on a hunger strike. Secondly, they threatened to burn the building down. They said that they had "Molotov cocktails" and other incendiary devices, which the students often carried around. They used to throw these things. Fortunately, they were usually filled with kerosene, not with gasoline. That's why fewer people were hurt in these incidents than you might have expected. Once in a while they used gasoline, and a couple of students burned themselves to death, since they just did not know how to handle the stuff.

We didn't know whether they had gasoline and we didn't know whether they were serious about the threat to burn down the building. However, we had no alternative but to take them seriously.

So for three days they stayed in the USIS Library. This incident began at noon on a Thursday, and the students left Sunday noon. These were three rather intense days. I spent a total of about 22 or 23 hours actually talking or negotiating with them, if you can call it "negotiating." We identified their leaders. Actually, they identified themselves. One of my jobs was to find out whether these were the real leaders of the group. Apparently, they were. The students were led by a committee of five persons, five young Korean males. There were also a couple of females in

the group. They immediately draped the inside of the picture type windows, which faced out on the street with banners detailing their demands. The press, of course, flocked around. The South Korean Police secured the area, thereby disrupting downtown traffic.

We had a table brought up to the barricade at the door and persuaded the Korean students to remove the barricade and sit at the other side of the table. They more or less did this, although they kept part of the barricade in place, in the form of heavy bookcases, which were close by. I guess they thought that we were going to rush them. The interpreter and I sat on "our" side of the table, and we started to talk. I did not relish the prospect of suddenly being yanked over the table and becoming a hostage, so a Marine stood directly behind me with a gun on my left.

Fairly early on we were able to dispose of all of the demands except the "apology" for the Kwangju incident. We told them that these other demands were ridiculous, particularly the "demand" about the reunification of Korea. I pointed out to them that their demands for reunification, the removal of nuclear weapons, and the evacuation of American forces from South Korea might make good rhetoric on the campuses, but we could not talk about them. We agreed to talk about the Kwangju incident.

There were those in the Embassy and back in Washington, when they got their fingers in the "pie," who didn't want to talk about anything with the students. In reply to these views, I said, well, the only other thing that we could do is just to tell them to leave the USIS Library. What if they don't? My view was that we could talk about Kwangju because we had a good case. I didn't know as much about the Kwangju incident then as I do now. I figured that I knew people who did. There was one person in particular in the American Mission who had been present in Korea at the time and knew a lot about what the military relationship had been between the US and the South Koreans. He had a pretty good grasp of the sequence of events. We brought this man over. He actually was the civilian adviser to the CINC [Commander in Chief, US Command], a position which he had held for many years. He was a civil servant, an employee of the Department of the Army, and an excellent man who knew Korea and spoke Korean. I told him that I was glad that I didn't have to pay him. I told him that he should have been a Political Officer in the Embassy. He said, "Don't tell the military that, because they are paying me, and this is not what I'm supposed to be doing."

Q: Who was this?

DUNLOP: I've got a block on his name.

Q: We'll fill his name in later.

DUNLOP: I hope so. I think that he's still there in South Korea. If so, I hope that the Embassy is using him and his knowledge, for he's a real gold mine of information. His job in South Korea was to advise the CINC on the political leanings of the South Korean officers who were dealing with him. He was sort of a walking biographic library on these various South Korean officers. It was a very important thing to do, and it was smart of the US military to pay him to do that. I'm not sure that the Embassy would ever have gotten around to doing that or could have done it. And the CIA "Station" was totally out of the picture.

He came over to the Embassy and told me a lot about Kwangju, and I got him to talk directly to the student leaders. We would begin all of these discussion sessions with my reminding them that they were illegally in the USIS Library building, that they had damaged US Government property, that they were young people acting irresponsibly, and that they should leave immediately. I made the same points at the end of the discussions.

However, after a while the discussions focused on Kwangju. It was difficult to know to what degree they believed what we were saying. They never admitted that they believed it. We made our case as quietly, calmly, and logically as we possibly could. They listened and, after about three days, they finally left. It was a great moment for me when they left. And they left without being hurt in any way.

The South Korean Police wanted to smash the windows and drag these students out. We, of course, would not permit that, as this was diplomatic property. Having young Koreans beaten up by South Korean Police on our property was just impossible to contemplate. There were some people who said, "Well, then let's get the Marine Guards into this and get rid of these students." This raised the same problem, though perhaps slightly less of a problem than if they were removed by South Korean Police or military. The way we wanted to do it was to talk them out of there.

Of course, by their occupation of the USIS Library, they were achieving one of their purposes. Perhaps this was the only purpose that they could have realistically achieved and was the most important. That is, to get publicity for their views. Every minute that they had those banners up in the windows, and they would take them down and put them back up later, they were achieving one of their purposes. It looked as if these banners were printed on sheets which they had brought with them. We never figured out where they got that stuff. Of course, they had "cased" the building before. After all, the USIS Library was open to the public.

Several issues arose about crisis management which might be worth talking about, because this was a crisis. There were 73 lives at stake. I don't think that any of the Americans in the USIS building would have been hurt, had the building started to burn, although some of us might have been. I think that we did the right thing in having one principal negotiator. (Bernie Lavin, the USIS chief, was also heavily involved and a great help.) I got very tired throughout this period. Paul Cleveland, the DCM, would periodically ask me if I didn't want someone to spell me. However, I think that consistency in our approach to the students was very important. At times I just had to stop and say, "All right, that's enough for today." Then I would go off and lie down and rest.

Interpretation is also very important. We had a really bad interpreter at first. One of the problems in dealing with Koreans is this emphasis on politeness. The first interpreter was doing two things that were terribly wrong. He was using denigrating terminology, which I was not using for him, I was the Political Counselor dealing with these "riffraff" from off the streets. That was absolutely wrong. The interpreter should have said in Korean exactly what I said in English, but it was very hard for him to do that. The second thing that he did was the exact opposite. He would not interpret into Korean some of the "tough things" that I wanted to say, such as, "You young

people are acting irresponsibly." He would use the vocabulary of address that was denigrating to them, but he couldn't bring himself to say the things that I wanted to say to them.

Of course, you can't carry on a discourse as if it were a one way street, when I was telling them to leave. There had to be something else in the discussion. The "something else" was the Kwangju incident.

We had these long discussions about Kwangju, with me doing my bit about denouncing their behavior and ending it that way. Between times I would discuss the Kwangju incident and answer their questions. Of course, they were abysmally ignorant about what had actually happened in Kwangju. For them this was just a symbol, and the figure of 2,500 deaths was a figure that they had picked up. In fact, the South Korean opposition to the government usually used the figure of 2,000 deaths in Kwangju, and the students "tacked" 500 more deaths on to it. They were even more aggressive in this respect, or whatever the word should be.

They finally left the USIS Library. We had allowed them to express their views to us on a range of issues. Then we allowed one of the students to come out of the barricaded area and meet with a designated pool reporter from the press. The students said that they wanted to talk directly to the press. Then the student representative went back in. They sang some of their student, revolutionary songs and then filed out and boarded police buses, which were waiting to take them away. Of course, the South Korean Police were going to arrest them. From the start they knew that they would eventually be arrested, if they didn't burn themselves alive first. We also made it clear to the South Korean Police that we were going to follow the treatment of the students very closely. We said that we expected that there would be no physical mistreatment or beatings of these young people. There were none, as far as we know, and I think we knew.

A couple of points about crisis management. The question arose about food. They arrived at the USIS Library on an advertised hunger strike. In my view, they had chosen to use food as a weapon, if you will. I thought that it was legitimate for us to use food as a weapon also, if we could figure out how to do it. We asked the Department to ask CIA, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigations], the ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms], or whatever agency had experience with hostage negotiations whether we should give these young people food when they got really hungry. We never got an answer, which I thought was disgraceful. The answer might have been, "We don't have a clue" as to whether giving them food would be a good or bad thing. I began to be concerned because I thought that the tone of their voices was getting ragged. But silence was unacceptable to me. Well, they were hungry. They actually didn't eat anything. They had access to the water fountains and the toilets, and we made sure that those continued to function. Some of our people said at the beginning, "Turn those off." Well, we could have turned them off but didn't. We got absolutely no help from Washington on such issues.

The next thing that I wanted to do is that I wanted somebody with the necessary skills to "bug" that room and tell me what the students were saying to each other. Would you believe that I was told that we don't have that capability?

Q: With all of that fancy, CIA equipment and the equipment which military counterintelligence has?

DUNLOP: Nobody did it. I wanted somebody to tape the conversations between the students and listen to it. I didn't want to have them transcribed but I wanted someone to listen and tell me what they were saying to each other. We never got that, and I thought that this was also disgraceful.

However, the protestors finally left. Everybody was very happy at the way that this crisis had been handled, because nobody was hurt and, I guess, God was good to us at that time.

Q: Perhaps we can talk about some other things in South Korea. One issue was the KAL [Korean Air Lines] plane shot down during your time there

DUNLOP: Yes.

Q: Another issue is what kind of pressure were we putting on the Chun Government to leave office during your time in South Korea? Other questions might be human rights and other aspects of our relations with South Korea, including, perhaps, the role of the Christian missionaries. This was, perhaps, no longer so important.

DUNLOP: I think that it was important.

Q: Please deal with that. Was there any Japanese activities from a political point of view during your time in South Korea? There is always an uneasy relationship between Koreans and Japanese. How about the South Korean reaction to developments in China and also in the Soviet Union? There's quite a bit to cover. So we can pick it up next time.

Today is September 16, 1996. We have the shooting down of the KAL aircraft by the Soviets, the departure from office of Chun and concern that he would not leave office, human rights, and relations between South Korea and Japan, China, and the Soviet Union.

DUNLOP: Yes, other things may come to mind as we go over this list. Let me start with the shoot down by the Soviets of KAL Flight 007. This was a scheduled Boeing 747 flight from New York to Seoul via Detroit and Anchorage, operated by Korean Air Lines. It left Anchorage for a non-stop flight to South Korea, which took it on a long, over-water, southeastwards course which was not very well covered by navigational aids. For some time, through the ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization], whose headquarters are in Ottawa, Canada, we had been trying to arrange for various places around the world to be better covered with navigational aids. That is, radar stations that would track flights, give positional information, and so forth. The area where this flight took place was an "uncovered area." The flight path took the aircraft over the Pacific Ocean, near Soviet territory. The Soviets had not been cooperative in agreeing to install navigational aids. The flight path was along the coast of Siberia, which includes the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Kuril Islands.

KAL Flight 007 took off from Anchorage, bound for Seoul, on September 1, 1983. I had only been at the Embassy in Seoul for a couple of months. One of the passengers was Congressman Larry McDonald. KAL Flight 015, which took off from Anchorage only 15 minutes ahead of

Flight 007, was carrying Senator Jesse Helms [Republican, North Carolina], his wife, and a member of the Senator's staff. I'm not sure why KAL scheduled two flights along the same route that were to arrive in Seoul at about the same time. They probably started from different places.

In any event, since there was a Congressman on Flight 007 and a Senator on Flight 015, Ambassador "Dixie" Walker and I went to the Seoul airport, each to meet a different flight. We drove out to the airport together, but there was another car that was to take me home if Flight 007, which I was to meet, was delayed. This flight was due 15 minutes after Senator Helms and his party arrived on Flight 015.

As we know, Flight 015 landed on time, the Senator and his party were greeted by Ambassador Walker, who then took them into Seoul to the Hilton Hotel, where a large, security-oriented international conference was being held. Senator Helms was to be one of the key speakers at that conference to represent the tough Cold-war warrior face he assumed. He was going to be in Seoul for two nights and the better part of three days.

I stayed on to meet Congressman Larry McDonald in Flight 007 which, of course, never arrived at Kimpo Airport in Seoul. I knew the South Korean officials in the little protocol office there who could give me flight information, because I had been out there to meet people at various times. They were able to tell me pretty quickly that there was almost no likelihood of Flight 007 arriving at Kimpo Airport. Either this flight had "diverted" somewhere, had crashed, or something like that. So I left the airport and went back to the Embassy, which was a good 45-minute drive from the airport in normal traffic. At times this trip took a little longer. I called Ambassador Walker at the Hilton Hotel and told him what was happening. I also told him that there were beginning to be reports, both on the radio and directly to the Embassy, indicating that airplane may have crashed. Of course, that later turned out to be true. It was certainly intercepted by a Soviet fighter aircraft, as it was way off course.

We learned this information in "bits and pieces," of course. We were being kept as well informed as anybody could have been. It was several hours after Flight 007 was due in Seoul before the information was enough to report to the South Koreans and then to the public that the plane had not only been intercepted over Soviet airspace but shot down.

Q: I suppose that this was information from our intercept stations.

DUNLOP: This has now been published. It was obtained from the radio intercept stations which we maintain by remote control, interestingly enough, on Hokkaido Island, the northernmost of the main islands of Japan.

Q: The radio intercept station was at Wakkanai.

DUNLOP: These radio intercept station were targeted on Soviet air activity, including both air defense as well as commercial air activity. What was being said over the air was being tape recorded. However, it was not immediately listened to. There was no live person listening to the Soviet transmissions. It was not clear and never, perhaps, has never been made sufficiently clear to the public, who always like to suspect some kind of "complicity" or something of that kind

involved in these things. However, there was no live Japanese, Korean, or American person listening to these tapes.

However, once we realized that something bad had happened in the area, the tapes were recovered, played back, interpreted, and made available to the senior people in the governments concerned. What was on those tapes has now been totally released to the public. In fact, a little bit later they were played up at the UN. They were the normal kind of traffic conversation that you would hear between a fighter pilot sent up to intercept an aircraft and his ground "controller." It ends with those famous words, "The target is destroyed." We didn't know all of that at this time. It was a very confusing time. Since so much of the information was extremely sensitive and classified, I became the courier going back and forth to the Hilton Hotel where the Ambassador and Senator Helms were with these bits and pieces of information. It became very clear that the plane had been destroyed and that there were probably no survivors. For a while we hoped that KAL Flight 007 had been forced down and that it landed safely in Soviet territory. We hoped that the Soviets were not saying so because they couldn't figure out what to say. In fact, that was not the case. The plane was shot down, and everyone aboard was killed.

There was some interesting fallout to this. Of course, this incident tremendously concerned the Korean public, which is very nervous, living so close to North Korea. There was concern that this was a sign of a deliberate escalation of tensions with the communists in northeast Asia. For that matter, it also concerned us, although I think that we were far more prepared to accept that this was just a case of Soviet stupidity and brutality, rather than anything part of some larger malevolent scheme.

Particularly interesting to me was the reaction of our "Cold War" Senator, Senator Jesse Helms. I got over to the Hilton Hotel on one of my courier runs at about 6:00 PM. I was waiting to go in to talk to Ambassador Walker. He was in the room with Senator Helms. They were having a talk while I was waiting out in the hall. His staff aide came up to me and said rather brusquely, "Well, what have you done about the Senator's flight?" I thought that he was talking about the Senator's reservation for his ongoing travel two days hence. We had taken his tickets and confirmed his reservations on an ongoing flight. I hadn't done that personally, but I started by being reassuring and said to the young staffer, "We have a very efficient, Korean national employee at the Embassy who always takes care of these things. I always check on it."

The Senator's staffer said, "No, you don't understand. The Senator is leaving South Korea tonight. This was an assassination attempt directed at him! He's leaving in an Air Force airplane with a fighter escort at midnight." I was floored. I didn't know anything about this. Senator Helms was totally convinced that he was the Soviets' target and they had just shot down the wrong airplane.

Well, this generated a lot of confusion and a lot of problems because, while Ambassador Walker was trying very hard to persuade Senator Helms to change his mind, he also told me to get Lt. Gen. John Pickett, the Commanding General of the 7th Air Force, tell him the situation, and ask him to "lay on" this extraordinary request. I went back home because the telephone situation was better from my home in reaching the command post where I thought that I could find Gen. Pickett. And the telephone situation WAS much better. In fact, the telephone Gods were

generous that evening. At about 7:00 PM I got Gen. John Pickett on the phone. We were on a first name basis. He is a wonderful and very capable man. I said, "John, this is the one call that you did not want to receive at 7:00 PM tonight. I've got to tell you that we've got Senator Helms who is insisting that this tragedy involving the KAL flight was personally directed at him. He thinks that his life is in danger, and he is insisting that the US Air Force, and that is you, John, fly him out of here tonight with a fighter escort."

A long silence ensued. I felt so embarrassed for myself as an American and as an Embassy officer to have to convey this message. I was also embarrassed for Gen Pickett, because it might be enormously difficult to lay on something like this with only five or six hours' warning. Finally, I broke this long silence and said, "John, look, I'm not asking you to tell me that you can or can't do this. What I want you to authorize me to do is to go back to Ambassador Walker and Senator Helms and say, 'The United States Air Force will do everything in its power to accomplish this rather difficult task.' That's all I need from you now." He said, "Sure, Harry, go ahead." So that's what I did, while Gen. Pickett was scrambling around to find aircraft, including fighters and everything else late in the evening.

I went back over to the Hilton Hotel and duly reported that the Air Force would do everything that it possibly could. Ambassador "Dixie" Walker tried to be a soothing and calming voice. He was also pointing out to the Senator how this would be received by the South Korean Government and public.

One of those little "light bulbs" went on in my mind. I guess that's what Political Officers are supposed to do. I began to think about the press. I went over to this not very pleasant staffer of Senator Helms and said, "Incidentally, while we're thinking about all of these other things, I'd like some instructions on what to tell the press."

Q: I suppose that you did this in a certain, inwardly rejoicing way.

DUNLOP: I don't remember what I was thinking. However, I saw what looked like a startled look on this guy's face. He said, "Well, we don't have to talk to the press." I pointed out to him that this was "the most important story in the world at the moment." Newsmen were flying in to Kimpo Airport in Seoul. We already had about eight requests for interviews with Senator Helms. I said that he didn't have to say anything but I wondered whether the Senator would want to ignore the press. Those who were unfriendly to him who might put a bad spin on this story. He looked sort of thunderstruck. It had not occurred to this guy...

Q: You're from North Carolina yourself, aren't you, Harry?

DUNLOP: Yes. Anyway, there were some huddles, consultations, and so forth. I don't know what this aspect played in the Senator's decision not to leave Seoul that night. He changed his mind. So then I was able to phone Gen. John Pickett and say, "This is the best call that you could expect to receive this evening. Senator Helms has decided to stay in Seoul tonight." By God, Gen. Pickett had made the arrangements! He had earmarked a T-37 [small, twin-engined passenger jet] flown in from some place like Kadena Airport in Okinawa. He already had the fighters there and he was going to ensure that the fighters would be visible to the Senator.

Q: Fly under one wing of the T-37, then fly under the other wing. [Laughter].

DUNLOP: But it turned out that we didn't have to put the Air Force through that, other than what we'd already put them through. The T-37 had already flown in from Okinawa. The Air Force should have sent Senator Helms a bill for the travel of one airplane to Seoul to pick up the Senator. That would be about \$1.0 million or \$550,000, or something like that.

Anyway, that was one aspect of the story of KAL Flight 007. There were some others, though, that were interesting. Every time a crisis happened involving the communists in North Korea we in the Embassy and the US Government had a lot of hand holding to do with the South Korean authorities. We did not have a relationship with the South Koreans that made us totally confident that they wouldn't do something not only weird but, perhaps, dangerous, if they felt themselves under threat. We were not totally confident that they would consult with us and would take our advice which, I am sure, was given to them many times, to act in a "restrained" way, to think twice, and to avoid doing anything which could make a bad situation worse.

Q: I might point out that this goes back to the very earliest times. Our principal concern prior to June 25, 1950 [date of the beginning of the North Korean attack on South Korea], was that President Syngman Rhee might order his forces to attack North Korea. That's one reason why we kept our armed forces in South Korea.

DUNLOP: In 1953, Syngman Rhee was absolutely determined to sabotage the armistice agreement. As you may remember, his last, desperate effort to sabotage the armistice agreement of 1953 was to release all of those tens of thousands of North Korean POW's [Prisoners of War]. Under the armistice agreement their status was being reviewed as to whether they wanted to return to North Korea or not. I know for a fact that we had contingency plans to unseat President Syngman Rhee and replace him as President of the Republic of Korea, had he persisted in his refusal to abide by the provisions of the armistice agreement. Like the North Koreans, Rhee never accepted the division of the Korean Peninsula. However, it wasn't always a matter of our trying to restrain the crazy South Koreans. They were faced with a lot of provocation from North Korea. There were many assassination attempts against President Park and Chun. In fact, another assassination attempt was to take place in Rangoon, Burma, a few months later, which we can talk about briefly. So there were reasons for the South Koreans being "antsy" and for us being concerned that they would do something that, in our view, they shouldn't do. Among other things, we spent a lot of time telling the South Koreans that the evidence was pretty conclusive that the shooting down of the KAL aircraft was not deliberately planned, although deliberately. Now the evidence is even more conclusive, because the Soviet pilot has now written his own story, and he affirms that the shooting down of the KAL 747 aircraft was not "deliberate," in the sense that it was planned. It was just an idiotic "botch up" on the Soviet side, further complicated by their general brutality and callousness toward life. There was a direct order to destroy the aircraft even though the evidence known to the Soviet high command was overwhelmingly that it was a passenger aircraft.

Q: There had also been a case of a KAL plane landing in the Soviet Union. One wonders about the competence of KAL pilots.

DUNLOP: I'm not familiar with the details of that. It happened long before I was ever involved in anything having to do with Korea. As I understand it, this involved a KAL flight over the North Pole which lost its way. Its magnetic compass "blew up" or something like that. It turned South and flew well into Soviet air space [in fact, 1500 miles!]. That plane was actually fired on and forced to land on a frozen lake. It's a miracle that there weren't a lot of casualties. A couple of holes appeared in the wing of this KAL aircraft, which convinced the pilot to land on this frozen lake. I believe that it was in European Russia.

Q: I think that it was near Archangel, or something like that.

DUNLOP: There was always a lot of tension in South Korea. Maybe the South Koreans themselves are just "high voltage" people, and I tend to think that they are. However, the continued division of the Korean Peninsula, the presence of huge, armed forces there, and the proximity to China and the Soviet Union left a lot of tension in the air.

We managed to convince the South Korean leaders, or at least the ones that counted, that there was no great "plot" involved in the shooting down of KAL Flight 007. However, three months later, when the Rangoon tragedy took place, some of the South Koreans told us, "Well, you tell us that this wasn't somebody's big plan, but here are two incidents within three months of each other. They sure look as if they might be connected." Well, they weren't connected, but this coincidence presented us with some difficulties in discussions with the South Koreans.

Q: What did you, as a Political Officer, do on the shooting down of KAL Flight 007?

DUNLOP: I was involved in trying to reassure the South Koreans. My usual counterpart was the Director of American Affairs at the Foreign Ministry. He didn't have as much to do with this incident as the South Korean military. We quickly got our people in the Combined Command talking to their contacts among the South Korean generals, giving them what intelligence we had on this matter. We have an intelligence exchange arrangement with the South Koreans which permits us to give highly sensitive, intercept type information to the South Koreans. They were well informed people. Once they saw the data, I think that this led to a relaxation of the tension that they had originally felt. However, the tension went right back up to the "danger level" when this incident occurred in Rangoon. After this incident we sent a US plane with escorts to bring President Chun back to South Korea.

Q: Could you explain what happened in Rangoon?

DUNLOP: Chun was on one of his fairly rare trips abroad. He didn't travel much outside of South Korea. On this occasion, he took a trip through Southeast Asia, including a stop in Rangoon. At Rangoon, I'm told, there is a marvelous, ancient Buddhist pagoda, the Shwedagon. I haven't seen it, though I've seen pictures of it. Visitors are often taken there and shown this great jewel of the Buddhist culture and faith. A visit to the Shwedagon was on the schedule for Chun, who was traveling with virtually his entire cabinet, including the Foreign Minister and the Defense Minister. Afterwards, when we looked at the list of people who were traveling with President Chun, we wondered why so many of the senior officials of the South Korean

Government were included. He had almost all of his more important cabinet ministers with him.

In Rangoon, among other things, they were scheduled to appear at a ceremony where, I guess, some prayers would be chanted. They would do what faithful Buddhists do at a Buddhist shrine. And Chun was a Buddhist. There were a lot of photographers and people from the Protocol Divisions of the Burmese and South Korean Foreign Ministries. Chun was a few minutes late. Everybody else had assembled on a special platform at the Shwedagon Pagoda. Chun was about four blocks away in a car, making his way toward the Pagoda. Suddenly, two "Claymore" type mines were detonated which swept the whole area with a kind of shrapnel near the special platform where the South Korean cabinet ministers were sitting or standing. The mines killed 11 South Koreans, including the Foreign Minister, who was a great personal friend of Ambassador Walker. I had not gotten to know him very well by that time. About seven Burmese officials were also killed. There were 18 people dead and 30 wounded, or something like that. Chun, of course, was not among them.

Within about 24 hours the Burmese had run to ground the four-person assassination team, capturing two and killing two of them. The two people the Burmese captured were badly wounded, but the Burmese were able to get from them the details of how they landed in Rangoon. They arrived in Rangoon on a North Korean freighter, disguised as seamen, carrying their explosives, hand grenades, and pistols to defend themselves or commit suicide. They had cyanide tablets, and so forth. They made their way to the Shwedagon Pagoda. They had been trained to recognize the layout of the Pagoda. They very efficiently placed the explosives there. One of them was actually sitting within the Pagoda area, though out of the range of the explosion, waiting for the time when Chun's car would arrive. I think that the Burmese Protocol people came up in a big car, and this North Korean sapper thought that this was Chun. He waited three or four minutes and then pushed the button, causing the explosion.

There was no doubt that the North Korean intelligence service had planned this attempted assassination of Chun. Later on, there was the explosion of a bomb over the Andaman Sea on KA Flight 069 in 1987. That was another incident that helped to remind the South Koreans of how brutal and fanatic the North Koreans are. Maybe I can talk about that in connection with the Rangoon incident, though it happened several years later. I don't think that this will confuse us as far as the chronology is concerned.

1987 was the year before 1988. 1988 was the year that South Korea was to host the Olympics, the "Seoul Olympics." The South Koreans had done an awful lot to prepare for the Olympic Games. It was really remarkable what they did, when they learned that they were to host the games. They built a whole, new sports complex and a "Metro" system to service the site. They put in highways where highways had never been. They did a great many things. They were looking forward to this very much as signifying the entry of South Korea onto the world stage. And this is what it was. It was, in fact, well carried out. They accomplished that.

Naturally, in North Korea this event was viewed as help to their deadly enemies in South Korea. We were very much concerned that the North Koreans would undertake, not just one or two attacks, but perhaps a whole campaign of terror to try to disrupt the Olympic Games.

In preparation for the Seoul Olympics, we and the South Koreans worked very closely together. I must say that the Japanese also helped a great deal. Whatever else happened in that Korean-Japanese relationship, which is still very uneasy and troubled, the Japanese were completely cooperative in connection with the Seoul Olympics. They provided a lot of security help. Almost all of the travelers from the West going to South Korea, traveled via Japan. So the Japanese set up some very elaborate and, apparently, very effective security arrangements.

The Seoul Olympics took place in August, 1988. In November, 1987, a scheduled Korean Air airliner, flying East from the Persian Gulf and bound for Bangkok and Seoul, disappeared over the Andaman Sea, just South of Burma. I think that something like 280 people were on board, or something like that. All of them were killed. (After the KAL 007 shoot down, the name of the airline was changed from "Korean Air Lines (KAL) to "Korean Air" (KA).

By then I had returned to the United States and was Country Director for Korean Affairs. I was at home. This incident occurred on a Saturday evening, Washington time. Incidents of this kind, with great predictability, seem to take place on weekends. I was called from the South Korean Embassy with the news of a KA airplane that was reported as "missing," at that point. They hadn't even found pieces of it in the water, though they later found some of them. The South Korean Embassy officer who called me was absolutely sure that it had been a bomb. I thought that it was extremely premature to come to that conclusion. Planes disappear from the skies for other reasons. He wanted me to alert the American intelligence community to obtain any information that they might have on what was going on. That was reasonable enough. So I called the Operations Center in the State Department and let them do that. That's their job. They called me back a couple of hours later and said that they had very little information regarding this aircraft, except for press reports that it was missing. None of the American intelligence agencies had any direct information on it that seemed to be related. I relayed this to the Korean Embassy.

The full story of what happened to that airplane did not come out until the two people who had placed the bomb in an overhead compartment in Bahrain and then left the aircraft were captured. It is a fantastic, fascinating story. One of them committed suicide. The other one was prevented from committing suicide, a young Korean woman named Miss Kim. Miss Kim did not succeed in committing suicide. She became sick after biting into a cyanide pill, but not did not die, and there was no damage to her brain. She was taken back to Seoul. Over a period of weeks and months she told her story to her South Korean interrogators. It was a remarkable story of precise training, over a period of years, to become a terrorist. It went "wrong" simply because her escape route from the terminal had not been properly planned. Everything was planned up to the point of getting the bomb on the airplane and getting the two North Korean terrorists off the plane. This all went like "clockwork." Then, their escape routes from the airport did not work out, and they were caught.

She told her story of having been recruited as a bright young graduate of the North Korean school system. She was told what an honor it was to work for the Korean fatherland and the reunification of her people. She was told that her mission was to be the first in a series of missions. This was the curious, scary part, but there were other, scary parts of this story. The missions were designed to "destroy the Seoul Olympics," and, in the course of destroying the Olympic Games, set in train a series of events which would bring down the South Korean

Government, expose the Americans as the weak, imperialist manipulators that they are, and lead eventually to the reunification of Korea. What more glorious task did this young woman have to devote her life to but this?

She was sent to Macao for training in the Chinese language, because her "cover story" was that she was to be Chinese. She apparently was a brilliant student of languages. Very few adults can learn to speak a new language without an accent. While she probably had an accent, that probably could have been explained by saying that she was from Macao, where a special kind of Chinese is spoken. She spent a couple of years in Macao, studying Chinese. She went back to Pyongyang, North Korea, where she was then indoctrinated in the use of explosives in a bottle looking like a bottle of cognac. She was introduced to an older man, who was to be her partner in this venture. She was then drilled on how she was to get to Baghdad, where she was to board a flight to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

For this operation their route led from Pyongyang to Moscow, Budapest, Belgrade, and then on to Baghdad, where they boarded the Korean Air Lines flight. They left the plane in Bahrain, having placed the explosives in the overhead luggage compartment. The plane on which they were supposed to leave Bahrain stopped at Qatar, where they did not plan on stopping. A "hold" had been placed on flights to Qatar coming from Bahrain. The authorities in Qatar were very smart. They had been told to interview all of the people who had left Bahrain and see whether they would reveal anything. Not only did they interview these passengers. They detained them, so that their onward flight left Qatar without them. They had a "backup" ticket which they used in an effort to "switch" identities. They switched the ticket, but the passport was being held by the Qatari authorities.

So there was a "mismatch" between tickets and passports, and they were held. The woman and her companion were seated in a holding room in the airport at Qatar by the airport security people. There was a Qatari policewoman sitting between the two North Koreans. There was another security officer on the other side of the man. The North Korean man asked if he could smoke. The Qatari security officer said, "Yes." So the North Korean man reached into his pocket and pulled out a package of regular cigarettes. The North Korean girl asked, "May I smoke, too?" The Arab policewoman said, "Yes." So the North Korean girl took a cigarette and the North Korean man took a cigarette, each of which had a cyanide pill in it. Rather than biting these pills simultaneously, the North Korean man bit first and went into convulsions. Apparently, this happened "bang," just like that. He started to convulse with the cigarette hanging out of his mouth. Rather than be distracted by looking to her left, the Arab policewoman looked to her right, saw the cigarette going into the North Korean girl's mouth, and hit her arm. The North Korean girl bit the pill but only got a tiny amount of cyanide. So the North Korean girl survived.

One aspect of the fallout from all this was that if we hadn't been doing everything we could to help the South Koreans in the security field, this added the last bit of incentive, if anything remained to be added. After the North Korean girl was brought to Seoul, we heard through the South Korean intelligence services that she was likely to do a full "conversion" from allegiance to North Korea to allegiance to South Korea and tell all. We wanted to be very sure that we and the South Koreans could convincingly assert that she had not been coerced into a confession. That is, that she was not tortured. We explained to the South Koreans how very important this

confession was to be but we also said that it would not be credible unless we had access to her. The South Koreans did not want her to have access to anybody. However, we fought hard with the South Koreans for a couple of days, knowing that time was not going to be very good to us in this matter. We finally did get access to her, were able to interview her, and were able to convince ourselves that the reason she had made this conversion was simply that, like many Orientals, she gave everything to one particular cause. When she found out that the North Korean cause was flawed, when she found out that life in Seoul was not as it had been described to her and that people in South Korea were not clothed in tatters or were hungry and starving, she made her conversion. She was also no doubt in terrible fear of torture and death, and this had its effect. But in this case I was convinced that the primary cause of her conversion was her appreciation that she was not tortured and killed. You can find many similar conversions among Japanese POWs in WWI, similarly indoctrinated to anticipate torture and death.

For me that was certainly a very instructive insight into the degree to which the North Koreans were willing to go in pursuing their objectives. Why wasn't there any follow on campaign to disrupt the Olympic Games? I think that her confession may have played a role. The North Koreans knew that there was no way that they could do this without its becoming known that they did it. It would be more of a risk to the North Koreans than it was worth. So if there were other plans to disrupt the Seoul Olympics, so far as I know, none was ever carried out. Not that we relaxed our guard.

Q: Let's go back to the incident at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon. This was an incident of tremendous importance. If nothing else, no political leader, including Chun, could "take that" philosophically and not consider retaliation against North Korea. Tell me what the Embassy in Seoul, and particularly you, did when the news of this tragedy in Rangoon came.

DUNLOP: The first thing we did was to try to be helpful in the pragmatic sense. We sent two airplanes to Rangoon, one of them carrying some US security officers to help the Burmese Government with the investigation. They arrived on the plane that was to take President Chun back to Seoul. We also deployed an AWACS aircraft out of Diego Garcia [island in the middle of the Indian Ocean] and sent some fighter escorts with it.

Q: An "AWACS" is a flying radar plane [Airborne Warning and Control Systems aircraft].

DUNLOP: A very effective platform for a sophisticated air surveillance radar which could show us what threats might be in the vicinity of this plane. We also flew a hospital plane to Rangoon and medevaced the South Korean Minister of Defense and some others to the hospital at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. The claymore mine attack at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon took place on a Sunday morning. We later learned that when the US Air Force plane carrying President Chun landed in Seoul at 3:00 or 4:00 AM on the Monday morning, Chun convened at Kimpo Airport in Seoul a meeting of the remaining members of his cabinet and the deputy ministers who were going to take the places of those who had been killed or injured.

I am told that there were eight or 10 people in the room at the airport. They were all trying to show President Chun how "outraged" they were and how "macho" they were. They were all giving him ideas about what to do. One person suggested that South Korea could send a bomber

strike at Pyongyang, North Korea, and bomb the house of the President of North Korea. Others suggested other possible courses of action. President Chun reportedly said just about four or five things at that meeting. First of all, he said, "I'm going to make all of these decisions. Nobody is to do anything. And in particular," pointing to these people who had been so outspoken, "you guys are going to stand down until I tell you what to do. I'm going to take my time and get some sleep. I'm going to talk to some people." Of course, they knew that he was going to talk to the Americans.

We had a letter to him from President Reagan. You asked what I did. I was always kind of the "fixer" in these kinds of things. I informed the Foreign Ministry that Ambassador Walker would like to deliver a letter of condolences, sympathy, and support to President Chun. We arranged a meeting for about 2:00 PM that Monday afternoon. As always, Ambassador Walker went over alone. Chun did not want other Americans attending his meetings with the American Ambassador, and particularly other Americans who spoke Korean. One of my professional criticisms of Ambassador "Dixie" Walker, much as I admired him in many respects, is that he always rolled over for this. He let the Koreans do the interpreting. He had no record of this meeting other than what he could remember of what happened. There was no confirmation, and that was unwise and unprofessional. He shouldn't have done this. I told him this any number of times, but he never changed.

"Dixie" came back from this meeting with Chun saying that Chun was calm, rational, and composed. Chun was clearly fatigued to an extreme degree, very weary. However, "Dixie" saw no sign of mental stress or anything that would have affected his judgment. I might add that "Dixie" was not a great admirer of Chun. "Dixie" didn't think that Chun "hung the moon up in the sky" by any means. He had a lot of respect for him as a smart man, and I think that we all agreed with that. Anyway, "Dixie" came away from this meeting with Chun thinking that Chun had a lot of reserve strength.

As I recall, we did not have to do much more than say what was in that letter from President Reagan to President Chun. The letter more or less said, "I know how deeply you are enraged, horror-stricken, and saddened by this assault on yourself and your colleagues. We stand with you, but let's talk before doing anything." I don't think that we ever did much more than that. President Chun took a trip to visit his soldiers on Tuesday, the next day, and flew to all of the major South Korean commands. He said a few words to his troops. They were basically the kinds of things that we hoped that he would say. He told the soldiers that they were strong. He reminded them of what their duties were in the face of this threat, which had been made so manifest. He expressed his confidence in them. That was sort of a trip to hold the hands of the South Korean soldiers. We reported all of that.

One of the things that always happens when incidents like this occur, like the explosion in Rangoon, the "shoot down" of KAL Flight 007, the Chinese torpedo boats, or whatever, Washington always gets very, very nervous. People like "Dixie" and me start getting phone calls. One of the things that we were trying to do was to find out what was happening on the South Korean side and also to calm down the nervous Nellies back in Washington. We tried to tell the people in Washington that we didn't think that the world was coming to an end because of this incident. I suppose that after this an even harder job that we had was to convince Washington

that Chun was as rational and unbelligerent as he seemed to be. Because, as you reflected, and I did, too, how can a politician fail to say, "We've got to do SOMETHING." He wisely didn't do anything, actually.

Q: Well, in a way, there are only a couple of things that I can think of, in retrospect. One thing is the involvement of Buddhism, because of the desecration of the Shwedagon Pagoda. The other thing is that he didn't have to worry as much about being under any kind of political pressure as somebody might feel who had come to power by more democratic means.

DUNLOP: Yes. He really did not have much concern about public opinion and the National Assembly that his successors have had since the democratization of the political process in South Korea. On the other hand, this kind of political pressure was not totally absent.

One of the things that a leader like that has to do is to watch his own military. They have real clout. If they think that he is being "weak" and "namby pamby," this might be an excuse for some very energetic and ambitious person to say, "Well, we can do this job better than he can." Chun was a very reserved and inward looking man. He never took a great many people into his confidence. He wasn't a back slapper. He wasn't a very congenial, convivial person. Like all Koreans, he had to go through this routine of having drinking parties with his close associates. However, even they would say that Chun was not a lot of fun. However, he made quite important decisions at times, and this was one of them.

Q: Let's finish up on the Seoul Olympics. Did anything else happen during the Olympic Games that...

DUNLOP: I think that there were no other disruptive events during the Olympic Games that could be attributed to somebody deliberately trying to upset things. We had our "Delta Force." As you know, this is our quick reaction, anti-terrorism unit. We had a detachment from this force come to South Korea and help to train the South Koreans. A detachment from "Delta Force" came out several times. The colonel in command of this detachment would usually check in with the Embassy.

I remember one amusing thing that he said to me about this. On the third such trip I asked the colonel how things were going and were the South Koreans amenable to his instructions. He said, "You know, physically and talent-wise, they've got everything. They can do anything that other human beings can do. They can run up or down buildings forwards or backwards and that kind of stuff. They can board boats going 50 miles an hour from little boats. We've had some trouble convincing them to be precise in the use of their weapons and to exercise restraint. I think that we can say that they're beyond the 'spray and slay' stage." [Laughter] I would like to think that the rescuers who might come to help me some day are past the "spray and slay" stage.

The Seoul Olympics were a great success for the South Koreans. There were lots of anecdotes about them, none of which particularly deserves recording. The South Koreans did a good job. I was not there for it. I thought that I might try to "boondoggle" my way out there, but the Embassy was under a tremendous amount of stress just handling the American Olympian contingent. I would say one thing. I got to know some of the people who represent our Olympic

movement, and some of them are absolutely arrogant, egocentric, and very difficult people to deal with. I mean that they are concerned about petty things, like demanding suites with a "hot tub" and things like that. I'm not talking about the athletes. I'm talking about the administrators in the American Olympic Committee and all of their "hangers on." They can be real pains to deal with. The Embassy didn't need me hanging around, so I did not go.

Q: What about the problems of having the press all over the place? When the press got there, and the American press in particular, I imagine that they were always looking for a story to make the South Koreans look bad. They did that at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. This is just what the press does.

DUNLOP: NBC [National Broadcasting Company] had the coverage. The South Koreans didn't like the coverage. We had complaints from them. NBC, like any American network, put on a lot of "background" stuff about Korea. Of course, what they did was to oversimplify things. Although there are a lot of things in Korean history that are not particularly admirable, on the human rights side, for example, this was probably more than the South Korean authorities wanted to see dredged up from the past and, maybe, the not so distant past. However, there were no big problems.

I remember one example of cultural insensitivity. There was a Korean boxer who was thought likely to take one of the medals and, perhaps, win the gold medal. He was in one of the middle weight areas. He was really beaten and committed a foul in the process, which counts a lot in the Olympics. You get points, and the foul involves subtracting points from the total. He lost. He refused to leave the ring. After the celebration of his opponent's victory, he slumped down in the middle of the ring.

However, the cameramen didn't turn off the lights. The cameras were still on him. He presented a picture of utter dejection. People came up and tapped him on the shoulder, but he just sat there. The commentators began to laugh at him. He stayed there in the center of the ring for about an hour. They would keep cutting back to show him. They would say, "Oh, he's still there." I thought that this was just perfectly without any shred of taste. What was happening to that young man was that his whole life was in ruins. He had lived to be an Olympic boxer. He was a hero in his hometown. He had a salary. He had preferment. He had goodies which were otherwise probably unthinkable for his family. He had the responsibility for keeping all of that going. It was all gone. He knew that they would set the dogs on him in his home village. He would be pelted with stones when he got back there. I think that it was a particularly bad case of insensitivity.

I must say that an American sports columnist, Tony Kornheiser, wrote a good story about it. Some Korean told him what was going on, and Kornheiser wrote a nice piece on this incident. I wrote to Kornheiser and said that this was just a pebble on the beach, but it was nice to see that somebody had taken the trouble to report what was really going on, in a cultural sense.

Q: Harry, let's talk about the pressures on you while you were in South Korea, dealing with Chun and trying to get him to democratize the regime.

DUNLOP: Chun was a man who seized power illegally and who, in the process, was responsible for the deaths of at least half a dozen people. We know now, eight years since he left office, that he has been tried by a South Korean court, convicted, and sentenced to death for those crimes. He almost certainly will not suffer the death penalty.

However, the coup d'etat of December 12, [1979], was a brutal military takeover of the government, as military takeovers often are. He enjoyed absolutely no popular support in the country. His support was in the South Korean military. South Korean politics are very volatile. In the National Assembly, for example, people make extreme statements and throw things around, and things like that. There is very little tradition of give and take and compromise anywhere in this system. Certainly, the two parties in opposition to Chun were, in turn, run by autocrats, who were every bit as dictatorial toward their subordinates and party associates as Chun was toward his cabinet. So there was a lot going on in South Korea which bore no resemblance to a modern, political system.

By the mid-1980's South Korea had modernized its institutions in almost every important respect, with the exception of its political system. This system was run very much as the "Yi" Dynasty kings had done it, as Syngman Rhee ran it, and as Park Chung Hee ran it. Things were done by fiat. The opposition was watched closely by the police and curbed. Succeeding governments did the same thing in various ways. Once in a while, some of the opposition figures were curbed by being beaten up, usually by the police. However, the opposition was more generally curbed by letting opposition figures know that they were under close surveillance. They were told that there were certain limits beyond which they would not be allowed to go, they were harassed in various ways, tax agents would visit them, and such things.

When the Reagan administration entered office in the United States in January, 1981, just over a year had passed since the coup by which Chun seized power. Our relations with President Chun during the last few months of the Carter administration mostly during 1980 had been frigid and extremely cold. There was only very minimum contact maintained. This was limited to what had to be done to keep the South Korean-United States alliance intact, and not much more.

So the Reagan administration was faced with the question of what we were going to do about Chun and our relationship with South Korea. At this time we had 43,000 US soldiers in South Korea. South Korea was a growing, economic power in the Far East. What were we going to do about it? The decision was made that we were going to work with President Chun, but we would do what we could to ensure that Chun kept the promise that he had made when he was "elected" in a sham election in 1980 to leave office as President at the end of his seven year term. We would do our best to make sure that happened and that he stepped down at the end of the seven year term. Our principal objective in the interim, the specific, political objective, was to moderate Chun's human rights behavior where we could. However, we wanted to keep in mind that the object was to get him out of the presidency in 1987 at the end of the term to which he was supposedly elected.

New presidential elections were supposed to be held in South Korea in the fall of 1987. I arrived in Seoul in the summer of 1983, so I was there during the runup to those elections of 1987. I went back to Washington during the last couple of months of Chun's seven year term and

continued to deal with Korean affairs in the Department of State.

One of the issues that we had to deal with all of the time, from the beginning and right through the end of Chun's regime, was what sort of contact the Embassy should have with the two, leading members of the opposition, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Yong Sam, who is now the President of the Republic of Korea. The two Kim's were not friends. They were rivals. They were both harsh critics of Chun. Each of them had a particular following. Kim Dae Jung's following was mainly limited to the Kwangju area of South Korea, and among the Kwangju folk who had immigrated to Korea. One of his problems was that he was never able to overcome the fact that he was a politician with a "regional" base of support. The other Kim, Kim Yong Sam, eventually became President essentially by making compromises with the ruling party. He was "co-opted" by the party which Chun left behind when he left office.

In any event I was the principal Embassy contact with both of the Kim's. Well, more specifically, Kim Dae Jung was not in the country when I arrived in South Korea in 1983. However, I was the principal contact with the "other" Kim, Kim Yong Sam. My Political Officers would associate with the subordinates of the two Kim's, their deputies, and section chiefs in their respective parties.

We never had trouble arranging for South Korean opposition figures to talk to us. Nor did the South Korean government ever effectively seek to prevent that connection, although some high government officials didn't like it. Only once did they really try to "get me" personally. There was one whispering campaign which the KCIA [Korean Central Intelligence Agency] spread, involving false statements and lies that I beat my wife and that I showed up drunk at the office every day. However, that campaign petered out very quickly. They must have realized that it wasn't going to get them anywhere and was going to create problems for them.

Q: How did the existence of this "whispering campaign" get back to you? Were we able to work through our CIA Station to get the KCIA to cut out this campaign?

DUNLOP: Yes, we tried that. However, I would have to say that in South Korea, as well as in other countries where we have Embassies, in the areas I was dealing with, which included the internal, political structure of the country and the political-military relationship, the CIA Station contributed very little. The one time I personally ever asked them to do something was when I asked them to put a listening device into that room where the South Korean students were when they occupied the USIS Library. I think that I mentioned that previously. They apparently just didn't care or were unable to do it. A listening device would have been a great help to me and possibly would have been decisive in how we handled this incident. We muddled through without it but we could have used that help.

Otherwise, the people in the CIA Station were nice to deal with. They were intelligent and they understood a lot about what was going on in the country. They were always useful people to bounce ideas off. However, as far as practical actions to further our policies, I was not aware of any.

The following is just one anecdote, but perhaps this was one thing that I can say that the Political

Section did, and I had a personal hand in it. There was one, very vocal, younger opposition leader who was also not a part of the political parties of either Kim Dae Jung or Kim Yong Sam. This younger man had led some student demonstrations and had written some articles in the newspapers. We established contact with him. In fact, our Political Officers tried to maintain a fair amount of contact with him. He seemed amenable to this but was not very friendly toward us. He thought that we were a "malign" influence in South Korea and that we were part of the support system for Chun. He didn't think that was a good idea. I invited him to my house once and had some conversation with him.

It wasn't too long after that he was arrested. He was very, very badly treated by the police. We learned of that from his friends and from his wife. This was a specific instance involving someone who had been in touch with the Embassy, although not in any kind of illegal fashion. He was given the full treatment by the KCIA. I personally made 11 representations on his behalf. Unfortunately, I began these representations after the fact. He had been under this pressure for quite a while, a matter of days, but it must have seemed like an eternity to him. The KCIA finally let up on the pressure on him. I don't know whether it was because we were on to them or what. However, this was a very sad and nasty situation. Our representations may have had some effect or they may not have. This is an example of the kinds of things that the South Korean police could do when they wanted to.

Kun Hwoo Park, the Director of American Affairs in the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and now the South Korean Ambassador to the US, was a man of very great substance and charm. He knew his job and he did it well. Like all Directors of American Affairs, he came to be seen by other elements in the South Korean government as a spokesman for the Americans. We would go and bitch to him about something, and he would have to carry this water for us around the South Korean Government. So Directors of American Affairs in the South Korean Foreign Ministry don't have too long a "shelf life." However, they are usually rewarded for having been Director of American Affairs. They get a good, overseas posting, and that's eventually what happened to Kun.

Toward the end of his term as Director of American Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was a major "leak" of information on the North Korean nuclear weapons program. While the information leaked was true, we had every reason to believe that the South Koreans who leaked the information were trying to force our hand in dealing with it, involving ways that we didn't want to use in handling it, including perhaps even a preemptive strike against the North Korean facilities where nuclear weapons were being developed. The example of the nuclear reactor in Iraq, which the Israelis had successfully attacked, was very much on everybody's mind.

Q: The Israelis had made a preemptive strike against an Iraqi nuclear facility during that same era.

DUNLOP: Yes. So we decided to make a major issue of this leak. The Ambassador and everybody got involved in this matter. We made very strong representations to the South Korean Government, stressing that this kind of activity was absolutely unacceptable to us. We said that if, in fact, the South Koreans could not handle this kind of information in confidence, we were

going to stop providing it to them. The implication clearly was, "And then where will you be," so to speak?

Anyway, these representations got back to the KCIA which, as we later found out, had been responsible for the leak. To deflect attention from themselves, they "elected" the Director of American Affairs in the South Korean Foreign Ministry, Kun Hwoo Park as the "fall guy." They went to his office, beat him physically, manacled him and took him out the front door of the Foreign Ministry. They threw him into the back of a van and took him to the basement of KCIA headquarters. There they stripped him of all of his clothes, gave him a rough prison uniform with a stenciled mark on it and said, "You are no longer Mr. Park, Director of American Affairs. You are Prisoner No. 156783 until we decide differently." Then they closed the door of his cell and turned off the lights. They kept him there for 24 hours. I saw him two days after that and found that he was a shaken man.

This was absolutely despicable behavior. We came down on the KCIA like a ton of bricks. The thing which I think that those who read or hear these comments must understand is that, short of severing our relationship with the South Korean Government, which is vital to the United States for a lot of reasons, there are limits to which we can "force" a government not to do this kind of thing to its own people. That is, short of deposing the South Korean Government or breaking off our relations with it, there just aren't a lot of fine gradations in this kind of situation.

One of our biggest arguments with the South Koreans was always that we had to go every year to Congress to approve the military budget and keep our forces in South Korea. If enough incidents of this kind accumulated, South Korea would not get the support that it needed in Congress, and we would not help them get such support. We would say that, but sometimes we weren't able to convey enough conviction to make a difference.

President Chun Doo Hwan was faced with either living up to his promise to leave office after his seven year term was over and not running again, or changing his mind. He never said that he would change his mind. However, we knew, as the end of his term drew nearer, that this temptation must have been on his mind. At one point he had designated a successor, a man named Rho Tae Woo, who did, in fact, succeed him. However, the question was whether Chun would be satisfied with just having No as his nominee and willing collaborator as President of South Korea, or whether he, himself, would choose to stay on as President. There are not too many instances of dictators living up to promises like that. I guess that there are some, but not too many.

The last month that I spent in Seoul was June, 1987, before returning to the United States on transfer to the Department of State. It was a month in which No was nominated as the candidate of the ruling party, the party of Chun, for the presidency. It was the month when the opposition, and this now spread beyond just the students, conducted a very violent series of anti-government riots, not only in Seoul but also in other cities, notably in Pusan, the leading port city.

Every spring, if you will, there were riots to commemorate the Kwangju incident in 1980, when government soldiers killed a couple of hundred protestors. That incident took place at the end of May, 1980, so from then on the end of May and June was always a time when students would

riot to commemorate the Kwangju incident. Previously, these riots were violent, troublesome, and "scary," if you were near one of them. You could smell whiffs of tear gas, if you got nothing more than that. Riots would take place whenever anything seriously threatened the government's control over the country, but usually they were just confined to students. Although there may have been some sympathy among the broader population, usually the students would wear out their welcome after a few days of rioting. The shopkeepers didn't want to keep their shops boarded up, and vendors didn't want to have to stop selling their merchandise. So the students never really got much beyond the point of rioting.

It was a different situation in June, 1987. Not only were the students in full cry, but there was evidence that doubts about Chun's departure were beginning to be reflected in a political way in public support for the students. The demonstrations lasted much longer than they usually did, and they became increasingly widespread. As I said, they extended beyond Seoul to Pusan, Taegu, and other places, such as Kwangju itself.

The point was reached when it became very worrisome to us in the Embassy that this was the kind of situation that would give Chun the excuse for proclaiming martial law. If he declared martial law and sent the troops out into the streets, it would be a sign that he was going to stay in power and was going to use the Army to make this possible. This would have been a disaster for the political future of South Korea. It could even have meant civil war, because it wasn't at all clear that all of the soldiers would follow Chun. Certainly, there would be a lot of terrible things happening in Seoul, including the effect on the summer Olympic Games, which were due to be held in Seoul next year. This had been regarded as a time when Chun could step aside and let something different begin to happen on the political scene. It looked as if all of this might come unglued.

The Embassy, of course, was in touch with Washington. Our Ambassador at the time was Jim Lilley, who was on the secure phone to Washington a number of times in this connection. Ambassador Lilley had replaced Ambassador "Dixie" Walker in 1986. Washington finally told us that President Reagan was going to write a letter to Chun. It would be a strongly worded letter urging Chun to keep his promise to step down as President of South Korea and do nothing so rash and foolish as declaring martial law and canceling the elections of 1987.

We knew that this letter from President Reagan to President Chun was coming to us. We didn't know when it would be received. The bureaucracy takes a little time to get out a message like this. On Wednesday night, June 17, 1987, I received a call from Washington that the letter had finally been cleared by the White House. The cabled text would be received by the Embassy in a couple of hours, some time on Wednesday night, our time. I remember the date because Friday was June 19, 1987. Ambassador Lilley had taken a trip to visit some of our cultural offices out in the countryside, which he had never previously visited. This trip had been postponed several times. Ambassador Lilley thought that it would be a good time to do this. So Ambassador Lilley was not physically in Seoul. I was Acting DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] and, in effect, was in charge of the Embassy.

I contacted Ambassador Lilley and told him that the letter from President Reagan to President Chun was on the way and would be available on the following morning. I said that I would make

an appointment for Ambassador Lilley to call on President Chun on the afternoon of Thursday, June 18. I knew that it would take Ambassador Lilley a few hours to get back to Seoul and that he would like to read the letter from President Reagan before delivering it. I suggested making the appointment for any time after 2:00 PM on June 18. Ambassador Lilley said, "OKAY." I started calling right away to make the appointment. All that I could do, given the time of day, was to leave a message that an appointment with President Chun was urgently needed and that Ambassador Lilley was coming back to Seoul to pick up the letter from President Reagan which he wanted to deliver personally to President Chun.

On the next morning, June 18, I called the Foreign Ministry and was told that President Chun would not receive Ambassador Lilley. At this time Ambassador Jim Lilley was driving back to Seoul, while I was sitting in my office talking to this nice man from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who was telling me that President Chun would not receive Ambassador Lilley. I said, "But that cannot be! This is a personal letter from my President to your President, to be delivered by my President's personal representative, who is also under instructions to have a few additional words to say." I said, "Your President simply cannot refuse to see my Ambassador in this connection." The Ministry representative said, "Oh, yes, he can refuse to receive the Ambassador." I then escalated the level of my representations to the Ministry a little bit, as I was effectively in charge of the Embassy. I couldn't go too far up, as I was just Acting DCM.

I had a horrible feeling that President Chun had already made up his mind and that he didn't want to receive the letter in person. I was told, "You can just drop the letter in the mail or slip it under the door. We'll see that President Chun gets it." Well, I think that this was the only time that I really lost my temper in dealing with an official of a foreign government. I was sitting in the office. A lot of my Political Officers were running in and out. This was a terribly busy time. We had gas masks in the office. The Political Officers would take them with them when they went out into the streets. It was just a very hectic time. We also had a portable radio there because we were listening to the military security people, who also were concerned about where the demonstrations were taking place. Usually, nobody paid any attention to me. Who was I, just there on the phone. All of a sudden, the whole room went quiet, and everybody was looking at me. I was shouting into the phone and saying, "I want the name of the South Korean official who has taken it on himself to make this decision. I don't believe that President Chun has made this decision. I will not accept that your President has made it. I don't think that he would be that stupid to make it! He couldn't have made it. God damn it, I want to know the name of the person who made that decision right now!" And so on and so forth.

The South Korean official to whom I was talking said, "Harry, quiet down, quiet down." Well, I was desperate. Anyway, Ambassador Lilley came in about an hour later. I said, "Jim, you're going to have to take it from here. I've done everything that I can." Then the phone rang. It was the Foreign Minister speaking on behalf of President Chun. He said, "The President can't see Ambassador Lilley today, June 18. Would tomorrow, June 19 be all right?" Little did we know that tomorrow would be almost too late, because right about this time President Chun had decided to declare martial law. As we learned later, that Thursday night was a terrible night of rioting. A South Korean soldier was killed. He wasn't shot but he fell off an overpass, or something like that. At this time there were remarkably few deaths. There were some injuries in these violent encounters from flying rocks and so forth. That was one of them. Our Consul in

Pusan talked to the Pusan Police chief that night. The Police chief said that his police were too tired to go on. He said that he needed soldiers to help maintain order. He said that he had called Seoul to ask for some soldiers. This was not martial law. He said he just needed some soldiers. So, probably late on Thursday night, June 18, President Chun made the decision to proclaim martial law.

The appointment for Ambassador Lilley was set for 2:00 PM on the afternoon of Friday, June 19. Ambassador Lilley had the letter and went over to call on President Chun. At about noon on June 19, just an hour or two before he went in to see President Chun, there was an announcement over the radio that the Prime Minister would address the nation at midnight on that day. This seemed like an ominous time to do things, but this was the announcement. I thought "My God, this means that martial law is about to be declared." We did not get good, advance intelligence on this decision. Our military and our CIA people couldn't tell us what was going on in President Chun's mind or what he was discussing with his top lieutenants.

Later on, we learned a lot about what had gone on that day. By that time we had President Reagan's letter, and a great deal of rioting was going on. Ken Quinones, our Consul in Pusan, had called us with this story to which I have referred about the Police Chief in Pusan who had called for military help from the central government in Seoul to maintain order. We were really worried and concerned about the situation. The more we thought about it the more concerned we were about the possible consequences of martial law and the more disastrous it sounded to us. Then there was this ominous announcement of a midnight speech to the nation by the Prime Minister.

Anyway, Ambassador Lilley went over to call on President Chun on the afternoon of June 19. I did not go with him. No American went with him. President Chun still kept to his practice of seeing the American Ambassador alone. Ambassador Lilley spent two hours over at the Presidential Palace [Blue House], where both the office and residence of the President of South Korea were located. The Ambassador came back to the Embassy at 4:40 PM. He sat down at his desk and described what had happened to all of us, who were standing there, breathless with anticipation. We knew what was in the letter from President Reagan, which was strongly worded. The letter had told President Chun that he, President Reagan, had been President of the US for seven years in difficult times and knew what the stresses of making decisions were, but that there were a few times which were "defining moments," and so forth. This was one of them, and President Reagan wanted President Chun to know that the Korean-American alliance would be under severe strain if the political process broke down and if the presidential elections were canceled.

Anyway, Ambassador Lilley told us that, for the first time in his year of experience in South Korea, during which he had seen President Chun eight or 10 times, probably, President Chun did most of the listening. Chun usually liked to dominate the conversation. He would read the letter, if that were involved, and then talk about it. This time Chun did most of the listening. Ambassador Lilley said "I couldn't have been more explicit about what our concerns were. I asked him about the Prime Minister's speech. I told him that if the Prime Minister announced that martial law was about to be proclaimed, it would be a disaster for South Korea and for our relationship. We hoped that this would not be the case."

Some time around 5:30 or 6:30 PM it was announced on the radio that the Prime Minister's speech had been canceled. Later on we learned that it had been late in the evening of the Thursday or early on Friday morning that President Chun, who had long been toying with the idea of declaring martial law, had decided to do it. He told the Prime Minister to prepare a declaration of martial law for delivery over the radio at midnight on June 19. Then President Chun had reluctantly decided to receive the American Ambassador. We also learned that there were a lot of people, including some of his top military leaders, who were telling President Chun the same thing that Ambassador Lilley told him. So I am not trying to portray this as an intervention by Washington that suddenly turned things around. We will never know for sure -- my best estimate is that most of the pressures on Chun were to reverse his decision, including ours, and that added up to more than he could withstand.

Chun was not a stupid man. He was a very intelligent man. I think that he would not have made the decision to declare martial law lightly, under any circumstances. It would not have been based on an "impulse" on his part. After the Rangoon and other incidents we had often seen how Chun held up well under stress. However, he appears to have made a clear decision to cancel the elections of 1987, blaming it on the opposition for reckless violence and emphasizing that security must be maintained. In fact, Chun was not losing control of the country. There was no justification for canceling the elections which would have been accepted. The electricity was not interrupted, and no one died on hospital operating tables. The water supply flowed normally. Anyhow, President Chun shouldn't have made this martial law decision. Ultimately, he decided not to declare martial law and cancel the elections of 1987. Well, we'll never know, unless President Chun writes his memoirs and we can believe them, what combination of circumstances led him to change his mind. Surely, Ambassador Lilley's intervention with the Reagan letter played a role. I think that if there is anything in my career which I can look back on and say that it might have had an impact of historical significance, my part in that incident, little that it was, including losing my temper on the telephone, might have been such an event.

There were a lot of other incidents that were interesting, and some of them were important. However, this was probably the one time during my career when a nexus of events came together, in which I was directly involved, that may have made more than just a temporary difference.

About five days later, on June 24, 1987, Chun delivered a speech in which he said, "I will not wait until after the elections. I am now relinquishing the Chief Executive's authority to my cabinet ministers." I was about to leave South Korea. I was supposed to leave on June 27 or 28.

This announcement was the result of the huge "loss of face" for Chun which his reversal on June 19 inflicted on him. Once he had decided to back down on his decision to declare martial law and to cancel the elections, he had, in effect, cut his own throat politically. He recognized that and he delivered a very eloquent speech. He said that he had done everything that he could do, except resign from office. He said that now he was resigning from office. He indicated that it was up to his colleagues in the government. From that point on a real change became evident in the way that South Korea was going to conduct its political life. It is not picture book democracy by any means. The next President, No Tae Woo, who served for five years, had very much of the

military cast of mind, but he also had a broader outlook than Chun. For example, No had been chief organizer for the Seoul Olympics. This had been a very broadening experience for him. He had traveled to virtually every capital in the world. He had a very large hand in bringing off that major event.

No was replaced as President by Kim Yong Sam, one of the major opposition figures, "the other Kim." He is also the only chief of state with whom I can say that I am -- or was once -- on a first name basis. Kim Yong Sam and I must have had 20 meals together, every two or three months. They were always at his expense and they were always excellent meals. I rather liked Kim Yong Sam. He had a Korean nickname of "Stone head," because he was considered stubborn. I never thought that he was dumb. Some people interpreted "Stone head" as meaning that he was stupid as well as, perhaps, stubborn. I didn't think so. He is not a brilliant man. He is not a man of great, innovative skills but he is a survivor. He is a decent man with a good sense of humor and a good, pleasant air about him. It never bothered me to go and see him so often.

I didn't have that same rapport with Kim Dae Jung. I always found him much too self-centered a man, even for Korean politics. He lied to me on about four or five occasions. Politicians can lie to you on a couple of occasions, and that may be tolerable. However, four or five occasions is a little too much. So I didn't like Kim Dae Jung but I really did like Kim Yong Sam.

Q: Going back to the period when you were in South Korea. When President Chun made his announcement that he would be leaving the Presidency, you were still Political Counselor, right?

DUNLOP: Yes, but I left South Korea four or five days afterwards.

Q: What was the immediate reaction that you heard?

DUNLOP: Oh, euphoria. It had been very evident that this crisis point had been approaching. This was a good, not a bad outcome of the crisis. At this time I was deep into making my farewell calls. These were also substantive calls. My successor was not at post, and I could not take him around with me. I was talking to the heads of different political parties, factions in the National Assembly, and people in the offices of Kim Dae Jung and Kim Yong Sam. In fact, I also called on Kim Dae Jung and Kim Yong Sam, although I think that I had done that earlier, before this crisis emerged. However, people were just all smiles, including people in the bureaucracy and government. You might think that, although they were working for President Chun, they didn't want to see him hang onto power in this way.

I remember that Ambassador Jim Lilley came back to the Embassy after seeing the Foreign Minister. The Foreign Minister had mentioned my "vigorous" representations in trying to arrange an appointment for the Ambassador with President Chun. However, he referred to this in a nice way. The Ambassador said, "Well, I wasn't in Seoul and wouldn't know anything about that." He continued, "However, it was very important for me to see President Chun," as, indeed, it was. He said, "We're very grateful to President Chun for receiving me." The Ambassador said some important things at the right time. There was generally a feeling of relief that South Korea had come close to what amounted to a coup d'etat, but now the feeling was that South Korea could

continue on the path to democracy. Which has, thank God, actually been the case.

Q: By the way, Harry, going back to President Reagan's letter to President Chun. Obviously, this wasn't just Ronald Reagan looking up at the ceiling of his office and saying, "I'm going to write a letter to the President of South Korea." From your knowledge, what was the process by which this letter was written?

DUNLOP: Well, I certainly had no role in writing it, nor did I have any role in suggesting it, although I enthusiastically endorsed the idea. I don't know who came up with the idea. In recent years Presidents have written lots of letters. So letter writing by Presidents is not as unusual as you might think. There are lots of letters, and they don't get much publicity. Sometimes they do, but I believe that there was one letter which, I don't think, ever got any publicity.

I suppose that either Ambassador Lilley, who was getting increasingly worried about the situation in South Korea, or the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, more probably, or the Korean desk officer at the time came up with the specific idea of a presidential letter. Once an idea like that is accepted in the Department of State, the usual procedure is that someone, usually the desk officer, actually writes a draft. He then sends it over to an officer on the NSC [National Security Council] staff who deals with Korean affairs. At this time I think that the NSC staffer was still Doug Haas, although I'm not absolutely certain of that. The Korean desk officer in the Department of State probably called him, told him what was going on, and asked him if he thought that this idea "would fly." Doug Haas probably said, "Yes." If he said "No," the Korean desk officer would probably still have sent a draft over there, even though the chances of its being accepted might not have been very good.

Whoever it was that actually sent the draft letter to the NSC, and it was probably the Country Director for Korea, went in to see Doug Haas, gave him a copy, and then asked him to move it as quickly as possible. In this case there was a delay, and delays are very predictable with this sort of thing. Sometimes letters like this will come back to the Department in 24 hours, sometimes they will take a week. Sometimes, events change and you just don't want a letter or don't want the same kind of letter. I've actually seen letters which were signed and mailed, and then were pulled back, even though they had the full approval of the President. In the interim, something different had happened.

In the declassification business which I've been doing for some time, it seems to me that President Richard Nixon began the practice of often writing letters to foreign chiefs of state on policy matters, more so than his predecessors did. President Kennedy wrote a number of letters, also. I don't think that President Eisenhower was in the letter writing business, although he wrote, or signed, some letters. I don't want to perpetuate the idea that Eisenhower was a "do nothing" President in the foreign affairs field, as some people have suggested. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was his principal adviser on foreign policy matters, but Eisenhower was a very strong influence on foreign affairs, as far as I can tell. I don't think that writing letters to foreign heads of state or government was his strong point. Kennedy began to do it, Nixon did a lot of it, Johnson wrote some letters, and all of the Presidents since then have written letters.

Q: Harry, let's go back to some other issues. You mentioned Chinese "torpedo boats." What were

these?

DUNLOP: This was another "Saturday morning" crisis. This happened when I was in Seoul, probably in 1985. I was at home, prior to going to the office, which I always did for a little while. Then my wife and I would take the car, drive out to the Commissary, and do the week's shopping. Then we would come back and spend some time with our children.

On this particular Saturday morning I got a phone call from Yi Song Okay, a very worried man who was then the chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs at the South Korean Foreign Ministry. I knew him but didn't have occasion to deal with him on as regular a basis as much as I did with the Director of the American Affairs Division. He said, "We have a crisis, and it could be a very bad crisis! We don't know all the facts, but I'll tell you what I know." He said, "We have information that a Chinese torpedo boat, one of a flotilla of three, is approaching South Korean waters and is being pursued by the other two boats. It has sent some sort of international distress signal. We think that there may have been some killing or shooting on board the torpedo boat. It appears that somebody is ill or sick, as they have requested medical help by flying an international distress flag. Our Air Force is now launching F-4 'Phantom' fighters to make sure that the boat is not pursued inside South Korean territorial waters."

I asked: "And what orders do the fighter aircraft have?" Yi Song Okay paused and said: "Well, I believe that they have orders to attack the two other torpedo boats if they enter South Korean territorial waters." All of this was totally new to me. I said to him: "Well, I hope that they don't attack the other torpedo boats."

This was really a fascinating situation. Yi said to me: "Please get a message to the Chinese which will assure them that we will treat the people on that boat strictly according to international law. However, we cannot permit them to be forcibly removed from South Korean waters." I thought to myself: "How can I do that?" I was still at my home in Seoul. There was no phone circuit between Seoul and Beijing. I thought: "Well, how much time do I have?" I realized that I didn't have much time. In fact, I had "minus time." I didn't have time to call the Ambassador or the Department in Washington. These are the two things that you usually do before taking action, so that everybody knows that you have at least "touched base" with senior officers.

So Yi Song Okay hung up. I then called the duty officer at the American Embassy in Tokyo. It was not that he was uncooperative, but it took a long time to give him the bits and pieces of the incident. He asked: "Who is this? Where? About what? Would you repeat that again? Would you give me your name again?" I said that what I really wanted him to do was to call the duty officer in the American Embassy in Beijing, because the Embassy in Tokyo did have telephonic contact with the Embassy in Beijing, and convey this message which I had received from a responsible official in the South Korean Foreign Ministry. "Please give him assurances that whoever was on that Chinese torpedo boat, mutineers or whoever, would be treated strictly in accordance with international law." I think that there was another part to the South Korean message, that is, that there would be no attempt made to exploit the crew of the Chinese torpedo boat for political purposes. However, the South Koreans would see to it that their sovereign, territorial waters, extending 12 miles from the coast, were defended.

So the duty officer at the Embassy in Tokyo wrote all of this down. I asked him: "Would you pass this on to the duty officer at the Embassy in Beijing and then call me back, so I could say that at least the American Embassy in Beijing has received the South Korean message? Then could you ask the Beijing duty officer to call you when the message has been delivered to the Chinese Government? And could you then call me to say that the message has been delivered?" I am sure that on a Saturday the duty officer at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs is as hard to reach as in any other capital. Anyhow, the duty officer in our Embassy in Tokyo promised to do all of that, and that is the one thing that we did in all of this. He reached our Embassy in Beijing, which did contact the PRC.

We later heard that the South Korean fighter planes took off, with a full combat load. However, this combat load, whatever it may have been, was inappropriate for attacking ships at sea. I suppose that they would have attacked the other two Chinese torpedo boats, anyway, at least with their machine guns. We also learned that there had not only been a mutiny but there had been a murder on board the first torpedo boat. The captain of the boat was dead, and a couple of his officers were bleeding on the deck. In the course of this incident I learned the full implications of all of these words in international law, including "barratry," "mutiny," "defection," "murder," and "assault with intent to kill." There were about 18 different aspects of this incident. "Barratry" takes place when the operators of a ship do something to damage the interest of the owners of the ship. So the operators of the ship were mutineers, committers of barratry, murderers, pirates, defectors, etc.

The torpedo boat pulled into South Korean territorial waters. The other torpedo boats, seeing the South Korean planes above, hove to outside of South Korean territorial waters. Things calmed down at this point. The South Koreans later tried the remaining crew members of the Chinese torpedo boat for murder, mutiny, and barratry. The people in the South Korean Foreign Ministry kept calling me up and saying things like, "What's barratry?" This was just their curiosity. Somebody else was prosecuting them. I said: "I don't know." Then I tried to find out what "barratry" was. The South Koreans, in fact, did what they said they would do. I think that, of the eight or 10 crewmen who were not dead or wounded, about five of them were tried, convicted, and sentenced to terms in a South Korean jail. Two or three of the crewmen were freed and sent back to China. I think that one of the crewmen who was not convicted applied for permission to stay in South Korea.

Q: I assume that the others were returned.

DUNLOP: I guess so, after they were thoroughly interrogated. I think that this incident was worth mentioning, because it seemed typical of things that happened almost every weekend in South Korea, or at least it seemed to me I spent a lot of weekends that way.

The relationship between the Chinese communists and the South Korean Government was a curious one. The mainland Chinese government was considered the chief supporter of the North Koreans. It turned out that was true. The Chinese continued to give military support and vital oil supplies to the North Koreans long after they told us that they had stopped providing such assistance. We were often lied to by the Chinese. I came to distrust what the Chinese would tell me about Korea. I went to Beijing once to talk to them about Korea and came away from that

discussion believing that I had been deceived or that they had attempted to deceive me extensively.

On the other hand, the Chinese had a great interest in gaining access to the South Korean market and technology and attracting South Korean investment. So there were these two sides to Chinese policy toward South Korea. The South Koreans didn't seem to know how to exploit this Chinese desire for closer contacts. They would have been delighted to have contact with China. The South Koreans were always ready to recognize "Red" China, to set up air flights, reestablish postal communications, and all of that. When I was in Seoul, the only thing done was that postal and telegraphic connections were established. There was talk going on during the last year, 1986-1987 of my tour in South Korea about establishing air routes that would cross South Korea directly from Tokyo to Beijing.

The North Koreans were adamantly opposed to airline routes transiting their airspace, so the Chinese wouldn't accept flights transiting South Korean airspace. In those days flights between Beijing and Tokyo had to fly all the way around the Korean peninsula. They had to go down almost to Shanghai and then fly North, either to Beijing or to Tokyo. When I flew from Seoul to Beijing, I had to fly to Tokyo and catch a plane there. In fact, at one point the pilot announced over the loudspeaker that Shanghai was off our left wing, as he made a turn to go North to Beijing. Very little had been accomplished by the time I left Seoul.

By the time I left, Russia and China were very close to establishing diplomatic relations with South Korea, which, obviously, was to the great discomfort of North Korea. Except for the shooting down of the KAL 007 in 1983, the Russians played very little role in what came to our attention, anyway, in Seoul. The Russians were constantly flogging the "treasures" which might literally be unearthed in Siberia if anybody would invest the necessary capital. They were perfectly willing to try to entice South Korean capital into developing Russian natural resources in Siberia, even though there were no diplomatic relations between Russia and South Korea.

Once in a while one of the big, South Korean "Chebol," which is the Korean word for large, multinational corporations, would express an interest in Siberia. They would come in and ask the Ambassador what the Americans thought of that. We would say, "Fine. However, remember a few things about Siberia. It's cold and there is no infrastructure to support a major industrial program. There are few roads and railroads. You would have to deal with one of the world's worst bureaucracies there, and there is no local market. You can't sell anything directly to Siberia. You have to take it all out. So what's going to happen to the South Korean balance of payments from the Russian point of view? You're going to have to figure out some way to pay for what you get. This is harder to do in Siberia than almost anywhere else in the world." Anyway, nothing ever came of that.

The Japanese have long explored and meticulously studied taking the Russians up on this kind of offer, but they've never done anything significant in this connection. They just haven't been able to find a way to make it profitable.

Q: What about human rights? We've touched on human rights in a number of ways. What were we doing in this connection during the time that you were in Seoul?

DUNLOP: Well, I think that I mentioned the fact that we kept contact with Kim Yong Sam and Kim Dae Jung, the opposition leaders, to the discomfort of the South Korean Government, but never to the point they were able or tried very hard to prevent these contacts. I've already described that day when Kim Dae Jung returned to South Korea from exile, when everything went wrong at the airport.

We had a continuing dialogue with the South Korean Government about human rights. I mentioned the young man who came to my house to discuss this matter and later on was tortured. I made 11 representations on his behalf. I kept a list of those efforts because I wanted to be able to tell people like Congressman Torricelli [Democrat, New Jersey, now Senator from New Jersey], who kept accusing the Embassy of "fostering torture and vengeance." He was on the radio today, along with a Congressman named Feighan [Democrat, Ohio], who came back to South Korea with Kim Dae Jung. I kept a record of all this so that, when we talked with them, I could tell them what the Embassy had tried to do for people like that.

I can't say that our representations had more than a marginal effect. What they needed to do in South Korea to improve the human rights situation was to reform the political system. That did not happen until President Chun's speech in 1987, announcing that he was resigning from office. The human rights situation now, along with the general, political situation, is far better. However, we're still dealing with an authoritarian culture where one of the things that the South Korean police do when they pick someone up is to slap him or her around because this individual has disturbed the normal order of events. This individual is seen to have done something which sent out bad vibrations disturbing the harmonious status quo, and he or she shouldn't have done that. In effect, these individuals displeased the person as the chief of state, who has the "mandate of heaven" in the old Chinese sense.

On the other hand, Korea was never a place where people were often stood up against walls and shot, as happens in many places around the world. The mistreatment of people could be severe, but very few people died of it. The death penalty was almost never invoked. A mass murderer who went into a house and killed many people would be sentenced to many years in prison at hard labor, which was very hard, indeed, in South Korea. However, Kim Yong Sam, who was arrested many times, became President of the Republic of Korea. So there has been a big change. I think that we played some role in bringing about this change. I think that South Koreans who go to the United States and study here, as so many of them have done, and then return to Korea and take responsible positions in their government and industry, all know that there is a much better way of conducting the political life of a country than the way it had been done in South Korea. Their experience in the US has had its cumulative effect. I'm not saying that it was any particular policy of the US Government, but the fact is that the US is the place where South Koreans go to study and where they have derived much of their knowledge of the outside world. I think that we gave South Koreans a very clear picture of a political system that has a pretty good record for human rights, whatever else it does well or badly.

Q: Did you have any concerns about the KCIA [Korean CIA] "messaging around" in the Korean immigrant community in the United States?

DUNLOP: That used to be a major problem in the 1970's for the US relationship with South Korea when Park Chung Hee was President. I think that when he became President, Chun made a conscious decision that he was going to stop doing that. For one thing, his early relationship with the US was so bad that I don't think that he wanted anything which he could control, like that sort of thing, to make it any worse.

During the administration of President Park Chung Hee, there was the well known defection of the "military attaché" in the South Korean Embassy in Washington. He was not really a "military attaché" but worked for the KCIA. He was the Chief of Station of the KCIA in the Embassy. Either for money or for whatever reasons he talked freely with people in Congress and elsewhere about what the KCIA had been doing in the US. What they had been doing included coercing people in the Korean community in Washington who, they thought, were politically active on the wrong side. The KCIA did things like threatening their families back in South Korea. That was the most common form that this activity took.

However, as I say, I think that President Chun made a conscious decision to stop doing this kind of thing. His first Foreign Minister was a man who had been a great friend of Richard "Dixie" Walker, later US Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. The Foreign Minister, Lee Bum Suk, had died on the platform at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon, Burma, during the North Korean terrorist attack on the South Korean cabinet. The Foreign Minister told Ambassador Walker at one point, and I think that it was before I went to South Korea, that he had told President Chun that he would take the job of Foreign Minister under several conditions. If Chun wanted him to be Foreign Minister, Chun was going to have to meet these conditions. One of them was that the KCIA would have to get out of the business of dealing directly with Washington. Not only dealing with the emigre South Korean community in semi-covert or clandestine ways, but in trying to run a separate foreign policy with the US CIA in Langley. Chun reportedly said, "OKAY, that's fine with me," according to the Foreign Minister and which "Dixie" recounted to me. Chun is reported to have told the Foreign Minister: "The KCIA only screws it up anyway." So that was not such a major problem in my years. I think it was a conscious decision by Chun to make sure that it would not be a problem.

Q: There is this habit of thinking of the US CIA as being "too closely in bed" with the KCIA. At one point, of course, Richard Lilley had been the Chief of Station in Seoul.

DUNLOP: So had Don Gregg, who had preceded him in that position.

Q: When you were in Seoul, were you disturbed by this relationship between our CIA and the KCIA? How did you feel about it?

DUNLOP: I had mixed emotions about it. I was sorry to see Ambassador "Dixie" Walker leave South Korea, because he was a very nice man and a good Ambassador. When you get a new man at the helm, like Jim Lilley, you never quite know what direction he's going to want to take the "ship of state" and whether he will like the crew that he is going to inherit. However, that would have been true of any new Ambassador. Other than the case of Richard Helms as Ambassador to Iran, this was the first time that I was aware of a former CIA person appointed Ambassador. There may have been some other such examples, but I was not aware of them. I wondered about

that. Some of the junior Political Officers seemed to have a rather acute concern about this. I remember telling them: "Look, let the man stand on his own merits. If he does the job he's supposed to do, we'll have no concern. If he doesn't do the job, I'll bet that it's not because he's a former CIA Chief of Station. It'll be because he doesn't know how to do his job. Then we'll have to help him do his job. Try not to approach him and what he does through this prism of his once having been the Chief of Station here."

I really think that the relationship between the US and South Korea was not affected by that. Ambassador Jim Lilley is an effective man and administrator. I think that he knew that if he was going to run the Embassy efficiently, he would have to be impartial, so to speak, and not show the CIA Station undue favor or allow it to exercise undue influence in the decision making process. He was going to have to treat the CIA Station as it ought to be treated. He did this, as far as I know. During my time in South Korea from 1983 to 1987 we had two good CIA Chiefs of Station. They also knew how to play that particular kind of bureaucratic game to the benefit of the operation of the US Mission as a whole.

When Don Gregg was being briefed to replace Jim Lilley as Ambassador to South Korea, I was in my last months in Washington as Country Director of Korean Affairs. Don had office space in my office. We helped him through various things, which you always have to do with Ambassadors. Don had been Chief of Station in Seoul when Kim Dae Jung had been kidnaped in Japan by the KCIA, back in the 1970's. Phil Habib was the Ambassador to South Korea at the time. Under Phil's direction a major effort was mounted to get the KCIA to let Kim Dae Jung go, or at least to get him back to South Korea alive. I think that I said that Kim Dae Jung wrote Don Gregg a letter thanking him for his efforts. Kim Dae Jung told Don Gregg he could have that letter published if he wanted to. This was one of the nicer things that Kim Dae Jung ever did. That was when Gregg was encountering some really vicious opposition to his appointment. I give Kim credit for that. It was a very nice, decent letter. Kim Dae Jung had much to thank the Americans for, and this incident is very high on my list of those things.

Q: One last question about your time in South Korea. Did the American missionaries play any role in our relations with South Korea? I go back to my time in South Korea in the 1970's when the missionaries were very much tied up with human rights issues.

DUNLOP: Yes, the American missionaries played a significant role in our relations with South Korea. There was a man named Ed Poitras there. He was an intense, middle-aged man who took everything seriously. There were always stories of one kind or another about coercion, threatened coercion, or surveillance. Ed Poitras was very outspoken. Then these allegations began to come very close to him. While I don't think that he was ever called in by the police for interrogation or anything like that, he would come to the Embassy and also write back to his friends in the United States about these incidents. He never felt that we in the Embassy were doing enough on such matters. I don't think that we could ever have satisfied Ed Poitras on those issues. He was in touch with a lot of people in the US He was an earnest, sincere, but rather narrowly focused person. We saw a lot of him and people like him. At one point we set up a breakfast to talk things over. That was useful.

There was also a "professional Korean Left" in Washington. There was a group of people in

Washington who made a career out of following Korean events and criticizing the US Government for what it was or was not doing about them. The other members of the "Korean Left" went back to Washington on the plane with Congressmen Torricelli and Feighan. When you have a man like Poitras in South Korea reporting these "dire" developments and saying that the Embassy, as usual, is "insensitive" to them, this tended to complicate the work of the Embassy in Seoul to some extent. However, as a significant influence, in the sense of the "China Lobby" of the 1940's and 1950's, which, to some degree, was motivated by former missionaries in China, I don't think that the missionaries in Korea made much of an impact on our policies toward South Korea. We tried to be courteous and cooperative with the missionaries in Korea, and their relationships with the Embassy in Seoul seemed to improve a bit, while I was there. I don't think that this was necessarily because of anything we did differently. Maybe it was just that the personalities involved changed to some extent. We had good relations with most of them. Sometimes, as with Ed Poitras, there were considerable friction in dealing with them.

The missionary community is very well established in South Korea. They first arrived in the 1880's, mostly Presbyterians and Methodists. Now, of course, you have missionaries from across the Christian spectrum. There are a couple of long established families, like the Underwood family, who are now in their fourth or fifth generation, living in South Korea. They do useful things. One Underwood is the head of the Seoul Foreign School, and his brother does something else, I forget what.

Q: Well, Harry, let's stop at this point. We'll pick it up the next time when you went back to Washington. You left Seoul in July, 1987, to become Country Director for Korea in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Department of State. You were there for how long?

DUNLOP: For two years, until August, 1989.

Q: So, Harry, you left Korea but only in the territorial sense. When did you return to Washington?

DUNLOP: I returned in July, 1987. I replaced David Blakemore, whom, in fact, I had succeeded in Seoul as Political Counselor. So I succeeded him twice in a row. The Korean country desk in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs was always a good job. It was a pretty high profile job because South Korea was an important country, with US troops stationed there, and a lot of political interest too.

Q: When you say "the Korea desk," did that include North Korea?

DUNLOP: Yes. We had an officer assigned whose sole responsibility was North Korea. He reported through me to the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. We covered both North and South Korea. That was another reason why this assignment was an important responsibility because of the threat from North Korea, which I thought then and now was real. I still think today that the threat of renewed hostilities on the Korean peninsula is real. My boss was Bill Clark, a very competent Foreign Service Officer and senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. As it turned out, I did not get along with him very well. However, I had a lot of respect for his skills.

Q: When I was in South Korea, Bill Clark had been Political Counselor in Seoul.

DUNLOP: Yes. Bill was Political Counselor. At another time and in another context he had another connection with Korea. As I said, he was the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. At that time the occupant of that position had policy and operational responsibilities for China, Korea, and Japan. He was a very busy man.

At first we worked well together. In fact, I think that we always worked well together. However, there were personal conflicts which I do not wish to go into.

Q: Personalities aside, I think that it is interesting for people who look at this interview to be aware of this relationship. Did your differences with Bill Clark involve a judgment problem?

DUNLOP: We really did not have policy differences. Well, there was one area which I will get into and where I will talk about our differences. We produced a "white paper" on the Kwangju situation in South Korea. This referred to the so-called "Kwangju incident" of 1980, involving the massacre of several hundred South Koreans in the opposition to the then government, that of Chun Doo Hwan.

I had some friction with Bill Clark, not over what the "white paper" was to say but how hard to push to get it through the Washington bureaucracy. Quite frankly, this difference, from my point of view, turned on the fact that Bill was "angling" for the position of Ambassador to India. A new administration, that of President Bush, was in office, and there were a lot of unknown factors on the Seventh Floor of the Department of State where the offices of the Secretary of State and his principal assistants are located. He didn't want to stick his neck out. I thought that he had to, under the circumstances. I thought that he had no option to doing that. I'll talk about that at some length later on, because the Kwangju incident and the preparation of this "white paper" was a considerable part of what I did while I was Country Director for Korea.

Q: To start off, then, let's talk about North Korea first. The period that we're talking about is eight or nine years ago. Was there a feeling then, as there certainly is now, that North Korea, although it had a large army, was beginning to fall apart, as far as its military capability and everything else were concerned? By this time the Soviet Union was no longer its major patron, and North Korea really didn't have anywhere to go to obtain sophisticated military weapons. How did we feel about North Korea at this time?

DUNLOP: My feeling was evidently very different from those who now work on North Korea in the Department of State. I think that there is now a feeling that changes are being forced on North Korea. Whether the North Koreans like it or not, they are going to be easier to live with, and we can help that process along. This is not a view which I share. I will go into why I don't share this view. I feel that things have not changed very much in North Korea. I think that our intelligence on that country is so bad, while their military capabilities are so great that I am very leery about our current policy toward North Korea. To use a scare word, it is pretty close to appeasement in my view. I am not a fan of that type of approach.

When I came back to Washington in July, 1987, I had several objectives in mind. I had thought them through and may even have made a list, though I didn't hang it over my desk. Achieving these objectives was in addition to all of the routine, day in and day out things at work. I knew what I wanted to accomplish in specific terms. I felt that there was a lack of understanding of the North Korean situation. I believed that there was a developing nuclear capability in North Korea. It did not already exist at that time, but I felt that it was moving fairly quickly and was aimed at us. I felt that this developing, nuclear capability could change some of the thinking in Pyongyang, the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea [DPRK], about the risks of going to war. This bothered me a great deal.

Information was coming into the US intelligence system in 1987 of a very scary nature. We were getting overhead photography of a facility in North Korea of which we had been aware for a long time. We had long considered that it was concerned with low level research on nuclear matters. All of a sudden, it began to look very ominous. We could tell from the overhead photography that things were going on at that facility which, we could tell, could be directly related to nuclear weapons research. I figured that, given what we knew about North Korea, this almost certainly involved the development of nuclear weapons.

However, there was no consensus in the intelligence community that North Korea had a nuclear weapons program, let alone what level it had reached. There were differing views. The majority view was more like mine than not. There were some strong dissenters, particularly over in what had been the Atomic Energy Commission and by now was the Department of Energy. The Department of Energy has a responsibility for making a significant input into assessing the levels of nuclear research and development around the world. Their view of North Korea was much more "benign" than that of the rest of the intelligence community.

Q: As you got further into this matter, what was behind this view of the Department of Energy? Were they looking more or less purely at the scientific aspect?

DUNLOP: Yes.

Q: Did the Department of Energy seem to understand what made the North Koreans go?

DUNLOP: Later in my Washington tour I had an opportunity to work on a military estimate of North Korea. We can talk about that. I went over to work at the National Intelligence Council after my tour on the Korean desk. I think that one of the reasons that I was accepted there was that they had two or three intelligence estimates that they were having some trouble with. They were looking for someone with expertise on these matters who could help them with these estimates. I think that I was able to help them.

However, it wasn't until 1990, three years after I returned to Washington, that we had a consensus in the US intelligence community that there was a nuclear weapons development program going on right then in North Korea. There was a difference on how far it had progressed and how long it would be before the North Koreans had a nuclear device that could be exploded. The compromise position reached within the US Government, in the way that such matters are usually handled, was that the North Koreans would probably have the capability to explode a

nuclear device by 1995. I felt that they almost had such a capability in 1990 or, at least, would probably have it well before 1995. However, to get the intelligence estimate through the Washington bureaucracy, we had to make compromises, and we "footnoted" that compromise, that is, dissented.

Q: By "footnoting" you meant to say that the Department of State felt that North Korea would have nuclear weapons sooner, rather than later.

DUNLOP: Yes, or something like that. I can talk about the whole, estimative process, as I saw it unfold.

Q: Let's continue on the nuclear weapons question concerning North Korea. Then let's talk about other aspects of North Korea and then go on to South Korea.

DUNLOP: From the fall of 1989 to December 1990, or more than one year, I was assigned to the National Intelligence Council [NIC], which worked for the Director of Central Intelligence in the capacity which he has of overseeing the entire, intelligence operations of the US Government. There were two intelligence estimates being finalized at this time. I was not there for the beginning of this process. I would say that I entered on my duties with the NIC about half way through the drafting process on these two estimates.

The two estimates had been "hung up," partly because there had been personnel changes, partly because there were substantive disagreements over nuclear matters, and perhaps other aspects. I was told to get these two estimates off dead center and to take over responsibility for pushing and goading them through the process. I was pleased to do this.

Both of these intelligence estimates were on the military side, for which, perhaps, I had some relevant experience. I had watched the situation in North Korea unfold and had been responsible for political and, to some extent, certain military activities within the Embassy in Seoul, below the Ambassadorial level. I knew the American military leaders in South Korea quite well and had always been interested in and paid a lot of attention to military issues. So I didn't feel too disadvantaged in this connection.

The two intelligence estimates re Korea fit into each other in a hand in glove way. One concerned the military balance on the Korean peninsula. This is the kind of thing that the intelligence community produces in areas of conflict around the world, usually with the Americans on one side and the "bad guys," real or potential, on the other. Sometimes estimates of this kind concern two or three parties in which we are not directly involved. Of course, in the case of Korea, we were very much involved. This estimate was intended to produce a nice piece of paper with a blue cover on it which policymakers could look at when they were concerned about the security of Northeast Asia. They could see what the best estimate was of the relative strengths of the opposing forces deployed North and South of the 38th parallel.

Along with that and closely related to it was a separate intelligence estimate on "surprise attack" by North Korea on South Korea. One of the great, and perhaps overriding, concerns of military commanders in South Korea has been the geography of the Korean peninsula, which places

Seoul and about 15 million of the 45 million or so South Koreans, that is, about one-third of the population of the country, within artillery range of North Korea. Certainly, within tactical rocket range of North Korea. In other words, about 40 km from North Korea. This is about as far as Dulles Airport is from the White House in the District of Columbia. This situation presents a very real military problem to us and the South Koreans. There is almost literally no real estate to trade for time. Everything that we plan on and all of our force dispositions in the Korean peninsula are predicated on the assumption that we are not going to initiate a war and that we're not going to attack the North Koreans first. We have to be prepared for the North Koreans to initiate hostilities.

Q: This really focuses the mind. For every one of us who served in South Korea this is the overriding consideration. "Sudden noises at dawn" are a particular matter of concern.

DUNLOP: Ever since 1976, and I think that there is a reason for choosing 1976, we have been aware of a redeployment and a changing military command structure in North Korea which places their main punch and power increasingly close to the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone which separates North and South Korea]. By 1987, when I arrived back in Washington, and by 1990, when I became involved in this matter of intelligence estimates, the North Koreans had continued this process of redeployment of their forces, to the point where the best estimate was that, at most, we would probably have only between 18 and 36 hours advance notice of an armed attack by North Korea on South Korea. In fact, it was believed that we might be "lucky" to have 18 hours advance notice. In military terms that is almost nothing. It is like the blink of an eye.

One would hope that things would happen in the weeks and months preceding a possible North Korean attack that would sharpen our senses and make us more wary of developments of a changing political nature and perhaps developments internally in North or South Korea or in the world outside that would make us more and more expectant of an attack. However, perhaps not.

Anyway, this was an important intelligence estimate, as was the strategic balance estimate. We put the two estimates together, and I was quite pleased with the final product. The nuclear chapter of the military estimate still reflected a compromise between different positions. There was a consensus that the North Koreans were working on a nuclear weapons program. On almost the very day that we published this intelligence estimate, which is no reflection on the American intelligence community, we received new evidence of North Korean nuclear weapons development activity. This new evidence put the North Koreans about one year ahead of what even the more pessimistic people had thought. The evidence was that the North Koreans were beginning to test the conventional explosives that you need to surround a nuclear core to optimize the efficiency of the nuclear explosion.

Q: These indications could be identified by people who know what they are talking about.

DUNLOP: Well, some of the testing has to be done, or at least it is much cheaper to do it, in the open. If you try to contain these explosions underground, it becomes much more complex to get the necessary data. What you want is to collect the data in a "real world" environment. Ideally, that would involve a rocket descending on Seoul. So you don't want to have anything in a contained room. You could do it in a contained room, and the North Koreans probably have done

it in a contained room.

We actually saw photographs of truck trailers with the electronic gear that would provide the analytical component of these tests. We also saw the craters following the explosions. That moved the timing of the whole program up, so I was really very pleased that we had developed a consensus. I was not totally satisfied that it was as accurate as I would have liked it to be or that it reflected my own views as much as I would want. However, it was a lot better than we had before.

I think that there were two reasons why this consensus was slow in developing. It seemed to me that the more scientific you are, and, of course, the Department of Energy [DOE] people are the real scientific experts in this matter, the more "culture centric" they are in looking at other people's nuclear programs. Because WE had done things in a certain way, they really didn't think that other people, if they were smart, would try any other way. We always attach enormous importance to safety in our handling of nuclear materials. These scientists just couldn't conceive of a government that would assign people to work on a program whose deaths were absolutely certain after a given period of time. I personally had no difficulty in believing that the North Koreans would do that.

There was an employee of the Department of Energy who came in to lecture in a little program which I was very glad to take. This was called a "Non-Proliferation Seminar," but it was really a seminar about how you make nuclear weapons and, to some degree, how you detect the making of such weapons. The Department of Energy runs this seminar for the rest of the US Government. I had some time available while I waited for additional security clearances before I went out to CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] headquarters in the fall of 1989. I was also allowed to visit Los Alamos, NM, and to the nuclear testing site in Nevada. It was an interesting program, well worth taking.

Anyway, this DOE employee came in to give us a lecture. He was introduced as a man who had been fired from US Government employment in 1978 because he told President Jimmy Carter what Carter didn't want to hear. His story was that he had been a senior civil servant in the Department of Energy, very much involved in the effort to assess the threat of nuclear proliferation and figure out ways to hold it down. President Carter had come in with a sweeping program that he had promised the American people would actually work. This involved limiting the export of nuclear technology and getting other countries to cooperate in this connection. President Carter was convinced that we could "put the clamps down" to a degree that no other country could carry on a nuclear program, if every other country would just do what Jimmy Carter wanted them to do, involving the implementation of very stringent export controls.

This DOE employee thought that this idea was nonsense. He apparently wrote a memorandum, which he held up and showed to us. It described how to make a "quick and dirty nuclear bomb," with easily available, neighborhood resources. He circulated this memorandum around the government. According to this DOE employee, the memorandum came to the disapproving attention of somebody in the Carter administration and so he got into trouble and quit his job or was fired.

His story was, and the way he read it to us from the memorandum, that the machine tools to handle nuclear material were the same required to make an automobile. They have to be adapted to some extent, but they are no more complicated than that. To shield the operation, all you need is a big, swimming pool. In other words, you have to work under water. There are remote controlled tools for working under water. Some people have to go into that water, and those people will eventually or probably die from nuclear radiation. They will probably absorb a sufficiently large nuclear dose that they will become fatally ill after 10 or 20 years or so. However, if you are willing to send people into the water, working with these robotic tools, you can do the work necessary to build a crude but deliverable nuclear weapon that will go off with a very loud bang. He said that it is not all that difficult to extract weapons-grade uranium or plutonium from material assembled for research on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. He didn't talk about how the South Africans and Israelis had done this. However, they did it, and I thought then and now that the North Koreans could develop that capability.

That worried me a lot. I think that was one of the reasons why the American scientific community was a little slow to accept the prospect that the North Koreans could develop nuclear weapons. The risks that the North Korean Government would be willing to take and the short cuts that it would be willing to try to take would be unacceptable in a sophisticated, scientific environment like ours, where they wouldn't do it. So our scientists dismissed the possibility that others might do so.

Q: I'm not sure of the timing. However, at somewhat the same time Iraq was developing an atomic bomb or nuclear capabilities. The Israelis launched a "preemptive strike" on the Iraqi nuclear "research" facility. I'm sure that you can probably figure out the timing, but that must have been around 1982, or something like that. Anyway, as the North Korean nuclear program developed, it's not just that the United States needed to get its "act" together. It was also a matter for the South Koreans to consider. What did they do about this?

DUNLOP: One of the things that bothered me a great deal about the slowness of our preparing these intelligence estimates was that, because of the way that our intelligence systems are integrated, the South Koreans were getting a lot of the raw data on the North Korean program, although what they obtained had not been as thoroughly analyzed as the material we had. The South Koreans kept coming to us and saying, "What do you think about that?" We would say that we did not know what to think about it. I think that attitude began to generate some significant degree of suspicion on the part of the South Koreans, that we were deliberately hiding from them things that we didn't want them to know. There is enough potential for friction in our relationship with South Korea, anyway, to allow such suspicions to grow. As someone responsible, at least at one level, for the political relationship with South Korea, I felt that was a bad development from that point of view alone. We not only had to have a clear understanding of what was going on in North Korea. We had to make an assessment and share it with the South Koreans.

We didn't reach a consensus in the intelligence community on the North Korean nuclear program until 1989. Actually, the intelligence estimates were not circulated within the US Government until 1990. I was under the impression that we had such a consensus in 1989. In fact, we didn't have an estimate, but I thought that we had an agreement on the general situation.

Because of this concern of mine, and I think that Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Bill Clark shared it as well, we then persuaded the intelligence officers to brief the South Koreans on the North Korean program. This position we had then was less than a top level, intelligence assessment, but it was an agreed, inter-agency position. The team that was to brief the South Koreans left Washington for Seoul in the spring of 1989, just before I left the Korean desk. I thought that was a great success. However, when I got over to the National Intelligence Council at CIA, about five months later, I found that the DOE had "backed off" from the statement and was no longer prepared to support it. So we had to go back and include this statement in the intelligence estimate.

The South Koreans actually knew what we were going to say before we said it. However, I thought that the general line contained in this briefing at least put us in a more acceptable position in terms of the South Koreans than was previously the case. Getting a briefing team to go over to review the matter with the South Koreans was one of the objectives which I had in mind when I returned to the Korean desk in Washington. I wanted to see if we could not push the intelligence community into an agreed position that would reflect the danger of a North Korean nuclear weapons development program which I feared was emerging.

I said earlier that I thought that there were two reasons why we were so slow to develop a consensus on the state of the North Korean nuclear weapons development program. One reason was this scientific reluctance to accept that any other country would develop nuclear weapons in any way other than we had done. The other was a more generalized reason, perhaps based on a misapprehension. I think that this attitude still exists and is not confined to any particular part of the US Government. I know some senior military officers who feel this way, or who don't see it the way that I do. I know some policy people who don't agree with me, either. These people don't see why the North Koreans would want a nuclear weapons program. They say: "Why would they want it? Don't they know that if they set off one bomb, they are going to be 'fried'? Why should they spend all of this time and effort?"

The reason that the North Koreans have, and it is a compelling reason, is that they want nuclear weapons so that we won't use our nuclear weapons against them. They want to neutralize the advantage they consider the South Koreans have in the form of the US as an atomic ally. They want to hold South Korea "hostage" to their nuclear weapons. Therefore, they are thinking of war on the Korean peninsula would be a war using conventional i. e., non nuclear weapons. The North Koreans think that they can win such a war with conventional weapons.

Some people may ask, "How can they think that they can win such a war?" Well, the North Koreans have 1.0 million men under arms. South Korea has 350,000 men under arms. Here is where I got a lot of blank stares and "glazed over" eyes from American military people. The North Koreans could take Seoul and then say, "Let's talk about it. We don't want any more fighting. We don't want any more killing. Of course, if you're going to fight, here are 15 million hostages whom we have in the Seoul area." Some of our military say, "No, the North Koreans have to get to Pusan first. They'll bypass Seoul. Our forces are sufficiently strong that they won't put the effort into taking Seoul. They'll go down and try to take Pusan. They didn't get Pusan in 1950, and that killed them." Well, that might be true if the North Koreans want to drive us into

the Yellow Sea. But what about seeing us walk off the Korean peninsula, with our heads hanging? I'm not saying that's a given or would necessarily be the North Korean war plan. However, by God, if I were in North Korea's position, that's the way that I would be thinking. Very few people think that is what the North Koreans will do. However, it seems to me that it would be absolutely essential for the North Koreans, from their point of view, to be able to say to us as their armies approach Seoul "Don't use nuclear weapons against us, because we have nuclear weapons, too."

Q: The Koreans are not a docile people. All of us who know them, in fact, know that their toughness is one of the things that we admire about them. You might think of Syngman Rhee letting the North Korean prisoners of war go in 1953 and so forth. Was there concern that the South Koreans might say: "Well, we don't know what the Americans think about this, but we know what we have to do." We're talking about the possibility that the South Koreans might launch a preemptive strike against North Korean nuclear facilities.

DUNLOP: As the Israelis did attack the Iraqi nuclear facility, a place called, I think, Osiraq. The possibility that the South Koreans might slip the leash and attack North Korea has been a fundamental concern in our relationship with South Korea for a long time. It goes back to the days when Syngman Rhee did everything that he could think of to prevent the US from signing the armistice agreement in Korea in 1953. This included releasing the North Korean prisoners of war which he felt was something that he could do which might disrupt the whole process of bringing a negotiated end to the Korean War. And perhaps it came pretty close to doing just that.

In December, 1967, North Korean saboteurs attacked the "Blue House," the residence of the President of the Republic of Korea. President Park Chung Hee was almost killed on this occasion. Park Chung Hee's wife was assassinated by North Korean agents while sitting in a theater next to her husband in downtown Seoul. The North Korean agent missed Park Chung Hee but hit his wife. These were all times of great tension. It was perhaps not as serious as all of those, but we had those concerns after the bombing incident at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon, although that may not have been as serious a crisis. In 1983 Ambassador "Dixie" Walker had a letter to take in to President Chun after the Rangoon bombing, which said: "Let's not do anything rash." In fact, Chun was nowhere close to doing anything like that. Here was a man who had every reason to be enraged, but held himself and others in check.

I think that one of the reasons that South Korea has never initiated an attack against North Korea is that the South Koreans realize that if they didn't first get our approval, our response would be uncertain. However, they didn't consult us in advance about the Kwangju incident, that was internal -- nothing to do with the North. They took South Korean forces out from under the Combined Forces Command without prior agreement with the US and used them to suppress what they called a revolt in Kwangju. This is one example where the South Koreans took unilateral action, knowing that it would really anger the United States. So the South Koreans have done a few things in the past, but starting the Korean War again in a way that would risk the American commitment to them is something which I don't think they would consider doing. Hopefully, they will never do that.

I would like to think that our policy toward North Korea now, which is "talk, talk, bribe, bribe,"

will work. I have grave doubts about this but I'm not in a position to make a judgment on this. I don't read any of the official papers and I don't associate with any of the Americans who are involved in current policy matters. Many of the Americans concerned with policy toward North Korea are good friends of mine, despite the fact that I disagree so profoundly with them. I find it painful to argue with them and I've quit arguing with them. We are talking about our policy in 1996 toward North Korea, of course.

Q: With further regard to North Korea, you mentioned that in 1976 there was a change there. What sort of developments have you seen over time in North Korea?

DUNLOP: Let me say what I think is the case. I think that the historical record will back me up on this. To some degree, this is my own interpretation of the record, and I'm not sure that you could document this. There was a period between 1975 and 1976, after the American collapse in Vietnam, which the South Koreans witnessed from up close. The South Koreans had grave doubts about the ability of the Americans to sustain our commitments around the world.

During this 1975-1976 period a series of talks was opened between North and South Korea. We were not included in them, though these talks took place with our knowledge and approval. I'm not sure that we were aware of every contact that took place, but the South Koreans basically kept us pretty well informed. There were many such talks, well over a hundred. I think that there was serious thought, in the mind of Park Chung Hee, who was no fool, that if the American commitment was in question, he wanted at least to explore the possibility of some easing of the tension between North and South Korea.

One of the things which, I think, Americans who have dealt with Koreans must try very hard to understand is the concept of Korean ethnicity to Koreans and how painful the division on the Korean peninsula really is. The one propaganda "cut" which the North makes against the South which always has the capacity to inflict pain in the South is: "We don't have any occupation Army in North Korea. We don't have any places where our women's bodies are being abused by savage barbarians. We don't have any Russian officer commanding North Korean troops. We are Koreans. True Koreans would never allow that to happen. Obviously, you people in South Korea aren't really true Koreans." That kind of charge burns like a red hot poker. No less with Park Chung Hee than with any other South Korean.

I think that in 1975 Park Chung Hee felt that the possibility of some kind of improvement in relations between South and North Korea was at least worth exploring, especially as he looked on the Americans in that particular time frame as having demonstrated their unreliability as an ally to South Vietnam. That was when Park Chung Hee also began what he hoped would be a clandestine nuclear weapons research program in South Korea itself. We found out about this clandestine nuclear weapons research program afterwards and we landed on him very hard.

These were important events. Here was Park Chung Hee looking at the Americans with a much less confident eye, impelled, as Koreans are, to think about the reunification of Korea, which was a high, high objective of both North and South Korea. So Park began on a nuclear weapons program of his own and also started talks with the North Koreans. He sent the head of the KCIA, a man named Yi Hoo Rak to Pyongyang to talk to Kim Il Song, the North Korean leader. One of

the preconditions for these talks was that Kim Il Song had to admit that he had tried to kill Park Chung Hee and say that he was sorry for this. So Korean "face" would be saved.

Yi Hoo Rak went to Pyongyang and had a long meeting with Kim Il Song. Soon after the meeting began, Kim Il Song told him, "You can leave now." So Yi Hoo Rak went down the hall to the elevator and was literally pressing the elevator button. At least this is the way that Yi Hoo Rak described it later to the Americans. Then Kim Il Song came out of his office and said to Yi Hoo Rak, "I've had second thoughts. Come back here." Kim Il Song said, "You know, that event the attempted assassination of Park Chung Hee was regrettable. Please tell your President that I said it was regrettable." Now that's not exactly a heartfelt apology, but it was enough to keep the talks going.

However, the talks ultimately failed, in 1976. I don't think that this failure was due to Park Chung Hee's being unwilling to go whatever mile was necessary to keep them going. I think that what happened in North Korea was a combination of things, which included the emergence of Kim Jong Pil, the son and prelate successor to Kim Il Song. Kim Jong Il was one of a number of possible successors. I think that you will see at this point how Kim Jong Il began to be treated in North Korea. They began to use "hagiographic" names...

Q: Like "Beloved Leader."

DUNLOP: Kim Jong Il was referred to as "Dear Leader." Kim Il Song was referred to as "Beloved Leader." I used to know these names well, but I am not sure how well I know them now. Kim Jong Il was given some responsibility over defense. I believe that Kim Jong Il's influence was negative. I believe that Kim Jong Il "spiked" whatever thoughts there were in the North Korean hierarchy about exploring the possibility of a real "modus vivendi" with Park Chung Hee on the Korean Peninsula. He put a spoke in the wheel, or whatever the word is.

Also in 1976 the North Koreans began a redeployment of their armed forces toward the border with South Korea. They had always had a formidable military capability up next to the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone], but before 1976 they also had significant elements of their military forces, particularly their armor, dispersed around North Korea.

In addition, they began a process of moving their military forces South and toward the DMZ digging them into tunnels. They were and are the biggest tunnel diggers in the whole universe. Certainly in the world, and probably in the universe. The North Koreans have spent an enormous amount of energy in putting military installations into the rock underneath the mountains down near the DMZ. This is one of the reasons that we are so concerned about this business of surprise attack, because we can't see what is going on as well as we would like to. Between 1976 and 1987 an enormous amount of redeployment of North Korean military forces took place.

We also acquired and began to use much more sophisticated means of collecting intelligence. I refer in particular to enhanced satellite photography. As I've said before, our intelligence on North Korea has been terrible. It's been terrible from the point of view of intelligence collected by agents. Indeed, I think that I can make the statement here that it is almost non-existent. I know of no useful "human intelligence" (humint) source that either the South Koreans or we have had,

inside North Korea, giving us intelligence based on what a human being sees and observes. If we had such intelligence sources, I was not aware of them. And I think that I would have been aware of them. Certainly, when I worked out at CIA headquarters in Langley, I thought that I had access to any intelligence that anyone could have. It just wasn't there, as far as I was aware.

What we do have is overhead photography. We have photography produced by U-2 and SR-71 aircraft, and now we have satellite photography. That kind of photography does give us some idea of what this tunnel construction by the North Koreans has been. Once the tunnels are completed and the "blast doors" are in place and the tanks rumble in there, we don't know much about them. However, that all began in about 1976. Considering the general poverty of the North Korean economy and the resources available, this tunnel building activity continued at a remarkable pace.

I think that 1976 was kind of a watershed. The North Koreans turned from exploring the possibility of an accommodation with South Korea, under Kim Il Song's direction, toward preparing for Armageddon under the influence of Kim Song Il, in a way that they had not previously done. The nuclear weapons development program is certainly part of this effort. However, I note here that North Korea joined the NPT [Non Proliferation Treaty] in 1986. I was assigned to the Embassy in Seoul at the time. We all felt, "Good heavens! What a great idea!"

The NPT is a treaty signed by or adhered to by a very large number of countries. Countries which subscribe to it promise that they will not develop nuclear weapons and that they will allow the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA, a UN specialized agency with its headquarters in Vienna], which has very competent people, to inspect their nuclear facilities, if any. A signatory country is required to declare its nuclear facilities and anything to do with a nuclear program, including those for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. These facilities must be declared to the IAEA and then its inspectors must be allowed to visit them. When North Korea acceded the non-proliferation treaty in 1986, it looked like a possible "breakthrough" in relations. In the Embassy in Seoul we thought that maybe we could lay to rest any concern about North Korea's developing nuclear weapons. Now, in retrospect I believe that they joined the non-proliferation treaty precisely to mask their nuclear program, not to reveal what it was. They have successfully done that, so far.

The North Koreans create all kinds of bureaucratic delays in implementing the non-proliferation treaty, but they can always say that they have adhered to it. They raise small points like, "This is not quite right, and that is not quite right." They say to the UN inspectors, "Oh, you're an inspector? Who are these inspectors?"

So North Korea, from my standpoint, remains a very, very dangerous tinderbox. At least some people in North Korea might be willing to resume the Korean War under certain circumstances. I don't believe that trying to buy them off will work.

Q: To continue with this discussion of North Korea, during the time that you were Country Director for Korea, how did you view the role of the Soviet Union and of the People's Republic of China?

DUNLOP: Give Deputy Assistant Secretary Bill Clark significant credit for this. Bill Clark came out to South Korea in 1987 in his capacity as Deputy Assistant Secretary. Among other things he did during this visit, he told me that he would like me to be Country Director for Korea. However, he wanted to know whether I would support an initiative that was very much in his mind and he didn't know whether I would support it. Personally, I'm a "hawk" and I come across as a "hawk" on matters like North Korea. I think that is pretty evident from this interview. Bill Clark wanted to start political talks with North Korea. He wanted to know that his Country Director for Korea was "on board" for this initiative. I guess that he made support for this a "condition of employment." Once he explained this initiative to me, I said that I would support it. I actually thought that it was a worthwhile initiative.

We started these talks. We had to get them started in a way which would not reinforce the always present suspicion on the South Korean side. These were going to be bilateral US-North Korean talks to start with. The idea was that they would become "Four Power Talks" at some point, with the addition of South Korea and China. Perhaps eventually Six-Power talks, adding the USSR and Japan, to ratify a settlement of security issues all over N.E. Asia. At least, this was my vision. The North Koreans were agreeable to the initial proposal for talks, which we made to them through the Chinese. We asked the North Koreans if they would participate in these talks. After we first approached the Chinese, they said that they would be happy to be "facilitators" in these conversations between the US and North Korea if they would initially take place in Beijing.

I took a "fun trip," the only time that I've gone all the way around the world. I went to Moscow and Beijing to carry this message as to what we wanted to do and to explain it to our Embassies in those two capitals, and, to the degree possible, also to the Soviets and to the Chinese.

Q: By the way, what about the South Koreans? Were they informed?

DUNLOP: They were informed at every stage. This was my precondition to taking the job as Country Director for Korean Affairs in the Department of State. If Bill Clark had his precondition -- my support for direct talks with North Korea -- I had mine. No going behind the backs of the South Koreans. I told Bill Clark that I would be prepared to be the "point man" as far as the Department was concerned. And, of course, our Ambassador to South Korea would always have to be at least as well informed as we were. We would back him on whatever he saw fit to do in Seoul.

The reaction of the South Koreans was always a major concern. In fact, if there had ever been any thought about doing or suggesting this in the past, it probably foundered on the feeling that this would not be acceptable, as far as the South Koreans were concerned. Keep in mind that this was a time of great political change in Seoul. This is the time just before President Chun stepped down from office, which we had always hoped and prayed he would do. We were making a major effort in that connection. I think that we've already talked about the tensions that arose in Seoul, going so far as martial law almost being declared, and then Chun backed off. There was a lot of evidence that the political system in South Korea was going to modernize. In addition to this was the fact that the new President, No Tae Woo, was an unknown quantity and might get "cold feet" on this initiative at the last minute. However, too many South Koreans wanted a

change in the political system.

I think that we were favored by that change in the South Korean political system as we moved very cautiously into these talks with North Korea. The successor to Chun was No Tae Woo. While he was a military officer by background, with some dark and shady things in his past, nevertheless he was a pretty sophisticated and cosmopolitan Korean. He had the primary organizing responsibility for the Seoul Olympics, which still lay a little bit ahead of us at this point. However, No Tae Woo was a man who was sophisticated and accessible to dialogue.

Chun was plenty smart but was a person with a rather narrow focus. His experience with the world outside South Korea was very limited. If he had been dictator and "generalissimo" throughout this process, it might not have gone as smoothly as it did.

Anyhow, I took this trip around the world in February, 1988. I flew to Yugoslavia, Hungary, and then to Moscow. Of course, the American Embassy in each locale set up my program, so that we had talks with the "right" folks. Then I went on to Beijing, where I had very interesting talks there with the "senior Chinese official handling North Korean affairs," at least as the American Embassy in Beijing described him. His name was Tao Bing Hwei. I found a lot of receptivity in Moscow to the idea of direct US talks with the North Koreans. This kind of surprised me. The Soviet officials I talked to said: "You mean that you people are going to do that?" This was as if to say, "How come you got so smart so late?" These Soviet officials were very supportive of the idea, and I don't have any doubt that they were sincere in this respect. The Soviet officials also said: "Look, we don't talk very much to the North Koreans. We'll give this process our blessing, if you want to put it in those terms, but don't expect us to be very influential with Pyongyang." I think that they were being honest in this respect.

This was not the attitude in Beijing. As I left Beijing, I thought to myself: "Did I just get 'stiffed,' as I thought?" I think that we had been "stiffed."

Q: When you say "stiffed," what do you mean?

DUNLOP: They told us that they were supportive of the idea of direct US talks with North Korea. Again, there was some of this attitude that it had taken us a long time to "get smart," but "better late than never." The Chinese facilitated the mechanics of the talks. It was no big deal for them. We didn't want to have the talks in our Embassy or in the North Korean Embassy, for obvious reasons. We didn't want the North Koreans "bugging" us. Of course, wherever we went in Beijing, the Chinese were going to "bug" the talks. We accepted that. We thought that it would be fine for the Chinese to have access to pretty much everything going on in these talks. They gave us space in a conference room in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. I've forgotten exactly how it was arranged. They gave us interpreter facilities and so forth.

Q: As you were making this trip, with the blessing of Deputy Assistant Secretary Bill Clark, we weren't only just saying, "We're going to talk with the North Koreans." What were we looking for?

DUNLOP: What we told the Russians and the Chinese was the absolute truth as to what we

wanted to do. We wanted to establish a political channel of communications with North Korea, for the first time since 1953. It was clear that Kim Il Song, the North Korean leader, wasn't going to live forever. In fact, he lived for a few more years after this, but he wasn't going to live much longer. His potential successor, Kim Jong Il, looked really "bad." This nuclear complication would rapidly be upon us. Political conditions in South Korea were moving in a direction which would support some kind of reopening of the dialogue which had gone on in the 1975-1976 period, when Park Chung Hee was President of South Korea.

We thought, without any great expectations of immediate benefit to ourselves, that we could position ourselves to be in a much better position to talk to the North Koreans in an emergency, if we had a channel which went beyond the already existing, military channel through the Military Armistice Commission at Panmunjom. This was the only place where we had ever spoken to the North Koreans. The South Koreans had developed their "Red Cross" and other talks in the 1970's, which were all highly political, but those had ended. What had gone on consistently throughout this period and previously were the monthly meetings of the Military Armistice Commission. Sometimes these talks were very formalistic and sterile. Sometimes they were more useful. For example, the North Koreans passed us a few letters while I was in Seoul, through the military command. At one point the North Koreans proposed direct talks between their military commander and General Bill Livsey Hart, the senior US commander in South Korea. Of course, they did not want any South Koreans participating.

Q: This is the thing about these talks. One of the things that North Korea, publicly at least, always tried to do was to get us talking with them, bypassing the South Koreans. This sounds like...

DUNLOP: Like something that they would jump at, and, in fact, they did jump at it. We just had to make sure that any benefits that the North Koreans thought they might derive from driving wedges between us and the South Koreans in fact didn't happen. I think that we were able to avoid that. These talks were literally about nothing, from the North Korean point of view. We proposed an agenda to them, covering such subjects as "nuclear non proliferation" and North Korea's observing the non proliferation treaty [NPT] which they had signed. We let them understand that if they effectively joined the NPT system, and I think that this was not a bad thing to propose to the North Koreans, this meant that the North Koreans would join the NPT in substance and not just on the surface. If the North Koreans would submit themselves to meaningful controls on nuclear development, we were prepared to say to them what we've now said to them. That is, that we and the South Koreans would help them develop a "peaceful uses of nuclear energy" program. Such a program might well be beyond their capabilities without our help, or at least would be more expensive and so forth.

We thought that this was a reasonable "quid pro quo." There are some people in the Department of State who still think that it is a reasonable "quid pro quo." The problem is that the North Koreans think that they have their "quid" for our "quo." In fact, they haven't given any "quid" for our "quo." However, that was one of the major objectives we had. We wanted to offer them some "carrots" in the peaceful nuclear field before they had the damned capability to build nuclear weapons. In this way the North Koreans might see an advantage in backing off from their nuclear weapons development program. These talks began in Beijing while I was Country

Director for Korea. They were at the Political Counselor level. We put forth substantive agendas. They said that they would take these agendas under consideration but they never agreed to any meaningful talks. So all we had were essentially "talks about talks." I suppose that North Korea was not prepared to abandon its nuclear weapons development program. They saw that was our objective and were not prepared to get into that kind of discussion until after they had developed a weapon. As I look back on those talks in retrospect, I see that was probably why this "ploy" failed. Evidently, Kim Jong Il continued to believe that their continuing to develop a nuclear weapons capability was too valuable to throw away. Therefore, they were going to pursue the nuclear program, at least until they had a weapon. In my view they now are doing that, or rather, have achieved that.

Why did the Chinese "stiff" us in the sense that I thought they did? That is, why were they unwilling really to "go to the mat" with the North Koreans on the nuclear issue? I don't know. One would think that a nuclear war on the Korean peninsula would be just as abhorrent to the Chinese as it would be to us, although the prevailing winds do blow in the "right" direction, from the Chinese point of view.

Q: In other words, the prevailing winds blow from Korea toward Japan and not toward China.

DUNLOP: Yes, toward Japan, toward Georgetown, and toward Arlington County [Laughter]. It's hard to know. Maybe the Chinese discussed nuclear weapons with the North Koreans which they didn't tell us about and which we never learned of. Or perhaps they knew that such an effort would fail and didn't want to put any major effort into it for reasons of "face." As I say, I don't know. Certainly, the Chinese never effectively slowed down the North Korean nuclear program. Indeed, nobody has been able to do that.

Q: Did you get any information from the Chinese regarding what was going on in Pyongyang and all of that?

DUNLOP: The Chinese official to whom I talked in Beijing was a knowledgeable figure named Tao Bing Hwei. The Embassy in Beijing had arranged an appointment with him for me. The Embassy talked to him on nuclear matters. Tao Bing Hwei had fought in the same guerrilla unit and in the same campaign against the Japanese with Kim Il Sung. Kim Il Sung is now described in his biography as leading a unit which drove the "cowardly" Japanese into the sea during the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945. In fact, this unit had a minor military impact, but Tao and Kim Il Sung were in it. Kim Il Sung had gone to Manchukuo, the Japanese name for Manchuria during the earlier stages of the Sino-Japanese War. He joined with the communists and fought with Chinese Red Army units up in Manchuria. Tao was in one of those Chinese Red Army units. Tao came back to Beijing in 1949 with the triumphant victors in the Chinese civil war. Kim Il Sung was then recruited by the Russians to go back to Pyongyang, North Korea. However, Tao and Kim Il Sung kept this personal relationship.

Whenever Kim Il Sung visited China, which he did on numerous occasions, Tao Bing Hwei was his personal interpreter and escort officer. From the Chinese point of view Tao was the man who saw Kim Il Sung the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. Tao was given a kind of Confucian, academic title as the "Head of the Institute for the Research of Peace in Northeast

Asia," or something like that. He is actually a senior official in the Chinese foreign policy establishment. For this purpose he was actually a fairly interesting person.

Q: Oh, yes!

DUNLOP: I would like to have drunk another 20 cups of tea with him, in addition to the eight or 10 cups of tea that were served out at the meeting. I think that I had two meetings with Tao. I was very impressed with him. He is a very impressive man and is more than just a survivor in the communist elite. We've all met communist survivors who were dull as ditch water and dumb as could be. Others were brilliant and interesting human beings in their own right. Tao certainly fit into that category.

Tao said all of the "right" things. He downplayed their ability to influence the North Koreans. I think that was not correct. I think that the Chinese had considerable ability to influence the North Koreans. At least they could have tried a lot harder in this connection than they actually did. It seemed to me that, while Tao wanted to do everything to encourage these talks between North Korea and the United States, he evidently had no intention to commit the Chinese to doing anything in the policy area. He kept saying, "We have very little influence in Pyongyang." He and other Chinese would tell us, "You know, the North Koreans are just as difficult to deal with as your South Koreans." Well, I believe that. However, after all, we have some influence in Seoul. I think that I probably made that comment at some point in the conversation with Tao. We certainly didn't expect that the Chinese would sign anything that I could go back to Seoul with and say definitively that the Chinese were going to help us with the North Koreans.

On the whole, I was pretty cautious in my evaluation of what they were going to do. I don't think that I used the word "stiff" on any piece of paper that I drafted. However, as I look back on it from the perspective of two or three years, I think that's what happened. The Chinese just said to themselves, "We're not going to spend any political capital on this." Why should they? I can imagine some reason why they should, like avoiding nuclear war. But it was never evident to me that they lifted a finger to help reduce the chances of a war.

Q: Were these talks with the Chinese in Beijing publicized or known generally? What was the public reaction to them?

DUNLOP: We told the North Koreans that we would not hold secret discussions with them. We said that we would respect the confidentiality of anything they said in those meetings which they did not want to make public, that is, we would not go public with such. However, we told the North Koreans that we would inform the South Koreans of everything that went on and would not hide anything from them. We told the North Koreans that if they ever said, "Don't tell the South Koreans about this or that," that would be the end of the talks. We would not conduct ourselves at the meetings with the North Koreans in any other way than the manner which I have described. However, we did say that if they did not want the contents of these meetings to be released publicly, as distinguished from telling the South Koreans, we would respect their wishes in that regard, at least to the degree that they asked us. Basically, this question never came up because we never got into any discussion which really had substantive content.

Yes, we announced that the talks were being held. There was a big flurry of excitement in Washington over them. This was only to be expected. We did everything that we could to say, "Look, this is really just 'batting practice.' We haven't even gone out and exchanged lineups. Take it easy." But the American press, of course, was all excited about this. There wasn't much to get excited about except that we were talking to the North Koreans. That, in itself was important.

Those talks have now been superseded by very substantive discussions which have taken place since then, and are going on now. They've been promised oil, foodstuffs, and four or five nuclear reactors. Or at least we agreed to ask the South Koreans to build them for them. Those have been very substantive talks. They have taken place in Geneva, New York, and other places.

After a while we were kind of unhappy with the Chinese venue for these talks. I can't remember what it was that made us unhappy about it. I think that, at one point, the North Koreans suggested Kuala Lumpur [Malaysia] as the site for the talks. Just about the time that I left the Korean desk, we may have agreed to a change. We did not want to hold these talks in the United States. The North Koreans always wanted to hold these talks in New York, probably for reasons of convenience. They had their Mission to the UN there. However, then we didn't want to have the talks on American soil. That looked too much like a bilateral negotiation over the heads of the South Koreans. For their part the South Koreans were pretty much agreeable to any place but the United States. Now it appears we've overridden such South Korean objections.

Q: Let's turn to South Korea. Perhaps the subject of North Korea might come back in. You have already talked about South Korea. When you took over Korean affairs in Washington, where did Korea rank from the Washington point of view?

DUNLOP: Well, if you look at Korea from the viewpoint of the Pentagon, it ranked very high. The US military had a "specified commander," a four-star general in command of US forces there. This was obviously one of the more important US military commands. The US military feared that the North Koreans might eventually launch a renewed Korean War, which I also feared. South Korea was where major hostilities could occur. As discussed above, there was a question whether the North Koreans would strike for Pusan first or try to take Seoul, with its 15 million people, as hostages and then sit on it. The US military was always acutely aware of the possibility of a renewal of conflict on the Korean peninsula. Some of the four-star generals who have commanded in South Korea went on to become Chiefs of Staff of the US Army. Examples of this include Generals Vessey and Wickham.

The overall command of US forces in South Korea was a "high profile" job from the Pentagon point of view. So the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (POL-MIL) in the State Department also regarded Korea as a high profile situation. Interestingly enough, for one reason or another, and it may have been just a matter of personalities, POL-MIL did not insert itself in the work of the Korean desk too much, although I would have welcomed their support on certain occasions. However, perhaps I would not have welcomed it on other occasions. Nevertheless, POL-MIL was a bureau that we had to clear telegrams with on most occasions.

In EA/P [Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs], Korea was a relatively small appendage to

Japan and China. However, EA/P also realized full well that this was a potential "trouble spot."

Korea was also a pretty high profile country from the viewpoint of Congress. A number of Congressmen were deeply interested in Korea when I was on the Korean desk. Congressman Steve Solarz [Democrat, New York] was perhaps the most prominent among them. I'll say a few words about Stephen Solarz and his staff assistant, Stanley Roth. Korea had "sex appeal" for Congress. A lot of Congressmen had interesting experiences in Korea. Senator Murkowski of Alaska, for example, was one of those. There was Senator Allen Cranston from California whom I detested so much but who was a very powerful man. He finally quit the Senate in about 1988 under something of a cloud. Congressional delegations tramped through South Korea at a great rate, partly because their wives loved to shop. Itaewon in Seoul was one of the great shopping emporiums of the Far East, at least of the Korean part of it. Congressional interest was partly generated by growing Korean communities in their respective districts. This was especially the case with California, which was why Senator Cranston was on our radar scope so much.

Senator Lugar [Republican, Indiana] was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during part of my time in South Korea. He had a lot of interest in Korea. He was a very good man, very perceptive and helpful. He was as much interested in Korea because of his committee responsibilities. However, he also understood the importance of Northeast Asia to the United States.

At staff meetings in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs I was just one of a number of Country Directors. There was the Country Director for the Philippines, for example, who was very important at that time because that was the period when President Ferdinand Marcos fell from office. We were sort of "getting things on track" in South Korea, whereas in the Philippines the desk officers could see things going "downhill." When things were getting better, nobody spends much time worrying about the country you are concerned with. I had the good fortune to return to Washington at a time when Chun had finally decided to leave office. There was going to be an election which would result in a process of modernization which would go ahead rapidly. That helped matters a lot.

I came back to Washington with several objectives in mind, and I tracked them over my desk. One of these was the North Korean nuclear weapons development program. I thought that we needed to focus much more on this issue. I guess that you could say that I was successful in this effort, although it took several years. I can't say that the policy toward North Korea now reflects many of the things that I would like to see happening.

Another issue was relations with Congress, particularly with Congressman Steve Solarz. Stephen Solarz is no longer in Congress. As a human being, he is certainly one of the brightest people that I ever associated with. He has an extremely quick mind. He is very intense and very abrasive. He was a liberal Democrat from Brooklyn. He had lots of seniority in the House of Representatives and a great interest in foreign affairs. He was Chairman of the Asian Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. So Asia was his area of particular interest, and he took it very seriously. He made at least one trip to South Korea every year.

These visits were always periods of tension, because Solarz generates tension around him. He was very arrogantly insistent on things being done "his" way. His schedules had to be "just so." He didn't mind insulting Koreans or anybody else if something didn't work out his way. He was a man who came to believe that we were following essentially the right course in Korea. However, he did not begin thinking that way. Like many people in the liberal establishment, he had many suspicions about people serving the Reagan administration. He suspected the Reagan administration of "getting in bed" with dictators around the world, and here was a dictator in the case of Chun in South Korea.

Q: Jeane Kirkpatrick, our Permanent Representative to the UN, discussed this point at some length, although she was really talking in terms of Latin America. She came from a conservative, Democratic background. She went to work for President Reagan as his Ambassador to the UN and said basically that we should support "strong leaders, even if they are 'authoritarian' in outlook."

DUNLOP: Well, Chun's relationship with the Carter administration, of course, was "zero," and deservedly so. Chun had shot his way to power. In his handling of the Kwangju incident Chun had tried to associate us with him so that we would share the blame for his overreaction and the brutality displayed by his own troops.

When the Reagan administration came into office, we had this dilemma which we have repeatedly faced around the world. In this case there was a government in South Korea with an unpleasant person in power. The Chun administration was politically unpopular in the United States and a "nasty guy" from our point of view. However, he was running an important country, where we had significant interests.

When I was on home leave, I would go around and give little talks about South Korea. It was an interesting and useful thing to do, and I was always gratified to find the degree of interest in South Korea that there was in the United States, in places like Milwaukee or Cincinnati. I would start out my presentation by defining what our interests were in South Korea. I would say, and believed very sincerely, that we had fought World War II in Asia, a terribly bloody conflict, in the 1940's to determine, in important ways, what Japan's role was going to be in Asia. I asked whether my listeners thought that Asia should be dominated by an imperialistic, warlike, aggressive, selfish, self-aggrandizing, ethnically exclusivist Japan. Or would it be an area where Japan would play an important and even a major role but in a constructive and peaceful fashion? We fought World War II to make sure which of those Asia's would emerge from it. We won that war and had an enormously successful, post-war policy. This policy ensured that the Asia that we were going to have to deal with, as the Pacific area became more important in the world, would be an Asia which would not be dominated by an imperialistic, aggressive and hostile Japan. Rather, Japan would be a cooperative member of the world community.

I said that's where South Korea fits in. As long as the US military guarantee of Japan's security is believed by Japan to be effective, that is one of the major foundations of a successful US foreign policy in East Asia. In these circumstances Japan will accept a cooperative role with the United States. However, if Japan ever comes to doubt our intentions, if we are driven militarily out of Northeast Asia, if we ever have to abandon our treaty commitments to Japan, then what we

fought for in World War II and thought that we had won would again be in question. The place where that could happen is in Korea. If we are militarily confronted and defeated on the Korean peninsula, Japan will reassess its relationship with the United States. It will have no alternative to do so. We must not allow that to happen. So maybe our stance in South Korea is a "holding action" or maybe it is a "subset" of our policy toward Japan or Northeast Asia, but that is the reality.

We have a document which we sign each year, the communique made public after the meeting between the US Secretary of Defense and the South Korean Minister of Defense. This communique always includes some "sacred language" which is repeated every year, although there are some passages in it which change each year. It contains little segments of prose which have been hammered out and are repeated every year. One of these statements concerns the nuclear commitment of the United States toward the Republic of Korea. This doesn't mean that we have to keep nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula. It means that we will consider the use of nuclear weapons, if necessary, in the defense of the peninsula. We do not exclude that possibility.

Another passage from the communique includes a little phrase which I think I recall correctly. It states that the independence, self-determination, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Korea (that is, the area South of the DMZ) [Demilitarized Zone], are vital to the security of Northeast Asia and, in turn, to the United States. That is, we would be willing to go to war in South Korea (a "vital interest"), not just because of Korea but because of its relationship to our interests in Northeast Asia more generally. The South Koreans always want to separate out the phrase, "in turn." They want it linked to the word, "vital," meaning that we will fight in direct defense of South Korea no matter what. However, we use the phrase, "in turn," to relate our commitment to South Korea to the security of Northeast Asia. I believe that this is just as much true today as it has ever been.

Congressman Solarz believed that, too. This is a long digression from our discussion of Solarz, but he believed that. What he did not understand or was very skeptical of was whether, in pursuing that interest which, to him, was very acceptable, we would do enough in the human rights and the civil liberties area to "pressure" Chun. He thought that we could do both things simultaneously. Like many liberals, the more he was involved with foreign affairs, the more realistic he became about what could be achieved. However, he never relinquished the belief that we should always try and try harder to do this. Now, I happen to agree with that view and I think that Ambassador "Dixie" Walker agreed with that. But Stephen Solarz was very skeptical about that at first.

When I arrived in Seoul in 1983, Congressman Solarz had made only one trip to South Korea. This was in 1982, when the Reagan administration was in office, and he and "Dixie" Walker did not hit it off well. "Dixie" Walker, my Ambassador, was no knee jerk conservative by any means. However, he was a Republican and a "political" Republican at that. He was an academic but a "political" Republican. "Dixie" had an acerbic tongue and a good wit. Over the years he had inflicted some "cuts" which were remembered, and I don't think that his relationship with Solarz was ever going to prosper. They were just two different kinds of people. Solarz is a "cold, prickly" type of person, and "Dixie" is a "warm, cuddly" type of person.

They had some real frictions very shortly after I arrived in Seoul. Another Solarz trip to South Korea was announced, and I could see clouds on the horizon. I was always Control Officer for the organizational aspects of every Solarz visit. When Solarz arrived in South Korea, I remember being very impressed with him. I was very impressed with Stanley Roth, his special assistant, who traveled with him. He could be a very helpful intermediary. However, Roth was really agitated, irritated, and frustrated by both "Dixie" Walker and Solarz. They seemed to take pleasure in "going at each other." OKAY, some of that was probably inevitable, but, by God, didn't that get in the way of what they wanted to do? That was the way it was with the Solarz trip to South Korea in 1983. When the 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1987 trips took place, each one of these was a little easier, in personal terms, between "Dixie" and Solarz. Each of these trips led to an increasing acceptance by Solarz that we weren't just giving up on the human rights issue but were really trying hard to make progress. It was hard, but we were trying. So Solarz became, perhaps less abrasive. My relationship with Roth survived our bosses' sparring.

One of my objectives when I was transferred back to the Department in 1987 was to keep the relationship between me and Stanley Roth at a level that could be helpful.

Q: I don't think that Stanley Roth was Solarz's staff aide. I think that he was an employee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

DUNLOP: I don't know actually who employed him. I should know it but I don't. I don't know whether he was on Solarz's personal staff or whether he was an employee of the East Asian Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. I know that Roth has subsequently held several senior appointments under the Clinton administration in ISA [Internal Security Affairs office in the Department of Defense] and in the National Security Council. So he couldn't have been "just" a member of Solarz's staff. Or, if he started out that way, he acquired another position later on. He is a very bright guy. I would be pleased to see him play an important role in any administration's foreign policy. I think that he has his head screwed on right. Anyway, maintaining a good relationship with Stanley Roth was one of my objectives.

That meant spending some time and hanging around with Stanley Roth and making sure that he knew about things before he read about them in the papers. This was particularly the case with the North Korean situation. Another consideration was that Solarz was the only Congressman ever to have visited Pyongyang [North Korean capital]. I think that Solarz went to Pyongyang in 1981 or sometime around then. Whatever the North Koreans tried to do to convince him that US policies were wrong and had failed, his trip just convinced him of all of the worst things that he had been told about North Korea. He recognized the worst aspects of the North Korean regime. So I wanted to keep alive the connection which I had developed with Stanley Roth over the years. I think that I succeeded in that.

There was a man on the NSC staff whom I didn't know much about but had heard a lot about, Doug Paal. Under the Reagan and Bush administrations he had the Korean "portfolio." I wanted to make sure that my relationship with him was as good as it could be. I didn't mean that I would go and "sell out the store" when I talked to him. However, I wanted to make sure that he felt comfortable that I was not trying to go behind his back and, more hopefully, he wouldn't be

trying to go behind my back. Of course, he was in the administration, not Congress, so it was easier. However, really, the same kind of things have to be done. I think that a Country Director has to be...

Q: Harry, this is a little bit of Washington "trade craft," as they call it. You were in touch with both Roth and Paal, on the staff of Congress and the NSC, respectively. How did you go about keeping them informed and able to understand your position?

DUNLOP: With Paal, there were certain types of messages, certain things that we were doing regarding which we had to get his "clearance." You can get this electronically, because the system was such that S/S [the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State] could "electronically" send to Paal a "drop copy" of a message for his clearance. I don't think that this had been true earlier in Washington. However, there's another way to do that: call him up on the phone, set up an appointment, and take the message over to him. That procedure is time consuming, but it allows direct contact with him. Or you could send the draft to him and then telephone him and ask if he had any objections to it. I could say that if he had some reservations, I would be glad to come over and talk to him about it, if I couldn't talk about it on the telephone. This would involve anything to do with any kind of Presidential visit. It would also involve the visit of any senior Departmental official, such as the Secretary of Defense. It could involve almost anything having to do with the visit of a Congressional Delegation, if it was really important. The NSC needs to know about such things. If we were going to send instructions to the Embassy, the NSC staff wants to know about them before they are sent.

Sometimes it is enough just to send the NSC an info copy of the message. Sometimes you have to get a substantive "clearance." That is, you won't send the message unless the NSC staff agrees with it. You determine the procedure there on a case by case basis. These are the kinds of things which would bring me on the Korean desk, one way or the other, into contact with Doug Paal on a regular basis. There is no such system with Congress. Arrangements are totally "ad hoc," except when you have an Ambassador who is up for confirmation by the Senate. Then you have to pay calls on Senators and go through a confirmation process. Other than that, I don't know how else you handle it. A wise country desk officer makes sure to keep in touch with key Congressional staff like Roth. I'm not sure that there is a system which institutionalizes the maintenance of such contact.

Q: You were talking about a system. How did you handle arrangements with Roth? What did you do?

DUNLOP: Regarding the North Korean program for developing nuclear weapons and my trip to Moscow and Beijing, I called Stanley Roth and said, "Stanley, guess what? I'm going to be going around the world, the first such trip I've ever made. Do you want to go?" (Ha, ha, ha!) No, he didn't want to go. He couldn't have gone, anyway. I said, "It's going to be cold in Moscow in February anyway, Stanley. If you want to go, I'd be glad to go along with you." Then I told him what I planned to do. After the trip, when I went to see Stanley Roth, Solarz sat in on the discussion. It was very interesting. I remember going over there to one of the House of Representatives buildings.

I also remember telling Bill Clark, the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the Bureau of East Asian Affairs and my immediate boss, what I was going to do, so that Bill wouldn't say, "I hear that you were over talking to Solarz yesterday." So there's a lot of that which you instinctively do or don't do. Sometimes you pay a price if you don't do it right. I think that I managed that pretty well.

Bill Clark was very protocol conscious. He was a very bureaucratically "wary" kind of guy. Clark was very interested in his own, bureaucratic status and making sure that he didn't get "blind sided." I was smart enough to know that he had a right to know whether I was going to be talking to Solarz. If Solarz said, "Why are you doing this or that," Clark needed to know in advance that I was seeing Solarz. Sometimes I would be talking to Stanley Roth, and Solarz would walk into his office. I couldn't control that, but I'd always tell Bill Clark about it as soon as I got back. I would say: "Congressman Solarz dropped by when I was talking to Stanley Roth about my trip to Moscow." I think that this is basically a matter of human relations. I didn't usually like to go out to lunch with people. This was busy, expensive, and time consuming. I spent some time in their offices, which was well spent. If they said, "I don't have any time on my schedule this afternoon. How about lunch on Monday?" Of course, I would do that. However, there wasn't too much of that. I didn't encourage practices like that. Obviously, the Bureau of East Asian Affairs had no money to pay for such lunches, so the cost would have been out of my own pocket, unless other arrangements were made or we went "Dutch" [shared the bill]. I would have done that if it had seemed to be the right thing to do.

So those were the two most important, "out of the building" contacts I had. Obviously, we had other contacts over at International Security Affairs (ISA) in the Department of Defense, whatever it was called at different times and under different Secretaries of Defense. This came directly under the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). ISA was an important contact point for the Department of State. I can't remember the name of the people over there. There was a Rear Admiral who was in charge of dealing with Northeast Asian Affairs in ISA. I had worked in ISA and knew, or thought that I knew, what they did there and what was important to them. So I could get along with them.

I don't know whether that is an accepted, bureaucratic practice, that Congressional staffers don't spend their time initiating communications with the Department of State. And the same thing may be true regarding members of the NSC staff. However, the ISA staff would seek us out to spend time with us. They would come over whenever it was appropriate. The Rear Admiral would come over. He was a pretty knowledgeable guy. He would have been more influential than he seemed to be, had he had more "clout." Things might have gone along better, but that's the way the system works. Certainly, he was an important man.

I had a counterpart in CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], in the Directorate of Intelligence [DI]. That is, the analytical people. I cannot remember having had any contact with people in the Directorate of Operations [DO] in CIA when I was on the Korean desk. They supervised the operation of the CIA Station in Seoul, but the Station was not active in the things that I was interested in. The CIA didn't seem to be able to find out anything about North Korea, so we never bothered to ask. They weren't much interested in South Korean domestic politics as far as I could see. If they were, it wasn't in ways that appeared very much on my radar scope, or which

bothered us. This is not always the case around the world. There were nice guys in the CIA Station in Seoul. They were intelligent people, and it was interesting and profitable to "bounce" ideas off them. When I was in Seoul, I had cordial relations and frequent personal contact with them. Both Station Chiefs while I was there were top-notch. It's just that they never seemed to have much to offer on issues of direct, critical concern to me. However, in an operational sense I never really felt that CIA personnel were particularly relevant at many of my posts abroad. This was even more the case in Washington.

Q: What about the political situation in South Korea? You were there during a transfer of power and so forth. How did that work out?

DUNLOP: Fortunately for me, when I returned to Washington to work on the Korea desk, the ice was breaking in South Korea. There was going to be a real election which would be really contested. As I watched this process begin, I was convinced that it was for real. One of the things that we had to do was to convince people back in Washington that it was for real.

There was a community of Korea watchers in Washington and elsewhere. Some of the people had already had experience in the US Government. Don Ranard, for example, had been a Foreign Service Officer and a desk officer in the 1970's. He had left the Department after a dispute of some kind and was critical of our policies toward South Korea. He was very skeptical that what we were doing was sensitive enough to the human rights and civil liberties situations. Some of these people, one way or another, had a kind of "vested interest" in the civil liberties situation. I'm not challenging their sincerity in any way. They had some kind of organizational connection. They included some people from the Methodist Church in Washington and from the National Council of Churches in New York. They were very skeptical, even harshly critical, of the Republican administration in terms of its policies around the world, and particularly in South Korea.

I tried to be responsive to them. I admit that I didn't like some of them personally. Generally speaking, I was often irritated at their attitudes, which I felt were pretty puerile and unsophisticated in some sense. If there hadn't been civil rights abuses in South Korea, these people would have been out of a job. I felt that they were a little bit prejudiced in their view of what was going on in South Korea. Not that there weren't things to criticize.

In addition to dealing with them in Washington I had occasionally run into them when I was in Seoul. Things were demonstrably getting better. However, I felt that it was part of my responsibility to stay in touch with them to the degree that they would be willing to listen to my point of view. I would then be prepared to let them decide whether I was too prejudiced or not. Some of them would never believe anything that I said. They would have to go and see the situation themselves. They would never take anything that the Department of State said. However, I made myself available to them.

The same thing happened in Congress. Congressman Solarz did not have a particularly negative kind of attitude. He understood what the events of June, 1987, meant and that this was not a false spring.

Q: You refer to the events of June, 1987. What does this refer to?

DUNLOP: First was the decision by President Chun not to declare martial law. Then, he went on the radio and said that he was retiring from office as President. He also said that he was turning over political responsibilities for the election to his staff. In effect, he was biting this "bitter apple" or taking this "bitter pill" in public.

I left Seoul only a few days after Chun's speech, within a week or so. I returned to Washington to find big smiles on the faces of those who followed South Korean developments. And rightly so. It had been a "near run thing," on June 19, 1987, when Chun made his decision, ordered his staff to prepare a declaration of martial law, and instructed his Prime Minister to give a midnight speech over the radio announcing it. Then Chun backed off from his decision, which we have talked about. We may not fully know all the aspects of this decision, but we've talked about that event.

From then on it was kind of "downhill sledding" for me. I had good news to convey. I believed that it was true. So we went through a very good time. One of the events that I first had to deal with was the election of October, 1987. There was a lot of interest in it. This was going to be the election which would signal the end of Chun's regime and put somebody else in as President of South Korea. It was pretty clear that the opposition was highly fragmented and did not have the opportunity to do the things that it was able to do later on. It was therefore pretty clear that No Tae Woo, who was Chun's "designated successor," was going to be elected President.

However, the rules had changed. The rules for the elections of the National Assembly, in particular, were going to be important. I felt that they would result in a lot of opposition strength appearing in the Assembly. There always had been some vocal members of the National Assembly, but there was going to be a very significant increase in their number. There was a lot of concern in the US that, perhaps, the elections would be manipulated, so that Chun as "eminence grise" would be seen to be the victor. I didn't believe that very much. I remember that it even got to the point where S/S, the Executive Secretariat of the State Department, insisted on our setting up an "Election Task Force." I thought that was absolutely unnecessary. I told them that if the Secretary wanted to have someone in the Department who was following the elections campaign to assemble the information coming in from the Embassy and "field" any questions regarding it from the press and public, the Korean desk could take care of it. All the Secretary had to do was to give us a little cubicle up there in the Operations Center and maybe a bed. But no, someone wanted to have an interagency, interdepartmental task force set up. Fortunately, it lasted about 48 hours. This was just wasted motion. We didn't need it.

We wanted to be sure that the presidential and National Assembly elections were properly reported from the Embassy. The Political Section had a good staff there, and there was no reason to think that the reporting would not be good. We felt that the Korean desk could interpret election developments accurately to the public in the United States and that this would not be a difficult job.

The other development, though, which was coming up on the horizon, with a potential for real problems, was security for the Seoul Olympics. The Olympic Games were due to be held in

August, 1988. Even before I had left Seoul in July, 1987, we had begun very serious thinking on how to help the South Koreans handle the potential security problem. Security problems could come up from various sources, but the most dangerous one and the one which was the most difficult to predict and to deal with would come from North Korea. The question was whether the North Koreans would allow the Olympic Games to take place on "sacred Korean soil," with all of the publicity and credit which the South Korean Government would garner from it. What would the North Koreans, the sworn enemies of South Korea, do about the Olympic Games and how could we keep them from doing anything about it?

The other security side was the usual problems that might come from dissident students, "nuts," maybe an Arab terrorist organization, or the "Japanese Red Army." They might come to the Olympic Games just to make their presence known.

In the fall of 1987, after the elections had taken place, but not long afterwards, along about Thanksgiving, the North Korean security services put a bomb on Korean Air Flight 069. The plane disappeared with all on board over the Andaman Sea. I discovered at that time, never having known where the Andaman Sea was, that it is part of the Indian Ocean just South of Burma. I remember that I was at home on a Saturday night when I received a phone call from the duty officer at the South Korean Embassy, saying that they had lost track of a South Korean aircraft and that they feared that it had been brought down by a bomb. Knowing the Korean penchant for paranoia, I said, "Why do you think that?" He said that they just thought that this might be the cause for the aircraft disappearing without a trace.

Well, the South Korean Embassy was right. I had been a little skeptical, I must confess. Certainly, that was a possibility, but there seemed to be other things that happened to airliners beside being blown up by a bomb. What the duty officer essentially wanted me to do on that Saturday evening was to call the State Department Operations Center and ask them to check all of the available sources of information and see if we, the CIA, or the Japanese knew anything about it. He asked that the Operations Center put this incident on their check list so that any duty officers coming to work would look around and see if there was any information available on this missing aircraft. He thought that this might contribute to the sum total of knowledge available on the matter. This seemed like a reasonable request, so we alerted the Operations Center.

Later, we found out that, in fact, the airplane had been destroyed in flight by a bomb placed on board by a North Korean sapper team. [FYI: Harry went into the details of the sapper attack in an earlier part of this interview, though this version seems more complete than the previous one. END FYI] The team which placed the bomb consisted of one man and one woman. They had been sent from Pyongyang through Moscow, to Budapest, to Belgrade, and to Baghdad, where they boarded this Korean Air flight. Incidentally, after Korean Air Lines Flight 007 was shot down by the Soviets, KAL changed its name from Korean Air Lines to Korean Air. So this flight was KA 069, and not KAL 069. It was the same people, same airline, but with a different color scheme and a different logo. They changed it all, because they thought that the initials KAL had brought "bad luck" to the airline.

So the North Korean sappers boarded this KA flight in Baghdad. They carried a bomb, which

they had obtained in Belgrade, in a transistor radio, I believe. At one time they had planned to use a bottle of brandy. However, when they got to Belgrade, the bomb handlers and makers who had preceded them to Belgrade were in the North Korean Embassy there. They had discarded the idea of a "bottle bomb" and replaced it with a transistor radio bomb. The North Korean sapper team put this in the overhead compartment and then left the plane, returning to North Korea by another route.

They had an escape route planned which took them to a nearby Emirate on the Persian Gulf. I don't know the geography of the Persian Gulf very well. Perhaps you do. They were going to leave the aircraft in Bahrain and then go to Dubai, where they would change planes and go to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Q: They could take any of those routes.

DUNLOP: But they were going North, retracing their path. Is Dubai North of Bahrain?

Q: Dubai is South of Bahrain.

DUNLOP: Then the idea was that they were going to get off the plane in Dubai. They had separate tickets and several identities, including several passports. They planned to leave the "holding area" for transit passengers, reboard the aircraft, and go to Dubai. Then in Dubai they would take another aircraft under other identities and go home to a triumphant welcome in North Korea.

Well, nobody had quite figured out what it took to get out of the "holding area" for transit passengers in Dubai. The two North Korean agents were well trained and well versed in everything that they were supposed to do. However, apparently, the passports of the transit passengers were collected in Dubai for international passengers and returned to them when they returned to the plane. Therefore, they had to use their "false" passports to get out of the "holding area." They were able to reboard the aircraft, but this left an anomaly among the passengers who were deplaning, since two of the "deplaning passengers" would have "disappeared," and there would be two new passengers, as far as names went. As soon as the plane disappeared, and the South Koreans asked the Dubai authorities to check the passenger manifest, they found this anomaly. The two North Korean agents were found, sitting in the departure lounge in Bahrain, waiting to get on another plane. If they had been able to do so, they probably would have totally disappeared. However, the Bahrain security authorities asked them to "step this way." The security authorities took the sapper team, consisting of the older man and a younger woman, into a holding area, where they were going to interrogate them. British personnel were directing the Bahraini security services. The Bahraini security people wanted a British security officer present when they interrogated these two agents.

They sat them down on a bench. A Bahraini female security officer was sitting between the two North Korean agents, and a male Bahraini security officer sat on the left of the male North Korean sapper. So you had the female North Korean agent, a female Bahraini security officer, the male North Korean agent, and then a male Bahraini security officer. The male North Korean agent asked the security people if he could smoke. They said, "Yes." He reached into his pocket,

pretended that he had no cigarettes, and then asked the female North Korean agent for a cigarette. She said, "Oh, yes. Here, take one." She took out a cigarette, handed it to him, and then started to put another cigarette in her mouth. The male North Korean agent bit down on his cigarette, which contained a vial of cyanide in the filter, I guess. He immediately convulsed and subsequently died. Apparently, cyanide kills you instantly when it gets into your system. The female Bahraini security agent sitting between the two North Korean agents saw with her left eye the male North Korean agent dying. At the same time she saw the female North Korean agent putting a cigarette into her mouth. The female Bahraini security agent moved her right arm violently, knocking the cigarette out of the mouth of the female North Korean agent, but not before she had apparently crushed it in her mouth. Apparently, she imbibed a tiny amount of cyanide, less than a lethal dose, but enough to make her convulse. The male North Korean agent died, but the female agent didn't.

After she recovered, the female North Korean agent was sent to Seoul and turned over to the South Koreans. Eventually, she made a full confession of what she had done, how she got where she got, and what she did. One of our concerns was that, as we shared responsibility with the South Koreans for security at the Seoul Olympic Games and all of that, we had to make very sure that the confession by this female North Korean agent was credible. We wanted to be sure that no coercion was involved in getting this confession from her.

We then went to the CIA in Langley and asked them as a matter of urgency, to contact the South Korean intelligence authorities in Seoul. The female North Korean agent, of course, was under the control of the NSPA, the National Security Policy Agency, which was the current name for the KCIA [Korean Central Intelligence Agency]. I guess that Deputy Assistant Secretary Bill Clark telephoned to somebody in the Directorate of Operations, perhaps one of the Deputy Directors of CIA, who had some operational responsibilities. I didn't have any contact with that side of the CIA. He explained the very great importance that we attached to making sure that the confession of the female North Korean agent did not appear to have been coerced. In fact, this was before she confessed. It was important that her confession not be coerced. The best way that we could make sure that her confession was not coerced was to have access to her as soon as possible, at a very early stage in her interrogation. We didn't want to conduct the interrogation. We just wanted to witness it, so that we could say that "We were there."

After some reluctance the South Koreans agreed. I remember that I asked a South Korean Embassy officer to come in to see me at the State Department. We went over this whole subject in very great detail, so that the South Korean Embassy in Washington, in its reporting, would reinforce what our Embassy in Seoul was saying, and what our CIA Station in Seoul was saying to the NSPA, the current name for the KCIA. That was really my role in this. However, the South Koreans did give us access to her, and we were able to see how the interrogation progressed.

It was one of those cases like the Japanese prisoners of war during World War II. These people came in with a "total mind set" about "good and evil" and the "rightness" of their cause. Any little chink in their intellectual armor tends to bring down the whole structure.

Q: It is amazing because, during World War II, we found that the few Japanese prisoners who

were taken by our forces would point out artillery positions and would do anything we asked them to do. They would tell us things that our prisoners of war in Japanese hands would refuse to provide their captors. Our people might surrender, but they weren't going to give away the store.

DUNLOP: To continue with the story, this female North Korean agent, "Miss Kim," turned out to be a woman with an IQ of something like 180. In other words, very highly intelligent. She had very great language abilities. She had been sent to Macau, the Portuguese colony off the coast of China, near Hong Kong, for two years to develop a Cantonese accent in Chinese. That was to be part of her "cover." She would travel as a "Macau Chinese." Apparently, that didn't make any dent in her view of who she was or what she was doing. She had all kinds of motor skills and was very dexterous. The South Koreans gave her a whole battery of tests, and apparently she scored at the top of all of them. She was also very, very beautiful. She appeared on South Korean television, where she was asked various questions. The South Korean journalists did not want to "share" her with foreign journalists. American journalists from the AP [Associated Press], the "New York Times," and so forth also wanted to ask her questions. We finally arranged for that. Nothing is ever very easy with the South Koreans, but this was done. She received hundreds of invitations and offers of marriage from the South Korean public, after she appeared on television.

It was really scary about this talented young woman because she was so thoroughly programmed. She was just perfect. In fact, she was a walking bomb. They just had to wind her up, set her loose, and off she went to do terrible things.

Security for the Seoul Olympic Games was an important problem which we faced. Miss Kim said in her confession that she had been told by Kim Jong Il, who personally "blessed" her, that her task was the noble work of setting in motion a chain of events which would disrupt the Olympic Games in Seoul. She quoted him as saying that there would be many such efforts, with the net result of disrupting the Olympics, discrediting the government of South Korea, and achieving the "sacred objective" of reunifying Korea. He told her that she was to take the first step toward achieving this. This was something that she could look back on as her contribution to Korea. And, of course, Kim Jong Il said, "If something goes wrong, young lady, you have your cyanide cigarette."

As far as we know and so far as I can recall, there was no other attempt to disrupt the Seoul Olympic Games. I would certainly have known if there had been any other such attempt by the North Koreans to disrupt the Olympics. I can conclude that the most important result of this total fiasco was to prove Kim Jong Il's involvement in this act of assassination and murder. Therefore, to continue with other incidents to disrupt the Seoul Olympics was just too great a risk for the North Koreans to assume. I don't know why they wouldn't have gone ahead with other efforts if this attempt had not failed so completely.

Q: Harry, I propose that we stop at this point, because I know that you have to leave. I want to put at the end here the usual list of things left to discuss at our next session. We've talked about the destruction of the KA flight over the Andaman Sea and the aftermath to that. You've talked about security of the Olympic Games in Seoul as a major concern. Can we talk the next time about the impact of the Olympic Games on our relations with South Korea, how South Korea

was perceived, and then how we saw the new government under President No Tae Woo developing, as well as the political side of that? We've already talked about North Korea, and we have covered the concerns about North Korean nuclear weapons development up into the 1990 period, when you were assigned to CIA Headquarters at Langley to help with an estimate there. We don't need to cover that again. We've talked about relations with Congress, and particularly with former Congressman Stephen Solarz, as well as relations with the NSC. So we'll fill in that area.

DUNLOP: I don't want to dwell on Senator Cranston, but he played a very malign role in connection with South Korea. He came back into the picture from my point of view, because we had to have an Ambassador to South Korea confirmed whom he opposed.

Q: Harry, let's talk about the Seoul Olympics of 1988. First, how did they go? You know, many countries "vie" to host the Olympic Games, to put on their best face, and show their part of the world. It becomes quite an operation. I've often wondered if the "fuss" is worth the bother. How did the Seoul Olympic Games go, and what was your impression of them?

DUNLOP: As to whether the "fuss" is worth the bother, I think that only the South Koreans can answer that. They put an enormous amount of physical resources and psychic energy into the Olympics. During the four years between South Korea's nomination in 1984 as host for the 1988 Olympics, Seoul was transformed in many ways by the construction of a major "Metro" [subway] system. It was built in an extraordinarily short period of time. Here in Washington it has taken us 20 years to near the completion of construction of 103 miles of subway. The South Koreans built something like 140 miles of subway in four years. They killed some workers in the process by going too fast. They had some collapses and so forth. However, they assimilated that. They built an entirely new Olympic complex for the Seoul Olympic Games. I think that seven new buildings were constructed. Across the Han River, you can see these new buildings from many places in downtown Seoul. They are attractive and, apparently, very efficient sports facilities. They had the "Velocidome," or whatever they call it, for bicycle racing. There was a big stadium constructed, state of the art swimming pools, and all of the rest of it. The major concern we had as the Olympic Games approached was not that the South Koreans were unable to administer or manage such an event, but how "malign" the North Koreans would be and how much they would try and, even worse, possibly succeed in disrupting them. As we said last time, we believe, on very good authority, based on the first person evidence of Miss Kim, one of the North Korean bombers, that one of the major purposes or, perhaps, THE major purpose of bombing KA Flight 069 over the Andaman Sea near Burma in November, 1987, was to start a train of destabilizing terrorist events that would bring about the collapse of the Olympics, at least in the view of the North Koreans. That was intended to cause such a loss of face to the South Korean Government that it, too, would collapse, and the great mass of the Korean people would rise up and unify the country under the banner of the "Great Leader" from Pyongyang, Kim Il Sung.

That seems to have been the motivation for this bomb attack by North Korean sappers against a Korean Air flight. To my knowledge, and I think that I would have known about it, there were no further efforts made by North Korea to disrupt the Seoul Olympics, either in the months preceding them or in the course of the games themselves. One explanation for that -- one that

appeals to me -- is that the North Koreans may have felt so badly burned when their intentions were very clearly revealed by the "defection" of Miss Kim who had placed the bomb on the airplane that was destroyed. The North Koreans may then have felt that it wasn't worthwhile to continue with other efforts to disrupt the Seoul Olympics. We don't know and we may never know, unless the North Koreans tell us what was in their minds at the time.

The Seoul Olympic Games were a success, from the administrative standpoint or from the sports point of view. We did not hear any sour comments on the games. I remember when the Winter Olympics were held at Lake Placid, NY, and the buses all broke down. There was a lot of fuss about that. The South Koreans handled the Olympics in Seoul very well in an atmosphere of total calm and quiet. There may have been a few student demonstrations which hoped to attract the swarm of international journalists and personages in town. If so, they attracted little attention.

Were the Seoul Olympic Games "worth it"? South Koreans who knew Japan will tell you that the 1966 Olympic Games made a big difference in the way Japan perceived itself and the way that the world perceived Japan. The Japanese became much more self-confident about having put the ravages of World War II behind them, both psychologically and otherwise. After the 1966 Olympics the Japanese went on to become the great giant that they have shown themselves to be. I don't know Japan that well and I don't think that you can point to such a dramatic before and after impression in South Korea. Possibly this is because the changes which people admire in South Korea, including the modernization of South Korean society and the great, economic successes they have achieved were well under way before 1988. By the mid 1980's the one thing that had not been modernized in South Korea was the political system, if I can use that word. At the time the political system was still being run on a "top down," strictly authoritarian style. It had changed very little since the time of Syngman Rhee. It had changed very little from the time of the Japanese occupation. It had changed very little from the "Yi" dynasty which preceded that.

With the departure of Chun changes in the South Korean political system were well under way. Unless there is some catastrophe, I think that this change is now irreversible.

Did the Seoul Olympic Games of 1988 "trigger" that change? No. We don't know precisely what triggered Chun's decision to step down, though we went into it at some length. However, it was probably a combination of self-doubt about whether he could get away with declaring martial law and perpetuating himself in office in the old political system; great pressure from within his own circle of advisers not to try that, including key figures in the South Korean military establishment; and, of course, the effort that we made at the last minute to persuade him not to declare martial law and not to perpetuate himself in office. The major fact, though, is that he didn't do that. By not doing it he reversed a major decision which lost him enormous "face." In any case, Chun's decision to declare martial law and to stay on in office, and then to back off from that decision it was a tremendous development in a society like South Korea. In effect, Chun was a political eunuch after that. He stepped aside even before he said he would. That is, before the election, turning over the basic running of the country to his ministers.

No Tae Woo, who succeeded Chun as President, was a very different personality. Chun was not only a military and very authoritarian figure but was a very "inner directed" and "inner centered" person. He didn't have any particularly bad personal traits. He wasn't like Idi Amin [of Uganda],

doing terrible things in his basement for his own amusement. Chun was an autocratic, an isolated, chilly, and aloof man.

No Tae Woo was not like that. He had a lot more exposure to the outside world. After his early, military career during the last four years before he became President of South Korea he had been in charge of preparations for the Seoul Olympic Games. This was a major job which required a good sense of "PR" [Public Relations] and a lot of travel around the world. This was a broadening experience which Chun never had. I suppose that, in his heart, No Tae Woo is still more comfortable with a Confucian, authoritarian ruling style than with that of a Jeffersonian democrat, to employ that overused, comparative term. However, as far as we could tell, the way No ran the South Korean Government was substantially different from the practices of Chun Doo Hwan. The National Assembly elections which put the "real opposition" in power, not just the "co-opted opposition" with positions of power in the National Assembly, functioned as the constitution provided. The groups controlling the National Assembly constituted a check on the powers of the President. I don't believe that there were so many instances of human rights violations or serious restrictions on human liberties during the presidency of No Tae Woo.

I was Country Director for Korea only during the first year and a half of so of the No Tae Woo administration. I followed Korean events very carefully after that and still do. I think that South Korea turned a corner with the presidential elections of 1987. I think that South Korea is unlikely to go back to previous practices.

During the administration of No Tae Woo, when I was on the Korean desk, our bilateral relationship with South Korea had a much lower human rights component, whereas during the administration of Chun human rights were a significant component. The issue of human rights was always present in what we were trying to do in South Korea and with the South Koreans. It was much less the case after Chun left power.

Q: Do you recall whether we were trying to "nudge" No Tae Woo to do particular things?

DUNLOP: We had some trading problems. When the South Korean economy became a world scale economy, they tried as long as they could to have the benefits of "Third World" preferences and all of the advantages of being highly competitive on the world market. They tried to do this. By golly, they tried. [Laughter] It wasn't just the Clinton or the Bush administrations that tried to talk them out of it. The Reagan administration also tried. We were constantly engaged in a pulling and tugging game over things like the issue of intellectual property rights, which is another term for copyrights. Refusing to provide recognition and protection for copyrights is a "soft" way to provide protection to domestic industry. The South Koreans are great imitators and, like the Japanese, are prepared to take the products of other countries and then make them better. Then they sell them back around the world under the label of the original manufacturer, as in the case of "Nike" brand shoes, "Intel" computer chips, and so forth.

I remember an amusing account told me by the IBM representative in Seoul before I left to go back to Washington. It must have been some time in 1987, not long before I left. When he had arrived in South Korea in 1981, his job was to sell IBM equipment to the South Koreans and to watch, like a hawk, to be sure that they didn't "pirate" any of this material. In 1982 my friend had

a visit from whomever was the head of IBM at the time. My friend gave the IBM President a kind of "warning" briefing about the South Koreans. He said: "You know, these people are really about to start getting into the computer business, not just as consumers but as producers who are very competitive." This high IBM official almost fired my friend on the spot for making such a stupid statement. He said: "How could you believe that a South Korean could ever get into electronics? Are you serious?" This high IBM official evidently thought to himself: "What are we doing with a man like that in Seoul?" Well, my friend was still laughing about it a few years later. It had been kind of a scary experience to be so severely reprimanded by his boss. He was also wrong.

Other issues between the US and South Korea were in the security field. We had already drawn down our forces on the Korean peninsula to below 40,000. These consisted of one "heavy" [i. e., reinforced] division up on the DMZ, the 2nd Infantry Division, which was strengthened with more armor and more artillery than a standard US infantry division. We had the 7th Air Force, a very small force with its headquarters down in Osan with a couple of airfields. However, they had very advanced aircraft and were capable of being reinforced very quickly.

Q: This is the whole idea. If anything "happens" in the security field in South Korea, we would reinforce them. Air Forces can do that.

DUNLOP: Our whole posture on the Korean peninsula and the reason why the great spring exercise called "Team Spirit" was so important to us was that it was not a "combat" exercise. There were some combat aspects of it. They had tanks out in the field, the Signal Corps set up their field telephones, and trenches were dug. Mostly, though, it was a "reinforcement" exercise. Given the huge turnover in the US military every two years or so, about half of the officers were newly assigned to the 2nd Division, compared to the period of the previous "Team Spirit" exercise. The real purpose of this exercise was to train people in what they would need to do to bring heavy units all the way across the Pacific from places like Okinawa, Hawaii, and Ft. Lewis, WA, and integrate them with forces present in South Korea. The 9th Infantry Division stationed at Ft. Lewis is scheduled to be a "reinforcement" for South Korea and probably still is. Significant elements of the 25th Division on Oahu, Hawaii, were also involved in this exercise, along with Marine Corps units stationed on Okinawa. Our military needed to practice doing that.

The South Koreans were very concerned when we would say, as we would occasionally do, that for budgetary reasons we were not going to have Exercise Team Spirit this year (or any other year), or because the North Koreans were whining, screaming, or yelling up in North Korea about our alleged "aggressive" intentions. The South Koreans didn't want us to cancel "Team Spirit." In my view they were absolutely right. "Team Spirit" had more than just symbolic value, although it had plenty of that, too. So we had arguments with the South Koreans over "Team Spirit."

Once in a while the US military, on its own, would come up with an idea which the South Koreans didn't like. US military officers would propose cutting back on the resources available to us in South Korea, both in terms of manpower and equipment. One of the things that the Air Force did at the end of my tour there in 1987, and which I was very sorry to see, was to "decommission" the SR-71 aircraft. This is an extremely capable, very fast, high altitude

reconnaissance aircraft with super cameras.

Q: It was also called the "Black Bird."

DUNLOP: It flew regular missions all around the perimeter of North Korea from 1983 to 1986, during my assignment to Seoul. Around 7:00 PM you could hear the sonic "boom" as it would pass over Seoul. It was very reassuring.

Q: I remember hearing that.

DUNLOP: The SR-71 was a very expensive aircraft to fly. It had to have special fuels which cost a lot of money. It needed special, "back up" facilities which couldn't be used for anything else. So the US Air Force stood down the SR-71. The South Koreans asked, "Well, what are you putting up in its place?" We answered, "Oh, we have a satellite capability when we need it." Then we got into an argument about how much of our satellite capability would be diverted to replace the SR-71, rather than on just a "contingency" basis, because the SR-71 had been flying regularly.

Other than those issues we had few other really contentious issues with South Korea while I was Country Officer. Our relationship with the South Koreans always had its "rough edges," because what the South Koreans want they go after in a very hard edged way. I suppose we look unreasonable to them at times. However, those frictions are kind of inherent in dealing with them. I am sure that other of their Asian neighbors find them very aggressive and tough in many ways. Perhaps they "push the envelope" farther than they should in their own self interest.

We no longer had major issues of human rights. Had we had them, à la Chun, political pressures in the US might eventually have forced the total withdrawal of our forces from South Korea.

Q: While you're speaking of this, as South Korea was moving toward becoming a democracy, how did you view the two "Kim's" who made up the political opposition? One of the comments frequently made about the South Koreans is: "Are they really up to having a democracy?"

DUNLOP: I know and I'm not sure that I have any terribly good insights into that. Regarding democracy in South Korea, what you see now is what you get. There is a substantial amount of democracy in South Korea. There is real freedom of the press. The newspapers occasionally say scurrilous things about the Americans. They don't suffer any consequences from saying that. For example, they don't have their newsprint allowances cut back, as happens in countries where the governments "control" the press. The South Koreans have almost total freedom of assembly. I can't recall any instances where we as Americans received complaints that the South Koreans did not allow political activity in some provincial city, for example, in the sense that a political meeting or rally had been planned and then was denied a permit by the local authorities. Cases where people had been called in by the police and roughed up seemed to have stopped, although doubtless surveillance of the political opposition continues.

"Corruption," meaning the payment of large sums of money to whoever is in power by others who have other kinds of power, continued. We were quite aware of that. It had taken place under

every preceding regime in South Korea. The South Korean economy expanded, and the big companies, known as "Chebols," also grew. These are sort of multinational corporations. I think that the Japanese equivalent is "Daihatsu," although I am not exactly sure. The Chebol's became wealthier and had more money to contribute to the political party in power. Recently, there have been trials in South Korea and convictions of both President No Tae Woo and his predecessor, President Chun, on those grounds. I suspect that this kind of corruption is going on under President Kim Yong Sam as well. His son has been accused of taking bribes. Under Kim Yong Sam the South Koreans may have drawn back a little bit, given the notoriety which his predecessors attracted for corruption. However, that was that people assured themselves of access and influence. It's not totally unlike the way money is used in other countries, but in South Korea it takes place on a larger scale. The South Koreans haven't rid themselves of that characteristic. Call that "undemocratic" if you will. Certainly, a lot of political purists would say that it is a deformation of the political process. On the other hand, we have our own campaign fund raising scandals.

However, this kind of corruption did not ensure that President No Tae Woo could pick his successor, because he tried, and his hand picked successor lost. The man who was elected President was Kim Yong Sam, one of the two "Kim's" that I have spoken of, who, along with Kim Dae Jung, were the real leaders of the vocal opposition to Park Chung Hee in the 1960's and 1970's and to Chun in the 1980's. I got to know both of these Kim's quite well. After his return to South Korea Kim Dae Jung was my contact. We had a lot of discussion in the Embassy, probably in 1986, and especially back in the US, as to what level of contact this highly visible man would have with the Embassy. It was finally decided that I should be his principal point of contact. Then, on the very last week we were in Seoul, we had a July 4 reception. For the first time Kim Dae Jung was invited to the traditional July 4 reception. That was after President Chun had made his "mea culpa" speech and had withdrawn from office.

I don't know whether I've talked about my personal reactions to the two Kim's. I saw them on a regular basis. I saw Kim Yong Sam more frequently than Kim Dae Jung. I found Kim Yong Sam a much more congenial person than Kim Dae Jung. Both have "huge" ego's. Kim Dae Jung's ego is the larger of the two. I guess that both can prevaricate and tell you less than the whole truth. Certainly, that's true of both of them. However, Kim Dae Jung would blatantly lie, right straight to your face. I found that very difficult to accept. I suppose that I should be more sophisticated than that. However, when I find out that somebody has flat out told me a lie, and knew that he was telling me a lie, it upsets me. So I spent some of my time in South Korea being upset at Kim Dae Jung.

Somehow, Kim Yong Sam never irritated me so much. I had a pretty high opinion of the intelligence of both of them. Kim Yong Sam's critics, and, of course, anybody in a position of power in South Korea is going to catch a lot of snide sniping, call him "Stone head." They laugh and giggle at that and in that way they suggest that he is less than totally sharp, mentally. If he deserves the nickname "Stone head," it wasn't for that, it was for being stubborn. Kim Yong Sam was a stubborn man. Maybe that's what they meant. On reflection, though, I think that they meant that he was rather "stupid." They felt that he did "dumb" things because he didn't understand things quickly enough. I don't think that is the case. I think that both Kim Dae Jung and Kim Yong Sam are very smart people.

Both Kim's are courageous. They battled each other at a time when the odds were very heavily against them. When the odds got better, they kept on battling. They evidently felt that there was no reason not to criticize each other in that sense. One of the problems from which Kim Dae Jung suffered, once he became a legitimate player in South Korean politics, was that he was a regional politician. In fact, in the early days of South Korean history, following the end of World War II, they both were regional politicians. Kim Yong Sam came from down in Taegu. I guess that Kyongsang-Namdo is the name of the province. It is in the southeast quadrant of the country. Taegu was the place which had been the capital of the Shilla Dynasty, way back in the Middle Ages. It always had an elite group which could influence things throughout the country.

Kim Dae Jung came from Cholla-namdo, which is the province directly to the West of Chongsam-namdo, in the southwestern quadrant of the country. This is the poorest part of the country. It has often felt itself very misused, neglected, and mishandled by whoever was in power in the center of the country. Cholla folks are joked about by others as "country bumpkins."

Kim Yong Sam came on the scene as a Kyongsang-namdo politician. He attracts big crowds in Taegu and Pusan. Kim Dae Jung comes on the scene as a Cholla-namdo politician, and the big crowds supporting him are down in Kwangju. Kim Yong Sam overcame that reputation as a regional politician. He stopped drawing so heavily on his background as someone from Kyongsang-namdo province. He began to look out at the other four or five provinces in the country. By the time he was ready to make his bid for the presidency, he was no longer a "regional" politician. Kim Dae Jung never made this transition. He kept his ties to Kwangju, which you can't criticize, and he never sought to portray himself as anything else. Or, if he did, he did it in a clumsy and unconventional fashion. I think that was why, when the contest between the two of them turned out to be who would be the leading opposition politician and get "real" power, Kim Yong Sam had a big head start.

Q: Harry, what about the role of the students during this "changeover?" One often thinks of the role of the students, no matter what the circumstances, as rising up against the government during the spring of the year. Did you see any difference in the attitude of the students in South Korea at this time?

DUNLOP: As you say, student riots always seem to take place in the spring. They take place at other times, too, if there are reasons for them. However, everybody anticipates that the main riot season is in the spring. When I was in Seoul from 1983 to 1987, these riots were "keyed" to May 17, the anniversary of the Kwangju "uprising" or "massacre." The students would carefully orchestrate an increasing level of confrontations in the streets, which would reach their peak in the week of May 17. When the universities closed in June, the students would go home, and things would quiet down. The students would demonstrate on several themes, but consistently on the Kwangju incident.

Those responsible for the Kwangju incident had not been brought to justice. They still exercised their power to hide what had happened in those bloody days. And the Americans were regarded by the students as complicit in this. So the bundle of Kwangju-related issues was always a stimulus for riots. The students would always make this one of their major points when they

were out in the streets. Until Chun left office, commonly-used slogans were, "Down with Chun," "Down with the Dictator Chun," "Down with the American-supported Dictator Chun," "Down with the Military Government," "We, the Elite of This Country, Can No Longer Tolerate the Embarrassment of Being Subject to a Colonel in the Army." In their view, nothing was lower than a colonel in the Army. This was the point of view of the students. I saw one other slogan which said, "It Is No Less a Disgrace to Be Subject to a Government Run by a Colonel Than by a Sergeant." By that they sarcastically pointed out that Park Chung Hee had been a sergeant in the pre-World War II Police or Army. Chun had been a colonel for a long time before he seized power and appointed himself a general. Both socially unacceptable backgrounds to the students.

Then there was the issue of the reunification of Korea. On this subject the student slogans would say: "Reunification Is the Sacred Goal of the Korean People." They felt that anyone who stood in the way of reunification was an enemy of the people. Now, who stood in the way of reunification, according to the students? Well, certainly not the North Koreans. They wanted to reunify the country. The students said that it was the South Korean Government, under the tutelage of the Americans who, for all of their nefarious reasons, benefit from the division of the country. The students also criticize the Japanese, too, who, of course, want everything "bad" for the Korean people. The Japanese were much more the friends and allies of the Americans, and the Americans were much more their patrons. The Japanese cannot get away with pretending to be for Korea.

So these three issues: down with the dictator Chun, Kwangju, and the reunification of Korea were always present in the student rioting, in varying degrees and at various times. The theme, "Down with Chun" went away when Chun left office. There was a significant decrease in interest in the Kwangju incident after Chun left power, because Chun was regarded as the "murderer" of the people killed at Kwangju.

The reunification issue continues to be a sufficient stimulus for these demonstrations. It seems to me that this was the major motif of the rather severe demonstrations in the spring of 1996. I am not really aware of the exact scope of them. You read only fragmentary reports in the press about those things. Apparently, some of the violence had not been observed over the preceding three or four years. Violence returned to the streets in 1996. When I say "violence," I must add that there is always an element of violence in these demonstrations. There is a sustained confrontation, involving deliberate provocation and taunting of the police with the throwing of fire bombs and bottles of burning gasoline or kerosene [Molotov cocktails], which cause some injuries.

I've seen these demonstrations. I've seen them closer than I ever wanted to be. I was always surprised at the lack of serious injury or death in these demonstrations, because they are terrible to look at. However, they don't usually kill people.

Q: Speaking of the time when you were dealing with demonstrations during your tour of duty in Seoul, how serious did we think they were? Aside from the Kwangju incident and the denunciations of the Chun "dictatorship," here was the elite of the country calling for something which is or should be anathema, as Americans see it. That is, joining up with North Korea.

DUNLOP: Their objective may not have been simply to join with North Korea.

Q: Yet when the students have passed through this particular phase, they become the leaders of South Korea. This pressure for reunification of Korea seems to disappear. How did we look at this?

DUNLOP: I think that's a very personal thing because I don't think that anybody has a good explanation for this phenomenon. I've never read anything written by a sociologist or political scientist which adequately describes this phenomenon. Apparently, it's very similar to what went on in the 1960's in Japan. The Japanese students were members of the "elite" and often attended Kyoto or Edo University. I may have gotten those names wrong. They were destined to be the CEO's [Chief Executive Officers] of companies like Mitsubishi and Sumitomo. They would go out and try to bring down the Japanese Government. I don't have a good explanation for this phenomenon in South Korea and Japan, where there can be such a quick turnaround.

I think that we're all familiar with the aphorisms which, I think, probably have a lot of truth to them. Young people have passions and are usually "radical." When they grow older, they become more conservative. You know, they say: "If you're not a liberal when you are under age 30, you don't have a heart. If you're not a conservative by the time you're 40, you don't have a head." Some of that, I'm sure, is true, but it seems rather dramatic...

Q: But on the practical side, how did the Political Section and also the Embassy in general view these developments? Did they see these things as something to be endured, the season, the result of hurricanes, or what?

DUNLOP: At a point about half way through my tour in Seoul, the Political Section wrote two or three airgrams on the general subject of "Anti-Americanism." While I didn't draft all of these, I was the stimulus for having them prepared. I remember that when I presented this project to the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission], Paul Cleveland, was very skeptical about it. He was not so sure that we really should do this. However, I ultimately persuaded him. I think that he liked the drafts of these reports. In many ways he was very much looking over his shoulder toward Washington and gauging how these reports would be viewed or used back there. He was a politically sensitive bureaucrat in that sense. He came around to see that, if we did this carefully enough, it would be useful.

One of the things that we managed to do in these airgrams was to point out some of the inexplicable nature of this apparently "anti-American" sentiment which we had observed. One of the considerations was: how could it be felt so strongly when the students were in their 20's but there were almost no signs of it when they were in their 30's and 40's? The people in the South Korean Foreign Ministry used to tell me how they had participated in student riots. They were my contemporaries. Then they would laugh and say, "Well, maybe it was a 'rite of passage.'" I think that it probably was. If your elder brother went out and got a badge of honor by being hit by a tear gas canister, maybe you, in turn, would feel the urge to do the same thing.

The conclusions of this series of airgrams, which received some favorable attention in Washington, strangely enough, was that there were reasons for anti-Americanism in South Korea. These reasons may not all have been apparent to Americans, but it was not an illogical

and inexplicable phenomenon. The reasons for it went back at least to the Taft-Katsura Agreement of 1905. When President Theodore Roosevelt sponsored the Portsmouth [NH] negotiations to bring the Russo-Japanese War to an end, there was a "side agreement" signed, which was known as the Taft-Katsura Agreement. William Howard Taft was then the American Secretary of State. Katsura was the Foreign Minister of Japan. This agreement was contained in a secret, agreed memorandum in which the United States, in effect, approved of Japanese "suzerainty over" Korea, in return for a Japanese disavowal, also in principle, of any aggressive intentions toward the Philippines. This agreement has been read by some South Koreans as a malicious, malign plot by the Americans to impose Japanese colonial rule at its worst on them. I doubt that Secretary Taft had any real knowledge of Korea or knew much about Japanese administrative practices in Korea, which probably hadn't even developed at that time.

From our point of view the Taft-Katsura agreement was just a way of getting the Japanese not to cause trouble for us in the Philippines in a way that we would both understand, though it was not explicit. We had just taken over the Philippines and still faced an insurgency there which became known as the "War of the Philippine Insurrection." I don't know why we felt that the Japanese might have an interest in making trouble for us in the Philippines.

However, anti-Americanism in South Korea goes back to that, and it's an historic fact, although you can argue with South Koreans that the Taft-Katsura agreement didn't have the explicit, anti-South Korean content alleged or that we were "plotting" to "do them down." I think that we just ignored South Korean interests. That alone is enough to enrage many Koreans.

Q: I've seen references to the Taft-Katsura agreement surface quite recently in the "World Wide Web" in diplomatic history. It's very much that.

DUNLOP: Well, we didn't do anything for the Koreans during the 45 years of Japanese colonial rule in Korea, until the Japanese attacked us in 1941, and then we fought the war elsewhere, which was fully to the Koreans' advantage. If we had ever had to confront the Japanese on Korean soil, it would have been a horrible experience for the Koreans. Syngman Rhee lived in the United States for many years and pleaded for Korean interests at the conference in Paris which produced the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. He went to Paris with the American delegation headed by President Woodrow Wilson. He urged that Korea's interests should be recognized, and so forth. He got a cold shoulder.

At the end of WW II, only a tiny group of Americans even knew where Korea was. They were virtually all connected with Christian missionary activity. One of the things that has worked to our advantage in Korea is the missionary effort, which I am not sure has been duplicated elsewhere in the world. I don't pretend to know what has been the impact of our missionaries in Africa or even in China. However, I suspect that it has been a lot more controversial than missionary activity in Korea. The Christian missionaries who were in Korea were mainly Protestants, either Methodists or Presbyterians. They were obviously highly dedicated to the well being of the Koreans. They often came out to Korea with medical degrees and had prepared themselves for serving the people. While they were in no position to challenge Japanese authority, they were still seen as "friends" of the South Koreans. That has done the US some good. So I would always throw that into the pot whenever the South Korean students would

begin to rant and rave about various things.

Then, of course, something else that the South Korean students would accuse us of is "imposing" Syngman Rhee on them just after World War II. They said that this denied them the right to run their own affairs through their own representatives who had been democratically elected in village councils and through the free operation of forces which Syngman Rhee ruthlessly suppressed.

Did we impose Syngman Rhee on the South Koreans? I think the word "impose" is wrong. Can it be looked at as a rational basis for understanding why South Koreans looked for reasons to object to the role of the Americans in their history? I think that is a stretched interpretation, but it's a possible one. Certainly, it's one promoted by people who propagate an anti-American point of view. So you've got those reasons: we allegedly "sold them out" to the Japanese when we refused to hear their pleas and when the Japanese administered Korea in an obnoxious fashion. When we did come into the Korean peninsula in 1945, all we did was to impose another feudal dynasty on them, that of Syngman Rhee. What about the good things that we did in South Korea, including sacrificing American blood so that they wouldn't fall under the totally obnoxious and malign rule of North Korea? There were also the enormous amount of economic aid we poured into South Korea, our continuing commitment to their security, and our earnest efforts to promote human rights on the Korean peninsula. These can all be ignored if you want to ignore them. So the students who want to go out and scream about the Americans can do so, because they are human beings and can pick and choose the elements of history that appeal most to them.

I think that, insofar as our view of this phenomenon in the Embassy was concerned, no, student rioting was not a serious, political problem for the United States. Not until June 1987, at least. This was something that we were going to have to live with and to alleviate to the degree that we could. One of the reasons why we prepared this series of airgrams I mentioned previously was the "white paper" on Kwangju which I have already referred to.

Q: We have already covered that.

DUNLOP: It took several more years before it came out, and I think that it had some good effect. I can't say that every South Korean student has read this "white paper" by now and is therefore deeply convinced that the Americans were not only not complicit in the Kwangju incident but were outraged and did what they could to ameliorate the situation. This is a fact.

I think that it is still true that the student demonstrations are not a serious threat to the stability of the South Korean Government in Seoul. If the contrary were true, that would make it of concern to the United States. I don't know enough about what happened in the spring of 1996 to change that judgment. What I do know of what happened in the spring of 1996 sounds more like the one in 1987. The demonstrations in the spring of 1987 were the most serious and widespread. It was that rioting which led Chun to revoke his decision to declare martial law and eventually to withdraw from the presidency. Obviously, the situation in the streets in 1987 was beginning to have a profound, political impact on the South Korean Government. The demonstrations drove Chun from power. That's what the students will tell you: "We did it!" So they feel that they will keep on doing it, and they have some justification for that claim. You might say, "Well, there are

better ways to do it."

Q: The students are a real factor in South Korea at the present time, as opposed to other places where the students don't really have much influence. As you say, the students in South Korea deposed two Presidents.

DUNLOP: Who was the other President, beside Chun?

Q: Syngman Rhee.

DUNLOP: I guess so. I hadn't thought of him. What I've read about that is that the student unrest...

Q: Was significant in bringing about the fall of Syngman Rhee.

DUNLOP: And, of course, for the students who did it they'll always attribute the critical significance to it that they want. I think that the North Koreans have been successful in their propaganda in South Korea in only one respect. They have not been successful in portraying North Korea as a "paradise." What the South Koreans know about North Korea is enough to make almost everybody realize that it's a very tough place to live. What the North Korean have done successfully is carry out a campaign of "negative advertising," like "negative campaigning" in the US They have been able to emphasize the fact that there are no foreign troops in North Korea, no "mixed blood" children running around the streets of North Korean towns, that they are independent and on their own, doing the Korean thing the Korean way, while the people in South Korea are the "slaves" of the Americans. They have convinced many South Koreans that they have allowed the Americans to "defile" South Korean women, and that is a very, very strong theme in all of this. Otherwise, they have convinced many South Koreans that South Korean leaders have "sold" themselves to the interests of the Americans.

I guess that brings me to another element in the anti-American phenomenon. There is definitely a racist or, if you will, ethnocentric element in the Korean character, North and South. I think that anti-Americanism is very easy to stimulate, simply because Americans and Koreans are racially different. Each regards the other as "inferior" in different ways.

Q: Harry, in the interest of people who will be reading documents in the Department of State and so forth, you raised a question about Paul Cleveland being concerned about the impact of these airgrams on anti-Americanism back in Washington. Using this instance, could you describe why, when you are reporting to the Department, you are not just a reporting officer. You have to bear in mind that when a report goes back to Washington, it could have an impact which might go beyond its impact as information. It may have other consequences which you have to keep in mind. Therefore, anybody who is looking at the official records of the United States has to keep this factor in mind. I may not be making myself clear.

DUNLOP: Not at all. You are making yourself quite clear. Let me think about the possible rationale which Paul Cleveland might have had for being somewhat hesitant about sending on these airgrams on anti-Americanism in South Korea. To Paul's credit, he agreed to send them on

to the Department, despite his reservations.

If I'm not mistaken, these airgrams were sent back to the Department in 1986, which was an election year in the US. The office of President was not up for reelection, but all of the members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate were up for election or re-election. Looking at the situation in retrospect, I am not suggesting that the Reagan administration was teetering on the edge of a major defeat in the 1986 elections. However, tensions rise on the eve of elections in the US, and nerves get frayed. There had always been opposition in the US, both in Washington and elsewhere, including on some college campuses, to American Government policy toward South Korea.

On the Left, all American administrations were viewed in those post 1970 days as having a "malign" component in their policies. The simplified version of this view was: "Wherever we could find a dictator, we would support him. We haven't met one dictator whom we didn't like and were not prepared to support." South Korea, with its record of authoritarian government and harsh treatment of the opposition, was certainly a target. There was kind of a professional "lobby" which took this point of view. I am not being critical when I speak of a "lobby." However, basically, the members of this "lobby" earned their living in institutes and "think tanks" in Washington which watched for things that they could criticize, write "Op-Ed" pieces about, hold conferences on, and get foundation money to pay their per diem and travel expenses to go to South Korea. I'm not saying that shouldn't happen. However, this is the background against which we were doing our reporting from Seoul.

Ambassador "Dixie" Walker was the first non-career Ambassador to South Korea since we established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea in 1948. He was a Republican, appointed by a Republican President [Ronald Reagan], though his background was much more academic than it was political. He was prominent enough to be well known around Washington. He had made his enemies in the academic world, talking to people about China and all of that. There were people in the American academic world, in the political world, who were looking for ways and means of getting Ambassador Walker and the Reagan administration.

So I can imagine Paul Cleveland's concern that in this off-year election period we were proposing to send in a series of airgrams which were probably very readable, although off the beaten path, and which might get a wider circulation. The "word" might get around Washington that the American Embassy in Seoul believes that South Koreans "hate us" because our policies are "bad." Paul Cleveland saw a certain danger of that kind of interpretation getting around. Once he saw the airgrams themselves and thought the matter through a little bit, he saw the utility of doing what we were doing, in pointing out the fact that "anti-Americanism" was not just something which just happened every so often, and the Embassy was looking for something to say because it had an opportunity to address some of those issues, such as the Kwangju incident. So Paul Cleveland allowed the series of airgrams to go on to the Department of State.

I have never been in an Embassy where I felt that the political reporting was seriously distorted for any reason. Neither have I ever been in an Embassy where I thought that all of the political reporting was "perfect" or "good." From time to time I had to fight some battles over reporting. There were relatively bigger battles in South Vietnam, particularly when I had a superior named

Martin Herz and another officer named Josiah Bennett, who was a real "nervous Nellie." I had to fight some battles but, generally speaking, I won them.

Q: But these are battles in which you need to weigh the balance of advantage. There is always a decision as to whether to report something back to Washington. You need to consider the possibility that the report will "leak" and end up causing you more grief than you intended.

DUNLOP: I was probably one of the more naive officers in the Foreign Service during my time in South Vietnam, because I only very slowly began to appreciate these considerations. If they had come to my attention, I might have said, "Oh, yeah." I think that my views in this regard developed slowly because I rarely had any real run ins with my superiors. I was also at a low enough level that it would not have been primarily my concern, in any case. When you get to be a DCM or an Ambassador, you have to begin to consider how your "constituencies" back in Washington look at you, partly through the prism of the Embassy's reporting. This is an important consideration. DCM's and Ambassadors wouldn't be human if they didn't want to be seen in a good light. Nor would they be good public servants if they allowed this human instinct to override their responsibilities.

In our reporting we were also trying to persuade other elements in the US Government that our views were "right." I think that this is true of any Foreign Service Mission abroad or of any Country Office in the Department of State. There are only limited resources in the US Government to support foreign policy. If you believe that there is some important issues with your country of assignment, such as maintaining a continued American military presence, which is expensive, you are always concerned about pressing the powers that be sufficiently to get at the public trough and get your interests adequately funded. You are trying to get in there to get at those resources. Other people are also doing that. If the Embassy reports something about corruption in the country you are concerned with or the government to which you are accredited or about anti-Americanism among the students, some people in Washington will say that's not the program we should be supporting as much as "my program." So let's take, say, 6,000 troops out of South Korea and put them, say, in Norway. That is an oversimplification. There are not only the political pressures which can affect an administration in an election year. If we are not doing the "right" thing in the country about which you are concerned, and your Embassy says that you are not, this may affect the jockeying for resources within the government.

Q: Harry, you mentioned Allan Cranston, who was a Democratic Senator from California. You said that he was influential during the time that you were dealing with South Korea. Could you explain this further?

DUNLOP: Senator Cranston must have "hated" President Reagan with a passion.

Q: They were both from California.

DUNLOP: Yes. Cranston was also getting to be an old and crabby man by this time. He was a very unpleasant person to be around. Some people whom you don't like very much are not hard to be around. But for me Senator Cranston was very hard to be around. Cranston was a spokesman and a very loud spokesman in Congress for this group which was very critical of

South Korea. We were always having to bat back high, inside fast balls from Senator Cranston, or stimulated by Cranston from the academic side. This was where Cranston got his "blows" in most tellingly, although fortunately he wasn't very successful. I had an opportunity to see him throwing those punches during my last months as Country Director for Korea.

Jim Lilley was going to be reassigned in 1989, following the 1988 presidential elections. He had been Ambassador to South Korea for a year or a year and a half, following "Dixie" Walker. He was being assigned by the Bush administration as Ambassador to China. Don Gregg was the nominee to replace Jim Lilley as Ambassador to South Korea. Jim Lilley was a career CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] officer on the clandestine operations side of the agency. So was Don Gregg. Except for the assignment of Richard Helms to be Ambassador to Iran, I don't know any other cases where career "DO" [Directorate of Operations] officers became Ambassadors, though there probably are some. However, Lilley and Gregg were two former DO officers assigned as Ambassador to a very high visibility post, back to back, in this atmosphere of our allegedly coddling dictators.

Fortunately for Don Gregg, good things had already begun to happen in South Korea. That is, Chun had stepped down politically, and some of that pressure had been reduced. However, Senator Cranston set out to derail Don Gregg's nomination as Ambassador to South Korea. He dragged out the nomination for six months. Don Gregg had resigned from the CIA in 1979, about the same time that Jim Lilley resigned. Jim had come back into government service in the Department of State in 1981 or 1982, under the Reagan administration, as a DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] or something like that. Then he worked himself into being appointed Ambassador to South Korea in 1987. In 1989 Lilley was to be recalled and reassigned as Ambassador to China. Meanwhile, Don Gregg, who had been working for Vice President George Bush as Bush's senior foreign policy adviser, was then nominated to replace Jim Lilley as Ambassador to South Korea. So here were two career CIA officers, although both of them had resigned and been out of CIA for some time. They were scheduled to go to sensitive, important posts.

I guess that Senator Cranston saw this as an opportunity, as ambassadorial appointments often offer, to "embarrass" the Reagan administration. Senator Cranston dug out some stuff about US support for the "contra" activity in Nicaragua which he was trying to pin on President Bush. He was trying to pin it on President Bush through Don Gregg, who personally knew a man named Felix Rodriguez, a CIA agent acting as a direct contact person with the "contras." Gregg knew Rodriguez personally and had seen him in Washington a couple of times during this time. It was Senator Cranston's contention that: a) Rodriguez would have known about all of the alleged, "illegal activities" in support of the contras (shipments of arms to Iran and all of that), and b) would have conveyed all of this information to Gregg, who, in turn, would have conveyed all of it to then Vice President Bush. And Bush's statement that he knew nothing about all of this was, therefore, a lie.

Gregg's contention was that his contacts with Rodriguez were purely social and were not very frequent. He said that Rodriguez may not have known much about alleged illegal activities in support of the contras, anyway. Rodriguez certainly didn't tell Gregg, so he, Gregg, knew nothing about this subject. Therefore, Gregg couldn't have told Bush in any case. So here was a

"clash" between Senator Cranston and Gregg. I can't remember all of the tactics that Senator Cranston used to influence the investigation of Don Gregg's background, including subpoenaing then Vice President Bush's and Gregg's personal papers, legal arguments, and all of that. Finally, there were very contentious, public hearings in which Senator Cranston showed himself, to me, as a very bad human being. He was not only malicious in intent but was malicious in style. But Cranston lost! I think that the vote to report out Gregg's nomination to the full Senate was something like nine in favor and six opposed. There was a great sigh of relief at this outcome. Don Gregg is a very nice man, a warm and charming personality. He proved to be a fine Ambassador. Don has a very lovely wife, and they had a buffet ready at home, to which all of the "workers in the trenches" who had helped Don's confirmation were invited.

Q: What was your role in this process?

DUNLOP: First of all, we gave him office space and secretarial support in our offices in the Department. Desk officers do this for every potential Ambassador who is going through the "vetting" and then the nomination process, followed by confirmation hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. However, there was almost nothing else that we could do to help him with this part of his life. We made sure that he was well informed on all of the strictly South Korean issues that he needed to know about, so he wouldn't be "blind sided" and look like that poor Ambassadorial nominee during the Eisenhower administration who couldn't pronounce the name of the Prime Minister of the country to which he was assigned.

Q: This was a nominee named "Gluck," who couldn't pronounce the name of "Bandaranaike," the Prime Minister of Ceylon at the time.

DUNLOP: I believe that Don Gregg was very honest in denying these allegations of complicity in "lying" about what he told Vice President Bush and, of course, that Vice President Bush had also "lied" about what he knew regarding the contras. I was concerned that Gregg would be so preoccupied with this that he wouldn't prepare himself regarding South Korean issues. We had a lot of material to give him. He appeared to be well acquainted with the issues and could show that he was well informed. He needed to avoid becoming too distracted by the Cranston charges. So we helped him as much as we could. Don Gregg was very appreciative of what we did. I always get Christmas cards from him. I don't know what's happened to him now.

Q: He's still around Washington.

DUNLOP: I've seen him interviewed in some connection. Not quite as often as Jim Lilley, who appears more frequently on TV talk shows.

ISABEL CUMMING
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Seoul (1984-1985)

Isabel Cumming was raised in Boston, Massachusetts. She joined the Foreign

Service in 1957. Ms. Cumming held positions in Iran, Korea, Sweden, Poland, Japan, Yugoslavia, and Germany. This interview was conducted by G. Lewis Schmidt on January 15, 1990.

CUMMING: I had planned on retiring after Germany but I decided to take another assignment and went back to Seoul. I will tell you that after a 25 years absence, it was quite a shock.

They say you never can go back, but I went back to a country I didn't even know, because all the shacks that I had talked about or mentioned previously were now beautiful skyscrapers. The Bando Hotel, which was a very little six story thing, probably the highest one, is now no longer, but there is the Lotte Hotel, which is 15 or 20 stories high.

The Chosen Hotel is eight times the size of what it was. It was fantastic. The Embassy was in a building that we had built while I was in Seoul before. USOM (the US aid agency) had built two buildings up near the capital: USOM was in one side and the other was for the Korean government. The USIS was in the old Embassy building and we were in the whole building instead of just one floor. We had a marvelous library which was on one floor -- the second floor and it was used very, very extensively. Of course, now the libraries have grown so that you can listen to tapes, you can listen to records. They have all kinds of things that you can do in the libraries today.

I was there when the students took the library over in 1985 and stayed in there for a weekend, which was quite an experience and one I didn't need in my last tour in the Foreign Service. They were protesting the actions of the Chun government in Kwangju and the American support for that government. USIA had an office in Kwangju and the students wanted to know what we had done down there. They came in at noon. Duane Davidson, who was the deputy PAO, and I were the only two in the office. Our information officer was there, but he was on the other side of the building. I got a call from the librarian who said, "I have 60 revolting students down here. What should I do?"

I didn't quite comprehend what he was saying. I said, "I am sorry, Mr. Kim" -- I think that was his name -- everybody in Korea is named Kim -- I said, "I don't understand you." He said, "I'm not kidding you. I have got 60 revolting students." So I repeated it and Duane heard me.

So I said: "Here, you talk to Mr. Davidson." Then I went and locked doors because I thought if it was true, I did not want the students to come upstairs. But they weren't interested in doing that. They were too busy locking the doors downstairs and moving the shelves around so that nobody could come in and get them.

They were in the library and all they wanted to do was stay where they were. They were going to camp in the office and our library because they had a wonderful place, because they had all the paper they wanted with our mimeograph paper down there and they could put all the signs they wanted to put up on the window. They had the best propaganda outfit going you would want to believe.

I called Bernie immediately and the security officer; the Marines came down, the security officer

came down and, of course, the police were notified. Bernie and our political officer came over and they tried to get to the students. We had a way of getting into the elevator, but the elevator would not stop on the library floor so that visitors could not use the elevator. But we could stop it on the second floor.

So anyway we found a way to talk to the students and tried to get them out, but they were only interested in getting the Americans to apologize for what they had done in Kwangju. Of course, Bernie and the political officer spent most of the time talking to the students and trying to explain to them that, we hadn't done what they said we did. But they would not move and finally said that they wanted to talk to the Ambassador. We told them they could talk to the Ambassador if they would come out of the library; then the Ambassador would talk to them.

This was on Friday afternoon and we finally got them out on Monday. We all worked around the clock and just stayed there and tried to keep Washington and the Korean government informed and made sure that the Koreans didn't trash our building because that wasn't what we wanted.

We wanted the students to leave quietly. They finally agreed to leave and when they left, they had made headbands for their heads with sayings on them. Our papers, our crayons and paints were being used and they snake danced out rather than coming out quietly as they said they would. But they went out to waiting buses that took them away. They didn't tear the library and the offices up per se. They pulled -- one of the radiators was broken and -- but they really didn't wreck the place entirely -- we thought they would do a lot worse. The rugs either had to be replaced -- I think cleaning them was too much. During the siege we were sending food into them and we had coffee going to them because we were trying to be kind to them to show them that we were trying to get them out. But they didn't really do the damage -- they didn't tear it up -- they didn't damage a book. Not a book was damaged. As a matter of fact, they put all the books back on the shelves. But the librarian had to close the library because the students didn't put them back in the right shelves as you can well imagine. They weren't in order -- but they did put them all back on the shelves. No damage. They weren't destructive. It was a pretty hectic weekend.

From then on we knew that things would go a bit downhill with the students. The students were protesting but not to the extent that they are doing now. They certainly didn't come to the embassy or to the USIS office to the extent that they did before.

We -- the US -- is to blame for everything. The students did quiet down during the Olympics. I was not there for the Olympics; I had left. But that -- they are now entirely different. But you wonder what they are after because they have everything in that country now. Of course they want to go up to North Korea.

We did have some defections from the North Koreans. One evening I was driving home when I found all the traffic stopped because everyone was looking up at the sky. I looked up and saw a plane. You never see a plane flying over Seoul but that was the time that a North Korean plane came down and, of course, they looked after it and followed that plane until it landed. It was a North Korean defector that came down.

But Korea has grown -- they are very anti-American. They are very anti-American military. Our

military is very well -- I mean there is no question that we have got lots of military there because you see them if you go shopping -- and the Americans, of course, pay everything in dollars today. When I was there before, we couldn't spend a dollar. You had to use the currency of the country. Now everything was dollars, even on the local market. You can buy anything you want with the dollar and they want your dollars. Before they wouldn't take it but now they will. They want it. They don't want Korean money.

I felt that I should be using the currency of the country and they would take it but they would tell you next time -- like your maids, they didn't want anything but American money because they had more confidence in it. The embassy has no objection to our using it. I questioned the practice -- as a matter of fact, some of the people in the Embassy were paying their maids not only the money but also with coffee every month and with sugar and with things that Koreans couldn't get from the economy. This was commissary stuff. I don't believe in that at all; I objected strongly to that practice.

I had a hard time getting a maid because they would say to me I didn't pay in coffee. But I said that I would not. I just didn't think it was right that we would do that.

But this a new era. Korea was a very well-developed country. It was a beautiful country. When I was there 25 years before, there wasn't a tree in the place. You would see the little men going up with their A-frames picking up anything they could find that would look like a branch. Under Park Chung Hee they had Arbor Day and they planted a tree every year -- every family went out and planted a tree and now the country is just gorgeous with trees.

Today I think you will find every American business company is there. Of course, all the big Polo shirts, the Liz Claiborne, you name it. They are all there because they can get the people to work and do good work and that is where everything comes from.

I mentioned the anti-Americanism present now. I don't know what caused this except that I think they have been infiltrated because certainly the American Embassy and USIS certainly have worked hard but the Koreans have really taken an anti-attitude; they just dislike us intensely.

GEORGE G. B. GRIFFIN
Minister-Counselor (Commercial)
Seoul (1984-1986)

George G.B. Griffin was born in Turkey in 1934. He graduated with a BA from the University of South Carolina in 1957, and served in the U.S. Navy as a lieutenant overseas from 1957 to 1959. After entering the Foreign Service in 1959, his postings abroad have included Naples, Colombo, Calcutta, Islamabad, Lahore, Kathmandu, Kabul, Lagos, Seoul, Nairobi and Milan. Mr. Griffin was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: Okay. You were in Seoul from when to when, '84 to...?

GRIFFIN: The end of August 1984 until the end of May 1986; not quite two years.

Q: Your position was what?

GRIFFIN: I was Minister-Counselor for Commercial Affairs, or the senior commercial officer there for FCS, as I had been in Lagos.

Q: In the first place, what was the situation in Korea in 1984 when you arrived there, internally and...?

GRIFFIN: It was a fairly normal time in Korea. President Chun, Doo Hwan was hanging on to power in a semi-dictatorial way, but the economy was beginning to boom, which was what I focused on. At the time, Korea was our seventh largest trade partner. It was behind Nigeria in that sense, as our annual trade deficit with Korea at that time was about \$3.5 billion; the one with Nigeria had been more than \$4 billion.

I was happy to get the job was because at the time I was an FSO-1, and the job was an MC position. I was promoted to OC shortly after I arrived, which made me look a bit better to others. The FCS section was large, with a permanent staff of 32 FSOs and FSNs, plus many contractors we could call upon at the drop of a hat. We needed them because we had some 9,000 to 10,000 individual visitors a year to our section, plus about 60 to 70 trade promotion events a year. Our primary function was to try to redress the trade deficit. In my first year we managed to identify and facilitate sales contracts for over \$25 billion in U.S. exports, which narrowed the deficit considerably.

It was, as always, a tense time on the Korean Peninsula. Most of our visitors requested a trip to the DMZ – the demilitarized zone – to take a look at the North Koreans. It was always tense there. During my tour, there were a couple of incidents along the DMZ and one or two more at sea. The Koreans spotted a North Korean submarine close to one of their beaches and captured some people sneaking ashore. That sort of thing still goes on today. That was the security setting.

Then there were several trade issues of mounting importance. One was protection of intellectual property. We found several Korean firms and individuals pirating American intellectual property. A larger issue was market access. The Koreans talked a good line about free trade, and then made sure we couldn't sell much. This applied to insurance, music, movies, and many other things. We mounted aggressive campaigns on both fronts. Our market access approach was soon adopted by FCS headquarters in Washington and formed the basis of an instruction to all posts. The idea was to educate Koreans about our government policies and try to convince them that cooperation with us was better than constant resistance and throwing up trade barriers. We worked hand-in-hand on that with the American Chamber of Commerce. Because of my role, I was the first Senior Commercial Officer in Korea invited to join the Board of Governors of AmCham. That proved very helpful in getting many things done. For example, we worked very closely with IBM, which had one of the biggest American presences in Korea. When we learned that AmCham policy papers were being copied and sent to Korean firms, a joint IBM and Embassy technical team devised a way to protect them.

The Ambassador at the time was Dixie Walker, a political appointee from the academic world. He was new to Korea. By that, I mean he had been there a couple of years before I arrived, but Korea was new to him as a scholarly subject. He was in the Army in World War II, and afterwards was in Japan in the occupation forces for awhile, so he spoke some Japanese. He had learned some Korean. The DCM was Paul Cleveland, who will reappear into my life a couple of times later.

I started by trying to make more efficient use of the large staff, and to meet most top business leaders – the heads of the so-called *choebals*, conglomerates like Samsung, Daewoo, Lucky Goldstar – and political leaders. Perhaps our best success came in inter-agency and inter-office collaboration in the Embassy. The credit goes mostly to Paul Cleveland. I arrived at the same time as the new Agricultural Attaché, Dan Conable, and the new Economic Counselor, Don McConnell. Relations between our predecessors had been not warm, and Paul was determined that wouldn't continue on our watch. It didn't. We got along beautifully and collaborated on many things, which I think made a real difference in redressing the trade balance. I found that FCS was not well organized to focus on the priorities that headquarters and I thought were the most important, so I reorganized it. I got headquarters to increase our budget to hire five more people – two FSOs and three FSNs. I expanded the FCS programs around the country, opening offices in Pusan and Kwangju, but didn't station permanent staff there. We had a part-time FSN at the Consulate in Pusan, but in Kwangju we simply put a commercial library at the USIS post. We made frequent visits to both posts to meet with business people, which was appreciated by the consuls in charge.

As a member of the Board of Governors of the American Chamber of Commerce I went to several meetings of APCAC – the Asia Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce. These were in places as far away and diverse as Pusan; Singapore; Jakarta; Auckland, New Zealand; Maui, Hawaii; Anchorage, Alaska; and even Charleston, South Carolina. Each was focused on a different issue, and I made speeches on behalf of both the Korea AmCham and Uncle Sam at some of them. In a different mode I convinced USTR – the office of the U.S. Trade Representative – to postpone two Section 301 cases against Korea. These involved issues of market access and intellectual property, where USTR wanted to impose immediate sanctions, but I managed to jawbone them out of it.

Q: How did Korea at that time close down access? What was the technique they used?

GRIFFIN: Well, let's take movies, for example. The Korean Government agreed to allow the import of American movies. But then movie theater owners would refuse to import any, saying that their customers didn't like American movies. Or they would refuse to dub them in Korean. Or air-conditioning in theaters would mysteriously conk out during the first showing. Some distributors would say, "Sorry, we have our own movies." They were trying to protect the tiny Korean movie industry, which was not doing very well. But we knew from experience that most American movies, no matter how bad, would pack cinemas. To Koreans, they were something new that they hadn't seen, and they liked to check them out.

Q: I would think there would be a force within the theater owners saying, "Hell, we want these

American movies because the more people come, the more revenue there is.”

GRIFFIN: So you would think, but one owner even let snakes loose in a theater to drive the people out; it was a great scene.

Q: Well, how did you deal with it?

GRIFFIN: We kept pushing. We held out the threat of a tough Section 301 case, in which we would ban certain Korean imports into the United States. Finally, exporters of those products managed to put an arm on the movie producers and distributors and convince them to play ball because it would cost the country too much. The same with insurance: AIG, an American insurance company which had its origins in Shanghai, China, wanted to come into Korea. At the time, there were no American insurance companies there. There were a few Korean companies, which sold very expensive life insurance. Koreans were using traditional family and clan systems to cover themselves, but that didn't include much in the way of life insurance. Women would pool their money and sell their family and friends very cheap coverage. They wouldn't pay out much; perhaps enough for a simple funeral. AIG claimed it had a system that would be not much more expensive and would, because of their broader worldwide resources, provide better benefits. That took a lot of effort, but we got AIG in the door, working with the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry. A very distinguished economist and gentleman, Nam Duk-Woo, was the head of it. He had been Prime Minister shortly before I got there, and understood what it was about, which helped a lot. I spent hours with him and his staff, discussing how to go about it. The heads of the *choebals* were not easy to roll. They were members of his Chamber but, despite the country's basic Confucian set-up – in which the head of government and officials are on top, and businessmen are on the very bottom – they thought they were powers unto themselves. We've seen that in this country.

American business leaders like Roger Smith, the head of General Motors, come out to make a deal with the Chairman of Daewoo. GM already had a partnership with Daewoo, which was manufacturing automobiles with Chevrolet engines. Smith wanted to expand, to build Pontiac and maybe Buick plants in Korea. But it was not easy, as Daewoo and others, such as Samsung, had multiple interests. They not only made automobiles; they made computers, they made TV sets, they made toys, they made almost everything you could possibly think of. Since being unleashed by a post-Korean-War government, they competed with each other fiercely, usually in a rather destructive way. The Koreans are fighters, and are quite good at it.

Q: For the record, I was Consul General in Seoul for three years and one time I had to extract an American businessman. I'd send a vice consul with him to the airport or something to keep the bully boys... They wouldn't really hit but they would put a lot of pressure.

GRIFFIN: It was a challenge to get to know them. I quickly discovered that there was a tradition with Korean businessmen – if they didn't know you, they wouldn't do business with you. It is a worldwide practice, and certainly true in Korea. Americans often act like the Lone Ranger; they come galloping into town, do their thing, and ride off into the sunset, assuming they have sealed the contract. Koreans, and most others, don't like to do business like that. So they devised a system to shortcut the process to get to know you. The idea was to go to a *kaesing* house –

modeled on the geisha tradition – sit around and guzzle scotch, and be served wonderful food by beautifully dressed women. It built to a climax of loud, drunken *karaoke* singing, with everybody falling about; good camaraderie. That made you friends, so the next day you could talk serious business. They would brag about their hangovers all the next day, but I soon learned that the Koreans were not as drunk as they acted. They would down a bowl of pine-nut soup to line their stomachs just before they began to drink, and the Scotch they served was watered-down to about half the potency of ours. So it wasn't as boozy as it seemed, and the food and the music were always good.

Q: My real problem was that most of the Korean men I met, if they hadn't taken professional lessons in singing, they were damned close, and all I could do was come up with 'Old MacDonald Had a Farm' or something.

GRIFFIN: My favorite was “When the Saints Come Marching In.” I got pretty good at it. You had to do it.

Q: I know it.

GRIFFIN: We had a bit of a problem once. USTR sent over two people. One was Sandy Kristoff – an Assistant USTR. I told her about Korean attitudes; that before she got into the negotiations she should get to know her Korean counterpart. I told her about the system and how it was normally done, noting that there were no women guests; only the *kaesing* ladies. That was a challenge she liked. She said she wanted to go. I said it had never been done before, but agreed to see what I could do. The Koreans agreed fairly quickly. It was especially confusing to the women who served the food and drinks. Usually they help the men with the protocol and try to get them tipsy. The woman who served Sandy had never been faced with another woman before and didn't quite know what to do. Another problem, which I hadn't thought about before we arrived, was that she wore a very short skirt, and we all had to sit on the floor. She had a bit of a hard time, but we managed to give her enough tablecloths and napkins to make it okay. And it worked; she really got to know her opposite number, and she did well at the negotiating table.

Q: I interviewed somebody, who later was Ambassador to the South Sea Islands – she was a trade negotiator; and she said when she went there they said, “Okay, we'll call you 'Mr. so-and-so'.”

GRIFFIN: They did that, yes. That might have been Kristoff. We also had a lot of trade missions. One day we had twelve in town at the same time; four of them led by governors, including John Ashcroft of Missouri, who is now the Attorney General, Virginia Governor Chuck Robb, and Jay Rockefeller from West Virginia. There were also several big city mayors, including Diane Feinstein of San Francisco. For those visits, we used the surge contractors so we had enough staff to handle everything. We produced huge briefing books and individual schedules, always including sessions with the Ambassador and the President of the AmCham. We put each mission on a separate full schedule, for which we seemed to have devoted all our resources.

But I had a hard time with Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, when he was brand new. He was advanced by a staffer, Robin Cleveland, who is now at OMB. She happened to be Paul

Cleveland's daughter, so Paul didn't deal with her officially. They don't agree on politics, by the way. She said McConnell had heard that Korea was important to our balance of trade, and wanted to see the situation for himself. He was particularly interested in cigarette exports, which was a big issue at home. Kentucky exports tobacco, bourbon and race horses, so all that was on the agenda. McConnell wanted to see President Chun, Doo Hwan, which Robin mentioned about a day before the Senator was due to arrive. I told her that Chun's schedule was full most of the time. I explained that when Richard Nixon came to Seoul it took some doing to get him on...

Q: When he wasn't President.

GRIFFIN: ...when he was ex-President. It took some doing to get him on the schedule. I said Chun was President of a sovereign country, and did not take marching orders from American senators, especially one he's never heard of. She asked me to try anyway, so we did. Even her father tried, but got nowhere with the Blue House. She asked me to be at the airport with her to meet the Senator, hoping I could explain the situation. I agreed, and took her to the airport in an Embassy car. McConnell was almost the last one off the plane. Robin introduced us, and immediately told him that he didn't have an appointment with the President. I interjected that the Embassy was still trying to get one. He said, "What do you mean? He won't see me? If he won't, I'm getting right back on this plane and going home! Now!"

I looked at Robin in disbelief. She had put me in the hot seat. I asked what she expected me to do. The Senator couldn't get back on the plane because it was scheduled to overnight in Seoul before returning to the U.S. We had arranged several other appointments, so I asked her to tell him we would keep trying. She finally got him calmed down and off the plane, but he's a real hip-shooter. He tried to hire me a couple of years later, by the way, as his foreign affairs staffer, but I turned him down.

Q: Also, I've found that there is a real problem with newly elected Senators particularly, because it goes to the head immediately and they want to throw their weight around.

GRIFFIN: I think one reason he offered me a job was that we did get him in to see President Chun. The Ambassador practically got on his knees to get it accomplished, but he got in. I'm not sure where that got us. Or Kentucky. Or Senator McConnell.

Q: What was your impression of these trade missions that would often be, like you mentioned, Chuck Robb would come with some Virginia businessmen and go to Korea to try to establish. How did things work?

GRIFFIN: Very well, most of the time. Because of the professionalism in that FCS section. They had been doing it long before I showed up, and had it down to a fine art. I had to hire more people simply because we had more visitors. The staff could churn out a set of full schedules, get appointments with appropriate people, and prepare detailed briefing books the size of a DC phone book within days, and sometimes hours. Most visitors let us know well in advance that they were coming, what they wanted to do, and how they wanted to do it. Some trade missions were well organized; some were pitiful. We always helped the ones that weren't doing very well. The better organized ones usually didn't need much help, but we still made appointments and

hotel reservations, and prepared briefing books. It was beneficial to the post and FCS, because it gave us a good name, and it was a money-making exercise. We weren't allowed to make a profit, but the income enabled us to hire more people as contractors, and do a better job.

Q: The trade mission...?

GRIFFIN: They paid for our services. That gave me more staff to do basic things like market research in our slack times. So it more than paid for itself. I think it was well worthwhile. Perhaps one of the better missions that I can recall offhand was the one led by San Francisco Mayor Diane Feinstein. She also brought along some people from Oakland. They were very focused on what they wanted, which in general was to attract more Korean shipping into the ports of Oakland and San Francisco, which had just been refurbished. Of course, they had competitors. For example, Long Beach sent a separate mission, as did Seattle. Each was carefully designed to attract business of most benefit to it. The newspapers made fun of one of my Senators, Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, saying he only bought his suits from a particular Korean tailor in Itaewon. Korean tailors are famous for putting quality suits together cheaply and quickly. But Hollings didn't just come to shop. He came with a mission that was, as usual, focused. That was one reason I visited Charleston, because Charleston had just built a new port and wanted Korean business. The U.S. was exporting everything from coal and beef to musical instruments to Korea. In FCS, we were trying to make sure that would help balance out all the Korean toys and television sets Americans were buying. There also were several Korean-U.S. joint ventures.

Q: How did you find at this point the Korean business community? In the first place, was there a considerable body of Korean businessmen, particularly younger businessmen, who'd, say, maybe gone to school in the United States or something like that and had come back? Was this a good cadre with which to deal?

GRIFFIN: We were in touch with some of them, in part thanks to the help of USIS and the Consular Section. We also learned that the Koreans were better at this than we were. The Korean Government had a list of every Korean that had migrated to the U.S., including their names, addresses, and phone numbers. When you consider that at that time there were around 800,000 Koreans in and around Los Angeles alone, that's quite an achievement. We met some American-educated Koreans in both countries. A few were in important Korean Government trade policy positions. One with whom I worked closely earned a degree in Oregon and taught school there after he graduated. His English was excellent and his ideas were moderate. People like that were helpful in many ways, both to us and to Koreans trying to deal with us.

While preference is usually given to graduates of Korea's most prestigious schools, some of the *chaebals* hired young people educated in the U.S. to help them deal with American business. But the *chaebals* were still run like highly disciplined, feudal organizations. One day I went to Samsung headquarters to see the Chairman. On the ground floor, the door to a large room full of people was ajar. A man was yelling and screaming at people marching and shouting back. At first I thought something bad was happening, but it was just their daily lesson in company policy. All employees had to attend, shout slogans and march up and down. That's the way they do things.

Q: They all wore the same uniforms.

GRIFFIN: Yes, plus hats and headbands. The *chaebals* are highly disciplined organizations, but that didn't stop bad things from happening. Today in America we worry about corporate corruption. There was corporate corruption in Korea then, and probably still is. As I mentioned in the case of Nigeria, the implementation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act upset some Americans affected by it, but I argued that it was better for everybody, because it cost the firms less money, and they got more bang for their bucks if they were clean. Nonetheless, we caught one American businessman trying to bribe a Korean official. I think he went to jail. Our Consul General, sadly, got into trouble of the same sort. Without mentioning names, after he left Seoul on transfer, he accepted a "gift" of first-class tickets to Seoul and back and good seats at the 1988 Olympic games. He was caught, though he still professes innocence. And his wife accepted another "gift" of mink coats.

Q: As I mentioned before, I was consul general there, and it was a constant worry for me and something I kept drilling to the officers, because at that time any visas were highly prized.

GRIFFIN: The American Consul General was probably the most popular diplomat in town.

Q: I hated to go to receptions. I'd usually try to avoid getting into a corner.

GRIFFIN: Well, you know Koreans. If you invite them to dinner, they send you massive floral displays. They're not bouquets; they're huge. Or they send expensive art objects, cases of booze, baskets of food and other things to your house. Then you have to send it all back.

Q: It's a pain in the neck.

GRIFFIN: It's very embarrassing. The Chairman of Daewoo had a very nice dinner for me before I left. He presented me with a painting, and when I said I couldn't accept it, he said he knew we had rules saying we could accept gifts of up to 50 dollars. When I agreed, he showed me an official certificate stating that the painting was valued at 25 dollars. I still have it and the certificate, after clearing it with L to make damned sure. It is a nice, fairly new water color painting that was damaged. The Chairman said he really wanted to give me another one hanging on a nearby wall, but it was worth several thousand dollars, so he didn't. We got other things we could keep – mostly little brass bowls and spoons.

Q: How did you find American business practices meshed with this? I remember sitting - this is back in about 1978 or so - in a Country Team meeting and hearing the Koreans at that time were trying to wean themselves away from buying Japanese stuff and they wanted to buy a couple of fire engines. They went to the United States and they came up and they were ready to buy it, but the people in the United States, the fire engine manufacturing company, said, "Well, you know, we've got such a good market here in the United States that maybe we can do..."

GRIFFIN: To get Americans interested in the Korean market we pointed out that it was a reasonably large market. It wasn't Japan or Germany, but it was pretty big, especially if you

looked at the size of our bilateral deficit. We saw that they were importing more and more things, so we sought American firms which made what Koreans wanted. A couple of “for instances” may illustrate my point. The demand for electric power in Korea was outrunning supply, so they wanted to build two more nuclear power plants (they already had two). It was to be a \$5 billion project. American firms were very interested, especially since the nuclear power industry in this country had just tanked after Three Mile Island. The U.S. public was afraid of it, so they weren’t building more nuclear power plants. But then our companies began fighting each other for contracts in Korea. I saw what was happening, and concluded that the only way to win was for all the Americans to cooperate with each other. This was easier said than done, because there were several firms making the same type of equipment, and each wanted the contract. I made my pitch to the Ambassador and got him interested. This was sometimes hard to do with Dixie, but he caught on quickly and went to work.

He chaired a meeting with the head of the AmCham and representatives of all the interested companies we could think of. He told them the only way the Embassy could help them was to support American business in general. They knew they needed the Embassy’s help to get the Koreans to deflect the Canadians, the French, the Germans, the Japanese, and the Swedes. We argued that they would get to first base only if they cooperated with us and with each other. It took them awhile to think it through, but eventually they agreed. I’m not sure it made the best business sense, but it happened. We reminded them that, as in Japan, when Korea was rebuilt after World War II, we put in an electric power system with American specifications. It had 110-volt household current, and American-style plugs and light bulbs. We wanted to ensure that the nuclear plants were built to American standards, so our firms would have an advantage over the Europeans and the Japanese. They soon saw the light, and worked with us in Washington and Seoul, and we pulled off a major coup. We got both power plants in the end. There were plenty of opportunities for corruption every inch of the way, but whenever we saw something like that about to happen, we shined a spotlight on it, made it public, and embarrassed enough people so they stopped doing it. The same thing with the Olympics. I was there only until 1986, but there was already...

Q: The Olympics would be ‘88.

GRIFFIN: The head of the Korean Olympic Committee was Roh, Tae Woo. He eventually became President of Korea himself, but his Olympic office was a very murky place. I went there several times, either to gather information for our businesses, or to accompany the representative of an American firm. You have heard about scandals at the International Olympic Committee in recent years. Well, that certainly seemed true of the Korean Committee. If you didn’t come in carrying a present, you didn’t see anybody. Naively, I went there without an appointment to see Roh. No dice, but I did see his deputy. After listening to a runaround, I told him that Americans could not compete in such an atmosphere. I said if they didn’t make the process more transparent, we would cause serious political trouble. I said that without any authority to do so, but things got a little easier. Some Americans did get in the door. I don’t think they got a major share of the contracts for the Olympics, but they got some.

I ought to mention a couple of other things: I told you that Roger Smith, who was then Chairman of General Motors, came out. This was just...

Q: There is, by the way, a very funny movie called “Roger and Me,” I think. Roger Smith never appeared in the movie, but it was about a guy who was trying to get an appointment with Roger Smith and he never did. It’s an amusing movie.

GRIFFIN: He came to Seoul just after a major political event – the return of Kim, Dae Jung. He had been in political exile, teaching at Harvard. He decided the time was ripe to return home, though he was anathema to the Chun, Doo Hwan Government. He flew in with some fanfare, accompanied by several Americans, two of whom I knew both before and after – namely Pat Darien, who had been Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, and Tom Foglietta, a Congressman from Philadelphia who eventually became my boss as Ambassador to Italy.

Q: By the way, to put in context, the example of Benigno Aquino, who came back of the same type of thing to the Philippines and was assassinated on the tarmac, so this was in everybody’s mind when he came back.

GRIFFIN: Right. We had some advance notice that Kim, Dae Jung was coming, but probably not much. It wasn’t in my bailiwick, but I was at the airport to meet a trade delegation on the same plane. Ambassador Walker knew when Kim was coming, because he had been sent a memo by the Political Counselor recommending that he be at the airport for Kim’s arrival because there were Congressmen and Pat Darien on board, to make sure that there would be no problem. He rejected it absolutely, saying it wasn’t any of his business, and who was this fellow Kim, Dae Jung anyway? He called Kim “some Communist,” and said he didn’t want to have anything to do with him. He ordered a junior political officer to go to the airport to see what happened. Well, all hell broke loose. It was all over Korean and international TV and newspapers that Kim was dragged away screaming by cops, who beat up Pat Darien and the Congressmen. I was just outside the jetway where it all took place, trying to see what was happening. When I finally learned the details, I told others I thought the Ambassador had made a mistake.

The next day, I took Roger Smith in for a courtesy call on Ambassador Walker. Smith was a bit tired – jet-lagged – but the Ambassador, rather than listening or engaging Smith on doing business in Korea, started making excuses about why he didn’t go to the airport. That’s all he would talk about. I lost it. After I got Smith out of there and to his next appointment, I went to Paul Cleveland and told him if Dixie ever did that again, and I knew he would, I would quit. I said I couldn’t deal with guys like the Chairman of General Motors and have the Ambassador rattle on about his personal problems. The Ambassador was supposed to help us on the commercial side. Paul said it was the way Dixie was, and asked what I expected him to do. I said, “You’re the DCM. Just tell him what I said.” Paul did talk to Dixie, who was more helpful thereafter, while complaining publicly that I was trying to make a commercial officer out of him. He said that wasn’t what he was sent there to do.

Q: Getting the ambassador going to something, I used to have trouble getting ambassadors to take on a consular problem; somebody unjustly in jail and it needed the clout of the ambassador. Ambassadors don’t like to dirty their hands in that. Trade now is so important that there’s no doubt that they’re sent out to do that, but I guess it was still a period of time when he thought he was going to deal with...”

GRIFFIN: Yes, I've had similar experiences with other ambassadors. Some have their own sense of what they should focus on, which isn't always where you want their attention.

Q: What was your impression of Dixie Walker? Was he coming out of the fairly far right on the political spectrum?

GRIFFIN: Yes. He was very good at some things, but didn't want to bother with others. In the end, after Paul Cleveland left, Dixie and I got along well, maybe because there had been a problem between Paul and Dixie, but I won't go into that. Paul was succeeded by another DCM who was fine, but didn't really get close to Dixie, who finally decided I was ok. We sat together on my last day, and sort of hugged each other. He said, "You're actually a pretty good fellow, Griffin." So in a way, we kissed and made up. I guess his complaints about me trying to make a commercial officer out of him were supposed to be humorous, but I didn't think so at the time. His wife Ceci has since died, but we had a problem with her in Seoul. She was striking, with the features of a model, and was quickly discovered by a famous Korean couturier, Andre Kim. He is a gargantuan fellow who weighs about 400 pounds, loves life, and designs fabulous clothes. She liked his styles, and he knew it would help his business if the American Ambassador's wife were seen wearing them everywhere. She agreed, but then wanted to keep the dresses, so Paul had to tell her it was a no-no. When she and the Ambassador resisted, he got the Counselor of the Department to weigh in. Finally, grumbling and in tears, she gave them all back to Andre. I seem to recall that Nancy Reagan got into similar trouble for doing similar things.

I also made a misstep there, which I ought to mention. A Congressional delegation led by Senator Phil Gramm came to town...

Q: From Texas.

GRIFFIN: The representative of Bell Textron Helicopters wanted to throw a lunch for them and some influential Koreans, and asked if he could do it at my house. The rep thought my house would be more conducive to conversation than one of the local hotels. Bell was after a huge contract to make and sell helicopters to the Korean military. I checked with the DCM and FCS, and everybody approved. I invited some Korean ministers and bureaucrats, who actually came, so it went off very well. But after it was over, I made a bad mistake. The Bell rep paid for everything with a check made out to me, which was a no-no – something I didn't realize at the moment. I took it down to our disbursing officer and asked him to do the paperwork. But he recoiled. He told me I had handled the check and that it was made out to me – against the rules. I had to send the check back to Bell, and endure a clean-up session with Jim Thessin in L, to make sure I didn't do such a stupid thing again. And I haven't.

That's pretty much the sum and substance of Korea. My tour was cut short when I was selected for the Senior Seminar. While I didn't think my job was done, it's supposed to be a great honor to be chosen for the Seminar, so I couldn't argue. I did try. I called Director General George Vest and told him I needed to finish my tour. He said, "Shut up, Griffin. Don't argue. Get on a plane and come home." So I did.

Q: Just another look at Korea on the business side at that time: Were you watching a transformation of Korea? It had gone through the usual thing: textiles and then some assembly work for other people. How did you see it developing?

GRIFFIN: They were way behind the Japanese - let's say that.

Q: Thanks to the Japanese.

GRIFFIN: Yes, thanks to the Japanese occupation. It kept them cowed from 1910 to 1945. But their manufacturing, as such, essentially consisted of ceramics and some stone carving: in other words, crafts. But they knew they had to move ahead, so after the Korean War, which slowed them up even more and divided the country, they went to work. One of the better lines that Dixie Walker used, as I did after hearing it for awhile, was, "The Koreans are the only people I know who make the Japanese look lazy." And, boy, do they work – yes indeed! Their work ethic is incredible.

Q: 64-hour week at one point.

GRIFFIN: Easily. They lifted themselves up by the bootstraps. First, they cobbled together simple things, then they began to make more complex things, better and better. By the time I left – and they're even more advanced now – they were doing very sophisticated things. For example, they tried to push Intel out of the computer chip business, saying they could do it better. Andrew Grove came out while I was there to try to settle things. I handled his visit and found him fascinating.

Q: He was the head of Intel.

GRIFFIN: He was the President of Intel, and one of its founders. He is Chairman now. Anyway, the reason that the Koreans didn't take over the chip business was because they couldn't get it quite right. To quote Dixie Walker again, "Korea is the land of almost right." They fabricated military tanks out of titanium and other sophisticated alloys and, again, got it almost right. But then they would have to call in the Americans to fix something. They were making everything from those, to airplanes, to you-name-it by the time I left, and doing most of it very well.

At one point, Hyundai Motors President Chung, Sae-Young told me his company wanted to export automobiles to the U.S., but he was fearful that it would fail. He knew the Japanese had tried and succeeded to an extent, but he wasn't sure Hyundai could compete in the tough American market. I told him that, as long as Korea let Americans make and sell Buicks and Oldsmobiles there, I didn't see serious problems with trying to sell Hyundais in the U.S. They did put a plant in Canada, and later in the U.S., but they haven't done very well. His fears were well grounded, but at least they made the effort. Koreans constantly and aggressively look for new markets and technology.

My old friend Howard Schaffer came through Seoul while I was there. He was posted there during the Korean War. When was the Korean War?

Q: '50 to '53, more or less.

GRIFFIN: He was there, I think, from '53 to '56, or something like that. Anyway, he was headed to Dacca as Ambassador to Bangladesh. He hadn't been to Seoul since he left, so we're talking 30 years later. I went to the airport to pick him up and brought him into town, and by the time we got to South Gate...

Q: An old gate.

GRIFFIN: ...he said, "You know, George, I know I used to live in this town, but that big gate is the only thing I recognize. I might as well be on the moon. This is nothing like it was then." Surrounding the gate now, for example, are modern buildings like Samsung headquarters, in a big, shiny, steel and glass skyscraper. I took him to our house on Compound Two, where he used to live. He recognized that and the site of the old royal palace at the end of Sejong-No Street in front of the Embassy, but said the rest of it was just unbelievable. The palace itself was just rubble when he was there, and has been restored.

Q: What you saw would be like me. I left there in '79, but I had also been there in 1952 during the war, and South Gate was still standing and the Catholic cathedral was still standing, and that was pretty much it.

GRIFFIN: He said it was all dirt roads, full of men schlepping stuff on A-frames here and there...

Q: Oh, yes. Did you find there at that time sort of a visceral hatred, dislike, or whatever you want to say, of the Japanese and Japanese things?

GRIFFIN: Yes. The Japanese Embassy is on a narrow street between our chancery and Compound 2. I walked past it on the way to and from the office every day. Sometimes I went around a different way to avoid demonstrations. The police blocked some of them, but many were staged without warning. It was easy to organize a demonstration against the Japanese. There was always a crowd ready to join in.

Q: Commercial-wise how did that play out?

GRIFFIN: The Japanese were doing plenty of business effectively. They probably were our biggest competitors, in almost every field. They knew the country well, and used plenty of time-proven tricks to get business. Fortunately for us, the Koreans were not trading with the Chinese when I was there – though I think they are now – so they weren't commercial competitors. But Koreans always found reasons for demonstrations and riots. For example, my daughter went to school up behind the big university.

Q: Yonsei or Kyung Hee or Seoul University?

GRIFFIN: Yonsei, if memory serves. She was at the large international school there. I went to pick her up one day just as a riot started, with students throwing rocks at the police, who responded with pepper gas. The students had been driven back inside the gates of the university.

I decided the road was clear enough for me to get through, even though it was full of rocks and clouds of gas. I wanted get my daughter and head back before things got worse. I raced through without incident, but my air vents picked up so much pepper gas that it took months to dissipate. Every time we got in the car we started weeping and sneezing. It was terrible.

Q: So commercial activities were given a pass by anti-Japanese activists, but political issues were not?

GRIFFIN: Well, the business deals were not all that visible to most of the public. The students might find out about one once in awhile and have a demonstration. But when the Japanese entered into a deal, or a joint venture, say, with one of the Korean *chaebals*, they didn't put up big signs saying, "Sony is here." Neither they nor their Korean partner would make a big public deal out of it. We would find out about it in other ways. For example, Lucky Goldstar had several ventures with the Japanese, but they always used their logos, not the Japanese. Some demonstrations against the Japanese were staged by, for example, the so-called "comfort women," whom the Japanese had used as sex slaves during World War II.

Q: Did you have to deal with 'don't buy American' anti-Americanism?

GRIFFIN: Sometimes. We certainly had demonstrations against us as well. Movie distributors organized a demonstration against us one time, railing against cultural imperialism. But usually demonstrations against us were about other issues. The Koreans were pretty good about keeping them in check. The Embassy is next door to secret police headquarters, another favorite target of demonstrators. I don't know if Sejong-No Street, that huge boulevard, was there when you were.

Q: There was a big boulevard, and we had two buildings, twin buildings, built for USAID. One had been turned over to the economic ministry, and we kept the other. They were talking about getting rid of it.

GRIFFIN: We didn't get rid of the second one, and I ended up in what had been the AID Director's office; a giant, wood-paneled space. It was bigger than the Ambassador's office.

Q: This was where the power was at one time.

GRIFFIN: Shortly after I arrived, I had it partitioned in half to create offices for the new people we hired. There was no other place for them in the building, and I didn't need all that space. The boulevard was a great place for demonstrators and would-be race drivers. It was built as an emergency airstrip, designed for use by our forces in case the North Koreans came crashing down again on the South. During the monthly air raid drills – they must have had those when you were there...

Q: Oh, yes, at noon once a month.

GRIFFIN: ...everybody had to get off the streets, go inside, and into shelters. Then the Koreans would zoom in with helicopters, from which troops would come rappelling down.

Q: And tanks would go up and down the street.

GRIFFIN: You had a real sense that you were in a war zone at the time.

Q: Did this prove as an inhibitor, the fact that you had 20 or 40 divisions of North Koreans sitting 30 miles from Seoul? Did Americans who were going to invest look at this and...?

GRIFFIN: No, it didn't hold them up. They knew the risk was there, but because we had 42,000 troops stationed there, I don't think they worried about it a lot. I took Roger Smith, with the head of his Pontiac Division, to Inch'on, where they wanted to build a factory. It is quite close to the North and in a seaport that is sporadically a target of North Korean spy ships, but I don't think any of that entered into his calculations. Another time, I mentioned it to Lee Iacocca, the Chairman of Chrysler. He was intrigued, but clearly not concerned. Chrysler was making tank engines in Korea. Then there was EDS Chairman Ross Perot. He liked to talk about his exploits. You may remember that he hired a team of ex-Green Berets to get his employees out of Tehran in a daring rescue effort. Ken Follett wrote a book about it called "On Wings of Eagles."

Q: I remember.

GRIFFIN: I told Perot I was working on Iran at that time, and had been intrigued by the EDS side of the story. I asked him to inscribe a copy of the book for me. He said he would if I got a copy to him. I couldn't find one in Seoul, but back in Texas one of his aides got one, which Perot signed. They should have sent it to me through the pouch, but I guess they didn't know about that. They sent it by international mail, and when it arrived, I was really angry because someone in Korean Customs cut a big hole in the spine. "Looking for drugs," they said. I went to see the head of Customs, showed him the damage, and asked him if they really thought I was a drug smuggler. He apologized and offered to get me another copy. I told him to forget it because the damaged one had Perot's signature in it, which I wasn't sure he would redo. I still have the book.

DONALD MCCONVILLE
Economic Counselor
Seoul (1984-1987)

Mr. McConville was born and raised in Minnesota and was educated at St. Mary's College in that state. After service in the US Army overseas, he joined the Foreign Service in 1962. Specializing in Economic and Trade issues, Mr. McConville served in a number of posts abroad, including Panama and Vietnam as Economic Officer and as Economic Counselor in Korea, Malaysia, Mexico and the Philippines. In Washington, Mr. McConville also dealt primarily with International Trade and Economic matters. Mr. McConville was interviewed by Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

MCCONVILLE: '84. I then went from Malaysia back to Korea again, this time as economic counselor, which is a step up from Malaysia, being a more significant relationship. Now, getting

back to Korea in 1984, Korea by this time was...

Q: This would be '84 to...?

McCONVILLE: '87 - was a much more significant developing nation. It was clearly one of the tigers. Many of the people in the significant economic positions within the government at that time were people whom I had known 10 years earlier when I'd been out there in '74 to '77. Many of them I had extremely close relationships with, and this was of enormous benefit. Again, it was a period of extremely intense activity in '84 to '87, particularly on the trade side. Now, at this time textiles were still important in Korea, but there was a much, much broader range of trade relations in which Korea was a significant player by this time - steel and ships and all sorts of emerging electronic products. This was also a period in which trade issues were becoming more and more prominent in the United States as the international trade relationships and the deficits that the US had with some of these East Asian countries and so forth, so trade issues with Korea were a very prominent part of the agenda with Korea during that '84 to '87 period, not just in the economic dimension but in terms of our total relationships. My first ambassador in Korea when I first arrived there had been Habib, Philip Habib, and then he was followed by Dick Schneider. Both Habib and Schneider were career officers and both were ambassadors who attached a great deal of importance to the economic dimension of relationships in Korea and had gone out of their way to develop very good relationships with the American business community in Korea and to give a great deal of attention to economic issues.

The ambassador now was a politically appointed ambassador, Richard "Dixie" Walker. Walker also strongly believed in the importance of economic issues, and this time they were clearly a very significant part of our relationship with Korea. The DCM at that time was Paul Cleveland. Paul had actually been in the political section during the time I was in the economic section, so Paul and I had known each other, and that was one of the reasons I ended up getting Korea, that Paul was very happy to have me come to Korea at that point. But Paul, again, attached a great deal of importance to the political dimension of the relationship. Now, we had an economic section, a commercial section under the Foreign Commercial Service, a commercial counselor, and we also had an agriculture counselor. I had proposed to Paul - and Paul was very much in favor of this; I can't say just who was the author of all these ideas because it was so much a collaborative effort - to develop a very close relationship amongst the economic, commercial, and agricultural sections, chaired by the DCM, but within that the economic office was supposed to have the lead role of promoting this sort of coordination, and not just in the embassy itself but also in promoting this kind of close working relationship with our parent organizations back in Washington. We developed a very extensive and pretty aggressive economic agenda and particularly a trade agenda, and setting out what we advocated was to identify priorities amongst American trade issues and to set out targets and goals for ourselves and prioritize those things that we felt were most important, rather than try to run off in all directions at once, concentrate on those things that we could agree. So we set up priorities for ourselves in a cable at some length, setting out all our reasoning behind it and so forth. It went back to Washington, and the trade community back there within the government was exceedingly pleased with this effort, because they found if we can get the embassy agreement with all three of these agencies represented there, that made it much easier for them back in Washington to support a collective policy, and we sort of became known as the troika out there. But it was a model actually that

could be used elsewhere. The people back in the trade community in the Washington agencies were extremely pleased with this arrangement. Now, we had just an endless series of trade negotiations with the Koreans during that period of time and had to use a number of threats to get them to do some things. All of this was worked with an extremely close collaboration. People coming out from Washington used to comment from time to time about what a blessing it was for them to work with this kind of relationship. The USTR officer, the woman who was responsible for the Korea portfolio was gushing about it and she said, "You know, in the reporting from Korea, it's golden, because it always comes back with the agencies believing that everybody in the embassy is on board on this, so the people back in Washington, within the different agencies back in Washington, are willing to accept that these are the facts to deal with." So many times in the State Department in Washington, the reporting would be discredited as being too much influenced by foreign policy interests and so forth, and she said that we had completely overcome this sort of prejudice by projecting this image of unified reporting coming from the embassy. We put an awful lot of effort into it and were very, very successful. The Koreans attach a great deal of importance to economic issues, and we were pressing them for a lot of things that they were finding difficult to accede to, but they knew that it was pragmatically necessary for them to do so and the economists among them recognized that this was in Korea's interest in most cases to do these things, to open up their market as fast as they could possibly politically accomplish this. So this kind of pressure, as long as it was used adroitly enough, they saw as in being in their interest as well. So it was a pretty extraordinary experience. And we also worked very, very closely with the American business community there, with the Chamber of Commerce and so forth.

Q: How did they find doing business in Korea? This is a period of time, which continues certainly in Japan, where American business finds itself opening up offices, trading there, great difficulty because the laws....

McCONVILLE: It was difficult in Korea. They had a lot of complaints, but at the same time they were doing very well, and it wasn't quite as difficult as Japan. So they felt a very strong need in having the U.S. government behind them to bring pressure to bear on certain issues, but at the same time they very strongly believed that US business interests were doing well in Korea and could do even better. So they had a lot of interest in working with us, and what we again pressed them to do was prioritize the things they needed to get done, so we used our leverage most effectively. We had just a constant parade of visitors from Washington. I know that we had a least a quarter of the Senate out there during the time I was there and probably almost as much of the House, and we had endless governors bringing trade missions and so forth. We had encouraged the Chamber of Commerce - and we worked on their committee to help them do this - to develop effective presentations for all these visiting groups. We didn't tell them what to say, but we helped them organize what they said and, rather than having just a litany of complaints, to have a positive and constructive story to tell these visiting Congressmen and Senators and so forth, but then to identify the issues where they really felt that it was particularly important to get some support from the Congress and do it in a way in which these things were well argued and well presented and focused. So again the visiting delegations were increasingly impressed by their meetings with this Chamber of Commerce group. They would frequently comment to us how impressed they were by the presentations they had there as compared to other countries they had visited. So this was an extremely interesting, exciting period of time. We got an awful lot of

backing at the highest levels within the embassy. We had an excellent relationship with the business community. We had excellent relations with the trade agencies back in Washington. And we got an awful lot accomplished. There was a series of trade negotiations, and in most cases in the trade negotiations of that era, two of the biggest countries they would be involved in negotiating with would be Japan and, secondary, Korea. So you'd get a great many negotiating teams that would come out and visit Japan and then they would come to Korea. For instance, they would come back from the steel negotiations with both countries at the same time, these visiting U.S. negotiating teams were always very complimentary of our embassy effort there, and they were also pretty positive about their negotiations with the Koreans. Again, it was the same sort of experience that I had described earlier. They were tough, tough negotiators, but in the end you could strike a deal with them, and they respected that. They said, you know, with the Japanese where they were treated with this infinite courtesy but in the end they would walk away with nothing, it would be so amorphous; whereas, with Korea you could be much blunter and more direct and you could expect you'd have to get down on the mat and wrestle around, but in the end you could strike a deal. That was, again, a very exceptional experience, and I also came away further reinforced by the role that sound, informed economic policy can play in transforming countries and bringing them into modernity.

Q: As economic counselor, you were a member of the country team. During this period, '84 to '87, what was the political situation in Korea?

McCONVILLE: They still had a military-dominated government. All these people had been elected, but Chun Doo-hwan was the President at this time. Of course, Park Chung-hee had been assassinated. Chung Doo-hwan was getting increasing disfavor amongst the militants in Korea, and his term was coming up and he was maneuvering to have Roh Tae-woo, another general, to succeed him. Roh Tae-woo actually during the time I was there was elected President, but there was very strong protest from increasingly broad circles of the Korean populace about the method of the selection. During the final months that I was there, there were increasing clashes. They had been led by students and some of the activists, but more and more the middle class and the passers-by, the people on the streets, the business community even were siding with these activists. You were having clashes on the street with tear gas being thrown and cars being overturned and so forth. It never got directed at foreigners, Americans or other foreigners; it was all directed at the Roh Tae-woo government. I remember being out at times and, having passed pretty close to where some of these events took place, never really feeling personally threatened. But it was clear that the political situation was coming to a boil. Roh Tae-woo, I think, was still in power when I left, but it was not too long after that when he subsequently had to give in to elections and the elections then elected the first real civilian government.

Q: What did Choi Kyu...?

McCONVILLE: That happened in between. That happened in early '80. Park Chung-hee was assassinated in about '79.

Q: November of '79.

McCONVILLE: The military coup took place not long after that, with Choi Kyu-hah asserting

himself. Then when they reared up against this military coup and then were put down by the generals, that was Chun Doo-hwan, and that kept coming back up all of the time and ultimately after the fall of Park Chung-hee, Choi Kyu-hah was arrested and subsequently spent that time in a monastery and so forth, lost a great deal of whatever personal wealth he may have amassed, and Chun Doo-hwan ultimately came to somewhat similar fate. But that was all coming to a boil during particularly the latter part of that period, so politically it was a pretty extraordinary period as well. Economically Korea was an enormous success story. At the same time, they were having these political tensions. Again, it tends to lend a lot of support to the argument that ultimately if you have open economic arrangements and begin to succeed economically in at least a modern market-oriented international economic arena, these will increasingly bring pressures to open up politically. First of all, you begin to develop more and more diverse centers of power within your political body as your economy continues to expand and economic power becomes more and more significant and becomes more dispersed. As people begin to succeed more economically, they become more and more concerned with political liberty and feeling more disposed to press for political openness. It certainly happened in Korea; it happened in Taiwan. Whether it will always happen everywhere, I suppose, is an open question. Again, you can argue - certainly Park Chung-hee, in taking over Korea in '62 -- the Koreans whom I talked to who remember that period, maybe because I talked to so many who were in economic backgrounds - most of them thought back on that short period between Syngman Rhee and the military coup by Park Chung-hee as sort of total chaos in Korea. They looked on that as totally an abhorrent period of time.

Q: Korea was really considered the bottom of the...

McCONVILLE: Yes, they were economically, but during the period after Syngman Rhee had been overthrown and before Park did the military coup, it was just total chaos. The politicians who tried to run Korea during that period of time had been totally incompetent. In fact, there was no sort of culture that supported a democratic sort of organized society in Korea at that time. Park Chung-hee, for all of his harshness and so forth, never amassed any great amount of personal wealth. He seemed to be a man who was really driven by a mission to modernize Korea. He lived pretty modestly. He could be very harsh with political foes, but he seemed truly to be driven primarily by what he considered to be his role to modernize Korea. He had always spoken that at some point then time would come to turn over political power, but like so many autocrats who do this, they find it more and more difficult to give up that political power, and he was never able to do it until it was crumbling beneath him and he was assassinated by some of his own.

There were all of these mounting demonstrations at the time. There was no question of whether he was losing control. Certainly given the Korean culture and so forth and their long history of a very, very Confucian-oriented, hierarchical society, they were still having trouble in working out functioning ways to work as a democracy. They're doing it much better now, and Kim Dae-jung, I think, is certainly doing well as President. At one time he was the arch foe. But whether that can justify having an authoritarian government during a period of modernization may still be open to question, but I find it difficult to believe that, had Park Chung-hee not come along, Korea would have ever succeeded certainly as quickly as they. They paid a price for that in some of the political oppression that they had. I still remember looking out my window on that first tour, looking down - there used to be a school right behind the embassy; this was around '74 or

'75 - and see these little school children, elementary school children. I looked down at them and I would think to myself that by the time those little people down there are young adults, these people are going to have a standard of living that's not going to be that dissimilar from the United States that I knew of in 1970. At that time, they were still a very poor country.

Q: It wasn't until around 1978 or '79 when the average income had reached \$1,000.

McCONVILLE: Yes. I knew what life was like for an awful lot of very ordinary Koreans. It was still a pretty harsh affair. I had become persuaded that by the time these people were young adults they were going to have this kind of transformation economically. That kind of thing hadn't happened that often in the world before and certainly within that period of time. I was convinced it was happening in Korea. Certainly coming back in '84, '84 to '87, I was seeing a great deal of it. These economic technocrats that I worked with and had such a great deal of respect for, they were all very decent people themselves. They had a great sense of taking part in a very historic episode in Korea and having a great deal of personal satisfaction in being involved in this kind of role. They're people I still have tremendous admiration and respect for. There were an awful lot of very, very capable and very well intentioned people in those roles. There were a few dogs and a few people that weren't of the highest motivation, but they were blessed with an awful lot of very, very competent people. Again, that's the other dimension of a Confucian society. Civil service and government roles still had a great deal of stature, so they attracted a great deal of very, very capable people into those roles. Anyhow, that was another very, very good experience in Korea. By the time I then finished up.

Q: I think this is probably a good time to stop. But let's put at the end of this tape: Where'd you go in '87?

McCONVILLE: I went back to be the Director of the Office of Trade in EB. Trade was again to play a significant role.

Q: All right. We'll pick this up then in 1987 when you were back in Washington.

McCONVILLE: On a personal note, it was in Korea on that tour that I got married in 1985. After all these years as a bachelor, I met and married my wife. She was a Korean woman whom I'd met through mutual friends.

Q: What was her family background?

McCONVILLE: Her father had been a career army officer in the Korean military going back to the Korean War and before. He'd actually been in an academy in Japan. He was in the same class, I think, as Park Chung-hee. But he had by this time retired as a bird colonel in the Korean army and had worked for a while in some kind of defense organization, defense industry organization. She was the oldest of six children, and all her brothers and sisters - she had two brothers and three sisters - were all in professional roles.

Q: Was she able to go to one of the universities?

McCONVILLE: I can't remember the name of it. She actually had gone to college right about the time that her father had retired from the army, and this had been sort of a difficult period for them financially, so she did go to a university but not one of the top schools. Of course, her brothers went to Seoul University. She had worked for Koker, I think. She had majored in English and foreign languages and had worked for Koker and then she'd become an international stewardess for KAL (Korean Airlines) - that was a very, very prized job at that time - until her first marriage, which was a Korean medical doctor. That had gone bad and they had gotten divorced - it had been a very bitter sort of thing - and she had a small child. He was at that time five years old, a young boy. The father had totally disappeared from the scene. I met her through some mutual friends and, much to my surprise at this particular time in my life, we ended up getting married, and I acquired not only a wife but a stepson. We got married actually on the lawn of Ambassador Walker's residence. In Korea no one officiates at a marriage. Getting married in Korea means you turn in some papers to change the status of the records. They get married in churches and in Buddhist ceremonies and so forth, but a priest or a preacher or a Buddhist monk is not empowered to marry them. He just oversees the ceremony. We got married on the lawn of the ambassador's residence, and we had Ambassador Dixie Walker as our featured speaker. They also always had in Korea some prominent person who would give a speech of some sort. So in effect we just married ourselves, exchanged our vows. We had already turned in our papers to be legally married. There was a very nice group of people there. It was a wonderful wedding ceremony. Ambassador Walker in effect officiated at the marriage.

The particularly amusing thing: A week or two before that former President Nixon had visited Korea. Dixie Walker, of course, had been a Republican; he was actually from the academy community, the head of the International Institute of the University of South Carolina, but he had been active in Republican politics. When Nixon came out there for a visit, he had some functions for him at the residence. One of the functions he had for him was just to meet with the embassy people. He was going to have another big reception for a huge number of guests, but for this function for the embassy people, they had a little receiving line with people being brought up to be introduced to Nixon, and when my fiancé - to be my wife about a week or so later - and I get up to be introduced, Ambassador Walker introduced us and said, "You know, a week from now I'm going to marry these people." Nixon's eyebrows went up: "Is that legal?" I'll remember that remark to the last of my days. It was a pretty extraordinary experience. I had a tux on and my wife had a traditional western wedding dress on. We had a reception on the lower part of the residence lawn there, and while we were down there - my wife had set this up - the two of us slipped away for a bit - there was a second little house down there - and we changed into traditional Korean garb, both my wife and I, and we reappeared out there with our guests dressed in traditional Korean garb. Unbeknownst to me, apparently one of the traditions in a Korean wedding is that the husband carries the wife around on his back in a couple of circles. It symbolizes something or other. So pretty soon people were calling for this, so my wife gets up on my back, and I go around this circle, and this broke the audience up. All this was being recorded by a video camera, so we still have a record of all this. I was pretty pleased at the number of Korean friends I had there as well. Some of them go back to that '74-'77 period. In fact, one of the more surprising guests - he hadn't really been invited - was Kim Woo-jung, who's the founder and head of Daewoo, which has now collapsed but, of course, at that time was very, very big, a multibillionaire. The top Daewoo officials, presidents of their different units, they were all very bright and able technocrats. Kim Woo-jung did not have any sons, so, unlike

some of the Korean conglomerates where their sons were being groomed and were being headed to take over the operation, he had developed this pattern of identifying very bright young people whom he would groom as his senior executives and surround himself with these people. Well, I had come to know a number of these people, who were often U.S.-educated, bright technocrats. There had been a function where, I think, Time Magazine was doing something big on Korea that involved the business community in a big way too, and the Korean business community was very much behind it. I don't remember just what it was now. But they had sent some people out to set this up, and Kim Woo-jung was having a big dinner for them. The ambassador couldn't go that evening, so he had asked me to go in place to represent him there. Kim Woo-jung came in a bit late for this dinner. One of these presidents was sitting right next to him, right across from me, and it was somebody I had a very good relationship with, so when Kim Woo-jung came in, he started telling him about how I was going to be marrying a Korean woman in the next few weeks. Kim Woo-jung seemed to get fascinated by this and he just started to ask a number of questions about how did we meet and so forth. It was really pretty amazing that he seemed to be so intrigued by this. So this president, this good acquaintance of mine, was one of my invited guests for the wedding and he didn't come, but who else comes? Kim Woo-jung. I hadn't invited him. He came to the wedding, not for the wedding but came down for the reception for a good part of the afternoon. I was absolutely flabbergasted.

ANDREW F. ANTIPPAS
Consul General
Seoul (1984-1988)

Andrew F. Antippas was born in Massachusetts in 1931. He received a bachelor's degree from Tufts University and entered the Foreign Service in 1960. His career included positions in Africa, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Korea, Canada, and Washington DC. Mr. Antippas was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 19, 1994.

ANTIPPAS: I came back to Washington in December, 1983. There were no jobs available as a Chief of Mission or Principal Officer. There was some talk about the ambassadorship in Equatorial Guinea but that was snapped up by the General Counsel of USAID. The job as Consul General in Seoul had opened up again. I decided that what had happened during the previous six months was a clear message to me that I was "notorious" and probably wasn't going to get much of anything if I hung around the Department. Since my wife was still pressing me to stay out of Washington, I decided to take the job in Seoul and get as "far away from headquarters" as possible. The assignment became official in December, 1983, and I went to Seoul in January, 1984.

Ken Keller was still there as Consul General. He was retiring from the Foreign Service. He had replaced me three years before when my assignment to Seoul had been "can-celled," as I indicated previously. He wasn't due to leave Seoul until February, 1984, but rather than hang around Washington, I decided that I would go out to Seoul a little early. I stopped off in Honolulu to talk to the District Director of the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service],

Sam Feldman, who had been in Hong Kong when I was in the Embassy in Bangkok. We had done the Indochina refugee "thing" together. He was still in Hong Kong at the time of the fall of Indochina to the communists. Sam was one of these hard-charging INS guys who apparently took on the Asian organized crime syndicates, or at least Pacific Island organized crime -- especially the Samoans -- apparently a very tough crowd in Hawaii. A few months later, after our meeting in Hong Kong and resuming contact there, he committed suicide. He shot himself, so there was no question that one of the criminal "tongs" had done him in. I was really shocked when that happened. Sam was a gruff kind of guy but once he accepted you as a colleague, that was it. We had that kind of relationship -- we in the old line consular service. I have talked to people in INS since then, and they felt that this was strictly due to "stress." They hadn't recognized until that time that stress could play such a role in INS.

I took over the Consular Section in Seoul in February, 1984, after Ken Keller left. I found the Section somewhat in disarray. Ken and the fraud unit had uncovered a major fraud ring in the Section, centered in the fraud unit itself. I should say that the Fraud Officer led the investigation to find these people. We fired 12 local employees in the Consular Section, including the senior security local employee, who apparently was involved in the fraud. I found that relations between the American and Korean staff in the Section were very poor, very tense, very fragile. There was a lot of resentment on both sides. The Americans were distrustful and resentful toward the Koreans, and the Koreans, of course, felt great resentment toward the Americans because the Americans felt that way.

Ken was a very competent and professional officer and had run a "very tight ship." The place was working; we were issuing 30,000 immigrant visas a year and almost 100,000 non-immigrant visas.

I thought that the first thing that I would try to do was to try and establish better relations between the Korean and American staff. My experience in Bangkok, under similar circumstances, although on a smaller scale, had been that if you could not make friends with the local employees, if the local employees weren't going to help you, you are never going to be able to fight this battle against fraud. You are never going to win this battle in any case. You can't even fight this battle against fraud if at least some of the local employees aren't going to be supportive. I decided that it behooved me to try to improve relations between members of this large staff -- 47 Korean employees and something like 20 Americans.

There was a very competent cadre of Americans there. They knew their job and were doing it very well. Bruce Beardsley was my deputy in the Consular Section. He has gone on to do very well in the Foreign Service. Of course, I knew the DCM but didn't know the Ambassador before I arrived there. The DCM at the time was Paul Cleveland, an old friend from Indochina days, when he was a staff aide to Marshall Green. I felt that I would have the support of the front office of the Embassy in anything that I would need to do.

I decided that as a first step I would try to get to know the local employees of the Consular Section a bit better -- at least have some direct contact with them. I started a program of meeting privately, in my office, for about 10-15 minutes with every local employee, "pressing the flesh" and showing the human face of bureaucracy. I think that worked, to a certain extent. At that time

the Korean staff was overwhelmingly female. A lot of them had come out of the Peace Corps and the aid program. When those programs were phased out in South Korea in the 1970's, a lot of these people had gone to work in the Consular Section. The situation was very well summed up by one of the younger women employees who was willing to talk to me. In the case of most of the employees, I would call them into my office, ask them to sit down, and try to talk to them. They would say very little but would be quite circumspect. I knew that this was because not too many people did this, particularly in Korea, a male-dominated society. As we know, the turnover in American staff like that is tremendous, particularly in vice consuls. Everybody does things differently, from the Consul General on down. Every supervisor is different. I could see where the local employees would say, "Don't bet your life on any one of these people because, after a few months, there will be a change of boss." I understood that.

Anyhow, one of the younger and friendlier members of the staff said that she had been told by the older women, "When we need to talk to the Americans, we [the older women] will talk to the Americans." In other words, "shut up." That was a clear message to me that it was going to be a hard row to hoe. We would really have to "divide and conquer" here and do the best we could in terms of improving working conditions, which are always a problem for our staffs, and trying to be friendly and outgoing. I would regularly go around the Section, see what was going on, and just try and stay on top of things. This is very much what the boss has to do. My experience had been that you really can't tell what your staff is up to by simply going up to the "visa line" and standing behind them and listening to conversations. Even if you are an ultra democrat and you sit down and issue visas with your officers, as some consular section chiefs do, you are not really going to find out what is going on. I thought that I had other things to do beside going up there and issuing visas. "Showing the flag" helps out. I have done all of that. I have issued all of the visas that I want to do.

I have found that one of the great demands put upon the section chief by Korean society is that you get to be the ultimate "court of appeals" for visa refusals. I got involved in visa issuance because the Ambassador, the DCM, "Minister So and So," or someone else would call me up and "put the arm on me."

We had "shouting matches" with the commercial section chief because Korean businessmen were really "putting the arm on him." At times the situation was very tense. I consider myself very much a "team player." I had been a chargé d'affaires and run my own Embassy. So I was not parochial. I had done other things. I had been a political officer and a desk officer in the Department. I understand where all of these guys are coming from, and you have to help them out.

So I decided that, normally, my deputy would be the ultimate "appeals court." We were already doing this, to some extent. I decided that I would get involved in the process as well, because I think that this is the only way that you can tap into the system and find out what your officers are telling the applicants. You recognize that, initially at least, you are only hearing the appeals of those who are well placed. They are the only people who are able to appeal, through somebody. What I wanted to find out was what was happening to the ordinary visa applicant. Aside from any democratic feelings that I might have, I really needed to know how I could find out what was happening. Once you can find that out and they know that you are finding it out, the whole

system works better. Once the vice consul or the unit chiefs feel that they are not answerable to anybody, then everything deteriorates after that.

I found that what angered me a great deal was that vice consuls, for whatever reason, sometimes feel so full of themselves that nobody can talk back to them. I found it very reprehensible. I have experienced it since I retired, as I have gone back to places that I knew. I noted that these vice consuls are junior officers. One of your biggest jobs as a section chief is to bring those junior officers along and teach them the trade, not the trade of being a vice consul but of being a Foreign Service Officer -- the value system of the Foreign Service. I thought that was very important.

I decided that we had to start out with a level playing field. The vice consuls had to know that I knew what they were doing, and not because I was standing behind them or listening to them. I was going to review the record of their cases on a very representative, ad hoc, basis. The biggest problem I had was to get people to keep decent notes on the application forms. I said, "Look, a visa application is practically a court document. These things have ended up in court and become subjects of litigation. I want you to keep decent notes on them. I can assure you that when I review or handle a case, I keep very detailed notes as to what was said and the reasons for my decision. That is what I want you guys to do. I realize that I have more time to do this. I have got leisure to do this. I have got a nice office to sit in, and you are sitting out there on the visa line. But you have got to do better. You never know whether we will have to go to court on some case. I may have to justify overturning your decision."

Anyway, keeping visa records became a growth industry. It soon became known that Antippas would listen to anybody. I let it be known that anybody could talk to me. You didn't have to go through somebody who knew somebody. I had an "open door" policy. I tried to be careful about that.

Appearances are so important, particularly in Korea. I guess that I personally handled 10 or 12 visa cases a day. People would make appointments to appeal decisions that had been made on cases. I would have the cases brought to me and would review them. Of course, frequently they would be brought to me by somebody who was somebody. Most frequently, I would overturn the decision made. I would find that the 30 seconds which the vice consul had to listen to this person, who may have been standing out in the snow for eight hours, before making his decision, had not been enough to bring out all aspects of the case. Generally, I would let the intermediary sit with me. I would tell them, "Don't say anything. The conversation is between me, the applicant, and my Korean secretary." I would ask all of the questions that I needed to ask before coming to my conclusion.

Generally speaking, my perception would be a little different from that of the vice consul, probably because of my own long experience and my understanding of the ethos of Korean society. Finally, I would say to the intermediary, if there was one, "All right. I will grant a visitor's visa. When is this individual coming back to Korea? Tell me the date when he or she is coming back." I would say, "I don't care when it is -- three months or six months from now. You tell me. I will mark it in my book that I want you to come to the Consular Section and see me. Don't send the person's passport over. You come and see me. If the person doesn't come and see

me, don't call me again on a visa application."

By doing that I found that very few people double-crossed me. Some people would. They were in the business of influence peddling. There was no greater currency in Seoul than to say that you knew the American Consul General. That is still the case today. I hear that the situation today is as bad as when I got there.

I was concerned about illegal immigrants. However, as Counselor of Embassy for Consular Affairs my job was to take a strategic view of the problem. I took off on that area on two fronts.

One of the things that really angered me was to discover, given my extended knowledge of Korea and my understanding of what had happened, having been there from the beginning, so to speak was "GI brides" and the possibilities for fraud which this involved.

Just before I went to Grenada, the "20-20" TV program had done a lengthy program on Korean prostitute rings working on the U. S. military in Korea. This wasn't anything that I had invented. When I got to Korea, I walked the "trench line" in the Consular Section and tried to figure out what I could do on the margins to change and improve things. One of the things that ticked me off was to see the obvious fraud that took place in GI marriages, when a young GI would come in with a woman 20 years older than he was who looked well travelled and well worn. You knew perfectly well what had happened. Old soldiers knew very well what had happened. This annoyed me. It was one of my hobby horses. I thought that I would like to do something to change this situation.

The Immigration Attaché in Seoul during my stay there was sympathetic to my view, because he, of course, had to approve the petitions which the GI's were executing on behalf of their Korean "brides." We would make inquiries at the U.S.- Korean Command. There were certain areas and certain centers of interest where the Korean Command would have liked to see us improve that situation.

First of all, you had to recognize that nobody can tell American citizens whom they can marry. Changing the circumstances under which GI's met these women is really beyond the Theater Commander. This is a Washington level problem. However, as I looked at the problem, what I discovered was that, given the way that the American military was operating in Korea, we had the phenomenon of "homesteaders." That is, there were officers and enlisted personnel who spent a large part of their careers in South Korea. In many cases they were married to Koreans and really had a vested interest in that country. They kind of specialized in Korea.

Among the offshoots we had of this problem at this time was black marketing and currency speculation. We are talking now about 1984, before the economic "takeoff" happened in South Korea. There still was a thriving black market for commissary and PX merchandise. On the black market a banana would cost you a dollar. You would have fights between the Korean and the American wives in the commissary over bunches of bananas. I know that my wife once threatened to belt somebody over an issue like this. The Provost Marshal when I told him said, "No, don't let her do that!" There were scandals of this kind. I felt that the American Army wasn't looking very good. There were prostitution rings.

I did a long-term research study of the problem, pulling in all of the information I could obtain from INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] and other sources about what was happening to a lot of these wives when they went to the United States, particularly if they remained in the U. S. military, and the kind of Korean communities that were springing up outside of military cantonment areas.

I also checked law enforcement reports. These wives weren't really involved in drug trafficking, but they were involved in large-scale trafficking in commissary goods -- fur coats, jewelry, and electronic equipment. This was a time when a Foreign Service employee could sell his property in Korea, because local Korean industry wasn't producing merchandise of this kind. They started doing that a couple of years later, and after that, there was no way you could get rid of your old stereo set. Before the Korean economy "took off," you could still sell your old stereo, buy new equipment at the PX, and refurbish everything. This was in 1984. Things changed a great deal in a couple of years.

There was a lot of trade going on in these Korean communities around the military cantonment areas in the U.S. It was very clear that there were major prostitution rings as well -- not necessarily because the Korean women went there as prostitutes. They were more or less forced into prostitution. They borrowed money so that the U. S. immigration visa "fixer" could "hire" the GI to marry them. They went to the United States with him but they owed money to the "ring." Very frequently, the GI would drop them. Even the GIs who married these women for love had second thoughts, once they were married. A lot of these Korean women were just "dumped."

There were gangs called the "Korean Killers" and others. As I say, they stayed away from narcotics, as far as I could tell -- unlike the Chinese, Thai, and maybe the Vietnamese gangs. The Koreans were a little more circumspect, but it was very clear that they had very sophisticated prostitution rings operating. A great source of supply was these Korean women who were marrying GIs and who were subsequently jettisoned.

I felt that I was on firm ground to be pushing this as an issue, from a strategic point of view. I worked very hard on this matter. I managed to get the chief of staff of the Eighth Army on my side -- a major general. The first chief of staff was not interested. His replacement was different. I think that he and his wife were "born again" Christians, or something like that. They had very high moral standards. He was much more cooperative. Once I got him on my side, I found that the rest of his staff was cooperative.

I found, for example, that senior military chaplains were very cooperative. The junior chaplains - the majors and the captains -- didn't seem to care very much. The older, "bull" colonels among the chaplains understood what we were trying to do.

Dealing with this problem was an interesting exercise. It involved my going on AFK [Armed Forces in Korea] TV and giving talks with the Immigration Attaché, saying what was involved and trying to get the Korean Command to change the regulations under which people were counseled about the implications of getting married. I think that the culmination of this whole

effort took place when the Chief of Staff of the Army came to Korea -- General Vessey. He was not a guy that I particularly liked. I don't think that anybody else liked him, either. Stilwell was a very good guy. I got to know him quite well after he retired.

Anyway, an FSO on his staff whom you knew, I think, was George Barbis. George is an old friend of mine, of course -- part of the Greek "Mafia" in the Foreign Service. George was working as a kind of special assistant to the Chief of Staff. He came to Korea on several occasions with the Chief of Staff. I went to George and said, "Look, I am working on this problem." Of course, George himself had served in Korea in the 1950's. He had a lot of Korean friends and was sympathetic.

Dixie Walker, who was the Ambassador to Korea at the time, was sympathetic to my efforts as well. Ambassador Walker arranged for me to brief the Chief of Staff of the Army during one of his visits. The briefing was held in the Conference Room at the Embassy. I gave him a kind of read out of what I just told you here. I gave him a copy of a long despatch that I had written to the Department on the nature of the problem, mentioning all of the INS reports of what was going on outside the American Army cantonments in the States and all of that. I tried to make the point to the Chief of Staff that I was a very good friend of the American Army. I said that I had had a "love affair" with the Army since I was a kid. I said that I thought that this situation was giving the Army a bad name. I tried to tell the Chief of Staff that I was not trying to attack the Army.

Of course, as you could predict, the reaction of the Chief of Staff was defensive. He said, in effect, "Well, I guess we have to do something to make our soldiers less 'masculine,'" or a wisecrack comment about "too much testosterone," or something like that. Anyway, the briefing didn't go off too well. There was obviously very little that the Chief of Staff could do. We could only try to do something on the margins. I subsequently received a note from George Barbis on the stationery of the Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army. I still have that note somewhere. He referred to some kind of scandal regarding Korean prostitutes and said, "You tried to tell us about this some time ago, and here it is in the news." It was sort of a moral victory, I thought.

The GI's were told not to get married. However, one of the interesting aspects of this matter was that my thinking continued to evolve in this connection. As I looked at the records available in the Consular Section, one of the things that concerned me was where in hell all of these Koreans were coming from in the United States. Based on the records available in the Consular Section, there were some hundreds of thousands of Koreans who had gotten to the U. S. illegally. Even if you factored in the number of those who had "overstayed" on visitors' visas, it still didn't add up. These Koreans were in Los Angeles, New York, and every place else. They were springing up all over the place.

Then from the CIA reporting from the "Blue House" [Presidential Mansion], it was clear that the Chun Doo Hwan administration was encouraging the movement of Koreans to the U. S. The view of the Korean Government was to encourage emigration, because this was how to get rid of protestors. But there also was a reverse benefit. There would be large communities of Koreans in the U. S. who were amenable to the Korean administration's way of thinking. They thought that this was a good development.

I had decided that the prostitution issue was worth fighting for because it was clear to me that if we didn't tighten up, in some fashion, we would have a continuous "leak" of Koreans into the U. S.

I continued to look for ways to slow down the visa trafficking. I was trying to do something because it was clear that there was an absolute flood of Koreans heading for the countries South of the U. S.-Mexican border. They were making it into the United States in that way, particularly from Mexico. In fact, there was a Korean movie issued in 1987, called, "Deep Blue Night." It was about a Korean illegal immigrant who goes to Los Angeles through Mexico and recounts his shenanigans with some women there. This was quite scandalous at the time it came out in Seoul in 1985, I think, because there was a lot of nudity. I said, "This thing is a training film on how to get people into the United States." I put in a lot of effort, trying to persuade my consular colleagues to tighten up their visa requirements.

DONALD M. BISHOP
Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Taegu (1985-1987)

USIS Policy Officer
Seoul (1987)

Donald Bishop was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1945 and grew up in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. He has a BA from Trinity College and an MA from Ohio State University. He joined the United States Information Agency in 1979. His overseas posts include Hong Kong; Seoul and Taegu, Korea; Dhaka, Beijing, Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria; and Kabul, Afghanistan. Mr. Bishop was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2010.

BISHOP: To Korea. I went back to Washington for the first year of the Korean course at FSI, and then went to the Field School at the Embassy in Seoul for the autumn term. I got to my assignment in Taegu in January of 1985.

Q: OK. Today is the 3rd of January, 2011 and with Don Bishop. And we are moving -- 1983, you've left Hong Kong and you're going to Korea. What are you going as?

BISHOP: My assignment was to be the Branch Public Affairs Officer (BPAO) in Taegu. We spelled the name of the city, using roman letters, as Taegu, with a "T," back then. Now, with a new romanization system for Korean, it's "Daegu." And Independence Gate in Seoul, once "Tong'nipmun," is now "Dogrib-mun."

I followed Maureen Taylor.

I had volunteered for Korea because of my positive experiences when I was in the Air Force. That included seeing the activities of the USIS Center in Kwang Ju. For my wife, it was of course a highly congenial assignment.

When I was in the USIA training course for incoming officers, I had learned that BPAO jobs were highly regarded for development and promotion, “the chance to run your own program” early. There were two kinds of BPAOs. Usually, a BPAO was the PAO at a consulate. BPAO Sapporo worked at the consulate, for instance. But there were twelve posts with independent, freestanding American Cultural Centers in cities with no consulate. Poznan was an example. Medan was another. I wanted to be that kind of BPAO because I wanted the relative autonomy.

There were two of the freestanding Centers in Korea -- Kwang Ju and Taegu. Taegu was important in Korea because it was the third largest city and the textile capital. It was also important because it was in North Kyongsang province, which had provided so much of Korea’s leadership. It's fair to say that its high schools and universities were incubators for Korean leadership in that time. There were five major universities in the Taegu area -- Kyongsang Bukdo National University, Keimyung University, Youngnam University, Taegu University, and Hyosong Women's University.

We moved into a home in the Apsan neighborhood of Taegu, a few hundred yards west of Camp Walker. By this time, Jerome was studying at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts, and John and Edward were students at the Army's Taegu American School at Camp George.

Q: Who was the Ambassador in Seoul?

BISHOP: Richard L. Walker was the ambassador. His academic background was pretty interesting, and I think history will be much kinder to Dixie Walker, both as a China hand and as an Asia hand, than his academic contemporaries were. In any case, I rate him high as an Ambassador.

The Public Affairs Officer was a USIA legend, Bernie Lavin. The DPAOs in Seoul who were my direct bosses were Duane Davidson and Hugh Burlison.

A consulate had been established in Pusan, and Taegu was in the Pusan consular district. Frances Sullinger – and later Don Q. Washington -- was the BPAO there, and the Principal Officer was Ken Quinones.

Q: How far were you from Seoul?

BISHOP: It was a four-hour train ride or a four-hour drive in those days. It was a comfortable distance. I could get up to Seoul whenever I needed to pretty easily. I could lift up the telephone and call them any time. Visitors came from the Embassy infrequently, though, so I had the feeling of autonomy than I wanted.

Every day, the USIS driver would go to the railroad station to pick up the pouch sent down from the Embassy. It contained all the unclassified cables, the USIA and Embassy circulars, instructions, offers of speakers, and so on. Every day we waited for the arrival of the pouch.

During my tour USIS-Taegu received one of USIA's first PCs, a Victor 9000, but there was no email. Before I left, though, we received the daily Wireless File by computer to computer transmission using telephone lines. This allowed USIS Taegu to reach local newspapers and television stations with fresh news and policy statements.

Eventually, I set up a USIS account and telegraphic address at the 19th Support Command's communications center. This allowed me to begin receiving Embassy reporting cables. I would stop at the Army comm center to read the cables each morning before going to the American Cultural Center. I was in good form in my discussions with local officials and journalists and with the Commanding General. They realized I was in touch with policy, and I could pick up more things in my conversations.

Q: Do I recall there were attacks on USIS centers in Korea in the 1980s?

BISHOP: Yes.

When I got to Taegu, one of the first things the staff had me do was visit a small memorial stone that had been erected outside the door of the City Hall. It honored the Korean student who had spotted a backpack lying on the steps of the American Cultural Center. The student had reported the backpack to a policeman. When he and the policeman went back together, the student touched it first. It exploded and killed the student, and the policeman was severely injured. This led to a great manhunt, and it did turn out that it was a North Korean agent who had slipped into the country with the mission of putting the bomb on the steps of the American Cultural Center. This had happened, if I recall correctly, in September of 1983.

So on one hand, there were aspirations for democracy within South Korea's domestic polity. The bomb showed that in Korea, domestic developments were also affected by the mix-in of the threat from the North, and what was happening there.

Q: It sounds like you had to pay attention to the security of your Center.

BISHOP: Yes, a lot of attention. I applied some things I had learned in Vietnam, and the commander of the Military Police brigade at Camp George, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Pomager, gave me some more tips. He told me, though, that I was on my own. If something happened at the Center, there would be no MP cavalry sent to rescue my USIS wagon train.

The local staff of USIS-Taegu was seven FSNs and seven local contract guards paid for by the Embassy. Because of the recent bombing that had killed the student, the Korean National Police didn't think our seven security men were anywhere near adequate, and they assigned members of what were called in English the "combat police" to guard the Center full time. They were draftees assigned to the police rather than to the Army. On any given day, six of them stood shoulder-to-shoulder in front of the double doors to our Center. They could modulate their

security posture based on their analysis of any given day's threat. The policemen could be in civilian clothes, or in uniform, or in uniform carrying their carbines. The Korean police commanders felt their men should be able to enter the Center at will, especially to look over suspicious visitors using our library, but I drew the line at the Center door. They had to ask my permission to enter.

One day I was chatting with the commander of the combat policemen guarding the center, and I asked him how many men do you have assigned to this mission? I thought he'd say a one or two dozen, but he quite surprised me. One hundred and five combat policemen guarded the center. There were six on the front steps. There were walking patrols, pairs of policemen going in each of four directions at the intersection, and roving patrols. There were three shifts a day, and additional men to cover the days when the others had a day or weekend off. It all added to 105 bodies.

Q: Since 9/11, there's been a lot of discussion in the Foreign Service about the tension between security, on one hand, and open access to embassies and consulates. Your experience seemed to preview this debate.

BISHOP: Well, there's another angle to that. The combat police at the American Cultural Center were justified as "security," yes. It wasn't hard to see, however, that they had another effect -- a positive effect as far as the Korean government was concerned. It was to help insulate Korean society from America's liberal views.

The heavy security presence meant that any Korean who wanted to visit our library had to satisfy the policemen that he or she had peaceable intentions. It discouraged visitors. We had very low attendance at the library, as few as a dozen people on some days. Thirty visitors was a banner day. It meant that I had to find ways to get our programs out of the center and get them and myself around town.

This sometimes had unexpected results. In order to increase the number of people who might visit our Library, I was always trying to think of ways to highlight the availability our resources. I had received the latest World Bank report on countries of the world. I made up a list of ten countries including the U.S., the Soviet Union, England, Japan, and North and South Korea. I took statistics from the tables in the report, things like population and GDP per capita. I mailed out this informative list from the report to a few hundred local contacts, saying "Here's the kind of information available to you at the USIS library."

Now, of course, all this is available on the internet, but in those days it was not so easy to come by. One of the columns that I had copied out of the World Bank report was about calories per day of nutrition. And according to the report, printing North Korea's own statistics, they were slightly better fed up there than in the south. I sent my comparison sheet out routinely, not thinking much about it. A few days later, however, the police came to ask our FSN Mr. Kwon Hwa-soon why I was spreading untruths about the north; I was going to create a lack of confidence in the ROK government. They had been telling the South Korean people -- accurately -- that North Korea was an increasingly poor society. So there was a lot of vigilance on what we were doing.

One weekend I received a call at home from a local Catholic priest with radical leanings, asking if he could drop by and see me. It was, it turned out, about a visa for another priest. He was at my house about ten minutes after I talked to him on the phone. Five minutes after his leaving, there was a knock on my door. It was the local police commander asking whether that radical priest done anything while he was here at my house. I asked, “how did you know that he was here?” “Oh, the policemen at the box outside your residence is very alert. He just happened to recognize him.” This seemed unlikely, and it made me think they were listening to my calls. The possibility angered me.

Back to your original question about security vs. access, over the years I’ve come to think we have to reduce our reliance on fixed venues – an embassy, consulate, or center – in Public Diplomacy. Officers have to get out more, and we need to hold more programs off our premises.

Q: You were in Korea at an important time in its political development. Before we get to your programs and work in Taegu, can you help set the scene?

BISHOP: As I mentioned, there were many areas of official engagement. There was the military cooperation. I’d seen that military cooperation in depth when I’d worked that summer at the Pentagon on the Security Consultative Meeting. I’d seen how well knit together the two armed forces were. Both countries were working through trade problems.

The official relationship, based on mutual interest, then, was quite close. The senior people on both sides -- ministers, generals, ambassadors, counselors – all had living memories of the war. All were certainly united in support of the alliance.

Chun Doo-hwan was President, a general now wearing civilian clothes. Just how he had advanced himself to the front rank of Korean generals in the wake of President Park’s assassination, and what had been his relationship with Park Chung-hee, wasn’t very clear.

By this time the modernization of Korea was well underway, and the democratic aspirations I had seen in Kwang Ju more than a decade before had really begun to bloom. The old habits of the generals – I make decisions, I give orders, you follow -- were running up against the aspirations of the middle class and of the younger generation. As I mentioned, among younger people you could also sense their longing for unification and a new suspicion of the United States, imagining that there must be ulterior motives behind our support for South Korea. You could feel this tension.

This was not helped by the South Korean government’s own efforts to curb the democratic forces within South Korea. The government and its security agencies were quite rough with the students, for instance. Actually, saying “rough” is inadequate. It could be much more ugly. There were torture rooms in the police headquarters in Seoul, and I presume in other cities, where they routinely gave the water treatment to students. This was brutal and excessive. Indeed it was immoral on one hand, and on the other hand it was destructive for the Korean government maintaining the support of its own people. There’s a lot to say about this. We’ll touch on it some more I’m sure. The memories are flooding back.

As I turned this over in my mind, I thought through some of the history. I mentioned before that Park Chung-hee received his initial military training from the Japanese, at the Japanese Military Academy in Manchuria. He had been first in his class. He'd won the Emperor's silver watch. He had to have scored 100 percent on every examination -- artillery ranging and infantry tactics, to be sure, but also on political subjects.

Many scholars have traced the militarization of Japanese education in the 20s and 30s, during the run up to the Second World War. Park, when he thought about society and politics, was a Korean patriot, yes, but he was also affected by his education under the Japanese during this period of military hegemony in Japanese society. He had been taught that citizens were all supposed to have one consciousness, and the one consciousness should uphold the leader. This idea was operationalized in the Third Republic by teachers and professors of "National Ethics" at the schools and universities, and by the Ministry of Education when it wrote textbooks. They spoke of "reform of consciousness," *uisik kaehyok*. The generals who succeeded Park Chung-hee as President had absorbed the same attitude when they were educated and when they were on active duty.

The military experience of the generals, tied in with the notion that there should be one national consciousness, ran up against the aspirations for democracy, many of which had been set in motion by the American example before, during, and after the Korean War. In the Mission we could see this interesting mix. There were economic issues related to trade and development, and the political officers, as always, kept busy reporting the ups and downs of politics and policies in Seoul, or Seoul's relationship with other nations. But there were also human rights issues that derived from the contest between the generals' authoritarian frame of mind and the popular desire for democratization.

This contest, the contentions, these divided emotions, and frustrations did much to create what we called the "anti-American wind" in the mid-1980s. There was a perception that U.S. support for Korea was U.S. support for the generals' authoritarianism. It was an impression the generals were happy to ride.

Q: Had the repression in Kwang Ju contributed to this?

BISHOP: Absolutely.

I had been in the Air Force in Kwang Ju, so I knew the city quite well. I had just entered the Foreign Service when the "incident," the Kwang Ju "incident" -- I'm putting quotes around that word "incident," *satae* in Korean -- took place. It was surely a "rising," but it was part of the Korean government's damage control strategy to contain domestic and foreign outrage by using the word "incident," assuring that articles and broadcasts used this weaker term.

There's a large and growing historical literature on the rising, and even as I talk about it, I feel the need for dozens of footnotes and qualifiers, but let try to describe it simply, all in one go.

It happened in 1980. The rising in the city had been prompted by the arrest of Cholla Namdo's favorite son, Kim Dae-jung. The local outrage ran so high that protesters seized the weapons in the reserve armories and expelled the Korean Army from the city. They held it for some days. The government's response was to move troops from other parts of the country to surround Kwang Ju, and a ROK Army Special Forces unit entered the city and brutally reasserted control, killing some hundreds of citizens. (Some years later, one of my former English club students in Kwang Ju told me of her terror as the troops violently entered the shops on Walking Street. She was trembling behind the shop's steel accordion door, which was fortunately down and locked.)

I was really wrought up by the news reports because I knew the city, the students, and many leading people. The Korean Government at the time said the “incident” was inspired by radicals or communists. This was disinformation directed both at domestic and foreign audiences, justifying the repression and discrediting Kim Dae-jung and people's aspirations for democracy. I just knew that story was preposterous. But it had some currency, even among some Americans.

The rising took place in May of 1980. I was just in the Foreign Service, studying Chinese to go to Hong Kong. The news reports that came back were fragmentary, and they included the Korean government's line that the justification for arresting Kim Dae-jung was that he was a communist agitator, a tool of the North, a threat to national security. Somehow he had infected the city of Kwang Ju, they said, so the Army had only killed radicals and communists who were opposing the government. This was so false, so utterly vile, that it really enraged me.

The Korean government's disinformation, in 1980 during the rising, and in 1985 when I arrived in Taegu, was a one-two punch. First, the government said the rising was inspired by radicals and communists. Second, the movement of Korean Army troops to quell the rising had been approved by the United States because Korean units were under the operational control, the “opcon,” of the CINCUNC who was also the Commander of U.S. Forces in Korea.

When I got to Taegu in January, 1985, I found that the Gordian knot of things related to the Kwang Ju “incident” was very much on people's minds, especially that the United States approved sending the ROKA units into Kwang Ju to kill the demonstrators. The entire question of operational control, however, was much muddier than the common belief.

Actually the Korean units deployed to Kwang Ju had been very deftly chosen from among units in the southern areas of the country, which were not under UNC authority. In general, units assigned to the Second ROK Army were not under UNC operational control. The Korean government didn't need any “permission” to move them, but it deftly shaped the narrative of the “incident” to imply that we had.

Yes, the Kwang Ju incident was a running sore in U.S.-Korean relations.

Q: Well, as it affected you, how did we view the North Korean government? And how did the Koreans look at the North Korean government?

BISHOP: When I arrived in Taegu in 1985, it was more than 30 years past the end of the Korean War, which had affected everybody in the country. The younger generation didn't go through the

war themselves, but their parents did. And whether it came from memories of the war, or whether it came from the South Korean government keeping alive the brutality of the North Korean invasion, or whether it came from North Korean provocations over the years, there was strong, and official, and widespread hatred of North Korea.

I had seen it in Cholla Namdo when I was in the Air Force. I remember driving down a country road and there was a big sign: *Kim Ilsongul taeryokijukija* -- “skin Kim Il-song alive.” Skin him alive, that’s pretty strong. We don’t even quite say skin Osama bin Laden alive. We say bring him to justice.

By the mid-1980s, that kind of visceral hatred of the North had perhaps receded some, though it was still the dominant opinion. Among younger, college-educated Koreans, however, there were signs of a kind of romantic longing for national unification. There was the idea that Koreans would never do wrong to one another, so it was only the outside powers, including the United States, that kept Korea divided and kept North Koreans and South Koreans from rushing together to embrace.

To some larger or smaller degree – I thought it was “smaller” – the North, through its broadcasts and perhaps through some agents in the South, was also stimulating that kind of thinking.

Among younger people, then, there was something I had certainly never seen in Korea in the 1970s when I was there in the Air Force -- the need to recall the war and justify the extraordinary measures that South Korea and the United States had to take for Korea’s defense.

As I mentioned, part of this generation change that resulted in the anti-American wind of the time was caused by frustration over the ambiguity of the American position at the time of the Kwang Ju rising.

There was another part of the generation change. New ideas were coming into Korea – dependency theory, for instance. And liberation theology began to affect the liberal clergy of Korea. It was a challenging mix of ideas in circulation.

Q: I know about liberation theology. What’s dependency theory?

BISHOP: Boiling down a lot of theory into a few words, and probably not giving full justice to its nuance and complexity, it was that the idea that the world was centered on a superpower. At the periphery are the other nations. In one way or another, said the theory, all were in a dependent relationship with the superpower. Since the two sides are unequal in power, the result is social injustice. The Korean students cast us as the superpower, the core. Korea was, in this line of thinking, one of the innocent nations on the periphery, under the thumb of the big powerful nation at the center.

Q: What, then, was USIS in Seoul doing?

BISHOP: Of course the press work, the exchanges, and the library work were ongoing. In 1972, when I was a frequent visitor to the USIS Center in Kwang Ju, it was jammed with students

studying for their exams, meeting other students in English conversation groups, and watching USIS films. In 1973, though, USIS in Seoul decided that the Centers would no longer host high school English clubs, and a few years later the Centers stopped hosting university groups. I'd say that in the decade after I left Korea, the program shifted – in accordance with the USIA doctrines we discussed a while ago – to focus on influencers rather than direct contact with students. In the 1980s, a university student could use the USIS library, but the desired patrons were journalists, faculty, and government employees.

The PAO in Seoul, Bernie Lavin, was very committed to and fond of Korea. He saw the need for Embassy people to hear the new, challenging ideas directly from Koreans, and the need to answer them face to face. He funded a series of seminars, one every month or so. He would invite 20 or 30 Koreans, a mix of academics, government people, journalists -- vocal folks with plenty of angry younger people mixed in. He would pick out a hot springs hotel somewhere in the countryside, and we would all go there for a weekend. Of course each branch -- Taegu, Pusan, Kwang Ju -- would contribute a few participants to the guest list. You went to the hotel with some of your contacts, and over the weekend you talked through all the issues. A few officers would come down from the Embassy to be able to talk about specialized topics. There were some very tense and very charged exchanges.

All of us who were in the program while Bernie Lavin was PAO remember these seminars. During the business part of the seminar, things got really hot and heavy, with agitated back and forth between angry Koreans and Americans whose feelings were hurt by their anger. Embassy section heads sent newly arrived officers down to the seminars in order to break them in. They didn't confront these raw feelings when they went over and visited the Ministry of Economic Affairs. But they would get them when they went down to those seminars.

The highlight of these weekend seminars was the Saturday evening dinner, Korean style, sitting on the floor around the tables, with beer and Korean white lightning helping out the conversation. Bernie was well known as a singer, and during earlier tours in Korea he had translated some of the famous Korean folksongs into English. So he personally led everybody in the rounds of singing in English and in Korean, which along with the various spirits helped thaw people out, calm people down after the day of sometimes hot and heavy exchanges. Despite the charged opinions, everyone left the seminars with new friends.

(Proving that no good deed goes unpunished, Bernie was asked by a local recording company to sing his translations of the Korean songs, and "Songs Koreans Love to Sing" came out on cassette. The Yongsan PX made a nice display to sell copies, and they played on a boom box in the aisle. One soldier, listening to Bernie's voice, said: "No, they got that wrong, it's 'songs old Koreans love to sing.'")

Q: Was this gap between the young university students who had not been affected by the Korean War and the older generation, was this manifesting itself more and more?

BISHOP: I think that was one of the major sources of the tension that we faced in the Public Affairs. This was the age before the internet and the social media. Bernie was, admirably and directly and openly, following the USIA doctrines of the time, which was to focus on

influencers. Whether the invitees were older professors or what Bill Maurer called “young and nasty” faculty, say, we were focused on opinion leaders, confident that professors would speak to students, editors and journalists who would write for readers, and so on.

Q: We've had some of this in our schools, particularly in the '60s and '70s, the young nasty educators, young rebels, perhaps. You get your kicks out of influencing young people and it's not necessarily rational, but it's there in every generation.

BISHOP: So if a future historian lists the origins of this anti-American wind -- this tension I've been talking about -- part of it was simply the generational difference and the coming of age of a new intelligent college-educated future Korean leadership cohort. Yes, that's one of the things you'd have to list.

Ambassador Jim Lilley told me once -- and we'll get to Jim Lilley later -- but I remember hearing it from him first, “When you're young, if you're not a socialist, you have no heart. When you're old, if you're not a conservative, you have no brains.”

Q: I think that was Clemenceau.

BISHOP: Oh, Clemenceau! Jim Lilley quoting Clemenceau! I think he attributed it to Winston Churchill!

Q: OK, but one of the things that always struck me in the United States about the left – the Communist Party and all – was that although the Stalin regime was awful, yet somehow or another a bunch of very bright people during the 1930s could justify the destruction of the peasantry, the purges, everything.

BISHOP: Right, it was appalling.

I agree with you that in retrospect it's astonishing how many in the leadership and in the opinion-forming sectors of Western societies had been seduced by the dreams or the aspirations of socialism and communism. And you're right, there were many notorious cases in the 1930s -- Walter Duranty, Paul Robeson, Malcolm Cowley, Henry Wallace, not to mention Alger Hiss later.

Anyone who studied Cold War apologetics knows that it was common to contrast the low and mean shortcomings of free societies against the lofty ideals of socialism and communism, and that this comparison of realities vs. ideals must always be challenged. In fact, however, there was kind of a default unthinking acceptance that it was the aspirations of socialism that should be counted, and the realities of poverty and purges and gulags that should be ignored. So should all the ugly dehumanizing oppressions that we see now in movies like “The Inner Circle” and “The Lives of Others.”

Q: About East Germany, even now we still confront this, we're not through it. Focusing on Korea, I think the problem was that the same government that was beating up the students was also trying to make this case about the Communists. The Korean government was gradually

discrediting its own clear-headedness about life in the north. I served in Korea, too, and I also saw this notion inside young Koreans, that Koreans won't hurt each other, when indeed their own government was treating them cruelly, and the north if given the chance would also. In fact, we've just seen how shocking was the North Korean attack on a small island village. It's changed attitudes.

BISHOP: Right, right. All I can say is, it was part of the times.

One of the conclusions I have drawn, over the years, about anti-Americanism as a phenomena in the world, and about the challenges to American power, is that very few of them are actually indigenous or homegrown. It's not that the scholars of Egypt sat down and came up with the Egyptian critique of America, or the Nigerians thought up a unique Nigerian take on American power. Rather, they read our own domestic criticism and add a few local twists. Reading U.S. critiques of our own country, and its place in the world, strikes something in them, and they repack and reshape it. It's domestic criticisms of our own society that come back and are used against us. In a way, our domestic politics exports ideas that come back to us in the form of criticism.

There is a competition of social visions in the United States, and the competition just doesn't take place among us. If we speak of 9/11 and the war on terrorism, there's a body of American opinion that supports the war and is confident that our interventions are a force for good in the world. There's another body of opinion that believes the world would be better off without American meddling, and that indeed America is the source of much of the evil in the world. The critical takes on the United States go out to other countries, and for a whole lot of intellectual reasons they come back as criticism of American foreign policy.

This is a roundabout way of saying that Korean academics in the 1980s didn't think of liberation theology on their own. It began in European and American faculties and spread to Korean thinkers. The same was true of the dependency theory we began to encounter in the same decade.

Q: Well, when you went to Taegu, were you given particular marching orders, or just told to go do your job?

BISHOP: I don't recall anybody sitting me down and telling me "this is what we need you to do." It was implicit that I would continue to do what USIS posts always did. I would run the Center and organize its activities, tend the Fulbright program, find international visitors, and I'd go to local events, meet local leaders, and I'd help an occasional Embassy visitor -- the low-key USIS things.

When I arrived, I found that my predecessor, Maureen Taylor, had focused the program mostly on the universities in Taegu. She had a Ph.D. in English, and she shaped the program to match her strengths, using American literature as an avenue to create dialogue.

Q: You mentioned that Taegu was a center of higher education. I'm guessing you were frequently on the campuses.

BISHOP: There were five universities in Taegu and more in the rest of the province, and so there were plenty of opportunities to continue the traditional USIS programs that reached higher education.

In my conversations, I came to understand that professors chafed at the psychological limits that they faced, the dissonance between their ideals and the reality that they faced for their families and their jobs. And they also chafed at the controls that the Ministry of Education was putting on universities to make sure the demonstrations and the students were kept quiet.

All the universities had departments of “national ethics,” and students were required to take so many hours. These departments aimed to strengthen Korean unity and the traditional values of deference to rulers. They were a kind of vigilance against people who were too radical.

All during the 1980s the government was implementing a policy to move main campuses away from downtowns, to relocate to new campuses outside the cities. On the face of it, this was a good idea because many of the universities had outgrown their small downtown campuses. Taegu University moved outside Taegu. Part of Kyongbuk National University moved out of its old downtown campus near the American Cultural Center. Keimyung University undergraduates left their wonderful ivied campus for a new locale. In the capital, Seoul National University moved to Kwanak.

The universities tended to leave the professional schools, like medicine, or perhaps the adult graduate courses in business, downtown. But they moved the undergraduates whenever possible so that the students were farther away. If things got out of hand – if the students began marching – they could be interdicted by the police before they could reach downtown.

I think I developed a good rapport with most of Taegu’s educators. One of the deans regularly shared with me what he learned at Ministry of Education confabs for deans. All the deans were gathered by the Ministry every few months.

In Taegu I was implementing many of the tried and proven Public Diplomacy programs. I got to know university people and nominated individuals for Fulbrights or for seminars. At that time, Korea was given about 20 international visitors a year. Ordinarily, each branch (Taegu, Kwang Ju, and Pusan) could have one International Visitor, and Seoul would take the other 17. I called my staff together and said, let's shoot for five. We did it. The IV committee in Seoul approved five of our nominees. We had sent up nominations for “young and nasties.”

I wasn’t choosing poets and professors of English literature to be International Visitors. They were already convinced or won over. Rather I was after younger and more radical nominees, feeling that they needed a chance to visit the U.S. and see American society at first hand. I wanted their feelings about the U.S. to be based on a visit, not based on what they read in radical magazines.

In general, what I wanted to do was lean all our Public Diplomacy programs towards issues in U.S.-Korean relations, to increase the number of policy-relevant issues in our program mix. I thought the traditional USIS attitude -- that we create dialogue, and we get together with the

academic elites, that better relations will automatically result -- was fine as far as it went, but it wasn't enough.

Q: What were the effects of our Fulbright program? In other words, were people going to the United States and coming back?

BISHOP: By the time I got to Korea with the Embassy, the Fulbright program had been going on for more than 30 years. There was a pretty extensive alumni network.

One of the benefits of the Fulbright program, all over the world, in any country, is that once the U.S. had sponsored an academic for a Fulbright year, or sent someone to the U.S. as an International Visitor, they felt a sense of gratitude. They might organize a seminar, host a reception, and so on. In a way, we were always able to reap dividends from the earlier investment. Among academics, as among other sectors of Korean society, an individual fell somewhere on a continuum between right and left. In general, I found that the Fulbright year was liberalizing.

In the 1980s, there were many young faculty who were beginning to challenge the U.S.-Korean relationship. We had not had enough time to reach enough of them, though. When I chose "young and nasties" for the International Visitor Program I was trying to make up for that deficit. Still, we had not reached the stage of payoff yet.

And responding to one part of your question, I don't recall any of the Korean Fulbrighters or International Visitors "jumping" to stay in the U.S.

Q: How about the performing arts?

BISHOP: The Agency had a fine program called Artistic Ambassadors. A promising young pianist would come out from the U.S. and perform at the branches as well as in Seoul. If the other branches asked to host one performance, I would ask to do two, in Kyongju or Andong as well as Taegu.

Shirley Ann Seguin played in Taegu and Kyongju, and she performed a piece especially written for the program by George Perle. She asked us to find a page turner, and we lined up an honors pianist from one of the local universities. I remember the young woman's startled, even alarmed, reaction when she saw the handwritten Perle score dense with seemingly unplayable combinations of notes!

Q: Speakers and seminars?

BISHOP: In general I programmed every U.S. speaker sent by USIA to Korea. We had some programs at the Center, but I preferred to host programs on the campuses, in downtown hotels and other venues, or at places like the Taegu Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Pittsburg attorney Dennis Unkovic helped our Korean contacts understand American concepts of intellectual property, for instance.

As the government pressed the opposition, the question of whether the Korean constitution should be revised was beginning to be discussed. There were some interesting twists to the discussion. Liberal Koreans wanted to watch AFKN news because it had stories they could not see on their own stations, but the government could trump that desire by claiming that the AFKN broadcasts were one more sign of America doing whatever it wanted to do in Korea, in this case violating Korea's sovereignty over its airwaves. Liberal Koreans thought that the Constitution should be amended, and they hoped for American support for liberalization, but the government raised the spectre of the U.S. strong-arming Korea into amending the constitution.

The Embassy, then, needed to talk about constitutionalism, and Ambassador Walker needed to be able to make a statement about American non-interference in Korea's constitutional processes.

Sensing that the Mission needed a way, but an indirect way, to make a statement, I had a sudden urge to organize a seminar on the American constitution in Taegu. And what could be more natural than to invite Ambassador Walker to give the keynote address? This was the USIS indirect way. The Ambassador and the PAO quite liked the idea, and I got the green light.

The reward for my initiative was being sentenced to write the Ambassador's speech, Ken Quinones' speech, and my own. Fortunately our little USIS library in Taegu had an old volume listing every constitutional amendment that had passed Congress and been sent to the states – actually quite a long list, so I could fill up the speech with plenty of facts before getting to the main message. Ambassador Walker read his lines – that it was Koreans who would revise the Korean constitution -- perfectly. News of the seminar, with my punch line, was carried nationwide on the front pages of all the major newspapers.

A Foreign Service joke: Ambassadors, cabinet secretaries, and Presidents are all actors. It's the Foreign Service that writes their lines.

Q: Korea is a country with a large U.S. military command. Did this affect your work?

BISHOP: Yes, one of the other features of Taegu as a diplomatic post was that the U.S. Army's 19th Support Command, commanded by a one-star, was in the city. Charles Murray was the Commanding General when I arrived, and Herman Kammer was in command when I left. The three bases in the city were Camp Walker, Camp Henry, and Camp George. The Command had large tasks to perform in the war plans -- to provide fuel and supplies for the fighting to the north if there was another conflict. It was the Eighth Army's rear command, largely with ordnance, transportation, and quartermaster units.

Also in Taegu was the headquarters of the Second ROK Army, commanded by full General Oh Ja-bok, which had its own roles as backup, support, and reinforcement for the Korean military commands farther north.

I wanted to try and fit our USIS activities with the U.S. Army's efforts to strengthen its partnership with the Korean Army.

I noticed from my association with the 19th Support Command that the Korean Army and the U.S. Army, although they had been serving side by side for decades, didn't really understand each other very well. My concept was to organize a one-day seminar simply titled "Military Leadership," inviting both the 19th Support Command and the Second ROK Army to participate. I heard later that my proposal – nothing like it had ever been organized before – was debated among the Korean four stars before they gave the nod for the Korean command in Taegu to participate.

It was quite a fine event, with generals and field grade officers from the two allied armies sitting down to talk about leadership for a day. I provided the extra funds for simultaneous interpretation, so there was none of the usual delay for translation. Because the Korean colonels did not have to speak English to join the seminar, we got Korean Army participants who were not from the usual group that met Americans.

I must say that the eyes of the American participants were wide open the whole time. The Korean concept of leadership was more different than anyone had imagined. The Korean presenters anchored their papers on Sun Tzu as a leadership exemplar. Sun Tzu's views on what we call leadership were grounded in a Confucian view of human nature -- that some men are leaders and some are followers, just as some are kings and some are subjects, and one brother is older and another is younger. That there are leaders and followers -- that some command and others obey -- was to the Koreans a natural feature of human society.

In his lead paper, the Judge Advocate of the 19th Support Command began with the authorities in the Constitution. The Korean participants were shaking their heads. What does the Constitution have to do with leadership? So the Koreans were hearing for the first time American concepts of military leadership, and military law, and a lot of other things.

Going to lunch, I was in the car with the Second ROK Army's G-2, a one-star general. I asked him whether, leading a platoon or a company, he wanted to have country boys or city boys in his unit. He answered, country boys of course. The city kids have too much education. I told him that it was axiomatic for Americans that a smarter soldier is almost always a better soldier, even when duties are not challenging. The general was quite plainly surprised by this concept.

I asked him about Korea's democratization, and he said of course Korea will become democratic but it will take time. How long, I asked. I thought to myself that he might say "twenty years," and I planned to reply that five years sounded like plenty of time. He surprised me by saying, maybe in 50 years.

Q: Your program in Taegu seems a little more expansive than was usual.

BISHOP: I went down to Taegu with a more robust concept of what the BPAO should do. On one hand I pulled out of thin air the concept that the BPAO was also the U.S. diplomatic representative in the province, and the Center should be a kind of limited services Embassy office. In my view, then, any Embassy people who came Taegu way, say FCS or FAS, would use the Center as their platform for meetings, presentations, and catalog shows. We arranged with the Consular section in Seoul that visa appointments could be scheduled by our librarian.

Visiting vice consuls met Amcits in our Center. And I aimed to make myself the Mission's most expert officer on North Kyongsang province.

As part of my robust view of being the U.S. Diplomatic Representative, I wanted to do reporting. I had the FSNs scanning the headlines from the local papers, which we translated and sent up to Seoul. We'd occasionally translate an article or the political cartoons from the Taegu newspapers. This was something that none of the other branches were doing, and the Political Section in Seoul loved it.

Traveling through the countryside, I began to notice empty houses in villages when I would drive through. I couldn't understand how a country with a growing population would have abandoned houses. Examining the census results for the counties of North Kyongsang province, I found out that, yes, while the population of Korea and the province was growing, rural counties were losing population. I visited villages with the dean of one of the colleges to see things at first hand.

One could describe the population losses economically by saying labor was finding a greater return in the cities. You could describe it sociologically, saying it was young people responding to new opportunities in the cities, a polite way of saying the chance to get away from the confinements of village life. Both trends worked in the same direction -- the gradual emptying of villages. Yes, conditions and incomes for those who remained in the rural areas of Korea were better off. Even so, the countryside was losing population.

I wrote a fine airgram tracing out how the pull of the cities, the factories, and the export zones was so great, and the opportunities in the villages were so scant, that the rural population was declining and houses were empty. I understood that the younger people who were staying in the villages were mostly oldest sons, because they had the responsibility for their parents. The Embassy liked my reports. I was being noticed in Seoul.

Q: Well, one of the supposed great pluses for the Park Chung-hee Government was that he was slowing this movement to the cities down, by making farming pay for itself rather than milking the farmers to feed the cities as it so often is done.

BISHOP: Yes, President Park had launched that New Community Movement, the *Saemaoul Undong*. It had many positive effects on village life. In an unintended way, perhaps, it was one of the social changes that over the long run favored democratization, because there was a big emphasis on village councils, village meetings, getting together to decide what to do with the concrete or the money that came to them under the program. I've mentioned that program many times in other countries as a model of how to get things started, both development and democratization.

Another reporting project: I was reading the Taegu newspapers a month or so after the great cycle of university exams which so grip Korean society. A month previously, the students had taken the exams. The universities had published their score cutlines for admission to the various departments. The newspaper article was a follow-up, reporting to readers the grading criteria for the written essays on the examination.

I was quite surprised to see that essays were not merely graded on writing skill and organization. They were also graded on correct content. In writing out the essays, there were certain points the student needed to have made to receive a high mark.

So for instance, one question noted that Koreans eat rice while foreigners eat bread. The question was, why is this good? It's a strange question. The newspaper article revealed that the ideal answer, an essay that would receive the top score, what we used to call "the school solution" in the Air Force, would note that rice expressed Korea's national character. The flip side of this thinking was that Koreans who choose to eat bread were letting go of their heritage, were being weaned away from the culture of our society.

I was reading this article about the essays just when Korea was going to great lengths to protect its rice crop from any foreign imports. So the essay was a thinly disguised support for rice protectionism, wrapped in the garb of what I thought to be a rather crude nutritional determinism, given a nationalist spin. The Korean word usually translated as "nationalism" is *minjokjuui*, but an examination of the Chinese characters indicates it might also be translated as "racialism."

Those who wrote the question were using the examination to assure that Koreans continued to eat rice. No doubt the students had earlier had lessons on Korea's rice culture and the national character. A good score would result from writing out a memorized summary of the lesson. The question is interesting for what it said about Korean education, the teaching of what was called "national ethics," and for its parallel economic agenda. But it's also interesting because it revealed deeper concepts about the purposes of education, or perhaps the frame of education. This seemed an echo of how Park Chung-hee got an education during the colonial period. He had to learn to answer the Japanese questions the Japanese way.

I think I might have sent the last airgram in the Foreign Service analyzing the national examination questions.

Again, I was trying to enlarge what a Branch Public Affairs officer did. When the new Public Affairs Officer arrived in Seoul, John Reid, a man I greatly admire, came to Taegu the first time, however, he told me "I notice you're doing all these reports. Public Affairs Officers don't report. They go out and they run programs." I still had a few items I had begun and sent them in. He called me to say, "I thought I told you to stop." So I stopped.

Q: Did any American companies have operations in the Taegu area?

BISHOP: One of Jack Welsh's initiatives at General Motors was to launch five auto parts joint ventures with Daewoo Corporation, and while I was in Taegu, American executives and engineers began to arrive in the city. They came from GM subsidiary companies like Delphi, Fisher Body, Saginaw Steering, and AC Delco.

I soon realized that few of these Americans had been overseas before, and few were ready for the intercultural challenges of working and living in Korea. As a stopgap, I persuaded the 19th Support Command to issue special passes to the American employees so they could eat

American comfort food at their clubs, and I worked with the overall American boss of the joint ventures, Marion Eigsti, to set up orientations to the city. It helped some, but GM had not selected people with overseas experience who were likely to adapt. Some years later I learned that Daewoo had bought out the GM joint ventures. The experience was checkered.

There were a few other American companies in the Taegu area, and I took the initiative to gather them for a monthly breakfast to talk over their common problems. Their American employees were having problems obtaining the proper residence permits from the Taegu office of the Foreign Ministry, for instance, and I “demarched” the office on their behalf. Eventually the American businessmen founded the American Business Committee, Daegu (ABCD), a mini-Amcham.

Q: The decade of the 80s was an important period in Korea's political development, away from authoritarianism, toward democracy. Did you see this in your work?

BISHOP: Certainly. As the tension between the government and the opposition unfolded -- the opposition was largely a shifting coalition of political parties organized around prominent personalities -- there were demonstrations here and there in different cities. A big demonstration was scheduled for Taegu. Ken Quinones, the Consul in Pusan, came to Taegu to cover it. I joined him to observe the rally.

As a Principal Officer, Ken had a huge black car. We slowly cruised down the main avenues near the rally, which was held in a downtown theater. With its diplomatic plates, Ken was showing one and all that the Americans were there. The driver parked the car, and Ken and I began to amble toward the planned route of march. Within 30 seconds we had a tail of security officers walking not-so-discreetly behind us.

Ken talked to a few people. We found an office building. We went in the front door, went up the stairs, and went onto the roof of the building. We were looking down on the square. So were the policemen who were with us. So far we weren't doing anything that would alarm the police, but they were watching us. Indeed, the police had anticipated our presence and had assured that some policemen were ready to follow us.

When people left the theatre after the speeches, they poured out, raised a big party banner, and began a long march down the main road, passing right by the building. I thought to myself, “So this is what political officers do! It's pretty neat stuff.” We were relishing our great view of things, our anonymity, and how clever we had been.

Below us, the opposition leaders were walking just behind the huge party flag. One of them was future President Kim Young-sam. Another was Yi Man-sup, who would become Speaker of the National Assembly. We heard a buzz from the street, and we noticed that everybody in the march was looking up at the two of us and waving. They were passing the word down the line of march that the Americans are here. We waved back. How they spotted us I still have no idea, but anyway, we were local stars.

The government at the time was trying to use any legal method possible to suppress these demonstrations. So for instance, members of the opposition who were asking citizens to sign petitions were detained under the authority of the Control of Sidewalks Law. Of course if they had applied for a permit, they wouldn't have gotten it.

I think it was in 1986, when we organized our July 4 reception at the American Cultural Center, the mayor and all the city's senior officials attended. I got roused up and wrote out remarks for that ceremonial occasion that expressed our support for democracy and a criticism of using the Control of Sidewalks Law. The mayor left. I was a brash young officer who had pushed the local folks a little too hard. The mayor was friendly and fine with me, before and after, but that day I had crossed a line. Once again, this was how I was trying to be more than a Branch Public Affairs Officer.

When Jim Lilley became Ambassador he was anxious to get around to see the different cities. He came to Taegu, and he intended to stay overnight, so it was a large effort for me to organize the visit. Naturally, he had to call on the Mayor, and they had a good talk, partly because I had prepared a list of intelligent questions for the Ambassador to ask the Mayor. Afterwards, a newspaper reported that the Mayor had told a conference of city officials that he'd been surprised by how well-informed Ambassador Lilley was about local conditions, and that all of his own people should be equally well-informed. I smiled inside.

I was anxious for Ambassador Lilley to meet some of the opposition people in the Taegu area. I arranged for him to meet four prominent local radicals, or at least radicals who were not completely off the wall. I knew that the local authorities would be quite unhappy with the idea of the Ambassador meeting these people. For instance, one was the Catholic priest who had visited my house when I discovered the police vigilance on my activities.

I wrote out Ambassador Lilley's schedule to say that he would lunch at Camp Walker, and then he'd rest for an hour and a half. On that day, the Korean National Police motorcycle unit, which took the Ambassador through the city on every one of his calls, motored up with his car to the front gate of Camp Walker. They let him pass through the gate, and then the motorcycle policemen stood down for him to come back two and a half hours later.

We didn't go to lunch on the base, though. We drove right through the camp, and we exited via the back gate. We went, on our own, to a local Catholic church where the radicals and the interpreters were waiting. I'm kind of pleased with my small deception of the KNP.

It was a very good meeting with really frank talk between the radicals and Ambassador Lilley. The Ambassador learned some things from the conversation – absorbed nuance and context – that he hadn't heard before.

And -- I think that Ambassador Lilley, with his background in the CIA, liked the spunk of that event, sort of pulling a fast one on the local authorities who were none the wiser. When I went up to Seoul for a few months after I had finished in Taegu, I found that I was pulled into a lot of meetings with Ambassador Lilley because he valued my experience in the field.

I'd been hearing rumors that the opposition published an underground magazine, named *Mal*, the word for talk, or speech. I began to ask around, who has a copy? The usual response was "magazine, what magazine?" The word was out, though, that I was interested, and finally I was given a copy by one of my contacts at a university. With the FSNs, we translated the table of contents and a few articles to give a full report to the Embassy. I was the first in the Mission to have a copy.

The article that most caught my eye explained the system of press controls by the government. The article described how the editors of all the newspapers in Korea received a daily conference call from the Ministry of Information. They were told about what stories to play up, or play down, or omit. What stories to run on page 1 above the fold, which to place on page 13. Which facts to report, what photos to use, or what stories not to report at all. For instance, when the CIA Director visited Korea, the Ministry told the editors not to report it at all.

One of the Ministry's regular techniques focused on Congressional testimonies by Administration principals. The usual shape of remarks at Congressional hearings was this. After the obligatory genuflection to the Committee Chairman -- we have accomplished so much thanks to your leadership, Mr. Chairman -- the body of the statement spoke of balance in U.S. policy. On one hand, the U.S. expressed its solidarity with the Republic of Korea as it faced threats from the North. On the other hand, however, we were pressing the Korean government to improve its record in human rights and to respond to the Korean people's hopes for a greater democracy.

Editors knew of the testimonies and speeches because the Embassy sent them full copies, and of course they read reports on the hearings coming in from the wires. But the instructions from the Ministry to editors were -- you may quote the first part of the remarks, the part that emphasizes U.S. solidarity with the ROK on security -- while you may not report the criticism of human rights. The Korean Government was itself editing or filtering what we said. It was scrubbing any news about U.S. policy that supported democratization. Over time, this was increasing the public perception that the United States supported and empowered President Chun's authoritarianism.

In any case, I was the first in the Mission to obtain a copy of the magazine, and in this case I broke John Reid's ruling that branches not engage in reporting.

While my #2 FSN, Mr. Kwon Hwa-soon, was translating articles for that report to the Embassy, I could hear him cursing in his office. The article in *Mal* revealed things he was unaware of. He was hopping mad over what was being done by the Ministry because he was part of our daily efforts to explain U.S. policy.

My report to the Embassy was leaked to UPI, so my analysis had a brief moment in the sun. We understood better that the anti-American wind hadn't just started blowing on its own. The Korean government was adversely shaping public perceptions of its ally.

Q: I was listening to our last interview, and we talked in some length about the publication Problems of Communism. But in a way this wouldn't be particularly apropos of North Korea because North Korea was so beyond the pale. Other Communist societies were benign by comparison.

BISHOP: *(laughs)* Right. I remember we circulated *Problems of Communism* in Korea, and there were some regular readers. I think you're right, though, the journal mostly focused on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Q: It was a different world then. By the way, during this time we were improving our relations with China.

BISHOP: Well, you're right, we were trying to develop a positive relationship with China in the mid-1980s, but I don't recall that we in Korea were talking much about China. I also think that the South Koreans had not quite begun to appreciate the changes in China. It had not begun to register with them yet. Trade across the Yellow Sea had not yet begun to develop. I'm not sure it was on young people's minds.

Q: What about Japan?

BISHOP: Well, Japan. Anybody who's been around Korea very long knows that the mistrust between Koreans and the Japanese runs very deep. The colonial period is still within living memory. After the establishment of the First Republic in 1948, it took more than a decade and a half for Korea even to establish diplomatic relations with Japan. The prospect of normalization in the 1960s created quite a backlash, quite a stir, and there were angry demonstrations by the students. I know because my wife participated when she was at Seoul National University.

Japan's reluctance to own up to what they did during the colonial period and the war has always made things more difficult, too.

Certain countries have deeply scarred national memories, or deep scars of memory. For us, there's a deep scar about the Civil War. It's now a century and a half since the Civil War began, but the war's still alive with us. It touches all kinds of our domestic issues and still affects our thinking. The scar heals more as the years pass, and today we have a little calmer understanding of the Civil War, but it had such a wrenching emotional impact on our country's history that we never get away from it.

With China, the Second World War was the big scar -- the agony from 1937 until 1945, the sheer scale of suffering and death, the viciousness of the Japanese, the uprooting of so many people. China's scars and its narrative of the Second World War fit into its larger narrative of victimization and humiliation from the time of the Opium Wars. The thinking goes that the Westerners put China down and destroyed our country from the outside. They denied us our rightful place in the world, and we're going to get even.

With Korea the scars were the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War. These scars are important because they shape and color the national narrative, the self-understanding that people have about themselves. With Korea, the narrative of the Japanese colonial period nests inside the idea that Korea is a poor defenseless country caught between the large powers. The large powers are only trouble, and they're unhelpful for the development of our own pure Korean nation.

Continuing a little more on national histories, for Americans, the scars of the Civil War are a long time ago, so while the memory is alive, we don't get shocked by something that challenges our usual understanding of the Civil War. Indeed, we continue to think about the Civil War in new ways.

In China's and Korea's case, the scars are fresh enough, just a generation or two behind, that when the scar is poked, things can really be stirred up. In China, the Belgrade bombing did so. In Korea, we were sometimes surprised by how something would come out of blue, hit the scar and cause a scream, so to speak.

Sorry for a very long explanation.

Q: Oh no, no. It's important to think about these things. We still have 25,000 troops in Korea. There are still incidents, especially where young men of a certain age group are congregated, like rape in Okinawa. Was there anything like that in Korea?

BISHOP: This is worth a seminar.

When I was in the Air Force in Korea, in the early 1970s, I had seen the ugliness of "ville" culture and of prostitution. I sensed its long term moral impact, and I knew it wasn't winning us friends among the Korean people, but the official response was based on disease control, good order, race relations, discipline, and morale. I think, moreover, the Korean government and Korean press weren't inclined to report incidents involving U.S. soldiers. Also, there were Koreans who profited from the villes, and I'm reasonably sure they shared some of the profits with the police and officials so that there were no public stirs. By the 1980s, when I was in Taegu, however, the ville culture had mostly disappeared.

I haven't thought this all the way through, but there were "push" and "pull" factors affecting women found in the camp towns. Women who left their home towns in Korea in the 1960s and 1970s didn't have many employment possibilities, and some of them were lured to the bars. By the 1980s, though, millions of women were working in the factories and the export zones.

And so I do not remember any incident that had terrible effects -- as rapes in Okinawa had recently.

Q: How about your wife?

BISHOP: We were a team.

First, she was the gracious hostess for every event that we did. She baked all the pumpkin and apple pies for our Thanksgiving reception, for instance. She hosted the many guests who came for dinner at our residence.

You'll recall that Jemma is from Cholla Namdo. And you'll recall that for centuries there has been a tension between the Cholla provinces and the Kyongsang provinces. It goes back to the time of the Three Kingdoms, when the Kyongsang provinces were part of Shilla and the Cholla

provinces were part of Paekche. You could call it a social tension, a deep buried rivalry, even a distrust. This tension was sharpened because Park Chung-hee favored the Kyongsang provinces, generously funding their development, appointing Kyongsang people to high office, while he slighted or ignored or damned with scant investments the Cholla provinces. Not to mention that Kim Dae-jung was from Cholla Namdo.

Jemma bridged these tensions very well. It helped that she is a graduate of Seoul National University, and she was known among Catholic clergy from her work at the seminary in Kwang Ju and at Sogang University in Seoul. She would meet other Seoul National University alumni in Taegu. She was one of the very few who were from Cholla among the Kyongsang alumni. The vehicle of the alumni association gave her standing. She also organized the first get-together of her own high school's alumnae in Taegu.

Not to mention that when I might be explaining something to a contact in my awkward Korean, she might be at my side helping to explain things right. People listened to her. From her a message was credible in a way that it wasn't if it came from me. She is a gifted diplomat on her own.

I might add that while we were in Taegu she worked at Camp Henry – in Army Community Services under the 20th Support Group. They asked her to organize the bride school programs for the new Korean fiancées of American soldiers – classes, speakers, field trips, and activities. To this day some of the students keep in touch with her, saying how much they appreciate what she did to help them get ready for new lives in the U.S., and to shape their views of the United States in a positive direction before they got there.

Jemma's great gift is as an organizer. While she and her staff were running the Bride Schools, she also referred soldiers and family members from the entire 19th Support Command to its counseling center -- for alcohol and drug abuse and for gambling. This was a very large job, for which they paid her nickels and dimes. We can sum up by saying she was a bridge between Korea and the United States, helping the Army, yes, but helping me and the Mission even more. She can rightly be proud of everything she did in Taegu. As always, she made me proud of her.

Q: You left there when?

BISHOP: We had arrived in Taegu in January of 1985, and we left in January of 1987. My replacement was Donna Welton.

SEOUL, KOREA, 1987 USIS Policy Officer

In the personnel system, I was "off cycle," and I wasn't due at the Chinese language school in Taipei until it began in August. So I arranged things with PAO John Reid that I could work for a few more months in Korea -- at USIS in Seoul. I became the "Policy Officer" for USIS Korea. I worked on various projects, and perhaps you could say I became John Reid's utility infielder. I mostly worked two issues.

Q: You know, I mean the thing is -- today is the 4th of February, 2011 with Don Bishop. And we have you -- you've left Taegu and you've gone up to Seoul.

By this time Ambassador Jim Lilley had replaced Dixie Walker. Can you tell us about Jim Lilley and these forces you have described?

BISHOP: I never met anyone who worked for Jim Lilley who did not rate him as one of our finest Ambassadors, ever. We used to say of him that "what you see is what you get." He was straightforward with the Koreans. He shared his thinking quite frankly with his Embassy team. He had an incisive way of thinking and a blunt way of talking that I quite liked. I think the Koreans, and the Taiwans, and the Chinese appreciated his directness, compared with more circumspect and cautious talk by many other Americans from the Embassy or from Washington.

Now that I have read his book, I have a better feeling for how Ambassador Lilley may have developed that way. Ambassador Lilley's older brother had committed suicide soon after the end of World War II, and it affected Jim. Ambassador Lilley's take on what had happened was that his brother had been a very idealistic person depressed by the dissonance between his ideals and the reality that he saw in wartime China, post-war China, and post-war Japan. In the grip of the depression he took his own life.

This led Jim Lilley to always hone in on realities, to face things as they are. We often talk about "realists" and "idealists" in foreign policy. I editorialize that these labels are not always helpful. Many "realists" don't admit plain facts that mess up their concepts. Or they hesitate to report realities that run against an Administration's policy. But that's a topic for another day.

Most, I suppose, would count Ambassador Lilley as a realist, but I found his "realism" co-existed with a deep fidelity to American ideals and America's role in the world. He had a different shade of realism. In any case, his manner was invariably honest and direct. He edged up toward bluntness in normal diplomacy. I found this refreshing, perhaps because my own learned habits of diplomatic circumspection are somewhat at war with my desire for straight talk.

Jim Lilley stories? I sat in on an interview he gave with a famous American journalist. Actually, it was little more complicated than that. The meeting was scheduled with the journalist's wife, who was with one of the foundations, as I recall, and the journalist came along. Speaking to the wife about his experiences working in Korea, Ambassador Lilley was relating how the Korean government was resisting opening its market to American products. Korean government interlocutors frequently relied on the need to protect infant industries, even though their conglomerates were becoming quite competitive.

Ambassador Lilley said something like, "Oh well, one day, there's the little cute infant in the bathtub, but pretty soon you have a gorilla in your tub." Everyone laughed.

The journalist violated the guidelines for the conversation and published it in the *Baltimore Sun*. Whenever you use animal metaphors in other societies you'd better be very careful. A general at the Eighth Army had called the Koreans lemmings, which got translated as "field rats" in Korean, and there was a sharp reaction. After the interview appeared in the newspaper, there was

some ducking and weaving needed to try to extract Jim Lilley from having called the Koreans gorillas. He had merely used an off the cuff metaphor.

I wrote one of his speeches for the Korean Bar Association about constitutional reform and change, and we had some back and forth as he put his own stamp on my draft. Ambassador Lilley was not a wild-eyed liberal. I guess I would say he favored a careful transition from the authoritarian system that was in place to something that was more liberal and democratic. By “careful” I don’t mean “prolonged,” but he wasn’t in favor of radical solutions to the crisis. At least this was my junior officer’s take on things.

Q: Well, did you in this see a division in maybe viewpoint or -- between our military command and the Embassy?

BISHOP: It’s entirely natural and understandable that some senior officers at Yongsan, being soldiers, had close working relationships with Korean generals, and they had a natural rapport with their Korean allies. They tended to most value the need for American solidarity with Korea against the threat of the north. I’d say they were less knowledgeable about the rising desires for liberalization among students and families and businesspeople. So there was that.

USIS people didn’t generally get to be in on the innermost political discussions between the political officers and the Ambassador and DCM, or when the Assistant Secretary or one of the DAS’s (Deputy Assistant Secretary) would come to visit, so I can’t give you any sense of American policy discussions at the highest level. It’s clear, though, that the Embassy on the whole was on the side of liberalization but was trying to figure out how to make it work smoothly.

Q: What were the issues on your plate in Seoul?

BISHOP: As in Taegu, the large public affairs issue at that time was what we called the anti-American wind, in Korean the *pan-Mi param*, a big bundle of tensions and grievances about America’s place in Korea, and the control or the influence or the ties we had with the generals, meaning in this case President Chun Doo-hwan. As I’ve mentioned before, the wind was stronger because many Koreans believed that the U.S. supported the generals. This may carry the weather metaphors too far, but the anti-American wind was part of the brewing storm over Korea’s democratization.

The democratic wind was blowing harder in 1987 when we moved to Seoul. They came to a head in June of 1987. I’ve just finished rereading Jim Lilley’s chapters on Korea in his book, *China Hands*. He, and the Mission, were trying to align the firm American commitment to Korea security and the ordinary and necessary ties we had with the Korean government with the rising aspirations of the Korean people and their desire for a more democratic government. At USIS we were dealing with the growing anti-American feeling.

It was clear we had to start communicating directly with Korean students. As a subset of the population they were highly idealistic. They were away from home and feeling more independent. They carried within themselves the idea once they graduated and got on with their

lives – and once they had families, once they had jobs, they would be vulnerable to any pressure from the government -- which would weaken their willingness to take risks for democracy. As students, this was the time that they were unencumbered by these obligations, and this was when they could act.

As I mentioned earlier, the students had an idealistic yearning for the unification of Korea. They were attracted to the lines of thinking that blamed the original division of Korea on the United States, and they wondered whether the U.S. hindered Korean reunification for some dark reason of our own. We were cruelly thwarting the natural unity of the Korean people, who longed to be together, some reasoned. The publication and translation into Korean of Bruce Cumings' history of U.S.-Korean relations gave a boost to this interpretation.

I knew these feelings and the anti-American wind were natural expressions of heartfelt opinion – misinformed, yes, romantic, perhaps, but entirely understandable and entirely developing within the idea-forming sectors of Korean society.

There were others – some in the South Korean security agencies – who believed these ideas must have come from North Korea because they ran parallel to so much propaganda from the North. When a discredited and disliked ROK government said liberal thinking comes from the North – have you been listening to North Korean broadcasts? – it caused resentment. It led some Koreans to believe that their government always lies, so its accounts of a cruel and repressive North Korea were suspect.

In any case, it was clear that USIS needed to give more attention to students. I had been meeting them in Taegu, so my understanding of their thinking and their misconceptions about the U.S. and U.S. policy in Korea was fairly fresh.

The AIO in Seoul was Carl Chan, who is just now finishing up as Executive Director of the Advisory Commission of Public Diplomacy. His idea for reaching the student audience was to publish a special newspaper for students. He created *Sisa Nonpyong* out of nothing. It was an eight-page tabloid, words only, no photos, published once a month. I worked with Carl on content. We could, for instance, report on both sides of U.S. policy – both our support for security against the North and support for democracy. The Korean government's daily instructions to newspaper editors blocked this full view. In any case, the newspaper aimed at the students really made an impact on the campuses. Even if the students didn't appreciate all of our policies, they appreciated being communicated with directly.

As I've mentioned before, there were some Korea experts in the administration who were reluctant to undermine the Korean government. A U.S. internal policy debate over Korea would have hampered our direct communication with the students and other publics because we in USIS would have to be careful and restrained in what we might say. Carl and I were helped by the speech given by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Gaston Sigur in February, 1987, which put the U.S. firmly on the side of democratization. It illustrates the principle that Public Diplomacy people in the field need words to quote, principles to hone in on, policy to follow. Ambiguity, careful words, or hesitation don't foster strong advocacy.

Q: Well, were you there for the student demonstrations?

BISHOP: By the time I got to Seoul, there were daily and weekly student demonstrations. When you had a chance to see them occur at first hand (not just on television) as I did in Taegu and Seoul, you noticed quite clearly that they were very confined, usually taking place in front of a university's gates.

It was theater in a way. The combat police with their shields were on one side. Many of those combat policemen were draftees. On the other side were the students, coming out of the university main gate to shake their fists and to toss a "Molotov cocktail" -- often just a soda bottle with a tablespoon full of kerosene or lighter fluid. They wanted it to show well on TV but not to actually harm their own classmates who were in the combat police.

I recall flying in a helicopter over Seoul. It just happened that a demonstration was going on outside the Yonsei University gate. From the air I could see a bit of smoke and the crowd. But the rest of the city was completely untouched.

The tight focus of the television cameras on the demonstrations, day after day, communicated the impression of a great social disorder -- and possibly an imminent revolution in Korean society -- in a way that certainly wasn't justified by any objective view of what was going on. And of course you wonder that even today about events in Egypt. The cameras are on the crowd, but what else goes on in the city? You never know. That's why Foreign Service Officers have to see things with their own eyes.

I do remember walking through the Kyonghui University campus as the cherry blossoms were blooming that spring, however. This is a famous sight; the campus is stunningly beautiful at that time of year; thousands of Koreans come from all over to stroll through the grounds. As my wife and I entered the campus, though, I began to sneeze. A slight breeze blew through the tree leaves, blowing off tear gas particulates that had come to rest during an earlier campus demonstration.

Q: Well, now while you were in Seoul, did you have contact with the professors or the faculties at any of the universities? And if you did, sort of what was their take on what was happening?

BISHOP: I'd had two years of contact with academics in Taegu because a Branch Public Affairs Officer does more on what we call the cultural affairs side of Public Diplomacy. And yes, through my wife, and from past contacts, and from my own minor standing as a Korean studies scholar, I had plenty of contacts at the universities.

I would say that the professors clearly stood on the liberal side of things. They ardently hoped for liberalization. They were basically sympathetic to their students. Still, they, like all adults in Korea, knew that their positions were vulnerable to government pressure and sanction. A prof who became too radical knew he placed his job at risk. So many faculty tended to channel their aspirations in scholarly ways, whereas the students channeled them in demonstrative and political ways.

There's another thread to mention. This was 1987. A student who was 20 would have been born in 1966 or 1967. Their parents had endured the Korean War, but the students hadn't. It wasn't in their memories. They had grown up as Korea had begun its economic takeoff. So there was a generational divide between the students and their professors.

A second issue I dealt with concerned the American Forces Korea Network, AFKN.

Political tensions were growing in the spring of 1987. So was the number of demonstrations. What Koreans knew about these demonstrations did not come to them from their own newspapers, television, or the Yonhap News Agency. Rather the news reached them from foreign news reports. Foreign correspondents were at every demonstration, and of course they made good visuals for television. Many Koreans saw these foreign news reports on the American Forces Korea Network, AFKN television. At the time, AFKN was Channel 2 on any Korean television set.

AFKN, then, was thwarting the Korean Government's attempts to render the demonstrations invisible. The Eighth Army and the Embassy heard the government's complaints. They said the government had allowed broadcasting of AFKN over the Korean airwaves because it understood the U.S. need to provide news, entertainment, and command messages to soldiers. Now, however, you're showing news clips from the U.S. networks on our own Channel 2. You're broadcasting news about Korea, and you're showing videos of the demonstrations that we won't show on our own networks.

The result was a brewing conflict over the broadcasting by the Armed Forces Korea Network. Of course the Armed Forces Network had its own charter, so to speak, which was to pass on American and world news to American soldiers and their families. The AFN mission wasn't quite the same as the Voice of America's, but interfering with the news that the Armed Forces Network broadcast to soldiers would cause a stir in Washington.

I spent some time working with Eighth Army Public Affairs and AFKN, and I wrote out about a dozen brief guidelines for the AFKN news broadcasts. On ordinary Korean domestic news, AFKN would always source their reports to Yonhap, which was perfectly reliable. This was a gesture of respect for Korean journalism. If there was news of demonstrations (not run by Yonhap), AFKN would always source, say, the Associated Press or perhaps a Japanese news agency. The point was that AFN was not to broadcast its own reports. That was to deflect any direct criticism of AFKN, even as it allowed Korean television viewers to hear and see foreign media reports on Channel 2. This did not directly answer the Korean government's objections, but it blunted any criticism that AFKN was itself taking sides in Korean politics. It served for the moment.

Jemma and I left in May, and a few weeks later President Chun Doo-hwan threw up his hands and said, "the system can't continue." He made what was called "the momentous decision." I call it Korea's "turn for democracy." And although generals continued as Korean leaders for some years afterward, they were generals who were elected. Looking back, my efforts were to deflect a direct Korean government challenge to AFKN broadcasts -- so that local Koreans could continue

to see things on AFKN that could not be broadcast on their own networks. This was my small role in the events of 1987.

Q: Your time in Korea was coming to an end. Did you feel that new times were coming?

BISHOP: Yes, I had confidence that new times were coming. It was just a matter of how the transition would be managed. On the whole, Korea has taken a positive direction since then.

I did one last thing before leaving Korea. I had consistently been frustrated by the unwillingness of the Embassy and the Department to rebut the Korean government's disinformation on the Kwang Ju rising – for instance, to clarify that the Korean troops that savaged the city had not been under U.N. operational control, and the U.S. had not “approved” their deployment.

I was dumbfounded that some in the Embassy – and some in the Department -- felt that if we did so, we would pull the rug out from under the Chun government. Keeping the truth from the Korean people, and placing the Chun government's interests ahead of our own, meant that those of us in Korea dealing with the students and the public were left hanging out to dry. It was shortsighted, and contemptible, but most of all it was *dishonorable*. You don't do this to your people in the field.

It occurred to me as I was leaving that I needed to put something on the record. On the last page of my final evaluation I wrote out that I was one of the officers that urged that the United States needed to put the facts on the record.

Our failure to be forthright, open, and *true*, was a mistake that lasted 15 years. When Ambassador Laney formally apologized to the Korean people – not for helping suppress the rising, but for failing to tell the Korean people the facts – I felt vindicated.

HUGH BURLESON
Deputy Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Seoul (1985-1987)

BURLESON: Now we get towards the tail end of my career... I was next chosen to be DPAO in Seoul and began by taking 10 months of Korean language and area studies at FSI. This was '84-'85, so, I was already in my upper 50's. I found learning a new language at that age is a lot more work than learning, say, 20 or 30 years or 40 years earlier.

Fortunately, one of our teachers was a Korean woman whose husband was a Foreign Service officer; and they had served in Japan, where she had picked up a lot of Japanese. I think she actually studied formally at the Yokohama Language School run by FSI while there. So, sometimes, when I was getting stuck on some aspect of Korean grammar or Korean vocabulary, she could switch to Japanese and explain it in Japanese, because the languages are closely related. The grammars are almost identical in their structure and both draw vocabulary from Chinese. I.e., both peoples became literate from Chinese. If someone already knows Japanese,

it's a lot easier to study Korean from a Japanese text (or vice versa). We didn't have such a text but this Korean teacher could help me in that respect. So, I made the grade.

In August '85, I went out to Seoul, Korea, and began serving what was to be a 3-year term as DPAO Seoul. Bernie Lavin was PAO at the time -- an old Korea hand. I found the work interesting and rewarding. The situation, of course, was one of Army Generals (basically then a military government) running Korea. Korean students were reacting with increasing vehemence against the old system and trying to blame us, among other things, for the many transgressions that our supposed puppets in the Korean Government had perpetrated (such as the Kwangju massacre of some years earlier). So, we tried to find ways to engage the more rational of the students, and, of course, their professors, in a dialogue on U.S. policy. In some ways, the situation paralleled what we had in Tokyo back in the late '60s on security and defense issues. But, Korean students are not Japanese students. They had their own special psychology, and dealing with them proved quite a challenge.

Before long, Lavin was retiring. He left Korea, and a new PAO came on board, John Reid. He quickly focused on this problem with the students. He saw the situation as one that was increasingly anti-American and one poisoning the general atmosphere, especially in the college campuses, and our dealings with the Korean audiences.

So, we began publishing a newsletter for Korean students to try to penetrate their hard-core anti-American ideology. We had some success, but the real problem, of course, lay in the type of government they had; and we weren't in any position to help them with that. It was obviously a job for the Koreans themselves.

So, there was some tumult on the streets, a lot of tear-gas on the streets and in under-passes below the streets. One climax that came and started the process of toppling the military rule was, I think it was in the summer of '86 or '87. At any rate, there was a huge, almost a million-person demonstration in the wide square and thoroughfare adjacent to the USIS building. All we could do was to observe it and try to understand what was going on. But it was the beginning of the end for rule by military leaders. A few years later, they were able to have a proper democratic election.

I guess, sort of like you with Frank Shakespeare, I didn't see eye-to-eye with John Reid on many things. The chemistry was wrong. And I decided that it was time to retire. So, I left there in December 1987 after two and a half years at post.

DAVID BLAKEMORE
Director, Office of Korean Affairs
Washington, DC (1986-1987)

David Blakemore was born in 1941 in New York State. He graduated from Valparaiso in 1962 and joined the Foreign Service in 1965. He served overseas in Saudi Arabia, India, Korea, Bangladesh and Nigeria, as well as the staff director

of the Board of Examiners and Deputy Team Leader in the Inspection Corps in Washington DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in the winter of 1997.

BLAKEMORE: Some things never change. So I had to find myself a job. My old friends in the East Asia bureau helped me out and I became the director of the office of Korean affairs in 1986.

Q: So you were in Korean affairs from '86 to when?

BLAKEMORE: One year.

Q: '87. What was the situation as you saw it in Korea in that particular period?

BLAKEMORE: In retrospect it was a very humbling year. Chun Doo Hwan had taken over the presidency as discussed early in this narrative in 1979-80 and was still in power and very much in control of the situation. I think that the transition to his pal General Roh Tae Woo took place just before or sometime during the time that I was there that year.

It is a humbling thing, I say, because I was discouraged about the political future of Korea. I had always believed that economic progress of which they had had a great deal, would eventually force political liberalization. That they would figure out some orderly way to do that that would not leave them open to military adventurism by the North Koreans. In my year there I became more and more discouraged about the likelihood of that. It just didn't seem like they were going to figure out how to do that. The military government was as difficult as ever.

A fairly short period of time after I left everything loosened. Essentially the democratic government that you see in Korea now came about. So much for the State Department's ability to see long-term trends coming even of such a cataclysmic nature as that. I don't think anybody in the United States government in 1986 had a clue.

Q: I think this is quite true even in mega terms with the Soviet Union. It was close to the same period. But of course on the other hand probably nobody in Korea saw it either.

BLAKEMORE: I think that is right.

Q: Some of these things happen and it tends to make intelligence analysts go from worst case scenarios and predict all sorts of things which have no real validity for policy makers but it is just to make them look good because things do change.

BLAKEMORE: Things change. I was not intending to critique our ability to predict and to foresee events so much as anybody's ability to. Human affairs of this sort are just very murky. It was great news when it happened.

Q: When you are dealing with Koreans does this mean North Korea too?

BLAKEMORE: Yes, that's right.

Q: What were we seeing in North Korea? Here was the center of where we were dealing with North Korea and what do we know about it?

BLAKEMORE: Not much. No more than we did the last time we talked about it. North Korea was often described as the most difficult intelligence target in the world. Human intelligence was nonexistent. What we knew was only what was photographable from a satellite.

But I enjoyed that aspect of my year as the head of the desk because I had a very irreverent and very bright young officer by the name of Joe Mussomeli, who was the North Korea desk officer. Under his relentless prodding, we put forward a pretty strong case for the desirability of an improved relationship between the United States and North Korea bringing the South Koreans along if we could but doing it anyway even if we couldn't. I can't say that we accomplished anything overall during that year, but we make it possible to talk about that issue.

All along as far as I could see we had been perfectly happy to let the South Koreans call the shots in our relationship with North Korea. We discussed earlier the aberration that Jimmy Carter kind of forced in 1979. I do think we made it possible to talk about North Korea as a separate issue from the South. There has been subsequently a little bit of loosening in that relationship, not a lot but some, and a little bit of willingness on the part of the United States to deal directly with North Korea.

Q: Were nuclear problems apparent at that point?

BLAKEMORE: No, I don't think so. That came later. I think if the nuclear problems had been apparent we wouldn't have been able even to have the discussions that we did. What we were trying to do was some very modest stuff like approve visas for North Korean delegates to various kinds of sports conferences and so on that were being hosted by the United States and that we had routinely kept the North Koreans away from. It was modest stuff. Academic exchanges and that sort of thing.

Q: In this relationship with North Korea, from your perspective was China playing any role?

BLAKEMORE: No. We tried to keep the Chinese government very much informed of our thinking. They wanted us to believe that they played a moderating role on North Korean behavior and who knows maybe they did. But I am sure the Chinese would have said so either way. They played a role in the sense that we acknowledged that they were a major factor in this equation.

Q: Were the North Koreans making any attempt to become more palatable to the international body politics?

BLAKEMORE: No. I think it had been a long time since any of their embassies had been caught financing their operations by drug sales which was a major case in the '70s when I was on the desk the first time. I think it was in Copenhagen.

Q: Yes, it was Copenhagen, I'm quite sure.

BLAKEMORE: So that kind of gross anti-social behavior was no longer visible.

Q: They weren't blowing any South Korean cabinet ministers up I guess?

BLAKEMORE: Not since the early '80s in Rangoon. No they weren't doing any of that but it was pretty grim. There was no relationship.

Q: How about with the South Koreans? How did you find the South Korean embassy? How well were they sort of plugged into the Washington scene?

BLAKEMORE: Reasonably well. They were good men and I think they represented Korea quite well. Economics becoming more and more of an aspect of what they were here to represent with each passing year became large in the relationship. Unlike my earlier tenure on the desk when everyone's time and attention were dominated by the Koreagate scandal and the troop withdrawal issue, it was a much more normal time my second tour.

Q: Was there any analysis at that time coming from either political or economic sides about Korea incorporating the problems of too cozy a relationship between the government and the big corporations? The repercussion which just hit Korea within the last few months.

BLAKEMORE: I don't think you could call what was going on, I don't think you could dignify it with the word analysis. I would saying whining from the Commerce Department and the Treasury Department. I put it that way because people did not analyze the situation as far as I am aware of. There was no really effective information base, factual base. There was just a sense that the Koreans had followed the Japanese model of intimacy between the government and the big companies that was detrimental to U.S. trade interests.

I don't think, I am certain that no one thought of it in terms of corruption the way it seems so obvious just in the last few months. As you said, corruption is at the heart of this both in Japan and in Korea. It seems to me the U.S. government for a long time stood in awe of the coordinating capabilities of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in Japan and just thought that it was something about the Japanese culture which made it possible for them to work together so smoothly with the major industrial giants. People didn't talk about corruption and I think blindly that analysis was shifted in the minds of U.S. policy makers from Japan to Korea without even thinking about how Korean culture might make it a little different. Yes people were complaining about it but we had a major trade surplus with Korea at the time as I recall. It was based a lot on exports from the United States, aircraft, that sort of thing.

DAVID LAMBERTSON
Deputy Chief of Mission
Seoul (1986-1987)

David Lambertson was born in Kansas in 1940. He received his BA from the University of Redlands in 1962. He entered the Foreign Service in 1963, and his assignments abroad included Saigon, Medan, Paris, Canberra and Seoul with an ambassadorship to Thailand. Mr. Lambertson was interviewed in 2004 by David Reuther.

LAMBERTSON: Direct transfer to Seoul.

Q: What does a direct transfer mean? You've got a household, a family.

LAMBERTSON: Well, it really was quite direct for me. Sacie came back to the United States and spent a little time here. No, we both came back to the United States, but it was very brief for me. A little bit longer stay for her. Our shipment got there in a timely fashion. It wasn't long before we were reestablished in that nice old Japanese house that has now been torn down, which was the DCM residence. As usual, Sacie did great things with it.

That compound is one we hope is going to be the site of a new American Embassy, a deal that we thought we had finalized when I was the DCM there and it is still controversial, and unconsummated. In any event it was a nice house and that too was a good tour. It was so brief - blindingly short. But it was interesting.

Q: Well, Dixie Walker's still there. He was there for a few more months.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, Dixie Walker was there. Right.

Q: Again, we keep coming back to the point that here you're sitting in one country, but something that happened someplace else reverberates. At the time that you're in Seoul, DCM, Marcos falls in the Philippines. Did that particularly reverberate, because there's still this authoritarian system in place in Korea and it's going to be feeling...

LAMBERTSON: I think Marcos fell just before I went from Australia to Korea, didn't he?

Q: Actually it's about the same month.

LAMBERTSON: About the same time. Yes, it was a source of great interest and hope and fear, depending upon who you were in Korea, that that transition had taken place, and I'm sure the American role in it was noted by Chun Doo Hwan and his people. With every passing month Chun Doo Hwan was that much closer to the end of his "legitimate" presidential term, so something dramatic was going to happen in the summer of '87. Either he was going to step down as required or he was not. I'm sure that the Marcos resignation had a considerable impact.

Q: Just before I came out here I was reading Secretary Shultz's book and he made a trip out to Korea shortly after your arrival? He says that at that time there were the largest anti-government riots going on. I'm not quite sure of his time line.

LAMBERTSON: I think he came in the spring of '87, shortly before I left. It was '87 when

things began to heat up and people began to anticipate a transition or some sort of dramatic change; tensions began to rise in the spring of '87. I believe that's when Shultz made his trip. There were demonstrations very often; they customarily were at major intersections a few blocks from the embassy, and near where I lived. The smell of tear gas was often in the air.

Q: A modernizing perfume? Now, you're Dixie Walker's DCM.

LAMBERTSON: By early '87 I believe Lilley had arrived.

Q: What was Dixie like for those last few months? I mean he's been there now for some time. He's very comfortable. He's met everybody there is to meet.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, and I think the embassy was working pretty well. I don't recall any huge management issues that had been neglected. Paul Cleveland had been a good DCM and knew how to work with Dixie, and I kind of stepped into, in a sense, a well grooved track, that is as the manager of the embassy. I don't ever remember getting crosswise with Dixie or there really being a need for me to. It seemed to me to be kind of an easy transition.

Q: Did you also slide behind Paul in his golf game?

LAMBERTSON: No, I don't play golf. In fact, well, that same group...

Q: That's a bit of a handicap.

LAMBERTSON: ...that same group pressed me to join. It was called the Tuesday morning golf group and it met on Thursdays, the year round, at 6:30 in the morning. I finally told them that after the New Year I would join them. This would have been January of '87. I went out there and the course was entirely covered in a sheet of ice that was rutted in places because there had been snow that had melted and refrozen. We played our round. You'd hit the golf ball and it might hit a rut and bounce off hundreds of feet in the other direction skittering on the ice. The ice was a real equalizer. No, I did not play golf. I had a wonderful opportunity to learn when I was in Indonesia. There was a brand new golf course that the generals had built in Medan. I think it cost a dollar to play 18 holes. In the consulate our communicator was a young guy who was a very good athlete and a one or two handicap golfer. He wanted to teach me, and I had all the time in the world. Even under those circumstances, after one or two attempts I gave it up. I found it very frustrating. How about you? Are you a golfer?

Q: No, but I've had the same experience, a lot of guys say "oh; you've got to take this up."

LAMBERTSON: I think there are places, Korea possibly is one, Bangkok certainly would have been another, where it could have been quite useful to have played golf. I'd have gotten to know Suchinda, for example, much better had I been a golfer. But that would have been a huge sacrifice, so time consuming.

Q: I'm a baseball player myself.

LAMBERTSON: In any event, Korea was a comfortable place to get back into. After all, I'd left the desk only a little more than a year and a half earlier and so I knew the issues pretty well. I knew the people in our embassy and in the government. It didn't seem like new territory. It was a comfortable move.

Q: Were you, I mean you were there just for a very short period of time before you got your next assignment. Did you actually get a chance to sort of settle down into a routine and start up the contacts?

LAMBERTSON: I did, but again it wasn't very long into that tour when I was pretty sure that Gaston (Sigur, Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Bureau) was going to ask me to come back and be a DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary). I think by the summer of '86 I knew that in '87 I was probably going to be out of there which, among other things, caused me to give up my futile efforts to learn Korean in the early morning before the office opened. Korea was always going to be a sort of transitional thing for us. I knew fairly early on that the tour was not going to last very long.

Q: You mentioned that Kim Dae Jung came back into your life?

LAMBERTSON: Yes, Kim Dae Jung by that time was back in Korea and out of jail, but still considered poisonous by the Chun Doo Hwan government. As the July 4...

Q: Dixie was called in?

LAMBERTSON: Dixie was called in by the Prime Minister, Noh Sin Yong, who was a former KCIA director, but a modern man and a sophisticated man. I went with Dixie. Noh pleaded with him not to invite Kim Dae Jung to our National Day party because it would be too grave an insult to Chun Doo Hwan and would spark domestic unrest, etc. He made various arguments, with great passion. Dixie was noncommittal but gave no indication that he was going to change his mind. It was remarkable how much emotional ardor was wrapped up in that on the Korean side. We did do it, of course, and Kim Dae Jung came to the party, was there briefly and left, and life continued to go on in Korea. But I think the repercussions were quite severe within the Korean government.

Q: We get to vote in other peoples' elections.

LAMBERTSON: Yes. It was really quite unpleasant and an interesting example of the mindset of Chun Doo Hwan and to some extent of the intensity of Korean politics. Koreans take things very seriously, whether it's something like that, or this Olympic gymnastics dispute that just happened. I am sure there have been demonstrators at the embassy over that as well.

Q: Recent history has left them with some interesting circumstances. Take their attitude toward Japan.

LAMBERTSON: Their history has been awful. It still affects them.

Q: It's interesting that we notice these things in other societies and don't notice it in our own. During the current campaign season there was heated talk in the Op-Ed pages about flying a Confederate flag. The American Civil War was 150 years ago and yet people get quite emotional from time to time. But, if the Koreans fuss about something that was 100 years ago we'd say, "oh, get over it."

LAMBERTSON: That's a good point.

Q: Let's see. Yes, I think the Shultz visit was on March 6th of '87.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, I left Korea in the spring of '87. It was literally weeks after I left that the political situation began to finally break loose, in part because of the calendar and the required timing of the transition. I was with Gaston by then, and at the first ASEAN meeting I attended, in Manila, when Chun Doo Hwan was confronted with massive demonstrations and Sigur decided to go there from Manila to talk to Chun and try to assert some constructive American influence in the situation, and he did a good job of it.

Q: Moving back a little bit, you were mentioning in Australia one of the things as DCM that you worked with was the military in these joint facilities we have with the Australians. In Korea there is a major military presence and as DCM you now have liaison with USFK.

LAMBERTSON: USFK, the 8th Army, the CINC.

Q: Who was the...

LAMBERTSON: That's all being downgraded as part of the reorganization in Korea, finally.

Q: Yes. Who was there at the time?

LAMBERTSON: General Livsey. Jack Livsey, a very brash, soldier's soldier type guy, smart. Embassy-USFK liaison was effected in many ways. There was a POL/MIL section that worked with its contacts. We had Intel people who connected with J-2 out there, and no doubt there were various other kinds of connections. We also had regular meetings between the ambassador and CINC, a weekly breakfast. Then I also had a breakfast on a weekly basis with the deputy, who was a three star air force general, and a mild mannered man who I could relate to more easily than I could to Livsey. I don't recall any serious issues between the embassy and USFK during that short tour of mine.

Q: But it's interesting at an administrative level, you're both making an effort to make sure that you're talking with each other, that you have a regular time to meet so that you can march in lock-step because I would assume if you were to get out of step with each other the impact on what the Koreans would see would be pretty significant.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, that's absolutely right and it still happens from time to time, even recently. I recall within the last couple of years, the CINC made a speech on the security situation, and it seemed to me that if he cleared it with anybody it must only have been in Doug

Feith's office. I think the embassy-military relationship was pretty successful during the time that I was there. There had been some colorful people through there as CINC over the years, and a few of them had been a little hard to deal with. One of the best was General Jack Vessey, later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Q: Was General Gary Luck there?

LAMBERTSON: Yes, he was. When I was DCM he was commander of what I believe was called the First Field Force, a combat arm up there in the Chorwon Valley north of Seoul. He was a two star then. Later he was head of the Special Operations Command.

Q: Later I think, because I was at the Korea desk in the Pentagon later, he was CINC. But as we were saying, the Seoul tour actually gets kind of wedged in there.

LAMBERTSON: Yes, it was wedged in between other things.

Q: Other things and that other thing is you're asked to come back to the East Asia bureau as the deputy assistant secretary.

LAMBERTSON: Yes. I met Gaston for the first time when I was country director for Korea and he was the NSC East Asia man in the Reagan White House, so I knew him a little bit. In any event, for one reason or another he decided he'd like to have me in that job. I replaced John Monjo.

LAMBERTSON: I came back to the University of Kansas, where I have done some outreach work and some teaching. I've particularly enjoyed teaching in the honors program. I've done that intermittently since I've been back. I also had a nice stint in California, teaching for a semester at Claremont McKenna College near LA, under the auspices of the Freeman Foundation. That was the fall semester of 2002.

Q: But you are also involved in the KEDO organization. How did that arise?

LAMBERTSON: I've been traveling to Korea, North Korea, two or three times a year for KEDO, the Korean Energy Development Organization. KEDO is an outgrowth of the 1994 Agreed Framework between North Korea and the United States. When that agreement was reached in 1994, I didn't think much of it. It seemed like we were simply bribing the North Koreans to stop doing what they shouldn't be doing anyway. Over the years I've taken a somewhat kindlier view of it. Incidentally when I was still in Bangkok, Tom Hubbard, who did a lot of the negotiating of the Agreed Framework, called and asked me if I would like to be the head of KEDO. I said I really didn't think I wanted to live in Washington or New York.

In any event, my Saigon roommate, Spence Richardson, at some point began working for KEDO as the on-site American representative in Kumho, a place on the east coast of North Korea where a couple of large nuclear power plants have been under construction by KEDO. They needed

another person to do that, and it sounded kind of interesting to me, so I did it for the first time not quite four years ago and I've been doing it off and on since then.

Q: Four years ago, the year 2000?

LAMBERTSON: Yes, I was in North Korea while the Florida vote count controversy was going on. I wasn't sure which place was more bizarre.

Q: How much time do you devote to that?

LAMBERTSON: On average over these last three to four years, two or three times a year for five or six weeks at a time, or occasionally longer. I've spent well over a year of my life now in North Korea.

Q: What exactly are your duties out there?

LAMBERTSON: Being the American representative in Kumho reminds me a little bit of being in a very remote and very quiet constituent post. My colleagues in the office are four South Koreans, representing the Foreign Ministry and other agencies, and one Japanese Gaimusho man. Always one American. The official languages of KEDO are Korean and English. The North Koreans think it important that an American always be there. We meet periodically with our North Korean counterparts if some operational problem arises. I have occasionally traveled to Pyongyang or places in the vicinity of Pyongyang to participate in meetings between delegations from New York, Tokyo and Seoul and the North Korean side. I take a lot of books to read when I go to North Korea. Kumho is a good place to read and write, and engage in athletic activity and that sort of thing. A quiet life, but I find it interesting to live in a "denied" area, and to be the only westerner.

Q: So, it's over-seeing the construction of the nuclear substitute facilities?

LAMBERTSON: That's right. LWR power plants.

Q: That construction is actually South Korean, isn't it?

LAMBERTSON: The project is funded 80% by the South Korean government and 20% by Japan, roughly. The United States has virtually no financial stake in the construction of these nuclear power plants. Our commitment was to provide heavy fuel oil until the first of the nuclear reactors came on line. The whole agreement is in limbo right now because in 2002 we discovered and confronted the North Koreans with evidence that they had been cheating on the Agreed Framework for several years by secretly developing a highly enriched uranium program, which is another way to make a bomb. The Agreed Framework froze their plutonium production program. Since then we've cut off the heavy fuel oil and as of nine months ago the entire project was suspended, so there is no construction going on right now. There won't be unless and until a new comprehensive agreement is reached with the North Koreans in these Beijing talks and there's not much prospect of that happening between now and November 2nd. The Agreed Framework is hanging by a thread, as is this particular project, so every time I go out there I

assume it's probably going to be my last trip. It's not a long term career, but it's been interesting.

Q: And you get to go around the country. How does one get from, what did you say, the East Coast to Pyongyang?

LAMBERTSON: I've traveled by bus south to Hamhung and then flown by AN-24 to Pyongyang. I've gone by MI-8 helicopter direct from Kumho to Pyongyang, and several times I've gone by road via Wonsan, which I find fascinating.

EDWARD W. KLOTH
Korea Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1986-1988)

Mr. Kloth was born in North Carolina and raised in New York. After service in the Peace Corps and private business, he worked with the Department of Defense, later joining the State Department. In his career with State, Mr. Kloth served several tours in Japan and Korea, In Washington assignments he dealt with East Asian, Political/military, Economic and Environment matters. He also spent two years on Capitol Hill as Department of State Pearson Fellow. After retirement, Mr. Kloth continued as advisor to the Department on variety of matters and served a tour in Iraq as Economic Officer. Mr. Kloth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: Well, you left there in '86? Where did you go?

KLOTH: I left Fukuoka in the summer of '86. Now I'd finished my first two tours overseas, and so I thought, well, it's time to go back to the States. A friend of mine was working the U.S.-Korean political and diplomatic relations slot on the Korea in the Department. I got a call from the desk asking if I would I like to come back and replace him. The A-100 junior officer class counselor about diversifying, I wondered whether this was a good idea, so I called up my CDO. She immediately said, "That's going to be a great job, take it." I said, "What about diversification?" She laughed and said, "Well, you're in Japan now; that's Korea."

I will confess the one hesitation I had was over what U.S. policy was going to be toward the '87 Korean election. Would a conservative U.S. administration push for a truly democratic process or acquiesce, even collaborate, if Chun Doo-hwan, who was the dictator at the time and president, tried to continue in power in one form or another? Many thought he would, in spite of the one term stipulation in the constitution his government had written. I expected him to try and short circuit this system.

I wondered whether the Reagan Administration understood how much damage Chun and the perception of U.S. support for him had done to our relations with Koreans in general. I was very concerned that if we got in a situation not perhaps that bloody, but nevertheless where the U.S. was perceived as helping Chun Doo-hwan stay in power through some kind of illegitimate use of

force, or manipulation of the system, that this was going to do a lot more damage. If I were the US-Korean bilateral relations desk officer, while not being the decision-maker, I was going to be part of it, ...be up to my ears in supporting a policy I thought wrong.

I decided, after thinking about it hard, there was another side, that perhaps I could have some influence on this process at a critical time. I was happily surprised when I got to the desk that Desk Director, David Blakemore, Bill Clark, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, and Assistant Secretary Gaston Sigur, as well as people working at Heritage Foundation, who knew Korea, understood the dangers that we were facing. Chun was unpopular in Korea. In the U.S. Administration, many felt strongly that the time had come for Korea to move on, meaning to have elections that were perceived by Koreans as being really democratic. (I refer readers to the oral histories by Sigur and Clark as well as Harry Dunlop, political counselor in Seoul, then Korea Desk Director from the summer of 1987.)

In this case, having a very conservative U.S. administration, in fact meant that we had more influence than we would have with a liberal administration. President Chun had based his legitimacy, in part, on his “special” relationship with President Reagan. If President Reagan’s conservative administration was telling Chun to keep his word and step down and to have fair elections that was very powerful.

Q: What were our interests and concern with South Korea, which we are talking about, in 1986?

KLOTH: That mid-‘80s was a transition period; not only were the politics of Korea changing but also its economic situation. Korea was moving into the “developed” category. In 1969, Korea exported cloth and wigs. By 1986, it was electronics and cars, including cars to the US. Korea hosted the 1988 Olympics. It was their coming-out party on the world stage. The Olympics was also a pressure point for Chun as well. If he did anything that marred the Olympics, that would have been a political disaster.

Korea now had developed its economy to the point where trade issues with Korea were on the table in meetings of high-level U.S. and Korean officials. It was partly a kind of by-blow from the highly contentious trade relations between Japan and the United States in the ‘80s, but it also reflected Korea’s growth as an economy and success as an exporter. Koreans were advertising Seoul’s wonderful preparations for the Olympics, so Americans found it harder to understand why Koreans were keeping in check sales in their country of American products from cars to movies to beef. Koreans’ argument that they were still a “developing” country was harder to swallow when people in the U.S. saw Hyundai cars driving our streets. Koreans, of course, were indignant that they should be rolled up with the Japanese as a “protectionist export machine,” although that was the Japanese clone model they were using so effectively. Koreans felt they were still pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, and now we were punishing them for their hard work.

Q: Was the Korean economic attitude parallel to the Japanese one where they had the rice farmers and other groups who were really trying to protect or was it different?

KLOTH: Of course, Korean industries and agriculture were trying to keep the protective wall up,

as did the same sectors in many countries, including Japan, the EU and even the US.

Q: How did we view the threat from the North at that time?

KLOTH: Well, the big change, I think, in our view of the North was in the late 1970s, we discovered that, while the South was outstripping the North economically, the North Korean army had ballooned up in numbers and equipment. Through much of the '80s, our concern was on the conventional threat. In the late '80s, just as I was leaving the desk, the nuclear threat from the North jumped to the forefront of our concerns.

When I was on the desk, there was even an effort to reach out to the North, but the North Korean agents blowing up of a South Korean airliner put a tamper to that. We were much concerned about the security of the Olympics and another North Korean attempt to use violence to stop them.

Q: Yeah, that's what I'd heard.

KLOTH: To 1988, where Korea was, if not a developed country, rapidly developing; it was moving from the developing into the developed category.

Q: As you know, I've been interviewing Alan Leo who was sort of Olympics officer at the time.

KLOTH: Right.

Q: He said, "The Olympics did sort of expose a strain that hadn't been as obvious before and that is anti-Americanism."

KLOTH: Right.

Q: I mean, how did we feel about one of the things about Korea getting out from under us was we'd been if not an occupying power I mean we are a very substantial player there which could be resented?

KLOTH: Well, with due respect to Al, anti-Americanism has always been there. I think it came out more publicly in 1988. One thing that did strike me coming back to Washington in '86 was how many Americans of influence didn't seem to realize that there was this other side, that the relationship had a love component and also a hate component or a resentment component.

Q: Out of curiosity what sort of nicknames would you get?

KLOTH: Perhaps one might compare to some of the unflattering terms used in the New York of the 1950s for any number of ethnic groups. Al is certainly right, I think, that in some incidents at the Olympics, anti-Americanism shot to the surface. The American team walked in the stadium waving rather than marching in lock step, and Koreans reacted badly. Koreans are highly sensitive to their own sense of decorum. Many decided that the Americans were being deliberately disrespectful. Koreans are more self-confident today. I suspect they would react

differently to the waving per se, although they are still quick to resent real or perceived slights to their national dignity. I think all the teams wave now.

Q: Okay, well, then what was the view when you arrived, I'm trying to capture this, of Chun Doo-hwan, what was going to happen? What did we think?

KLOTH: The concern was that Chun would manipulate the system in a way that would either keep him in the presidency or in a renamed office that would leave him as the ruler of Korea or that he would pass it on to Roh Tae-woo, who was one of the co-conspirators in 1979 and 1980, through a process that was undemocratic. Our hope was: 1) that Chun would, as he had said he would from the beginning, serve one term, and then leave and 2) that most Koreans would see the process of electing his successor as democratic, regardless of who won.

We were also very concerned that Chun would use the military to stay in power or that in another scenario army officers would stage a coup against the widely unpopular President. Then Korea might see bloody resistance and wind up with another dictator. It was all too easy to imagine dire scenarios in which South Koreans used violence against each other, even without North Korean intervention of some kind.

We were also concerned, of course, about North Korean large or small attacks. The North Koreans had not moved against the South either in 1960 or 1980. Only the North's leaders know why. But if there was some kind of violent conflict going on in the South in 1987, would the North make some violent move?

Q: As one looks at this, one is struck by the fact that the North doesn't come probably because the leaders there are pretty happy with the way things are. If they get into a war, it sounds like they'll grab something, but it's unsettling, and a good chance they would lose. But the way things are, they keep the threat going and keep their generals happy and what the hell.

KLOTH: Good point. We often forget, but the North Koreans don't, that if the Chinese had not intervened, Korea would have been united as the non-Communist Republic of Korea in 1950. While we may focus and must focus on the potential for them to attack the South, from their point of view a war could also lead to the North being "liberated." After 1950, they have been careful how they use violence. Deadly, but very cautious; now that doesn't mean that this nuclear threat isn't real.

Q: How did you find the Korean embassy during the time you were on the desk?

KLOTH: I got to know my counterparts very well. They were very impressive. The officers I knew went on to become ambassadors and two, foreign ministers. From what I've seen of Korean foreign ministry officials, the U.S. gets the very pick of the crop. The Japanese embassy also gets excellent officers, and I'm sure China sends their best now, too. Koreans appreciated somebody who'd lived in Korea as a Peace Corps volunteer. I think that added a certain bonding element. Kathy Stephens, now our ambassador to South Korea, was a great step forward for the US, because she was a Peace Corps volunteer and could speak Korean. In spite of Korea's importance, she's the first Korean-speaking U.S. ambassador.

Q: Did you find, I mean this was not at your level, it was a level or two above, but was there a problem that Korea was sort of in competition with Japan and China for attention in the Asian bureau and that Korea would take a third place or not? Or did you have any feeling?

KLOTH: Japan and China are the big fish, of course. That said, my experience with the Department is the focus goes on where there is a crisis. Korea got plenty of attention right up to the White House the closer we got to the election. If a memo I wrote went up to the Undersecretary or Secretary or even to the White House, it was read. The feedback that we'd get on various issues showed that high level people were thinking hard about Korea, trying to make the right policy decision.

Whether they thought about Korea "more" than Japan or China, I couldn't say. Certainly once the 1988 Korean election was over peacefully, and Roh Tae-woo's victory seemed to have been accepted by Koreans, interest at the top dropped off. I wasn't getting calls for quick updates to the White House the way I had before. But that was typical of the way the Department operates. It's a big world. There's plenty to worry about at the top. If an issue seems settled – at least for the moment – it's time to focus on what isn't settled. In Korea desk's case, support for a successful Seoul Olympics and North Korea quickly took center stage. Check Harry Dunlop's oral history. I left the Korea desk for Japan desk in summer 1988, but Harry stayed on as director.

Q: Let's talk a bit more about how U.S. policy developed during the time before the Korean election of '87?

KLOTH: Yeah, it was '87. Well, Gaston Sigur made clear in his February '87 Asia Society speech that the U.S. government expected President Chun to keep his promise that the next change of government in South Korea would be a democratic one and the Korean military would also stay out of politics. I was gratified since I wrote the speech. In late fall we knew this speech was on his calendar in February, and Desk Director David Blakemore thought the speech should be an important statement of policy before what we expected to be a hot spring in Seoul. Spring is the student demonstration season. We saw the potential for an escalation into violence. Given Chun's unpopularity, demonstrations might well grow, in which case Chun might use the military to stay in power or might himself be overthrown by a coup. The North Koreans might seek to take advantage in some violent way as well. On the plus side, a successful 1988 Olympics was tremendously important to the majority of South Koreans and that, we hoped, would be a powerful force for responsible behavior by Chun and his colleagues.

David asked me to take a crack at doing the speech. I'd drafted quite a few remarks and talking points for high level meetings in the fall, so I used them as a guide. When David read my first draft and said, "Okay, but I think we should be even more frank. Go back, and give me what you really think we ought to say now. Don't worry about staying within the lines of what was approved for us to say up to now."

I did. I heard later through the grapevine that a number of folks up the line cleared with a bit of hesitation about potential negative reaction among some U.S. conservative politicians. The

speech was well received by many in Korea and the U.S. who knew Korea and were worried about the consequences of Chun trying to cling to power. Secretary Shultz on his March trip to Seoul reiterated that what Assistant Secretary Sigur said was what the Reagan administration believed it was time for a change.

In the end we'll never really know why Chun did what he did, what weight U.S. policy had on him. I think the key element in the change as we look back was the feeling of Koreans of all political stripes that Korea had grown beyond dictatorship. The economy and society had grown beyond where people were willing to accept strong-man government necessary for development and holding the Reds at bay, Park and Chun's mantra, and one that through the 1970s, even early 1980s, had some popular appeal. The large demonstrations in the spring and the support that ordinary Koreans gave to them gave expression to the demand for change.

The embassy did a terrific job in keeping us informed as well as keeping the heat on Chun. Ambassador Lilley was terrific. These days there's a tendency to underestimate the importance of the "reporting" function and to see advocating of "doing" as separate from reporting. I agree political officers, in particular, have to be aggressive advocates of U.S. policies, implementers may be a better word in some countries. Nevertheless, instantaneous Internet access to media reports from around the world doesn't negate the importance of good reporting from our posts about what is happening and what it means for U.S. policy. We need to know what programs are working and what aren't. Indeed, the Internet information waterfall we're sitting under makes it even more important that we have political and economic officers on the spot backed up by post leadership giving us focused views on key issues. Washington also needs to know what posts are saying to different people and how they are reacting. Embassy Seoul did a superb job through the spring. You don't get that kind of thoughtful reporting that supports policy at crucial times from other agencies, let alone the media. It's a vital skill we develop in FSOs.

Q: Were we seeing signs of a government moving toward either a coup of some kind or rigging the elections?

KLOTH: Well, we were very afraid that the system that the government was going to use with a sort of stacked electoral college was not going to result in a democratic change. A huge concern was always about the Korean military and what was going on there. In spite of the long and close relationship between U.S. Forces Korea and the Korean military, we didn't have confidence in our ability to see a coup coming.

I knew a number of the people around town at CIA and DIA, so I convened at the Department a regular meeting, including very much our own INR, about once a month where we would sit down together and discuss our views of the situation. The goal was to ensure that information or analysis that one or the other of us were working on got around fast. Our meetings also ensured the intel agency working-level folks were up to date on policy-side thinking. The goal wasn't to pound anyone into place. We all knew each other too well. That wasn't going to happen, but to be sure we considered all the angles. We also operated on the rule that we could, indeed should, tell our bosses what we learned but not who said what. I think it was very effective in helping us to understand what we knew and didn't know as we went forward.

Another issue was press guidance. The Park and Chun governments had been quite skillful in manipulating United States' government statements to convey the impression that the U.S. supported in them. So in looking at how we did press guidance, I felt and was able to persuade others that in tense situations press guidance should be shorter rather than longer. The longer a piece was the more opportunity you give people to cut and paste and create a position they want their people to think the U.S. has taken. Then when we go in to complain, they say, "Look, here are the words in your guidance." By having shorter press guidance you deprive them of that opportunity, although admittedly there are times when you want to obfuscate. Then longer may be better. While the Internet age gives access to our original statement, it also enables those not our friends to disseminate their version faster, so I suspect the principle still holds.

Q: I say this is very important because going back in history I've interviewed Marshall Greene. Back in, I think, '61, when Park Chung Hee had his coup and took over; most of our military and all was delighted with it. Marshall Green happened to be charge, the ambassador was absent, and Greene, the DCM, had no instructions, and went out and stated what our policy has always been: we support a democratic government. Well, the thing was a lot of our military and others in the United States, because it was a very weak democratic government at that time, were delighted that ROK General Park Chung Hee was taking over. Marshall Greene was left sort of swinging in the wind without much support. It's an interesting episode in our oral histories.

KLOTH: Throughout our long relationship with Korea that's been another underlying challenge. We have to make sure that our military as well as diplomats in our public statements as well as our other interactions with Koreans are sending the same message.

Q: Well how did things play out?

KLOTH: The demonstrations grew through the spring of 1987, and finally the government said, "Yes, we are going to have a direct election."

Roh Tae-woo, a former general and co-conspirator in the 1980 coup, ran for the government party and won the fall election. Our feeling was that the government decision in June was based on the political pressure of popular support for the demonstrators and on an accurate analysis of the Korean political scene. Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, the two chief opposition leaders who had suffered under Park Chung Hee and then under Chun Doo-hwan, both ran for President, splitting the opposition vote and ensuring Roh's victory. Roh also ran a serious campaign. I heard his speech at the U.S. National Press Club in the fall of 1987 that was a skillful political speech. I heard then former President Chun speak in New York in winter of 1988, and his speech was quite a contrast to Roh's of the fall.

Q: What was the difference?

KLOTH: Chun's was very tough minded. He was almost belligerently defending the coup makers' abuse of force in Kwangju in 1980, sort of they got what they asked for. In particular with regard to Kwangju he seemed to see the people in Kwangju who had opposed his coup, as having been if not in league with the North, clearly aiding and abetting, so argued the government's reaction was inevitable and had to be very tough. When Roh talked about

Kwangju, he emphasized his regret, as I recall, that Koreans had wound up fighting with Koreans. He was much more astute, running as he was in a much more open and democratic election than Chun ever had.

Q: How did we view Roh Tae-woo? Were we thinking of him as being a transitional figure or was this a continuation of a dictatorship by another name?

KLOTH: Roh Tae-woo had gotten elected by a democratic process because his two rivals divided the opposition vote. Whether if they had united, those who were running the Korean government would have tried in some way to subvert the election, stuff the ballot boxes, what have you, to make sure that Roh Tae-woo won, we'll never know. The two Kims couldn't bring themselves to uniting, so the regional nature of Korean politics meant the opposition vote was split, and Roh won.

What was the Reagan Administration's attitude toward Roh Tae-woo? Korean politicians over the years had often come to Washington, although Kim Young Sam didn't come often at all. He didn't seem to have much of an organization here. Kim Dae Jung and his supporters were very active. The opposition in Korea saw the Democratic Party in the United States as a close ally against the Korean dictatorship. The Republican Party tended to be very concerned with the Communist threat. Korean government officials and conservative politicians played skillfully on that. Also at a political level that wasn't directly related to dictatorship, the Republicans tended to see the right in South Korean politics as people who more in common political point of view, just as the Democrats tended toward and were cultivated by the Korean opposition.

So there seemed to be a sense of relief in the Reagan Administration that Roh Tae-woo had won both from the point of view of an orderly transition but also from the point of view of his being a "conservative." But make no mistake, the relief was also rooted in the fact that the process had been a democratic one.

Q: Was there any effort on our part...I'm speaking about with the embassy, State Department or our American military tell the two Kim's why don't you get your act together and let's not put another general in or were we just kind of saying well, let's let the chips lay where the fall?

KLOTH: It was obvious to us and our people in the embassy as well as the Korean press and the Korean body politic that both running meant both would lose. Koreans knew these two well enough to realize their ambition, not a Korean or U.S. government plot created that situation, so in the end it didn't undermine the legitimacy of the election.

Let me speak a little more about life of a desk officer. Part of my job was to talk with the Korean embassy as well as with any government or opposition representatives in Washington. I was encouraged reach out to NGOs concerned about Korean policies in the human rights area as well as to think tanks across the political spectrum. I did that, and also got to know key Congressional staffers like Stanley Roth, later assistant secretary, who was working for Congressman Steve Solarz, who had a very active role in East Asian policy in the House. There were various individuals on the Senate side too who were in touch.

That was in no means a criticism of the excellent embassy reporting, but we also felt that we needed to work with people who were concerned and active in the US, that we ought to be talking to them directly to ensure they understood Administration's views and we theirs. The expectation was that we would disagree on some issues but each side should know the other's position, so we were engaging on real issues, not misperceptions.

Q: Was there a significant group in Congress, I'm thinking particularly of the right wing who were close to our military? I was there in '76-'79. The general made these comments at the time sort of kicked out I can't think of it, but anyway...

KLOTH: Singlaub.

Q: Singlaub, yeah. Was there a sort of hard core within the staff and maybe particularly the Senate saying well we've got to support basically military rule?

KLOTH: No, my impression was that the Administration's policy had good support among the conservative community. I think there was a broad feeling among conservatives too that Korea had come of age.

Q: Okay, we have a democratic vote and Roh Tae-woo wins the general election. How general-ish using my own term was the government?

KLOTH: As with Park Chung Hee, so with Chun Doo-hwan, the economic side, economic growth and development, were so important that Chun Doo-hwan continued to use civilian economic technocrats. Former military men were certainly given nice jobs, including ambassadorships, but economic results were number one.

Q: In many ways, I think Park Chung Hee set Korea on a course that has never deviated and that is really for real growth and despite all the general dictatorships and all they haven't messed with it. In fact, they've done the positive things on the economy, which turned Korea into a prosperous country.

KLOTH: Ambassador Dixie Walker, my first Ambassador as an FSO in 1982, said to me once that there were more American PhDs in the Korean government than in the American government. It was a very technocratic approach to economic development. Chun and then Roh Tae-woo continued that. I returned in 1990, and, of course, there was the next round of democratization when Kim Young Sam joined the government party and won the presidency following Roh Tae-woo, but the economic technocrats continued to be the key policy and implementation people.

Q: One of the things back to just what you were saying that there has been much talk about the Chicago boys in Chile who went to the University of Chicago and came back and even under the dictatorship in Chile. They brought Chicago economics, which was very successful, but Korea has certainly benefited by people who went to the United States and took their business courses.

KLOTH: True, although Koreans value PhD's highly. The economic heavy hitters in government

had doctorates by and large. That's one thing that has long fascinated me with the Korean case; they were trained in the United States and then came back to Korea. But clearly the model that they were using was the Japanese model – the government planned and supported the development of private companies to implement growth. Resentment of Japanese colonialism was there, but they saw Japan rebuilding rapidly after WW II, so they used a Japanese-type model of government-planned development based on private firms.

Korean protectionism kept out U.S. firms and that became a trade issue in the 1980s when Korea shifted from a developing to a developed country. But every Korean I know saw that as first a policy of making sure Japanese didn't dominate their economy, a feeling very much fed by their experience as a colony of Japan before 1945.

The relationships after 1945 were, however, complex. The new generation got U.S. educations, but many who had been to schools in Korea during the colonial period had been to school with Japanese. These personal connections continued. I've talked to Japanese who went through high school in Seoul. They had Korean classmates. Through the 1980s and 1990s, they would have school reunions in Korea. So these kinds of connections were very much there and were a factor in business and government as Korea's economy developed. Another interesting aspect of the PhD-drive after 1945 was that Koreans came to the U.S. for graduate school in far, far greater numbers than went to Japan. Koreans were still impressed with a Tokyo University PhD, reportedly harder to get than one from Harvard, but a Korean I know who graduated from Tokyo U. said that he felt Koreans kept him at a distance at work; he was considered very smart but a bit tainted.

Q: In the Korean context high school classmates are very important even more than college.

KLOTH: Right. And Korean and Japanese are similar languages, so a Korean can learn Japanese relatively easily like an American learning Spanish.

Q: What about, again from your perspective, on the desk, the China connection, what was happening?

KLOTH: Our focus was primarily on Korea. South Korea and China had no formal relations. We, however, encouraged not only China but also the Russians to have discussions and to develop relations with the South Koreans. I think the Chinese, in particular, were interested in South Korea as an economic growth model and potential partner. China too had suffered from colonialism, especially Japanese colonialism, and by the 1980s, Korea was clearly a model of successful economic development, especially when compared to North Korea, China's erstwhile ally. South Korea had a lot of lessons to teach. By the early 1990s, China was willing to establish diplomatic relations with Seoul. So was Moscow.

Q: Were we just sort of letting things...that's up to them or did we have any policy in that way?

KLOTH: We encouraged the two to talk and to build a relationship with South Korea. For the Korea desk the challenge was how to draw North Korea out of its shell and into peaceful interaction with the South and the international community, including the U.S.

Q: Well how about who had responsibility for reporting on North Korea and how was that working out?

KLOTH: Our external relations officer in Seoul was the one who followed North Korea, as I recall, and we weren't getting much. There were few defectors from North Korea and remarkably little information coming out, if you compare it back to the old Soviet Union or Eastern Europe.

Q: Well, at least we had representation in the Soviet Union.

KLOTH: Right. But we had none in the North, so we weren't going to have reporting from FSOs.

WILLIAM CLARK, JR.
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs
Washington (1986-1989)

Ambassador William Clark, Jr. was born in California in 1930. He graduated from San Jose State College with a B.A. degree in 1955. He served in the U.S. Navy intermittently from 1949 to 1953. In 1957, he joined the State Department, serving in Sierra Leone, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, India, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on January 11, 1994.

Q: As you mentioned, in mid-1986 you were assigned back to Washington as the senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for EA. What were your functions and responsibilities?

CLARK: All the regional bureaus operated differently. Most of the senior deputies were *alter egos* for the assistant secretaries. They didn't have jurisdiction over specific regions or countries. In EA, we have four deputies: one for economic affairs and the other three had responsibility for specific countries. I had watched EA for a long time and had seen it try various organizational arrangements. It was clear to me, and Gaston Sigur agreed, that one deputy could not be responsible for both China and Japan. The work-load would have been too great. So Stapleton Roy returned from Singapore to handle China, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands matters. I was responsible for Japan and Korea, administrative affairs of the Bureau and its public affairs. Dave Lambertson handled ASEAN, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Burma. It was a good division of labor and I think worked quite well. When Sigur resigned in February, 1989, I became acting Assistant Secretary, which lasted for about five months.

The Department at the time viewed a Bureau's Executive Director as a deputy assistant secretary equivalent. He or she was given a document stipulating that rank. But I was always interested in management and took an active interest in administration and personnel matters. I tried to run the Bureau on a day-to-day basis so that the assistant secretary could focus on the major issues as he chose. Of course, I also supervised the Country Directors for Japan and Korea, countries with

which I had personal involvement and continued interest.

In the 1986-89 period, which was the tail end of the Cold War, we had an opportunity to move away from our central concern of the previous decades, namely security. This is not to say that we have gave a thought to sacrificing our defense establishment in and around Japan, but the world situation was such that we could begin to focus on other US-Japan issues besides the common defense. We had for a number of years concerned ourselves with the major trade imbalance between the two countries and that remained major bone of contention. But in this end of 1980s period, we were able to begin to engage the Japanese in other issues such as UN, Cambodia, North Korea, etc. Today, I regret to note, we have returned to the "single issue" era -- i.e. trade -- that all other matters are pushed so far in the background that they are almost unmentioned in the dialogue between the two countries.

On the trade front, I don't remember the situation being much different in 1986 than it had been a year earlier when I was also working on it. There was no question that it was a major issue, which it continued to be for as long as I have been involved in Japanese affairs. At the beginning of the Bush administration, we did obtain final approval of the FSX program. This was not something that a new administration was necessarily comfortable with, but it was essential that it be done. That was the program that permitted Japan to build its own fighter aircraft with US assistance. It should be noted that now, five years later, no aircraft has yet been produced. But in the late 1980s, to get Congressional approval was a major fight, primarily because those that worried about Japanese "unfair" trade practices, led by Dick Gephardt, were just set against helping that country to develop a competitive fighter aircraft by transferring our technology to it. So the FSX program became a trade issue when it should have been viewed as a common defense matter. I took several "beatings" during Congressional hearings on this issue with the antis insisting that the trade imbalance should be rectified before we worried about security. I was the Department's principal witness on the FSX issue with one exception when Cheney, Mosbacher and Eagleburger -- the three secretaries -- testified as the final administration witnesses.

On trade issues in general, USTR was the principal administration spear-carrier on the Hill. The regional bureaus were of course involved in setting of the US trade policies -- much more than they are today, according to people who are still in the Service. The Bureau for Economic Affairs was also involved, but I am told that the Department as a whole is not nearly as involved in trade issues in the mid-90s than it was at the end of the '80s, with the exception of perhaps Joan Spiro, the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs. I testified on trade issues as well as security issues, often with representatives of other State bureaus. It was not unusual for deputy assistant secretaries to be the Department's lead witnesses; it was not a role that assistant secretaries sought or enjoyed. Generally, I was part of a three person panel with other representatives from the Department and other agencies. All the witnesses knew each other and had almost daily work contacts, so that the administration witnesses were a congenial group. That was true for trade, security and the FSX issues.

This was my first real exposure to Congressional testimony, although I had been a witness on a couple of occasions when I was the Japan Country Director, when I represented the administration on the issue of whaling. That was not an easy issue to deal with. I was a witness

along with someone from USTR and someone from Commerce. There were some members of Congress who wanted to cut off all trade with Japan because of their whale fishing practices. A famous expert had just finished studying the humpback whales who lived off the shores of Argentina. His daughter had made recordings of whale sounds. She appeared at the committee meeting just before we did. It was a tough act to follow. She gave every member of the subcommittee a copy of the book she had just written on whales. All I could bring to the table was information on the extent of our trade with Japan and what the consequences would be for American business and labor if that trade were severed. That sobered the subcommittee a little!

I was fortunate in one respect when it came to testifying in the late 1980s. Much of my testimony was in front of the Asian subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The chairman of that subcommittee was Steve Solarz, whom I had known for sometime going back to his visits to Korea. I also saw a lot of him when he visited Japan. So I had a known quantity in the chairman. I also knew some of the other members of the subcommittee -- e.g. Congressman Solomon (NY) who was a Japanese linguist. I learned early in the game to keep the opening statement short; I would submit a longer and fuller statement for the record. Congressmen tend to become testy and impatient if they have to sit and listen for too long. The more appearances I made, the easier it became, although it was never an experience that I enjoyed or looked forward to. After a while, I became accustomed to sitting in the well with my interlocutors sitting at higher levels so that you always had to look up. At the beginning, it was a little intimidating; you felt sometimes that you were facing a panel of judges. One time, I was lucky. I had been asked to brief the whole Foreign Affairs Committee on China; it was right after Tiananmen. I had told the staff that I could not testify in open session, but that I would be glad to brief the Committee in a closed session. On that occasion, I sat in the Chairman's chair and the Committee sat in the well. During this briefing, Solarz made a comment and I was about to "rule him out of order", but refrained. I told him later that I had come very close to doing that!

You could never be sure what question might be raised nor could you be sure that your answer was heard with the same meaning that it had when I delivered it. You know what you said, but you don't know what the Congressmen heard. In general, we knew what the questions might be because we had discussed the hearings with the staff. So we usually were prepared for at least the Chairman's questions. Some of the Committee members would wander in and out of the meeting and they were much less predictable; it was not rare that we had to answer a question that had been asked before when the member was not in the hearing room. But with the Chairmen, regardless what subcommittee was involved, we knew pretty well ahead of time what issues would be addressed and what the objectives of the hearings were. The staff was quite good on giving us advanced notice. It was usually a very good collaboration; we knew what information they wanted and they knew what we needed to know.

In addition, Congressional testimonies are difficult because you are addressing several audiences. Not only did the committees hear your testimony, but the Japanese press certainly covered much of it; even a small number of American press might be present. The Japanese bureaucracy was of course informed of every word you uttered through the ears of a Japanese Embassy official who covered the hearings. Then there was the Washington bureaucracy. Quite often, I would appear at hearings having covered the issue with the Chairman of the subcommittee in private. But the Chairman held the hearings because he wanted to make a

specific point. I remember once, when I was testifying together with another administration official, he gave an answer that we had agreed would not be given. The Chairman immediately went after him and the two went off into discussions that were useless and possibly counter-productive. I finally interceded and managed to bring the dialogue to an end. After the hearing, the Chairman told me that he never wanted to see the other witness again. I told him that I had no control over that because he was not a State Department official. Furthermore, I suggested that having that hearing was not necessary and that it ran the risks that in fact developed. He said that after having gotten that wrong answer, he could not let it stand unchallenged, thereby taking the discussion into areas which were not at all profitable and being diverted entirely from the objectives he had in mind for the hearing.

Being part of a panel always runs some risks. I am sure that some of my colleagues from other departments did not always agree with my comments. But in general I think, as I suggested earlier, the administration witnesses were on the same wave length and usually quite well prepared. I did find myself on occasions in tight spots. For example, as the senior deputy assistant secretary, I was responsible for testifying on appropriations for the Asia Foundation, which got much of its financial support from the US government. That was in part because the Asia Foundation was at times a useful adjunct to the US government overseas representation because it could do some things that we could not. One year the Department's Comptroller was former USIA official -- Roger Feldman -- and he felt that the Asia Foundation was not worthy of US support because he thought that USIA could do all that the Foundation did. The Foundation had good Congressional support. Every year, the Department was required to write an assessment of the Asia Foundation, which we did as objectively as possible. It was usually quite favorable. The Comptroller would use this assessment as the preface to the budget request, but then would not seek any budgetary authority. We were precluded by Department regulations to discuss budgetary issues during any of our Congressional appearances, which is an interesting experience when you are testifying before a Committee that is responsible for appropriations. Once, I was before the appropriations subcommittee with the Comptroller sitting in a spectators' row behind the witness table. Congressman Obey commended me for my report in the Asia Foundation activities, but wanted to know why the Department was seeking reduced funds to support it. I told him that I could not answer the question, but I suggested that since the Comptroller was in the room, the Congressman might wish to ask him. It was a silly game; the Department would send its budget request to Congress which would show a reduced requirement for the Asia Foundation. I knew that this tactic would not fly and that Congress would add to the amount requested. I told Feldman that he was just giving the Congress control over the Department's budget because it would restore the amount cut by reducing another Departmental account which was probably damaging to the Department. But I could never convince Feldman that he was acting against his own interests by reducing or eliminating the Asia Foundation support.

I should mention that most of administration testimony is public and on-the-record and often covered by the press. There are occasions when the testimony must be classified and then you closet yourself with the committee in one of the secure rooms. That is a little more intimidating because in a closed hearing the Congressmen can raise any questions they wish. You don't have the protection of an open hearing when you can always say that the matter is classified and that you would be happy to brief the Congressman privately or in an executive session. But in a

closed session, you don't have that protection. An administration witness always has to be aware of the Germanness of a Congressional inquiry. Just because it is a closed session, that does not open the discussion to anything that might be on the Congressman's mind. The question should be germane to the subject of the hearing. You just couldn't afford to allow "fishing expeditions". I always made sure under those circumstances just to say that the issue was not in my purview or the subject of the hearing; I would never try to mislead or talk around the question. Fortunately, this problem didn't arise very often, but you always had to be aware of the possibility. On the other hand, closed hearings had the advantage of not being open to the press and you didn't have to worry about tomorrow's headlines. A closed hearing is likely to require the submission of more documentation, which raises a new set of problems because classified documents are supposed to go through the Intelligence Committees where they are available to members. But Congressmen often chafe at this restriction and would much prefer to have the administration witness hand over the documents right during the meeting. On one occasion, I faced the issue of recursion. The issue was Vietnamese funds frozen in US accounts and whether some might be released. Lambertson was in charge of Vietnam issues, under Sigur. But on this occasion, it turned out that I was the only senior official in EA who didn't have a share of IBM stock. IBM was a plaintiff; so every one else recused themselves and I ended up being the witness on a subject that I did not know very well. I accused both Sigur and Lambertson of buying a share of IBM just so they would have an excuse to recuse themselves. The stock dropped in price soon thereafter, so I am glad I didn't own any.

I testified several times on Korea and especially on security issues. The atmosphere was different than that existing when Japanese issues were discussed; the trade tensions were not present. Furthermore, there was a palpable and obvious military threat. So the questions were most often directed to the future and the likelihood of a North Korea invasion. So the questions concerned troop capabilities and locations. The Korea question was not particularly acute during the 1986-89 period, but the tensions on the Peninsula was of continuing interest in Congress. In State, we felt, and we were supported by some people in Washington, that some movement towards North Korea might be appropriate. We devised what was known as a "modest initiative". In 1988, Sigur went to New York and gave a speech which had not been cleared through the bureaucracy, including the Secretary of State's office, as widely as it probably should have been. He said that we would remove regulations against the use of credit cards for Americans who wished to travel to North Korea, which involved a change in Treasury regulations and a notice in the Federal Register. Sigur also said that we would allow "humanitarian" trade which also involved some changes in regulations. We also said that we would make it easier for North Korean academics, clericals and press to travel to the US. Finally, Sigur said that he would authorize American diplomats to have substantive discussions with their North Korean diplomats at third party functions. In the same speech, we told the North Koreans, that in return for the easing of regulations that Sigur had announced, we would like some reciprocal actions and we gave them a list of actions from they could choose. We used this technique because we had found out that the North Koreans were very reluctant -- in fact, did not -- to talk about *quids pro quos*. So we used a public speech to communicate with the North Koreans.

When I became the senior deputy in the Bureau in 1986, there had not been any great attention paid to the question of taking some positive steps toward North Korea. However, sometime during the next two years, we slowly developed the idea of taking some initiatives. There had

always been a lot of discussions about the North in the Department and in other parts of the bureaucracy. The complete absence of any movement was just unnatural; furthermore, as long as the situation was as frozen as it was and as long the North was as isolated as it was, the possibility of miscalculations was very real. We thought that if we could get some dialogue going, we might be able to raise some warning flags before it was too late. We just wanted to find some ways of alleviating the tensions that had existed on the peninsula for many, many years.

There were of course the continuing military-to-military meetings in Panmunjom which were part of the armistice agreement. They were very formal meetings which were not really a good forum to raise political issues. We had tried some approaches through the Chinese. There had been some indications that perhaps the North was becoming more interested in a dialogue. We decided to test the waters by using a technique that would not involve us in endless discussions about either the process or the eventual outcome. We used the 1988 speech to give the North Koreans an opportunity to respond; they could have said "Thanks very much. Let's talk about it" or "We are interested in talking about one of the matters you have raised" or "Forget the whole thing. It is just another imperialist plot". The North could have responded in many different ways.

George Shultz' first response to the speech was that it was outrageous. When the speech received approbations, the Secretary then complained that we never sent him speeches that were that good. Of course, he never would have delivered anything like the speech that Sigur gave because it was so far in front of existing policy.

The speech had some effect. First, the North Koreans contacted one of our Embassy staff in Beijing at the International Club and requested that a meeting be set up. This was not in one of the actions listed in our "modest" initiative; the North Koreans had requested a bilateral session whereas we had stipulated substantive conversations only in a multilateral forum, such as a social occasion. I was asked what our response should be. I mulled it over for a couple of days. I then instructed our Embassy in Beijing to tell the North Koreans that meetings at the International Club would be acceptable at the Consular level on the grounds that the Club was owned by the Chinese government which then would become the third party to the dialogue making it a multilateral one. That in fact became a channel that has operated since soon after the Sigur speech. Nothing much came of the opening, but at least it opened a channel outside the military-to-military one. It gave both parties an opportunity to discuss political issues. I should add that I of course, in the course of drafting the Sigur speech, considered adding a provision for a direct North-Korea-US dialogue, but I didn't believe that the bureaucracy -- in State, in DoD, some in NSC -- in Washington would have found that acceptable. A question would have been raised about why we would wish to accede to what we knew the North Koreans had wanted for a long time; they had not shown any great willingness to be forthcoming. The other parts of the "modest" initiative could be defended on their own merits -- e.g. humanitarian aid, credit cards, visas to certain North Koreans (which was merely an expansion of a policy already in effect). Of course, the North Koreans never took advantage of the openings we provided; they never sent journalists, clerics or other categories; they have restricted their visits to the US to their own diplomats and some "academics" -- i.e. people who worked for the government.

The speech received considerable approval in the American academic community which for a number of years wanted to open a dialogue with their North Korean counterparts, preferably in Pyongyang. Many people used the speech as a jumping off point for their conversations with North Korean representatives; other country diplomats used it to illustrate how the US was trying to be reasonable. There were some academics who opposed our initiative basically on the grounds that we were granting privileges which were not needed or desired. But the speech did not generate the kind of sustained debate in the US that I had hoped for, but it was heard in Pyongyang, which was certainly one of our objectives. Our dialogue at the UN did not increase until much later nor did North-South talks really begin at this time. On the other hand, the reaction to the speech in the United States I think made it eminently clear to my bureaucratic colleagues that mentioning the possibility of a dialogue with North Korea was not a kiss of death.

Although the thaw in US-North Korea relations was barely noticeable by 1989, later it did become easier for Americans to obtain visas to visit Pyongyang. Some went at North Korea's invitation which may have served the North's propaganda machine, but was useful to us as well because it gave us some first hand insights that were not available to us otherwise. We eased slightly the restrictions imposed on the North Korea mission to the UN by permitting some of that staff to travel in the US to participate in conferences. I think our pace of improvement of our relations with North Korea was glacial at times and incremental at best. I think the Sigur speech opened the way, but it was almost another fifteen years before any major discussions between the two countries really took place. For example, when I was the Assistant Secretary for EA in late 1992, I received a call from Dave Locks who was in charge of the annual Prayer Breakfast. He was planning Clinton's first Prayer Breakfast and wanted to know whether some North Koreans could be invited. I referred him to the "modest" initiative and told him that clerics, academics or journalists would certainly be acceptable. The North Koreans submitted the names of seven participants, six of whom were government officials and the other was their Permanent Representative at the UN. I said that that list was not acceptable, but I finally told Locks that the UN representative would be acceptable. Unbeknownst to me, that North Korean was given a seat at the head table along with General and Mrs. Colin Powell, Senator and Mrs. Ted Kennedy, Senator and Mrs. Sam Nunn and I think the Mongolian Ambassador and his wife. I asked Powell later how it went; he told me that the North Korean didn't seem to have a clue about what the breakfast was all about and didn't have anything to say. I think the North Koreans missed a major opportunity.

The history of US-North Korea relations is a tortured one. Carter tried to open a dialogue using a three party proposal -- North Korea, South Korea and the US -- when he visited Seoul in 1979, which was summarily rejected by the North. Then came Sigur's speech in 1988, which at least opened another channel for dialogue in Beijing. The North, I think, in 1988 might have been interested in trilateral talks, but then we were not interested. We suggested in lieu that they hold bilateral talks with South Korea. I think that was the appropriate response in 1988 because the North was obviously at the time trying to get us to talk directly to us holding the view that the South was just a US "puppet". The North was using pejorative language when referring to the South and did not seem interested really in relaxing tensions on the peninsula. So the atmosphere was all wrong in 1988 for any progress. After that, it was inch by inch when there was any progress at all until 1993.

Our relationships with South Korea had its ups and downs. On the issue of democracy, I was in Seoul in 1980 when its fledgling beginnings were forcefully suppressed. By 1986, Chun Doo Wha, the President, was on his last gasps. Roh Toe Woo made a "grand" gesture to the opposition by agreeing to terminate certain undemocratic practices, thereby assuring his election. In any case, the political process was much more open in 1986 than it had been eight years earlier. In early 1988, I went with Secretary Baker to the Roh swearing in -- Sigur didn't go because Ed Dwerinski, who was then the Counselor of the Department, went and Gaston didn't want to be the third ranking State Department official. On the way to Seoul, I kept telling Baker that the name of the new Korean President was pronounced "Noe", even though it was spelled Roh. Baker was well received even though, since he was not a head of State, he did not rank among the most senior of the guests. Soon after that, President Roh paid a visit to the United States. I told Baker then that his name was to be pronounced as "Roh". The Secretary said that this was contrary to the advice I had given him earlier. I pointed out that the situation was different; that when in Korea, the name was pronounced as "Noe", but when in the US, it was "Roh". In the United States, for public relations purposes, the Koreans felt it was far better to refer to their President as Roh Toe Woo and not Noe Toe Woo -- it was too much like Doctor No.

We were encouraged by Roe's election. In addition, we were very active on the "democratization" front. In the last days of the Chun Doo Wan regime, some University students had occupied our USIS offices in Seoul. Harry Dunlop, who was the Political Counselor during this incident, held long discussions with them, permitting them to air their grievances and trying to talk them into leaving the building. He wasn't successful and the police finally had to force the students out. But Dunlop and the students had a long conversation about Kwangju, during which he felt that he had done a masterful job of explaining the course of events as we knew them. After that, Dunlop suggested that we publish a "White Paper" repeating essentially what he had said to the students. The Embassy supported Dunlop, but we did not see any good reason why the issue should be publicly debated again. I saw Dunlop's report on what he had said while visiting Seoul and did not quite conform to my recollections as a resident American diplomat during the uprising. Secondly, we had some reservations about issuing a paper when a friendly government was in power, particularly since the new President had been involved in the Kwangju matter. It was after my return from that trip that I turned the matter over to the Historian's Office, as I described earlier. That report was issued in part to put our views on Kwangju on a written record, but our action was also designed to encourage Roh to continue on the democratic path he was following and hopefully, even accelerate his pace. In the final analysis, I think Roh made tremendous progress in bringing his country into the democratic fold. During his regime, that was not really a major issue between our two countries.

As further evidence of the great progress that the Koreans had made on democracy, we noted the freedom that both Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam had in Korea. When I had been in Korea in the late 1970s and early 1980s, these two men were either in prison or under house arrest. They were seldom free. But by the late 1980s, they had fairly free reins. One could visit them if you were in Seoul. Kim Young Sam was politically very active and Kim Dae Jung was free to tell his side of history. The Embassy did have contacts with the two in the late 1970s, when they were not imprisoned. After the "Seoul Spring", in 1980, the Embassy had considerable contacts

with Kim Dae Jung. We urged him not to address college audiences so that passions would be unnecessarily stirred up; he ignored our advice.

There were some trade frictions between the two countries in the 1986-89 period. Beef was one commodity that was always in debate both with Korea and Japan. I used to tell the Koreans that I was depressed by their position on beef imports because only a few years earlier I used to cite them as a shining example of free beef traders because we used to sell as much beef to "little Korea" as we did to "huge Japan". The Koreans closed the market for our beef exporters. It was a shameless comment, but then shamelessness has been a hallmark of diplomacy for centuries. We also had some problems with American companies that were leaving their investments in Korea, like Dow which sold its assets to "Dynamite" Kim. But in general, trade issues were not a major bone of contention.

When I first returned to Seoul in 1986, after an absence of six years, I was struck by the tremendous changes. There was no curfew for example nor were there any troops on the streets. The atmosphere was very different, although I must say that even when the curfew was in effect and the troops were on the streets, we did not feel the heavy boot of oppression. The Korean government did not interfere with our daily lives; I thought it was not any worse than Paris during the Algerian crisis when you could see machine guns on the street corners and troops heavily armed everywhere. That was suffocating. By 1986, the society was much more open and the economic boom was evident. Buildings were going up everywhere, particularly on the south side of the river almost all the way to Suwon. Development had engulfed the farm areas which in 1980 still surrounded Seoul. More bridges had been built as had been Yoido, an island in the middle of the Han River which had been densely developed.

The Han River project was almost finished. This was a water-management project that had been under discussion when I was in Seoul in 1980 and for which the Corps of Engineers had done some planning work. That project made Seoul a different city introducing boats and parks to the entertainment landscape for the citizens. Seoul did not look anymore like a capital under siege; so the change in the physical appearance also made it seem like a freer society.

I might make some comments about anti-Americanism in Korea. It seems to follow closely political unrest in the country. It was quite virulent in 1980 after Kwangju. In 1987, when the Koreans were becoming unhappy with Chun Doo Wha, anti-Americanism rose. When Roh Tae Woo had stabilized the political situation, anti-Americanism abated. But I think it is fair to say that it always existed to some extent in Korea. There was a recent newspaper story recently about a young Korean, who after having completed academic studies in the US, returned to his country and killed his parents for the inheritance. We have been accused of being the cause for this young man's actions because we somehow educated out of him the family tradition and filial devotion that he would have been taught to strictly honor had he remained in Korea. So there seems to be always a feeling below the surface that somehow the United States, even though praiseworthy for defending South Korea, nevertheless is less than perfect and that some of its cultural patterns were really not welcomed in Korea. My personal contacts from 1980, which I re-established when I visited Korea in 1986 and thereafter, were certainly less anti-American than they had been. This was particularly true of the American missionary community which was much more at ease with their government in the late 1980s than it had been at the end of the

1970s. That can be explained in part by the fact that the missionaries were not as harassed as they had been during the Park regime; their new-found freedoms made them more benevolent toward the US. My Korean friends reacted pretty much the same way. Their views of the US had also evolved.

The Embassy, I thought, was working well in 1986. I was not happy with its physical location which remains a problem even today. We don't own the building or the lot; we had signed an agreement that stipulated that we would vacate the premises when our assistance program had ended and I think after 1979 we could not make a very convincing case that we were still extending assistance, either economic or military. But fifteen years later, we are still squatters. We do own land in Seoul which we have never developed, but never seem to be able to find the resources to build a Chancery. Our position on this issue is unseemly, at best, for a major power. We now occupy an old building, built soon after we began an aid program to Korea, not at all consonant with the modernity of much of the city; the Embassy's switchboard and the heating system is in a building next door.

We had a good working relationship with the Embassy. We were on the phone frequently with both Seoul and Tokyo, although unlike some other deputy assistant secretaries or country directors, I did not believe that a daily telephone conversation with every embassy was necessary or desirable. When daily calls are required, I believe it seems too much like micro-management and that is not the role of the Washington bureaucracy. Information nevertheless flowed freely and I think both we in Washington and the people in Seoul were pleased with the relationship.

It was during my tour as deputy assistant secretary that the Koreans began to make some headway in their relationships with the Soviet Union. They had for a long time tried to establish contacts with the other superpower, but until the late 1980s, had had limited success. We did not urge them to be more vigorous in their pursuits nor did we interpose any objections. The opening to Moscow was Roh's legacy as were his efforts to establish a dialogue with North Korea. I think the Koreans did a marvelous job on this issue and are rightly proud of their accomplishment. Their timing was good and the establishment of official contacts with the Soviet Union was followed soon by similar successes with the People's Republic of China. We did not play much of a role in these initiatives, which may have been one of the reasons the Koreans were successful!

Now let me move to our relationships with Japan in the 1986-89 period. The Japanese have never been as interested in involving themselves in world affairs to the extent that we would like. Of course, there are some that they say that the average American is also not sufficiently engaged in world affairs. The Japanese, by and large, including the ruling circles, we do not want to be perceived as a world power. Influence yes; their views taken into account, yes. But not the responsibility that goes with being a world power. The Japanese public is certainly not prepared to take on that responsibility. I wonder however what their views were in the early 1940s when the war was going very much in their favor. Since there weren't any public opinion polls at the time, we will never know. The Japanese did what they did in the 1930s and 1940s because their Emperor wished them to do so; that was enough for the average Japanese, although there were some who warned of likelihood of failure. The Japanese theory then was basically that of *jujitsu* -- a small man properly trained could beat a big man. When applied to countries, the Japanese

felt even more comfortable taking on a democracy. I think most of the Japanese felt that way, although history proved them wrong. The Japanese view since the end of WW II is not too different from the isolationism that Japan practiced for most of its life. It was essentially closed to the outside world for 300 years, although it did invade other countries -- particularly Korea and later China -- in that period. I think the Japanese are happy with their society as it is and are reluctant to have it "contaminated" by outside influences. The Japanese are essentially very conservative and are not seeking much change; they like their present situation, although the strains are beginning to show since labor shortages are forcing them to import people from other countries. That is likely to cause changes in Japan which it will resist; the Japanese believe that their aggressive policies of 1941 was a big mistake; i.e. attacking China was one matter, but attacking the US was just plain dumb. They don't want to repeat the same mistake. Today, the Japanese see themselves as a small country which might be stepped on if it wonder too far off its own shores. This concern is reinforced by the emergence of a powerful neighbor -- China -- which has had more political influence than Japan in the world since the end of WW II and which has a larger military force, although that force has no projection capability. China has not been an economic rival of Japan, but that is also changing. Those who had great insights might have been able to detect the emergence of China in the late 1970s if they had believed Deng Xiaoping's vision for his country. Not many then believed that China would emulate the "Four Tigers", although we were particularly amazed that Deng included Hong Kong and Taiwan in his list of countries to be emulated. I don't think we paid enough attention to Deng's pronouncements in the late 1970s; the Japanese did not either. In fact, the Japanese corporations were late in trying to make inroads in China despite their providing government-to-government assistance to that country. They are present now, but still not in the magnitude that has been the hallmark of some other investment efforts. Since we couldn't provide assistance, our private economy stepped in with its investments.

One of the continuing problems between the US and Japan is a asymmetry. That still exists today. In the late 1980s, we assumed that the Soviet threat was a major one. The Japanese didn't dispute our view, but since they were not in a position to take any effecting measures, they tended to be more relaxed than we were. They did not have the same sense of urgency about the Soviets being a regional threat. There was a continual shift in the definition of roles and missions in the national security sphere. I think both sides came to agree that the United States was not in Japan primarily to defend Japan, but rather to insure stability in Asia; that was an important revision in Japanese views which resulted in a force restructure.

In 1986, we viewed the US-Japan and the US-Korea relationship through the prism of the Cold War. That emphasis continued throughout my tour as Deputy Assistant Secretary. Even in 1989, we in EA at least had not detected that the Soviet empire was collapsing.

Finally, I think I might just briefly discuss my role as the day-to-day manager of the Bureau. I was faced with the perennial problem of insufficient resources. We were always looking at the possibility of reducing the State Department component of an embassy or of closing posts. We had to do some of that. The issue of US representation overseas was always facing us; the contentiousness of it increased during my tour because other Cabinet Secretaries were deciding to take even the minutest issue up with the Secretary of State. That I thought was a ridiculous waste of everyone's time and the issues which dealt with one or two or even three more positions

certainly did not warrant the attention of Cabinet level officials. So overseas staffing was always major issue. Shultz used to periodically make some noises about the size of US overseas representation, but it was very difficult for an any Ambassador to make his decision to reduce staffing stick with other agencies in Washington. Just to go back to my Cairo tour, I should note that there I developed a plan which would have required a 10% reduction in the total Embassy staffing. I did that at the urging of the Department of State. When we submitted that plan, we were left holding the bag; the Department gave us absolutely no support at all. My impact was a little greater later when I was in New Delhi, but in general the US leadership in the field is essentially impotent when it comes to the question of the size of US representation. In 1986-89 period, the Washington attitude was that the bureaucracy in the Capital should be reduced first before any cuts were made overseas. But the only Cabinet department that seemed to follow through in reductions is the Department of State. That was compounded both in Washington and overseas because the Department is a very minute component of the total bureaucracy; therefore any reductions have percentage-wise a much greater impact on the Department than they do on other agencies. Other agencies are so large that a reduction in Washington is barely noticed. The Department's financial squeeze was real in the 1986-89 period. Resources in real terms were reduced with every succeeding year. Costs rose, but the budgets did not rise at the same rate. For example, the costs of our operations in Japan went out of sight during this period without any significant addition to available resources. That left us with the dilemma of whether to reduce our presence in Japan or to take the resources out of another embassy's budget and staffing. The EA budget from 1985 to 1992 grew perhaps 15%. The yen-dollar ratio rose probably 75%; that is a losing formula.

On the personnel front, diversity was a major management objective. In this period, women, who by this time were represented in the Foreign Service in large numbers, won a law suit which stipulated that a certain number of the higher level positions, such as DCM, be reserved for them. That caused some minor difficulties for us. It wasn't that there weren't qualified women available, but Personnel, in its management of the over-all assignment process, would at times come down to the last few assignments for the year and realize that it had not met its established quota for women. That forced all bureaus to begin to shake things up, canceling assignments already made, moving people before the end of their tours, etc. Had Personnel planned better, these last minute adjustments would not have been necessary and the assignment process would have been much smoother. We also had to manage a couple of problems relating to African-Americans. We had an excellent black officer who was very good in the function that he knew. The powers-that-be decided that he should be assigned to another function because that would have increased diversity. He and I had agreed on a career development program, but he was under great pressure from some of his colleagues to move into another area. As we predicted, he found himself floundering and received some very damaging efficiency ratings. The whole assignment was unfair to this individual; it put him a position where he had to have language and reporting skills that he did not have. It was a poor assignment for an excellent officer; he survived, but that assignment set back his career unnecessarily. In general, the Bureau was under pressure to place more African Americans in the Far East; there had been and still was a great imbalance among bureaus with AF having the greatest proportion of African-American staff than any other bureau. Of course, there were more Asian-American staff in Far East posts than there were in other parts of the world. The Department had decided that these concentrations based on ethnicity were not good and made an effort to spread its ethnic personnel resources more widely.

It worked alright, but everyone interested in the issue must realize that it is a long term process and that immediate results could not be expected.

The Bureau's relationships with the central Personnel Office were good in 1986. They went downhill from there. George Vest was the Director General until the Spring of 1989. Bill Swing was the senior deputy. In my first year, Personnel was very cooperative in making appropriate assignments. We did a lot of things that according to the rules were not allowed, such as "stretched" tours. Sigur was interested in personnel assignments as were all the deputies. Personnel had the formal responsibility for making assignments, but there was an assignment board which actually made the assignment recommendations. Of course, most of the process was based on the "bids" that every officer made for vacancies when his or her tour was coming to an end. All bureaus were represented on this board. I had been in the Service for many years and by this time knew a lot of people. I sometimes counseled people not to bid on certain specific jobs because I thought that the assignment would not have been good for his or her career. I said that I would try to help the officer, but that he or she was making a mistake bidding for the particular job they had in mind. Personnel might well have made the assignment because the officer was the right age or had the right credentials, but I knew that it would probably not work because of the nature of the job or because of the personality conflicts that might arise at the post. So in my first year, I was very pleased by our personnel management accomplishments. The next two years were an entirely different story. Personnel became very uncooperative and blocked many of our assignment desires, despite the fact that I had been friends with both Deputy Directors General: Bill Swing and Larry Wilson. But I found that increasingly, the Personnel's front office promised to take certain actions which the staff below did not carry out; if the staff felt that an assignment was not within the rules, it tended to ignore the stated guidance from the Director General or his deputy. So the personnel operation became very rigid and calcified, which it continues to be today. I believe that even as we speak, Personnel is about to assign someone to the Political Counselor position in Seoul who has never been in Asia, much less knowing anything about Korea. It makes absolutely no sense at all, even if you give the individual language training which is not likely to be very effective given the age of the officer. This is the kind of assignments that were beginning to happen in 1987; the justification seemed always to be that the central office was trying to break "the old boy network" -- that was Ron Spiers' expressed intention. He had held that view for many years. I always considered the "old boy network" as a management tool. I think that part of the Department's problems stem from the tendency to turn management over to the people in "M" (the Under Secretary for Management). The officials who should really be responsible for management are the senior people in the operating bureaus, but they don't pay enough attention to problems. When they do pay attention to management, it is usually through the "old boy network," which is then criticized as being the enemy of good management. It is a vicious circle; I feel rather strongly about the whole management process of the Department, as you may have noticed!

We also faced the perennial debate of functional vs geographical specialists. For much of this period, Ron Spiers was the Under Secretary for Management. Ron has always upheld the importance of functional specialists; I have always leaned towards geographical specialists. This is a time honored debate. Ron always referred to us as the "regional Barons". We were in the 1986-89 period able to keep regional specialization as the most important ingredient in the assignment process. I insist that the Department of State deals with cultures; that requires deep

knowledge of country or regional history which is more important than global environment, etc. In fact, there cannot be one approach to our foreign relationships; each issue has to be addressed on its own merits bringing in most cases the best regional and functional experts together. Some issues might be resolved by functional experts alone; some by regional experts alone, but most, I believe require the closest cooperation between experts on different matters. The artificial distinction that many make between function and geographic doesn't make any sense in most instances.

In general, I must say that the Department of State is not very proficient in the management field. It is a very difficult job, even if you know what you are doing. To do it well in the Department is very tough; to do it the way the Department wants it done is damn near impossible! We had one major challenge during my tour: a staff reduction which required a meeting of all of the assistant secretaries with the Under Secretary for Management. That meeting with Spiers on the first issue was interesting because no bureau wanted to point a finger at a sister bureau, even if it felt that more of the reduction should come out of somebody else's hide. I attended because Sigur decided that that I should represent EA. The meeting must have lasted two hours trying to make the case that an across-the-board reduction applicable evenly to all bureaus was not the appropriate approach -- it certainly wasn't "management". We all thought that the senior levels of the Department should establish some priorities and then let the bureaus decide how the reductions might be applied to their own operations. Spiers listened to all of the arguments, nodded his head periodically and at the end of the meeting told all the bureaus to tell him how they would apply a 7 1/2% reduction to their own operations. As far as I know, "management" in the Department has not progressed beyond that simplistic and unthinking approach to resource reductions. The relationship between policy objectives and resource utilization has never really been developed in the Department of State. The Department seems to be unable to prioritize its objectives and functions. Everything seems important to everybody every day! That of course is not the real world, but that is the way the Department exercises its "management" responsibilities. The debate between functional and regional bureaus has been active for many years. I would say that today the functional bureaus seem to have priority, although I don't know how long that is going to last. Clearly the Clinton administration came in with a bias toward looking at the world on a function by function basis.

Lateral entry at mid-career levels was not a problem in the 198-89 period. It had been a problem when I was Country Director in the early 1980s when, as one administration was coming to an end, political appointees of that administration were trying to enter the career service before their party left power. It was very poor timing for the individuals involved. But during my tenure as a DAS, I do not recall any great pressure to take into the mid-level positions of the Service any people from the outside. We did face the issue of politically appointed deputy assistant secretaries, although EA was not directly involved. We did not face that because Sigur was a non-career appointee and he wanted to have career people as his deputies. After Sigur, the pressure increased and the Clinton administration is even more eager to fill some deputy positions with non-career people than the Bush administration was. I have heard that even positions below DAS have been filled by non-career people. That was done in a couple of instances during the Carter administration; those people are now part of the career service.

JAMES R. LILLEY
Ambassador
Korea (1986-1989)

Ambassador James R. Lilley was born in China in 1928. After serving in the US Army from 1946-1947 he received his bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1951. From 1951-1958 he worked as an analyst for the US Army. His career includes positions in China, Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Laos, and ambassadorships to South Korea and China. Ambassador Lilley was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May 1998.

Q: Then by 1986 you ended up going to South Korea as Ambassador, right?

LILLEY: Yes. I would say that I was approached on this matter during the spring or summer of 1986. Paul Wolfowitz originally approached me. He was getting ready to leave Washington to go to Indonesia as American Ambassador. He said: "Look, we want to get a person in Seoul who has been tested and who knows what we want in Korea. We know that the career Foreign Service has its own nominee. We'd rather have you take this job as Ambassador to South Korea. Give up the DAS job and go to South Korea." I said: "Sure, I'll be glad to do it."

Then we had several months of a pretty active struggle with the State Department over who would go to South Korea. The State Department had its own candidate, who had good credentials. However, eventually, we prevailed.

Q: You mentioned twice that Paul Wolfowitz seemed to "shy away" from Foreign Service Officers. Was this his approach to...

LILLEY: No. In his view, there were Foreign Service Officers and then there were other Foreign Service Officers. He had great confidence in Bill Brown [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs]. He chose Bill Brown as his deputy, he had great respect for him, and he ultimately got him the ambassadorship to Thailand. He had great respect for Mark Pratt and other FSOs he worked with. However, he also liked people who, you might say, were on his ideological wave length. I think that he liked what I had done in Taiwan, and he felt that I understood the "balance" between Taiwan and mainland China better than the many of the career Foreign Service Officers did. He thought that Bill Brown also did, but Paul didn't think that there were many people like that in the Foreign Service. Paul Wolfowitz is a very smart guy. He knew where these guys came from whom the Department of State proposed to him as Ambassadors to various East Asian countries. He said that there were Foreign Service Officers who had outlooks which were not "compatible" with his views.

I believe that he felt that South Korea was a "key" post at that point. The situation there was sort of "heating up." "Dixie" Walker had been Ambassador in South Korea for five years. He'd done a good job, but I think that people wanted him to leave. So they wanted to get somebody who was acceptable to Congress and to the conservatives and who also had credentials that could be "sold" to the Foreign Service and other people. So he settled on me.

Q: You went out to South Korea and were there from 1986 to 1989. When an Ambassador goes to a given post, he usually has something in his attache case which states what the major issues are. These are the problems for which you need to try and resolve. What would you say were the primary issues regarding South Korea?

LILLEY: There were two issues that were laid on the table, as it were. The first one was North Korea. How important is our common defense against North Korea to South Korea? How overriding a consideration should this be? North Korea was "dangerous." We had 45,000 American troops in South Korea. We had a real commitment to South Korea. This issue took precedence over other matters, that was one view. The second issue was that South Korea had an authoritarian, military government. It had not had a real election. It crushed an insurrection in Kwangju in 1980, in which upwards of 2,000 people were probably killed. In their view President Chun Doo Hwan was a martinet. Should we put democracy and liberty in South Korea over our concerns about the threat from North Korea? How do we get the correct balance between these two problems?

Q: Oh, yes.

LILLEY: These two issues came up in my hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee prior to my confirmation as Ambassador to South Korea. Senator John Kerry [Democrat, Massachusetts] was being "fed" by some "delightful" people at Harvard with some concepts which don't really relate very much to democracy and security. So this question came up and was used against me when I said that the greatest threat to South Korea was North Korea. I was asked: "Then you're downgrading democracy in South Korea, right?" I said: "No, I'm not. I think that we should work toward both objectives." I was asked: "Then you're putting security over democracy, aren't you?" This question was a bit unreal, but this is what people on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were asking me.

Gaston Sigur had taken over as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and South Pacific Affairs. Paul Wolfowitz had gone on to Indonesia. Gaston had said to me: "Why don't you stay on as DAS?" I said: "No, I want to go to South Korea." So I went to South Korea, and Gaston Sigur brought back J. Stapleton Roy [former Ambassador to Singapore and later China and to Indonesia] and put him in the DAS job. I recommended that.

Anyway, when I went to South Korea as Ambassador, these were the principal questions that were on my plate. In addition, there were other Korean problems and bits of this and that. However, Gaston Sigur and I had had talks about this. Gaston was determined to push ahead with what you might say was "public" support for democracy in South Korea. I asked Gaston to come and give a talk at my swearing-in ceremony. He agreed and raised some of these questions about democracy in this way.

Later, when I arrived in South Korea and took my letter of credence to South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan, this idea of support for democracy was in it. In February, 1987, Gaston made a speech in New York about the necessity to "civilianize" the South Korean Government and to work toward democracy. Meanwhile, I was sort of playing the same theme, though in a lower

key, in South Korea itself. Earlier in January, I gave a talk to the Korean-American Friendship Society when a student was drowned, after some trouble with the police. I made a fairly strong statement on that occasion, saying that this was no way to deal with dissidents. So we were really working on this issue along parallel tracks, using the high posture in Washington of pushing for improved performance, with me trying to "work the seam" in South Korea.

There were continuing demonstrations all the time, with the South Korean police wearing their "Darth Vader" uniforms. The police were lined up in the streets. Occasionally, the students were subjected to torture to make them confess. This was sometimes done clumsily, and kids subjected to this kind of interrogation might die. It was a mess. Then the student radicals moved into Myong Dong Cathedral in Seoul and "holed up" in there, after conducting fire bomb attacks on South Korean police. Clearly, the problem was building up.

President Chun Doo Hwan was caught in this situation. He was trying to work his way out of it. He was trying to have "his man," Roh Tae Woo, nominated by his party and to "rig" the convention and ensure his election. For a while he was considering not stepping down from the Presidency. However, we made it very clear to him that we would be very unhappy if he did this.

Q: What would that mean to the Koreans? Were we talking about withdrawing the Second U.S. Infantry Division?

LILLEY: No. I would say that we were never that irresponsible. There are ways to communicate your dissatisfaction without "going the final mile." As we went into the spring of 1987, and things began to "heat up," the American opposition came to South Korea and began to criticize the Embassy openly because we were allegedly not making democracy work in South Korea.

Q: You mean people in the Democratic Party in the United States.

LILLEY: Sure. The "usual suspects" were on the side of the students. After all, we were involved in South Korea. The Council on Foreign Relations sent a delegation to South Korea. They were really fishing in troubled waters. We weren't going to tell them what we were doing. Yes, they could look at Gaston Sigur's speeches and see what he was saying, but I wasn't going to talk to them and give out what we were doing. That is, we were negotiating ending the occupation of Myong Dong Cathedral, lifting "house arrest" on dissidents, urging the South Koreans to open up the election process. All of those things we were quietly pushing for.

They knew that we were going to do this. They sensed the pressure. It came to an end in June...

Q: June, 1987?

LILLEY: Yes. There were outbreaks of violence in Pusan and attacks on our Consulate there. Violence also began to emerge in Kwangju and Seoul. President Chun Doo Hwan, as a military man, naturally wanted to turn to military force to deal with these attacks. He was exhausted and was concerned about his inability to put down the violence through use of the police. Just as President Syngman Rhee tried to do in 1960, so President Chun Doo Hwan wanted to bring in the military in 1987. We knew that Chun Doo Hwan was "testing us." So on June 19, 1987, I

took to him a letter written by President Reagan, urging him to "go slow, don't do anything rash." In the letter President Reagan warned President Chun that such tactics could cause damage to Korean-American relations and that it would be hard for the U.S. to continue to support him. We didn't say that we were going to "Pull out the Second Infantry Division," but we got the substance of these other words in there.

I must say that my first intention was to deliver this letter through the South Korean Foreign Minister, but my advisers in the Embassy convinced me to do it personally. We had read about the history of the Kwangju incident, and we knew that we needed to have a solid front of the American military and the American civilians to be successful.

Q: In the aftermath of the Kwangju incident there was a feeling that the American military and civilians weren't on the same side.

LILLEY: They claim that they were, but if you read the documents, there were things that the American military did which, it seemed to me, were inconsistent with what the American Embassy was actually doing. Certainly, that view has appeared in a number of publications, and this was clearly the way the South Koreans read it. The South Koreans were hearing things from the American military that weren't the same as what they were hearing from the American Embassy.

Q: This is probably an old story to you. It goes back to the time when Park Chung Hee came into power. Although the American military was supposedly on the same side as the Embassy, certainly subordinate American military officers were going off in a different direction.

LILLEY: Talk to Marshall Green. Well, now you can't do that any more, because he's no longer alive.

Q: Well, I have.

LILLEY: Marshall Green could give you chapter and verse on that.

Q: I served in South Korea under Ambassador Dick Sneider, when General Singlaub was the UN Commander. You get this impression...

LILLEY: Or you compare Sneider and General Dick Stilwell. Boy!

Q: That was not a marriage made in heaven, either.

LILLEY: No, that was open hostility. But there was a general called General Livsey. He was a good division commander, but being CINC in Korea is a very "heady" job. He was a four-star general, commander in chief, and all of that stuff. Just by chance I had lunch with him that day, January 19th. I told him that I was going to see President Chan Doo Hwan and was going to take him a message from President Reagan and that we were going to advise "restraint." General Livsey sort of looked at me. I said that when I went in to see President Chun, I was going to say: "I speak for the combined American establishment." General Livsey was part of this

establishment. I said that I was going to say to President Chun: "If, in fact, you move South Korean military forces in there, this will have very serious consequences for South Korean-American relationships." We know that after the meeting with me, President Chun went out and called off his troops. I was told that General Livsey called my Political Counselor on the phone on the next day and was livid with anger.

Q: Who was that?

LILLEY: A Foreign Service Officer called Harry Dunlop.

Q: I did a long interview with him.

LILLEY: Harry took the brunt of this. General Livsey was accusing him on the phone. He said: "Ambassador Lilley did this without my authorization," and so forth. We did it, and it worked. Then President Chun got together with Roh Dae Woo, and they compromised in about 10 days. Later on June 29, a statement was issued about an amnesty for Kim Dae Jung, opening up the election process, rewriting the election law, and so forth. This was an eight-point program that Roh Dae Woo came up with.

Now, this was the idea of the South Koreans. We didn't do that for them. They did it, but they knew that the "military option" just wasn't there. I think that we'd learned the lessons of Kwangju to a certain degree.

Then Gaston Sigur came out to Seoul. He was on his way to Singapore with Secretary of State Schultz. He came back to Seoul and sensed that a "sea change" was coming. Gaston was courageous. He saw Dae Jung, who was still under house arrest and had his car rocked by plainclothes men. He went back to Washington, went to see Congressman Steve Solarz [Democrat, New York], and they were really impressed with what had happened. In fact, Congressman Solarz said, I am told, that Gaston Sigur should receive the "Nobel Peace Prize" for his efforts! There was really a mood of euphoria. Something had happened to change things. We sensed that President Chun had given his blessing to Roh Dae Woo to come up with this program of democratization.

Q: What was your impression of President Chun when you first got to South Korea? How did this impression change or...

LILLEY: I think that President Chun was very Korean, tough, disciplined, and hard. I think that he was narrow in scope and in his thinking, but he had a sense of being obligated to Americans. However, he always wanted to stand up to the Americans and prove that the Koreans were independent. But I think that, in the final analysis, he knew that the Americans were critical to him. I think that he had the wisdom to see, at a crucial point, that it was in the interests of South Korea to hold back on maintaining an authoritarian government and to move positively towards democracy.

In effect, we had offered President Chun a "prize." We said to him: "After you step down, come to the States and be received at the White House. President Reagan will host a dinner in your

honor. You can do all of these things. They're all there, waiting for you." I think that appealed to President Chun. He wanted that meeting with President Reagan. He had come to the United States in 1981. He was one of the first, official South Korean visitors to come to the U.S. after Reagan's election. At that time Dick Allen [then National Security Adviser to President Reagan] had made a deal with him and said: "If you come to Washington, this means that you can't execute Kim Dae Jung." Kim Dae Jung was under sentence of death at the time. Allen said: "We don't want to have Kim Dae Jung executed. In effect, I am told Allen said if he is executed, you don't come to Washington." Chun came to Washington, and the South Koreans commuted the sentence of death against Kim Dae Jung. And Kim Dae Jung is President of South Korea today.

Q: Yes.

LILLEY: So we knew that we could work with Chun. He could be stiff. He had this sort of harsh laughter, but he has a certain appeal. I felt that I could get across to him. I know that at the time of the Kwangju incident in 1980, when he was not yet President, he was very tough, and did not take advice easily. His instinct was to crack down.

Q: What about Chun's advisers? There was a large number of men who had been trained in the United States. Were these people having any discernible effect on the military government in South Korea?

LILLEY: I think that his advisers played a very important role. I can think of three in particular who were very important. One was called Choi Kwang Soo, the Foreign Minister. He went to Georgetown University. I dealt with him and I think that he had a positive influence on President Chun. I know that he had a positive influence in terms of calling the troops back and for not using violence during the Myong Dong Cathedral incident. He really "bridged the gap," taking all things into consideration. He was very important. Second was Kim Kyung-hwan. He was educated at Williams College and got a Ph.D. at Harvard. He was Ambassador to the United States at the time I was in South Korea. He was really a man with a great ability to understand the United States. He was a reasonable Korean, a patriot, a nationalist. He grew up as a poor kid in Pusan as a refugee from the North Korean invasion of the South in 1950. He came from nothing and had gotten a Ph.D. degree from Harvard.

The third figure was Kim Key-hwan. He was educated at Yale and the University of California. He was a very savvy person and an economist. He was the right hand man of President Chun. Then there were the older guys like Nam Duck-woo, former Prime Minister, educated, I think, at the University of Nebraska. He had a Ph.D. and was also a very savvy person. I think that the people I have mentioned had some influence in restraining President Chun. They understood that he was capricious and difficult and might fire people quickly. However, they managed to live with him. The careers of some of them were pretty much destroyed by being associated with him. When the other, democratically elected Presidents entered office, some of these people were regarded as "contaminated." However, I think that basically these men were very important to the process of the democratization of South Korea. Plus the fact that we had trained more and more of the South Korean military people in the United States. They understood the limited role of the military in the U.S. in suppressing internal dissent. The South Korean military became more and more conscious of this, and less and less inclined to become involved in the political

process. This was shrinking away.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the South Korean military understood what putting down the Kwangju riots had done to the military, to the government, and to South Korea's place in the West?

LILLEY: Actually, the question of the Kwangju riots didn't come up that much during my time in South Korea. I remember that one of my close, Korean friends who had been trained in the West, once said to me: "Don't scratch off that 'scab' of Kwangju by talking about it." However, we weren't going to listen to that advice. Instead, we brought the former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Bill Gleysteen, and other people to "explain" to the South Koreans what the Kwangju incident had been and what the American role in it had been. We took a lot of "flak" from the South Koreans on that, because they had really been indoctrinated about this coup. We spent a lot of time trying to dilute that view. I don't think that we ever totally succeeded.

However, I think that one of the key South Korean military leaders, general Chung He-yung, at that time was a good friend of General Medicree Ministry (sp?). This general had been at Kwangju. He was in charge of the Special Force, which then included some of the most brutal people. He understood the damage which the Kwangju incident had caused. He was very close to President Chun. He was definitely a restraining influence on the President. He had learned the lessons of the Kwangju incident. I think that General Chun was a factor in convincing President Chun not to use force again.

Q: You mentioned several times the incident at the Myong Dong Cathedral. Would you explain what it was and our role in it?

LILLEY: Well, this incident concerned a bunch of radical students, and this is traditional in Korea. These students had started to put on a sort of "violent" demonstration at Myong Dong Square in Seoul. When the police appeared on the scene, the students ran into the Cathedral, sought asylum, and entrenched themselves there. South Korean Army troops couldn't go in to get them out, because this was a Catholic Cathedral, and Cardinal Stephen Kim was a revered figure in South Korea. The students got into the cathedral and were nasty, noisy, dirty, and "troublesome." After a while people got very sick of the students.

However, the information which I got from my South Korean contacts was that: "We wanted to go in and clean those kids out. The priests don't want them in there, they're messy, troublesome, and nasty." We said: "Don't do that! Don't go into that Cathedral with troops. It'll reverberate all over the world." They agonized about it and finally they decided not to go into the Cathedral. The priests and others talked to the students and urged the authorities not to arrest them but to wait them out. That eventually was the deal that was worked out.

Q: Students are generally so troublesome, particularly during the spring of the year, when they riot. Were you, USIS [United States Information Service], or anyone else able to make contact with those students? The ones who were going to riot were going to riot anyway.

LILLEY: There are students and students. There are the hard core, pro Kim Il Sung, left wing

extremists. There is another group who are sort of sympathetic to the extremists, who go along with them, and who support some of the things that they do. They like to stage demonstrations to show their spirit. There is a third group of students who are just sort of curious bystanders. We could "get to" the student groups, probably up to the second rung of them. I traveled around the country. I went to Kwangju, Pusan, Seoul, and Taegu and met and talked with students. I tried to communicate with them, which was very difficult. However, we constantly tried to keep in touch with them, to develop a "feel" for them, and to find out what they were thinking and what they were planning to do. This wasn't easy, and we could only get as far as the second rung of students. I would say that you can't overemphasize the importance of the students. Yes, supposedly in Korean history, which goes back hundreds of years, the students have been the "cutting edge." They have the "bumper sticker" mentality that is out in front. They carry out the slogans which all Koreans support. Some of these slogans went: "The division of Korea was a tragedy. The Americans are responsible for it." "The Americans were responsible for the Kwangju incident." "The Americans are imperialists and must leave Korea and stop the economic pressure they exert." These were the sorts of allegations that reverberated all over Korea. Catholic priests, Korean soldiers, and virtually everybody picked up these slogans and ran with them. Actually, many South Koreans were not engaged politically and remained uneducated in complex political issues. Some of them, however, are very sharp. Some of them are also pro-North Korea and under North Korean influence.

Largely, these allegations against us become part of a Korean phenomenon. Students do change when they enter society. They have to work. Others won't accept this kind of propaganda. The students have four years for indulgence and then go into society. That was part of the evolution.

What happened in June 1987, to change this situation is that the South Korean middle class joined up in the dissatisfaction with insensitive authoritarian government. There were great demonstrations against government corruption, government oppression, and the lack of a free press. All of these concerns were taken over by the middle class, the teachers, the merchants, and the priests. Many more were involved in this movement. It had widespread support.

We watched these things happen, like the great, huge demonstrations which attracted 200-300,000 persons in downtown Seoul. We could see these demonstrations from the roof of the Embassy, because they were coming at us, and there was a line of troops holding them back.

Q: They were going to the Embassy to protest?

LILLEY: They were marching on the Embassy. They were stopped, and it was peaceful. Most were going to make it a peaceful demonstration. You could see it. There were "taches d'huile," or oil spots of radical students. All would be peaceful and then out would come a fire bomb, which would explode with a bang! Back would come the tear gas shot at the students. The students there would instigate the violence, because they were convinced that they were in the vanguard of the masses. The masses really didn't support the radical students that much. The radical students wanted violent change. When Roh Tae Woo went into this business of offering concessions, the air went out of the demonstrations. The students lost popular support. They tried to keep their demonstrations going, but they weren't very successful. Also, the Olympics were coming to Seoul in 1988, a huge important coming out party, and Korea had to be stable, put on

a good front.

The last big demonstrations were at Yonsei University two years ago. A hard core of pro-North Korean students staged these demonstrations, but they attracted almost no popular support.

Q: When Kim Dae Jung was elected President, did we make efforts to communicate with him and to show him that we were watching these demonstrations?

LILLEY: Absolutely. We were. There were really two dissident leaders at that time. One was Kim Dae Jung, and the other one was Kim Yong Sam. Kim Yong Sam was considered much more acceptable. I occasionally saw Kim Yong Sam. In the case of Kim Dae Jung, the South Korean Government was saying that this guy was a communist and a violent agitator. At that time, as the U.S. Government representative in South Korea, I would have poisoned my relationship with the government had I made a conspicuous attempt to see Kim Dae Jung. I must say that my hat's off to Gaston Sigur [Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and South Pacific Affairs]. When he came out to South Korea, he would go and see Kim Dae Jung. As I said, at times his car would be rocked by South Korean "security thugs." However, Gaston went to see Kim Dae Jung, and this was a symbolic move by the United States to show the South Koreans that we were watching this guy, and that we contacted him directly.

Meanwhile, I was working with the South Korean Government, saying: "You've got to do something about this." This was because during the previous year, after Kim Dae Jung had been released from house arrest, Ambassador Richard "Dixie" Walker invited him to the July 4 reception at the Embassy. The South Korean Government just went berserk. They said that we had Kim Dae Jung at the reception, no government official would attend. It was an ugly incident.

The next step hinged around the reception scheduled to be held on July 4, 1987. I told the South Korean Government that Kim Dae Jung was not under house arrest and that we wanted to invite him. However, they said: "No." However, after the June 29, 1987, announcement by Roh Tae Woo, the situation changed, and the Foreign Ministry followed in the same vein. So Kim Dae Jung came to the reception.

Q: Kim Dae Jung came to the July 4 reception in 1987?

LILLEY: Yes, he did. That was the point.

Q: Roh Tae Woo was in office in...

LILLEY: No. On June 29, 1987, Roh Tae Woo made his statement in support of democracy as the presidential candidate of President Chun's party. July 4, 1987, was five days later. Now what may have confused you is that we went back to 1986, when Dixie Walker was Ambassador to Korea. Dixie invited Kim Dae Jung to come to the Independence Day celebration on July 4, 1986, well before Roh Tae Woo's statement on June 29, 1987, in support of democracy. The South Korean Government just exploded when they learned of this invitation. Lo Shin-yong, the Prime Minister, and everybody else said: "This is the final insult. This man is a criminal," and so forth.

Then, early in 1987, when we initially raised the possibility of inviting Kim Dae Jung to the reception on July 4, 1987, South Korean Government officials were very much opposed. After Roh Tae Woo made his statement in support of democracy on June 29, 1987, they dropped their opposition to our inviting Kim Dae Jung to the July 4, 1987 reception. And Kim Dae Jung came to the reception at the Embassy. This was the symbol that he wanted. He walked up to the Embassy and came in. I met him in front of the residence with the Korean military standing there. This was the symbol of reconciliation.

Q: We had our officers, I believe including Harry Dunlop, in touch with Kim Dae Jung.

LILLEY: When I was in South Korea, I do not believe Harry Dunlop saw Kim Dae Jung.

Q: Did Harry Dunlop have any contact with Kim Dae Jung during most of that time?

LILLEY: Ambassador Dixie Walker didn't see Kim Dae Jung, as far as I know. You're getting to the period before my term in South Korea as Ambassador. You ought to talk to Dixie Walker about this.

Q: Yes, but during your time as Ambassador to South Korea...

LILLEY: Gaston Sigur was the man who went to see Kim Dae Jung.

Q: Do we have a reading on Kim Dae Jung? Obviously, he had been here in the U.S. I even heard him talk at the State Department.

LILLEY: Yes. He was at Harvard for two years.

Q: Try to go back to the 1986 to 1989 period. How did we deal with Kim Dae Jung in the U.S.? Did we treat him as a South Korean leader who was going...

LILLEY: If you read Don Oberdorfer's book, "The Two Koreas," [Lilley points to a copy of the book on a bookshelf.], you'll see that I told Don, before I met with Kim Dae Jung, that I wanted to look at everything that we had on Kim Dae Jung in our files. I looked at this material and at the reports which said that he was a "Leftist" and so forth. My conclusion was that the files were not conclusive. Yes, perhaps Kim Dae Jung was somewhat of a Leftist in his earlier days. However, he had been a businessman and a constant irritant to the South Korean Government. He had dealt with people who had links to North Korea. No question of that. He had been involved in activities against the South Korean Government. No question of that. He was hostile to President Chun. No question of that. However, I believed he was not a communist and was not under the control of North Korea. The evidence that he had instigated armed rebellion against the South Korean Government was simply not in the files. So my conclusion was that Kim Dae Jung was not what the South Korean Government said that he was. Therefore, there was no reason why we should not proceed to contest(?) him. Or, at least, to tolerate him and to work toward his release from detention.

Q: How about Kim Yong Sam?

LILLEY: Kim Yong Sam was much less complicated. Nobody ever really felt that Kim Yong Sam was a communist. He was more of a perennial oppositionist. He had made a career of being against the South Korean Government. This was a popular position to take. He attracted a lot of followers for doing this. He went on a hunger strike from time to time. However, he was considered by many to be a "lightweight."

Q: What about what passed for the "body politic" at this time? The Korean military was running things when I was in South Korea from 1976 to 1979. The view I often heard expressed was that the "political class" just couldn't get their act together. The Koreans were often described as the "Irish of the Orient," and it was often said that you had to have a strict "ruler" to keep the Koreans in line. What were you hearing?

LILLEY: Of course that view was expressed. There was the famous remark attributed to General John Wickham that the Koreans were like "lemmings." You remember that remark, which so upset them during the Kwangju incident. The view was that if the President decides to do something, they'll all follow him. That was rather a crude metaphor.

Yes, there is a tradition of authoritarian government in South Korea. It's in the Yang Ban ruling class, it's in the tradition of the Emperors of Korea and the Kings, including King Sejong, and so forth. They were "strong men" who led the country. Certainly, President Park Chung Hee was no democrat. But he did great things for the Korean economy. Indeed, some of the faults in that system are still with us today, including crony capitalism and the covert deals between government and business. However, he created a successful South Korea, and he did it by "taking charge" and getting the technocrats to come with him, including Nam Duck-woo and all of those talented people. He got them to come with him because he had the idea of building a strong, prosperous South Korea.

Toward the end of his term, as you know, he "ran out of steam." You were there, you saw it. You saw him come "unglued." His wife was assassinated, and he became much more isolated. Of course, he was the object of a bizarre assassination attempt. Then there was a very short interregnum with Choi Kyu Ha, which never worked out because he was essentially a weak man. His term as President was marked with vacillation and uncertainty, strikes, and riots. Then Chun became President. However, the South Koreans were never willing to accept Chun Doo Hwan to the degree that they accepted Park Chung Hee, because they credited Park with making them prosperous. They were beginning to make money. We have had experiences like that in the West. The South Koreans knew that their leader had "feet of clay" in many ways. They weren't willing to put up any longer with what Park Chung Hee had inflicted on them.

Chun Doo Hwan had this hard face of a leader who announces what he is going to do, tolerates no nonsense, and moves ahead in the interest of the country, as he sees it. Basically, he was telling the South Koreans: "Follow me." However, his ability to accomplish things eroded. He still wanted to hang onto power. He was determined to hang on but he saw that he was losing public support. Some of his key military officers were not at all enthusiastic about his military practices. His key foreign policy advisers were saying to him: "Boss, it's time for you to adjust

your position. The Americans are consistently unhappy with what you're doing. No, they're not going to pull out their troops. They're going to stand with us against North Korea, but you have to give them a better case so that they can acknowledge a real democracy in South Korea." I'm sure that they made these points to him. They were probably much more influential than we were.

What we did was really to stay the hand that was planning to use military force. We also carried the public message which Gaston Sigur conveyed of democracy and the private message which I gave to them that they had to find much more acceptable ways to deal with Kim Dae Jung and the riots which had flared up. We weren't talking about the Kwangju incident. We reminded them all about the Kwangju incident.

Q: What was the situation when Rho Tae Woo came in on this? Did we have a clear view of Rho Tae Woo, and how did we see him?

LILLEY: I saw Rho Tae Woo quite a few times. I invited him to my house for dinner, I went out drinking with him, I went out to dinner with him. I did spend some time with him. I didn't see him too often, but we did get to know him, right away.

Q: What was his position at the time?

LILLEY: At that time he had been in the South Korean Army. He was the Vice Chairman of his party. He was the head of something, although I can't recall exactly what it was. He had a "sinecure" on which he was able to live. His claim was that he was the "anointed successor" to President Chun Doo Hwan, and this was clear. When they had the party convention in June, 1987, the Embassy didn't want me to attend, because they said that the proceedings were "rigged." However, I went anyway, against the Embassy's advice.

The journalists had been told that I wouldn't go, but the Embassy hadn't cleared that with me. So when the journalists saw me walking into the party convention, they asked me: "What the hell is going on?" I said: "I decided to come." I asked a number of my diplomatic colleagues whether they were going to go, and they said: "We're going to go." At the time there were about 17 Ambassadors in Seoul who attended. My attending didn't make much of a splash, although some people criticized me for going to this meeting. However, Rho Tae Woo came back to me later and said: "I really appreciated the fact that you attended. It took guts." I think that justified my attendance in my own mind. He said: "I know that it wasn't easy for you." I said: "Well, it sure wasn't," because the convention was obviously so staged. It was like one of our political party conventions, except that there was even less spontaneity about it.

Q: Was the convention held after the announcement?

LILLEY: I think that it was before, but I would have to check the dates on it.

Q: Was your concern about going or not going or did you just want to see the new man come in?

LILLEY: The argument that I shouldn't go was made by the Political Counselor, Harry Dunlop.

Harry's been right on some issues, but he's also been wrong. In this case he said: "You are 'blessing' a false process. You are 'blessing' a new, authoritarian man coming in to replace an old, authoritarian man. You ought to express your disapproval by staying away from the convention." I said: "Well, that just makes people angry." My idea was that this was their political process. Later, after the announcement, I went to the Kim Yong Sam party convention. I believe I also went to Kim Dae Jung's convention because this was a three-party race. I went to all of these conventions. I wasn't particularly welcome at some of them. There were a lot of Left Wingers there who were thinking: "What is the American Ambassador doing here?" In South Korea you can never win all of the fights.

Q: When was the presidential election and how did things develop?

LILLEY: The election took place in December, 1987. This is where I really have to express my admiration for the South Koreans. The two key decisions that the South Koreans made were on June 19, 1987, not to use military force, and on June 29, 1987, to move toward democracy. Then they had to move into democratic elections. They had to redraft their constitution and rewrite their election law. They did both, and within a period of a few months. Then they had the election in December, 1987. Rho Tae Woo got about 37 percent of the vote. Initially, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Yong Sam had a coalition. Then they started fighting each other, and the coalition broke down. If they had stuck together and decided that one of them would run, that candidate would have gotten perhaps 60 percent of the vote.

It was quite clear that they had caused their own downfall. However, being who they were, they cried "foul." That is, if the other guy wins, it's an "unfair election." If I win, it's a "fair election." This is their instinct, but it didn't hold water. Few people bought that. As I said, the coalition would possibly have gotten 60 percent of the vote.

Anyway, Rho Tae Woo then won, and the Embassy "called" that one very well. We "called" that one just about "on the nose." It was one of the political predictions we made that came out right. We sent in our cable and said that Rho Tae Woo was going to win. He was only going to get a plurality, not a majority of the vote, but he was going to win, because the other two candidates had split their vote. When Rho Tae Woo won, I went right over to congratulate him. I shook his hand. There was some muttering about an "unfair election," and that sort of thing, but I decided to go over and congratulate Rho Tae Woo. My picture was taken when I congratulated him, and it appeared in the press.

Then, once Rho Tae Woo was elected, and he had done this remarkable job of rewriting their election law, they had to focus on the Olympic Games. They had just had KA [Korean Air] Flight 858 blown up in November, 1987. The North Koreans blew up this plane over the Bay of Bengal near the Indian Ocean, with 115 people aboard. It was a horrible thing that they did. The young Korean woman who placed the bomb on the plane in Bahrain was identified and arrested. They shipped her back to South Korea, where she confessed to what she had done.

I must say that this was an example of how the Left Wing press in the world really gets to me at times. Swedish and American Left Wingers were trying to "spin out" some story that this was a Rho Tae Woo conspiracy to win the election. It was so clear that the attack on KA Flight 858

was a North Korean plot all along. These leftists were sowing seeds of this story around. They were asking us to "prove the unknown," prove that it wasn't a South Korean plot. Well, we proved that it was a North Korean plot. Then the Left Wingers said: "No, how can you say that it wasn't a South Korean plot?" Then things got messy, but it turned out that nobody bought on to what the Swedish and American Left Wingers were saying. And the woman was caught. Rho Tae Woo won the presidential election anyway.

Then the Koreans had to deal with the Olympic Games. They all "pulled together" for the Olympic Games. I think this was a factor in the South Koreans getting their act together. More than anything else in the world, the South Koreans wanted these Olympic Games to be successful. Their view was that successful Olympic Games would change South Korea's place in the world. It would be, as it were, their "coming out party." The Russians, Chinese, and everybody else would be there. The South Koreans would show everybody what a good job they had done in preparing for the Olympic Games.

Anyway, the South Koreans got together. People were worried about terrorism and radical students breaking up the games. No such thing happened.

Q: Were we "pushing" the South Koreans to develop closer ties with the Chinese communists or the Soviets?

LILLEY: No, we didn't. At this time Rho Tae Woo, on his own, came up with what he called his "Nordpolitik." He brought this idea over to me, and I said: "This makes a lot of sense." He said: "You're the China expert." I said: "I think that the Chinese are ready for you. They are very impressed with your industrial achievements. They looked at Chang Won, and it just 'blew their minds' when they saw it. Your Kwong Yang steel mill is the best in the world. They saw this and said to themselves: 'We want one of those. How do you get one?'" I said: "You made a great impression on the Chinese, the Russians are going to come after you." No, we had no problem with "Nordpolitik," but it was their idea.

Q: How about South Korea reaching out to Japan? Did you stay out of that question?

LILLEY: Well, we were always pushing for greater cooperation between South Korea and Japan. We didn't have to push for it in the economic field. That was very close anyway. It was in the military and security field that we were particularly interested. The Japanese are very much engaged in South Korea economically, in fact. It's not in our interest to push this hard. We felt that the constant bickering and suspicion on the security front was really quite inhibiting. We tried to "ease them" toward some sort of "tri-national" program of cooperation on security matters. We were "inching" them ahead with consultations and were even thinking about an occasional military exercise. However, we had to move cautiously on that question.

Q: Even if you meant it.

LILLEY: Yes, but leave it to be arranged largely through military channels. Let the respective military talk as soldiers, not as politicians.

Q: What about balance of payments questions?

LILLEY: As I got further into my tour as Ambassador, we went through the "crisis of 1987." We were getting closer to the Olympic Games.

After the North Koreans blew up KA Flight 858, they seemed to "retreat." They had been caught "red handed." So we could then focus on trade issues, and they were beginning to loom very large. The issues that attracted our attention involved insurance, cigarettes, high quality beef, wine, and agricultural products. The South Koreans were protectionist. They had high tariffs. They blocked us out of all kinds of service industries. We went to work on this. I would say that during the last six to nine months that I was in South Korea a good portion of our time was spent on trade matters. We had lifted "GSP" earlier.

Q: "GSP" means?

LILLEY: "GSP" means the "General System of Preferences" on trade. South Korea was a developing country which was trying to develop markets. We had very low tariffs on goods which Korea exported to the United States. We cut off "GSP," as South Korea no longer needed this kind of assistance. South Korea had a \$5.0 - \$6.0 billion trade surplus with the United States. Why should we continue to give them a "GSP" advantage? The South Koreans raised hell and said: "If you do this to us, do it also to Taiwan and to Singapore." We had, in fact, done this. The South Koreans didn't like lifting GSP. The "GSP" arrangement had been a "sweetheart" deal, from which South Korea profited tremendously.

Q: What about the "threat from the North"? I'm talking now about the military threat. I'm not talking about terrorism. The feeling that there might be something...

LILLEY: I would say that during the time that I was in South Korea, there were some "bizarre" incidents. First of all, there was the blowing up of KA Flight 858, which was terrible. However, that wasn't a direct threat to the South Korean Government. That was terrorism to block the Olympic Games.

Then the South Koreans did play games with us. In some ways they were their own worst enemy. They developed the theory of the "great water bomb." They claimed that the North Koreans were building a huge dam in North Korea, damming up rivers. The North Koreans would store up this water and then suddenly release it, and it would flood Seoul and many other cities in South Korea. They gave us pamphlets that said that North Korea was building this thing and that this was a great danger. We looked into it. The North Koreans were building some small dams, but the whole thing was ludicrous. However, the South Koreans made a great issue of this.

The second thing that happened was the announcement that Kim Il Sung [North Korean leader] was dead. The South Koreans claimed that this came in over the radio. We listened to it and looked into these reports. This story turned out to be a "phony." It wasn't true.

Then there was the question of getting North Korea into the Olympic Games. The South Koreans were dealing with the North Koreans, trying to get them to participate. The North Koreans were

being very difficult. They said that they wanted to have half of the games [in the North] and wanted to put on the closing ceremony. These negotiations between the two Koreas broke down and led nowhere.

Then I went up and looked at the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone] in terms of tunnels. We hadn't been able to discover any new tunnels. Was there any great action up there that indicated a threat? No, there really wasn't. The "ugly stuff" had taken place earlier, such as the "axe murders" along the DMZ, the discovery of several tunnels under the DMZ, the JSA "fire fights" that they had, when North Korean or other communist defectors came across, and the South Koreans tried to protect them. There was always the potential for trouble, but while I was there, I would say that it was largely minimized. The fact, however, that North Korea had 75% of its huge army deployed south of Pyongyang in an offensive posture and had also deployed thousands of artillery pieces along the DMZ which could blanket Seoul was disconcerting to say the least.

Q: The Soviet Union was still in existence until 1991. Was there any feeling that the sophistication of the infrastructure and anything else pertaining to the South Korean Army was beginning to "outpace" that of North Korea?

LILLEY: Yes. I think that it was. The South Korean Army was getting a lot of modern equipment and was modernizing its weapons. South Korea was "rich" and could buy what it wanted. They bought most of it from us. They were getting good aircraft, including F-5s. They got F-16s later on. The U.S. Air Force had F-16s stationed in South Korea. However, I would say that the North Koreans were still getting very advanced and sophisticated equipment from Russia. They got the Sukhoi-25 fighter-bomber and they got surface-to-air missiles which were very dangerous. I think that it was the SAM-5. From North Korea it could hit Kimpo Airfield near Seoul. The Russians were selling North Korea a lot of modern equipment.

That was a matter of concern because, obviously, the North Koreans were modernizing their forces. We began to see signs that the North Korean military establishment was in some ways "slowing down" because the amount of air time they had for training was cut back. The size of North Korean military exercises was being cut back. Certain things were happening up in North Korea which indicated that they were having problems in keeping their military "up to snuff" and getting the POL [Petroleum and other lubricants] to keep their forces rolling. However, the North Korean military establishment was still a huge force, and the rhetoric coming out of North Korea was very ugly and menacing. They also had ISO, DOD, and Special Operations units, which was a mobile strike force of highly trained and motivated troops.

I remember that we used to pick up North Korean TV broadcasts at the DMZ. We could monitor Pyongyang, too, in this way. It was the most bizarre performance that I had seen. There was this whole group of "iron-faced" generals sitting there in their Supreme People's Assembly, with medals and ribbons from their shoulders down nearly to their crotches. They wore these huge military hats. They had these great, stone faces and they would listen in silence. And in would come this fat kid with a pompadour, with his belly sticking out, sort of walking duck footed like this. It was Kim Jong Il! Here was this limp-wristed guy among these North Korean generals, and we would think: "What the hell's going on?" He would sit down in his chair, with these stone-faced generals behind him.

I remember asking South Koreans: "What is this?" They would say: "This is the North Koreans' great leader. He's a kind of god, in their view. If he came in there bare-assed, they would probably jump to attention." You got this sense of what a "bizarre" place North Korea was. This North Korean woman agent who placed the bomb on KA Flight 858 told us what she had gone through and what the North Korean leaders had told her. And what she believed was incredible. What the North Korean leaders pumped into their people's heads was bizarre.

Q: Did we get any feel for things beyond the military in North Korea, like food production and all of that?

LILLEY: North Korea was still getting a tremendous amount of aid from Russia and China. That was "propping them up." The food situation had not yet broken down. That didn't come up, I'd say, until the early 1990s. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, and the Chinese communists put most of their trade on a cash basis, and that's when North Korea began to fall apart. Till then, they were propped up by China and Russia, and largely by Russia.

Q: Speaking of farms, how was the farm economy of South Korea?

LILLEY: This was one of our problems. As you know, there was a huge "rice scandal" in South Korea.

Q: Oh, yes. I administered an oath to...

LILLEY: Tongsun Park?

Q: Not to Suzie.

LILLEY: Well, anyway, that had been a great scandal. That was over by the time I got to South Korea. It had left a "stink" of corruption in the agricultural business. Then President Chun Doo Hwan's brother had gone into cattle-raising. He had this, what did they call it, the "Saemaul" March 1 Movement, to bring life to South Korean agriculture. What it did was to bring wealth to President Chun Doo Hwan's brother. He raised cattle. So what did they do? They slapped restrictions on importing beef. The South Koreans import a lot of good cattle from us and raise their own cattle. Then they closed off imports of beef. The brother got very rich, and this kind of thing happened often. They were growing bananas under plastic in Cheju-Do. It was incredibly expensive! They could buy bananas for 40 cents a piece from the Philippines or Taiwan. And here they were growing them in South Korea under plastic. Why? Self-sufficiency. They said that they stood for the South Korean farmer.

The South Koreans would say: "We don't want your tobacco. It's ugly." What did they do? They subsidized their own farmers to grow tobacco in South Korea. They developed their own tobacco and cigarette industry. These guys had a \$2.0 billion plus trade in tobacco. Then they tried to "freeze us out" with high tariffs. We said: "Come on! If you open up and give us a fair chance, we'll get 20 percent of the market." They would say: "No, it's unpatriotic to smoke American cigarettes. You're exporting coffin nails." Some anti-tobacco Americans came back at us, too.

What they were doing was that they were merely giving their tobacco monopoly the right to sell cigarettes. We tried to change this practice, but the Catholic priests and the farmers were throwing cow manure at the Embassy and denouncing us as "merchants of death."

However, eventually, we were able to get a better deal, and our share in the market went up from something like 0.5 percent of the legal cigarette market to, maybe, 2.5 percent. They said: "Aren't you satisfied now? You increased your market share five times." We said: "Well, that amounts to 2.5 percent. When Japan or Taiwan opened up their market to us, our share went up to 10 or 20 percent." This kind of argument goes on and on. They were very hard-nosed with us. Imports of high quality beef from the U.S.? They were difficult on this. They would say: "Oh, you can only sell it to foreign hotels." We said: "No, your people have a taste for beef. They love it and they want this high quality beef." Then they would say: "Well, what about our own farmers?" And you go on and on and on.

And what about cars? They had a 200 percent ad valorem tariff on cars imported into South Korea. We have a tariff of about 5 percent. South Korea sells its cars throughout the United States. What is this? They would answer: "We used to import Japanese cars here. If we give the opportunity to sell cars to you, we'll have to give the same opportunity to the Japanese, and they'll flood our market." We said that there was something very wrong with South Korea exporting 1.0 million cars to the U.S., subject to a 5.0 percent U.S. tariff, and the U.S. exporting 1,000 cars to South Korea at a 200 percent tariff.

Q: I would have thought that the imbalance was so apparent that we could have "lowered the boom" on this trade.

LILLEY: We worked and worked on them, but I can tell you that it is an endless contest. It's like being in a "watering contest" with an elephant. Americans are "free traders" and they want "open markets." The South Koreans would say: "You want to lower the tariffs? In will come the Japanese. Their cars are better than yours, and they'll take advantage of it."

So we went around and around on these trade issues. It was very tough. We made progress on tobacco; progress on high quality beef, which is a very small market; and on white wines and some things like that. In general, negotiations on agricultural products were very tough. I remember one of the chairmen of the board of a South Korean chaebol [group of companies] said: "Listen. I'll tell you what. You guys are really worried about our not buying American products. I'll buy your American products. I'll put them on a ship, and I'll dump them in the Yellow Sea. Will that make you happy? Would you buy that? I'll buy \$50 or \$100 million worth of your products. We don't want your products, but you want to sell them to us." So that was one attitude. Of course, we said no.

The trade negotiations were tortuous. We had a very good man, George Mu, who was handling them for the Department of Commerce, for us. He had all of the authority it took. He was Chinese-American, tough, knew how to bargain, and got us as close to getting these deals for us as anybody I've seen.

GASTON J. SIGUR, JR.
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Washington, DC (1986-1989)

Gaston J. Sigur, Jr. was born in 1924 in Louisiana. He attended Louisiana State University from 1941 to 1943. In 1943 he entered the Army and served until 1946. He received his B.A., his M.A. and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He worked for the Asia Foundation and dealt with the National Security Council from 1982 to 1986. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

SIGUR: We were, of course, very pleased with the way in which Korea was developing economically. One couldn't help but be pleased with that, because they were doing extremely well. The Korean private sector was leading the charge on this, and Chun Doo Hwan and his government, to its credit, sort of gave them their heads on this. The people leading the economic development were very, very competent and able people. So that the Korean economy was moving during the Chun regime. And the security relationship between Korea and the United States, of course, was fine.

The basic difficulties in Korea had to do with the authoritarian nature of the regime and how this fitted, or rather didn't fit, in terms of the American belief that a democratic system is the best system. When you get a society, such as Korea, which is developing so rapidly economically in the way of getting an emerging and burgeoning middle class and all this, the people obviously want to have a much greater say in their future and in their circumstances.

I had known Chun Doo Hwan since he had taken over power. I had been in Korea a couple of times and had met with him shortly after he assumed the presidency. He was the first foreign visitor to visit President Reagan in 1981. This showed U.S. continuing commitment to the independence of Korea.

As I say, we kept pressing our views on human rights and more political opening to the authorities there, including the President. At the same time, we kept our commitment, kept our ground forces on the 38th parallel and President Reagan made it clear he was not going to change that. And our economic ties with Korea became broader and deeper.

More and more, though, as President Chun began to get to the end of his term, which was coming up in 1987, we had to consider how a presidential change was going to take place, if indeed it was. There were all sorts of rumors in Korea that Chun really had no intention of giving up power, and that he would use the military to stay in power.

We decided to get rather bold in our policy. On February 6, 1987, when I was Assistant Secretary, I went to New York and made a speech there. And this speech rather shook the political establishment in Korea, and the military establishment. Because, in that, I spoke of the need for the civilianization of the government. This was rather clear what we meant. I felt very deeply, as we all did, that we should take President Chun at his word that he intended to step down and that he intended to allow the people to choose his successor.

So there was a great deal of interest, obviously, as I said, in Korea over that speech and what this meant -- whether the United States was changing policy in the sense of withdrawing from full support of Chun. That was not the point. The point of the speech was to say that we support President Chun's determination to step down. In a way we were calling a bluff. President Chun had always said, in the meetings that any of us had had with him, with the President in 1983 when the President was over there, and with Secretary Shultz and myself and others afterwards, that he was irrevocably determined to leave office in 1987. Now, as I say, a lot of people didn't believe it, but he had never waffled on that in terms of what he said to us.

And shortly after I made the speech, I went with Shultz on an Asian trip and we stopped in Seoul. And at the luncheon table, President Chun raised my speech. He made some very flattering remarks about me as a friend of Korea and all that. He knew that, and everybody knew that and so forth. And he said, "While some of the words you used in that speech caused some difficulty to some of our people, I know that you understand the Korean situation well, and I think that the way in which you expressed yourself shows that."

At that point, Secretary Shultz said, "And I hope you understand, Mr. President, that that speech is the basic policy of the American government. This is the policy of the President and of me. And so read it carefully and take in every word, because that is our policy."

That was important that he say that. He also said it publicly at a press conference. He was asked if my speech actually reflected the views of the President, and he said, "In every comma, in every dot of the i, in every word, that is the policy."

Now that was very interesting. As I said, it sort of gave the Koreans an understanding, not necessarily from Chun's point of view, but from the point of view of other people who might have different points of view, particularly in the military, that this really is what the United States felt. Korea is an independent country; it can do what it chooses, but we felt we had to make our position clear.

It was not entirely clear that DoD agreed with our emphasis on democratization and human rights in our policy. After all, the defense establishment in this country has got to think fundamentally in defense terms. But my argument, and the argument, I think, of others in the government, was that look, we are just as much interested in defense as you are. But we happen to believe, and we think history bears it out, that a society in which people have as much say as possible, given differences of culture, history, social development, etc. about their own circumstances and how they develop and what their future is, that that is the most secure society on the face of the globe. I agree with Winston Churchill -- democracy is a lousy system, but it is better than all the others. It is better than all the others, and a Korea which moves toward allowing its people to decide their own fate is a more secure Korea. This is a place where the people will feel they want to defend themselves, that they want to support the independence and freedom that they exercise. So we believed security and democracy go hand in hand.

When I took that trip over to Korea at the end of June of 1987, that was the message that I brought. Because we saw Korea getting into more and more serious problems. I think it was

responding rather well. It was a difficult time. It was a hard time. The situation was very volatile and you had a lot of things taking place -- e.g. lot of student riots. People were obviously beginning to get worked up about it. When I went to Korea (and it was very interesting how we decided that), I met with everybody there at the time, really: the President, of course, his cabinet, and the opposition. I recall a statement by one of the members of the cabinet, a sort of tough-liner in his views, who said, "There is a fever in our land." And he was right. And the fever was: "We demand to have more say! We are not going to live like this any more!" He was right and he knew it. This fever was there and it had to be dealt with. It wasn't easy for the Embassy. I think they did a pretty good job.

I mentioned the interesting way the decision was made to send me to Korea. Shultz and I were on this trip in Asia. We had been down to an ASEAN meeting in Southeast Asia and then we were going on to Australia for an ANZUS meeting. I remember reading the reports coming in from Korea. They began to get more and more somber, with the increase in sizes of demonstrations on the streets, and there was more and more concern that the military would be used.

We were leaving for Sydney the next morning. I remember that evening, late in the evening after dinner, I was reading all these cables, and I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking: "Something, we have to do something."

I woke up early, about five o'clock or so. (I think the plane was leaving at seven-thirty or something like that -- you know how these trips are.) Anyway, I went to Secretary Shultz's room, and I said, "Is he up yet? I would like to talk to him about something." I did see him, and I said, "I think I ought to go to Korea. I think we have got to do something. We have got to make a show that we support what we have said we support. And we have to try to make it very clear where the United States stands and also that I will, at the same time, listen. I am going to listen and find out exactly what is going on."

So he said, "Makes sense to me. Let me call the President, and you can go as his emissary." We would give it high visibility. Of course, we had to get the approval of the government of Korea. But we did all that, and so by the time we got on the plane and were a couple of hours out everything was set so that I could go.

I sat through the first day and a half of the ANZUS meeting -- it was basically over except for a dinner, and then I flew to Korea. That was a fascinating trip, because it was very high visibility, and I met with everybody, including a couple of hours with the President (that, some day, I will write up, but not yet), and with all of the others, with Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, still under house arrest, and with Cardinal Kim, who was the symbol of Christian religious opposition to a continuance of government by the military. Kim Dae Jung was under house arrest. Kim Young Sam was not, at that time; he had been let out.

I also met with people outside the government: the newspaper people, Cardinal Kim and some of the other religious leaders and so forth, and tried to get a feel. I must say, everybody was deeply concerned about what was happening, and they were delighted, all of them, I think, with my visit.

President Reagan gave me full support. He was asked by one of the newsmen -- I don't think he had a press conference -- about "this trip by Sigur over there", and he said, "Well, he has got my full confidence and he is doing what has to be done. I am not going to say any more than that." And that was great. The Philippine precedent, when we forced Marcos out, was very much on the minds of everybody, and it was on the minds of all the Koreans. There was no question about that; everybody thought about that. And everybody knew, obviously, that I had played a role in the Philippine situation.

I remember thinking about that, after Korea, when I went back to the Philippines. When I was in a meeting with President Aquino, and I stepped out, General Ramos was there in the foyer waiting to see her. So I went up and shook his hand, and he said, "Aha, so Mr. Democracy has come to the Philippines again. Now what is your advice this time?" So you sort of had a cloak put over you when you were done.

In any event, the Philippines was very much on everybody's mind, but it was a different situation, of course. It was quite different -- quite different. After all, there were so many things that were different, not least of all was the tremendous economic prosperity in Korea, which was evident all over the place. Nobody wanted to upset that. That was one of the big things, of course. It was very interesting; nobody wanted to upset that. They were worried about that and concerned about the possibility of upsetting that. And, of course, one of the other big things was the Olympics. The 1988 Olympics was Korea's chance to shine. It was coming on, and nobody wanted to upset that. So you had some good things going for you, if you could just get over that very difficult time. I think it was very important that the United States make its position clear.

As I left Seoul, I had an interview at the airport with the press. And I remember this one American correspondent (ABC I think he was) said to me, "Is there any doubt in the minds of the Korean authorities, including President Chun and the military leadership, of what the United States would like to see here?"

And I said, "Let me make one thing crystal clear, as I made it to them: the United States absolutely opposes the use of military force in these circumstances. We see no reason for it. We could never condone it. We would always oppose it."

After that, the opposition people told me that that statement had more impact on many Koreans than any single thing. So many people remembered Kwangju in 1980 and what they regarded as American ambiguity about the use of military force there by Chun. I wanted to be absolutely certain that no one could charge the U.S. with ambiguity on this occasion. The memory of Kwangju was very much alive, very much alive. We had to be absolutely ironclad that there was not a shadow of a doubt that we would oppose the use of military force. It had to be said, and it had to be said publicly as well as privately. I think some people back here may not have been too happy with that statement of mine. But nonetheless I felt, given the circumstances in Korea and given the way I thought Roh Tae Woo was going to move, that I had to make that comment. Two days after my return to Washington, Roh Tae Woo issued his tremendous change in policy. He turned around and accepted everything that the pro-democracy people wanted. But, see, I suspected that something dramatic was coming. So the American position had to be made crystal

clear.

The Korean military had to understand where we and they stood. We never knew for sure what their views were. Certainly there were elements in the Korean military who were very disturbed about what was going on in Korea, and who wanted to step in and crush it. There was no question about that. We knew that and we understood that. And we had to make it absolutely plain. That is why, as I say, when Shultz and I talked about it, it was decided that I would go as the President's personal emissary to Seoul. That is why I had to speak in that capacity, clearly representing the President.

I think that the US government, including the hard-liners, had learned a lesson from the Philippines and that there was agreement to get ahead of a popular movement that seemed to be taking place in Korea rather than trying to keep the status quo. I do believe that even more fundamentally, there was an acceptance in Washington that security and democracy go hand in hand; i.e. that you can better fulfill your security obligations if you give the people a part of the political decision-making process. This is a lesson that we had not taken into consideration for a long time in our policy. For many years we tended to side basically with military rule, because we were concerned about Communism. But the situation was changing in the world; it wasn't just us. Although the new approach makes sense now, it did not always make sense. Certainly the "hard line" attitude was still around. But anyway, we sort of took the bull by the horns and we acted -- at least in words. I think it was very necessary to do. And I think if you look at what has happened in Korea, we can be very pleased by the way things have moved. I think the position of the United States is, as a result, considerably enhanced.

North Korea was always a specter. We were very disturbed about that country. We were particularly concerned about what they might do to upset things in South Korea during the changeover of power from Chun to a civilian government. This was something that was of great concern to us. We were also very much concerned about the Olympics and the possibility of the North trying to upset the games.

So during this time of crisis in South Korea, we made it as clear as we could to the North that any efforts on their part to try to take advantage of disturbances in the South would lead to American reaction. And we made this clear to the Soviet Union and to China, and urged them to make this clear to their North Korean clients, so that they wouldn't misunderstand here, that the United States would not sit by.

So we were concerned, we were worried, and we watched the situation very carefully, in terms of troop movements and things of that sort; everything we could find out. But I don't think the North had any doubts, because we were determined. I think they realized that President Reagan was not somebody they could fool around with on something like that, and that he would react. So I think we did what we could to keep the North at bay during this period. As I said, it worked.

I am not saying that the United States was the mover and shaker in all this; it was the Koreans themselves. They are the ones who did it. They are the ones who took the steps. They are the ones who accomplished all of this. We acted in the role that we would like to act -- as the outside honest broker, saying: "We will give you support and we will give you our military might, but at

the same time, straighten up your own house. We are not going to keep a small group in power.” I think that was exactly what we should have done, and that is what we did.

JOHN M. REID
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Seoul (1986-1990)

Mr. Reid, a Virginian, was educated at Virginia Tech, Columbia and Harvard Universities. A specialist in East Asian and Pacific Affairs, he served in Saigon, Vientiane, Bangkok and Seoul, primarily as Public Affairs Officer. In his Washington assignments, Mr. Reid also dealt with affairs of that region. He was also assigned as Public Affairs Officer at Beirut during the Lebanon Civil War, and was a casualty in the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut. Mr. Reid was interviewed by Charles R. Beecham in 2002.

REID: The only other viable opening in the area was Korea. I had been to Korea and liked what I'd seen, although I knew there were some tremendous problems there. Again, though, I really didn't know what I was getting myself into. That seemed to happen to me a lot.

I have always thought it very important to know the language of the country where I was assigned. Korean is a very difficult language, even more difficult than Arabic, I discovered. Normally, at FSI, it was a two-year program, the first year in Washington and the second in Seoul. USIA didn't want to give me the full two years, so the compromise was that I would do six months in Washington and go out to Seoul for the rest of the year.

I really worked at Korean for the six months in Washington and then packed my things and went out to Korea. When I got there, my predecessor, Bernie Lavin, greeted me with the news that he was leaving post early because his wife was sick. He said that he had already discussed the problem with Dixie Walker, the ambassador, and he and the ambassador had agreed that I would cut short my language study by three months and move directly into the job. Unfortunately while they may have agreed on this, I wasn't particularly pleased with it; I felt I had a commitment from USIA on language study, and I had always considered language ability very important for the job. When I tried to insist on getting the full year, a real confrontation developed between Walker and myself. At one point, Walker called me into his office and showed me a cable he had drafted to send to Wick, saying, I don't want this guy, send somebody else. I told him that I didn't care whether he sent the cable or not, but, if he sent it, he would be making a big mistake. I said, you have some serious problems in this country, and I can help you deal with them. I will be happy to stay here and work for you, and I can do some things that will make this a lot better for you, but, if you don't want me, I can be on an airplane tomorrow.

Anyhow, he backed down, and the thing got sorted out, as I knew it would, with me having to cut short full-time language study and move into the job. At one point, though, Walker said to me, "You will never learn Korean. You don't need it. When you go someplace, your FSNs will go along to manage the Korean for you." I wasn't about to let that one pass. Francis Park, the

director of the language school in Seoul, was very sympathetic and very good about setting me up with materials, and, for the next four years, Kim Young-baik, probably the best instructor at the school, met me every morning in my office for an hour beginning at seven o'clock. I would then study a bit throughout the day—ten minutes waiting at red lights or waiting in somebody's office, for example—and work on it whenever I could. When I left Korea, I could read newspapers, follow conversations at our meetings with students, and I scored three, three-plus.

Q: What did you mean when you told the ambassador that he had problems and you could help him solve them?

REID: Walker had strong opinions, and he didn't care who heard him articulate them. After he was nominated for the job in Korea, when he was still back in the U.S., a Korean journalist asked him, on the record, what he thought about Korean student protesters, and he referred to them as "a bunch of spoiled brats." He never lived that one down. Walker's contacts seemed to be senior government and establishment people. He didn't like the students, he didn't like journalists, and he didn't even want to be seen with Kim Dae-jung, one of the two major opposition politicians. I knew that, if I could get a handle on his public appearances, write his speeches, manage his media exposure, I could do him some good. Also, anti-Americanism had become a major problem in Korea. About six months before I got there, students had broken into and occupied the USIS library in Seoul, demanding that the U.S. apologize for the Kwangju incident in 1980. Younger Koreans were demonstrating against us, and older Koreans seemed embarrassed by the whole thing. The Korean media reported everything we did to support the government of Chun Doo-hwan, who had come to power in a military coup, and everything the Chun regime did to fix us with responsibility for the Kwangju incident. At the same time, they were beating us up over trade issues and demands for market access. We had always taken for granted Korean gratitude for our role in the Korean War, for our security commitment and for all we did to help them recover after the war. The anti-Americanism seemed to take everybody by surprise. Ambassador Walker appeared to have other priorities, and nobody else seemed to know how to address it.

Q: What about the rest of the embassy staff? Were they just letting the ambassador do what he wanted to do?

REID: Walker could be truly intimidating. Also, within the State Department, I think there is almost a cult of loyalty to the ambassador, the President's sovereign representative. You can advise him, but you don't cross him. When I had the disagreement with Walker over language study, the political counselor, Harry Dunlop, was involved, and he told me bluntly that I was out of line.

Well, overseas, my first loyalty has always been to my ambassador, and, even if you don't like the guy, and you think he is dead wrong, you do the best you can for him. I was able to manage Walker's exposure, to some extent, to write his speeches and statements, some of which I think he liked, and to keep journalists away from him, which I know he liked. There were still surprises. I remember once reading in the papers that he had gone down to Cheju, a big island off the south coast of Korea, and given a speech to some people he knew down there. I didn't even know he'd left town. Walker was there for about a year after I took over as PAO. I don't think he ever liked me, but I think he finally realized that I could do useful things for him.

I remember that, sometime during this year, Flora Lewis came to Korea, and she picked up on Walker and his problem right away. She invited me for coffee or lunch, and she really gave me a going over. It was off-the-record, but some of her questions and observations made me very uncomfortable. She was concerned about what was happening in Korea, and she didn't think the embassy was responding. Finally, she gave me some good advice, like trying to get a better handle on what the embassy was saying and trying to get some focus on what was happening in Korea.

Once Harry Dunlop saw what I was trying to do, what I could do, we became very good friends. Harry confided to me that he was very concerned about how things were going for us in Korea. We had major interests there. This was not so long ago, but we saw China and the Soviet Union as major security threats in North Asia. North Korea was a dangerous, secretive, aggressive and highly militarized country, and we had 43,000 troops stationed in the Republic of Korea. Korea had become a major trading partner, and Koreans resented our demands for free access to Korean markets. Chun's military dictatorship was extremely unpopular, and Koreans accused us of supporting it. Jim Matray once made a very insightful observation to me: When we accepted the Japanese surrender in Korea in 1945, Koreans held us responsible for everything that happened in Korea after that. Our troop presence in Korea, especially the U.S. headquarters on a former Japanese base in the center of Seoul, reinforced that view. We were beating on Koreans to take cheap American beef and cigarettes, instead of nutritious and tasty Korean products, and this was seen as a threat to the livelihood of poor, toiling relatives back on the farm, one more example of our insensitivity, arrogance and selfishness. At the same time, radical students, chanting slogans about American imperialism and Kim Il-sung's paradise in the north, were taking to the streets to oppose an unpopular dictatorship which people thought we were supporting. Middle-class Koreans and intellectuals were beginning to think the students might have a point.

Harry and his staff wrote four cables, to which I contributed. The first three cables analyzed the causes and nature of anti-Americanism in Korea, and the final outlined an aggressive mission plan to address it. The cable concluded, as I recall, with about 14 specific actions, and almost all of these involved USIS.

One of the first things we did was try to define the problem. We commissioned some research which showed us that liking for the United States was even less than we had assumed and that, central to this, was the perception of U.S. support for the Chun regime. We found that we were even less popular in southwestern Korea and in Kwangju, where the 1980 massacre occurred.

We also asked USIA for a research project to determine what Korean school textbooks said about the United States. USIA recruited Stephen Linton of Columbia University to do the study. Linton's conclusion was a little startling. He said that the important issue wasn't the little that students were taught about the U.S., however negative. It was what they were taught about Korea, a very ethnocentric view with the idea that all of Korea's problems resulted from external rather than internal forces. It was a view of Korea as an ideal, Confucian, paternalistic society, where collective welfare was the supreme value and which had been corrupted and degraded by years of foreign encroachment.

Central to what we said in our cable was the idea that we—the U.S. mission—had to be seen as more open, more accessible and more willing to engage a broad community of Koreans, not just those with whom the embassy usually dealt. We had been seen as aloof, and we had to communicate at least the perception that we were more open and more willing to take Korean views into account.

We started doing a series of regular evening meetings with students, with younger journalists, with academics and with younger dissident politicians. Sometimes I would host these, sometimes Harry would do it, and sometimes we could get someone else in the embassy to do it. The Koreans would ventilate, and we would respond. We'd serve drinks, and sometimes the Koreans would be very emotional and confrontational, and, for us, going through something like this after a full work day, was exhausting business, especially when we did it a couple of times a week. When I went to visit our branch PAOs—in Taegu, Pusan and Kwangju—they would set me up for the same thing—the big guy from the embassy coming down to talk to the local folks. We produced a briefing book, which we regularly updated, giving the questions the Koreans asked most frequently and suggesting the best answers.

At USIS, one of my senior Korean colleagues was Park Seung-tak, who had earned his own journalist's credentials during the Korean War. Very soon after I took over as PAO, Park Seung-tak got me personally involved with an interesting group that met over drinks and dinner in a local Chinese restaurant every couple of weeks. Most of them were well-regarded Korean journalists who had gotten into serious trouble with the Chun regime. Almost all of them had lost their jobs as a consequence of government pressure on their publishers after they refused to toe the official line. Some of them got by as free-lancers, and USIS occasionally helped out with translation jobs. They weren't all journalists. One of the group, Nam Jae-hee, was a government-party politician, but he was very moderate, very unhappy with some of the things the government was doing and very good about keeping open lines to the opposition. Another of the group, Han Hwa-gap, was a principal assistant to Kim Dae-jung, leader of one of the two major opposition parties, and, under the Chun regime, Han Hwa-gap's position had earned him some time in jail. Conversation at our sessions was pretty candid, and I was regularly asked to explain the U.S. position on one issue or another. For some of these people, USIS was an extremely important source of information. We would regularly pass them whatever we could get for them, particularly Wireless File playback of U.S. media reports on Korea and U.S. editorial commentary on Korea and Korean-U.S. relations. The government controlled information from overseas very effectively; there was no Worldwide Web in those days, and, for these people, USIS was the only place where they could find this information. I sometimes thought that Han Hwa-gap practically lived in our information section. It is interesting what happened to many of the people in this group after Chun left the scene and Korea became a more open country. Several of the journalists started successful publications or moved back into main-stream journalism as important columnists. Nam Jae-hee became a cabinet minister in the government of Roh Tae-woo. When Kim Dae-jung became president, Han Hwa-gap became parliamentary floor leader for the ruling party, and, after Kim Dae-jung resigned the party leadership, he became head of the party. I saw him a few months ago in Korea, and he is still outspoken in his gratitude for USIS support during his lean years.

Social life in Korea was pretty intense. It was quite common for people to meet for drinks after

work, and, being single, I could take the time to be with American studies people, journalists and other people important to us. It paid off. If we had a media problem, I pretty much had instant access, and I could almost always find someone to help us sort things out. During the 1988 Seoul Olympics, we ran into one particularly intense period of U.S.-bashing, and Nick Mele, Park Seung-tak and I spent one whole Saturday going from one newspaper office to another, schmoozing with editors and discussing how we might calm things down a bit.

On another occasion, Ambassador Lilley gave an off-the-record interview to a U.S. journalist who violated ground rules and attributed some very troublesome remarks to Lilley in his syndicated column. One of the Korean papers, JoongAng Ilbo, had a Washington correspondent who picked this up from the Baltimore Sun and reported it back to Korea. When the report appeared in JoongAng Ilbo, very distorted, we got to the editor right away and negotiated an arrangement for a clarifying piece under Lilley's byline. The piece ran with some favorable editorial back-up, and we came out looking pretty good.

When we dealt with hostile media, my principal rule was, you can take them on publicly over the facts, but you don't want to get into public arguments over their opinions. If you can prove they have it wrong, you can force them to back down. If you didn't agree with what they think, it is much better handled informally. Occasionally, I would have a little trouble over this with embassy colleagues who didn't appreciate that if you don't escalate these things into public confrontation, they will generally die of their own accord.

We started—and this idea came from Carl Chan, our assistant information officer—a student newspaper, Sisa Nonpyong. This one took a lot of planning and work. We decided to do the thing mostly in hangul, the Korean phonetic script, with very few Chinese characters. The format was pretty austere, with no photos. We got some help from USIA with commissioned pieces from U.S. writers who were knowledgeable about Korean issues, and we did some of the writing ourselves. The subjects included a whole range of problems the students like to argue about: U.S. trade policy, tobacco imports, the Kwangju incident, an uprising in Cheju that had occurred during the U.S. occupation, the U.S. and Soviet roles in the division of Korea and so on. Later, when we started doing telephone hook-ups with people in the U.S. talking directly to Korean groups, we sometimes included transcripts of these, and when we started getting some good speakers, we included reports on what they had to say. One of the best features was a letters-to-the-editor column, which attracted some very provocative correspondence. I think we did something like 200,000 copies of this thing, not nearly enough to reach an entire Korean student population amounting to millions, but the thing was out there, and people knew it was out there. Some of our academic contacts helped us place it. We knew that some of the copies were trashed, but some were read, and there was feedback.

I mentioned the phone hook-ups, and we did a lot of these. USIA had a small staff working on this—unlike the staff and resources devoted to interactive television. These people in USIA were remarkably resourceful in tracking down Americans who could address our issues—including some who had actually participated in the American occupation and the Korean War. We would usually have about a dozen people—students, academics or journalists—on our end of the hook-up, and the sessions would sometimes run for as long as an hour. Essentially, the cost was the phone bill, which was insignificant compared to the cost of a satellite video feed. It was a very

economical and effective program.

In our meetings with students and dissidents, one of the things we kept running into was references to a book, Origins of the Korean War, by a University of Washington professor, Bruce Cumings. Cumings had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Korea, he knew Korean, and he could cite Korean sources. His book was long and very difficult, but it was meticulously researched, and the research made it credible and persuasive. Cumings concluded, essentially, that the United States had connived in the partition of Korea to incorporate Korea into a system aimed at opposing Soviet and Chinese expansionism. This argument, advanced by an American scholar no less, was meat and drink to people looking for someone to blame for their problems.

We found another author, James Matray, who wrote a book called The Reluctant Crusade, which analyzed U.S. policy toward Korea during roughly the same period covered by Cumings. Matray's conclusions, however, were very different from those of Cumings. Matray's conclusions were often critical—that our policies were sometimes uninformed, misguided, poorly implemented—but they were sound and persuasive, and they gave us some credit for good intentions. We enlisted the help of USIA in bringing Matray out to Korea to talk to some of our audiences. I am not sure how many people he disabused of Cumings' interpretation, but I am certain that he persuaded some people that there is more than one way of looking at a problem. Furthermore, his presentations formed the basis of some good guidance we could use in our own discussions.

When Walker left, he was succeeded by Jim Lilley. Ambassador Lilley was a former CIA man, a Republican political appointee in the first Bush administration. I think he was an exceptional ambassador and just the man needed in Korea at that time. He agreed with our analysis of what was happening in Korea, that we were seeing an intersection of radical ideology espoused by the activists and general, more pervasive dissatisfaction with the Chun regime. He also agreed with what we were trying to do about it. That was certainly sufficient reason for me to like him, but there was more. He was careful, thoughtful and willing to take some risks. Immediately, he began putting some distance between himself—between us—and the Chun Doo-hwan establishment. He began talking to leading dissidents and opposition politicians. He engaged himself actively in what we did. Sometimes, we'd be meeting with 20 or 30 students in my living room, and Lilley would drop by for half an hour or so, put in a cameo and take a few tough questions.

Lilley was the first ambassador to go down to Kwangju, since the 1980 massacre, and to meet with dissidents there. It was a very tense, confrontational session. Some of the Koreans there had lost relatives and family members in 1980.

When Harry Dunlop left, he was succeeded as political counselor by Chuck Kartman. Chuck was a very different person from Harry, but his view of what needed to be done was no different from mine. I liked Chuck. He was younger and even less patient than I, quite ambitious, and he could be very confrontational. He was smart, well organized, decisive and intellectually honest, however. I enjoyed working with him. He was tremendously helpful to us when the radicals forced a temporary closure of our branch in Kwangju, and I credit Chuck with one of the most effective things we did while I was in Korea.

Perhaps the central theme in the dissident complaint against the United States was a view of our role in the 1980 Kwangju incident. This view was actively encouraged by the Chun regime to deflect criticism from themselves. There had been a lot of confusion about the Kwangju incident, principally arising from some deliberate distortion on the part of the Korean government, and most of the distortion centered on the command relationship between U.S. and Korean forces in Korea, which was poorly understood. There was—and probably still is—a Joint Forces Command, headed by an American general with a Korean deputy. The command existed only to deter external threat to the Republic of Korea. For this purpose, the Korean government assigned designated units to operational control of the command, but, like the U.S., it retained what was called sovereign command authority over its own people. What this meant was that the Koreans could notify the American commander and then withdraw their units whenever they pleased.

In 1980, Chun Doo-hwan was in the process of consolidating an illegitimate coup. He had declared himself acting director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, and this precipitated demonstrations throughout the country, in Seoul, Kwangju and elsewhere. Chun responded by declaring martial law, which provoked even more demonstrations, and, in Kwangju, troops moved in, injuring and killing some people. There was a violent reaction, with up to 100,000 people in the Kwangju streets, burning radio stations and seizing arms and military stockpiles. After police sided with the demonstrators, the troops withdrew. Then, other units moved back in and conducted a very brutal crackdown. It was a very bloody, nasty business, and, while there are all sorts of assertions of how many people were killed or who simply disappeared, there were at least several hundred.

Our problem was that, before the troops went back into Kwangju, the Koreans approached U.S. Ambassador William Gleysteen and General Wickham, the U.S. commander and asked permission to move specific units into the city. Gleysteen either concurred or said he did not object. In fact, the units the Koreans used to do the work had not been under Wickham's operational control, and our approval or concurrence was irrelevant. Nevertheless, the Korean authorities did everything they could to make people think that we had approved what happened, even the killing. They had set us up, and we couldn't shake it.

Since the Kwangju incident had assumed such major importance in the radical criticism of the United States, Lilley, Kartman and I agreed that we had to do something about it. One of Chuck's political section colleagues was a young officer, Lynn Turk, whom Chuck assigned to the project. Over a period of several months, Lynn worked with the State Department historian's office to produce a definitive, official account of the Kwangju incident from our point of view. I reviewed various drafts of the statement, as they appeared, but Lynn did the work. It was a very detailed, well-documented piece. USIS prepared the Korean translation, and our translators were sworn to secrecy. I think the statement, when we finally released it, was a bombshell. We distributed it to Korean media, published it in the student newspaper, sent it out to all our regular addressees and got it to everyone we could. Korean papers carried extensive excerpts, and Kim Dae-jung had it reproduced and distributed to his party membership. Ambassador Lilley consistently approved and encouraged what we were doing.

Q: How did all of this go down with more conservative Koreans?

REID: I think Chun and his people were highly displeased, since the paper was a major factor in focusing Korean anger away from us and back onto them, where it belonged. I don't think Chun and Lilley were ever very cordial, and I'm sure this made them even less so.

There was a great generational gap in Korea, between older Koreans who remembered the Korean War and younger, much more radical Koreans who did not. By the late 1980s, however, everyone had become so disenchanted and unhappy with the Chun regime that resentment and anger were pervasive. I think older, thoughtful Koreans understood that we were trying to distance ourselves from the Korean government, and perhaps the recognition that we were not supporting Chun and his friends may have encouraged political change. What happened after that was very encouraging. Korea has an elected president and has now had several peaceful transfers of power. And, in only one other Asian country I can think of, has a former president been jailed for corruption.

At one point, I was arranging for Lilley to have an on-the-record session with a rather large group of Korean journalists. We spent days preparing for the thing, going over questions and answers. At the appointed time, I met the journalists in front of the embassy and took them up to the conference room outside Lilley's office, on the top floor. I think they were a little awed. We sat around the table and they fired away. The questions were in Korean, with consecutive interpretation. The questions were tough and direct, but Lilley handled them beautifully. When we were leaving, one of the Koreans remarked to me, "No Korean official would have ever sat at a table with us and talked with us like that."

I should say just something about conditions when I was in Korea. It seemed that, every few months, one of our provincial centers would be attacked by the students. On one occasion, the Kwangju center was trashed, and some people were nearly killed. On another, our office in Seoul was attacked and set on fire, and some of our Korean employees were stoned as they were coming out on a fire escape. During the period of major anti-government demonstrations, whole sections of Seoul were under siege, and great clouds of tear gas drifted everywhere. There was a tremendous sense of unrelenting tension and confrontation and a feeling that trouble could erupt anytime, anywhere. I would wake up at three in the morning thinking about what might happen and what needed to be done. It was a tough situation and hard work, but I was lucky; I have never worked with a finer USIS staff. The Koreans on the staff were superb, totally loyal and sympathetic to what we were doing. Some became friends, and a Korean friend is a friend for life. The USIS Americans were the best USIS American staff I have ever seen anywhere—Nick Mele, Bill Maurer, Jack Sears, Susan Metcalf, Carl Chan, Judith Futch, Donna Welton, Gerald McLoughlin, Don Q. Washington, just to name a few of them. They were brilliant and creative, and they worked their butts off. We worked well—worked as members of the same team—with our embassy colleagues. Jim Lilley was a great ambassador, and Don Greg, when he came, understood what we were doing and supported it. We had good support from Washington. Hal Morton was area director, and I know I sometimes caused him a lot of grief, but he stood by me. We sometimes got into terrible confrontations with Koreans, the journalists particularly, but we had a lot of friends out there, and, when all the hissing and shouting was over, we could sit down and have a few drinks. Korea is a place where USIS made a real difference, and I am very proud of what we did there.

When I go back to Korea now, I have a great time. Korea has opened up and become part of the world. Koreans are self-confident and cosmopolitan. Korea is a crowded country, but Koreans are better-housed than the Japanese. Korea's cities are modern, clean and efficient, yet the Koreans are probably doing a better job of preserving their heritage than any country in Asia. For a people who have suffered an unspeakably miserable history and who have no significant natural resources, what the Koreans have done is amazing.

ALOYSIUS M. O'NEILL
Political Officer
Seoul (1988-1992)

Mr. O'Neil was born in South Carolina and raised there and in other states in the U.S. He was educated at the University of Delaware and Heidelberg University. After serving in the US Army in Vietnam, Mr. O'Neill joined the Foreign Service in 1976 and was posted to Korea. He subsequently served three tours in Japan as student of Japanese and Consular and Political Officer. He also served in Burma, Korea and the Philippines as well as in Washington, where he dealt primarily with East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Mr. O'Neill was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: July of '88. Okay, now we're going to be talking about Korea.

O'NEILL: It was almost five weeks to the day between leaving Rangoon and arriving in Seoul. In between that we had a short home leave. We also stopped in Tokyo to see my predecessor in the Seoul job, John Miller who had been in his new job for quite a while. There was a gap of at least a month between his departure from Seoul and my arrival, a month gap being unfortunately typical.

I was going to one of the best jobs in Embassy Seoul. In the political section I was going to be the chief of the external branch, which covered Korean foreign relations and North Korea-South Korea affairs. The other two branches were political military which, of course, dealt with the U.S. forces and the ROK officials who worked on the U.S.-Korea alliance and the treaty and the SOFA — Status of Force Agreement — etc. The third branch was the internal political branch which at that time was quite lively because of all the domestic unrest that still continued even though they had a democratically elected government by that time. Roh Tae-Woo was the president, a former general to be sure, but he had been elected in a free and fair election in 1987.

Upon arrival at Kimpo Airport, we immediately went into the embassy to get our ID cards. In Korea you don't exist if you don't have an ID card, particularly living on the Yongsan Army Garrison as we were. My family then went to our little cottage on Yongsan, and I stayed in the embassy and worked the rest of the day.

As you may remember the summer of '88, 20 years ago, the Seoul Olympics were looming. The

1988 Olympics were seen by all Koreans as a big national coming-out ceremony, as 1964 had been for Tokyo and all of Japan. This was going to be Korea presenting itself to the outside world in a very spectacular fashion. One of my additional duties, which was pretty much all-consuming for the next month, was as the embassy's Olympic coordinator.

My predecessor, John Miller, had been for at least the previous two years the Olympic coordinator dealing with the ROK government entities and the Seoul Olympic organizing committee, and the U.S. government, all the various entities that were concerned about VIP visits, security and all the rest of it. Regrettably, the embassy did not designate an understudy for John who could take over that job when he left. The idea was that when I came in four weeks before the opening ceremonies, I would become the Olympic coordinator, which was not a great idea. It consumed a huge amount of my time when in terms of my regular work, Hungary was opening official relations at the chargé level — the first communist country to do so. That was the first fruit of President Roh Tae-Woo's very wise Nordpolitik or northern policy in which he was trying to open avenues to North Korea and also vigorously courting North Korea's communist allies to open relations with a very successful South Korea. So that was all going on at the time that I was immersing myself in all sorts of horrendous protocol details having to do with preparing for an impending presidential delegation to the Seoul Olympics.

Q: I'm really surprised that they didn't keep John Miller on for a month or two more.

O'NEILL: He was headed to Tokyo and to the political section. As you know with the Department's alleged personnel system, when your clock runs out you disappear and you reappear someplace else. Bizarre, but anyway, that added to my trials. The Olympics was on the macro level a huge triumph for South Korea. It did exactly what it was supposed to do. The Koreans worked in their usual industrious fashion and built the right kinds of stadiums and other venues, organized themselves, and put on a spectacular show.

There was a U.S. presidential delegation, but that sounds much more unified than this group was. The head of the delegation was the estimable and fabled Vernon Walters who at the time was U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Walters was separately being invited by the Koreans anyway because of his long association with Korea and was coming on his own USAF airplane for the opening ceremonies. He and his group were totally professional and easy to deal with.

The real problem was the rest of the presidential delegation which was coming mostly on one VC-135 VIP airplane from Andrews, but there were others coming separately as well: one was the counselor of the State Department, Edward Derwinski, a former Republican congressman from Chicago. His wife was coming even separately from him. The group was a varied collection of people including some who had Olympic connections. One was a Korean-American who had won a gold medal in Los Angeles in 1948 as a diver.

Q: Yes, I remember him.

O'NEILL: Dr. Sammy Lee. He had been among other things Greg Louganis's diving coach. Louganis was going to be a big star in Seoul. There was a woman who won a swimming gold medal in the '64 Tokyo Olympics. Others were political figures who didn't want or didn't get

political jobs in the Republican administration at the time, including one who was the CEO of a big headhunting firm. These people all were coming in one flight but soon wanted to scatter to the winds.

Each one of them thought they were important enough to have their own schedules. Trying to keep track of all of these characters was really a major problem. Ambassador Jim Lilley had to get involved in corralling them at one point and listening to all their complaints about the way the embassy wasn't catering to their every single whim every second of the day. He had a breakfast for the group of them at the Residence. At the breakfast, Ed Derwinski, counselor of the Department, was accusing the Ambassador and the embassy of being against the Seoul Olympics from the start. As best Ambassador Lilley and I could figure out, he meant that the embassy had been accurately reporting the repression of the Chun Doo-Hwan government over the years before it was replaced by the more democratic government of Roh Tae-Woo. Derwinski, who was of a conservative persuasion, was incensed at this, in effect angry that the Embassy had been doing its job on the political front.

The Olympic Games, aside from being a great triumph for Korea both in terms of organization and of the face that Korea put to the world was, as far as I was concerned, also a festival of anti-Americanism. That's my most lasting memory of the Seoul Olympics. The Koreans were so on edge and so intent to ensure that everything went perfectly that anything involving Americans that didn't go perfectly really set them off. This included the opening ceremony. The American team was waving to the crowds and cheering, and some of them were wearing Mickey Mouse ears and things like this as young, happy, naive Americans traveling abroad probably for the first time would normally do. This greatly offended the Korean news media who decided that this was not decorous enough and respectful enough of Korea for their sensibilities, and they began blasting the American team for that breach of decorum.

We had another incident... I don't want to belabor this too much....

Q: No, I think it's well to capture the flavor.

O'NEILL: It was *really* flavorful! One of the first American gold medals was won by a men's swimming relay team, and those young guys went that evening to the Hyatt Hotel and had a number of drinks, I'm sure, in the bar. They walked out of the bar with a plaster lion's head that had been hanging on the wall. They just picked it up. It wasn't something, as far as I know, that you could stick in your pocket, so it was pretty obvious that they were doing it. Rather than just approaching these tipsy or drunken young men who had just won a gold medal and said, "Give us our lion head back," the Korean staff of the Hyatt went to the police about this "theft." The police lost no time in going to their eager media contacts about this gigantic crime. From the media outcry, you would have thought that these swimmers had burned down the presidential mansion, the Blue House.

The outrage was unbelievable. I was, as I often was, in the embassy that Saturday afternoon. The incident was on a Friday night, and I was in the embassy all day Saturday, and the phones were almost literally ringing off the hook, with outraged Koreans calling. The poor embassy operators were just beside themselves trying to field the calls. I remember talking to one man who was just

furious. “How could they do this??? How could they possibly steal something?” I said, “They were drunk.” He said, “What???” I said, “They were drunk. He said, “Oh.” And he hung up. It’s safe to say that Koreans understood the concept of doing outrageous things while drunk.

This whole thing, this hysteria, was fanned by the Korean news media. NBC Sports had the broadcast rights for the Olympics. They did a masterful job of broadcasting. Also as part of their programming they had prepared a number of really good...what would you call them?...spots or vignettes showcasing different things about Korea’s industrial might and the economic progress of the country, the palaces of Seoul, the history of Korea, things on the Korean War. Some of my relatives wrote me how much they learned about Korea from this fantastic coverage that NBC Sports was giving the country.

However, there was at least one spot about black marketing and prostitution particularly around the U.S. military bases, a not unknown phenomenon, shall we say. Again, the Koreans were not in the mood for any kind of accuracy or balance. What they wanted was laudatory treatment. If you gave 90% praise and 10% pointing out some warts, all they could think about was, “You were focusing on warts, and that’s rude.” Again, this set them off. There was a case where a Korean boxer had a match called against him. I believe the other boxer was an American, but the New Zealand referee called the match against the Korean. In response, that sportsman sat down in the ring and would not move. Every so often as NBC Sports was reporting on other events here and there, track and field and whatever else happened to be going on, they would occasionally go back and show this boxer still sitting there in the ring.

Q: I recall that!

O’NEILL: Again, Koreans were outraged that the Americans news media were humiliating Korea by showing this jerk sitting on his backside in the ring. No mention of the poor sportsmanship of the Korean boxer who had legitimately had a call against him. In fact, either in this match or in another boxing match that went against a Korean, his ringside staff and the Korean security people assaulted the referee.

Throughout, you had cheers for Soviet athletes and boos for American athletes with few exceptions. When Flo-Jo won everybody cheered. I happened to have been there at the track and field semi-finals, where she starred. Otherwise, it was a very grim period for Americans in Korea and the grimness lasted after the games, too. It really ground down a lot of people in the embassy.

Q: You’re pointing out things we faced together, the Korean attitude that if you’re at the mid-level and you’re told by your boss to go out and get something done, maybe getting a visa or something like that. They couldn’t take no for an answer. The pressure on Korean people was huge. I assume it probably felt that way to the boxing staff as well.

O’NEILL: That’s very true. It may have been that idea that orders are orders, and the boss told me to do this, so no matter what, I’ve got to do it. Maybe that eroded somewhat over time. I think it has, but certainly it was very intense during the time that you and I were in Korea. It was very much a product of the strong Confucian ethic in which every Korean is inculcated from

birth in that very hierarchical society. Democratization certainly at that point had not changed that a bit. Your boss tells you to do something, and you've got to do it no matter what. If you keep pounding at somebody long enough, that person will do what you want.

Q: Could you tell me something about the care and feeding of that presidential delegation? Did you have any particular cases that stick in mind?

O'NEILL: Oh, the whole thing. All of them felt that they were a key part of this presidential delegation, therefore for each of them, whatever their whim was, we were supposed to cater to them. We worked very hard to achieve that but there was little recognition from the group. I repeat, though, that Ambassador Walters and his group were completely different – total professionals.

One example was related to me by Ambassador Lilley who was a great leader during the whole thing. He knew I was doing my job, and he was supporting me 100%, which was a great relief. He told me, and I won't name the swimmer who got the gold medal in Tokyo '64, but there was a dinner at the Blue Palace, the presidential mansion, hosted by President Roh for people related to the Olympics. She was incensed to find out that she was not invited. She complained to Ambassador Lilley, and he said to me more or less these words: "What am I supposed to tell her? The Soviet minister of sports was not invited either." This gives you an idea of the towering egos that were packed on that one airplane. Anyway, it was a difficult juggling match because we were trying to cater to them to the extent that we possibly could.

There were security concerns. Nobody knew what the North Koreans were going to do. The North Koreans had tried mightily to get the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to split events between before awarding the Olympics to Seoul. Thereafter, the North Koreans were trying to get the IOC to award certain events to Pyongyang which the IOC was just not going to do. Remember that the North Koreans in November of 1987, while I was still in Rangoon, blew up a South Korean airliner, KAL 858, south of Rangoon in the Andaman Sea. Almost certainly this was on orders of Kim Jong-Il, apparently with the idea that this was going to be one of a series of attacks aimed at discouraging countries from going to the Olympics and otherwise putting a blight on South Korea's success. A small bomb exploded in the Taegu Airport at one point which forensic investigation indicated was a type used by North Koreans. So there was a very strong concern about security not so much about Islamic radicals although this was not too many years after the 1972 Palestinian outrage in Munich. So we had a lot of security related people there in Seoul working with the Koreans on a very broad basis.

The Olympics aside from being an enormously successful sporting event, was indeed a showcase for Korea. The Koreans did a masterly job of building the venues that they needed, bringing athletes and visitors in, organizing everything, making sure that every event went smoothly, and that the opening and closing ceremonies were spectacular. The whole thing was fantastic and a great triumph for the Korean people.

But it was also tremendous on a political level. The North Koreans were just left in the dust. They were just about the only country that didn't send a team. I think maybe Cuba boycotted, but nobody else that I know of did. The Mongolians were there, the Soviets were there in a big way,

the Chinese, the Vietnamese, everybody else that you could think of was all there. This really became the coming-out ceremony that the Koreans wanted and deserved. They worked hard on a lot of levels including the political.

So with the Olympics out of the way after maybe the first month and a half, I was able to revert full time to my real work which was looking at the development of Korean foreign policy, particularly toward the Communist countries that were long-time allies of North Korea and the beginning of an opening of a parade of missions from the North's allies. The first, as I mentioned, was Hungary. There was also a lot of North-South activity.

Q: Before we get to that, could you tell me a bit about where stood Korea politically at the time you came?

O'NEILL: By this time Korea had held what was really the first democratic election in the Republic of Korea's history in December 1987 because nothing had happened under Syngman Rhee or anybody else to that point that could be called democratic. What had happened was historic and by chance we were in Seoul in June 1987 on leave from Rangoon. There had been waves of demonstrations, very widespread and not only the students and laborers who were the usual manpower for demonstrations for decades but the middle class was beginning to get drawn in, which was a really important signal.

There was an incident in June in which a Korean student was accidentally killed by getting hit in the head by a tear gas canister fired by riot police. The Korean riot police were not armed but they were also pretty tough. Their main weapon was what was called tear gas which was actually a powder, what the U.S. Army calls a riot control agent. It was like U.S. Army CS powder but it was also vastly more powerful than CS. There was a huge funeral procession for the student. The government tried to restrict it to a route along the Han River south of the main part of the city to the cemetery where he was going to be buried. The demonstration organizers insisted that the cortege be allowed to go through City Hall Plaza right downtown Seoul, a few blocks from the Blue House, the foreign ministry and the U.S. Embassy, right in the old heart of Seoul. Eventually government relented and showed a great deal of restraint.

My wife and son and I happened to have gotten caught up in this because we were trying to walk from where we were staying to the Myong-Dong area south City Hall Plaza. We wound up caught in this gigantic crowd which was totally peaceful. There were a few radical students who were spoiling for a fight which they later got. You could see them and identify them because of the way they were dressed. In general though, tens upon tens of thousands of people were in the City Hall Plaza area and in all the main streets around it, people standing on top of the office buildings, in every one of the office windows. The middle class, the office workers were out looking at all this. It was pretty spectacular.

Right after that demonstration, Roh Tae-Woo announced that the ruling party had decided essentially to adopt all of the major demands of the opposition for a direct presidential election, as opposed to the planned indirect one. On live TV, Roh read right down about 10 points that the opposition led by Kim Dae-jung and Kim Yong-Sam were promoting. Roh was the government party's candidate to replace the dictator Chun Doo-Hwan.

This was a spectacular turning point in Korean history, and we happened to be there on the spot. All the major newspapers had one page extras out on the street immediately, reporting Roh's complete about-face which set Korea on the path to a true democracy. He was running initially against Kim Yong-Sam, the long-time democracy activist who was leading the opposition party. Kim Dae-jung, who was not only a long-time dissident but also a bitter rival of Kim Yong-Sam, had promised Stephen Cardinal Kim, the archbishop of Seoul, that he would not run and split the progressive vote.

Well, he didn't mean it, and Kim Dae-jung just couldn't resist running, which split the opposition and put Roh Tae-woo into the Blue House as president of the Republic of Korea. Later in the spring of '88, there was a National Assembly election in which opposition candidates won the majority for the first time. So this was the Korea that I went to in August of 1988, an extraordinary situation and as far as the U.S. was concerned, was great, particularly for Americans who had been working in Korea in times past.

One of the reasons for the outburst of anti-Americanism in the Olympics and afterward was because Koreans who felt this way were freer to do so than they had been in the past. They were able to express their bottled up emotions at the way they saw America as being the friend of the dictators of Korea over the decades before this election. They tended to forget or did not know that we had been pushing behind the scenes all these decades to get the kind of electoral situation that they had now arrived at.

Anyway, there were happy and unhappy notes in all this Olympic business, but basically it was a tremendous move forward for Korea. At that time the Korean economy was largely booming. It was a really exhilarating and interesting time. As President Roh was reaching out to North Korea's allies, he was also reaching out to North Korea itself. There was a lot of activity including prime ministerial level talks, a whole series of them starting that fall as well. Delegations of senior South Koreans were going to Pyongyang and then senior North Koreans were coming south, in both cases headed by the prime ministers. This was a fascinating development all its own, at least in terms of atmosphere. It was also a development that contributed to a more realistic appraisal of North Korea, especially on the part of South Koreans who were somewhat left of the political center.

Obviously everything in North-South Korea affairs is incremental, and to say that you had two steps backward for every one step forward is probably an overstatement, and it usually was about four or five steps back for every one step forward. Nonetheless, there were some promising developments which continued to play out. Of course, while all this North-South business was going on, more and more of North Korea's allies followed Hungary's lead and opened missions at one level or another.

Q: When you say allies, I can't imagine anybody in Eastern Europe really having much to do with North Korea. It was sort of like the Albanians.

O'NEILL: Yes. It's sort of yes, but... These countries were not military allies. The Warsaw Pact was not an ally of the North Koreans, but those countries had been very supportive of North

Korea during and after the war. Countries like Hungary, Bulgaria, and others had for reasons of communist solidarity plus a reasonable amount of humanitarianism brought North Korean war orphans to their country to be schooled. The Poles and Hungarians ran hospitals in North Korea for quite a number of years in the immediate aftermath of the war. They did what they could to help reconstruct even though these countries weren't necessarily economic powerhouses either.

One of the fascinating things about this period in Seoul is that with the exception of the Polish embassy when it opened, almost all these embassies were staffed by diplomats who had long experience in North Korea. The first Hungarian diplomat in Seoul was Istvan Torsza. I spent a lot of time with all these diplomats over the next four years, and most of them were happy and relieved that their countries were back in the West, so to speak. That was a year before things really began to unravel in Eastern Europe with the unification of Germany, but they knew that the trend was going in the right way for them.

Istvan Torsza, who was relatively young, had spent six years in their embassy in Pyongyang. He told me a lot of interesting stories about life in Pyongyang. He said he and his wife had decided not to have children while they were in North Korea, but while they were in Seoul they had twins. I asked if that because of the poor health conditions in North Korea. He said that was a big part of it, but the other thing was that growing up in Hungary, they were being told that they were building socialism. He said, "When we got to North Korea, we said, 'This is not socialism.'" That was the big reason for not wanting to bring children into the North Korean environment.

Hungary's diplomatic opening produced a screaming outburst from North Korea as you can imagine, because I'm sure the North Koreans realized that this was just the tip of the iceberg. Hungary's move meant that essentially the game was over and everybody else in the Warsaw Pact and probably most of the Asian communist countries were going to follow suit at some point. It was made even more painful for the North Koreans in that Kim Pyong-II, the half brother of the Kim Jong-II, then still the crown prince of North Korea, had arrived that summer as the North Korean ambassador in Budapest.

There was no change in the threat level but the North Korean press directed their vituperation toward the Hungarians, such things as "taking blood soaked dollars from the hands of the traitor Roh Tae-Woo." Kim Pyong-II was immediately pulled out of Budapest and was sent to Bulgaria next. When Bulgaria opened a mission in Seoul soon thereafter, the half-brother ultimately went to Poland as ambassador. He's still there. He's spent a lot of time out of North Korea.

Q: To keep him out of the Dear Leader's hair.

O'NEILL: Exactly; keeping down any potential rivalry. They were sons of Kim Il-Sung by different mothers. Anyhow, that really started an amazing opening in South Korean diplomatic history, South Korea's history with the entire world for that matter. It was fascinating to be with them and to hear what it was really like for them as communist diplomats to deal with the North Koreans. It was not fun. It was very difficult for them. Some of the stories were almost comical, but others showed that the North Koreans didn't like anyone all that much including their great allies like the Chinese and the Russians. That was one of the great parts of my job.

For some reason or other, the Polish embassy was staffed by people who had not served in North Korea. The Polish ambassador, the first one, had been in exile in Australia in the aftermath of the crackdown on the Solidarity movement. Almost everybody else did have Pyongyang experience: the Bulgarian chargé, the Romanian and Hungarian ambassadors, most of the Soviet diplomats.

As part of that same vast tectonic shift in foreign relations in Asia, the South Koreans were opening embassies in all these places. I had the great fun of working with the South Korean foreign ministry as they were dispatching people to Moscow, Prague, Warsaw, etc., to begin the process of finding space for a chancery, places to live, etc. I was the person who was sending out cables to the various U.S. embassies, saying that such and such South Korean diplomats would be arriving, to prepare to open a mission.

Our embassies in all these places were universally and instantly helpful, and we would get immediate cables back saying, "Tell them to come see so-and-so in our embassy. And we'll help in every way we can." This sounds natural and to be expected as something that we would do for our South Korean allies. The weird thing was that all too many South Koreans believed that the United States was opposed to Roh's Nordpolitik, that we were opposed to their idea of opening to the North's allies.

No matter what we said or did to welcome these tremendous developments which were helpful to us, for that matter, and clearly aimed at reducing tension in Northeast Asia, the general belief among Koreans was because the Republic of Korea was moving closer to the Soviet Union, the United States must believe that we are moving farther away from the U.S. and, therefore, they do not like Nordpolitik. We tried, and tried, and kept saying every way we could that this was a great thing and proving it by the support we were giving. Eventually that feeling died out, but it died hard, which said more about South Korean thought processes than it did about the reality of U.S. policy.

One of the strangest examples of this occurred when a retired senior FSO who was with a think tank working on Asian affairs, was visiting to meet with the Korean national security advisor Kim Jong-Whi and many other officials. I was his control officer and had known him when he was still an FSO. This was Alan Romberg, at the Stimson Center now. Alan and I were going to lunch with a senior Korean diplomat who was well known as one of the top Americanists in the foreign ministry, who had been repeatedly in U.S. assignments, who had been director general for North American Affairs. We all knew him as a great friend of the United States and a very able diplomat.

Beforehand, as I was briefing Alan, I mentioned to him just in passing that many Koreans, including some who should know better, believe that we oppose Nordpolitik. I had no thought that at this very lunch, this very same friend of the U.S. was going to raise this with Alan. But this ambassador, who I will not name, said he believed the U.S. opposed the policy. Alan and I were pretty much taken aback.

Q: Do you have any idea of the Korean thought process?

O'NEILL: Basically that life is a zero-sum game. We were against the Soviet Union and the PRC and were against communism. Korea had been our great friend all these years, and for them — Korea — to move away, they just saw it as linear. If you're moving towards somebody, you're moving away from somebody else. They assumed that we had to believe that no matter how much practical help we were giving to them in setting up their new embassies and how much encouragement we were giving to the Korean government in all this, it was just taken as an article of faith.

Q: This was the time of the end of the Reagan administration, and Reagan and Gorbachev were getting very close together and were going through this real opening to at that time the Soviet Union. Was there a feeling that maybe South Korea wasn't as important to us anymore or not?

O'NEILL: I don't think it was so much that as it was because the South Korea trade with the United States was growing. We had a huge military presence still. It was very important to us. A lot of exercises going on; a tremendous amount of interaction of all kinds. It was just the idea of the zero-sum game, and I think they had to be ignoring what they saw between Reagan and Gorbachev in order to keep this belief alive.

Q: Okay, we'll stop at this point. And we'll pick this up. We just started talking about your time when you arrived to deal with foreign affairs, Korean external affairs. We were talking about the opening to various countries and the South Korean feeling that perhaps we were opposed to what was called the Nordpolitik.

O'NEILL: Yes, Nordpolitik. It was a takeoff on West German chancellor Willy Brandt's earlier Ostpolitik or Eastern Policy, the opening towards East Germany.

Q: We talked about this, but let's talk about the opening. First place, if you would when we start the next time, how did we view the press from the north? Was this diminished compared to what it was before? How did we feel about it and also talk about the various things because all hell was breaking loose on international relations during the time you were there or the next year in '89. Also, developments in Pyongyang and all that.

O'NEILL: It was a fascinating tour. I couldn't have asked for anything better.

Q: Okay. Today is 17th of October 2008, and this is interview number seven with Al O'Neill. Al, we just listened to the last thing, so we want to talk about... First, let's talk about the threat from the North as was seen when you got there, and then it changed. Then we'll start talking about the events of 1989 that revolutionary year the situation as Korea viewed it and how we felt about Korea's external relations.

O'NEILL: As I mentioned before, I arrived in August of 1988 exactly a month before the opening ceremony of the Olympics which also coincided with a couple of the developments that you're discussing. As Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, etc., and ultimately the Soviet Union itself were opening diplomatic relations with the South, there was no concomitant rush on the part of the South's long-time partners to open the relations with the North. There was nothing that matched what the South Koreans were doing. As you know, there was a decades-long,

diplomatic competition between the North and the South for recognition by newly independent countries.

The South Koreans were clearly in the lead, partly because of the record of diplomatic and international responsibility that they had established over the decades but also because they enormously increased economic prowess. All these things that had developed through the 1970s and into the '80s raised the ROK's diplomatic stature to levels that to all of us who had worked on Korea were hoping and working for. But it was just wonderful to be able to see.

In terms of the North Korean threat during this period, I'm trying to think if there was any major incident from 1988 to '92 that matched some earlier North Korean outrages including in November 1987 when they blew up a South Korean airliner just south of the Burma or things like the submarine incidents that occurred later in the '90s. There were always minor infiltrations of military intelligence people either by small boat or submarine. But I can't think of any major incident that ratcheted up the military tension.

Q: Okay, just quickly what was the southern position during this time? Obviously North Korea's a very difficult place to penetrate, but we have planes flying over, satellites. Was there anything that during this time we were looking at to see whether the North Korean military machine was getting geared up or getting geared down?

O'NEILL: To my recollection, no. From 1978, U.S. and Korean forces were together under the Combined Forces Command which had a U.S. four star commander and a Korean four star as the deputy. Those organizations were always looking at North Korea and there were, as they say, national technical means, of trying to look at certain things.

There was during this period a significant reassessment by U.S. military intelligence and DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, of the order of battle of North Korean forces, meaning the actual array of units. They began to look more closely at North Korea. Remember from 1980 to '88 in the Middle East there was the big Iran-Iraq War and I think a large number of U.S. intelligence assets of the national technical level were devoted to looking at that mess over those eight years.

As that war wound down, there were more intelligence assets available to look at the Korea situation. The consensus was the North Koreans were forming more units. Some of it may have been done by breaking up other units and adding in people, a cadre-type arrangement where you subdivide units amoeba-like, then build those new units up to strength with additional personnel. The DIA tended to do two things in this kind of analysis. One is to look at worst case scenarios as a matter of theology, I suppose you could say. The other is that they tend to emphasize capability far more than intentions, and especially in the case of North Korea, since nobody has any idea from one day to the next what their intentions are. This gave the "capability vs. intentions" school of analysis free rein to say, "Well, if they've got this many people and this many artillery pieces and this many tanks, then they could get to Japan within 20 minutes." So you could always count on the military intelligence side for the direst sort of predictions, but with no information to speak of regarding North Korean intentions.

There was also a tendency on the part of some people in U.S. Forces Korea that I met with to say, "Our South Korean forces are numerous and large, and they've got good equipment, but they're not very well organized. They don't train as hard as they should, and the training doesn't produce the results that we think that it should." On the other hand, many in USFK said the North Koreans had all this equipment and all these people, and all they have to do is lean forward and they're down among us. Certainly during this time there was a great consciousness of North Korean Special Operations Forces total of an alleged 100,000 men who would presumably infiltrate...

Q: Shock troops...

O'NEILL: ...shock troops or whatever you want to call them who would infiltrate in a war scenario partly by sea in small submersible or semi-submersible boats and in a vast array of these rather ancient-looking but still useful Antonov-2 biplanes which had a capacity maybe of 12, 14 soldiers each. The idea was that Antonov-2s could get under the radar and saturate northern South Korea with highly trained, highly motivated special operations troops. That was in rough sketch the military balance analysis.

Against this was a South Korea that was vastly more powerful economically than the North and which was opening relations right and left with all the North's longtime friends... Friend's too strong a word. Nominal allies were all the North Koreans had. One of the things that I learned from talking to so many of those diplomats from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union who had long experience with the North Koreans is that they were never friends. The North Koreans were obnoxious all the time, constantly causing these folks trouble, and there was no love lost at all between them.

In terms of a real military threat of an imminent attack during that period, I saw none. There was nothing there.

Q: Was there almost a tipping point or something, or had there been in terms of equipment? The North Koreans had a lot of equipment but it was of a certain Soviet era. It has not held up well against Western weaponry.

O'NEILL: No, it has not. Even in the late 1980s, the period that we're talking about the North Korean array of equipment was Soviet materiel of the early to mid 1950s: T-54, T-55 tanks, similar vintage armored personnel carriers, etc. Their aircraft with very few exceptions were of a similar era, MIG-21's, MIG-17's, and MIG-15's, some stuff going back to the Korean War. Their pilots couldn't train nearly as much as the South Korean and American pilots would train. I don't think an American fighter pilot could even retain flight status if he flew as little as the North Koreans did at that time.

Q: Is this because of fuel or because of space?

O'NEILL: I think it was a combination of fuel, repair parts, etc., just all the problems that would normally plague a poor country's military forces. They did put on big exercises from time to time and all that. It was not a first-line military force. There were just a lot of them, and they

could have caused a tremendous amount of disruption, loss of life, loss of economic power if those people just all of a sudden marched south one day, as badly equipped and loosely trained as they were. Remember that the huge city of Seoul has 25% of the entire population of the ROK in and around it. The comparison that was always used was that the distance between the capitol building in Washington and Dulles Airport was about the distance from northern Seoul to the DMZ.

We had every reason to believe the North Korean forces were ideologically motivated; at least they would have been at first. The combat power that the U.S. and the ROK could have brought against them would have produced really horrendous battles, if anything surpassing the worst of the Korean War. But the South Korean public didn't go around thinking, "Are they going to attack today? Or next week?" They have almost never had much perception of a North Korean threat unless there's been some specific, nasty incident. It's like the elephant in the living room. Eventually you don't see it anymore.

Obviously, the South Korean and the U.S. armed forces trained very hard first of all to deter the North Koreans, and second, in the case of an attack to defeat it as quickly as possible. There were these major training exercises, so-called "Team Spirit" exercises every year. The South Koreans were in really good shape in every way, economically, in terms of international stature, and basically in good shape domestically, too, because in the previous year's presidential election 1987, Roh Tae-Woo had won a truly democratic election. He was a former general and a close compatriot of the despised Chun Doo-Hwan, but Roh was a different character. He had democratic instincts despite his background. He had defeated two long-time dissident rivals, Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-Sam, in no small part because Kim Dae-jung split the opposition vote.

Q: They sort of knocked each other out, didn't they?

O'NEILL: They did. In fact, the idea originally was that Kim Young-Sam was to run against Roh Tae-woo. Kim Dae-jung who has many virtues and has certainly suffered for his democracy struggle, but he also had certain messianic aspects to his character. He promised Cardinal Stephen Kim, the cardinal archbishop of Seoul, that he would not run as an additional candidate against Roh, the obvious thing being that that would split the opposition vote and perhaps put Roh in the presidential mansion, the Blue House.

Well, that was just too much for DJ to handle and he did run and he did split the opposition vote, and he did help put General Roh Tae-Woo in the Blue House to the fury of Kim Young-Sam and lots of other people. But again, for the first time in the 40 years of Korea's existence they actually had a democratic election that was recognizable as such by anybody.

As I mentioned earlier, by the time I got to Seoul in '88, the opposition parties had already won a majority in the National Assembly. This was in the assembly elections in the spring of 1988. So you had this remarkable situation where the National Assembly for the first time in Korean history actually meant something, and the various responsible committees of the national assembly were conducting audits of the various ministries.

There was a female legislator, a very bright woman named Do Yong-shim. One day, Mrs. Do

called one of my colleagues in the political section: “Gerry! Guess where I am? I’m at the foreign ministry. We’re conducting an audit of the foreign ministry!” This was so fantastic that the first thing she could think of was to call one of her best contacts at the American Embassy and say, “Look what we’re doing!”

Q: In a way was this the fruit of our showing how we do this democracy business?

O’NEILL: I think it was the fruit of a lot of things. We still did not get enough credit in public in the South for our constant and consistent support of democracy, of opposition figures, etc. That’s partly because we were trying to do it as much as possible behind the scenes. It’s also because in no small part the dictatorial governments that preceded Roh Tae-Woo were able through press censorship and repression to keep information of that sort out of the public domain.

Also, among Korean opposition figures, particularly the rank and file Korean opposition figures, there was always the belief that of course America supported these dictators because we were in Korea “for our own purposes,” and of course we wanted dictators who would help keep South Korea under America’s thumb. But there were constant attempts at democratization over the years by the Korean opposition parties, which really came to fruition when Korea’s economic might got to the point where there was a very knowledgeable middle class, a middle class that helped produce this economic might. That same middle class said, “Well, if we’re so good at running an economy, why can’t we also run our own government?”

Certainly by 1987 they began to become much more politically active and much more overtly sympathetic with the student anti-government pro-democracy movement, etc. There were all these things coming together, but we can take pride in what we were trying to do and the fact that it did come to pass. There were American diplomatic successes elsewhere in the world but this is one that’s very real.

Q: Back when we were both together a decade before, in the mid ‘70s, it was still conventional wisdom in the embassy. Maybe this isn’t correct, but my feeling was, and the phrase was South Koreans were the Irish of Asia. This was pejorative to a certain extent. They’re so divided that you need a firm hand, but maybe someday they’ll get better. I think was the feeling.

O’NEILL: There certainly was that kind of feeling. There was that feeling even among a lot of Koreans themselves, even Koreans who didn’t want to have a military- directed dictatorship as there was at that time under Park Chung-Hee. The Koreans are disputatious. That’s fine. That’s part of their character. It’s one of the things that particularly distinguishes the Koreans. But the other side of the coin, I think, was that Koreans certainly deserved to be trusted with governing themselves. The Korean opposition figures like Kim Dae-jung did indeed put themselves in danger for their cause.

Q: He was at Harvard for a while.

O’NEILL: He was at Harvard for a while in exile, after the second time that we saved his life. The U.S. government saved his life twice. That’s something that seems to be either still unknown in Korea or deliberately ignored in Korea by a lot of people. I still see Koreans complaining that

Ronald Reagan's first state guest was the dictator Chun Doo-Hwan. It's true, but the same writers ignore the reason he was invited, and it's known everywhere else except perhaps in Korea, the reason that Chun was invited as the first state guest of Ronald Reagan was specifically in return for Chun's promise not to execute Kim Dae-jung. Kim was then under a sentence of death because of trumped up charges having to do with the May 1980 Kwangju uprising.

In this period, the draconian National Security Law was being scrutinized by the Assembly and tested by Korean dissidents. There were also cases where that law was clearly violated by student activists and sometimes ministers of religion going to North Korea deliberately to provoke some kind of prosecution. There was a Quaker pastor, Moon Ik-Hwan, a long-time dissident and democracy activist, who went to North Korea for that reason. Also, a young woman Lim Su-Kyong went to North Korea and she became a real darling of the North Koreans, who called her the "flower of unification." She came back through Panmunjom in a staged return that was deliberately aimed at generating opposition to the National Security Law. She was duly arrested, carried off, tried, and convicted. I forget what kind of sentence she got.

During this same time, I was trying to tell people particularly in the ROK Unification Board which was now called the Ministry of Unification, that the best thing the South Korean government could do was to gather up as many of these student activists as possible and send them to North Korea but make sure they stayed up there at least a month. Don't let them go for a weekend and come back.

As far as I was concerned too, the North Korean party newspaper Rodong Sinmun which means Labor Newspaper should be required reading in all South Korean university classrooms. My feeling was it would be kind of aversion therapy because in my work I had to read Rodong Sinmun in translation. For the ordinary reader, it is the most turgid nonsense that you could ever imagine. It makes the Burmese newspapers look like the New York Times. My feeling was if you rubbed the students' noses in Rodong Sinmun on a daily basis, they would start yelling that they wanted to vote for Roh Tae-Woo.

As more and more Eastern European diplomats arrived, they began making the same pitch. Once there was a big meeting that the Unification Board called to brief the diplomatic corps on a North-South meeting. My Hungarian friend stood up and made my pitch unbidden. I didn't put him up to it. We had discussed this kind of thing, and he certainly agreed with me. He made exactly the same pitch: You ought to gather all these students who want to go to North Korea and send them there and then let them back maybe after a month. And make them read Rodong Sinmun. It was wonderful! The spokesman for the Unification Board couldn't really respond. All he could say was "We've got our own reasons to do this," and so on.

There was another pitch that I was making at the same time. There were still in South Korean prisons some very old men who had been captured by the UN forces during the Korean War. I can't remember any of them who were actually prisoners of war in the sense of being uniformed military people. The most famous of them was a journalist who had been attached if you will, "embedded," with the Korean Peoples' Army when they came South. He got captured during the course of the war and had been in prison ever since. This was the late 1980's, so he had been in

prison over 30 years.

He was by South Korean lights an unrepentant communist, and in the Confucian legal system in Japan, North and South Korea, and China, Vietnam, confessing and repentance are key aspects of getting released or getting a reduced sentence by showing that you'd now come over to the right thinking side. Well, this old guy just wouldn't do it. He was a dedicated, believing communist, and it was his bad luck that he had gotten captured, but he wasn't going to step down from his beliefs just to get out of what was undoubtedly far from a Club Fed arrangement in the South Korean prison system.

We used to routinely ask the South Koreans what good it did to keep him. The North Koreans were making this old guy a big propaganda *cause célèbre*, so the South Koreans were handing an international propaganda victory to the North Koreans for absolutely no benefit to the South. If they released him, it wouldn't have diminished South Korea's international standing a whit. In fact, it would have raised it, but they just got so wrapped around the axle about this man.

More understandably, at least some ROK officials would say the North Koreans have many hundreds of our fishermen plus POWs from the Korean War that they have never acknowledged, never released, etc., and they're not going to give those people up. I would say, "I understand that, and that is really bad behavior, but we know that they're a bunch of SOBs. You would not hurt yourself a bit; in fact, you would help yourself a great deal. Just let the guy go!"

There was another level in this, of course, because the North Koreans were making a big noise about this old fellow. That made it much more difficult for the South Koreans to let him go because then they would have been giving in to the North Koreans in return for nothing. Eventually they did release him. It was years later when he was nearly dying, and they didn't want him to die in a South Korean prison. They did let him go north, and he was feted as a great hero. Indeed, even I who am not very fond of communism have to admire somebody who could dig his heels in for that many years in the South Korean prison system on what he saw as a matter of principle. You might think he's an idiot, but you have to take your hat off to him.

Q: Okay. Let's go start looking at Nordpolitik. What was going on that got Hungary to be the first one there?

O'NEILL: I think the Hungarians... This was in 1988 before the big downfall, so Hungary and many of these other countries were still under their communist governments when they opened to Seoul. I think many of them were looking at several different things. One was just reality that the world was moving in a different direction than it had been in the 1950s and that South Korea was emblematic of the way the world was moving; that is, towards democracy, towards a successful capitalist system and economic structure. There was in a lot of these countries in Eastern Europe more and more political ferment. You remember, of course, very vividly that Hungary and Poland and East Germany in the 1950s all had uprisings against the Soviet government, all of which were put down, in the case of Hungary with particular brutality.

Q: In '56.

O'NEILL: 1956, yes. October and November of '56. There were still those kinds of currents in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. You'd had Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia in 1968 in Prague Spring also put down with great brutality by the Russian under the Brezhnev Doctrine. But these people hadn't been executed in the way that they would have been had Stalin still been alive or even under Khrushchev.

Meanwhile, even earlier you had the Solidarity movement in Poland which I think was a beacon to everybody else in Eastern Europe, too. It started in the shipyards at Gdansk under Lech Walesa, and that was quite a beacon. Exactly what caused them the Hungarians to leap first toward Seoul I couldn't really say, but they did.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the Hungarian foreign ministry was fishing around?

O'NEILL: Probably they were. They probably were because there were plenty of places in Europe where they and the ROK were represented, so it was easy to make contact that way if they wanted to. There may have been, though I can't think of any offhand, there may have been particular emissaries sent, but I think it mostly would have been done just through places where they were usually represented in a given capital.

There certainly was an economic incentive, too. The Hungarians and these others were expecting loans and grants and other assistance. Even the mighty Soviet Union was quite happy to accept that from the ROK, too. It was one of the clearest examples of a major diplomatic triumph for a given country that I can think of off the top of my head to have all these long-time supporters, even though they didn't like the North Koreans at all, long-time supporters of your enemy North Korea, coming to you, some in many cases hat in hand looking for your help and being quite willing to open relations with you.

Q: The Hungarians came before the events of '89, the fall of...

O'NEILL: Exactly. In fact, my recollection is not only the Hungarians but the Bulgarians, the Poles, and Czechoslovakia. I think all those came before the event. This was in the fall of 1988, starting in August through the fall of '88.

The Soviets, I'd have to look back and see when exactly the Soviets did open relations. It was certainly by 1990. The Hungarians sent a counselor to open a mission at the official level. He became the chargé. Then they sent an ambassador to open an embassy and full diplomatic relations. Ambassador Etre was a Kim Il-Sung University graduate who had been the Hungarian ambassador in Pyongyang and whose principal second language was Korean. He didn't speak very much English though the other Hungarian diplomats did.

Q: How did he end up graduating from the Kim Il-Sung University?

O'NEILL: He was sent there in the early days. There were others, too. The first Bulgarian chargé whose name I think was Georgi Dimitrov. He was a very engaging character and a Kim Il-sung University graduate. When Mongolia opened diplomatic relations, their first ambassador, named Urjinhudev, was not only a Kim Il-Sung University graduate but also a former ambassador of

Mongolia to Pyongyang.

During the '50s and '60s and even in the '70s all these countries had active relations with North Korea. They would send their diplomatic specialists on Korea affairs to Kim Il-sung University in the same way that the South Korean foreign ministry would send the people to Williams or Swarthmore or Oxford. In their peculiar world, it was a natural thing to do. I don't know whether you're winning or losing if instead of going to Moscow State University you're going to Kim Il-Sung University, but it certainly probably gave you quite a number of stories to tell.

It was great fun to meet with the newcomers. Essentially without exception these folks, the Czechs, the Hungarians, Bulgarians and all were just delighted to be where they were, especially the one who spent long periods of time in Pyongyang. The first Bulgarian charge, Georgi Dimitrov, had been at Kim Il-Sung University while Kim Jong-Il was there. Georgi told me he was quite good at ping pong and Kim Jong-Il would sometimes watch him play with the other students. When he later went back to their embassy in Pyongyang for another tour, Kim Jung-Il was the heir apparent, the designated successor. Georgi figured that he would just put on his old Kim Il-Sung University tie, so to speak, and go meet his fellow alumnus. But he was not allowed anywhere near Kim Jong-Il.

Incidentally, when I left Seoul in 1992, one of the farewell receptions that was held in my honor was hosted by Istvan Torsza, the pioneer Hungarian diplomat. I was very touched by that of course. In my remarks that night, I noted that more than half the diplomats present were from embassies that didn't exist in Seoul when I arrived four years earlier. These included not only ex-Warsaw Pact embassies but also Israel and Tunisia for example. It was an extraordinary time in Korean history.

There were Soviets coming to Seoul a lot even before there was an embassy, including the famous Georgi Arbatov, the long-time head of the Institute of the U.S. and Canada. Arbatov was very highly placed in the Russian political-academic world. He came to Seoul for conferences and of course, everybody was swarming around him.

Interestingly enough, in contrast to many of these Eastern European embassies who were sending people who were deeply steeped in North Korean affairs, the first Soviet ambassador to the ROK was an Americanist. He had done a lot of negotiating, been on their SALT and other arms limitation agreement teams in Geneva and elsewhere. His most immediate posting before Seoul was as Soviet ambassador in Manila. Of course, in those days we still had a huge base array in the Philippines: Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. I thought it was kind of interesting that the Soviets were sending this Americanist rather than a Korea specialist to Seoul. It indicated that the US-ROK relationship was at least as important to the Soviets as the ROK-Soviet one was.

When the new Soviet ambassador went to make his courtesy call on Ambassador Gregg, I remember watching for his car to go to our chancery gate. I was going to escort him up to Don Gregg's office. This large black Mercedes flying the Soviet flag was nosing its way through all our security barriers. I saw South Koreans just mesmerized by this big red flag on this great Mercedes turning in to the main gate of the American embassy. As I think I may have mentioned before, there was a general feeling among South Koreans including officials who should have

known better that we didn't like this idea of Nordpolitik and their opening relations with the North's allies. It was a wonderful scene: the jaw-dropping South Koreans watching that limo with the red flag on it, entering our embassy gate.

During my second tour in Korea we had two splendid ambassadors, great representatives of the U.S. and also great chiefs of mission, real leaders. First was James Lilley, born in China to a business family and a career CIA officer who had worked a good bit for George H. W. Bush including in the liaison office in Beijing. He was followed by Don Gregg, also a career CIA officer who had been for six and a half years the foreign policy advisor to then Vice-President George H. W. Bush. Don was very close to him. When offered an embassy, he chose Seoul where he had been the station chief in years past.

In fact, Don Gregg was the one who was directly instrumental in saving Kim Dae-jung's life when the KCIA goons in 1973 kidnapped him out of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. I'm sorry, the Imperial Palace Hotel in Tokyo and were going to drop him in the Sea of Japan on the way back to Korea. Ambassador Philip Habib and Don Gregg forcefully interceded with the government of Park Chung-Hee, and lo and behold! Instead of being dropped in the Sea of Japan, Kim Dae-jung got dumped out of his car in front of his house. Kim to his credit never forgot and always was quite willing to speak up about it.

Q: Al, how did the fall of the Berlin wall hit you all? You had already been by this time had significant what we would call Warsaw Pact types already established in Seoul. Did this have a profound effect or not?

O'NEILL: It had more of an effect on the Koreans and Korea at all levels, than it did on our embassy operations. I can remember watching on television, of course, as everybody was, just with rapt attention. Particularly, I remember one scene in Bucharest, Romania. You'd been seeing for days on end these huge crowds in Bucharest demonstrating against the Ceausescu regime which was probably of all the Eastern European regimes with the possible exception of Albania, closest to North Korea both in their way of doing things and also sort of spiritually if you will. Nicolae Ceausescu was a nasty character with a wife who was equally nasty. Their oldest son Nicky was a real terror. He'd run over people in his car and not even slow down, a real nasty analogue to the Kim Jong-Il of the time as he was reputed to be. I remember seeing a Bucharest TV news broadcast where they were talking about what was going on and all of a sudden these military officers burst into the studio saying, they were getting rid of Ceausescu. It was really quite extraordinary.

As I say, all that had a profound effect on Korea, and the Koreans. As these events were unfolding and communist governments were being ousted in Eastern Europe, Korean TV crews and reporters from the newspapers and members of the National Assembly and academics were flocking to all these paces in particular to East Germany to see what was going on. They all came back with their hair standing on end, the reason being that they knew that East Germany was one of the more economically successful of the Eastern European countries, and they saw that East Germany was a wreck. They also knew that the West Germany economy was vastly bigger than the ROK economy. They put that together and realized on top of everything else that the North Koreans had been using the East Germans as a lodestar — an economic lodestar, if you will —

in the same way that the South had been using Japan rather than us as their economic path breaker so to speak.

The South Korean visitors came back just stunned thinking about what this could mean for unification of North and South Korea. This whole period marked a huge turning point in South Korea. For the first time it became possible and politically acceptable to speak about unification as a very difficult and expensive process as opposed to something that everybody had to give knee-jerk approbation to. Up until then everybody had to say, “Oh, of course we’re for unification! Everybody wants unification. We want unification now! It would be wonderful, it will be glorious, and we’ll all be back together again, and Korea will be one.” Who could possibly object to such a thing? After that, newspaper columnists, members of the National Assembly and economists, too could say, “This is going to be very difficult. It’s going to be very expensive. It’s going to be something that is going to have to be worked out. There can’t be any rush. A rush could be disaster.”

It was a fascinating turning point. It was one reason that my wife and I had lunch with Kim Dae-jung and his wife at their house in Seoul. My wife and her first husband — she was a widow when I married her — had been democracy activists here in the United States, in exile from Park Chung-Hee. They had mutual connections with Kim Dae-jung people. We were invited by Kim probably in 1990.

The particular thing that Kim wanted to talk about was North Korea. I was the one in the embassy political section that followed North Korean affairs day by day. It would be megalomania for me to say that this lunch with Kim Dae-jung was the springboard for his eventual Sunshine Policy toward North Korea. I’m not that naive, but it shows what his thinking was as early as that period, long before he became president. He was then the chairman of his own opposition party.

Under Kim Dae-jung and his successor Roh Moo Hyun from 1997 to early 2008 there was the “sunshine policy” and then Roh’s “peace and prosperity policy,” the basic idea being that you had to lower barriers to North Korea, increase the economic standing of North Korea and also figure out ways to train the North Korean people so that when unification takes place, it would not be a socio-economic disaster for the South. To all of a sudden have 20-something million North Koreans who basically had no skills, who had no education, who had poor nutrition; even in those days and try to integrate them into the ROK that was heading into the 21st Century was going to be a disaster. The North Korea policies of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo Hyun originated from that period when Eastern European communist regimes were falling apart. It was a fascinating time to be in Korea.

Q: I think of a German friend. She was actually my interpreter when I was in Germany back in early ‘50s with a refugee relief program. She was saying that when the unification came in Germany that the story that the Federal Republic was going to give Ulbricht, the head of the communist party in East Germany the Cross of Honor for having kept East Germany away from West Germany for so many years! I don’t see how no matter what happens it’s going to be easy and it would almost be better to keep the barrier up.

O'NEILL: Again, as part of this more serious and realistic look at North-South affairs on the part of Korean adults if not on the part of university students, you hear people talking about increasingly long periods of time — 15, 20, 30 years — before unification could take place. Of course, they also know and probably shudder at the fact that they have no more idea of how long North Korea's going to last than the Soviets had as to how long they were going to last. The totally unpredictable nature of much of North Korea is going to be a major factor. The intent of South Korean policy is to prolong the period before unification becomes either necessary or possible or both. Now I think even most students in South Korea are not as knee-jerk, pro-North Korea, pro-unification now as they were.

Q: That sounds a little bit Pollyanna-ish.

O'NEILL: It does. Well, it does, but every day that goes by they've got more and more understanding of how difficult this is going to be. For example, I was at a dinner the other night and had a good long talk with Andrei Lankov, a Russian who has a PhD in Asian studies. He was from Leningrad State University in times past, now at Kookmin University in Seoul. Lankov spent a lot of time in North Korea himself and still visits the border areas and writes a good bit. He said that during the period we're speaking of there were maybe 1,500 or so North Korean defectors, refugees, whatever you want to call them, in the South. This was cumulative after the end of the Korean War in 1953. Now, since 2001 or so, there are at least 10,000 North Korean refugees some of whom have come in from China, some of whom have come through Southeast Asian countries.

Their problems of integration into the South are really stark. Because of the way things work in North Korea, the majority of the refugees are uneducated women who originally got into China for economic reasons to find food for their families and that kind of thing. There are very few educated North Koreans in the South and as Lankov says, there's no real education in North Korea anyway, so even being educated in that system doesn't count for much when you try to integrate them into South Korean society.

They suffer a great deal of social discrimination even when they've graduated from the training and orientation programs and financial assistance that the South Korean government gives for a while. I don't know exactly what the period is. Then they're basically on their own. Most South Koreans see them as country bumpkins who don't know anything, and they're looked down upon. Also, the disparity between the North and South Koreans languages has grown vastly over the last half century. The North Koreans have tried to retain pure Korean words and keep out foreign, particularly English, loan words which are now the staple of South Korean youngsters' vocabulary.

The South Korean government is trying to narrow the economic gap between North and South and, in fact, the present president of South Korea, Lee Myung-Bak has a program in which over the next 10 years, the objective is to raise the per capita income of North Korea from the current alleged \$1,900 a year to \$3,000. In South Korea the figure's probably around \$20,000 or \$25,000. I suspect the current North Korean figure is wildly inflated to begin with.

Q: When we were there back in the '70s, it was a big moment when the average went up to

\$1,000.

O'NEILL: In South Korea, yes, exactly. Now it's at least in the \$20,000 range even in spite of all the economic buffeting. Anyway, it's a huge disparity, despite South Korea's best efforts at food aid, fertilizer aid, and major projects like the Kaesong Industrial Center complex project to try to educate North Korean laborers as best they can to something like 21st century standards. The gap is actually growing. When I think of the disparity between the "Ossis" of East Germany and the "Wessis" of West Germany, the disparity and the socio-economic prejudices are starker in the case of the Koreas and are going to be greater.

Q: Tell me: When you were watching the overthrow of Ceausescu, were you looking North and saying this could... Were we considering this as perhaps an infection that could spread to North Korea and in a way in joyful but a real disaster?

O'NEILL: I certainly wasn't. In fact, I don't want to sound retrospectively self-serving, but there was a period from '90 through '92 in which the idea took hold in Washington that North Korea could not survive the death of Kim Il-sung. I didn't believe that. You'll just have to take my word for it. I didn't believe it for several different reasons, one of which was that the North Korean security apparatus was pervasive. Too, everybody knew that Kim Jung-Il was the crown prince and he had been designated as such by the revered Great Leader, the founder of the country, to whom everybody bowed in almost a religious sense. It was clear that the son was the designated successor. So despite the absence of any military abilities or background, etc., he had the blessing from the top giver of blessings in North Korea. The other thing is that North Korea is, if anything, more Confucian in its outlook than South Korea, so you've got this reverence for structure, for command, for the leader. Then of course, you had a pervasive security apparatus in which everybody was watching everybody else. The penalties for ideological impurity or attempts to criticize the system were really stark and often final.

Q: And you didn't see any infection from outside.

O'NEILL: I didn't think so. Nothing serious so far. Romania and East Germany were open societies compared to North Korea. In those days there was almost no leakage of information from the outside into North Korea. The North Korean leaders made sure it stayed that way. Particularly in those days, the penalties for possessing radios that could hear outside broadcasts were pretty stark.

There's more bribery and corruption now in North Korea so people can get away with things they couldn't before. Also, there are more technological means for getting information now than there were. People do have cell phones in North Korea. It is very dangerous to have them, but they do. They can get to communicate back and forth with people, particularly along the Chinese border who can piggyback off of Chinese repeaters for cell phones. Videotapes and DVDs of South Korean dramas are often sold on the streets in big cities in the North which seriously undercuts regime propaganda. There's an awful lot more people of various kinds, outsiders coming in and out of North Korea than there were in those days. Even the friendly embassies were pretty segregated from the North Korean people in those days, somewhat less so now.

At that time, many people in Washington were fantasizing about an early collapse, but they had no idea about the realities of North Korea. There certainly were people who in the early '90s who figured that this was going to be the end of North Korea, that Kim Il-Sung's eventual death which took place in July of 1994, aged 82, would be the beginning of the end. Of course, that's 14 years ago. The other thing that I didn't mention was that, but it also ties into this Confucian ethic of listening to the leader and believing the leader. The North Korean regime consistently emphasized and still does the pervasive threat by the United States but we, the Korean people's army, the security apparatus, and the leader whoever he happens to be, are the ones who are going to protect you from that terrible American threat. They're trying to go to war with us at any moment. That big American threat, I think, at least in those days, still resonated with the North Korean public.

I'll give you one example to support this. I used to talk to talk to my Hungarian counterpart about the Team Spirit exercises which in those days were the largest of the U.S.-ROK military exercises. The exercise themselves were actually about two weeks long as I recall, but if you listed to Armed Forces Korean television, you would have gotten the impression that Team Spirit ran for months. The reason was that they started announcing the exercise from the time the very first soldiers began picking up their rifles at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii and continued until the last guy turned in his mess kit back in Schofield Barracks a week or so after he got back from the exercise. My Hungarian friend was saying when he was in North Korea listening to the North Korean reporting , he thought that Team Spirit must have lasted for months.

The North Koreans railed about Team Spirit as they do about all the exercises large and small. But one thing that I learned from him was that the exercises were genuinely disruptive. They were forced by their own propaganda to make Team Spirit tremendously disruptive to the North Korean economy. To create an air of certainty about the threat that Team Spirit posed, the North Koreans had to pull people out of the farms, out of the universities and factories and put them into a state of semi war alert. He said that every year the North Koreans felt compelled to create, as I say, this air of mass fear about Team Spirit. Their circular logic produced a real reason for complaint about our exercises.

As long as we're talking about Team Spirit, let me get to my Polish story. After Poland's government was replaced with a democratic one, one of the first things that the South Korean government did was to invite officers from the Polish general staff to come. The Combined Forces Command routinely invited the Chinese, the North Korea and others to come observe Team Spirit.

Q: The North Koreans, I take it, never did.

O'NEILL: Never did. The Chinese wouldn't, although I'm sure they would really have liked to very much. But the Poles did this time. The Polish general staff sent several colonels; it probably would have been Team Spirit '90. One of our excellent officers in the political section in Seoul was named Jeff Goldstein who spoke not only good Korean but also Polish and Russian. So Jeff was put with this group of Polish colonels for the Team Spirit exercise. The Polish officers, of course, got wined and dined by their South Korean counterparts to a very happy degree. They got to go more or less anywhere they wanted to see the units in the field both U.S. and Korean, how

they were equipped, how they were operating, etc. They were flying around the country in helicopters.

They went up to one of the ROK army division headquarters on the DMZ. The division honor guard presented arms and yelled out something in Korean when the Polish officers were approaching. They asked Jeff what they said, which was, “Crush communism!” He said that the Poles burst out laughing, saying, “We’ve already done that!” They had a fantastic time. We learned in cables from Embassy Warsaw that the waiting list of the Polish general staff of the next Team Spirit was quite long.

If you want, we can talk a little bit about the armistice and what was going on.

Q: Yes. Why don't we do that?

O'NEILL: As you know, the armistice went into effect in 1953, and the Military Armistice Commission was designed to administer the DMZ and the military demarcation line which runs east to west across the peninsula through the center of the DMZ. The centerpiece of the armistice administration was in the Joint Security Area (JSA) at Panmunjom, the scene of many intrigues and some violence from time to time over the years including the infamous 1976 axe murders of the two US officers.

The North Koreans reacted very badly to a couple of things that happened, one of which was the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. One of the armistice structures was the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission or NNSC, which had two elements. On the UN Command side, the Swedes and the Swiss were represented. On the KPA — Korean People's Army — side there were representatives from Poland and Czechoslovakia.

In the aftermath of the Eastern European communist empire, the North Koreans came to the conclusion that the Poles and the Czechoslovaks were no longer neutral because they were now under democratic rule. There was a camp on the UN command side for the Swedes and the Swiss, their offices and their living quarters, and the same thing on the North Korea side for the Czechoslovaks and the Poles. The North Koreans began to put great pressure first on the Poles and then when Czechoslovakia split, used that as a device to cripple their half of the NNSC.

The NNSC's principal function was to investigate incidents that might happen along the DMZ and also to be good faith monitors of the armistice in general. I think in the time that I was familiar with it before they were expelled, the Poles and the Czechs did adhere to their responsibilities quite well. It probably didn't hurt that under certain circumstances the Polish and Czech officers were allowed in the large PX at Yongsan. The Swiss, incidentally, to the best of my knowledge were all Swiss foreign ministry officials in army uniforms. The Swedes I think were actually army people, at least most of them were, although they tended to be assigned to Panmunjom for very long periods.

Q: The Swiss, of course, have total mobilization in which probably you could meld the two together quite easily.

O'NEILL: Let me mention another big blowup. The UN Command decided that as a demonstration of South Korea's stature and to demonstrate that South Korea was a full partner in the armistice, something that the North Koreans always denied, the UN Command commander decided to nominate a South Korean army major general, General Hwang Won-Tak as the UN Command Military Armistice Commission senior member. He would be the highest ranking UNC person who would meet across the table at Panmunjom in the little room with the North Korean counterparts. The North Koreans reacted very badly to that asserting that South Korea had nothing to do with the armistice, that they hadn't signed the armistice. Therefore, there would be no more meetings at the major general level on the military armistice commission. There was this great uproar.

Several levels of meetings traditionally took place in Panmunjom. Normally there were duty officer meetings at the rank of major on a daily basis. There could be colonel level meetings for more serious or complicated issues above the duty officer level. For big things, major violations of the armistice or other major activities, they would meet at the senior member level, the Military Armistice Commission or MAC Senior member level. That got shut down when General Hwang was named. And it still hasn't been fully repaired. It didn't in any way change the threat level, just changed the rhetoric level, and it changed the effectiveness, of the structure of the Military Armistice Commission.

There were two other things that happened of importance to the U.S. side during that period. There were remains returned, and I was involved in both of them. The first of these, I can't remember now the exact timing of this but probably in '89 or early '90, the North Koreans announced that they had "found" remains of American servicemen who had been killed in the Korean War. They'd found them and they were going to return these at Panmunjom. There was negotiation through the Military Armistice Commission mechanism for doing this.

A congressional delegation or CODEL led by the then-chairman of the house veterans' affairs committee Sonny Montgomery of Mississippi and a large number, probably 12 or 13 members of congress, were going to Panmunjom to receive the remains, not coincidentally gaining some publicity for themselves. There was an awful lot of work to do. I was going to be the embassy's control officer for the CODEL. When the ceremony took place, we had representatives of almost all the UN Command countries in Seoul, even including Colombia. The Colombian military attaché was there, as were his British, Aussie, Canadian, French and Thai counterparts. There were British Gurkha soldiers from the UN Command honor guard at Panmunjom as well as ROK soldiers.

Q: I might point out Colombia took great pride, in fact, during the Korean War as the unit performed very well.

O'NEILL: Yes, they did. The North Koreans brought out the boxes of remains, and these were small lacquer boxes, they weren't coffin size. Of course, everybody on our side except me and the members of the House were all in uniform, so it was quite a fine thing, even the Poles and the Czechs including a Polish major general saluting these UN Command remains as they came across the line at Panmunjom.

By that time, the Poles were already under pressure from the North Koreans because of the fact that they were no longer “neutral,” that is, they were now a democracy. It was quite a day, and I was glad to be there. One of the first things that they did was they put UN flags on each of the boxes as they came across. Eventually they were repatriated to the U.S. Army’s Central Identification Lab in Hawaii.

To the best of my knowledge, if any of them were ever identified as being specific U.S. service members, it took years of work in Hawaii. The North Koreans turned over some artifacts with the remains. One of them was a dog tag belonging to a particular corporal from in the 2nd Infantry Division. The U.S. military people in meetings with the congressional delegation before the remains returned cautioned all of them very clearly, “Do not make any announcements about these remains or the identity of these remains based on anything the North Koreans say or do.” It was as clear as a bell.

This corporal’s whose dog tags appeared with these remains happened to be from the congressional district of one of these members of Congress. He later became, I won’t name him, but he later became famed in song and story for anybody who dealt with North Korean affairs. He lost no time while they were still in Korea of announcing the return of the corporal’s remains. One of the first things that the people at CILHI did was to rule out any identification of that corporal with any bones in any of the little boxes.

Let me jump ahead and speak about the second remains return at Panmunjom, because I was also involved in that. The second one was about a year later in 1991, I think. The American congressman who was coming was Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire, a very conservative Republican. He was a Navy veteran of Vietnam among other things. The remains return aside, Smith came with the preconceived notion that there were still American POWs — Prisoners of War — from the Korean War being kept in North Korea. We in the Embassy, along with U.S. Forces Korea and the UN Command Military Armistice Commission people were giving full support to Smith on the remains return. Nonetheless, he was quite suspicious of our intentions and beliefs because he was sure we didn’t share his belief in this idea of live POWs in North Korea.

The remains ceremony at Panmunjom was preceded by a highly contentious negotiation over two days, between Smith and a North Korean, actually a foreign ministry official who was then the head of the North Korean Red Cross. As we pointed out to Senator Smith in the briefings we did for him, this North Korean in a previous incarnation had been the North Korean ambassador in Burma in 1983. He had played a significant role in helping to arrange the entry into Burma of the North Korean assassins who tried to kill President Chun Doo-Hwan by blowing up the Aung San mausoleum in October 1983. This individual’s humanitarian instincts were in question as far as I was concerned.

Anyhow, there was a very contentious negotiation which I think was for show. The North Koreans have a tendency early in a negotiation to beat up on their opponents to soften them up even though they know they’re ultimately going to give the opponents what they want which in this case was the remains. We’d had a really bad day, and we all went back to Seoul and discussed with Smith what was going to happen.

The North Koreans did return the remains on the second day. I don't know if any of those remains have actually been identified even yet. It's a very slow process, and you can't be sure what the North Koreans are returning. Anyhow, this was a very contentious thing inside the U.S. side, too, behind the scenes because of Smith's view that we in the embassy and U.S. Forces Korea were insufficiently patriotic because we didn't believe that there were live POWs in North Korea. Anyway, those were the only two remains returns I think since 1954.

Q: Representative Smith's comes and asks you...

O'NEILL: Senator Smith.

Q: Senator Smith. Oh, my goodness! Senator Smith comes and asks, "Do you believe that the North Koreans have prisoners of war stuck in camps?" It is conceivable that they are people who were originally prisoners of war who essentially defected and have settled in.

O'NEILL: Yes, there were actually 21 Americans and one British Royal Marine who chose not to go home in the big prisoner return after the armistice. Those 21 Americans all went to China and the Chinese were the ones who were actually running the POW camps in North Korea. They took them over from the North Koreans pretty early in the war. I think part of the Chinese reasoning, and this is way beyond the scope of this interview, I suppose, but I think that the Chinese reasoning in taking over these POW camps was that the North Koreans were simply mistreating the POWs and weren't getting any value out of it.

The Chinese approach was, "We're not going to treat them very well although we'll pretend to for propaganda reasons, but we want to get some use of these people," aside from whatever military information they might get through mistreatment on one hand and cajolery and that on the other hand. They wanted propaganda value to try to get them to say nice things about the People's Republic of China and condemn the barbaric Americans for their war practices. So the Chinese had a more sophisticated view of the uses to which these prisoners could be put. It's not impossible under the circumstances of the war that some American POWs especially Air Force types would have been taken into China and the Soviet Union for interrogation particularly about how the bombing raids were conducted, what their tactics were and that sort of thing. My guess is if that happened, those people would eventually have been killed if they didn't die in camps. It's very hard to believe that there were still live POWs in North Korea in the 1990s.

There were certainly post-Korean War American defectors in the north. I think we knew most of them by name. In fact, one as I recall was a private first class named White who went across the DMZ while I was in Korea in the 1988 to '92 period. Sometime later the North Koreans reported that he had died, supposedly drowned. But there were indeed a handful of American who had gone over the DMZ in the post-war era, and that has gotten more attention recently in the context of these Japanese abductees because one, a Sergeant Jenkins, actually married one of the Japanese abductees in North Korea. He's now in Japan having gotten a very cursory court martial for desertion and given a very light sentence, since the Army presumably recognized that he had punished himself by spending 27 years in North Korea.

Q: I think this is a good place to stop. We've just finished talking about the return of remains. We've also talked about the fall of communism in Europe and also its effect, and also we've talked about North Korea. And the two major things we haven't really talked about: China and relations with China in this period and relations with the Soviets. Well, it's still going to be the Soviet Union by your time. And I don't think we've talked about Japan.

O'NEILL: Not Japan, no.

Q: So we'll talk about those next time. Great!

Today is the 24th of October 2008 with Al O'Neill. We have a number of things to cover. One of the things you mentioned we haven't done is Korea and the Gulf War. This was the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and our response. How was this for the Koreans?

O'NEILL: Well, a couple of things by way of preface. One is that the Koreans by the 1970's were very heavily involved throughout the Middle East in major construction projects, huge infrastructure projects like Jubail Port in Saudi Arabia and projects in Libya, also in Iraq. The invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in August of 1990 caused a huge stir in Korea because there were so many Koreans in the Middle East in these various projects. There was a major consular question if you will; what was going to happen and how dangerous would the situation be for the Koreans there. When the Desert Storm campaign started in February 1991 when the U.S. and the coalition began attacking Iraqi forces, the Koreans I think had gotten most of their people out of Iraq. I don't think there was any substantial number of Koreans in Iraq at that time.

Another feature of Korea's relations with the Middle East is that a disproportionate amount of Korea's oil came from the Persian Gulf area. I think it even now has a greater dependence on Middle East for its oil supplies than any other country in the OECD. When Desert Storm, the actual attack, commenced the Korean government had to be showing the people that it was doing something, so they instituted various kinds of energy saving measures. Some were small ones like in government buildings the elevator did not go down below the fifth floor, more symbolic than anything else. But I also recollect that they put in the same kinds of driving restrictions they had as a traffic control measure during the Olympics; that is, odd-even number days for when you had permission to drive based on the last digit of your license plate. I forget exactly how long that lasted, but it was in effect for some while.

The other thing, though, was peculiar to the Korean situation. The U.S.-led coalition chased Saddam's army out of Kuwait in about 100 hours of ground combat after a long bombing campaign. There were a couple of interesting ramifications of this, one of which was — perhaps the principal one — that South Koreans took a fresh look at U.S. Forces Korea and got a new appreciation of how capable these forces actually were. This was, I think, a morale booster in terms of appreciation of the deterrent towards North Korea. It also became pretty clear eventually through intelligence channels and news reports that that Kim Jong-Il had access to CNN's coverage of the Gulf War which you may remember was pervasive 24 hours a day. Kim Jong-Il was watching these same U.S. forces destroy an army that was equipped very much like his, with all those Chinese armored personnel carriers and Russian tanks, etc. Seeing that force being obliterated by U.S. air and ground forces of the kind that we had in the ROK presumably

gave Kim Jong-Il some food for thought and also, again, should have boosted the deterrent.

At the same time, from before Desert Storm commenced we were trying to get the Koreans to contribute military forces to the coalition by appealing to what we thought was their self-interest to help secure these very same oil supplies. They just didn't do it. Part of this may have been kind of a policy hangover from the Vietnam War when Korea under Park Chung-Hee had contributed two infantry divisions and a marine brigade and some other forces to the South Vietnamese side. That was still controversial in Korea because, of course, they were taking these forces from the defense of the ROK for the defense of another country which was beleaguered by a communist invasion and insurgency. It was also the feeling among a lot of South Koreans that the ROK forces had been mercenaries in the sense that the U.S. was footing the bill for the Korean forces in Vietnam. There was lingering resentment which I think played in various ways into the Korean antipathy toward contributing forces to the coalition of the Gulf War.

Q: Let's move to relations with China.

O'NEILL: The Republic of Korea's relationship with China had moved tremendously during this period, not fully to the point of full diplomatic relations which only took place a few months after I left. It actually had been on a gradual uphill path for quite a while. China had no remaining enmity towards the Republic of Korea. They had participated in the Olympics which was a real blow to the North Koreans. I'm sure nobody in the top echelons of the Chinese government had had any idea of boycotting the '88 Olympics in favor of North Korea particularly not when the relationship with the North Koreans and the Chinese was so strained by such outrages as that Rangoon bombing in 1983 and also Chinese certainty that it was the North Koreans in 1987 who had blown up KAL-858 near Burma as a terrorist venture to try to discourage people from to the Olympics. So as usual there was no love lost between the North Koreans and the Chinese by that time.

Also, even though Kim Il-Sung was still the great leader, the Chinese, particularly Deng Xiaoping, were outraged by the idea that Kim Il-sung had by that time established his first-born son Kim Jong-Il as the heir apparent, the crown prince of North Korea. As far as I know, that whole concept drove an orthodox communist like Deng up the wall.

Also, I think there was increasing three-way third country trade through Hong Kong between the ROK and China during this time. I recall reading somewhere that ROK-PRC trade at the time was at least three times the value of PRC-DPRK trade. There were a lot of reasons for the move toward full diplomatic relations during this period, and that's exactly what the Chinese were doing. There was another angle for the Chinese, too, which was by the same token an obstacle for the ROK in moving toward diplomatic relations. This was the question of Taiwan. The South's diplomatic relations were with the Republic of China, the government which that Chiang Kai-shek had established in Taiwan in the aftermath of the Chinese civil war. That was a relationship that was cemented by common enemies and antipathy toward communism and a good bit of trade.

Both places, Taiwan and the ROK, were "Asian tigers." They were moving up the scale of technology, their economies were largely booming, and for the same reasons: they were very

smart, hard working populations moving into all sorts of hi-tech industries. There was recognition, obviously, in the ROK that the only way you could have full diplomatic relations with the PRC was by breaking relations with Taiwan. I think most Korean officials who were dealing with this issue believed this was going to be necessary, and no matter how painful still had to be done.

Obviously the people in Taiwan were looking at it from a different perspective and weren't thrilled with the idea at all. That was the trade-off: one would have to go and the other would come in. The PRC followed a step-by-step process. At some point during my tenure, they opened a trade office in Seoul. You could see by that time that the handwriting was on the wall, and the Chinese inched up various visits, etc., to the point where in 1991 there was a final move by the ROK to become a full member of the UN. Both Koreas had long had observer status, and it had always been a very contentious issue in the UN for decades after the war.

It became clear that as a permanent member of the Security Council, the PRC would not veto South Korean entry into the UN which, I'm sure, caused Kim Il-Sung to kick his wastebasket around the office a good bit. There wasn't anything he could do about it and, therefore, the North said they were going to join, too, so the two Koreas did enter. Ultimately, it was either September or October of 1992 when the ROK broke relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan and the PRC opened an embassy and full diplomatic relations with Seoul. That was quite a remarkable event in Asian history.

Q: Were the Koreans asking you how did we the United States handled the Taiwan situation?

O'NEILL: They had representation in Taipei all along. I don't remember any specific discussion about how we did that or any particular question. I don't think they really needed to ask too much because they saw it firsthand. We had more discussion, really, over the question of relations with the Soviet Union; not whether they should do it or not but more the mechanics of it. This was a more unfamiliar situation to them than the China-Taiwan situation. By the time of the move toward diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, South Korea was in the position of being able to extend credits and loans to the Soviets. That was an incentive to the Soviets, an additional incentive, aside from plain common sense for opening relations with Seoul despite North Korea yelling and screaming. The enviable position that Korea had created for itself in the worlds of diplomacy and economics contributed to this movement toward relations with the former enemies of the ROK and great friends and allies of the North Koreans.

As for Japan, you can never tell what's going to happen next in ROK-Japan relations. It's probably the one that South Koreans are most touchy about and most ready to explode about in almost any moment. During that period to the best of my recollection, the relations were probably as good as they could be. I can't remember any real blowup. There were always these things that the South Koreans were watching including territorial disputes over some little rocks in what the Koreans uniquely call the East Sea of Korea and everybody else calls the Sea of Japan. There's also the perennial textbook issue: what kinds of history textbooks the Japanese ministry of education, always one of their most conservative ministries, will approve for possible use in Japanese schools.

Q: Both how they treat the...

O'NEILL: How the Japanese treat the World War II period resonates for the Chinese and the Koreans. Particularly, this means issues like the so-called comfort women, the sex slaves the Japanese armed forces employed as prostitutes during the war and, too, that the Nanjing massacre of 1937 in which hundreds of thousands of Chinese were slaughtered over a span of about six weeks by the Imperial Army once they captured what at the time was Chiang Kai-shek's capital of Nanjing.

Of course, during all that period and even now there's a tremendous series of linkages between the Japanese and Korean economies, with joint ventures between Japanese carmakers and Korean carmakers like Hyundai and Daewoo and other areas of manufacturing. The Koreans were big competitors of the Japanese in specialty steels and also in shipbuilding including supertankers the South Koreans were turning out. So while there was a lot of connection between the two economies, there was always the possibility of some flare-up over historical issues.

Koreans have a very long memory, and I'll illustrate this with a story that I always tell about the first Mongolian ambassador to the ROK. Mongolia became part of the parade of countries opening relations with the ROK during this period. The first Mongolian ambassador to Seoul was named Urjinhudev. He was not only a Kim Il-sung University graduate; he also had been the Mongolian ambassador in Pyongyang at one time like the first Hungarian ambassador, Ambassador Sandor Etre. A colleague, Dick Christenson, and I met with Ambassador Urjinhudev not long after his arrival. This discussion was conducted in Korean, my shaky Korean and Dick Christenson's near perfect Korean.

Urjinhudev told us that as he was going around Seoul meeting government officials and student groups and business people, one of the questions that he was invariably asked by Koreans particularly on college campuses was whether he would apologize for Kublai Khan's invasions of Korea in the 13th Century. I think he responded that he had no instructions on that subject [laughter]. But that was a good illustration of the Korean view of themselves and the world; they are the victims of everybody, and they'd never done anything wrong. They forget that Korean ships helped Kublai Khan invade Japan during that same period. Those were the ships to transport Kublai Khan's Mongol soldiers in the 1200s, in these two invasions that gave rise to the myth of the *kamikaze*, the "divine wind" that saved Japan.

There was a sequel to this. Soon thereafter there was a visit wither by the Mongolian prime minister at the time or the president. As always I went to the foreign ministry to the China-Mongolia Division director to get a preview, just the routine thing that diplomats do. The director said, "We're doing this, we're doing that, we're trying to arrange these loans and this guarantee." The usual sort of thing. He said that Koreans consider the Mongolians the closest to them ethnically among all Asians. There's only one problem: a lot of Koreans are going to expect an apology from the Mongolians because of Kublai Khan's invasion in the 13th Century. He said the government wasn't going to raise this at all, but it's out there. They hoped it would not become an obstacle to the visit in any way. In fact, it didn't, but the government was worried.

Anyway, it's a good illustration of Korean xenophobia. It plays into the business of anti-

Americanism. Nowadays, most Koreans prefer to call it “anti-American sentiment” but it is the most salient manifestation of this Korean feeling of victimization that shows up with respect to the Chinese, obviously regarding the Japanese but even the toward the dear Mongolians whom everybody loves now that they don’t go around conquering the rest of the world. It’s just part of the Korean psyche. They teach themselves that everybody’s out to get them and that they’re the victims of great powers which, of course, at the end of the 19th Century they were and the early 20th Century they were. There were indeed three wars fought over the control of Korea between 1894 and 1953. There’s this sense, but it just takes on an exaggerated importance.

Q: Having spent five years in Serbia, I can identify with this because it is exactly Serbs’ thing. If the elevator didn’t work in a hotel, if the elevator isn’t working, you get back almost invariably, “You didn’t spend 500 years under the Turkish yoke.” It’s the standard for...

O’NEILL: Well, we’re Irish, too, so we know about real victimization! We had the English for 700 years!

Q: With anti-Americanism or what was it...

O’NEILL: Anti-American sentiment.

Q: Anti-American sentiment. Okay. Did you sit around the embassy and look at this, and what could we do, and what are the roots of this and think about this as an issue?

O’NEILL: Oh, yes. Oh, very definitely. Most particularly as I detailed earlier in the interview in the context of the Seoul Olympics. I still unfondly remember that as a gigantic anti-American festival with sporting events thrown in. Ambassador Jim Lilley was there up through the end of December 1988, so he had the full blast of the Olympics. He used the expression, “We’re the biggest show in town,” meaning that of all the countries represented there, we were the biggest especially with the large military presence and its endless potential for crimes or accidents, which could become an immediate focus of the anti-American student movement and others as well.

There was also, again, the Korean belief that we were in Korea “for our own purposes” as if this meant the exclusion of any interest that benefited Koreans. Lilley was an excellent leader. He has been a career CIA officer with close ties to George H. W. Bush because he was the station chief in Beijing when Bush was the liaison office chief. His father was a businessman in China; so Lilley was China born and had a deep interest in Asia and served most of his CIA career in Asia.

Ambassador Lilley had an understanding of why the Koreans thought this way. It did wear on our morale in the embassy because it came up in every way that you could possibly think of. There was an instance where a shipment of American grapefruit into Korea was found upon inspection to have traces of Alar on it. Alar is a chemical that is normally used in apple orchards to keep apples on the tree long enough to ripen fully before they get picked. There was medical evidence that this could be a carcinogen. I suppose if you ate Alar for breakfast in large quantities for years you could get cancer.

Alar is not used in grapefruit at all. It has no effect on grapefruit because of the consistency of the grapefruit rind, I guess it doesn't penetrate and do what it does for apples. For some reason or other, though, traces of Alar were found on this shipment of grapefruit. This produced a huge uproar, the usual thing: the Americans are poisoning us with this carcinogen. It was all throughout the newspapers and news media, and there were student demonstrations and all that. The Korean media made a huge thing of it. Koreans, led by the news media, totally ignored the fact that Korean apple growers import Alar literally by the ton every year for the purposes for which it is usually used. That didn't show up in the news media at all although our agricultural trade office and our public affairs people were trying to put that information out, but it was just ignored. We don't own a Korean newspaper, so there was no way to get that into the press unless they wanted to put it in. During the uproar, it would have been unpatriotic for the news media to point out the heavy Korean use of Alar, so it just didn't happen.

The point is that Koreans were sort of almost always on edge about to do with the U.S. and ways they can be victimized by the U.S. It does take a toll on you. Meanwhile, of course, Korea was nonetheless probably the second or third largest importer of American agricultural products of all kinds including fruits, beef, and particularly high grade beef.

The Koreans had lots of import restrictions on certain agricultural products normally to protect their own industries. In fact, the man who was the head of the U.S. Embassy's agricultural trade office told me that the easiest way to survey the full scope of Korean agricultural restrictions on imports from the United States was simply to go to the main U.S. army commissary at Yongsan, the largest in the world, and look at the empty shelves. Whatever was supposed to be on those shelves was subject to Korean import restrictions. The main reason those shelves were empty was that Korean wives of American GIs were buying up large quantities and selling on the black market.

We did do a lot to try to counter some of the anti-American feeling. In the fall of 1988, Ambassador Lilley made a big speech on the armed forces. One of the big issues that Koreans really didn't understand was the question of operational control of Korean armed forces. The Korean public view was that the U.S. had "command" of Korean forces and, therefore, Korea was like the North Koreans portrayed it, a puppet of the United States.

In fact, what the U.S. commander of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command actually had was "operational control" of most Korean armed forces but not even all of them. It is a key distinction because if you've got command of a unit, it means that you promote people, that you pay them, that you punish them and reassign them. With command, you are essentially ordering their entire lives, as a company commander would do of his soldiers, as I did when I was a company commander.

From 1953, the U.S. commander never had that level of control over Korean forces. It was only operational control or OPCON. The Korean president put certain units under U.S. operational control; historically most of the Korean forces were in this mode both in peacetime and wartime. Then the American commander could direct a Korean division commander to have his division play in a particular exercise or move to such-and-such a location in combat. But he certainly was not promoting or relieving the regimental commanders. The Korean division commander had

command of his unit; the top American commander had operational control.

Ambassador Lilley made a major speech and tried to point this out that this operational control issue was agreed by successive Korean presidents and that no Americans had command of Korean units at all. It actually got pretty good press coverage, amazingly, for some period of time, and it was discussed on TV. There were certain things that you could do, but there were certain things that we were finding very much an uphill battle.

Q: How about pressure? How about with your wife? How did she find it being back there? Al's wife is Korean. Were they getting at her?

O'NEILL: Well, sometimes I think Korea got to her. My wife had been out of Korea as a place of residence since 1970 but, of course, she had visited during the four years we were in Japan and from Rangoon. But this was the first time that she actually resided in Korea in about 18 years. I think she found how Americanized she had become. Of course, we were living in an American village in the U.S. embassy housing compound within a large U.S. Army post called Yongsan Army Garrison in downtown Seoul. Of course, she had family members, friends, schoolmates that she knew.

For much of the four years, she was working in the consular section on immigrant visas. She was in effect deputized as a vice-consul as family members can be, so she was doing the same kind of things that the American officers were doing, not the work that the Korean citizen Foreign Service Nationals were doing in support of the American officers. She got the full blast of fraudulent documents and, let's say, departures from the truth in interviews and all that, as any American officer would. She didn't like that a whole lot.

I think overall she had the best of both worlds in the sense that she was living in Korea as an American diplomat's wife and embassy employee on the one side plus she was a Korean back in her home country. Largely it was good for her. Our son was in high school during those four years at Seoul Foreign School which was the oldest of the international schools in Seoul founded by American missionaries in 1912 during the Japanese occupation. It was an extremely competitive school. She, like all the Korean mothers at this school, were intensely concerned about getting their children into either Harvard, Yale, or Stanford with the idea that if your son couldn't get into one of those schools that he was doomed forever because below that there was just this black void.

Q: My wife taught there.

O'NEILL: I always referred to that school as a Calvinist pressure cooker. It was a really good school. Academic standards were extremely high, but the atmosphere was extremely intense in no small part because of all the Korean mothers who were there overseeing their children's futures.

Q: I have to mention that in Korea when a child is accepted in school, the parents are asked, "How many hours a day can you work with the child on their homework and drill what we teach?" This was expected. Al, you left there in '92?

O'NEILL: June 25, 1992.

Q: June 25th. That's a date I remember.

O'NEILL: The 42nd anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War.

Q: Where did you go?

O'NEILL: I went back to the State Department for two years. My immediate assignment was as deputy director of the Philippine desk. There was still in the East Asia and Pacific bureau a separate Office of Philippine Affairs. I got there at the beginning of August 1992. Most of the American military bases had closed by that time. Only one major installation was left which was Cubi Point Naval Air Station, part of the giant Subic Bay Naval Base. I had never worked on Philippine affairs before.

On the way back we stopped in Hawaii, and I went to the Pacific command for some meetings and briefings about the final close-out of the U.S. military bases in the Philippines. Also, I visited the East-West Center for a day or two for consultations with the people who dealt with Philippine affairs or Southeast Asian affairs in general.

Q: We're talking about the U.S. Pacific Command. Were you picking up an attitude about the Philippines? After decades in the Philippine bases was there a sense of relief or a change or resentment?

O'NEILL: At Pacific Command (PACOM) in Hawaii?

Q: Yes.

O'NEILL: By way of background, we had had quite a number of installations in the Philippines going back to 1898. Our acquisition of the Philippines from Spain was in itself a strange business. We fought the Spanish in a war that lasted about 90 days in 1898, and in a battle in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898 George Dewey's small fleet annihilated the Spanish fleet. At the time that this happened there was a fairly large rebellion going on against Spain led by intellectual Filipinos, Spanish-educated elite. Originally what they wanted was more autonomy within the Spanish empire, including seats in the Spanish parliament. But the Spanish over-reacted, cracked down on the Filipinos, thereby sparking an independence rebellion which was underway at the time the U.S. went to war with Spain. They had already come up with a democratic republican constitution, the first in Asia's history a couple of years before, in 1896. Because Spain lost the war, the U.S. agreed to pay Spain \$20 million for the Philippines, ignoring the fact that there were Filipinos for one thing, and also that the U.S. had used these ones who were in an armed insurrection against Spain to further our war aims.

There's a famous story about President William McKinley and the Philippines. McKinley told a group of Methodist missionaries working in Asia that he was struggling with the issue of whether the U.S. should simply control Manila and the Manila Bay area which is a huge harbor,

or take the entire island of Luzon, the big island that Manila is on or take

EDWARD H. WILKINSON
Consul General
Seoul (1988-1992)

Edward Wilkinson was born in Indiana in 1936. Mr. Wilkinson received his bachelor's degree at Purdue University and served in the army from 1957-1959. His career included positions in Philippines, Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Taiwan, Ecuador, Korea, Thailand, and Germany. Mr. Wilkinson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 2002.

Q: Well you were consul general in Seoul from when to when?

WILKINSON: We got there in late fall of 1988, and we stayed until the summer of 1992; we were there four years.

Q: For the reader of this, I had that job from '76 to '79, but I want you to explain things, because you're not explaining to me, but you're explaining to them. How would you describe American-Korean relations when you got there in '88?

WILKINSON: It's important to remember the dates, because the political situation had changed a great deal since you were there. Don't forget that in 1979 President Park Chung Hee was assassinated, causing a great deal of tension. I think by any standard, from the end of the Korean War until sometime in the '85 to '88 timeframe, depending on your definitions here, Korea was a dictatorship. This is a country that was and, of course, still is, our ally. We had excellent reasons to be on their side, but a dictatorship is not really the Americans' idea of a wonderful country, at least in most cases. But as a consequence of the political situation in the country, conditions developed into a military confrontation with unhappy citizens in, I think, the year 1980, when there was an uprising against the Korean dictatorship. Unfortunately, in that case a large number of Koreans were shot down by their own countrymen, the military.

A few years after that incident, the general who was in charge in the field where the shootings took place, Roh Tae Woo, was "named" the next president by the president of Korea at the time, Chun Doo Hwan (himself, of course, a general).

Chun simply announced one day that Roh would be his successor.

As I understand the story, as a consequence of this announcement, virtually within hours the city was filled with demonstrations against this situation. The Korean citizenry had had enough; they wanted a democracy. Apparently, the famous and beautiful, Namdaemoon area was absolutely filled with protesters, as far as the eye could see.

Q: South Gate, it was called.

WILKINSON: Right, South Gate. Huge numbers of people demonstrated rather, I think it's fair to say, unexpectedly, so President Chun quickly backed off from this statement that General Roh would be the next president.

In the event, they actually had a fairly democratic election. Unfortunately, for the people who really wanted to sidetrack the military in the Republic of Korea, two long-time dissidents ran against each other, as well as against Roh Tae Woo. Essentially, the votes for the two dissidents canceled each other out, so General Roh became president anyway. This took place not long before we arrived in Korea.

So after Roh's election, steps were taken to allow a loosening of the bounds that the Korean government had imposed on the people. One of the things that was done was to allow people who wanted to travel abroad to simply apply for a passport. Before that, one could not leave the country without the government's okay. This was not your choice; this was the government's choice. The idea, as I understood it, was that Korea, as a consequence of the Korean War, was so devastated that they could not afford to have the man in the street go abroad and spend money. That money was needed in Korea, so people were not allowed to travel abroad unless the government said it was okay.

The Government of Korea gradually eliminated this requirement, so when we arrived there in 1988, I think the rule was that people over fifty years old could, if they chose, go and get a passport and travel abroad. The idea was that, little by little, the age would be lowered so that ultimately all Koreans would be able to depart. And this was done.

There were lots of other laws and rules that were being changed in this way. These were President Roh's and his people's initiatives. These changes in Korea made a huge difference to us in our consular operation and our immigration colleagues also felt the same thing. Consular operations increased very, very quickly.

When we got to Korea in 1988, these changes were well in train, but by no means was it finished. It was during our period of time there, the four years we were there, that these travel restrictions were loosened, so that people could leave if they wanted to. Therefore we received huge numbers of non-immigrant visa applications, which, of course, made a big difference in our workload. Our immigration officer friends had a similar experience.

Some numbers: When we arrived in Korea, our immigration visa workload was large. Great numbers of Koreans did want to leave Korea during the period after the Korean War up until around 1987 or so. They wanted to do so for political and for economic reasons. Simply put, they wanted to go for political reasons – because of the fact that the country was a dictatorship – and for economic reasons, because it was difficult for the average person to live well in Korea. So people left. But because conditions changed rather rapidly, both economically and politically, during this period leading up to when we got there as well as after we arrived. People began to come back to Korea. Koreans who had been living abroad began to come back.

The first year we were there, 1988, we looked at, I believe, something like 27,000 or 28,000

immigrant visa applications and 78,000 or 79,000 non-immigrant visa applications. Four years later, the year I left, the numbers were quite different. We, I think, looked at some 17,000 immigrant visa applications and 256,000 non-immigrant visa applications!

Large numbers of people wanted to go abroad for tourism and study. The government was not concerned about them going abroad because, by and large, they came back. Now there are exceptions to that, needless to say, but it was simply not the same as it was during your experience there, Stu, because many, many Koreans who were living abroad wanted to come home. Korea was where they wanted to live their lives.

During my four years in Korea (or at least during the latter part of my tour), the U.S. Immigration Service accepted back more “green cards” than any other office. In other words, Koreans who had been immigrants in the United States returned home to Korea. They came to the Immigration Service offices at the embassy to say, “Fine, thank you. I enjoyed it but I don’t want to live in the U.S. anymore.” They had to do that in order to get certain documentation needed to live and work in Korea. It did fall off. It never went away, of course. There’s always a certain number of people who, for one reason or another, want to get out, want to go away, and couldn’t qualify for a visa. These are essentially poor people, and this of course goes on in virtually every country in the world. But I am sure that statistically speaking the numbers of fraud cases fell off a great deal.

There was a thing that happened, I think in 1982, which is something that I’d like to tell, if I may. It’s just – frankly – a short visa fraud story. It was wonderful in its simplicity and I’m just still in awe. I wish that I could say I would have somehow figured out what was going on if I had been there, but I doubt I would have.

Specifically, what was happening is this: if you are a U.S. citizen or a resident alien and you want your close relative to come and join you in the States, there is a procedure for this. One files a form I-130 with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. That form, essentially, puts together your status, resident or citizen, and your relationship to this person whom you wish to sponsor. If, for example, you were married and you wanted to sponsor your spouse, then you’d bring to the Immigration Service office proof of your U.S. citizenship or your permanent residence status information, together with your marriage certificate. Or, if you wish to sponsor a parent or a child, then you’d bring the birth certificate verifying the relationship. So, it’s all tied together and this completed I-130 form, duly approved by the immigration officer and specifically or at least theoretically, signed off on by the District Director of the office where it is filed is sent to the U.S. consular section in the place where the person is living. Based on this approved form, the immigrant visa application will be processed in due course.

The fraud that was being perpetrated on us was this. One or more of our locally engaged staff would go to the supply room and get packets of blank forms I-130s, which we had because people could also file this form in the immigration office in Seoul. Then they would take the blank ones home or somewhere and fill them in with plausible information. They made them look like the real things, including the “official” stamp that ostensibly attested to the “fact” that the application had been properly approved. Then, I am told – I wasn’t there at the time – the persons perpetrating this fraud simply tossed the completed forms into the mailroom in a way

that made them look like they arrived from the U.S.

Our staff then – probably not people in on the deal – took them mixed up with legitimate ones and filled in the appropriate visa processing forms and the cards then filed them away to await further processing. In some cases, the people who were beneficiaries of these fraudulent papers had to wait for a period of time because there's only a certain number that can be processed in a year's time. But they did that and lots of people got visas under these circumstances.

Now, as I say, the reason I am in sort of awe of all this was the simplicity of it. It didn't require very much – basically some knowledge of the procedures and a typewriter. So there you are.

Q: I'm told this was picked up by a visa officer who noticed that the typing thing always seemed to be on the same typewriter.

WILKINSON: Yes, I heard that, too. It's my understanding that a series of things came together to finally put a stop to the scam. I don't know all the details here. I have heard conflicting stories. But, as you say, one of the things was that somebody began to notice that it didn't matter if the completed form I-130 came from Portland, Oregon, or St. Louis, or Miami, they always looked like they had been completed with the same typewriter. I would not be surprised to find that some of our Korean staff might have been involved with reporting this as well, because virtually all of them were persons who wanted to do the right thing.

Another part of the story was, when they finally picked up on this fraud, somebody decided that it would be a good idea to keep files of all issued immigrant visas. The rules were that we shred old immigrant visa files after – I forget – six months or a year. In any event, it was decided in 1982, after the fraud was discovered, that we would simply keep all immigrant visa files. As far as I could figure, nobody thought about this decision again.

Anyway, we arrived in the fall of 1988. Sometime the next year I found out that as a consequence of this 1982 decision there was an entire warehouse full of paper. There was no filing system whatsoever, so it was hard to find anything. The mountains of forms and documents were essentially useless.

It was a major problem to figure out a legal, acceptable way to get rid of all this paper. Now as you know, for reasons of privacy, pertaining to the U.S. citizens and resident aliens who had filed many of the applications, you can't just put all this paper out for trash pickup. It's got to be destroyed. We spent a great deal of time and effort destroying this six-year build-up of paper. We finally got rid of it, but that was a huge job all by itself.

Q: Speaking of privacy and files, one of the problems that concerned me when I was there, was the possibility of war with North Korea. I mean, North Korea was about thirty-five miles away and in 1950, the North Koreans came and captured our embassy with a lot of papers intact and we had these files about people who were attached to the United States which could go very ill on the assumption that the North Koreans might take over the embassy. We never came up with a real solution for it. Was this sort of beyond the consideration about North Korea?

WILKINSON: There was an awful lot of time and effort spent thinking about North Korea and its impact on the south and various possibilities, but the possible destruction of consular files is not one that I ever heard of.

Q: How about student visas? When I was there, it was almost all graduate students and many male and they'd had to finish military service before they'd get their passport.

WILKINSON: From, I believe, well before you arrived in Korea until around 1988 or even a bit later, the number of student visa applications was relatively small. This is because, as I mentioned earlier, before virtually any Korean male could get a passport, he had to finish his military service. There were other restrictions and limitations. As far as I know, it was virtually impossible to get permission to leave the country to do undergraduate work, and graduate work was not something you could just do because you wanted to. You had to have government okay.

Q: Women could go?

WILKINSON: There were fewer restrictions on women, I think, but restrictions existed. Again, this sort of thing eased off basically in the short period just after our arrival in Seoul.

Q: Also the quality of schools these people were going to was really very high. When I was there they were going to good schools; very solid things, unlike when I was in Saudi Arabia and in some other places where people were going to... not what I would call real educational institutions.

WILKINSON: Well, to repeat, the Korean Government had a say about whether you could go and where you could go. I wouldn't be surprised to find that the Government simply would approve permission to study abroad only for very good schools. The idea was that these students would come back and put what they had learned to very good use. If a student wanted to go to a diploma mill, they probably wanted to use the opportunity to cut and run.

Q: Yes, or the institutions in the United States were claiming they were going to give them a good education when they really weren't.

WILKINSON: I agree with that although, as I said, certainly toward the end of my experience in Korea, people could just simply choose to go and – if we could see that they could afford to do what they proposed to do – we didn't get into the question of whether they wanted to study at the ABC College or Harvard. There were huge changes during that four-year period that were, I would have to say, largely thanks to changes that took place during the term of President Roh Tae Woo.

Q: What about GI marriages and all this? There has always been a problem anywhere we are where we have military because they usually end up going out with women who are prostitutes, or who often do that and have liaisons and there used to be anyway a real network of organizations in the United States, sort of, I think, Korean run, of getting young and not-so-young women to come over as so-called brides and then they would immediately be off on a range. They'd leave their husband and go off and work for massage parlors.

WILKINSON: Well, all of that was going on and, I suspect, still goes on, like in many other countries. Back to Taiwan a moment, my friend, Consul Lynn Curtain, told me of interviewing a lady in Taipei for an immigrant visa. She, when asked, could not remember the name of her husband, the man who ostensibly had filed the I-130 petition on her behalf. That was unfortunately the sort of thing that you dealt with all too often. Of course, there were naïve people, too. It was a mixed bag and the role of our consular officers is, among other things, to decide what is reasonable and what is not. But what you describe certainly existed. It probably still does.

Q: How about American citizens in jail or in trouble? Did you have problems?

WILKINSON: No, we didn't have problems. We had a number of Americans in jail, of course. The Koreans were relatively cooperative with us in trying to make life as acceptable as possible, within limits, for Americans in jail there. I don't think our American Citizens Services officers who dealt with these problems felt that they had serious problems in this regard.

Q: How about the American business community? Did you have much connection with them?

WILKINSON: Well, yes. I might mention something here with regards to that. I worked closely with the Korean-American Chamber of Commerce there on a variety of issues, one of which was providing a special sort of nonimmigrant visa procedure for people in which the Chamber was interested.

It began like this: Soon after I got to Seoul, I went to an American Chamber luncheon. By chance, I sat next to the Boeing representative in Korea who explained he was having trouble getting visas for some people from Korean Airlines who were going to go to Seattle to buy some airplanes. I told him, "Well, it seems to me that if somebody is going to go to the U.S. to buy a billion dollars worth of airplanes, or whatever, we ought to be falling all over ourselves to get their paperwork in order."

So, I worked closely with the AmCham there to try to ensure expeditious processing for appropriate non-immigrant visa applications. Not that we issued visas at their say so, but rather we made it as easy as we possibly could for those people who were of interest to the U.S. of A. to make the visa application processing as convenient as we could. This is because if they were of interest to American members of the Chamber, we felt it was in our collective government interest to be as helpful and cooperative as we could be. We got a lot of pats on the back for this, I'm pleased to say.

In this regard, I worked closely with the Department of Commerce Trade Center representative there at the time, Bill Yarmy. Bill started the Visit U.S.A. group in Korea with people from the travel business, to encourage tourism to the U.S.

But there wasn't a huge amount of business that Koreans had with the U.S. at that time. I think my Boeing example was an exception.

Q: How did you find life in Korea?

WILKINSON: I loved it for a variety of reasons. After the Korean War, Korea was, of course, devastated. The United States Agency for International Development, USAID, came to Korea and, as you know, built some housing for their people on the U.S. Yongsan military base located in Seoul. As I understand it, Yongsan was a property where the Japanese had a base during their occupation of Korea. The Koreans wanted no part of the locale simply because of the bad memories of the Japanese. So this became a major U.S. military base, largely because it was available. Right after the Korean War, it was on the outskirts of Seoul. After USAID ceased working in Korea, we embassy people acquired the housing. As the embassy grew, we built and acquired some other buildings and property.

Lisa and I lived out on the Yongsan base. There were some other properties down closer to the embassy where people lived, too. Again, they were Japanese-occupation related. One was a banking community...

Q: Yes, I lived in Compound Two, which I think was banking.

WILKINSON: Yes, that's right. Compound One was another one.

Q: The Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission and some other senior officers lived there.

WILKINSON: Well, it cost Uncle Sam relatively little money to house embassy officers during the time we were there. Yongsan and the other locations were clean and safe. We had some friends from other embassies and knew other foreigners who lived in Seoul, and they did suffer some robberies and some other problems in living in Seoul proper. We, frankly, didn't have to put up with such problems, so that was very nice.

On my way to Korea in 1988, I stopped in Portland, Oregon, and saw a retired Foreign Service friend, Russ Winge. He introduced me to the head of the Korean community in that city. I think he was the president of the Korean Association there. Anyway, he invited Russ and me to lunch. We had a nice repast at a Korean restaurant and that was my first real experience with Korean food.

We got to Korea soon thereafter, and within days I got a call from for a Korean Foreign Service officer who was, at the time, in charge of the passport office. He was a classmate of the Korean Association man from Portland. The passport officer invited me to lunch at a restaurant about a fifteen-minute walk from the embassy.

We had an all-Korean lunch, seated on the floor and eating from a low table in Korean style. During the lunch, I noticed that there were plates around the passport officer that were not around me. I asked, "What are those things over there?"

He said, "Oh, you wouldn't like this." So I learned fairly quickly, that Koreans, by and large (and I'll just say this without any apology), firmly believe that we foreigners do not, in general, like their food. Naturally, I insisted on having some plates just like he had. Even if I didn't like what

was being served, I was going to eat it because I didn't want people to make those assumptions. Well, I have to admit, some of them were a bit of a shock; Koreans like spicy food. But over the four years there, I learned to love Korean food.

Even today, my wife and I, under virtually every circumstance when we think about going out to eat here in the Washington area almost always think first of going to a Korean restaurant.

Q: So you were there until 1992?

WILKINSON: Yes. During the late fall of 1991, I had my eye on what I thought would be the perfect job for me, the Refugee Coordinator in Bangkok, Thailand. By chance, I noticed that my former boss when I was in the Asylum Office, Ambassador Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, was going to stop by Korea on his way to China. I sent a message to Ambassador Schifter to ask that he give me a few minutes during his stopover. He was gracious enough to allow me to come and breakfast with him at his hotel. Essentially, I explained a bit about the job I was seeking and asked him to put in a good word for me at the Bureau of Refugee Affairs.

I'm not sure what he did. He may have made a phone call, he may have sent a note, he may have ignored me – I doubt that somehow – but in any event I got the job.

THERESA A. LOAR
Consular Officer
Seoul (1989-1991)

Ms. Loar was born and raised in New Jersey. She was educated at Louisville University, Dartmouth, Rutgers, and she also studied in France. She and her husband entered the Foreign Service in 1986. After serving in Mexico City and Seoul she was assigned to the Office of the Undersecretary for Global Affairs in Washington, where she was involved in Human Rights and Women's issues. She subsequently became Senior Coordinator for International Women's Affairs. Following her retirement from the Department of State, Ms. Loar was the co-Founder and President of the organization Vital Forces Global Partnership. Ms. Loar was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: Great! Well then, in '89, where? Whither?

LOAR: We left to go to Korea. Richard by then was ready to bear a political position because he had paid his consular dues. We were looking for two assignments in a big embassy, and we did not want to be studying language.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It was easier for me to get a consular assignment almost anywhere since I was consular

cone. We needed a slot that sort of worked for Richard, and the two of us could work together. So he got this job as political military affairs officer in Seoul, and I got another consular position. We left there and showed up in Seoul a few months later.

Q: And you were in Seoul from when to when?

LOAR: Eighty-nine to ninety-one.

Q: This strikes a chord with me because I was consul general in Korea from about -

LOAR: Oh, that's right!

Q: Seventy-six to seventy-nine.

LOAR: Yes, now an interesting place, isn't it?

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: North Korean and South Korean.

Q: So, we'll stick to you, because I hope to get your husband at a later date.

LOAR: Yes. He had a real interesting tour.

Q: Were you prepared before you went to Korea? Were you getting any, either through the grapevine or through the official things, of what to expect in Korea and all?

LOAR: Well, you know, we got some area studies, which was really interesting. Living in Asia we thought would be a great experience, a great opportunity.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I came in and I knew that I'd come and do another job now, blah, blah, blah. But I had a really interesting first tour. First of all, I did the NIV work. But then I worked as the supervisory consul general's aide, which was very different, and gave me a lot of chances to do a lot of different things; and it was, frankly, a very good deal.

So I went to Korea. It was, okay, you're going to go into this section, and there was no program to rotate the junior officers, no schedule. So I went into the consul general and said, "Why don't I do a schedule that will allow officers to come in and know what they can expect?" "Great!" And then, of course, I had done my time in NIV, so I did not schedule myself for the NIV Section [laughter], because I thought: "If I'm going to be trained in how to do full consular work, it'd be good to work in Immigrant Visas for a while, and I'd like to work in American Citizen Services."

I just don't remember the reaction to that, but they didn't have any kind of clear way for people

to rotate and get a variety of experiences; and a second tour officer was treated exactly like a first tour officer; and that bothered me, because here was Richard and my good friend Patricia Hanigan from Mexico City. So there were three of us who were on the same track, had started in the same class, had gone to our first posts in the same country together, over here now. Here is Patricia Hanigan, really brilliant, wonderful officer in the Econ (Economic) Section, with an office and a secretary; and here is Richard in the Political Section with an office; and here I am, just starting at the very bottom again, with no sense of what my tour was going to be like and what my responsibilities would be! So I decided to help shape that. Sometimes that was well received, and sometimes it wasn't. But I had nothing to lose because this is my job and this is what I'm going to spend my time doing.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Ultimately, I would just say it was one of the lightest. I worked in the Immigrant Visa Section with Kathy Cahir, who, as I said before, was one of the best managers I've come across in any of my work experiences, but also a great human being. Kathy Cahir brings out the best in everybody. She values what people bring to the job.

Q: Her position was what?

LOAR: She was the head of the Immigrant Visa Section. Now in Seoul, you know, that's a huge job, and it was a lot of work with the military and their spouses, and "their spouses they wanted to bring over to the United States." [Laughter] Some of "those spouses" were older than their mother.

Q: Yes, I know it.

LOAR: See! That was a hard thing too, because you knew this was not legit (legitimate). You knew it carrying out these things. But it was not encouraged that you explore that deeply. If this guy says he wants to bring in this woman who's older than his mother, and that she's going to be his wife, this is what we do. If he says it, this is it. And that was a little discouraging.

The other thing was that I had a nephew who was adopted from Korea. So I asked to work on the immigrant visas for all the Korean adoptions, and I spent a lot of time getting to know that system and getting to ultimately respect how they did it; and there was some reporting to Washington on it.

Q: Yes. Well, let's talk a bit about the line. First of all, talk about the line immigrant thing. When I was there I was concerned that there might be fraud.

LOAR: Just perhaps.

Q: There had never been a real fraud investigation. So I went to Barbara Watson at a conference, and I said, "Barbara, I think we may have a problem. There's a lot of smoke, and I'd like somebody to come out because our security officer wasn't very interested in this." So she yanked out the old security officer, transferred him, and brought in a new hot shot, who was very

good, Ed Lee, who came in and uncovered a big fraud; and most of the section got fired. Well, while we were doing this, I didn't know that a whole new fraud system was starting in fake petitions. It started just about the time we got rid of the old one. [Laughter] This is ten years before.

What documentation and problems with regular line visa cases did you find?

LOAR: I loved the cases where they'd bring siblings over, because you know, sometimes the wait was 15 to 20 years. So their siblings had gone over and petitioned for them because the line, the numbers, were so slow that it took a good 15 or 20 years to be able to go over there.

So you could really look back, and you would see pictures of the Koreans who were in Japanese military dress, and who had their names changed from Korean names to Japanese names. You really got a sense of what life was like for the Koreans living under the domination of the Japanese. There were really interesting, heartfelt stories. You'd ask, "Why did you get married so young?", particularly of the girls.

The Foreign Service National team at the embassy in Korea, as you know, is very highly educated -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ...very motivated. The Immigrant Visa team were almost all women. There were a few men. They have individual teams. It was extremely hierarchical, usually headed by an older woman who was past 50. The others were more recent graduates of Ewha University or the other prestigious universities.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: They had excellent English, were very well mannered, very polite, very well dressed. Some of them took better vacations than I was taking. Very motivated, very professional, always on time. One of the things that I valued was that they would give me background information. I would say, "Why did this girl get married so young? In Korea you don't, you didn't get married that young." And they said, "Well, as soon as the girl reached puberty or any part of her sexuality was developing, or she was going through puberty, they married her off to someone in the village immediately, so that when the Japanese came, it was less likely that they would take that girl away and put her into sexual slavery for the purpose of the Japanese camp.

Q: Called the "comfort women," yes.

LOAR: Right, which is ultimately what they called that. And that was just shocking to me, what that meant for these girls, who were barely teenagers, because it wasn't a part of the natural culture to be married that young. And then to have the older woman who would say, "There's feelings about the Japanese." I guess it was a woman in her late 50s, and they were talking about what it was like living under the Japanese, and how in their vocabulary they had several names for Japanese men, and they were all insulting. So you would tie your shoe like a Japanese man,

you would go to the bathroom like a Japanese man, you would make love like a Japanese man, you would eat like a Japanese man, and every one of those was an insult!

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And we can laugh about it, but their feelings were so, so deep.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it all helped in doing the job, you know, and understanding why somebody would be posing in the picture with a Japanese military uniform.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Why their name was changed? Would you be suspicious of them? Why I went from a Korean name to a Japanese name to a Korean name again? And there was, I'm sure, a lot of fraudulence. But I think in our section there was such a high standard of pride in the work, especially among the Foreign Service Nationals. They wanted the officers to understand when these people came in and presented themselves.

I think there was a lot of fraud among the young military enlisted men bringing over wives - tremendous fraud.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Utterly frustrating to me to have to ignore the fraud, but it was not something that I was allowed to look into. I remember once talking about it, and how I was going to do "this," and that was highly, highly discouraged. If an American decides he wants to bring this person over, whatever arrangement he has made, financial or otherwise, that's what he's going to do; and that's it, and we just move on.

Q: You'd better explain for the record why there would be this fraud. What was in it for everybody. I mean this marrying your grandmother or the equivalent? [Laughter]

LOAR: Well, Korea was just going through an opening. It wasn't a thoroughly flourishing democracy as it's on its way to being now, and there were so many restrictions on the Koreans. There was a big, big opening either right before we got there, which was when the Olympics, the Korean Olympics were. The Seoul Olympics, when were you there?

Q: No.

LOAR: After that there was a gigantic opening to the outside world -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ...where Korea then had visitors from all over the world come and look at Korea, and to

understand what was going on there. For the first time, people of my age, and younger and their parents who never had this opportunity, had permission from the government to have passports to travel overseas. So there was a gigantic explosion of people wanting to and being able to travel outside their country. But there was still, you know, economic hardship for many, many people in Korea -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ...and for a lot of women who attached themselves to the military bases and made their living in prostitution. At some point, if someone became too old to make their living in prostitution, then they became somebody who was a madam or managed the prostitution services. And then when they were too old for that, they would then marry an American soldier and come to the United States.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that part of it just got pretty tiresome, and you realize what you're doing was not always in the best interest of the United States. But there was a strong relationship with the U.S. military there, whose feelings they made very clear to the embassy consular people at the highest levels, that if an American officer wants to do this, we're not going to be investigating these fraudulent claims, and we're not going to be looking at how much money this guy got, or what the deal was. But I do remember being astounded at this one guy bringing over somebody whose wife was older than his mother, and they clearly knew nothing about each other. And I remember when I was pushing it, I was kind of being told, "But this is not our wish, and we're not going to do this."

Q: When I was there, we had been interviewing American civilians, usually military who are out of the military, who would come back.

LOAR: Yes, but there's a lot of that too. Yes.

Q: And arranged for a marriage.

LOAR: Right.

Q: And we used to actually refuse marriages. We had this joint interview. We'd ask them each how much they knew each other, and find out there was no real connection. After I left I think the question was put to Washington. They said, "Don't do it!"

LOAR: Yes.

Q: The one thing I found - I don't know whether you have had this feeling - but I used to talk to the younger officers who were doing this. Sometimes I'd get very frustrated at them, and say, "Look. You do your best on this, but at least you're dealing with a country whose people when they hit the United States are as little tigers, and they're not going to end up on welfare.

LOAR: Most of them don't.

Q: They're going to do well, and they'll be an asset, no matter how they got in. Do your best, but don't worry because actually we're dealing with a high grade of ore here -

LOAR: Yes.

Q: ...as far as future American citizens." I mean this is -

LOAR: Yes, right. So, you know, because you were really looking for substance, after doing these, you know, this was sometimes frustrating.

And on the adoption side I got to meet the adoption agencies, find out how they met with people in the United States. It was very interesting, because the Koreans had gotten a lot of criticism during the Olympics, and then the foreign journalists came in, and there were headlines, and there were stories about Korea's number two export, behind cars, being babies and children for adoption. Part of it was that it was very well run, and if someone for one reason or another could not keep their child, you know, they were in service, they would give it up. Some of the agencies were tied to churches and Christian organizations. I think we got to know it pretty thoroughly, and that it wasn't a fraudulently run operation, and that they did have the interests of the children at heart.

I didn't know (it was very interesting) that when Korean couples adopted, it was extremely secret. They would hide it from the mother-in-law because it would be a great shame if the woman couldn't conceive herself. You'd be in the agencies, and they'd show you files. Then, there would be these locked files behind these locked doors, and that was where the Korean domestic adoptions were done. I thought it was very interesting.

But, after the stories in the press, they pretty much said they were going to shut down the adoptions, except for the handicapped. They would let those go, and they were very straight-faced about saying it, "Well, of course, we wouldn't keep the handicapped! We'll take care of our..." The story was, "We will take care of our own children. You know, if there are problems, and a family needs to give a child up, or a grown woman needs to give a child up, we Koreans, we can take care of this ourselves."

So, while I was there, there was a lot of concern in the United States that this meant they were shutting down the adoptions. The U.S. had meetings with Korean government officials, which is not something I had a lot of experience with. But I found an issue which got me out of the Visa Section, and that was very interesting. We found out that there was a public way of doing things and reality. As long as there were Americans looking to take care of these children, and these adoption agencies still had kids who needed to be adopted, if they couldn't be placed domestically, the agencies were still going to send them out internationally. I think there were 7,500 children a year adopted out of Korea to the United States.

Q: The majority of them were girls, weren't they, or not?

LOAR: I don't know. My nephew is a boy. But he was older when he was adopted; he was four years old. I don't know if it was a majority of girls or not. To tell you the truth, I didn't notice. I don't remember focusing on that.

But I do know that it was so surprising to American sensibilities that they would say, "If a child has a harelip or a heart defect, of course we're going to let somebody else take him, because we're not going to keep him here. And the truth is that Americans would adopt children with physical impairments, and spend the money to help them and heal whatever their difficulty or their problem was, and take them into their homes. It was a very interesting process, and I got to know a lot about Korean sensibilities from the way that they handled that.

Q: Well, when I was there, ten or more years before you were there, we had the same thing. The Koreans kept saying they were going to shut this down.

LOAR: Right.

Q: But the truth of the matter was that, if Koreans adopted a child overtly, that child would end up as a slave to the family.

LOAR: Right, because they were second-class, yes.

Q: And most of the adoptions usually were picking up somebody from a third cousin or something, and getting them -

LOAR: In the bloodline.

Q: ...yes, on the bloodline, and getting them put onto - I mean they would cook the birth records and all this.

LOAR: Right. Yes.

Q: So that was how adoptions really were handled.

LOAR: Yes. It was very interesting.

Q: It was a very successful program.

LOAR: It was, and I must say, I know a lot of American families. I have a good friend, Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, who is a member of Congress from Philadelphia. She adopted a little girl from Korea and was well known for it. I think she was the first single woman to adopt from overseas. She wrote a book about it. She was an advocate for it. She and her husband took many children from Korea, and did place them, and gave them medical care, and all that kind of stuff. They were sincere in what they were doing, and I thought that was interesting.

Q: Yes. When I was there, we had one woman that came to my attention. I said, "Oh, we're sending a child to Mia Farrow and André Previn."

LOAR: Oh, gosh! Soon-Yi!

Q: Who later became quite famous in sort of a scandal with marrying Woody Allen. [Laughter]

LOAR: Yes. That's right. Oh, isn't that interesting. That's right. She did come from Korea.

Q: Yes, yes. Oh, yes!

LOAR: Why was it that I missed the nice part of the job. That was the fun part of the job.

Q: Yes. Well, what was your impression of Korea at the time you were there?

LOAR: You know we'd been in Mexico. We got there in warm weather, and we had the language. We got nice housing in a really beautiful Mexican neighborhood, and my son could walk down the street to the Montessori school. When we got to Korea, we were on an Army base. Now, I had never been on a military base before. The diplomatic compound was on the military base, Yongsan, so you're completely cut off from Korean society. Plus, we didn't have the language. The only ones who really had the language right were the Peace Corps volunteers or those who were really, really good and spent two years studying (which I didn't think was in my temperament to do). And, surrounding this military base, you have to go through checkpoints. You know what it's like.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: You have to go through checkpoints with giant American men with assault guns, through various checkpoints until you get to your little housing compound; and the little housing compound also was a tad worrisome because every house was the same!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And we used to call it Levittown on the River Han.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: You know, the Han River in Korea. The house we had was less attractive than the rest because you had to go down the steps. We were told, "Oh, that gets flooded an awful lot." Gee, I looked forward to that! They were white cinderblock houses. You went in, and the furniture was all this sort of standard issue, and I remember thinking, "Well, I just won't entertain. Just let it be known - I'm not entertaining! No one's setting foot in this house!"

And then, over time, like anything else, you get used to everything, and you value the checkpoints, because your kids can walk around and play day and night on the compound. It did take awhile though. There were soldiers who had guns, and I had no experience with walking around with people who had arms. And I had no idea what they - I mean I wasn't doing anything bad, but how did I know that they had that a positive view towards me or my sons?

Q: Yes.

LOAR: You were in this strange little military base in the middle of Korea, where they had movies for 50 cents, Baskin Robbins, Burger King, and the largest commissary in the world, where they had more brands of Oreos and more variations on Oreos than in any supermarket I had ever seen. And it was just the strangest cultural thing. Korea was one cultural experience. But it was being on this military base, and I said, “We’re not going to unpack, you know. They paid for us to get here, but we’re not staying!” And I really did not expect to stay. I thought we’d go back, or I thought, “I just don’t want to move, but that would mean I’d have to spend the rest of my life here,” which was not attractive.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: But it was a very hard adjustment, and that was sort of a signal that, “Gee, maybe we’re not cut out for this moving from post to post thing. Maybe we just started this too late in life, or maybe it’s just not a good mix for us.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Both Richard and I were working, so we both had to report to work right away, because you’re a tandem couple. “Well, that’s great, but we don’t give a rat’s ass! Come in to work!”

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that wasn’t the case, though, when I actually got into the job. Kathy Cahir said, “Get yourself set, and when you have your kids set in school, and you have your house all set, then you report to work. I don’t want to see you till you’re set.”

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ...which was a very smart management decision –

Q: Oh, yes!

LOAR: ...because I wasn’t distracted. And, of course, I didn’t believe that she meant that, because I thought, “Huh! You can’t mean this, so I’ll keep coming in!” She goes, “Did you get your shipment?” “No.” “Well then, what are you doing here? You get that taken care of! Any kids that registered in school? No? Then stop.” That was just so smart, because she knew that I wasn’t going to be focused right now.

Richard didn’t have [laughter], anybody telling him that, and I knew I was going to take care of it. So he did walk into the Political Section and start work.

But we had to take our childcare with us, because we were so concerned. It’s not something they [the Foreign Service] have in their sensibility.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: If you had a tandem couple and there's some children involved in the mix, that somewhere along the line someone's going to have to be responsible for that. But we did have our interim childcare we took from Mexico. She was actually a European graduate student. She came back to the United States. Of course, we paid for her fare back to the United States. When we were in consultation, we paid for her hotel room in Washington. All of this was out of pocket, you know.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: We stopped in Hawaii on the way. She had her separate airfare, her separate everything, so that we could have some continuity. She was with us for a month, which was really, really great for the kids. That really helped us.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: This was our childcare person wasn't a stranger. It didn't seem at the time that I was in the Foreign Service that they had any particular concerns about tandem couples having particularly different challenges. You get two housing costs for one and all that. They did have challenges with regards to how you got assignments; and, then, if there were children, how you began work and your official responsibilities. But partly that wasn't the norm. I don't know what percentage of the Foreign Service were tandems. They said we were one of the few to come in together. We had met each other before we came in and came in as a couple.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: We were one of the very few they knew who had done that. Some tandem couples had met when they were in, or some had one spouse who came in and then later the other spouse came in. But it wasn't like anyone had given any thought to tandem couples' particular challenges, or needs, or opportunities in the Foreign Service. So that was a bit of a challenge.

But you know, you get used to life on the military base and then you take your little shuttle bus to work; and that was also very interesting, riding on this military bus [laughter]. But then we became very good friends with our neighbors. We were on the north side of the big street on the compound, so they called us the North Koreans. We had great pride in being that; and we became very close to the people on our north side of the compound. We are still very close to some of those folks including a great officer, Al O'Neal (who would be a great person for you to talk to), who had a Korean-born wife, Jen O'Neal, whom he actually met in the United States when she was teaching language. She taught us a lot about Korea, and it was a really enriching and wonderful experience, so that over time this isolated base and this isolated side of the compound really became very much home to us. We got to like it a great deal. It was a challenge and a great discovery for us. The people said it was just like Hawaii. It's a great vacation spot!

We were very spoiled in Mexico. We went to every beach resort; we just headed out of town for

three-day weekends. We had great diplomatic discounts, took the kids everywhere, took our nannies with us on these vacations, and just hit all the beaches, and it was so much fun. We had the language, we knew which hotels...

In Korea they're a hard-working people, to whom the idea of vacation is not something that is usual.

Q: I think it's something like a 54-hour week.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: I think is the norm -

LOAR: Right.

Q: Or at least it was, yes.

LOAR: And so we figured, "Okay. Well, we need a little break. Let's go to Cheju-do, which is the island in the south that's supposed to be like Hawaii," and the geography is like Hawaii. However, the amenities are not [laughter]!

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: The beaches are not! So it was a very interesting experience! But we did relax by climbing mountains, because that's what you do when you're a hard-working industrious Korean.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: And it was a great experience for us. Coming back on the plane ... I'll never forget this. We were in the back of the plane, and everyone was in front of us, and everyone had straight black hair, and I realized this was really a homogeneous society.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And there's one race, and conformity is so important, and men dyed their hair if it went gray. It was just an eye-opener; I really was dying for variety.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Then I remember one of our trips home, just looking around the United States. I'm like, "Oh!" landing in LA (Los Angeles, California) and seeing blacks, and Hispanics, and redheads, and blondes, and short people. I'm just thinking I love this diversity, and I love this about the United States. I love the range and the mix of who we are.

So, that was hard to get used to. You were always the foreigner. I'd go out with this wonderful

team of Foreign Service Nationals, who were so lovely, so polite, so nice, so kind, also very interested in my family and in how my husband married me when my Chinese Zodiac sign was a horse, and a white horse at that, which was very troublesome for women because it meant you had a fiery temperament, and “Did he know that?” I learned so much.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: They were so open about themselves. I’d go out to eat with them and I’d try to use my chopsticks as best I could, and I was always stared at. I was always the odd person in a restaurant, the odd person on the street.

Even though there were 40,000 American troops there, you were still odd looking, and I just never felt that I blended in. I thought, “Well, if I wear my glasses, and I wear a hat, and they can’t see that my hair’s this color, can they still tell that I don’t blend in?”

It was such an interesting experience, and now I know how people feel when they come to the United States, and they just don’t feel like they’re in the right place. We would go hiking with the kids on the Korean national holidays, and we’d do all the Korean things of hiking mountains. The Korean ladies and the Korean grandmothers would come up to my sons and grab them by the cheeks and touch their skin. My son was, what was he? Second grade? I guess that was first or second grade, and he did not like strange, older women coming up and granny hugging him, so we gave him a walking stick and taught him the word for “please don’t touch me,” and then he would sort of like push off with the “please don’t touch me!” [Laughter]

Q: Yes. [Laughter]

LOAR: But it’s just that it was very enriching and fabulous. We wrote a lot of letters home, and letters to my uncle who had served overseas for USAID (United States Agency for International Development), and to the extended family. We were writing a lot about our experiences and reporting back to them what was happening.

Q: Yes. Well, the Far East is entrancing no matter how you look at this.

LOAR: Oh, yes! Utterly interesting! Just fascinating, and a great chance to see things, and learn about the food, and that Koreans are so private until you break through, and then they are so warm.

Q: Why don’t we stop at this point. And the next time when we pick this up, we’ve talked about the work in the Non [NIV].

LOAR: Yes.

Q: Were you doing other work than...

LOAR: Yes, I did American Citizen Services, which is another enriching phenomenon!

Q: Well, we'll talk about American [Citizen] Services. We've already talked about the visa side of things, we've talked about living on the compound, and next time we'll be talking about 1) your impression of the government, and the Korean's society as such, using your Foreign Service eye on this; and also [2] about American Services, and the expat community.

Q: Okay. Today is 23 May 2002. Theresa, we're in South Korea. You were there from when to when?

LOAR: Let's see...I left there in '91, so maybe '89 to '91 I'd say.

Q: Eighty-nine, okay, to ninety-one. Well, let's talk about a couple of things. You said you were doing American Services for a while.

LOAR: Yes, I did consular work over there.

Q: Yes. What did this sort of consist of? Can you tell any stories or tell us of anything-

LOAR: Well, this was Korea right after the '88 Olympics, when there was a big opening for Korea, when they changed a lot of the public signs on the roads, and not just have it in Hangeul (modern name for Korean alphabet), but in English as well to make Korea more open to outsiders. It was a big point of pride for them as a country. They felt they had reached a level of sophistication and an opening up as a country, which was very important to them. So we went to Korea, my husband and I, after that. We lived on the base, and I just don't remember what I told you so far about this.

Q: Well, we talked about living on Compound One or Two, I guess.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And we've talked about the time on the Immigrant Visa line.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: But then you were moved from Visas to American Services.

LOAR: Citizen Services.

Q: Citizen Services.

LOAR: Right.

Q: And what were those?

LOAR: That were a large number of American citizens who were posted to the military base,

and an extremely high number of young single women who'd come in to register their babies, which was shocking to me! I'm like, "You got it together. You're in the military. Did you choose to have these? Do you have some..."

Q: Yes, having unwed mothers in the military doesn't seem to work at all.

LOAR: Well, I think it probably may have come from the communities they came from, Where unwed pregnancies were pretty common. And that was shocking to me, and I was always really dying to ask them questions, which, of course, we couldn't do.

Q: But you can't, right.

LOAR: And there were lots of Americans who came over to teach English, and got themselves in weird situations.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was an interesting case of a couple of American women - one American woman murdering another one; and that was a fascinating thing, because then we had a U.S. attorney come over to investigate.

Q: What had sparked that?

LOAR: That was before my time.

Q: Oh.

LOAR: The investigation was when I was there, and I was less interested, frankly, in delving into why! [Laughter] But we wanted to provide cooperation to them, because they were really trying to get at what happened there. And it was a relationship deal. It always is, isn't it?

And we also had a lot of Korean citizens who had left Korea during the dark years and the tough times, when the government was very oppressive. They had immigrated to the United States, and had gotten an education (like a lot of Korean immigrants do here), and had made something of themselves. They were coming back to Korea and hoping to do something to contribute to their society; to be able to profit economically and to play a role. So there was a lot of giving up their American citizenship and getting back their Korean citizenship. I don't remember the details. I did know it extremely well then. I remember thinking, "We certainly want these people to come back and to contribute to what's going on in Korea, but why do they have to give up their American citizenship? Why wouldn't they be able to just make that contribution?"

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a lot of that, and it was an interesting phenomenon to see more and more Koreans coming back, and feeling like they had a chance to do something here, or profit from the economic openings that were happening in Korea. That was sort of the rest of the work. We had

young Americans who would die and leave their estates, and one very interesting man who was retired military (because a lot of retired military stayed on in Korea, especially if they had Korean spouses). This guy had a huge ivory collection. Our job was to inventory it, and you had to be very careful how you sent ivory into the U.S.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I remember that as an interesting project - looking at these beautiful, gorgeous pieces of carved ivory and inventorying that to go back.

The head of ACS (American Citizen Services) when I came in was Vince Principe [Vincent Principe], a wonderful Foreign Service officer. Lovely man, who would bake cakes for the marines and for the section. He was just a generous, kind person, who had a deep belief in protecting Americans and providing services. He would go out and give speeches (I remember this) to American business groups about the dangers of Americans driving in Korea, because, of course, the great danger was that if you drove and you got into an accident, you would be blamed for whatever happened to that person, and their family, and anything else, Bad Karma, that might happen to this family.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a lot of outreach. We had a number of interesting cases with mentally ill Americans who needed to go back to the United States. The challenge was how we were going to get them back, and getting cooperation with the airlines that are not American airlines. So there were a lot of economic issues with American companies, and with trying to get their cooperation and help in getting Americans back to the United States whom they didn't want in Korea, and whom we didn't particularly want in America. But what the heck! They were Americans, and they were going to go there.

But I remember coming into this section, I was the second American officer in ACS. We had Vince who was head of the section, and they'd never had a second officer before. I was offered a desk that I shared with one of the Korean FSNs, and a phone line I shared with them. I thought, "Gee, hmm, I'm a second tour Foreign Service officer. Perhaps I could have my own phone line, and perhaps even I could have an office to sit in." At this time, my husband was up in the Political Section and, of course, had a very nice office; and my other good friend, whom we started with in the Foreign Service, was in the Econ Section, and had a nice office, and a desk, and a secretary. I thought, "Gee, shouldn't this happen to the American officer in this section?" I suggested that to the consul general, who said, "Yea...mmm...sure...that's a good idea." But not much happened.

And then there was this wonderful guy - I wish I could remember his name - who was up in the Admin (Administrative) Section. I said, "Don't you think American officers should have their own offices?" He was a really nice guy in the Admin Section (he might have been the deputy head of Admin in Seoul at the time) and came down, and of course the Foreign Service Nationals thought it would be appropriate, "Why doesn't Mrs. Loar have an office?"

Q: Sure, oh, yes! I mean, why not?

LOAR: They thought it was inappropriate that I didn't have one. "Mrs. Loar, you need an office." They were just so great, so earnest, and educated, and dedicated. And so we cooked it up with this admin guy, and he built this office in his section. [Laughter] Then the consul general who was downstairs said, "Really nice idea, very good, ah huh!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: "So glad you thought of it sir!" And then the Foreign Service Nationals took it upon themselves to get the furniture, because the embassy put old crappy furniture in the office, and it was "Oh! No, no, no. Mrs. Loar, you need good furniture!" And I had the best couch and chairs in this office. It was nice. Now the second officer had a permanent office in there. That was actually a fun little project to do. But it was a little bit of consular officers being sort of these second-class citizens.

Q: Did you run into the phenomenon of GIs marrying Korean women, and in many cases it was very suspicious. In other words, that this was a put up deal, that they would get them into the United States, and then they would go separate ways.

LOAR: Well, that was over in the IV (Immigrant Visa) Section. That was in my rotation in the IV Section. I don't know if I talked about that with Kathy Cahir being the head of that section. She was wonderful.

Q: Yes, I was just wondering because when I was there, I'm thinking not so much a GI, an American would come to Korea and often meet an older woman, sometimes of dubious reputation, at the airport, fall immediately in love -

LOAR: Yes, yes! Lifelong commitment.

Q: And want to get married the next day, you know.

LOAR: Well, there's a lot of that. Actually I remember having a soldier sit before me who was about 19, and the woman that he was bringing over to be his wife was older than his mother! "And did you tell your mom about this? Does Mom know that your bride to be..." [Laughter], and the bottom line was, there was no interest in looking into that. If an American soldier said, "I'm telling you that I'm going to marry this person," than that's what was going to happen.

Q: We stopped it! Anyway...

LOAR: There wasn't much interest in that, and we could be as sarcastic and have as much fun as we wanted, but at the end of the day, that was going to go forward. It was discouraging to me that we weren't more serious about some of the fraud issues, but I guess you do your best.

Q: What about American business people? The Koreans can be pretty rough in business deals.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: The mid-career type people in a shoe factory or something, will be told, "You go out and collect that money from that man, or get this deal, and don't come back without it signed, or something."

LOAR: There were a number of similar disputes where Americans or Korean Americans would get arrested; and who would say they did something wrong or immoral, and these were really commercial disputes. They would just put the Americans in jail because they didn't get from them something they thought the Americans should have paid, whether it was compensation for something, or just that they didn't pay their bill or a bill that they thought they should pay. There were a number of those kinds of interesting, odd cases that took a lot of negotiation, where the Econ Section would get involved, and the trade ministry, and they would decide whether this American who committed this terrible violation of not paying the bribe or kickback could get out of jail.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a case where an American was involved in an automobile accident, and was sent away. The company spirited the person out of the country right away, because they were going to go after all the assets of the company to pay for the damage done to the Korean who was hit in the accident, and the Korean wasn't killed. It was this idea that if a person is hurt, breaks a leg, or something, then your company has to compensate for all of that.

I actually didn't spend that much time in ACS. I spent a lot of time on the Immigrant Visa line. The ACS time was the interesting time, because it was a chance to broadly see what the needs of Americans were. But the military took care of itself very well most of the time. So it wasn't like in Mexico City, where people would come down and find themselves in jail for drug use, and all that kind of stuff. It was a much calmer pace and a calmer time.

Q: What was your view of the Korean government. Your dealing with aspects of it, and Korean rule per se.

LOAR: Well, I had a chance to work with the government on the issue of adoptions. I don't remember if we talked about this before, or not.

Q: Well, talk about it again even if you talked about it before.

LOAR: After the Olympics, the Koreans were embarrassed by the international press that had headlines like, "Korean Number One Export is Cars, Number Two Export is Orphans," because at that time there were 6,000 or 7,000 Korean children adopted a year overseas. So, while they sort of shut it down, it was still going on. I had this time on my hands, and bored to death with my job, and was looking for some more oomph and some more opportunities for substance. I talked to people in the different ministries, and they pretty much would say, flat out, "Look, if a baby is damaged and there's something wrong with him, sure we'll let Americans take him. Otherwise we are able to take care of our own." They would say that, but then the numbers

would keep increasing. So I thought it was an interesting thing: they had to act like they were saving face and not really saving face.

The adoption agencies were very well run, and extremely organized, and seemed to be very concerned about the welfare of the children and about doing things right. I think they had an interest in working well with the embassy to get the adoptions done and the visas done, so the babies could go overseas. We had an interest in having things go pretty smoothly. There were three or four different agencies.

Q: What about Korean society? Were you picking up things from the local employees, and from observations, and all that?

LOAR: Well, the thing that struck me was how there was such an interest in self-improvement. Well, for instance, my name was Theresa. There were three or four different Koreans on the staff who were converting to Catholicism. Now, you know, being Catholic my whole life, I'm like, "Gee, do you really know what the deal is?" [Laughter] Perhaps I'm being sarcastic, but a lot of them took the name Theresa. It was a self-improvement thing to convert, to study, and to come into the faith - just like studying English. There were a large number of Presbyterians and a fervor, a real strong desire, to improve yourself through religion, through learning English, through all of these things.

It really struck me how focused they were on getting the outside indicators of what success would be, and getting those in line, and very concerned that their children go to good schools, of course, and very concerned that people knew that their children would go to good schools. It was almost like they didn't value themselves as highly as they should have, considering where they had come from after the Korean War. It really struck me that they undervalued themselves and depended so much on outside validation for who they were and what they'd accomplished.

But there were all the student protests when we were there - regular springtime events. My take on that was that they worked really, really hard in high school, and their mothers prayed really, really hard and long at the temples, the Buddhist temples, to get them in to college, and when they got there, they just kind of blew off a lot of steam and relaxed.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And then had time for these protests. Our older son Michael, at that time, was at the Seoul Foreign School, which was right near Yonsei University. The tear gas would come into his classroom, and he'd come home and then say, [whispers] "Oh, yea! We had a protest today! It was great! Exciting!" And then one time, one of the students climbed the wall to Seoul Foreign School - as if they could care less about these little kids.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it was great excitement.

The ambassador's residence was broken into when we were there. Don [Donald] Gregg and his

wife, who were just lovely people, were really admired by the Koreans. Don Gregg, who had been CIA station chief many years ago, really cared a lot about Korea. He and his wife, Meg, who were just very graceful, very nice people liked by the embassy and admired by the Koreans, really knew their way around. Their residence was broken into in the course of one of these student protests. Supposedly, the students were protesting over U.S. trade. It was [laughter] because the U.S. was forcing them to take in oranges and bananas, and we weren't letting in their fruit. Yes, I mean that's a really cutting-edge issue for students on campuses across Korea. So it was an orchestrated thing. But it was a scary thing because the protesters jumped over the wall and got into the residence. The Greggs were okay, but it did make everybody feel uneasy, and it was uncomfortable.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And then, a couple of weeks after that, we had a break-in in our home within the military compound. Of course, everybody thought the worst. It was the middle of the night, and there's a pounding on the back door. We got the kids, and ran across the street to another house. It turned out it was some drunken guy who had tried all the other doors on this street, and they were open. Ours was locked in the back, so he was really mad, and he was kicking it. [Laughter] And, of course, he circled the guard posts, who were all asleep. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter] Okay!

LOAR: So he made his way down our street, on the North Korean side of the compound. He got mad because our door was locked! [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: It was terrifying, though, it was!

Q: Oh, sure.

LOAR: Because it was not very long after the break-in, we were sure that "Oh, my gosh! Now they're coming into houses!" We had the typical cinder block Levittown on the Han house, which was utterly charmless and looked like everything else.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it just turned out that's what it was.

There was a sense that it was inconvenient, because you had to alter your route home, but there were these regular spring protests. They still go on, I think.

Q: Yes, well, they were during my time. What about the role of Korean women? What were you seeing then, from your vantage point?

LOAR: Well, for one thing, I joined a group, that was just getting started, of Korean women, and

some American and foreign diplomats, and some journalists, who had lived overseas and who had had international experience or who had worked for or were working for, foreign companies in Korea. We would meet at this one club somewhere downtown. My friend Caroline Wagner, who was an econ officer, and I would go to these meetings together. It was fascinating, because these were Korean women who had lived outside or worked within foreign national companies so that they didn't have to play by the rules of what Korean society expected of them. It was fascinating to me, because they were extremely well educated and very articulate. The ones who lived overseas and came back to Korea were as frustrated as heck as they were expected to live by a different standard, which was not full participation. They were not getting access to the jobs that they were prepared to do, educated to do, and capable of doing. At the beginning, it was primarily foreigners in that group; but, and towards the end, it became primarily Korean women, which I thought was really interesting.

That's when I learned that the Korean government actually had a maternity policy for working women, which our government didn't have at the time. [Laughter] So we ran right back to get the State Department to jump on that one, but never got anywhere with that.

But it was interesting how they did certain things they valued and understood. They wouldn't necessarily give women access to the highest jobs that were available and were capable of doing, but they did want them in the work force; and the fact they had a decent maternity policy would indicate that they wanted them in the work force, which I thought was interesting.

They also gave women a day off every month because you need that day off every month.

Q: Oh!

LOAR: And I always thought that was kind of an odd and interesting thing, "that us skwemen 'ave (women have) our day off, you know."

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I said, "Okay." It's like I'd be embarrassed to ask for a day off every month! But it was sort of a standard thing, and it was just, "You know why. It's just we need to have it."

Q: Well, was there any talk about women were now, by this time, generally a graduate of Ewha Women's University, a top rate recruit, that women were beginning to penetrate up or not?

LOAR: Well, there was a professor -- I forget which university, it may have been Ewha -- Park, Yong-Ock, who was focused on women's leadership in politics. I got to know her through Richard. We got to hear some of the things she was trying to do (and she's visited me here a number of times since then, and I'd really like to catch up with her, as a matter of fact). She was looking for openings for women in the political parties, and hearing about how women in other countries did it, and how women were ready to take that place, and were ready to get in there - not just in companies and private companies, but in the government, as well. But, no, I didn't see many women moving into high positions. Richard knew a lot of the people in the foreign ministry, but you didn't really see women diplomats.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And later, and when I was back at the State Department more recently, I had some women come on a delegation that was sent by their government to look at the model that we had at the State Department on this Interagency Council on Women. They included some women from ministries in that, but not all. There were men who were sent to take a look at this model, which I thought was very interesting.

Q: Well, it probably makes sense, otherwise it would be a -

LOAR: It'd be machoist.

Q: Well, it would be a sealed off thing.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And it wouldn't go anywhere.

LOAR: Right. But it was an interesting opportunity.

A lot of the Foreign Service Nationals who worked at the embassy were very well educated, capable women. They had great pressure, of course, to produce sons; it was thought to be lucky to have two sons, which I have. I remember one who had one child, a girl, and she was going to have another baby pretty soon, and everyone prayed it'd be a boy. When it wasn't a boy it was a tragedy. Because she had two children, which was just kind of a standard number, and no boys, her mother-in-law was really going to give her a hard time. I thought that was kind of sad because a healthy successful pregnancy is a reason for joy. So that was the undervaluing of girls, in looking at that experience.

There was an officer at the time named Richard Pittard, who did a reporting cable on prenatal sex selection. Because of sonar scans and sonograms, couples were able to look at the fetus to see if it was a boy or a girl. They were selecting not to continue the pregnancies of girls; they would only really focus on continuing the pregnancies of the male fetuses. He was blocked from sending that back to Washington because there was concern that if enemies of Korea on the Hill, like perhaps Senator [Jesse] Helms and others, got that cable, they would really come after Korea hard and try to come down on them. The people in the embassy didn't want that to happen. But interestingly enough, prenatal sex selection is a phenomenon throughout Asia. Now looking back at that Richard Pittard had something there. It's a problem in China and it's a problem in many other places where there's a shortage of girls. And there's going to be a shortage of brides.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Right.

Q: To carry, you know -

LOAR: Gotta procreate guys!

Q: And it takes two to tango! You know, I mean really!

LOAR: Yes, that's right. But it was an indication of the undervaluing of girls and of women.

Q: Yes. Well then, you left there in what, '91?

LOAR: Ninety-one, yes.

Q: Whither?

LOAR: We came back to Washington. I had been a consular officer, but wanted to go work on a desk. As a consular officer, the desk offices had no interest at all in having USIA apply, so I thought, "Oh, yea. That job looks like a good job." I'd try to find out what the good jobs were. I wanted to be on a desk. Richard wanted to be on a desk. Richard, who had done politico-military affairs, had people begging him to -

Q: Yes, sure, sure.

LOAR: ...bid on this and bid on that [laughter], and I got was: "Well, you could try." I got the Costa Rica desk. I thought, "Fine. I'll take it, just so I know the new job is set." All the more senior people at the State Department, in the embassy there in Seoul, said, "You know, a desk job is a great place to go," and we had a wonderful country team, people who had been in the Foreign Service for a long time. We really had a good country team and a good sort of esprit de corps. We had Ray Burkhart as our DCM. It was good after we got used to the fact that you were always an outsider in Korea, and even with just a little tiny bit of language you're not ever going to blend in.

For our family, it was an interesting time, because we really did a lot of different things culturally, and traveled throughout Asia, and all of that. But you always stand out; you're always the foreigner, and you're never going to blend in.

Q: Did you get any feel while you were there of the threat from the north?

LOAR: Well, we had a lot of CODELs that came through. And, of course they didn't have consular officers handling CODELs. But my husband - the kind, supportive husband that he is - would try to throw some my way. So I got Pat Schroeder. I had a chance to show her around. I admired her as a congresswoman, and was really glad to do it.

Q: She really was very helpful in getting pension rights and things like this. Oh, boy!

LOAR: Yes. And she, you know, was on -

Q: Congresswoman from Colorado.

LOAR: Colorado, Pat Schroeder from Colorado, and she was on the Armed Services [House Armed Services Committee], I think.

Q: Yes, she was.

LOAR: It was actually during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that she came, just after that, and I think I was her control officer then. I'm just trying to remember that. The goal was to try and get the Koreans to kick in their fair share, which they had absolutely no intention of doing [laughter], and they were pretty clear about that. But Pat Schroeder and a congressman from Upstate New York were going around making the rounds.

Actually Pat Schroeder came around Valentine's Day. She brought Valentine's Day candy and cards for all the Foreign Service Nationals and the American officers. She was so thoughtful and wonderful.

She was someone I really admired, because she was a woman elected in her own right and not on her husband's or her father's coattails.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: She made it a point to take issues that were affecting women's lives and to put them on the legislative agenda for the United States. Years later, there was a great cover story in the New York Times Magazine about her and how her stuff has come to the mainstream now. But, she really had done tremendous work. I remember her talking about Social Security issues. She really looked at the basic needs that American women had and found witty, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes very dramatic ways of talking about it. And she really did it on her own right.

So I was thrilled to have a chance to escort her up to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) and to do the ritual of visiting to see what the troops are like and what the issues are. But I would never as a consular officer have been asked to do that. They did not ask consular officers to do that. They give them all to political-econ officers, and it was only because my husband interceded that I got this opportunity.

I had another chance. I had Geri [Geraldine] Ferraro, whom I also admire greatly on a visit. She and her husband had come to Korea. She was terrific. And I actually got to know her very well later on, when we did the Beijing Women's Conference. She was on our delegation. She's one of those people that the more you know her, the more you like her. She also was a great person who had just broken through on her own, and was active and making her mark in politics. Those were fun isolated incidents.

We always went up to the north; I even got a helicopter ride once [laughter]. My husband also arranged that.

Q: But the DMZ was very quiet -

LOAR: The sense of the danger from the north was palpable, but it wasn't exploding. They blasted that music, and did this and they did that.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: But there was no ... you know, that I was aware of, a real sense that it was going to ... there was reason for cause or alarm. Not that that wasn't reflecting on people in the ERs (emergency rooms), which I found so amusing!

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: That "in this time of tension, living here on this border, blah, blah, blah." For onward assignments, people would always say, "_____ is more less relaxing, yet less stressful, more relaxing." But here is the biggest commissary in the world with more configurations of Oreo cookies than I had seen in U.S. markets because these are American soldiers, and they need every brand of Oreo cookie.

Q: Yes, oh sure, sure.

LOAR: So anyways, I thought it somewhat an exaggerated claim.

Q: Oh yes. Well, everyone always does this, you know. I was in Personnel when they were trying to cut down on people abroad, and every place said "because of the time of crisis in _____," and you could fill in whatever country it was. It was always a time of crisis.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: ...and some places were noncritical. [Laughter

LOAR: [Laughter] That's right. Crisis looming! We can predict it.

DONALD P. GREGG
Ambassador
South Korea (1989-1993)

Chairman, The Korean Society

Ambassador Gregg was born and raised in New York and educated at Williams College. Joining the Central Intelligence Agency in 1951 he served with that Agency in Korea and Japan, as well as in Washington D.C. both at CIA Headquarters and in The White House, where served as National Security Advisor to President George Herbert Walker Bush. In 1989 he was nominated to be Ambassador to South Korea, where he served until 1993. Ambassador Gregg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: You were appointed by George Herbert Walker Bush...

GREGG: To be ambassador.

Q: To be ambassador. How did that come about? Did he ask?

GREGG: Yes. He asked me. He said, you know because of the Iran-Contra business everyone was saying you ought to take Brent Scowcroft to be your security advisor. I said, yes. He is a role model that everybody has. I understood that completely. Bush had defended me during the Iran-Contra thing very well. So people knew that I had been to Korea. They knew I was an Asian specialist, so it was I think a very natural thing to do.

Q: How did the preparations and the Senate hearing go?

GREGG: There was a long delay, and Senator Cranston had a man on his staff who devoted I think six months of his life to defeating my nomination. I have my hearings taped. I am very proud of them. It started out with Cranston dumping on me for 45 minutes. It was sort of like lying at the foot of Niagara Falls looking upward. You know, I was there by myself. I didn't have a lawyer. I didn't have anybody. I was all by myself, and just began to climb up the rope slowly hand over hand, just dealing with the questions and accusations and so forth. I finally got through in September.

Q: Was the questioning, was it just Cranston or was this you had to make political points?

GREGG: Yes, I think so, and to try to embarrass Bush. You know, it was very partisan. My children were all there. The man who leapt to my defense was Senator Helms, a man for whom I have a great many doubts. But it was a very interesting experience.

Q: During that experience you are always on the tightrope aren't you that you don't screw up your relations with the country you are going to, saying something that might help the Senate but it is not going to help you...

GREGG: There was no questioning about Korea. The questioning was all about my fitness to be ambassador because the feeling was I had deceived people because of the Iran Contra business.

Q: Well then you arrived in Korea September '89, and you were there until February of '93, basically the length of the Bush administration. What were the issues you felt you had to deal with when you went out there?

GREGG: Well the first issue I dealt with was the fact that we had nuclear weapons in South Korea. We had a nuclear inspection; an annual team came out to make sure that they were stored safely because something awful had happened in Spain or something. They had to report to me when they had finished. Everything was fine, but I said, "Why did this process start." They told me what had happened in Spain and how difficult that was. I realized, South Korea was already embarked on what they called *nordpolitik* (Northern Policy). It was based on Willy Brandt's

Ostpolitik. The government of South Korea was establishing relations with all of North Korea's friends and allies. They were moving toward an attempt to reach out to North Korea.

Q: By this time China and South Korea had relations.

GREGG: No, they were established in September of 1992. So we also were beginning to have suspicions about what was going on at Yongbyon, the North Korean's nuclear interest. So, I thought, my god, if we had nuclear weapons in the South, that is going to become an immediate issue. We will never take them out under pressure. It will become an issue for students in the South. It will become a sticking point with the North.

I went to USFK (U.S. Forces Korea) and asked, "Why are these here?" "Well they have always been here." I said, "Are they of any utility to you?" They said, "No." So I went to President Roh Tae Woo's national security advisor, a man to whom I was very close, and I said, "I think we ought to get them out of here." So it took some doing because it was part of the security blanket, but I was able to send in October of 1990, a message with the full support of the Blue House and USFK, I recommend we remove our nuclear weapons from South Korea. I had one brief message back from Dick Solomon who was assistant secretary at State. He said, "You will never know how helpful your message was." About a year later President Bush announced that we were pulling nuclear weapons back from all over the world. In Korea we went through a little dance because we had the "neither confirm nor deny" policy about whether we had nuclear weapons. But we worked out something where President Roh would say there are no nuclear weapons on Korean soil and the White House said we have no reason to object to that statement by President Roh. That is one of the best things I did.

Q: Had these nuclear weapons been something to which the South Korean government kind of hugged to their chest?

GREGG: Sure. But it was just part of the security blanket. But the relationship was closer. The sophistication of the relationship was greater. I made the point, look if you need nuclear weapons, they can be had in spades. But having these obsolescent things sitting in Osan was just an irritant.

Q: Well at that time I think I remember General Chapman back when I was there in '76- '79, that every time they did war games, they found that the North got into Seoul and all this, and they at the last day of the games they would call in massive air power to stop it. Had the balance changed by the time you were there?

GREGG: It was still iffy. That was the first thing that I asked when I got there. When I left it was very tenuous. The reading at that point was, if we had good weather, we can get air power deployed quickly enough and in large enough numbers to probably keep them out of Seoul. But if we have bad weather it still was doubtful whether we could hold Seoul. The problem of getting the people of Seoul across the Han River was just incredible. So it was still a very touchy defense scenario.

Q: Well how about on the economic side. Much had been made of Park Chung Hee's legacy that

he had set up a strong economic base there including doing things for the farmers which hardly anybody else had ever done in any other country, that is give them a living recompense for staying and growing rice and other things.

GREGG: Well, that became a major problem because the price of Korean rice was sky high, just because of the subsidies, and yet there was a tremendous emotional sentimental attachment on the part of the Korean people to their grandma on the farm. Carla Hills who was the Special Trade Representative came out and was pushing for us to let more beef in and rice in and so forth. One of them said, "Well why are you doing this? If the prices are lowered, and the markets are opened up, it is going to be the Australians that are going to sell us the beef, not you, and somebody else will sell the rice." Carla said, "We know that. We are not arguing for unilateral advantage. We are talking about freer trade."

It was shortly after her visit that six students vaulted over the wall of the residence and got into the residence and tried to set fire to it. My wife and I were in our bedroom. They tried the door once but did not try to break in. It took some time for the Korean cops to get themselves organized to rout them out. I didn't feel under any particular threat. I have had people come after me with real malice aforethought, and that was not the case here. These kids I think, were surprised at how easy it was to get into the house. So they were eventually routed out. They did about \$35,000 worth of damage to the furnishings.

Q: What were they after?

GREGG: Protesting the opening up of the beef quotas. You know, they were making a demonstration. Who knows what they were after. It was actually a very good way to start a tour as ambassador because we behaved rather well. My wife in particular was very gracious. We were on television. We thanked the Korean police who actually had done a lousy job, but we praised them. The Koreans were deeply embarrassed, but we had behaved well, and actually it was a very good way to start a tour. But it showed me just how sensitive these economic issues were, particularly when farmers were concerned.

Q: Well, what was your role in the trade issue?

GREGG: I was probably the most active of any ambassador that had been there in terms of trying to sell American products. I had a very favorable article in the Wall Street Journal written when I left saying that nobody had ever done that in Korea. I enjoyed it. I worked very closely with the Foreign Commercial Service.

Another high point of my tour was a fight between Lockheed and the French on anti-submarine warfare planes. This was fascinating because Lockheed offered the P-3 aircraft, the Neptune, and the French were trying to sell the Atlantique. So Lockheed was in some trouble, and they came to me and said, "We really need to keep this going. What can you do?" I did not use CIA on this because I don't like economic espionage, so I went to the defense attaché and said, "We don't know what price the French are willing to sell their aircraft for. Can you find that out?" So he found that out. I went back to Lockheed with that. They lowered their price. But the sale was still going to the French. I had gotten to know the minister of defense quite well. I played golf with

him, so I asked to see him. I said, "Mr. Minister, you know how interested we are in this sale of Lockheed aircraft. There has been a price adjustment and the Lockheed price is now lower than the French price. But I don't think you know that because I don't think your office has been made aware of that." Dick Christiansen was in the room with me. He is now DCM in Tokyo, absolutely fluent in Korean. He passed a note to me saying the interpreter is not interpreting what I was saying. So I again repeated this. I looked at Dick, and he shook his head. I then thanked the minister for the meeting and said I would like to see you once more before you make your final decision. That was interpreted and he said, "Yes, please." I requested to see him and said, "I would like to use my interpreter at this meeting if you don't mind." He said, "Fine." So we went and I said exactly the same thing. This time it went through. He went right through the ceiling, called a halt, called a review, and the bid went to Lockheed. I was paraded down the assembly line in Marietta, Georgia, one time when I was in that area where they were still very pleased. The French were furious. They never spoke to me again.

Q: I mean you know, to get to the interpreter, I mean other things. It looks like a lot of people were in on the deal.

GREGG: Well I don't think the interpreter was. It was just what I was saying was so embarrassing. That was Dick's interpretation. He didn't think the interpreter had been bought off. But certainly some people down below had been bought off.

Q: It does show some of the problems with interpreters. You are not getting your... The president while you were there was...

GREGG: Roh Tae Woo?

Q: How did you find him?

GREGG: I liked him. He loved to play tennis. I arranged for him to play tennis with President Bush. We, unlike the Japanese who always have it Japan against the United States, we teamed the two president's up as partners, and the opponents including me could make career enhancing decisions as to who won the match. I liked him very much. We helped him. We introduced him to Gorbachev in San Francisco on 1990. We helped get the Chinese to drop their opposition to both North and South Korea joining the UN. He and I were real buddies. He would ask me to come and play tennis at Blue House quite frequently, and also golf.

Q: These tennis and golf things, business could be conducted there.

GREGG: Oh absolutely.

Q: What was sort of the internal situation in Korea at that time?

GREGG: Well the real political watershed I think, had taken place during Jim Lilley's time where there had been an agreement to have the president elected by a direct vote of the people instead of the rigged system that had been put in place by Park Chung Hee. So Roh Tae Woo had been elected because he had run against both Kim Dae Jung, and Kim Yung San, and there had

been a three way split, and he I think got something like 40% of the vote, but he was still in. So he was still regarded as a military figure but he was much less authoritarian than Chun Doo-hwan had been or Park Chung Hee, and conducted I thought, a very sophisticated diplomacy. During my time, when I came I think Hungary was the only eastern bloc country to be represented. When I left, everybody was represented in Seoul.

Q: How did the Chinese recognition go? I mean was this difficult for the Korean side or the Chinese side?

GREGG: It was from the Chinese side because the North Koreans felt that as a tremendous betrayal. The Chinese ambassador came to see me immediately after he arrived, and we had a fascinating talk. He had spent 15 years at Pyongyang, so he knew the North Koreans very well. He had been with Kim Il Sung when Kim played his last visit to China in 1991, and Ceausescu of Romania had already been killed after having tried to bring...

Q: This was the '89 uprising.

GREGG: Right. Ceausescu had been one of the few people that Kim Il Sung had maintained a bit of an interesting relationship. The Chinese ambassador said that Kim Il Sung was very worried about what had happened to Ceausescu, and had said to the Chinese, "I realize that I have to make some changes in North Korea, what is your advice, because he mentioned the situation in Romania." The Chinese said, "Well do what we do. Keep political control at the center but set up some special economic zones at the periphery where you can have special rules and use them to attract foreign investment. So Kim Il Sung began to move in that direction. He set up a special economic zone way up north in Rajin-Sonbong. It was doomed to failure because it was essentially a dusty parking lot surrounded by barbed wire by a polluted river. It was inaccessible. Nobody wanted to go there. But that is where he really started to try to move to new directions.

Q: When the Chinese came in, did they, were they pretty cautious? Did they feel that this was hostile territory? How were they received?

GREGG: Oh they were received very well, because the Russians or the Soviets had already recognized the South. By that time it was very clear that the South had outstripped the North economically. I think the Chinese saw real opportunity to begin mutually beneficial trade relations with the South Koreans, which they have done.

Q: Had there been trade relations with China before hand.

GREGG: There had been some, yes.

Q: Going sort of through Hong Kong.

GREGG: Well, they had a boat from Qingdao to Inchon that had started when I left, a ferry boat. Yes, there was some trade.

Q: Did the Chinese community play any role, I mean there was a small Chinese community.

GREGG: No. Taiwan had been there for years, and they had to leave. What community there was was more or less in the Taiwan camp I guess, but it is not a significant factor.

Q: Did you get involved with the two Kims?

GREGG: Kim Dae Jung, and Kim Yung San? Yes, I did. Kim Dae Jung was very much aware of the fact that twice I had been involved in keeping him alive, so he was very friendly to me. Kim Yung San, I always found very unimpressive. Not very intelligent. But he would ask to see me, and we would have long dull dinners. But he was elected president just before I left. Dae Jung and I saw a fair amount of each other. I felt one of the things I wanted to do was to go down to Kwangju where there was tremendous anti U.S. feeling because of the supposition on the part of the people of Kwangju that we had supported the horrible suppression of things there. Kim Dae Jung helped me set that up.

Q: How did that go?

GREGG: It went tremendously well. It was very controversial. Kim Dae Jung said, "If you are going to go, go in the winter during Christmas vacation when the university isn't open, and so I planned to do that January of 1990, and the day before I was supposed to go, Kim Dae Jung called me up and said, "Don't go, it is too dangerous. There is a kidnap threat." The national police was aware of this, so I called a country team meeting, and said, "You know there is this. I have the feeling that I really ought to go. What do you think?"

The country team was split right down the middle. So I decided I would go. I left a memo in my safe saying if something happens to me, it is purely my fault. So off I went, and I arrived, and the press along with a huge bodyguard of police. The press was saying have you come to apologize for Kwangju? I said, "No, we have nothing to apologize for. I have come because we have a cultural center there that is being firebombed, and I want to find out why there is such resentment of us." So I spent two full days talking to everybody. I had been to Hungary once, and it was long after the uprising of 1956, but there was sort of a feeling of betrayal on the part of the people of Kwangju. On the morning of the third day the press came again and said, "Have you come to apologize about Kwangju?" I said, "Yes, I found we do have something to apologize for, and that is we have kept silent for too long." That made an impact, and so the people who had been firebombing our...been organizing the opposition agreed to see me. I had been trying to see them and they refused. So I canceled my return flight, and I had about 3 ½ hours with about six of these guys. It was absolutely fascinating. At first they wanted to meet in secret, and then they decided they wanted to have television. So we met in front of the television and newspaper people.

The first question was who gave the order to shoot in the streets of Kwangju? I said, "I have no idea. It was a Korean decision and a Korean order, and it is only Koreans who know." He said, "That's a lie, because we know you have satellites that can look down from the sky and you can read a newspaper from the sky and were watching, and you know who gave the order." I said, "Well we do have those satellites, but they don't take you inside a man's head. We don't know who gave the order." Then they said, "Do you take us as a nation of field rats because the general

in charge said there is a certain lemming like quality in Korea.” This had not gone over well. I said, “Absolutely not. I have huge admiration for the Korean people. That is why I have come back in this capacity.” Then they said, “Well, we thought you were going to save us.” I said, “What made you think that?” Well you sent an aircraft carrier to Pusan.” “That was a signal to the North Koreans not to get involved.”

They said, “We know you supported Chung Doo-hwan because he was the first man to visit President Reagan. We know you supported what he did here because you were so close to him.” I said, “Did you know the price of his visit was Kim Dae Jung’s life?” That had been said in Washington; it had been said in Seoul, but it had never been said in Kwangju. It caused a sensation. So after about three hours, they said, “Well we don’t have any more questions. We thank you for coming. Some of your answers have not been good, but some have been helpful, and we thank you for coming.”

The interpreter I had, who was a superb young woman, whispered to me, she had just done a magnificent job and really removed the language barrier. She said they are terribly afraid they are all going to be arrested after this because the police are after them. I said, “Thanks for telling me.” So I went out, it was raining, and the cops were surrounding the place as they had and tear gas had been needed to flush some people out at times. So I put my arms around two of these guys and I went up to the very tough policeman who had been my chief bodyguard and said, “You are not to touch these people. You are to let them go.” He sort of could hardly believe. I said, “I mean it. I don’t want you to touch these people.” So he barked an order and the cordon gap opened up, and as they passed through each one was either kicked or pushed out into the darkness. One of them turned and waved as he went.

The fire bombings of our cultural center stopped. We moved to a new place and were able to stay until budgetary... I went four times to Kwangju. I went with the German ambassador, and we talked about the German implications for eventual North-South reunification. I went down with the first Russian ambassador, and we talked about the Russian view of the Korean Peninsula. I consider those visits to be among the most interesting visits of my life. In fact it made me feel quite at home when I went to North Korea because I felt the same kind of resentment in the North that I had felt in Kwangju. I saw it evaporate as the North Koreans found I was taking them seriously and trying to answer their questions in good spirit.

Q: Did you see the rise of anti Americanism? Had we just in a way, some of these things have outrun their time or something.

GREGG: I was never in 3 ½ years ever able to make a publicized appearance on a college campus. I was invited frequently to make appearances. I would always accept. The word would get out that I was coming, and the campus activists would say “Don’t let Gregg come or we will burn the campus down.” So the invitation would be canceled. I got an honorary degree from the Jesuit University there, Sogon, and they gave it to me at night on Christmas vacation. So there was still a lot of that. There were riots around the embassy frequently. So it was still there. It subsided I think, later on, after I had gone. Particularly after first Kim Yung San and then Kim Dae Jung, these were the opposition leaders. The politics were getting freed up. The military was out of politics, so that had removed one source of tension.

But the Koreans had tremendous historical memory, and they remembered the Taft-Katsura Agreement, which not one American in a million is aware of. I just learned that the 1919 demonstration against the Japanese had been inspired by Wilson's 14 points. The Koreans felt the United States would come to their aid. There was a demonstration of Korean unhappiness with the Japanese occupation. We didn't do that. Then there was the division of the country in 1950 that was resented, and the fact that Truman would not fight to go up to the Yalu and reunite the whole country. So there are all of those underlying resentments which never were really fully cleared up.

Q: Well were you involved at that time particularly because of the fall of East Germany and all that, in looking at the problem of a collapse in the North and the soft landing and the hard landing and all that. Could you talk a bit about what the thinking was at that time?

GREGG: It really didn't start until I had left. Willy Brandt made his only visit to Korea while I was there in October of '89. I was a great admirer of Willy Brandt, and I saw a good deal of him on his visit. He went up to the DMZ, and I had dinner with him when he came back from the DMZ. He said, "That is the most appalling thing I have ever seen. It is a time warp. I am sure that when that DMZ is penetrated, you will find that the psychological dislocations behind it are going to be much more difficult to deal with than what we will cope with when the Berlin wall comes down." He said, "We hate the Berlin wall. We draw graffiti on it and so forth, but there are gates through it, and people pass back and forth and radio works and television works and so forth, but the DMZ is a time warp." The Koreans said, "Well when do you think the Berlin wall will come down." Brandt said, "Not in my lifetime."

Q: This was in '89.

GREGG: Within 60 days it was down. So I think that there was a feeling that unification was going to take place. It was really after I left that they began to try to quantify what that would cost. The feeling was the cost to South Korea would just be more than they could handle. As I say, one of the few things that North and South Korea agree on is that they want whatever process occurs to be a gradual one. I think that is still true.

Q: This is tape two side one, with Don Gregg. Don, what about within Korea the, I can't remember the name for it, but the big industrial...

GREGG: Chaebol.

Q: Chaebol. How did you view them at the time, and what were our concerns and their influence?

GREGG: Well, they had been tremendously successful. Park Chung Hee had appointed some very talented men. General Park Dae Jung said, I want you to build a world class steel plant. I will give you land; I will give you loans; I will give you all the help you need. So as a result, Korea is either the first or second largest producer of steel to this day. Chung Se Yung of Hyundai got started, a magnificent man, building ships, building cars, now into microchips. They

were given free reign, preferential loans. Laws were passed if they needed to be passed, or pass the regulations just to allow them to grow very quickly. So, you had figures on the landscape, Chung Se Yung of Hyundai, Kim Dae Jung of Daewoo were the two. B.C. Lee of Samsung. These were men who were more or less laws unto themselves. The thought of their collapsing was almost unthinkable at that point. We felt that we wanted a better deal in terms of access for agriculture, that kind of thing, but it was later on, particularly in terms of automobile production that some of them just went off the rails. Daewoo is now essentially defunct. Even Samsung had an ill conceived venture into the automobile business. The banks were weak. Everybody was concerned with market share, not profitability. There has been I think, triggered by the 1997 economic turndown, there has been a real turnaround in the Korean market toward more transparency, and a more profit driven system. I think they are doing very well.

Q: Was there a corruption factor in all of this?

GREGG: Yes, there was. There were always rumors for payoffs for some of the big military purchases. It was very hard to pin down. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, the American business community used to complain about it because they always talked about a tilted playing field. Everybody else pays off, but we are not allowed to and so forth. I would just say, "Look, one of the things the United States stands for is not doing that, and just keep at it." That is one of the reasons that I became as active as I was in going to trade fairs and pushing American products. I felt that for Korea really to get over the top as an economic entity of continuing viability, they have to move away from the Chaebol oriented, corruption ridden closed kind of economic society where if you didn't pay off, you weren't going to get anywhere.

Q: Well how about Congress? When I was there, I took Tongsun Park's visa oath and I think Robert Giuliani, a Giuliani anyway came and was taking a deposition from him. This is back in '76 I think or something. You know we had congressmen who, they would arrive and not even talk to the embassy, come and get measured for suits, and young ladies would appear to serve as handmaidens or something. Was that still going on?

GREGG: It wasn't as bad as it was in the 70's. I think that Lester Wolf was one of the guys that appeared all of the time back then. There were a number of them. But it was less, much less when I was there as ambassador.

Q: Did you find, was there much congressional interest in what you were doing there?

GREGG: Not that I remember. Jim Baker was Secretary of State, and he had four or five issues that he paid a great deal of attention to, and one of them was not Korea. So I had the ability to take a lot of initiative, as I did. I never really remember having to take congressional concerns into much consideration. Maybe I have forgotten, but it wasn't a big...

Q: Well reverberations from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the whole thing, did they filter down much to South Korea, or were they insulated from this?

GREGG: They were pretty much insulated. I mean it was seen as because we had moved so quickly to get Roh Tae Woo in touch with Gorbachev, and they sent a very able man as

ambassador quickly after the collapse. I think the South Koreans just saw the collapse of the Soviet Union and their recognition by China as indications of their growing success and their growing stature.

Q: How about Tiananmen Square, this is in '89. I mean this reverberated certainly in the United States.

GREGG: Well you know, no. The Koreans are tough, and they have been looking down the muzzles of North Korean artillery for 50 years, and it really takes a lot to shake them.

Q: Were you, speaking of the North Korean threat, how did you feel about the North Korean threat when you came back? I mean was the thought of a lunge south, I mean did it make sense in the North Korean context at this time?

GREGG: No it really didn't. Our ability to defend Seoul had improved, as I say it depended on good weather. But the military balance was much more favorable. It was recognized that the North Korean air force wasn't exercising much. Their equipment was getting old, that they didn't have the economic power to maintain a massive invasion. Then as now, it was easy to inflict tremendous damage on Seoul via their artillery was the main threat. I think my feeling was that it, they were not irrational. This wasn't a really very likely event. Now it became very much more dangerous after I left in 1994.

Q: What about, I think it was called South Pos?. We had a very large American community, military community right in the heart of Seoul on the wrong side of the Han River. Was that, were we concerned about that?

GREGG: We were concerned about it in terms of our relations with South Korea. It was as though we still had a British base in New York City's Central Park. Jim Lilley had really embarrassed the military about their golf course right in the middle of Seoul. I played the last round on that golf course, and we shut it down. They built us another course south of the city, not nearly as convenient, but at least we turned the golf course over, and it is now used as a park. We talked at that time, they wanted access to the base at Yongsan. We said, yes, we are willing to move, but you have to pay for it. The cost at that time of moving us down to Osan or Suwan or whatever was 4-6 billion dollars. The Koreans didn't want to cough up that much money. So that has been an issue for some time.

Q: Were E&E, I mean emergency evacuation plans always...

GREGG: No, that was really not. My successor Jim Laney, was about to declare that the evacuation of all non-essential personnel, which is sort of the last thing you do before you expect a war to start. That was headed off by Jimmy Carter's visit, but not during my time we didn't talk about that.

Q: With the arrival of the Chinese and then the Soviet and then Russian embassies, were you able to get a little better picture of North Korea?

GREGG: Yes we were. Also during my time, the South Koreans had the prime minister level exchanges with the North Koreans, and they signed in early '92, an agreement that still isn't a very good blueprint for the way relations between North and South Korea have been developed. The national security advisor to President Roh Tae Woo said to me when I was about to leave, "If we could have kept everybody in the United States and South Korea and North Korea in place for one more year, I think we could have solved the North-South issue.

Q: Well Kim Il Sung, was he alive when you left?

GREGG: Yes.

Q: Was he a failing force?

GREGG: No. It was recognized. I mean I have told you what the Chinese ambassador told me about his mind set. Billy Graham had gone to North Korea on two occasions, and Kim Il Sung had said, "You know, I really want to make friends with the United States." That didn't seem to have much impact. But the power shortages in the North were becoming very noticeable because there is no longer concessional aid from the Soviet Union, and the weakness of the economy was noticeable. The trains in the north ran very slowly because the electric power was so weak. There was a general recognition that the North's economy was imploding. That it was already reports of food shortages; that the feeling was the North really needed to change the way it was doing, changing its economic approach. But that was headed off by the reinstatement of Team Spirit, a sort of a reinforcing of exercise that the North Koreans hated. It brought thousands of U.S. troops in from abroad, and it was sort of a symbolic demonstration of our willingness to come to the aid of South Korea if there was a North Korean invasion. The North Korean alert level was always way up when we did that. I canceled it for one year, and that paved the way for a lot more talks. But it was reinstated without my knowledge.

Q: Well you say it was re-started without your knowledge, while you were still ambassador...

GREGG: Yes, the decision was made in the fall of 1992.

Q: Was this sort of you know, business as usual in the Pentagon, or was this...

GREGG: I think it was business as usual in the Pentagon. It was also some hard line South Korean generals who sort of saw Team Spirit as sort of a reassertion of the security blanket. They were very suspicious of talks with the North.

Q: Well you left there when?

GREGG: In the end of February '93.

Q: When you left, how were things at that time?

GREGG: Kim Yung Son had just been sworn in. He was talking about Seigewa, globalization. That was his big thing. He was talking about more economic development. I thought things were

good. I think I probably had as easy a time as any ambassador in the post war period.

Q: Had the computer Internet revolution sort of hit Korea? I think it would be a natural for it later on.

GREGG: No it hadn't.

Q: Well you got involved in Korea again afterwards didn't you?

GREGG: Yes. I still am. I had talked to the Koreans about the fact that they never had an organization in the United States really dedicated to all facets of the U.S.-Korean relationship. They had tried to do it through Tongsun Pak, which had failed. This had caused them really to draw back. They established something called the Korea Foundation which is going around endowing chairs and various universities. I said, "You need to have somebody in the United States, somebody with some stature who really develops an organization devoted to the Korean-American relationship." At that point I thought that George Herbert Walker Bush was going to be re-elected. I had some hopes of going to be ambassador to Japan. He lost, and that brought my government career to a halt. So I was offered the job as chairman of the Korea Society, and having said what I said to the South Koreans, I could hardly turn it down. So it turned out to be a very stimulating difficult job.

Q: What is difficult about it?

GREGG: The non-profit world is much more competitive and cut throat than I thought it would be. I have been sued by an African-American employee whom I dismissed for non performance. He is in California. I have dealt with corruption, embezzlement. Managing a Korean organization is in a way like herding cats. But when I took the organization over, it had a net worth of less than \$200,000. We now have an endowment of \$8.5 million. We have enlarged our office space three or four times. We have a very active program involving business development, involving cultural exchanges, involving political discussions. I continue to enjoy it.

Q: What about the, you have been involved in some business with North Korea haven't you?

GREGG: Yes.

Q: What would you like to say about those?

GREGG: Well, Kim Dae Jung had a completely different attitude toward North Korea than Kim Yung San. I invited, I helped pay for the visit of two North Koreans to New York in '95 or '96, something like that. Kim Yung San people never forgave me for that. I was encouraging subversion in their view which is ridiculous. But Kim Dae Jung said to me, "Please try to plant the flag of the Korea Society in North Korea." So I began to pursue the North Koreans in New York. They have a mission there at the UN. I invited the ambassador out to my home with some of his staff. Introduced them to American businessmen who had an interest in perhaps investing in North Korea. We were approached by Syracuse University who had an IT training program with the former Soviet Union.

Q: IT?

GREGG: Information technology. They said, “Do you think the North Koreans would be interested?” I said, “Yes, I think they would.” So we funded an exchange program between Syracuse University and Kim Chaek University of Technology in Pyongyang, which is going very well. The Clinton administration was very open to me. They invited me down to try to assess the Jimmy Carter visit, because they didn’t really know what to make of it.

Q: The Jimmy Carter visit being what?

GREGG: Well he went to see Kim Il Sung in 1994 at a point where we were about to pull out of our [inaudible]. People we were getting ready to re-enforce. The North Koreans said, “We will turn Seoul into a sea of fire.” They pulled out of the non- proliferation treaty. I think next to the Cuban missile crisis, this was the second most dangerous moment in the post cold war era. Jim Laney who had been the former president of Emory University, and very close to Jimmy Carter, knew that Carter had a standing invitation to go to North Korea. Laney got hold of Carter and said, “I think you ought to go.” Carter said, “Well I am not sure how the White House would feel about it.” Warren Christopher was dead set against it, Secretary of State, feeling that that usurped his rule. But Gore was for it, and so Carter was given permission to go. He went to see Kim Il Sung. Kim Il Sung said to him what he said to Billy Graham. I want to be friends with the United States. If you are concerned about my nuclear program, I will turn it down as long as you build some replacement power generating things and give me oil in the interim for the power that I lose for shutting down my nuclear reactor. That was the genesis of the 1994 agreement. They called me to the White House when Carter was still on his trip and said, “What do you make of it?” Bill Clinton was there. I said, “All I can say is Carter had a man there with him,” Dick Christiansen again, who had helped me on the trade negotiations, “who is absolutely fluent in Korean. So there is absolutely no doubt about what was said by both sides, so that you will have a clear record of what was said if you want to look at it.” It isn’t like Gerry Ford going to Poland with a poor quality interpreter and not knowing what was said.

Q: “I lust after Poland,” or something like that.

GREGG: Something like that. So that worked. That led to the agreed framework established in 1994 where we with funding from South Korea and Japan were going to build two light water reactors in North Korea. That then, the relationship with the North wasn’t going very well. I was part of a Council On Foreign Relations task force that recommended a senior person be put in charge of the relationship with North Korea. Again we had to wrestle the State Department to the ground. The assistant secretary felt he was doing a perfectly fine job. He wasn’t doing a good job at all.

The former secretary of defense Bill Perry was appointed. He went to North Korea, and the issue was not only nuclear, but missiles. They had fired a multi stage rocket in 1998 that really rattled the Japanese cage. It was much more sophisticated than we thought they were capable of. So he went to the North and worked very closely in putting out a report saying what the North Koreans could expect from us if they stopped firing missiles and shut down their nuclear program or

maintain their nuclear program. So the demarche from Perry was considered by the North Koreans, finally accepted. They sent their Field Marshall Jo, Myung Yok, to Washington in October of 2000. He went to the White House in uniform, invited Bill Clinton to go to North Korea. He was given a dinner by Al Gore. The State Department sent Madeleine Albright to North Korea to check out the feasibility of a visit. In December of 2000, after the election, I was approached by the woman in charge of North Korean affairs for the State Department saying, "Do you think Bill Clinton should go to North Korea." That was Wendy Sherman. It was one on one. I said, "Well do you have a missile deal?" She said, "No, we cannot get the answer to two or three key questions." I said, "What are they?" She told me. I said, "Well I think what is happening is Kim Jong Il has the answers to these questions. If Clinton goes, he will get those answers, and he will be given a present for having gone." So she said, "Do you think we should go on that basis?" I said, "That is way above my pay grade. That is a decision only the President should make."

I think with the controversy about Florida and time ran out. But the North Koreans knew that he had come very close. Madeleine Albright, I have spoken with her at the University of Michigan. She is very entertaining on the subject. She said, "You know Kim Jong Il and I are about the same height. We both wear high heels and we both put mousse in our hair. But he is very intelligent. I had eleven hours of discussion with him, and we left a very good hand of cards on the table which the Bush administration has failed to pick up." So when Kim Dae Jung came to the United States pushing for an early meeting with Bush. It didn't go at all well because Bush said, "I don't trust Kim Jong Il. We are going to have a policy review before we do anything." He had referred to him as a pygmy, also we should have gotten out. So the policy review was held, and it revalidated the Kim Dae Jung sunshine policy, but it changed the agenda. Kim Dae Jung had structured his sunshine policy around the things that were the easiest to do first, leaving the hardest things for last.

Q: Sort of confidence building.

GREGG: That's right, and the Bush people moved the tough things right up to the front, which is troop disposition along the DMZ and so forth. So they laid out the basis on which they would resume contacting the North, and the North didn't respond, and then came 9-11. So then the North Koreans approached me in the fall of 2001 saying we are getting nowhere with the Bush administration. Why don't you come to North Korea and talk to us. I said, "I can't really anoint myself to do that. Why don't we figure out something better than that." So we agree to four former ambassadors were going to go, under the leadership of Bob Scalapino, an renowned orientalist from (University of California) Cal Berkeley who had been to North Korea before. It was going to be Jim Laney, Bill Gleysteen...

Q: Jim Lilley?

GREGG: No I don't think it was going to be Jim Lilley.

Q: Dixie Walker?

GREGG: No. Yes, Dixie Walker. So then we were planning to go in February of 2002, and then

came Bush's State of the Union speech in which he made North Korea part of the axis of evil. That trip went down the drain. So I went to a conference in the UK on the future of Japan. This was at a place, not Ditchley, but a similar conference center run in part by the British Commonwealth office. Very good conferences. There were a number of Europeans there.

I was appalled at their attitude toward 9-11. Not the Brits, but the French, the Dutch, the Swedes, the Swiss, and their attitude was well now you know what we have been dealing with in terms of Bader Meinhof and the Red Brigade. You know, what is the big deal. Don't over react. What is so special about you. For them to lack any understanding of the impact of 9-11 on the United States, I thought my gosh, if these people don't understand where we are, there is no way in the world the North Koreans can know. So I felt motivated to write Kim Jong Il a letter saying that your weapons, missiles and nuclear matters have become of huge concern to us because we have been attacked by people who would love to get their hands on the kinds of things you possess, and use them against us. That is why we are so concerned, and we really need to talk about this. It was about a three-page letter. I took it to one of the, a man named Lee Good who was the ambassador, the number two ambassador to the UN. He said to me, "How dare you write a letter like this to my chairman. Who do you think you are. Very Korean reaction." I said, "I am writing this letter to him because I think I understand how his mind works, and he needs to know this." He said, "How do you know how his mind works?" I said, "Well I have talked to George Toloroya who sat with him for several days on a train when he went to see Putin and had a long talk with him. I talked with Chinese who were with him when he visited a Buick plant in Beijing or in Shanghai. This is the kind of thing we have to do in North Korea. I have talked to Kim Dae Jung at great length about his visit with him, and I have talked to Madeleine Albright about her visit. They all add up to a very intelligent man who is trying to lead North Korea in some new directions." He said, "That is a good answer. I will send your letter."

So two weeks later I was invited to go. I had not asked permission. I had kept Rich Armitage informed, He is deputy secretary of state, an old friend. He sent me a perfect little note saying Don, thanks for your note. Keep me informed as you desire, blah, blah, Rich. Perfect. The State Department said, "Would you like to have a Korean speaking Foreign Service officer go along with you." I said, "I'd be delighted." So they sent a young woman who spoke fluent Korean, and so in we went.

In April of 2002 I had about 10 hours of discussion with Kim Le Gwan who was the leader of the North Korean delegation to the recently completed Beijing talks, and a very hard line general named Ree Chan Dok. My meeting with him is very reminiscent of my meetings in Kwangju.. It started out with the same bristling animosity, and ended up two hours later with saying exactly what they had said, "You have come a long way, and I appreciate your coming." We would up understanding each other. He started out with me saying, "Why are you here? You speak first." I said, "Well, General, I am here because I think you need to know what our frame of mind is. Yesterday I was taken up your Juche Tower," which is a tower about the height of the Washington Monument. "It is very impressive. How would you feel if you were looking out your window and saw one of your own aircraft fly into that monument reducing it to a pile of rubble and killing everybody on the plane. We say that twice in New York and once in Washington. How would you feel?" I just looked at him. He said, "I think you have lost sight of the fact that the real fighting spirit is in the heart of every soldier." I said, "I know that. The last thing we ever

want is another war with you in Korea.” He said, “It would be a disaster for you.” I said, “Well look what we are accomplishing in Afghanistan without a single heavy artillery piece or heavy tank.” He didn’t like that. But we went on from there and you know, talked very frankly. As I say at the end of two hours we had developed a good deal of respect for each other.

I came back from that trip and wrote something that I sent to the White House recommending that somebody like Bill Perry be sent to North Korea. Well it was interesting. They said, Kim De Wan said, “Why is your George W. Bush so different from his father?” I said, “Well he is a Texan, and his father is a New Englander.” “Why is W so different from Clinton?” I said, “Well you know in a democracy that happens. You have continuity of leadership, so you don’t have to deal with that. Whereas sometimes there is a real turn. I watched one at close range from Carter to Reagan. Clinton to Bush is the same kind of thing.” “So why don’t you understand us better?” I said, “Well, I think because you are the longest running failure in the history of American espionage.” I said, “We couldn’t recruit you people. We could recruit Soviets; we could recruit Chinese.” He sort of swelled with pride. Then this was funny. He said, “Are you wearing your Ops Center hat when you are saying that?” I said, “What?” He said, “You heard me. Are you wearing your Ops Center hat?” I said, “Are you referring to a very bad book by Tom Clancy?” He said, “Yes, of course.” This is what my wife calls an airport only paperback written by Clancy and another guy named Steve Pieczenik called Op-Center. The leading character is called Gregory Dowell. He is former chief of station in Seoul and later ambassador. So it is clearly based on me. So I said, “Well I haven’t read the book. My wife has. Would you like her reaction?” “Yes.” I said, “Well, she doesn’t mind that I die an honorable death at the end of the book, but she hates the fact that I had a Korean mistress.” That broke him all up. But I tell you that because it shows the sophistication of these people and the depth of their knowledge about us.

So anyway I suggested that there was great mystification as to why one president was so different from another. They realized they had almost had Jimmy Carter as a guest and now they were dealing with a man who referred to them as part of the axis of evil among other things. I said that you could recapture everything that Clinton had by sending somebody with a letter to the North Koreans. They are very anxious for a better relationship. You know, absolutely no response, no acknowledgment to that or anything else I sent to the White House on the subject.

Q: Well do you sense that on this subject that there is a guiding hand? I mean you have national security advisor Condoleezza Rice, you have Colin Powell in the State Department, both of whom seem to be sophisticated and have been around the block and understand. Is it that this is political or visceral? What is happening do you think?

GREGG: Well I think what is happening is that the philosophy of the Bush administration was shaped by a group of people who called themselves, before the election, they called themselves the Vulcans. That is named for the big statue of the god of fire that is on a ridge above Birmingham where Condi Rice grew up. The Vulcans consisted of Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Bill Kristol, Scooter Libby, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice. They were intellectual descendants, particularly Wolfowitz, of the Wohlstetter at the University of Chicago, who felt that we should have been much more preemptive against the Japanese before Pearl Harbor. It is also influenced by another professor, whose name escapes me, who felt that Athens should have

been more pre-emptive against Sparta. So this is the doctrine that they sold to Bush, that to maintain our role as the world's only superpower, we need to be unilateral if need be. We need to go into pre-emptive action, and we need to engage in regime change. I think those are the touchstones and 9-11 seemed to validate it.

There is the President has said you are either with us or against us, and he sees North Korea as evil. Wolfowitz recently, in referring to Saddam Hussein, he said, "Saddam Hussein was in the same category as Hitler, Stalin, and Kim Jong Il. Sooner or later those people are not just content to bring evil down upon their own people. It spills over their borders and they have to be dealt with." Now the president has distanced himself from that kind of rhetoric. He says he is committed to a diplomatic solution. I heard Secretary Powell give a wonderful speech yesterday after flying down here. He was talking about democracy in Asia and the development of democracy in Asia. He was highly enthused about that. I am very thankful that he has stayed as Secretary of State. I think he gives us some credibility and some substance that would otherwise be lacking. I think he has a very hard row to hoe, but I think he has been given more leeway on Korea. Wolfowitz said in my presence last October, "The State Department is now in the lead on Korea." That had not been the case in the past. But you still have people like John Bolton who is undersecretary for proliferation who is out there. He is as unpopular in South Korea as he is in North Korea, talking about coercion and sanctions.

Q: The North Koreans have said they won't talk to him again.

GREGG: Right. I don't think they have ever talked to him. They denounced him in no uncertain terms.

Q: Right now we are going through a period where the North Koreans are sort of challenging us by going ahead with nuclear developments. Is this, how do we read this? What are they doing? What are they after?

GREGG: They are after a changed policy on our part. They are truly concerned about our military intentions toward them. I went to a Track II, six-party meeting in Qingdao last September, hosted by the Chinese. Some of them had been to the previous official six-party talks in Beijing just less than two weeks before. The same ground was covered. The leading Chinese figure there was a woman named Fouying, a very accomplished diplomat. She said, "We all agree, including North Korea, that we want to have a nuclear free Korean Peninsula. We all agree, including North Korea, that where we want to end up is a verifiably nuclear free Korean Peninsula where North Korea's security and economic concerns are adequately dealt with. The problem is we don't know how to get from position A to position B, and that is still the problem because the Bush administration says we will not submit to blackmail. We will not reward that behavior, and the new mantra is CVID, completely verifiably, irreversible dismantlement of all nuclear programs." They want Korea to do what Qaddafi had done. I saw Kelly briefly yesterday, and Colin Powell had said that some progress had been made in Beijing, but it is going to be a long slow process because we and the North Koreans are staring at each other across a chasm of mistrust. In the meantime the U.S.- South Korean relationship is in the worst shape I think it has perhaps ever been. Because the alliance which has been geared to joint opposition to North Korea as the implacable foe, in the wake of the summit of 2000, no longer

works because the South Koreans now see the North Korean, these are the younger people at least, as perhaps a long lost brother who has acquired some bad habits and needs rehabilitation and tender loving care rather than punishment. The older Koreans are still very suspicious of North Korea, but the younger Koreans are very accepting of the North. They think the North would never use nuclear weapons against them. They see the United States, many of them see the United States as a greater threat to their ongoing security than North Korea. The relationship is in very difficult shape.

Q: Well you know the great concern is that the North Koreans being hard pressed for money, that there could be leakage of nuclear weapons to a terrorist. That would put the...

GREGG: Absolutely. That is a red line, and I have written the North Koreans. I am in touch with them, and I wrote them when there was a statement hinting that that might happen. When I went there the first time, I said that it is just imperative that you completely distance yourselves from any form of terrorism. They said, "We have already signed two UN measures against terrorism."

So I agreed that could happen and that is our concern. I don't think they had any intention of doing that. The sort of nuclear bazaar that has been run out of Pakistan has been of deep concern on that score.

Q: The North Koreans were at one point you know, selling drugs. Their embassies were selling drugs to maintain themselves. I mean how dire would you say their straits are?

GREGG: Well I think it is somewhat, I have talked at length to people who have been up there delivering food and medicine and so forth. They have allowed market gardens to be cultivated for the profit of the owners. That has improved the food situation to some extent. They had a somewhat better rice crop than last year, but they have cut down all their trees. They have lousy fertilizer, primitive agricultural technique. They are very vulnerable to fluctuations of temperature and rainfall, and so they have a food, they have had a food shortage, and there has been starvation. It is still bad, but it is somewhat better than it was. There is still a great power shortage. But even in my two trips to Pyongyang in April and November of 2002, I saw improvement in Pyongyang in those six months in terms of food stalls in the streets, more cars, so forth. Now Pyongyang is much better than the worst provinces up along the Chinese border are still in very bad shape.

Q: The Japanese factor recently, has that been...

GREGG: Well, I was at another conference in Japan just before Koizumi went to Pyongyang, and we had at this conference, some Chinese who were very knowledgeable of the North Koreans having spent years in Pyongyang. The major concerns on the part of the Japanese were those abductees. The Chinese said, "Oh, they will never admit this." Well Kim Jong Il did admit it. He apparently thought that that would somehow put the issue behind them.

Q: These were Japanese citizens...

GREGG: These were Japanese citizens who were kidnapped by the North Koreans so that they

could use them as models top train agents to act like Japanese. Maybe 30 were kidnapped. They allowed some to return to Japan. The Japanese have not returned them. The issue has bubbled up. It has backfired, and the North Koreans are furious at the Japanese and make the point that the Japanese never speak of the tens of thousands of young Korean women they kidnapped and forced to be comfort women for the imperial army. So the, you know the thinking is at some point the Japanese will pay reparations to North Korea. Sort of that money that would be in the billions would help kick start the economy. North Korea, I felt quite comfortable there because I was dealing with Koreans, and I understand the Koreans. It is a terrible regime. It is a repressive regime. It is a brutal regime. The question is how do you get them to stop being repressive and brutal. My suggested solution is to let them develop economically, improve the living standard of their own people, give Kim Jong Il a real chance to survive. I suggested that his role model ought to be Fidel Castro who has presided over a decrepit society but still maintains some degree of respect at home. How he does it I don't know. The South Koreans hope he will be a Deng Xiaoping, a real reformer. I am not sure he is capable of that.

Q: Is somebody talking to Kim Jong Il? I mean you were mentioning Park Chung Hee, you know, who brought him bad news? Do you feel that there is contact with him?

GREGG: Well, yes. Putin refers to him as a completely modern person. They apparently get along quite well. He has got some good give and take relations with the Chinese. He has met a number of South Koreans including Kim de Jong. Everybody I have talked to who has talked to him directly says he is a highly intelligent man. For example, he reads the daily press out of Korea on the web site every day. He goes to the web site of the Blue House.

Q: That is the White House of South Korea.

GREGG: Yes. He complimented the minister of unification under Kim De Jung saying, "You know, I really am very interested in your write up of Park Chung Hee, because I want to do some of the same things for North Korea that Park Chung Hee did for South Korea in terms of jump starting the economy. So I think he has a recalcitrant military that he has trouble dealing with. I think he has a small coterie of people around him who are fairly enlightened.

EDWARD W. KLOTH
Political Officer
Seoul (1990-1993)

Mr. Kloth was born in North Carolina and raised in New York. After service in the Peace Corps and private business, he worked with the Department of Defense, later joining the State Department. In his career with State, Mr. Kloth served several tours in Japan and Korea, In Washington assignments he dealt with East Asian, Political/military, Economic and Environment matters. He also spent two years on Capitol Hill as Department of State Pearson Fellow. After retirement, Mr. Kloth continued as advisor to the Department on variety of matters and served a tour in Iraq as Economic Officer. Mr. Kloth was interviewed by Charles

Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: In 1990 where did you go?

KLOTH: After finishing my tour on Japan desk in 1990, I went back to Seoul. I was in the embassy for three years as the head of the internal political section. In the portfolio were relations with Korean politicians and the National Assembly, in particular, and relations with university academics and NGOs, even the media. I wasn't trying to do the work of the public affairs section, but to better understand the dynamics of Korean politics and society by talking with people who had a broad range of contacts and perspectives. I also had a mandate from our front office to be proactive in ensuring the politicians and others I met with understood U.S. policy. Koreans might agree or disagree, and the goal was to increase the number of those who agreed, or at least, if they disagreed, understood our policies. Too often politicians and the Korean media out of ignorance or for their own political purposes portrayed the choices as zero-sum – "U.S. wins; Korea loses."

Trade issues had become big, for example. The Uruguay Round was entering a critical stage, so Koreans would ask me about that. North Korea was also heating up and Koreans had a variety of opinions about what South Korean and U.S. policy should be. As a political officer I had two jobs: to advocate U.S. positions and to report how local politics and how that process would affect our interests.

Q: Who was our ambassador at the time?

KLOTH: Don Gregg was ambassador in 1990.

Q: Okay, let's talk about the Seoul time. You'd been away for a while and they had a real election. Talk about the changed political environment that you were dealing with.

KLOTH: Korean politics and the way the government operated were much more open and democratic, reflecting the new dynamics of Korean society and Korea's economy. Koreans were living better; wages had taken a big jump in '88 as part of the democratization process, which capped the economic development of the '70s and 80s.

The jump in car ownership was a highly visible symbol of those changes. When I first went there in 1969, only affluent people could afford to cars. I was startled in 1990, going out to Seoul National University to visit some professor friends to see row after row of brand new cars parked on campus. One professor began by saying, "I bet you noticed all those new cars. They aren't owned by professors but by students. Dad or mom gave their kids a car when they got into SNU, because that's a big deal. The students often maintain the cars using the money they earn tutoring high school kids (a college students' usual part-time job with a long tradition). In Korea that is very lucrative and always has been. Back in the days when Koreans were much poorer, I certainly knew more than a few students of very, very modest means who funded their college educations by tutoring. I'm sure many still do, but today some use the money for cars."

Q: You might just mention about the sort of hierarchical university system.

KLOTH: If you ask Koreans to name the universities, to rank order them, everyone will start with Seoul National University – Korea has public and private universities. Yonsei or Korea Universities, private schools, probably come next. Koreans will go down a list with much less variation than in the U.S.. After all, it's a smaller country, but it also has a tradition of rankings that is strong. Where you go pretty much determines a person's upper and lower limits in terms of future jobs and more.

Thinking back to the bad old days of the Foreign Service where if you didn't go to the Ivy League, you could apply but your odds of being accepted didn't seem to have been very...

Q: Well, anyway back to Korea.

KLOTH: Back to Korea. In 1990, Korea was very different. Folks were more prosperous, and they were reaping the rewards of their hard work. I mentioned the cars at Seoul National University; obviously that is the higher end. But in Ulsan, with the big Hyundai shipyard, higher end blue collar workers were going around on motorbikes. If you wandered around the back streets of Seoul's Yongdunp'o, there were a lot of small machine tool shops. These were one or two guys with a power drill making parts, perhaps auto parts, as sub-contractors, very humble kinds of places. But you'd see TV aerials on roof tops. People were well fed and clothed. In '69, you would see poor people, clearly not as well fed, but also wearing cast off military uniforms. By the 1990s, people were wearing work clothes that were not cast off military uniforms, so all these little things were signs of a better quality of life. I don't mean there was no poverty or that working conditions weren't often terrible, but by the 1990s Koreans felt confident enough in their future to worry about things like the environment.

With a more open political system, there were TV investigative reports about things like pollution, water pollution, industrial waste being dumped into the river systems. Prior to this time, a story occasionally might pop up on such problems, and then it would disappear - censored. University professors and folks in NGOs told me that the government didn't want to hear about pollution in the '70s and the early '80s. Most people were just focused on living a little better, so it wasn't a case of censorship bucking much popular sentiment. Rapid economic growth was accepted widely as the number one priority – or maybe number two after being sure the North Koreans wouldn't start another war.

Talking to people in Korea's business world, I discovered that many companies were and had been thinking ahead. If, say, a company put up a brand new TV factory, it would put in anti-pollution equipment, because it was cheaper to do so at the start, than five years later if government policy changed. Guys running the big companies and even many medium-sized ones could see change coming. They traveled on business and were well informed. Ironically, I was told when I visited one plant in the early '90s, the government told the manager not to use his anti-pollution equipment because it increased electricity consumption. They didn't care if he was willing to pay. Limited supply worried them as demand jumped with all the new TVs, refrigerators, washing machines and computers.

Q: Well, Korea under Park Chung Hee government had made a great effort to pass the goodies that were available down to the farmers and all, as opposed to so many other places where the farmers were made to sacrifice to the city folk. Was that still going on?

KLOTH: Well, they did, and certainly in terms of trade things like rice imports or beef imports continued to be contentious issues. We'd negotiated with them and opened their system relatively speaking, but in the '90s rice was a very hot issue because the Uruguay Round was going to require concessions. I found that the embassy internal sections' job was shifting. Up till '88, it was very much focused on political reporting and advocacy for democratization and human rights. There were three officers in my internal politics section.

By '91, the democratization, labor and human rights situation was much improved. The North Korea nuclear issue was a major concern. We only had one officer on the external affairs account who covered that. He was getting swamped by '91, so we moved one of the officers out my section to work with him. I would argue our internal section was becoming "normal." You'd follow the ins and outs of domestic politics and advocate with politicians and others on key issues like security issues, trade and U.S. policy toward North Korea where U.S. policy was getting plenty of criticism from right and left in South Korea.

Q: Was there a difference between the politician of the 1970s and the 1990s as far as almost structurally? Were they more independent, district oriented or how?

KLOTH: In the '70s, when I was in Peace Corps and a grad student, I really didn't know politicians at all. I, of course, knew plenty of Koreans interested in politics, but it was a dictatorship. In '82, when I first went back in the consular section, through friends, I did meet a number. So my '70s memories are basically newspapers and impressions. Korea's political parties, including the government party, were kept on a tight leash.

The president of Korea was and still is a very powerful figure. The Korean bureaucracy is very large and powerful too but takes its cues from on high, in part because of all the apparatus that was built to develop Korea. Seoul is also the center of the universe: the capital of government; the center of business, academe and the media.

The Korean assemblymen of the ruling party, of course, are plugged into the ruling party, and therefore have more power and influence than the minority, but the Assembly as a legislative body reflects what various segments of society are thinking. In terms of the individual politicians as has been true for a long time certainly in the '70s and the '60s, there is a tradition that roots parties in regions of the country. If you come from the Cholla's, then you are going to be in one party, and if you are from the North or South Kyongsung in another. The roots are not just political – Presidents Park, Chun and Roh were from the Kyongsung area, but social too. There are historic prejudices at work too. A Korean acquaintance's girl friend was forced to break up with him, when her family found out he was from a different region.

Koreans are smart and very competitive. When democratization came, while the regional biases remained key to electoral behavior, political candidates in Seoul had to work hard to win because

the populace came from all over the country. In the 1990s, a new generation also came of voting age, and in the 21st century the Internet opened the system further. But you could see in 1990 that it was a New Korea, economically, politically and in terms of society.

We shouldn't leave my job in Seoul without noting that a major part of my job was to watch developments as Korea approached its '92 presidential election. All the candidates were civilian politicians. We were worried that conservative hard-liners might try to carry out their threats to disrupt the process, because Kim Young Sam, a long-time opposition leader, had merged his party with President Roh's party, and was the united party's candidate. Since Kim Jong Pil, who led another regional group, also joined the ruling party, the demographics assured YS would win, and he did, so there was an orderly, democratic transition to a completely civilian-led government, quite an accomplishment when you look at struggles in other countries around the world. Another remarkable feature was the lack of revenge taking against the KCIA or police operatives or even those involved in the 1980 coup, accept for eventual trials of Chun and Roh. People wanted to move on and beyond the past.

Q: What about the role of women by that time, 1990, when you got out there? When I was there in the late '70s we benefited greatly by the fact that the embassy would hire married women because married women even graduates of Ewe and other major fine universities couldn't get jobs. What was happening by 1990?

KLOTH: Let's make one point that even in '69, when I went there in Peace Corps the issue is sort of an issue between college educated or middle and upper class women and working class women. In 1969 when you went into Dongdaemon market, many of the stalls were run by women; food stores run by women, those kinds of things. We often forget...

Q: They were married so that....

KLOTH: Certainly among all groups in society, the pattern was that a woman, and males for that matter too, should get married in their early twenties, and their parents would find them a spouse. In fact, the parent's job or one of the jobs was to find them a spouse.

That had a long tradition and up through mid-twentieth century, the bride and groom might see each other for the first time at the wedding ceremony. But Korea in the sixties was changing. Young women after college would often go and work. I think middle and upper class parents – at least some parents – thought it was a good idea. The young women would accumulate some money and would learn about the world outside the house, even if the vision was to quit as soon as they married. The primo jobs were in the big companies such as Hyundai. One of my students said to me that her parents felt that the experience would help her be a better mother. Their hope was that her son – comments like this were invariably about being a better mother for raising boys, not girls - would go to work for Hyundai or one of these other big companies. His mom would know what it took because she'd worked there. Mom's job to run the house and see to it that the kids studied hard and got the education they needed. Koreans' view was that stay-at-home Mom was a full time job and a very important one.

There was a lot of tension too with parents because on the other hand, there was recognition that

people were going to meet people of the opposite sex where they work, so that's another reason for daughters going to good companies. They would meet a bright young man at a good company and make a match. Nevertheless, parents on both sides still expected a veto, and "meetings" with a group, not individual dates, was considered the preferred venue for young people to get to know each other. I remember my grandmother telling me that Indian parents thought American parents criminally negligent in letting two young people who knew little of the world decide to marry each other. Korean parents felt the same way. Marriage was too big a decision to be left to the fancies of youth.

Well, by the 1990s, things, and this is a kind of a moving scenario and some families moved faster than others, things were changing. Many young women wanted to go on and do more. There were also new opportunities, even in government, including the foreign ministry, and a few women politicians. But I think probably more significant, again I don't know the statistics, but I suspect more significant was an increase of small business opportunities, of small shops, dress shops, for women to be independent even after marriage.

We should also note that more Koreans were studying abroad and then returning to work in Korea. It began to change in the '70s, first because university jobs in the States became tougher to get, so Koreans finishing PhDs had a hard time finding jobs in the U.S. And at the same time Korea had developed and also had a government policy of incentives, things like building apartment houses for the Korean Development Institute, so that when people came back, they could look to a more comfortable life. By the '80s, the U-turners were increasing and even more by the '90s. So that was a significant change, which reflected the new opportunities in Korea.

Q: 1992 and I would like to talk about was there a more discernable, maybe it's always been there, but anti-Americanism or at least on some issues? And the roll of think tanks of the universities; was there a distinct chattering class? And also although you weren't dealing with external matters but you were dealing with internal, was there a change in attitude internally toward North Korea and Japan, China maybe, the Soviet Union just disappeared or was disappearing.

KLOTH: Right, Korea was establishing relations, diplomatic relations with China and Russia.

Q: How was this affecting Korea internally, and did you see where Korean-Americans having an influence developing enough clout or what have you in the United States and those sorts of things?

KLOTH: On China and Russia, not a few Koreans seemed to believe that Korea's better relations with those countries would upset the United States. Usually that idea came from the many folks with a zero-sum approach to international relations. I spent more than a little time trying to explain to people in all the political parties that the U.S. had long urged such better relations.

The first sign I saw of the growing influence of the U.S. Korean-American community was among some of our visiting Congressmen from areas with significant numbers of constituents from that community. I remember one Congressman who, in addition to a very busy round of official calls I had arranged as his control officer, had a separate schedule arranged by some

influential Korean-Americans in his district. He was completely exhausted by the time he left. It was a bit of a scramble for me too, trying to ensure the two schedules meshed, because I only learned of the second program when he arrived at the airport.

Q: Back to 1990s Korean politics, was the U.S. over confident in its trade policies and pressure on Korea to open its markets? Wouldn't that feed perfectly natural but latent anti-Americanism? I mean after all we'd been in Korea for over 50 years sort of throwing our weight around, there had to be a very strong residue or remnant or whatever you want to say of anti-Americanism?

KLOTH: Well, it's always been there, and it's about Koreans having control of their own fate at one level. There are various different levels to it. Korea was colonized by the Japanese. That was particularly galling to them not only because of the brutality of the colonization, but also because they had been an independent country with their own king, and they traditionally looked down on the Japanese. Koreans felt they were closer to China, which was kind of the center of the universe, and at times in history Koreans even felt they were protecting "real" Chinese culture as, for example, during the Manchu period. (The Manchus had conquered China.) It was doubly galling and frustrating for Koreans to find themselves colonized by Japanese, people they looked down on.

Depending on the U.S. military and aid after the Korean War made Koreans grateful but also resentful. For many, Korea was not yet fully independent yet. These feelings were there in the late '60s when I first went to Korea, but with a controlled media and political system, the Korean government only allowed criticism of U.S. policy when it wanted to. The opening of the political system after 1988 meant that Koreans could publicly express feelings that they had in the past but couldn't discuss openly in the media. So for some Americans I think this was very shocking and a radical change. But I think for most of us who'd lived as Peace Corps volunteers outside the walled embassy and military compounds, it was no surprise.

JOHN E. KELLEY
Deputy Director, East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Washington, D.C. (1991-1993)

John E. Kelley was born in California in 1936 and raised in Washington, DC. He attended Pasadena City College and the University of Virginia. He then went to Hawaii with the Weather Service and joined the Coast Guard, receiving a degree in government from the University of Hawaii. Mr. Kelley later obtained a master's degree in international relations of Northeast Asia from American University. In addition to serving in Japan, Mr. Kelley served in Korea, Portugal, and Australia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 21, 1996.

KELLEY: I came back to Washington and took over as Deputy Director of the Office of East Asian and Pacific Analysis in INR.

Q: What was the main interest of East Asian analysis at that time?

KELLEY: The main focus was Korea but that was not an area that I had dealt with. In addition to my Deputy Director position I ran the Southeast Asian office in that part of INR.

Q: With Korea, was it what was happening in North Korea?

KELLEY: Yes. North Korea was being its usual difficult self and the CIA was all abuzz with the suspicion (which they thought was more than a suspicion) and we thought was perhaps less than a suspicion) that the North Koreans had acquired nuclear weapons and were squirreling these things away, ready to nail the nearest underlying target, and trying to find a way to keep all of this from happening. Our role as the intelligence arm of the State Department was to take the same data that the CIA was working with and see whether their conclusions were justified or see if there were other conclusions that were more probable. We spent most of the time in a "peeing" contest with the CIA over this issue.

Q: Was there a discrepancy? Was there a real difference?

KELLEY: Since I was not dealing directly with Korea it's a little hard for me to recite chapter and verse of all of this. Some of it is still subject to active political interests and my information is out of date. At the time there was substantial reason to believe that most of what was being touted as fact by CIA was interpretation. There were more plausible interpretations based on past North Korean behavior to explain their behavior at the time. The North Koreans are always tough to try to fathom, it's always a career-threatening activity to try to build your future on what the heck the North Koreans are up to. Nobody really knew what the North Koreans were going to do, but certainly on balance the interpretations that we made on what the North Koreans were trying to do were much less threatening to the stability of the region than the ones that the CIA and DIA were coming up with. I think that those were largely a product of the missions of the various institutions. DIA had to be sure that the U.S. military never got surprised by any threat, regardless of how credible it might be. If they missed it there were lives at stake. So they would paint their view of what was going on in North Korea from that perspective. We on the other hand had the luxury of being able to take a look at past North Korean behavior in a North Korean political context. We considered how they had behaved politically in the past, what bombastic behavior in the past had been designed to accomplish, and what had they actually used to accomplish, what had been their focus when it came down to the crunch? We took a less alarmist view as a consequence of what was going on in the North and almost every occasion the outcome was much closer to what we had anticipated than what the CIA and DIA anticipated. They were being paid to spot the disaster before it happened and we were being paid to try to figure out what was really going to happen.

WILLIAM CLARK, JR.
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs
Washington (1992-1993)

Ambassador William Clark, Jr. was born in California in 1930. He graduated

from San Jose State College with a B.A. degree in 1955. He served in the U.S. Navy intermittently from 1949 to 1953. In 1957, he joined the State Department, serving in Sierra Leone, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, India, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Thomas Stern on January 11, 1994.

Q: In 1992, you were nominated and confirmed as Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs. How did that come about?

CLARK: It came in a couple of ways. Baker became unhappy with Pickering, then our Ambassador at the UN and wanted him reassigned. Tom had always wanted to go to India and the Department granted him his wish. That started a chain of changes with Assistant Secretary Solomon moving to the Philippines and I returning to Washington as the Assistant Secretary. I don't remember whether any one called me or whether I read in the newspapers that Tom was being sent to India. I did get a call from Eagleburger offering me the EAP job -- an offer I couldn't refuse! Tom and I worked out the timing because he was in no hurry to arrive in Delhi and I was in no hurry to leave. I stayed until mid-summer, although the change had been announced several months earlier. I did return in May for my son Jerrod's graduation from Columbia. Since I was back in the States in any case, I suggested to Alan Cranston, my Senator from California, that I have my hearings while I was in the U.S. He told me that he didn't have certain reports from EAP that he had requested and that although I was not responsible for the delay, he was not going to proceed with my confirmation hearings until he had received those reports -- which, by the way, had nothing to do with me but were on some subjects of interest to the Senator. So I went back to the Bureau and got the reports sent to Cranston. Then he didn't have time for the hearings at that moment, so I went back to Delhi and returned in June for the hearings. I was in Washington then just for the day -- forty-five minutes for the hearing and back to Delhi. As was true for my previous confirmation hearings, I appeared before two Senators, one Democrat and one Republican. In the 1992 hearing, Cranston was in the chair and Frank Murkowski was the minority representative, as he had been three years earlier when I was being confirmed for India. Frank was an old friend; he would come into the hearing room, throw me some "soft balls" and leave; for the Assistant Secretary hearing, he stayed a little longer. Then it was back to Delhi for the goodbyes and return to Washington in mid-summer.

The Secretary of State was Jim Baker. Larry Eagleburger was the Deputy Secretary and Arnie Kantor was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. These were all people whom I had worked when I was the Acting Assistant Secretary and who knew me well. As far as I was concerned, the Baker team was very good. There was a lot of criticism that the "Baker gang" was a closed circle which you couldn't penetrate. But since I knew the people well, I did not have any problems. Also just as I began my tour as Assistant Secretary, Baker began to phase out in preparation to his transfer to the White House. I always had easy access to the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary. Baker held a staff meeting every morning which permitted all the Assistant Secretaries to keep him informed and to receive guidance unless it was a complicated problem which required a separate session. So it wasn't necessary to see Baker frequently. I used to see Larry more frequently on personnel and other issues. I saw Kantor once a week at a regularly scheduled meeting; the same was true for Frank Wisner who was the Under Secretary for Security Assistance, Science and Technology. These were meetings strictly on EAP matters.

My days as assistant secretary would start early so I could read the night time telegraphic traffic before diving into the day's work. Then I would go to the 8:45 staff meeting which took about a half hour. That was a meeting of the Seventh Floor principals and the regional assistant secretaries; one or more functional bureaus would be represented on a revolving basis. I remember those meetings well because there never seemed to be enough chairs; on a couple of occasions, people had to stand against the wall. After that, I probably had a meeting with Kantor or Wisner or another Seventh Floor principal. In the afternoon most of the time I would chair one study group or another; I had formed several on one topic or another. Then there was always the constant stream of visitors and the staff. The day would end about 7 or 7:30 p.m. EAP had jurisdiction over a disparate group of countries. I don't think we were nearly as disparate as my colleagues in NEA were; there is more commonality in EAP than in NEA. We basically had ASEAN, North East Asia and Oceania; those groupings in effect covered all of the countries in EAP and I think could be supervised adequately by one person, as long as he had four deputies. Now one deputy handles Japan, Korea, ASEAN and Burma which is much too much. I disagree with the way the Bureau had been organized by Dick Solomon because one deputy carried too great a workload and I certainly disagree with the current organization. We will try to develop a regional security policy as are the countries in the area; I don't think it will be entirely effective because I am not sure you can separate out one part of the world without much relationship with other parts. On economic issues, ASEAN is developing its own as is AIPAIC; then there are the burgeoning economies of Japan and China which far outweigh all the others. You can't develop a meaningful general economic policy for the whole Far East; there are too many issues that require special and distinct attention. That is not to suggest that there aren't enough commonalities among the nations of the Far East that would require separate regional bureaus; I believe one can handle all the issues, but I don't believe that one regional policy will ever replace the webs of bilateral relationships. Country experts are still absolutely essential. It is a fact nevertheless that our position vis-a-vis one country is becoming increasingly important to our bilateral positions with other countries; we do set precedents when we act in a certain way on a bilateral issue; other countries in the area expect the same treatment. If we are developing a policy towards China, for example, we must take into consideration its effect on other Asian countries. We have not done that sufficiently because the whole phenomenon of Asian assertiveness is new; those countries are collaborating much more and are not always supportive of our actions. They want to be consulted -- real consultation and not just notice ten minutes before the public announcement. For example, for the Japanese being on good terms with the U.S. was sufficient reason to go along with us. The rest of Asia, if the Japanese agreed, would also go along. Now some Asia countries will advise the Japanese not to go along with us on certain matters. The Japanese are also becoming more concerned about the impact on Asia of any agreements they might reach with us. It is a different game and we are very slow in catching up with the new reality. The ascent of China, along with the increasing economic importance of many Asian countries, has made for a new ball game in the Far East. Other Asian countries are impressed by the obvious expansion of the Chinese economy; this has been happening for the last fifteen years, but has become impressive only recently. The growth of China's economy has of course security implications for all Asian countries and that is becoming a very important factor in their policy considerations. Furthermore, ASEAN has graduated from the poverty; Japan has to be more careful about its US policy in light of the growth of China and ASEAN. All these new developments require new US approaches and perceptions. Despite all of this, I still think that one person can give oversight to US policy in the region, particularly if, as I did, he or

she has very good deputies. I used to see my deputies all the time; we exchange information often and directly; my door was open to them all the time. I held a small staff meeting three times a week and a large one once a week. Then we had a meeting with deputy assistant secretary levels officials from DOD, CIA and other agencies. It was very informal intended to let all of us know what was of concern that week to a particular agency. That meeting was unique in the Department; I don't think other bureaus had such an exchange with other agencies. It was a system that Paul Wolfowitz started and I think worked very well, as long as it was not used as a platform for a lecture by an assistant secretary.

The evening social season was not that burdensome. I think we may have attended functions two or three times each week; it was not a great burden. There were also two or three lunches each week.

By summer, 1992 the Presidential campaign was in full swing. That had some impact on one issue that I dealt with, such as the sale of 160 F-16s to Taiwan. The General Dynamics plant where these F-16s were built was located in Texas. the political campaign meant that the decision on the sale was made much quicker than otherwise might have been the case. Our memorandum requesting a decision was devoid of any reference to the domestic political issues. Once the decision was made, I recommended that a high level emissary be sent to Beijing, so that the Chinese could berate someone for our actions. I thought that would be good therapy for the Chinese. I also suggested that we provide the emissary with some good news to offset the Chinese unhappiness. That recommendation came back approved with a note of congratulations because I had been chosen as the "high level" emissary. If nothing else, our approval of the sale made G.D. a much better buy for Lockheed which occurred a couple of years later.

The "two China" policy had always been a very delicate balancing act for the U.S. By the time I became Assistant Secretary, the Chinese had been berated, as they are almost every year, by the Congress; the President had vetoed the anti-Chinese legislation and had been upheld. So I found a stable situation with the U.S. maintaining close relations with both Beijing and Taipei. My deputy, a China expert, Lynn Pascoe, who is now the head of the American office in Taiwan, was very good; I had brought him on board as I had all of my deputies. He is still young and has a very bright future in the Foreign Service, which is one of the reasons why I had him assigned as one of my deputies. When he first reported for duty, he was still carrying the traditional banner "We can't do anything for Taiwan." Our Ambassador in China, Stapleton Roy, opposed the sale; he was a real student of Sino/US relations having been involved in that process for many years. He believed that the sale was a violation of the letter and spirit of the 1982 communique, which had become the central tenet of our China policy. I thought somewhat differently; I saw no reason why we couldn't be more forthcoming with Taiwan and I was pushing our policy in that direction. I asked for a review of our China policy which has just now been completed. With Lynn's assistance, we wrote a very balanced decision memorandum for the President. I was able to take some of the heat of out the dire predictions that the China experts were making; he on the other hand was able to convince me that some of the predictions were probably right. So I felt comfortable with our memorandum because while it did predict strong Chinese reactions, it did not assume that all ties with China would be broken by our sale to Taiwan. I was told by a number of people around town that the White House had already reached its decision; that didn't seem to me to erase the desirability of forwarding a balanced, well

considered memorandum with options. It was Lynn who suggested that among some other actions we might take a high level emissary be sent to Beijing. We knew that it would be a terrible visit during which the Chinese would vent all of their frustrations on the U.S. delegation. We also put together a package of four "goodies" so that the Chinese could rightly say that while we were selling the planes to Taiwan, they had not been forgotten. For one, we settled four FMS cases that had been held up since Tiananmen. We closed the cases -- the Chinese lost a lot of money in the transaction and got their junk back. That action permitted the Clinton administration to start its relationship with the Chinese on a level field. Secondly, we agreed to re-establish military-to-military talks and for that I invited Teddy Allen, the head of DSAA at the time, to join my delegation. He came in full uniform and a military presence which I believe made our offer to restart the talks more credible. Thirdly, we agreed to have a joint committee hearing on commerce and trade that the Chinese were anxious to hold. This was an established mechanism which we had also put in abeyance after Tiananmen. For that purpose, Barbara Franklin went to China in December 1992 on a trip which was greatly criticized, but which was absolutely critical to the calming of the roiled US/Sino waters. She was criticized for a "boondoggle" trip which was unjustified because she managed to get \$2 billion worth of contracts signed. Lastly, we also agreed to restart the Science and Technology joint committee; that took place in Washington and was important also to calm the Chinese apprehensions.

We worked out this package and then I took it to Eagleburger. I told him that I could only be effective on this trip if I had a U.S. Air Force plane for the trip. He said that I just didn't qualify for that. I pointed out that I was a high level emissary. We finally compromised on a small airplane that took me from Tokyo to Beijing. That plane was so small that we had to refuel somewhere both on the way to and from Beijing. The meetings with the Chinese were even tenser than I had imagined. I knew that I was going into rough waters when I was met only by Roy at the airport -- no Chinese. Got to Beijing and Roy and I talked about the game plan and did some fine tuning. Then we went to the Foreign Ministry where I was received by the Director General for American Affairs, who is now the DCM in Washington. I spent about two hours with him with me explaining why we had made the sale, why we thought it was good for the Chinese and then what we had in mind to do for China. He told me that I spoke with no honor and that I had a forked tongue; this was all done with great formality. Then I was asked to wait because my next meeting was to be with the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lee Hung Qwa. We waited for about half an hour and then the Vice Minister came. He read from a script, which I did note had been somewhat modified to take into account what I had said to the Director General. That meeting lasted for about a half an hour and that was the end of my meetings with the Chinese. The package I brought with me was not that great, but since the Chinese only expected me to explain our rationale behind the F-16 sale, it was helpful. We did not make a big deal of the four "goodies" because that would have been counter-productive, but we just explained the sale and said we had also decided to proceed on the four items that I mentioned. We never linked the two, but the package was presented as matters on which we wanted to proceed because it would be good for both us and the Chinese. Although these were not my more pleasant meetings, I think the whole trip was worthwhile for it did reduce the level of hostility that Beijing was manifesting. The Chinese press was rather low key about my visit. In the first place, they didn't want to treat me as a Presidential envoy, which I was, but rather as an Assistant Secretary. That was alright with me. I have seen my two Chinese interlocutors since that time and they both have always assured me that their coolness was not a personal matter and that I should come back to

Beijing when they could host me appropriately. That was an interesting trip!

On the F-16 deal, we worked very closely with Frank Wisner, the Pentagon and the NSC; to a much lesser extent, with PM in the Department. EAP was the action bureau and we wrote the report, obtained the clearances and sent it up the chain. That is a process that was different than that which might have been used some years earlier or is used today. I always prefer that the action bureau be a regional one.

I mentioned before that I hired a new deputy for China matters -- Pascoe. I hired one other one and kept two who had worked for Solomon. When I arrived, the principal deputy was a Japan expert; it didn't make any sense to have both the Assistant Secretary and his principal deputy being expert in the same area. I wanted some one who knew China and that was Pascoe. Then I wanted a real go-getter and recruited Don Westmore who was the DCM in Sri Lanka -- a job for which I had recommended him. He dealt with ASEAN affairs. He has unfortunately left the Foreign Service and is now the regional rep-resentative for AT&T. So one deputy handled China and Korea, one was responsible for Japan and ASEAN, one had Vietnam and the Pacific Islands and one handled region-wide economic issues. That was a different arrangement than had been customary for EAP, but I wanted to shake things up and therefore changed the deputies' areas of responsibility. Long before I became the Assistant Secretary, Sandy Kristoff, the economic deputy, had been at USTR and had asked me whether she should take the EAP deputy job. I knew her from India where she had served before her USTR assignment. Now she is at the NSC. So I knew all my deputies well and had worked with most of them at one time or another.

In general, I was satisfied with the level of competence that I found in the Bureau. I did think that it was not as lively as it might have been. It was not as pro-active as I wanted it to be. Some people had been there too long and were obviously in need of new challenges. So my first goal was to shake the place up and I am glad to say that the core of my new staff is still in place today. I knew of course that economic/trade issues would be central to our relationships with Japan and therefore selected an economic officer to be that Country Director -- Steve Eckton, who had been at the OECD and was a Japanese language officer. That was the first time that had been done. I also recruited a few more Country Directors -- people that I would be comfortable with.

Vietnam became a central issue for me. When I arrived, Ken Quinn, for whom I had great respect, was the DAS responsible for that part of the world; he was taking a lot of flack on our MIA and POW policies toward Vietnam. He had been targeted by all the critics -- "The League of Families", etc. I also found that in DoD there was very hard line official in ISA who had a direct connection with the Secretary. He used to by-pass his Assistant Secretary, Jim Lilley. I found that the head of the "League of Families" used to come to meetings of government officials on the subject of Vietnam. That didn't seem to me to be appropriate, so I just didn't hold anymore meetings. But I did want to proceed with normalization; I thought that it was time to bring the Vietnam war chapter to a close. I think we -- i.e. those of us who saw the situation in the same light -- got very close to striking a deal and almost convinced the White House over the tenacious objections of a lot of people in Washington. We had the White House almost convinced that the time was ripe for serious discussions with the Vietnamese on normalization because I felt that they had been sufficiently forthcoming on the MIA/POW issues. Had my

recommendation been followed, the Clinton administration would have had a much easier time when it started down the normalization path. Even though I started my efforts before the election, I pursued it even after Bush lost because I thought it was the correct policy and I wanted to start something that the Clinton administration could bring to a conclusion. There was no chance of doing anything before the election, but after it, I was pushing very hard for a change in our position. We did manage to do a lot of the necessary staff work. General (ret) Jack Vessey, who had been in Korea as the CINC when I was there, was very helpful since he was our principal negotiator with Vietnam on the MIA issue. But to get the Washington bureaucracy to look at the Vietnam issue again and to change course, was a very difficult challenge. Some parts of the bureaucracy in DOD and at the NSC never did agree. I was always convinced that once we had decided to proceed with normalization, the threat of a major political back-lash by the veterans' groups would not occur and in fact when the Clinton administration pursued it, there was not much of an uproar. I think Clinton deserves considerable credit for pursuing what we started; my only criticism might be that the process is moving too slowly.

We worked closely with some Congressional members on the Vietnam issue. That was Quinn's task. He urged Senator Kerrey, a Medal of Honor winner in Vietnam, to hold hearings on the subject and we got a lot of help from various Members of Congress. Without their help, we could not have changed course. It was the Congress in fact that approached us. A couple of people, like Senator McCain, went to Hanoi. Both Kerrey and McCain carried considerable credibility on the issue because they both had suffered greatly during the war. Both wanted to move toward normalization and had started the ball rolling even before I returned to Washington.

As I mentioned, I took over as Assistant Secretary in late summer, 1992. The election which the sitting President lost, took place three months later. That really created a vacuum, although I found it somewhat easier to work with because Eagleburger was first acting and later Secretary. As I have said, he was an old friend and we work well together. So I had complete access to the top decision maker in the Department. I think the hiatus also enabled me to get the Vietnam issue to the White House and almost approved, although I was never able to get formal NSC approval. I found that in fact the change in administration did not interfere with progress, such as the North Korean issue. There was a decrease in White House drive to accomplish things, but within the Department, momentum was maintained.

I mentioned North Korea. I had been away from the subject for three years, but I did not in 1992 find that there had been much change in Pyongyang's attitude. The big issue during my tour as Assistant Secretary was one that in fact I had dealt with three years earlier; i.e. the nuclear question. Back in 1986-87, we suspected that the North was taking actions that were consistent with a process of nuclear weapon development. By 1992, we had further confirmation of this development. It is true that the North Koreans had signed the NPT in 1987; by 1992 they had finally concluded an agreement with the IAEA for full scope safeguards. That enabled IAEA inspectors to look at manufacturing facilities and laboratories where development efforts might be taking place. We also had information that we thought should be made available to the IAEA particularly when the inspectors began to have some concern about the accuracy of the North Koreans' information. This was the first time that we released "overhead" intelligence collection material to a non-ally. The membership of IAEA included several country representatives to whom we would normally never had divulged our intelligence findings, much less evidence of

our capabilities. But in the case of North Korea, we felt that we had to break with past practices and turned over relevant intelligence collections. Of course, the IAEA had also found religion; it had been embarrassed by the Iraq surprises and had become much more thorough about its inspections. There was a wide spread divergence in the intelligence/nuclear armament community of what the North Koreans had done or were about to do. There were some who felt that weapons had already been built and that the US had to destroy them as soon as possible. I disagreed with that view profoundly. We also started a dialogue in the UN on the issue where a very good working group and process went to work. I spent considerable amount of time going to New York to talk to some of the Permanent Representatives and I thought that real progress was being made in bringing some rationality to bear on the North Koreans. Although I recognized the potential danger of the situation, I was also intent on not raising it to a hysterical level, which I think it became in 1993-94. I did not think that raising the status of North Korea to "super power" level even if it had built four nuclear devices made any sense. Such status would only encourage them to build more, some for themselves and some for sale.

We laid all we knew about the North Korea situation to the Clinton transition team. The fellow responsible for East Asia was a young Hill staffer who knew remarkably little about the area. We also gave Winston Lord a full briefing. I stressed to both that I hoped that we would not permit the situation to escalate unnecessarily. We did write papers which we eventually sent to the NSC. We used the change in administrations to request a review of our China policy, as I mentioned earlier. We wrote a lot of papers on East Asia issues for the new team, fully expecting that Lake would ask for them sooner or later. In fact, the new NSC never asked for them, but we sent them anyway. Winston showed up soon after inauguration, but was really shackled and not able to function at all. Over the years, the government's guidelines on what nominees could or could not do had been tightened considerably; now, until one is confirmed, one can essentially fill a chair and a desk and that is about all. When Carter was elected, Holbrooke sent Ken Quinn, who was to be his executive assistant, to the Bureau to let everyone know that starting January 20, he wanted all the DAS gone because his new appointees would start working on that day. He moved into the Assistant Secretary's office on January 20 and began to act as if he had been already empowered. That process had changed by 1993; Lord moved into a small office and I stayed on as Assistant Secretary until April. A couple of weeks before his confirmation, I did move into the office that Lord was occupying and Lord moved into one of the DAS offices. He would not move into the Assistant Secretary's office until he was confirmed. In fact, I weaned myself away and the Bureau's Executive Director became acting assistant secretary. One evening, someone called him and told him that there were a lot of papers to be reviewed. He said that he was leaving and that someone else could look at them. Over the January-April period, I just slowly faded away into the background; at the end I was available if needed, but the Bureau operated without me essentially as April rolled around. I think the transition went very smoothly. I was a little surprised by the change on the Seventh Floor. The advance word had been that the new team would be much more open than the Baker group. Towards mid-February, I finally saw the new Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Peter Tarnoff. I suggested that he needed to see the assistant secretaries more often; it had been the pattern for many years that the Under Secretary for Political Affairs saw each regional assistant secretary individually at least once a week. Tarnoff resisted that; he was willing to see us if we had a problem but was very reluctant to schedule a regular meeting. I pointed out that that just wouldn't be adequate because he would not necessarily know if there was a problem. In the three months in 1993, there was one meeting

with all the regional assistant secretaries which was very short because after Tarnoff had said his piece, he was called out of the meeting. The Secretary also made a couple of speeches emphasizing his interest in openness, but I can't say that we saw much of him. He held staff meetings with his senior people all the time, but assistant secretaries and others only saw him at staff meetings that he held every Wednesday. Those meetings usually were taken up by a lengthy presentation by one person and then quickly at the end, we went around the table to see whether anyone had anything to say. That was not a recipe for openness. When Baker chaired those meetings, some decisions were made or at least there was an intelligent debate about an issue. Christopher's staff meetings were much too large for that kind of dialogue. This all may have changed by now, but in early 1993, I thought that Christopher was more remote than Baker ever had been. Fortunately, there were not many issues in the three months that we are discussing that required Seventh Floor involvement; we handled most of them at the Bureau level. As soon as Lord was brought up to date, it was he who went to see Tarnoff and went to the NSC meetings. In EAP's case, the transition worked well; I understand that in other bureaus, there was considerable friction with some of the newcomers being shut out as long as possible. I thought that type of behavior was silly and it didn't happen in EAP. It also helped that Winston and I were friends of long standing.

I'd like to talk now a little about Cambodia. Dick Solomon had worked long and hard putting the Paris Accords together. There was a good working group at the UN on Cambodia. The sessions at the UN would normally start with a meeting of a small group -- France, Great Britain, the U.S. and someone from the Secretariat -- which would be followed by a larger group meeting, which also included the Germans, the Russians and the Chinese. All countries had accepted this process and it worked quite well. That was a very useful avenue and Dick should get a lot of credit for getting it started. When I became Assistant Secretary, it was becoming obvious that the Paris accords were not being followed. We reviewed the situation and decided that it was highly unlikely that the Paris Accords would ever be followed strictly. But there was enough movement in Cambodia to make it worthwhile pursuing the peace arrangements. Most of the debate both in Washington and in the UN was the extent to which we would permit modification of the Paris Accords and still maintain momentum. We agreed to just keep moving the process along as long as it was going in a positive direction and would not insist on strict compliance with the letter of the Accords. In the final analysis, an election was held in Cambodia and we had a surprised King. So I think we took the right tack, even if the process was not as smooth as it might have been.

I certainly found that EAP was relying on the UN more in 1992 than it had in 1989. Cambodia was certainly a large part of that shift since the UN had been used first to organize the Paris talks and then to monitor progress in Cambodia. We also used the UN on North Korean issues because the IAEA is a creature of the Security Council and therefore we thought that the Security Council was an appropriate forum to express our concerns. The Chinese did not reject this approach. There had been enough dialogue on the North Korean nuclear issue in the UN so that when the IAEA governing board had to take up the matter, there was no debate; all the bases had been touched and we were able to marshal virtual unanimity in the IAEA; there may have been a couple of objections from countries like Libya. It is true that the Chinese said that had the issue been subjected to a vote in the IAEA they would have abstained, but since the IAEA works on consensus, it usually does not take a vote and we viewed the Chinese statement as more a

warning to North Korea that it couldn't count on China's unswerving support.

So there are some issues that are best discussed and dealt with in a multilateral context. I do not think that this new process made my life as Assistant Secretary more difficult. In fact, issues that lend themselves to international scrutiny are easier for an assistant secretary to handle if they are dealt with in an international forum. I did not find that other parts of the Washington bureaucracy were anxious to be the lead unit even when the matter was being addressed in the UN. It may be that I was just lucky because our representative at the UN in the early 1993 was a temporary delegate since Albright had not yet been confirmed. The Assistant Secretary for IO was also very cooperative, so that I found using the UN a very good and bureaucratically effective method in dealing with Cambodia and North Korea, at least. My philosophy is somewhat different than the present State Department team which concentrates much more on functional issues to the detriment, I believe, to bilateral relations. That new approach puts a lot more of the policy development and implementation burdens on functional bureaus. For example, it is Gallucci, as the head of PM, that spearheaded the US policy towards North Korea. I would have preferred to have EAP be the lead bureau.

Japan was always an issue for the EAP Assistant Secretary. It was always the trade problem. We were aware that the White House was considering using Japan for campaign purposes, but fortunately that didn't happen. By 1992, I had watched Japan trade issues for thirty years. In retrospect, the best I could say is that it could have been worse. If we hadn't engaged in trade negotiations and other dialogues, the Japanese would have had even a greater current account surplus. Their markets would have been more closed, although they might have some weaker economic sectors. Our pressure for "market opening" has forced Japan to modernize some of its sectors and become more efficient. I guess I would have to say that on balance our efforts have had some positive results although it would be hard to prove by just looking at the statistics. You have to remember that State has had one policy; you can argue that the White House and Treasury have followed two policies. State has always supported free trade and market opening in the hopes that would increase our exports to Japan and decrease their imports to us. The White House and Treasury agree with that thrust, but they also have pushed the strengthening of the yen which hopefully would have had the same results as the market opening efforts. That yen strengthening policy is the one that is always discussed and I think it has been very effective in restraining the trade imbalance. I have already commented about the lack of understanding in Washington about Japanese culture and its decision-making process. By 1992, I think Washington had come a long way in understanding those factors. That did not ease the burden on the Embassy of not appearing to be Japan's spokesperson. It is always the burden of an Embassy of trying to explain the cultural differences between its host country and the US without appearing to be a defender of its hosts. I think when I was in Tokyo we managed to maintain a balance in our reporting, which has not always been the case. But even today, even with an increased understanding of the Japanese culture and process there is a lively debate in Washington on how you deal with it. That debate has not changed in the last ten years, although the environment in Japan has changed markedly. We still have the Team A and B concept: at one time we negotiate, at other we beat on the Japanese. Arguably, ten years ago, Team B might have had the right approach, but now, with Asia growing in confidence, it won't work in Japan and in fact creates a back-lash from other Asian countries. Those other countries will agree with our goal of market opening, but do not agree that strong arm tactics -- such as numerical targets and

the "301" approach -- are appropriate. In 1992, EAP was involved in trade issues; I have the sense that today USTR has taken over entirely. Of course, once again, the fact that I had a friend in USTR, Jules Katz, helped; we had worked together many years. Jules and I didn't agree on many issues but we respected each other's views. It is a fact, I think, that the Japanese "experts" have an entirely different view on how to deal with the Japanese than other Washington bureaucracies. The Japanese "experts" have to be careful lest they are perceived in the same way as our Embassy in Tokyo was seen from time to time. It is very much a matter of presentation; if you emphasize tactical routes to achieve commonly agreed objectives, then you will have a much better hearing than if you say that the Japanese just won't do some things. Unfortunately, most "experts" tend to take the second line and that is not the road to success.

By the time I became Assistant Secretary, the famous Bush trip to Tokyo was history. That was one of the best prepared trips that had ever been developed for a President; it was then cancelled and then reinstated and became one of the worst trips. The President's illness didn't help, but it was not a well planned trip to start with, even though we did reach some agreements with the Japanese during his stay in Tokyo. In any case, during my tour as Assistant Secretary, the Japanese trade issue was not a major preoccupation of the administration.

As I mentioned, cooler heads prevailed at the White House and Japan did not become an issue that Bush discussed at any great length. I think the Clinton team had a much harder time when they came into office because they had discussed the issue during the campaign -- although the Democrats didn't make it a major issue either -- and had hinted at a much tougher policy. That made cooperation with the Japanese somewhat more difficult. China was the big campaign issue with Bush being accused of coddling the Chinese dictators. That also caused Clinton more trouble when he became President -- as evidenced by the whole human rights fiasco. I should note that the transition team did want to be briefed on what we had been doing on human rights; I think we had a fairly good record on that score. But it was not a subject of much exchange. On China, Lord knew it well and we didn't spend much time talking about it. We did raise the Philippines with the transition team because at the time the SOFA agreements had expired and we had no legal protection for our armed forces in the Philippines who still used the islands for exercises. So we needed to have new agreements negotiated.

I should mention finally that I wished I had been able to make a couple of changes in the process. I would have liked to stay on to bring those changes about. But the new administration had already selected its team; it did offer me the ambassadorship to the Philippines. It took them a while before they finally decided and that gave me an opportunity to look at other possibilities. Just as they were about to send the paperwork forward, I decided to look for greener pastures. My case is an illustration of the mess we have made of the nominating process; it is now so complex and the confirmation is becoming increasingly longer that it is a wonder that any new appointments are made. I think increasingly people will not be willing to wait that long.

JOHN RATIGAN
Chief Consular Officer
Seoul (1992-1995)

Mr. Ratigan was born in New York, raised in Minnesota and educated at Dartmouth College and Yale Law School. After service in the Peace Corps and ten years in private law practice, in 1973 he joined the Foreign Service. A specialist in consular matters, and particularly immigration, Mr. Ratigan served as Consul Officer in Teheran, Cairo, Toronto and Seoul and from 1984 to 1985 as immigration specialist and Pearson Fellow on the Senate Immigration Subcommittee. In 1989 he again served on that subcommittee as immigration expert. Mr. Ratigan was interviewed by Ray Ewing in 2007.

Q: Ok in 1992 you were up for reassignment. Where did you go?

RATIGAN: I went to Seoul, Korea. I had a good friend who was the incumbent CG there, and it seemed like a natural follow on, a larger section. I had always been fond of the Far East, so I was pleased to be able to get back to the Far East, so off I went to Korea.

Q: You were a senior officer then.

RATIGAN: I was.

Q: Did you have Korean language training before you went?

RATIGAN: I had the so called fast course. A seven week course in Korean, and a brief story if I may. I discovered, we were learning of course the basic forms of conversation and polite address and so forth. I discovered after some weeks of learning how to converse with people in very basic terms the sort of form of address that I was using to people I could only use with about three or four people in the whole country. It was so formal and so highly reserved for senior and august people that I really wasn't going to be able to use this form of address with anyone that I would be normally conversing with. So that kind of put a crimp in the process. But I did learn some things in Korean and it was overall a useful experience in the fast course.

Q: Was the consular section in Seoul even larger than in Toronto?

RATIGAN: It was. I think we had I want to say 20 or 21 something like. Quite a few officers including a large number of JO's.

Q: Many with only rudimentary Korean probably.

RATIGAN: Oh yes.

Q: But some with good Korean?

RATIGAN: Well not very many. But we did have one Korean-American whose Korean was basically at the native speaker level. Thank God for him. The department generally didn't make the investment to training people to a good standard in Korean for visa work. They should have. So we used translators. We used FSN's as translators constantly and almost for every officer.

Interestingly, we had a junior officer, American but somehow had managed to serve as an intern in the Japanese Diet for I think a year. And so he went over there; he obviously had studied some Japanese before and served as an intern to a member of the Japanese parliament.

Q: This was an American officer.

RATIGAN: Yes, a man named Mark Knapper. So he came in with very good Japanese. Since the languages are so close, he picked up Korean really quite readily. He was a language officer who exceeded the performance you would expect. He was really good. Of course he had a lot of Korean girlfriends.

Q: that would be helpful. Much of the work in the consular section was visas?

RATIGAN: It was. We were just getting overwhelmed. Koreans they were making a lot of money, and there was a lot of desire to travel. So the volume was in excess of 2,000 every day virtually, probably six to eight months of the year.

Q: And of the 2,000 roughly what percentage would be non immigrant visas?

RATIGAN: All non immigrants. We did a good business on the immigrant side too with Korean adoptions and with the large number of Koreans already in the States bringing over relatives. But the 2,000 plus was all non immigrant. So we were trying to build new facilities while at the same time maintaining security. We had a tough go.

Q: Were you co-located with the rest of the embassy in the chancery?

RATIGAN: We were, yes. The chancery was located in a prime location right very close to the foreign ministry, very close to the prime Korean government buildings. But it was a very old building that was basically in the process of kind of decaying because for years, and it is still going on, there had been this expectation that we were going to swap various parcels of property for a new location where we would build a new chancery. That swap actually came off six or seven years ago after I left. So we got another prime piece of property that was a former boys or girls high school. But when we went to build on that property we were told by the Koreans that skeletons were buried there and it was holy ground. So the whole thing as far as I know is still in limbo. We traded our property but we basically didn't get anything that we could use in return. So now I think the plan may be to build a new chancery out on part of the military base where many of us lived. I lived on the military base which of course was now also quite anachronistic in that it was really not quite in the heart of Seoul but really in the middle of the city.

Q: You lived on the military base in a government house assigned to you.

RATIGAN: Yeah. I got a lot of salutes with my grey hair. But that was the point. It was like living in a small Midwestern town in the mid 1950's. You know you had everything right there, the bowling alley, the movie theater, the library, you name it. The military headquarters was located there. They had a wonderful hotel. It couldn't have been much easier as far as living conditions.

Q: You were the consul general so you rated salutes.

RATIGAN: The soldiers thought I was military, so even though I was not in uniform, they would just salute to be on the safe side.

Q: So you had a heavy supervisory responsibility with this big section. You also had to relate to the ambassador and DCM. Did you travel a lot or were you pretty much confined to Seoul?

RATIGAN: I didn't travel much for business. I mean we had a consulate in Pusan. They had this wonderful bullet train that went from the north to the south of the country, which we took one time. We went from Seoul to Pusan.

Q: Did you supervise the principal officer in Pusan?

RATIGAN: I don't think he was a direct reporting, no not the principal officer. There was a consular officer there that I supervised. I think the principal officer reported to the chief of the political section or DCM perhaps. I would go down there from time to time just to see how things were going, what the problems were and so forth. For private travel we tried to do as much as we could. I am an enthusiastic skier and they had excellent skiing in Korea. They would like to host the winter Olympics in Korea much as they hosted the world cup and the Olympics for that matter several years ago. The mountains are marginal as far as winter goes. They are really not alps type mountains but they could make it. Skiing and snow and stuff is very good, and the facilities by and large are very good.

Q: You were there from '92 to '95. Did any major events take place during that period?

RATIGAN: No. What did take place was there was some major concern about a possible invasion from North Korea. The south and the north were going through some particularly difficult times and they were trying to work out the first of the various arrangements about the nuclear facilities and so forth. But tensions were high and we began to make preparations evacuation. I mean Seoul is -- from Seoul to the DMZ (the boundary line) is the same as from the U.S. capitol to Dulles Airport. So I mean it is very close. I used to joke that if the North Koreans invaded the first thing they would have to conquer would be a gas station because they would have very little fuel. But I mean nonetheless it was not a joking matter. We began to plan for an evacuation, something I had never done or really been involved with before. Thank God we had the assets of the U.S. military at hand. I and the American citizen services officer, Kathryn Berck, began a series of regular meetings with the military in planning for trains. Basically we had about 10,000 Americans in the Seoul area as I recall, and we were going to put them on trains to the south. We would go and report regularly to the front office about where things stood and what the plans were and so forth.

Q: This planning related to the American citizen community, not so much to the embassy.

RATIGAN: Right. A lot of the resident Americans were business people, and of course a big chamber of commerce in Seoul, but also you had people scattered all over the place. You had

missionaries still. You had -- the military was an unaccompanied tour at that time, but there were a lot of spouses and others who would come over and find their own accommodations, a lot up near the border. Some of them not, because there were U.S. military facilities all over the place. So you have, I suppose it is in any situation, but it was a real mix of people.

Q: You called it the border. Is that what you called it in those days, or did you call it the DMZ?

RATIGAN: Well I think the technical term was DMZ, but we regarded it as a border. You know, let me just move on. You would go up to the DMZ and have business up there. One of my jobs, I became the acting DCM for six or eight months. I forget exactly what caused the DCM to leave.

Q: Well did the DCM leave or was it between ambassadors.

RATIGAN: The ambassadors, that is what it was. Don Gregg left as ambassador. The DCM became the Chargé and I became the acting DCM. This lasted for quite awhile. So anyway in the course of that we had the first visit outside, we had the first major political visit by President Clinton. He had made a brief visit to Vancouver in the early days of his administration, but his first major overseas visit was to Korea. I don't think they stopped in Japan first. I think they first went to Korea and then went to Japan on the way back.

Q: Was this to attend a conference or a meeting or was it for bilaterals?

RATIGAN: Bilaterals. They were still in the jogging and pizza days. It was really interesting. I mean as you know this is the first presidential visit I ever handled, and so you are constantly on the phone with the people in the department who run the presidential visits. Nothing we ever did was enough. But it was fascinating in the sense that we set up the visit, and the key event was to be a jog through the blue house grounds, the Korean president's home. Beautiful gardens and what not, and they were both joggers, so they were going to jog and cameras would roll and so forth. So we were all on track planning that and so forth. At just about that time David Gergen came on board at the White House. Well things changed. You could just about hear Gergen saying, "You are going to do what?" Just overnight the jog was off or they were going to take a stroll at some point or other when nobody cared. But the key event was suddenly changed to be a trip to the DMZ and the visual of course was Clinton looking out at North Korea you know with the jacket on or whatever it was. So I spent a lot of time advancing that visit. I have another story to tell you about the accommodations. Let's come back to that. So we spent a lot of time up there kind of advancing that part of the visit. It is a good show. You go up there and there is the line and kind of a Quonset hut that straddles the line and the North comes in on one side and the South comes in on the other. The gendarmes are around looking in the windows with their rifles on their shoulders. Then there is sort of a raised observation platform on the South Korean side. Of course that is where the president was. Well you see these kids up there. On the 2 ID, the second infantry division. Their motto was "Second to none, in front of them all." They were these 18 to 20 year old kids up there in front of everybody. Intentionally so. They were as we always refer to them the trip wire, the guys who were going to get slaughtered if anyone comes across the line. You are up there and you see these kids and you ask, what are we doing? What sense is this? But anyway that is the editorial comment. You know so we spent a lot of time up there. We would take helicopters. The military was running helicopters up there. So I learned a

lot up there.

Q: Did you fly along the DMZ in helicopters sometimes?

RATIGAN: No. You just, Camp Boniface. There are all kinds of camps just strung out along the DMZ. Camp Boniface is the one that is up along the main crossing point. So you just helicopter in there and set down. Everyone is of course, well back from the actual line. There is a bridge that you can actually go down halfway, but nobody ever goes down it because you never know what is going to go on. Of course on the other side you have got these guys in this big, very Stalinist building on the northern side looking out at you. You can see them with their glasses looking at you. There is this huge North Korean flag. It is probably as high and broad as this room that flies from this flag pole on the other side. You think, My God, if the wind dies that thing is going to go straight to the ground. So there is a lot of drama, and the confrontation is drawn more clearly when you actually get up there. So Gergen set things straight and got the president up there, and did all the right things. I am saying Gergen; I am sure that is what happened because the timing is just very clear.

Q: You mentioned you wanted to say something about accommodations.

RATIGAN: We, when the visit was first announced, we were talking with the foreign ministry, and the foreign ministry said, "Of course the President will stay in the Shilla Hotel," which is one of the leading hotels in Seoul, and kind of what the government uses for visits. It is not exactly Blair House because it is a private hotel, but they use it a lot. We had already addressed this with the White House and they said, "No we want to stay at the Hyatt. Because when the president gives the speech, we want that Hyatt logo." So the Hyatt was a very nice hotel, a bit out of the way, not right in the heart of downtown. So there was a lot of pulling and hauling about that. The Koreans were really insisting that he stay at the Shilla. The White House and we in the embassy said, "No, we are staying at the Hyatt. We have got it all set up there. The Secret Service has done all of that stuff, the advance work, installing the phone lines, etc." Well I think the president was due to arrive on a Tuesday, and I think the Monday a week before the Tuesday, the boilers blew up in the Hyatt basement at about 6:30 A.M. Of course the White House switch and everybody. There were probably about 70-80 people already at the Hyatt, and the cables all up and down the halls and all that sort of stuff. So it just turned out that the Shilla had 275 empty rooms. So while the Hyatt tried to recover from its misfortunes, almost everybody moved into the Shilla.

Q: Did the president stay there?

RATIGAN: The president stayed at the ambassador's residence. So they didn't get quite what they wanted. Then you know, I had embassy officers scattered all over the place during the visit, but two of my best officers were at the ambassador's residence to serve as gophers for whatever the Clintons needed. So after the big dinner, the Clinton's came home at about 11:00. The two, Margaret Farrell and Kin Moy were there. So the Clintons came in and said, "Well let's call out for pizza." So they did. So they sat around. Margaret and Kin and Hillary and Bill were there and sat around and talked until I don't know, 12:30 or 1:00 A.M. It just sounded like a wonderful occasion. My two guys were absolutely thrilled. It was just a smash. I think the visit went off

very well. At the end, I wasn't there. But they had a wheels up ceremony the next day. It was a military airfield. Anyway they had Clinton and Hillary and Christopher. Everybody sort of made a speech at the wheels up. My wife said that the order of brilliance was, ascending order, Christopher was the least inspiring. President Clinton was very good and Hillary was just out of sight in her comments and sort of quips and ability to interact with the people there. I had been working with the White House person in charge who was the wife of a guy named Lindsay. I don't remember his first name. He was sort of a grey eminence, the president's behind the scenes in the white House who kind of did some of the tough jobs. But his wife was the White house advance. The two of us were kind of a couple. I just remember we were so delighted. We had our pictures taken, and we sort of hugged each other and said, "Thank God it is over." So I think the whole thing went off fine.

EDWARD W. KLOTH
Principal Officer
Pusan (1993-1995)

Mr. Kloth was born in North Carolina and raised in New York. After service in the Peace Corps and private business, he worked with the Department of Defense, later joining the State Department. In his career with State, Mr. Kloth served several tours in Japan and Korea, In Washington assignments he dealt with East Asian, Political/military, Economic and Environment matters. He also spent two years on Capitol Hill as Department of State Pearson Fellow. After retirement, Mr. Kloth continued as advisor to the Department on variety of matters and served a tour in Iraq as Economic Officer. Mr. Kloth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: You were in Korea from 1990 until when?

KLOTH: I went to Pusan after three years in Seoul in 1993. Actually, I'd asked to extend a year in Seoul. The dilemma, as you may know, for LDP positions in Korea...

Q: LDP, Language Designated Positions, is you have somebody waiting in line.

KLOTH: The issue is for hard languages, the replacements are assigned three years in advance. That meant when I arrived in Seoul, my job was on the bid list for filling within months of my arriving at post. I had to decide right away whether to extend or have somebody assigned and the position filled. So when I got to Seoul, I talked to my new boss about extending for a fourth year because my wife had located a job she liked. Since we had just started working together, my boss not unreasonably said, "Let's wait until the bidding season starts."

As things turned out, he came to me not long after and asked if I'd like to go to run the consulate in Pusan instead of staying in Seoul. My wife and I decided that would be fun; I'd never lived outside of Seoul and neither had she. But because I would have been already three years in Korea, I asked if I could just go for two instead of the usual three, lest I hurt by future promotion

prospects by spending too much time in one country. Everyone thought that would be fine.

So in 1993, I headed south for our consulate in Pusan as principal officer. You may recall at that time budget cuts were really hitting the Foreign Service, a periodic occurrence that seems to happen at least once a decade. One consequence although I'm not sure what year or years it happened in the '90s was that State didn't hire any new Foreign Service officers, a short sighted policy we are still paying for. The budget cuts were hitting hard constituent posts hard too, in '92 or early '93; inspectors had come through to look at the embassy as well as at Pusan. When they characterized it as only "very desirable," my reading of that was the post was in danger of closure.

Q: What was the rationale for having a post there? When I was there in the late- '70s Pusan had a USIA post and Kevin was the USIA officer but there was no...

KLOTH: Well, we had USIA posts in Taegu, Pusan and Kwangju. In 1980 there was not only the most famous anti-government action in Kwangju, but also in '79 and '80, large demonstrations in Pusan and southeast Korea as well. So after the Kwangju rising, the Department decided to augment the USIA officer in southeast Korea with a State officer who would report on what was happening outside the capital because USIS officers "didn't do reporting," a silly policy if ever there was one.

At first it was, I've forgotten what they called it, it wasn't an American presence post, a term they use today, but there was some other euphemism. Then after a State officer had been there a couple of years, he recommended they upgrade it to a consulate because at that time the Japanese and the Taiwan governments had representatives in Pusan. The South Korea government was not recognized by Beijing, so they had neither an ambassador nor any other representatives in Korea from Beijing. So it was in something like '84 or maybe '85, when Pusan became a consulate. It had a principal officer and one consular officer, and was to be a listening post outside the capital. With democratization, that function was less important, and, when I went down there, I felt, and was told, that the post needed to justify its existence by shifting to more representational and commercial work, along the lines of consulates in Japan and other developed countries.

I should also note that Pusan did consular work: visas for Koreans, passports for Americans and other assistance for Americans. The most Americans in the district were military connected, but there was a small business and educator community.

Q: Can you characterize the Pusan area or was this a particularly interesting post? Was there a reason for Pusan other than being a port?

KLOTH: It is a large port, the largest in Korea, and the district included both Kyongsung provinces and Taegu, a major city. You had a large part of Korea's new industry there. Over in Pohang was the steel mill; Ulsan was where Hyundai had their shipyard and their auto plant. In Changwon there were various hi-tech and the new aviation parts industries. Masan had what they called an export zone where Korean manufacturers could bring in raw materials duty free or with a minimum of customs hassles, manufacture with them and export finished goods. It was an important farming region as well and so a good location in terms of business as well as politics

and other activities that were going on. The alternative probably would have been Kwangju, but it didn't have the transport, commercial or U.S. military activities that Pusan did as Korea's major port.

Before I went down in '93, the DCM told me that he thought the post should either expand or shrink but wasn't sure which. Grow with more staff because there was a lot of visa business and potential commercial work down there. Or shrink which meant it would be cut to one officer – I had a vice consul to process visas.

At that time, Pusan was processing visas for Koreans. With only one vice consul, it was all based on review of documents. Applications were brought in by travel agents. If somebody needed an interview, we sent them up to Seoul. The embassy itself was processing a large number of visas by having travel agents bring them in too; these were short-term visitor tourist or business visas. The prosperity in Korea as well as the increase in the Korean-American population in the U.S. had combined over the course of the '80s to greatly increase the number of Korean's who wanted to visit the U.S., and they needed visas. Since the embassy was unable to expand the size of its consular section commensurately, they reached tilt with ever longer lines outside the embassy, which had a very detrimental effect on the view most Koreans had of our embassy.

After all, as they say so often in the consular course, the only contact most Koreans will ever have with anybody from the embassy is with the person who is behind the visa window. So the embassy decided in the late 1980s to have the travel agents bring in the tourist visa applications. They would be processed through the computer watch-list system, of course, and then an officer would review them and decide who needed to be interviewed and who could be issued a visa immediately. That was the same system we used in Japan before the visa waiver program.

Now this was pre-9/11, of course, so the issue of terrorism was not at the top of peoples' minds, and certainly not when it came to Koreans. Visa processing in Pusan was very popular. People who didn't need an interview got their visas faster. We knew the area, so we were able to give added value to adjudication compared to an officer in Seoul. Occasionally, Seoul would ask us to double check on somebody or on a firm.

At any rate, the inspectors rejected that system. They felt that it undermined the integrity of the visa processing. So unfortunately for me, one of the consequences of stopping the system was that Pusan no longer did visas, except for local Korean officials or other special cases, and they pulled my consular officer out to reinforce the visa line in Seoul; so when my vice consul transferred out after a year, Pusan went to a one-man post. A few years later it was closed, although I understand there is now an "American-interest" post operating.

The consequence in terms of the view of the consulate and the U.S. in the district was immediate. At every speech and every reception after the end of visa services was announced, the lead question was, "Why are you doing this? Don't you know what a hassle it is to go to Seoul? Don't you want Korean businessmen to do business in the U.S.? Don't you want people to see their families? I thought Korea and Koreans were important to America?"

I did have a bit of success in trying to ease the blow. When we knew this was coming, I

immediately went to the mayor and the head of the chamber of commerce and the head of the travel agent group, and told them what we were going to do. I personally went to the presidents of the local newspapers as well, explaining to everyone that it was a budgetary issue, which it was. I think I was able to ease the impact in terms of my relationships with local leaders. For the average Korean, however, it was seen as yet another sign of U.S. disregard for a staunch friend. Worse yet, the Chinese, Japanese and Russians all issued visas in Pusan, so the compare-and-contrast was unflattering. I can only imagine what Koreans thought when we closed completely.

I don't mean to belittle the budget issues involved. They went beyond the cost of stationing two or three officers. We shared a building USIS, an old Japanese bank building, built in the '20s. We knew major repairs were going to be required. While in Pusan, I was instructed to look around and see what other options there were. Finding a situation that would meet our security needs was the big problem. One local office building's management were interested, until they thought it through and realized it meant having riot police stationed around the building 24-7, standard practice at the embassy as well as consulate because of concerns about dissident or student-types rushing us. In the mid-eighties, the USIS in Seoul was captured and occupied as was the Pusan consulate. Space was going to be expensive for our Pusan operation.

Shortly after I got to Pusan, the DCM called from Seoul and told me to fire half of my staff because of the budget cuts. It was the worst job I ever had to do in the Foreign Service. Fortunately, I had one American position that was vacant, so I called back the vacancy notice. I got permission to keep one person on a personal service contract until we stopped processing visas. I did have to let one Foreign Service National (FSN) go. Deciding which one was tough because they were all good.

We continued U.S. citizen services such as passports, notarials and those sorts of things. I was determined to not let my representational and other duties be tied to the passport window, so we only opened the window for services half a day a week. That turned out too be fine. We could have done that a long time ago, and let the vice consul get out more to do political, commercial or representational work. I should also note that we would also go periodically to Taegu to do citizen services.

Expanding commercial work turned out to be a challenge. The fundamental issue was that Korea's large firms and many medium-sized as well had their headquarters in Seoul and so worked directly with FCS, the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service, if they needed assistance. FCS agreed with me that a full-time, trained FCS Korean staffer in Pusan could help U.S. exporters by developing local relationships with local medium-sized firms, but never got the funding. I didn't have the staff to really do the time-consuming work we needed.

The one thing I could do on the cheap was to set up an "American Business Center." The mayor came over to put up the sign on the consulate wall with me. FCS in Seoul sent me commercial almanacs of American firms and other promotional materials. We put some posters up in our waiting room. We did some training with one of my consular employees, so she could answer questions. Since it was our waiting room already for passports and other consular services it was all set up in terms of security for admitting people from the outside. It was a little hard to know what the pay off was. We did get some newspaper stories and had a steady stream of medium

and small business people. It helped to show that amidst the trade friction, the U.S. government was working to promote U.S. exports.

I also spent a lot of time preparing for possible noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO) with my U.S. military colleagues. Up until the early 1990s when things got tense because of North Korea's nuclear program, the embassy and U.S. military command had not do much coordination on possible NEOs. The ex-pat community outside the embassy and military was also modest in size.

The military did have NEO briefings and periodic exercises for its dependents. I remember attending such a briefing when I was in Peace Corps. But the military was first of all very focused on their own personnel of which there were significant numbers. I don't know what the numbers were in 1969, but at that time my guess is military dependents may well have been the largest number of Americans and foreigners in country. By the '90s things had changed with a lot more American business people as well as English teachers working for various universities or private institutes; so it was a considerably larger number. There were also a large number of Japanese and others too.

With increased concern about heightened tensions with the North, our embassy and military began proactive cooperation. The surprise for my military colleagues was that I could not "order" ex-pat Americans to do anything from participating in exercises to evacuating if situation got bad. I could "advise" people through my warden's list, and did go out to some of the communities of U.S. business people working outside of Pusan and Taegu to discuss the process. This issue was a big deal for our little consulate and military bases in the consular district, because if anything happened to Kimpo airport in Seoul, evacuees would be put on trains south to Pusan. And, of course, our military in the south was going to have its hands full doing its primary mission, moving people and materiel into the Peninsula off ships in Pusan and getting them north.

A big challenge in preparing and exercising NEO plans was to keep a very low profile. The embassy didn't want the North or South Koreans to imagine we were preparing to evacuate American civilians and then attack the North. At the same time Washington wanted to keep maximum pressure on the North and "not take options off the table." In our district we didn't want to panic Americans either but did need to keep them informed. We also had to manage expectations among this group too – our military wasn't going to have the resources to send helicopters out to pick up every American living in some small town.

My military colleagues from officers to enlisted were great. We spent a lot of time together developing plans from NEOs to base events.

Q: At this time and we've talked about this before, had anything thing gone ratcheting up North-South wise?

KLOTH: Again, because of the heightened tension over the North Korea nuclear program and the attempt to get the North Koreans into negotiations into an agreement, which did eventually come to fruition, tensions had gone higher. There was a great difference between the average

Koreans view of the importance of the issue and the view of the American government. Koreans did not want to a war. Many of all political stripes worried that the United States would do something that would start a war. Underlying folk's attitudes was the long-standing frustration that a foreign government – the U.S. – would pursue a policy for its own reasons that put Korea at greater risk than Americans who lived out of North Korea's reach on the other side of the Pacific. And, of course, South Koreans felt they should be the prime negotiators with the North. Conservatives and liberals differed on what terms should be were united in the opinion that Americans didn't know how to deal with North Koreans. "You just don't understand those guys the way we do. Drive a rat into a corner, and it will bite you."

On the other hand, the same person who might be worried about an escalation to military action might later in a conversation insist that to negotiate with the North Koreans, you had to be tough or they would push you around. The common underlying theme was really the same, South Koreans should be dealing with the North, and the U.S. should let the ROK government run the show.

Q: Did you have a pretty good idea of industrial production and how the Koreans were doing?

KLOTH: Well, the Korean factories were booming. This was the early nineties, and they were much more diversified, churning out TVs and other electronic goodies, even airplane parts for Boeing. When I got there first in '69, they were "exporting" construction workers to places like Saudi Arabia. They were exporting cloth and some clothing. By '72, they were exporting a lot more clothing; by '75 even more clothing. By 1993, they were exporting automobiles and electronics from highly modern factories that had just been built.

From Pusan I would go out and visit plants such as the LG factory in Kumi near Taegu where the TVs were put together untouched by human hands because they had the latest equipment. I went over and saw the Pohang Steel Mill. I'd visited steel mills in Japan in the mid-'80s and even to my untrained eye this Pohang plant in '94 was certainly among the world's most modern. The people who were running it clearly knew their business well; it was impressive. Koreans' enthusiasm for education for the future was evident too. Pohang Steel built what its manager proudly called "Korea's MIT," Pohang Science and Technology University. That was an impressive place. They were working hard to get very sharp students there.

The Koreans were also developing an up-to-date defense industry as well. Changwon was one place they were doing it, and they were also building a plant out to the west of Changwon to assemble F-16 fighters. I visited Lockheed-Martin folks out there who I used to visit to see the plant and to check with them on U.S. citizen services issues. The first time I went out the floor was an empty. Before I left Korea, the first jets were rolled out. Making parts in Korea as well as doing the assembly was an important aspect of what was a carefully thought out program of industrial development.

Let me talk a bit more about U.S. outreach programs in the direct. After I left Pusan, the USIS posts in Pusan and Taegu were closed, although in the new Korea, now in the Internet age, the old USIS regional posts focus on a library and English programs was anachronistic. Koreans could see the NY Times on line; access to uncensored news was not the issue it had been under

the dictators. Koreans could afford to and did hire native speaker English teachers in large numbers.

Q: How did you feel about that system?

KLOTH: Well, I always thought having USIA distinct from State Department was artificial. The distinction between consulate and USIA was something that was lost on most Koreans; certainly the Koreans saw the USIA as the U.S. government. USIA had some very good officers. I felt sorry, thinking back to my time in the embassy's political section, that we didn't have cables reporting from our USIA posts. Their people learned a lot; they were out and about and talking to a lot of people, and often had a very good sense of what was on people's mind, but it didn't get in the cable stream in the way it should have.

I think my final point is that we need to label our posts outside capitals as consulates or better yet consul generals. A major point is to show the local folks we think highly of them. In Pusan and Fukuoka the other foreign representatives were consuls general; the American was a "consul," although we were the ally and major trading partner. If an important part of the role of our regional post is to emphasize the importance that we attach to our relationship with a country, we don't serve ourselves well by having representatives of lesser title than those of other governments. I think all these "virtual" or "American-presence" labels are dreadful if we use them in cities where there are diplomats from elsewhere with consular titles.

Q: Was there much of an American alumnae association? Koreans who have gone and we are now entering an era where Koreans are going to the United States studying and all and then coming back weren't they?

KLOTH: Right. In the '80s, we began to see a U-turn up to the '60s and '70s. I don't know the numbers but...

Q: It just wasn't a factor.

KLOTH: Out of every ten that would go, I suppose perhaps seven or eight would stay; by the '80s that was turning around because of the opportunities in Korea. I think by now it's even more so, although we clearly continued to have significant Korean migration to the U.S. There has certainly been a leap in Korean sightseers. I remember talking to a cab driver in Pusan who had been to Europe a couple of times with some of his friends on tours. He hoped he could send his kids maybe to summer school abroad to learn a language. He hoped to get to the U.S. too, but said matter of factly, "I'm a cab driver, you know how hard it is to get a U.S. visa. I can go to Europe a lot easier."

Q: Were you picking up, was this a different world, a different outlook in Seoul or not?

KLOTH: Yes and no. The national TV was clearly the major source of news and programs, so I think in that sense no. But in Korea, as in Japan with Tokyo, Seoul is the center of the universe; it is the center of government, business, education and society. As in Japan, I would go to a lot of receptions with business people and government people in Pusan. It often seemed that a third of

the crowd had just got back from Seoul, and a third were going tomorrow. They had to spend a lot of time there to work the bureaucracy, either their company's bureaucracy or the government bureaucracy.

Q: Well, they had a pretty good train going up there didn't they?

KLOTH: They called it the Saemaul high-speed train. It took four to four and a half hours, and it was very comfortable.

Q: How about fleet visits?

KLOTH: Well, because of the North Korea and the tension with North Korea, I had three carrier visits by two carriers, the Kitty Hawk and the Constellation, over only a three or four month period. In terms of the consulate's representational work and showing Koreans we valued them as allies, it was great to have a two-star admiral host a reception for local government, military and business people. I was actively involved. We had an army base in Pusan and a small U.S. Navy base in Chinhae and a great USO, and they took care of logistics that a consulate would help with in an area without such bases. Local officials and police as well as ordinary citizens were great. Everyone wanted to make sure the visits went well, and they did.

Q: How important were the business leaders of the shipyards and steel works and all that?

KLOTH: Well, again their line of sight was back to Seoul because that's where the company headquarters are. The steel mill, shipyards, and auto plants were some distance from Pusan. The Pohang and Hyundai managers were clearly powerful and important people in their area, but they weren't necessarily local. In Pusan, in addition to the people who worked for the out-of-town major companies, there were also businessmen who had significant local businesses, some of them small or medium sized manufacturers, who were influential local leaders. These people were, as in an American city, important people with roots in the community.

Q: On universities, one, were there universities there and what happened in the springtime? Did they come out and demonstrate?

KLOTH: When I was there, demonstrations were not significant at the universities. We would, however, in the fall and spring have a few demonstrations, including near the consulate. We had a few riot police around the consulate 24-7, but when a "demo" was expected, even if it involved just a few people, the riot police would come out in force. They were well informed about what was going on.

Q: Were these demonstrations against the United States and for what?

KLOTH: The protests were about U.S. policies -- U.S. role in the division of Korea, U.S. troops in Korea, the Hialeah U.S. Army Base being in the middle of Pusan or some issue of the moment. There were some dissident groups who wanted the consulate to move because it was a symbol of the U.S.-Korean unfair "relationship". Moving Camp Hialeah and associated facilities in Pusan was not just a dissident issue. They sat on prime real estate in that port city surrounded

by mountains. Quite naturally moving the base was very much on the minds of the business community as well. From their point of view we're underutilizing potential commercial and residential real estate.

The U.S. military officers I worked with were very sharp and understood very well. The official position was that if the Korean government would build an alternate facility suitable to the mission we'd move. Most of even the dissidents, I discussed this with, believed we meant what we said. The problem for even a business leader in a place like Pusan is that decisions on Korea's budget would be made in Seoul and moving bases around the capital would be higher priority. Kim Young Sam came in as President. He was from the area, so Pusan people hoped he might do something, but nothing happened.

We had one big shipping incident when I was in Pusan that made American President Line (APL) very appreciative of our having a consulate there. An APL ship was hit entering the harbor in the fog by a Korean ship departing, nearly sinking the President Monroe. The captain told me that he was ready to abandon ship, "You know, I have so few crew on this big container ship that I can't respond to emergencies the way we could when we had smaller ships and larger crews. I came close to abandoning ship."

Fortunately, the captain was able to get it into the harbor and get it alongside a pier. The next excitement started when workers were cutting jammed containers loose to unload them. The contents of one caught fire and set others alight.

I got a call at 7:30 on a sunny May Saturday morning from the Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs who had just been called by the president of APL, asking for help from our military in Korea. I went down to my Navy colleague's house and knocked on her door. As luck would have it, there were two Navy ships with special fire-fighting capabilities in port, an oiler and a guided missile cruiser. Both ships' crews had special fire-fighting training and equipment.

Like characters in a movie, we picked up the Navy officers, packed into my car and raced off to the commercial pier. The Navy crews arrived quickly and, working with the Korean firemen, quelled the fires.

My head FSN, a very sharp guy, was already at the APL office and worked with the local APL people and harbor officials. It was quite an experience.

Q: Was your wife able to find a job in Pusan?

KLOTH: No, she didn't, but she continued to teach up at a university in Seoul and commuted back and forth on the Saemaul train. Jobs for spouses was a real issue if they didn't want to be English teachers. We were lucky.

WALTER F. MONDALE
Ambassador

Japan (1993-1996)

Vice President Mondale was born and raised in Minnesota. A graduate of the University of Minnesota and its Law School, Mr. Mondale served as State Attorney General before his appointment and subsequent election as United States Senator from the State of Minnesota. Elected Vice President of the United States in 1976, Mr. Mondale served for the duration of the Carter Administration as active participant and advisor. President Clinton nominated him United States Ambassador to Japan, where he served from 1993 through 1996. Throughout his career Mr. Mondale has contributed substantially to the welfare of the nation in both the public and private sectors. Mr. Mondale was interviewed by David Reuther in 2004.

Q: Let's look at the Korean situation a little bit. As you were saying, in '94, things seemed to be spiraling down. The North Koreans withdrew some of their nuclear promises and whatnot. Former President Carter goes to Korea. Did you know he was going?

MONDALE: His first visit to Kim Il Sung was June of '94. I was over there. I think he came by Tokyo on the way out and he told me about what he had talked about. He was very hopeful that this would help resolve the North Korean issue, that they were willing to open up peninsula talks, they were willing to put strength behind the idea that there should be no nuclear weapons on the peninsula, that Kim Il Sung was ready to talk to his counterpart in South Korea, that they would return American bodies still there from the Korean War, and Carter thought he had made good connections there and there was going to be...

Q: His trip in the first place was a little unsettling to some people.

MONDALE: It was, not to everybody.

Q: Only those who were responsible for the policy at the moment. But before he went, did he pass through Tokyo? Were you aware what he was doing, outside of what the newspapers were saying?

MONDALE: I'm not sure. I remember talking to him about it. I remember him telling me how it had gone with Kim Il Sung. He talked to me on the way out. I'm trying to remember whether he did also on the way in and I can't remember.

Q: That was a very interesting intervention on his part.

MONDALE: And this is a good thing for the State Department to ponder. The fact of it is that Carter's talk with Kim Il Sung came at the last moment that that was possible. He was soon dead. Carter came back through Tokyo on his way for the second trip. On the way out to the airport, he was informed that Kim Il Sung had just died. But that first trip opened up commitments and possibilities, but even people who didn't want Carter to go later used to try to influence the son when he took over. So, I think that what you have there is the special prominence and stature in this case of a former President who can gain access with a guy like Kim Il Sung and have

serious, multi-day discussions about things that none of us could have talked to him about. But in the doing of it, how does our government control the brief that the President uses? How do you tell a former President, "Here's your talking points. Here's what you can say?" To get the best out of people like that, we have to find ways of doing both. I think there's strength there that sometimes the traditional diplomatic system can't fully reach.

JAMES T. LANEY
US Ambassador
Korea (1993-1996)

Ambassador Laney was born in Arkansas and raised in Arkansas and Tennessee. A graduate of Yale University Divinity School, he first went to Korea as Methodist minister and professor at Yonsei University in Seoul. Returning to the United States, he continued his career as minister and educator, teaching at Yale and Vanderbilt Universities and serving as professor and President of Amory University. In 1993 he was named US Ambassador to Korea, where he served until 1996. Ambassador Laney was interviewed by David Reuther in 2004.

Q: The Clinton administration takes office in the 1990s, and we get into the process of how you come to be ambassador to Korea.

LANEY: Well, there's an interesting story there. In 1980 I ran into Charlie Kirbo downtown. Charlie Kirbo was close to Carter and was a man who didn't want any office; he was a prominent lawyer here in town; older, sort of a father figure for Jimmy Carter. Kirbo would often go up and stay in the White House and come back and he'd offer advice; but he was someone who was totally without any hooks or ambitions about the presidency; and so Carter and he were very, very close.

I ran into Kirbo going into an office building, and he stopped me. Now this is in the summer of reelection, of 1980, and he said, "Jimmy and I've been talking and we want you to be ambassador to Korea." This is 1980. And I said, "Well, that's very heady," and then that was the end of that. Of course, Carter wasn't reelected, and that was no more. Now, regarding Korea, in 1991 Carter received an invitation from Kim Il Sung, the head of North Korea at the time, to visit, and so he said to me, "Let's go." Well, it turned out, as I checked into it, South Korea was having an election or something, and the time just didn't fit. Then the next year we were having - I mean whatever it was, he wasn't able to use that invitation until 1994 when I invited him to go up to North Korea for that resolution of the nuclear thing.

Yes, that was the same invitation. This is all to say these are the things about Carter with Korea. Of course he knew my interest in Korea, my history there and all.

In 1980, Korea had had what they call the Kwangju Rebellion, where hundreds of students had been shot by the military government commanded by Chun Doo Hwan, who later became president.

In fact - Kwangju is the name of the city; it's the Cholla [Cholla-namdo] Province. And this is where Kim Dae-jung was from; that's his home area. But there was a lot of criticism in Korea of the Americans, partly because Chun Doo Hwan put out the word that he was operating under the authority of the Americans when the violence occurred - they tried to pass the buck!

Q: Be careful of your friends? [Laughter]

LANEY: And there was a lot of confusion as to where the commanding general was in all this, the Commander of U.S. Forces, Korea. So I was going to the Philippines, to Manila, for a meeting of the International Association of University Presidents; and Carter asked me to stop by Seoul, knowing my history and interest in Korea, and do a personal assessment of what I could find out; and so I did. I took several days. I talked, of course, to my friends who had been my friends when I was there as a missionary. Then I talked to people in the embassy, and...

Q How plugged in did you find the embassy?

LANEY: I was really disappointed and angered by the embassy. They tried to stonewall me.

Q: In setting up appointments or briefing you?

LANEY: Well, they talked to me, but the briefing was so perfunctory and they just dismissed all the issues that were highly charged! Well, if an issue's highly charged, it may be convenient to say, "Well, no, there's nothing to that!" but that's not an answer, you know; that's not dealing with the issue.

I left, and I make no pretense of having plumbed the depths of these events, but I left with a distinct feeling that whatever his role in the situation, General Wickham [John Adams Wickham, Jr., commander in chief of the United Nations Command and commander of the United States Forces and Eighth Army, Korea, 1979–1982], who was the commanding general, had been compromised by the whole affair, whether wittingly or unwittingly. And I recommended in a notation - personal memorandum to Carter - that it would be good to go ahead and make a change. Don't dismiss him and don't make any kind of...pass any judgment, no reprimand, nothing. Just have a rotation maybe six months earlier. Just get him out of there because he was a lightning rod!

Carter sent me back a copy; maybe it was the same one that I'd sent him. He'd written notes, you know. He wrote on there, "This does not accord with what my advisors are telling me." I thought, well, why did you ask me to go in, you know [laughter]! I mean after all, he wasn't committed to taking my advice, but I thought, you know, this is what's going on.

I still think that a more proactive approach in 1980 could have averted a lot of continuing anger and resentment that festered for many years, still festering when I was there as ambassador, of the whole incident and America's role in it. They had a white paper that the State Department presented, you know, looked into it, and they exonerated [Chun] Doo Hwan himself. When I was ambassador I looked into it, and there was very clear evidence that the white paper was not really

as even-handed as it ought to have been; in other words, it wasn't convincing to the Koreans; and in the long run, if you can't...it's one thing to satisfy yourself, but if you can't satisfy the people that feel aggrieved, and I don't mean cave into them, then you haven't really succeeded very much. So that was an issue continuing, and in fact, I had an -

Q: Of course that's difficult because that would put you in the position of pointing the finger at their own leaders, who were in part creating this image. I mean you -

LANEY: I think that sort of thing ought to be done. I don't think you should allow yourself to be a patsy.

Q: To your own allies and -

LANEY: Right. I mean, what - unless you totally patronize them and you treat them like children, I think that in itself is demeaning. I said, "Okay. I want to tell you how it is now buddy, and this is because we're partners. You want to be partners? This is the way partners act, you know!" But you've must have a certain purchase on that. You know, you have to have a standing to be able to say that! The problem with a lot of the people there, they had no standing to be able to say that. So they just had to try to figure out how do we get the most out of this with the least amount of damage. Of course, this doesn't solve the problem.

Later on, this came to haunt me when I went down to Kwangju. I can tell you about that later when we're talking about the ambassadorship.

Anyway, this is all background - that he used me as a separate set of eyes and had at least apparently told Kirbo he wanted me to be ambassador. Carter and I never talked about that; that was Kirbo. But I don't think Kirbo would have hazarded this without some reason to think, and this must have meant that my memo was better than I thought it was [laughter] even though he didn't take my advice!

The other thing was that we had this ongoing discussion about going to North Korea. Those were the two Korea-related things that kept coming up.

Q: Of course, in the early days of the Carter administration opened a very significant discussion about withdrawing troops from Korea. In fact, I think [Don] Oberdorfer in his book on Korea [The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History] kind of starts off with the Carter administration and that issue.

LANEY: Right, right, and that riled the conservatives in Korea greatly because troops there are a symbol, as well as a reality. The reality is, of course, not only does it give them a greater sense of security, but it also saves them billions of dollars a year on budget because they don't have to replicate what we would take out, and it also is a source of enormous amount of money and connection. The power base ran through the military for so long, the power base of Korea. It was very important for the main people to be seen eating with the commanding general occasionally. There was a profound permeation, you know, all through the military government and all: if the military government ran Korea, the United States military ran the military government. So that

was part of the heritage.

And Carter, of course, ran afoul of all of that by saying, “I want to withdraw all these troops;” and he did it, of course, in his usual way of just saying, “Well, I’ve decided to withdraw the troops!” no preparation or anything. It’s not really a matter of being a politician. He’s not a diplomat, in the sense in which he tries to prepare the ground so that when something happens, there’s receptivity to it. He’s an engineer, and he thinks that if this angle should be there, then you strike it on paper; that’s it. Sad thing is people aren’t the paper, and they’re not the pencil.

Q: I would suspect that a college president would understand the issue of preparing the ground for people, especially before you spring a request for money! [Laughter] I mean a sophisticated college president prepares the ground in the same way as any diplomat, and we ought not to see these as two different worlds. They’re very similar skills.

LANEY: Oh, I’ll tell you, I do! It wasn’t an easy thing for me because I have a certain degree of impatience too. And you know, learn to see around corners or be totally surprised.

Q: So how do we get to the Clinton administration and the suggestion that Jim Laney ought to be the ambassador to Korea?

LANEY: Well...of course I didn’t know Clinton, but I’d shaken his hand once, that’s all. But I was known to both [Georgia Senator] Sam Nunn and to Jimmy Carter as having Korean background. I think...I don’t know the discussions that took place with Warren. Of course, Warren Christopher was very close to Carter at that point.

Carter had often said Christopher was the best public servant he’d ever known, and Christopher was very active on the Carter trustee board, and he was head of the transition team for Clinton.

Q: Oh, I guess that was because he was Deputy Secretary of State -

LANEY: Under Carter. Right. As trustee of the Carter Center, he and David Hamburg, who was a scientist in New York, and I think Hamburg was head of the National Science Foundation under Carter or something like that [president and then chairman of the board of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and president of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences from 1975-1980]. He had some important scientific post, and he may have been president of the Rockefeller University; I’m not sure, something like that [president emeritus at Carnegie Corporation of New York].

But anyway, David [Hamburg] and [Warren] Christopher came to Atlanta to see me in December, and we had a private dinner, just the three of us, to discuss the future of the Carter Center and things like that. This was in 1992...yes, like December of 1992. And my relationships with Christopher and Hamburg were good; I mean it was just easy and so forth. I think Christopher had taken a liking to me; he doesn’t say much, but I think that. I think as they were casting about for the next headmasterships and all, I think there was a real desire - my predecessors had been Don Gregg and Jim Lilley; well, and for that matter, before that had been Dixie Walker [Richard Walker]. All three had been CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], that is,

former CIA officers. Certainly with Don Gregg and, as far as I know, with Jim Lilley, that really didn't signify anything, but it carried a certain kind of an aura, halo, or as they say in Korean, "namsa" (smell). You know, it was ineffable.

Q: Right, the selection of a politically-appointed ambassador can be to deliberately send a signal by using somebody with a certain background. .

LANEY: Exactly. Well, and you can see, apart from...and I don't question their integrity at all, but the association carries the lingering wonderment, if not suspicion - was there still a link? This is complicated by the fact that the Korean CIA, which is in some sense modeled after the American CIA (but it has domestic as well as international responsibilities), was so feared it was used as a political arm; and that means that a lot of Koreans in knowing this, there's mystery - are you who you say you are? And even if you are, how do you disprove the suspicions that attach, you know.

In any case, having said all that, I've already said more than I think is warranted, I think that Clinton wanted a fresh approach. I don't think he wanted something that carried associations like that and all. He wanted somebody that at least had some experience with Korea, and I think for Carter and Nunn, my name came up in that regard, you know. They had come to respect me at Emory and know me and trust me, and I think they felt, well, you know, let's try this! Then Christopher had come to know me, and so that, you know, I'm not privy to what went on and how my name got there. All I know is Christopher tracked me down in Europe and said, "The president wants to appoint you ambassador to Korea." And I said, "Well, I need a few days" -

Q: So he got to carry the message.

LANEY: "I need to think about this a few days." The next day it appeared in the New York Times that Mondale and I were going to be going to Tokyo and Seoul respectively [laughter]. This just kills me with the trustees, because I had not been able to prepare them, and it comes out ...in the Times when I'm in Europe, you know. This is terrible!

Q: So much for preparing the ground [laughter].

LANEY: But you know, that's as far as I know.

Well, the only other thing I know about it: Carter did ask me, I think, once, "Would you be interested in going?" and I said, "Well, it'd be hard to turn down." I had no interest in being an ambassador, just quasi ambassador; you know that wasn't anything I wanted to do.

But Korea's different because I love Korea, as you can tell, and this is a different matter. I had real feelings about the issues, and you know, Carter had mixed feelings about me, "Well, what's this going to mean (for the Center)?" and so forth. I was in a budget hearing in, I guess, March of 1991 and Sam Nunn called from Washington and got me out of the budget hearings. He said, "I need to know whether or not you really would take this job if it were offered." And I said, "Well, I can't really answer that Sam. But you know my great interest and commitment to Korea. That's all I can say." And he said, "Well, I don't...I'm in...I'm in a bind because I don't want to get

across purposes with my fellow trustees at Emory.” [Laughter]

LANEY: I heard nothing else until Christopher called me and told me that the president wanted to employ me.

So that 1991 conversation was the only one I had where it was specifically asked would I be - didn't say it's being offered, but would I serve, or take the appointment.

And you know, as a result of all that, I felt an enormous degree of freedom. I didn't feel like I owed anybody anything except to do a good job, and that really made a difference in my inner feeling about it. I had great freedom with regard to the Clinton White House. It was not always appreciated [laughter]!

I remember last night I was watching this Democratic [Party] unity meeting in Washington, and there was Terry McAuliffe; and I turned to Berta, my wife, and I said, “You know, within three months of my arrival in Seoul, Terry McAuliffe visited me. And I said, ‘Terry, the White House is in a mess! I've never dealt with anything that is so screwed up!’” He was appalled, “This was lese-majesté.” [Laughter] I said, “I know Clinton's smart, but I'll be damned if I can figure out what he wants or where he's going.” And I said, “You know, I can't get any clearance or any clarity about anything in the State Department! I'm out here, you know, flying by the seat of my pants!” And I said, “This is a big time issue!”

I'm sure Terry went back and told Clinton [laughter], because he would look at me a little bit, you know, like, “Can I trust this guy?”

But then at the 1994 APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) meeting at Jakarta, Indonesia; I remember we were all sitting around, and I was sitting here, and (President) Kim Young-sam was sitting there, and Clinton was sitting there and all the advisors; and we were just kind of chatting; and all of a sudden Clinton turned, and he said, “President Kim, is Jim Laney doing a good job for you out there?” This is the damndest question I ever heard of! And he turned, and he said, “Oh, sir! He's doing a most excellent job. He could not be a better ambassador!” “Okay!” [Laughter] I thought, you know, “What's going on here?” Probably giggling me, I guess.

Q: Tell our audience something about the world of being a political appointee. Here you're off and you've gotten the call. What happens to you, now? You have congressional hearings, State Department briefings. How did all this organized and scheduled?

LANEY: Well, at that point, I said, “I can't do anything for another two weeks. I'm on this three week trip with some other friends, and I'm going to finish it out!” So I didn't come home for two weeks.

And then...I recall I had to go up to the State Department, and of course they had to vet me for security. They had the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), you know, look into me, and that took time. As you recall Mondale and I were nominated together.

Q: Well, where we were...I was seeking a description from you of the experiences you go through before you walk into that door of the embassy.

LANEY: Okay, I had to go to ambassador school. There was a week of protocol - how does an embassy run, and all that. That took place in State Department itself, yes.

Q: And it's you and...

LANEY: Well, in this case, the whole tranche of new ambassadors. There were about...whether they were career, you know, Foreign Service or not. There were about 25 of us. There was Mondale, and Holbrook, and me, and a whole, you know, just a whole range of folks, such as Swanee Hunt who went to Vienna.

Anyway, that went on for a week. Then they had some sort of parallel program for wives. It wasn't quite as heavy, but it was an attempt to, you know...

Q: So what kinds of briefers were in these? Were they all-day sessions for a week?

LANEY: All day sessions for a week, yes; and they have people coming in from different things, like the security and that, people about budgets and about offices back in the State Department, and about how State Department and the government are organized. I don't remember, but it was the usual stuff, you know. You're coming into a system that is working. How do you get into the system, and how do you work it, you know, with the least amount of pain, and so forth. Then the next week we spent being briefed, I think, out at the CIA. I know we were flown down to Fort Bragg to see the Special Forces operations.

We were flown down and flown back in the same day, and we were told under what circumstances these could be requested, and how they could come in. It was very, very, you know, highly, highly restrictive. In fact, their very existence for a long time was even denied! But we saw all that, and briefed with the Pentagon, you know, all that stuff, Treasury, you know. I went around and saw the Commerce Secretary, and then I spent a lot of time - now this was before my hearing.

I spent time meeting with various senators, and so forth. In fact, John Negroponte and I had our hearing together. He was on his way to the Philippines.

Q: Your hearing was on September 14, 1993.

LANEY: Right, that sounds right. Sam Nunn introduced me, and he was a very complimentary. Prior to the hearing my Department handlers held what you call the murder boards, where they get you and prepare you for the worst kind of questions prior to the actual hearings.

And John and I had gone through that. I remember -

Q: Now that's something the State Department does for you?

LANEY: Yes, right, yes, in a special briefing room, which I spent a huge amount of time briefing. I met with Bob [Robert L.] Gallucci on nonproliferation and you know, just all that stuff. I can't remember. Peter Tarnoff was a friend, and so was Winston Lord. Winston was the Assistant Secretary for Asia and the Pacific, and Peter was Undersecretary for Political Affairs, and so I spent a good deal of time in Washington during that period getting myself sort of orientated and so forth, and really liked Bob Gallucci. We hit it off, and had several lunches together, and so forth.

As I say, I spent time on Capitol Hill. There's a political liaison in the State Department that makes the appointments on the Hill and takes you up there. They escort you.

Q: Yes, the Bureau of Congressional Relations, I think, yes. And that's as much a courtesy, to get you known before the hearings, I would assume.

LANEY: Right. Well, it's partly to let them know you. I remember my meeting with Jesse Helms' staff. I met with his top staff person, and I could see "dismissive" written all over him, and here was this softheaded Clinton appointee. [He said] "I understand you're a minister and are now president of Emory." And he said, "Well, you don't know much about the armed forces, do you?" And I said, "Well, yes, I served in the Counter Intelligence Corps in Korea." "Oh!" The whole atmosphere changed! You know, it's amazing.

That was a good coin, I could cash in there. From that point on we had a good...even though he - and he didn't oppose it at all, my appointment. There was a problem because somebody, it may have been Helms, but somebody held up about 20 appointments. You know, any senator can hold them up without any explanation.

And he just had a whole group that was held up, and finally Nunn persuaded them to break my name out so I could go on. He said, "Look, you know, we got business over there. This is silly." So I was broken out by myself and went on -

Q: From that sort of initial class?

LANEY: Right, so I could get a vote and get confirmed.

This was after the hearing. The hearing itself was, I think, very standard. You know, they asked about the usual questions, about my background, about North Korea, and about, you know, what I thought we ought to be doing, and stuff like that, and I'm sure there was some naïveté. I mean, you know, the difference between even somebody who is familiar with a country and not having actually assumed any responsibility vis-a-vis the country, and going there and being responsible for it is a big change!

You know, I got worried. I thought, my gosh, I had not used my Korean for 35 years [laughter] - which is a long time. Then to add to that, my hearing had decreased badly, as you can tell. I keep asking you what you said. So it's hard to get diphthongs and consonants; I'd miss them; so it was hard for me to pick up things. So my facility in Korean was greatly reduced, but I could still

speak. So I practiced on the way over, on the plane, my arrival speech to the press, and when I got off the plane I spoke in Korean for about four or five minutes, and that made an enormous impression upon the press. Unfortunately, it gave the impression to everybody else that I was completely fluent [laughter] and therefore they were disappointed when they found what we'd done [laughter]! But my return, while I was familiar and can read that, you know...but of course, most everybody I dealt with could speak English, except for the president himself; and at that level I didn't trust anything but absolute clarity, you know, so I was glad to have an interpreter.

Q: Back in Washington, did the Korean embassy in Washington have a reception for you or sort of acknowledge you on your way out to take up your position?

LANEY: They had a dinner, they did. They had a dinner, a nice dinner, but it wasn't too big; I mean it was maybe 20 people.

Q: To introduce themselves to you basically, again.

LANEY: Yes, and they had the head of the State Department's Korea Desk and some local people. But more interestingly, the ambassador invited me, on one of my trips to Washington, to stay at the embassy, which I did. I was not yet the ambassador. So one of the newspapers in Seoul had a cartoon the next day, and it showed a double bed and two people lying there, and one of them said, "Laney" and one of them said, "the Ambassador Han Seung-Soo." And they said, "Bedfellows?" [Laughter] It was not necessarily caustic, but it was raising an issue.

Q: Yes, a perception. Perception is reputation. And reputation is power.

LANEY: Yes. So anyway... But I enjoyed it. I got the feel of Washington. Of course, I met with people in the White House. I met with, of course, a lot of people in the State Department and was briefed at great length for a whole day, I guess, at the CIA, which I found to be an absolutely useless briefing. Their knowledge of North Korea was just nil. I mean they had all the stereotypes, you know. No problem with that, but that's all, you know; and then they said, "Now the invasion is going to come down through the Chorwon Valley. Okay."

So they've greatly augmented and strengthened it since then; it's much better now. I've lectured there several times, which has helped them.

Q: So you get these briefings; you've gone through the Congress; you got tangled up in Jesse Helms's black listing.

LANEY: Right. But that didn't last too long, maybe a week; and by the way, I got clearance, zip on the vetting from the FBI. They checked...God they checked even some of my high school teachers.

I guess it was to see if I was telling the truth, you know, and whatever when I was there.

Q: Well, that's a long form too, that has to be filled out.

LANEY: And of course, I had to fill out all those financial forms. And get approval, get approval from them on any investments that I still held and all that sort of stuff. But you know that's just bureaucratic stuff. That's no big deal; it's just something you have to do.

Q: So now you're prepared to actually take your post. When do you arrive at post?

LANEY: In...I know it was somewhere around October 20th or so in 1993.

Q: Now who's backstopping you in Washington? Who's at the Korea desk?

LANEY: Charles Kartman. But he had left a couple months earlier to go out to - I'd chosen him as my DCM. So he had preceded me to Seoul.

Q: Aha! How did you get the opportunity to choose him as your DCM?

LANEY: Well, because I'd met him and liked him, and I'd been given several names, but after I met him and saw his capacity, I was happy to appoint him, and he was eager to go. So we worked that out nicely.

Q: Because that's a pretty standard procedure, isn't it - a new ambassador can pick his DCM or...

LANEY: Yes, yes, well at any time...I mean not total freedom, but I mean among those who were eligible.

Q: Here's a list of guys we have, yes. You went through the ambassador's course. There is a DCM course, you know, and it tells you what to do when the new ambassador comes -

LANEY: How to keep him out of trouble; keep him from stepping in it.

Q: What did you see were the main issues that you might be dealing with? What's in your mind as you're walking in the Embassy door?

LANEY: Well, of course the big issue then was already North Korea because the nuclear thing had surfaced again, before, in the summer before I got there; and Bob Gallucci and I had had a luncheon in which I suggested why don't we offer to substitute light water reactors for their nuclear plant, and it turned out that's exactly what we did. I'm not trying to claim credit for it. I'm just saying that that was how early on we were talking about things like that.

This anticipated what would happen in another year, and almost a year and a half away...but the nuclear thing, and of course, there was always trade.

One of the major interests of any ambassador in Seoul has been a relationship with the military command, U.S. Forces, Korea (USFK), and immediately I struck up very good relations with General Gary Luck, who was the commanding general. We would meet every week for breakfast; we'd alternate his place and my house; and we would have no one else there. This was

just the two of us, so we could really talk; and that did more to establish a bond and the kind of ease where we could pick up the phone and talk to each other. I mean I was happy with that, and when the crisis came six, eight months later, that turned out to be very worthwhile because we knew each other, and we knew that we could really listen to each other and trust each other, and I knew how I could trust him, and I think he knew how he could trust me.

So it's the command, and the nuclear issue in the north, the economic trade issue, which was a big one because we were running a deficit with Korea. This is always an issue though, how you get them to buy more.

You had all these people coming around trying to get contracts. And then of course, there were things that were more niggling, like the problem with the visas, because there were so many more people wanting to come to America than we were willing to grant visas. Then there was my responsibility to get acquainted with and reacquainted with...I'd already met - in fact, Kim Young-sam had visited me in my home here, and I'd had a luncheon for him. So he felt good about the appointment; he felt like he knew me.

But I needed to establish cordial relations with him and his principal advisors so that - and it turned out the foreign minister, Han Sung-Joo, who is now the ambassador in Washington, was someone with whom I struck up an immediate affinity, and we just met all the time and just really...he and I really worked out the policy that we followed, and when push came to shove, he would get Kim Young-sam to finally go along with it, you know. Washington never even resisted one of them. They were either so preoccupied elsewhere, or they didn't have a clue, so...

I don't think any ambassador's ever had a freer hand to call the shots, I once ruefully observed that Christopher had gone to the Middle East 32 times and he'd come to Seoul twice in his term.

I said, "You know, this is just something wrong with this picture." I mean here we were really seized by the North Korean problem. That's why when I told Terry McAuliffe, "They don't know what they're doing."

Q: Getting to that developing North Korean nuclear problem which flows from the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) inspection of the North Koreans once the North Koreans signed on to the Nonproliferation Treaty. But, in the wake of the First Gulf War, the argument arises that the IAEA is surprised that the Iraqis had gone as far as they had so the consequent reaction is that everybody should be stricter with the next guy, and the next guy happened to be the North Koreans.

LANEY: Yes.

Q: So North Korea received the benefit of a more intense -

LANEY: Well, they got the benefit of it, and of course North Korea kicked the IAEA out.

And that's what brought it to a boil, you know, so that in early January 1994, things were really heating up. In early January, and I don't remember the dates, but it was sometime after the first

of the year, Sam Nunn and Dick Lugar came to Seoul and stayed with me. Actually Sam was chairman of the Armed Forces Committee of the Senate, and Lugar was the minority chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I had tasked my staff, particularly a young man named Danny Russell, whom I dubbed my “intellectual sparkplug,” because I tasked him to draw up on paper on the North Korean situation, and I said, “I want a layout in this way - that we have two concurrent, but not necessarily compatible goals: one, we’ve got to get rid of the North Korean nuclear threat; and two, we will not go to war. Now how do we resolve those?” So he drew up a really wonderful paper.

By the way, my senior staff at the embassy were very unhappy with us. I was told, in no uncertain terms, that ambassadors don’t draw up papers to present to senators that haven’t been vetted by the NSC (National Security Council) and the State Department. I said, “Well, okay,” and then we still did it.

Lugar and Nunn were so pleased with that, and they incorporated most of that paper in their report, which is in the congressional record [February 24, 1994], by the way, and in their recommendations to the administration about what should be done. So that was a good...that was a timely visit by those two very important senators.

Things began to heat up as the weeks rolled on, and people began to get nervous in Seoul because we were trading threats and implications, but we had no real contact with North Korea. There was a North Korean mission in New York, but there was no real discussion, and you know, we were not trying to resolve anything through them.

Q: So in one sense, one was sort of stuck responding to headlines or statements without really talking to the people that were making these statements?

LANEY: Right. When you get to the point where you’re dealing with threats that are an ultimatum to war, you have no way of testing the seriousness, the intention, that sort of weight to put to it. I liken it to smoke signals on two opposite hills on a windy day, because “there’s a signal.” “What does it mean?” “Damned if I know.”

I said, “You know, this is no way to run a ship. You know, we need better contact.” And they said, “Well, you know, nobody wanted to deal with North Korea because it was a pariah.”

Q: But isn’t what you’re saying is, because of domestic political concerns on the U.S. side, the attempt to talk to the North Koreans would be criticized.

LANEY: Well, you can’t talk. It sounds like appeasement, you know.

Here’s our biggest problem: it’s the United States, whether it’s now or then. The United States is so big and so powerful that if it looks like it makes any effort to take the first step, it’s already a concession, because they should come to us. It is very difficult for us to be receptive in a way in which we invite, you know, really in a sense of inviting, some sort of intimacy, some sort of contact -

Q: The inhibitions you are describing are embedded within our domestic political discussion...

LANEY: Well, and internal to the government itself, yes. Washington is so, so obsessed with the idea they've got to look tough. I mean there's nothing, in terms of domestic political situation, more debilitating, more damaging to the political career than to not look tough. So every time it's, "Will this make us look tough, or will this make us look like we're softies?" You know, this is the whole reason about wimps and all that stuff.

And I said, "Well, you know, I'm not worried about it. We're two ships in the night. We're headed for a collision course. This is like a Greek drama being played out, and nobody will change. We're playing chicken: two cars running at each other, and no one's going to swerve." I said, "Do we really know what we're doing? Are we going to go ahead with this without any..." I mean I don't mean to say no one else didn't think like that too, but this was my thinking: how do we avert this with honor? I mean I wasn't going to talk about being craven or anything. Is there any reasonable way out, you know?

Of course, they had the news people who were saying...part of it is our domestic hard Right which whips and goads any administration into being tough. These people have been deceitful, and of course now they're evil as well, which means that how do you deal with them!? You've got to destroy evil; you can't deal with evil!

Anyway, there were those who said, "Let's have a surgical strike on Yongbyon; we're talking about Yongbyon. Yongbyon had produced all these spent fuel rods - 8,017 at last count - with their reactor, and they had the capacity to be turned into plutonium for five or six bombs, which it looks like they've done now, for the last year. But we froze it for nine years. Well anyway, how do we stop that?"

I said, "Well, if you bomb it," and the Commanding General agreed, "you've got a prevailing wind, and it's coming down from Manchuria, it means that all that radioactive dust will come into South Korea." He said, "That's one of the stupidest things I've ever seen." And I said, "Furthermore, if you bomb it, they will go to war." They had all these long range artillery pieces lined up with their sights on Seoul, which is a city of 15 million people, very densely populated, and with one signal, all those things could fire. I mean you'd have a rain of fire. Well, in fact, one of their...I think it was their foreign minister said, when we were exchanging some bad vibes at Pyongyang, he said, "We will turn Seoul into a sea of fire."

Well, you couldn't believe how quickly ramen disappeared from the grocery shelves in Seoul! People were getting ready to get out of there! And with that the Seoul International School, which has a lot of foreigners in it, they didn't close it, but the parents decided to take an early summer vacation; so the mothers and the children went home. We had a great departure. There was never any, and you know, I tried to keep them calm -

Q: So what was in the papers that brought on this crisis, or what were people responded to it?

LANEY: All excited about it. I mean we're talking about things getting more and more nervous, and people leaving, and business being, you know, affected. I know I was on national television.

They would pick me up in Seoul, I'd go over to the station, but I tried to calm things down. They said, "How are things going?" I said, "Well, they seem to be a lot calmer than they are in Washington" [laughter]

But anyway -

Q: Now you're saying as American Ambassador you gave interviews at this time?

LANEY: Yes, I don't know whether it was NBC (National Broadcasting Company); I was frequently on CNN (Cable News Network) and stuff like that because I knew the people at CNN here in Atlanta who run it.

Tom Johnson at that time was head of CNN, and Eason Jordan was head then of newsgathering; He's (Jordan) now head of the whole thing. But in any case, I kept thinking, "We've got to get hold of this." At one point, I was in close contact with Sam Nunn - that is to say, I mean like a lot - and I went back to in March 1994 Washington, and met with -

To back up a little bit, I had told Winston Lord in January or so that, "Winston, somebody in the State Department will have to give full time to this Korean thing. I mean we don't have a policy center, and this is big time!" And Winston said, "Well, I don't have time for it!" I said, "Well, what about [Thomas C.] Hubbard?" He was his Deputy Assistant Secretary. "Oh, Hubbard has other responsibilities." I said, "Well, you know, this means by elimination there's no time left for North Korea; and you know, I understand there are a lot of other problems, but this one has shown up big!"

So this distressed me greatly, and so I went back to Washington. I made about...at least one trip a month, if not more, usually just for a few days, and met with [Thomas F.] Mack McLarty and David Gergen in the White House and told them. I said, "I really want to impress upon you how serious this Korean situation is, and how can we deal with it in a way that is not by default?" I said, "Right now we don't have anybody in the administration, either in the White House or in the State Department who is spending full time really thinking about what we should be doing," and I said, "You know, if war breaks out, this will not be a popular thing, because you will have a bunch of body bags coming back!" and that got their attention! Well, later, I didn't know this, but Bob Gallucci told me that before I got back to the State Department, Mack had called Christopher and said, "The President wants you to appoint somebody in charge of North Korean situation." I think they had asked me whom I thought, and I said, "Bob Gallucci," who was the best one I could think of. So Bob was appointed that afternoon. He was already Assistant Secretary for Nonproliferation of Whatever that's called [In February 1992, Gallucci was the Senior Coordinator responsible for nonproliferation and nuclear safety initiatives in the former Soviet Union in the Office of the Deputy Secretary. In July 1992, the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs]

But they added this as an additional portfolio and made that primary because, of course, this was an issue of proliferation. So I was enormously relieved to have someone of Bob's caliber be put in that position.

But I was still concerned that we were not talking to North Korea. So I talked to Sam Nunn, and he and Dick Lugar agreed to try to go to North Korea. We got them lined up to go, and they had their bags packed - this is literally true - but at the last minute, they could not get clearance from the North Korean mission in New York, so they had to cancel the trip. So here was -

Q: Because obviously the North Koreans have to go through a decision-making cycle themselves.

LANEY: Right. So here we are, now coming on May 1994, and I've had to meet with the embassy staff to calm them down; they're all agitated - the question, "Were we planning to have a NEO?" (That is a Noncombatant Evacuation [Operation]). I said, "No. If we do that, that will be a signal to the North that we're getting ready to do something, and I don't want to give such a signal." Kim Il Sung had said, "We watched the Gulf War, and we know that as you build up, we know what's going to be the next step." Well, this is what I kept telling Washington. I said, "You know, we're between a rock and a hard place. If we don't build up, we're not prepared; if we do build up, we'll probably precipitate what we're trying to avoid."

So that's when I came back in May for the Emory graduation, the commencement. I was the speaker, and they were giving me a degree and all that stuff, and I used that occasion to have a long talk with Jimmy Carter, and I expressed to him my profound concern about the way things were going and the lack of being able to take the nettle, I mean to really seize it, you know!

And he said, "You know, Bill Clinton was just here yesterday for a world town meeting (it was at the Carter Center), and privately he told me how disappointed he was with his foreign policy team" and he said, "I can now appreciate what kind of quandaries you must be in, you know, in dealing with that. If he sees it from the top and you see it from where you are, you're both seeing pretty much the same thing. There's no resolution. Tony Lake is a great guy, but he's not a...he's not a decisive guy. That's what Berger had - decision."

So he said, "You remember the invitation that came to me two years ago from Kim Il Sung who is in North Korea?" I said, "Sure. You and I were going to go." He said, "Do you think it's still operative?"

And I said, "Why don't we check and find out?"

He said, "If I can get clearance, I'll go." And I said, "That would be great, because we need to have somebody go over and talk to the old man and find out what's really going on." So he checked, and they said, "Yes, it's still good. We'd love to have you." And he checked with the Clinton White House, which you've got information on, I'm sure, about the briefing of Gallucci and how they tracked down Clinton to get his approval (he was in Europe, I think). Ever since I've called it: they didn't give him a green light, they gave him an amber light. It was, "Well, okay. We don't like it, but if you're going to go this way."

Q: Sort of the impression I have, but Gallucci comes down on June 5th and briefs Carter for the purpose of this trip and I'm sure preps him on the Washington -

LANEY: Right, right, goes all the way to Plains, [Georgia]. That's further away than Atlanta;

like three more hours, anyway, in a car. But anyway, now this is an interesting sidelight. After I left Atlanta I flew to Hawaii for a meeting of the Chiefs of Mission in Asia Pacific with Winston Lord. We were all there: Mondale, other ambassadors were all there. With Winston as chair we had cover a lot of material, and he said, "Now, I'm going to give each of you ten minutes to talk about your post," and we were talking about Bali, and we were talking about Seoul, and we were talking about Tokyo, and we were talking about... everyone had ten minutes, no matter what the importance of their post or what problem. So my time came, and I started talking about North Korea, and I had hardly gotten into it, and Winston said, "Sorry Jim, you're times up." I said, "Winston you know, we're talking about very serious things here." He said, "Well, I know, but," he said, "you know each one of these people wants to have their say, okay." I said, "This is... God, you know..."

So I flew back to Seoul, and within a day or so Carter called, and he said, "I've gotten clearance, and I've been briefed, and I'm ready to come. I'll be in on such and such a flight." They arrived that Sunday afternoon. At that time we were hosting our daughter and her husband and three children at the embassy residence, and so they all went swimming after the Carters arrived. [Laughter] Big deal, you know! Carter's here.

It caused quite a sensation, you know, to have President Carter there.

Q: Because he comes in about June 12th, I think. June 12th is when he goes up to the North. So Gallucci must have briefed him around the 5th.

LANEY: Well, let's say we walk that back. I think he went up on Wednesday morning... Wednesday, Thursday, Friday... that's right. So he comes in on Sunday, and Monday and Tuesday we brief him, I think... or something like that. I know we brief him at least one day and he goes to see the president and so forth.

He was not at all impressed with the people he met in the Korean government. Kim Young-sam, the president, was very uneasy about his going up there. The main thing Kim Young-sam was concerned about the whole time he was in office is that somehow America might upstage him, and he was afraid this was an initiative that left him out. I mean it's an understandable reaction, and he didn't want to look like everything was taking place over his head, you know. Tall guys would pass the ball back and forth, and he was running around, and he couldn't reach it.

Q: Right, and hasn't that, in one sense, been the characterization of this problem handling all along, that the Koreans were saying, you know, "Take me along with you. I want to be there. I want to be a partner. Don't talk to those guys without me."

LANEY: Right. That was the later bigger issue as we began dealing with North Korea formally. That was the big issue - are you going to make a deal behind our backs that will leave us out or compromise us?

Q: Because that would obviously impact on their standing domestically for them.

LANEY: Oh, sure. Absolutely! So anyway, that was their feeling, and whatever day of the week

it was, either Tuesday or Wednesday, the Carters were taken up to Panmunjom, and we walked him up to the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone], and I handed him over to the North Koreans! It was a very sober moment because the tension was so high, and you know, we didn't know what was going to happen.

I mean it was...Mrs. Carter was really very, I think, very anxious; and going along with him was Marion Creekmore, who had been an ambassador in Sri Lanka and was now working for the Carter Center; and Dick [Richard A.] Christenson, who had been the consul general in Okinawa, [Japan] and knew Korean language well, and had been recommended by the State Department as a note taker and interpreter. I appointed Dick later as my DCM after Chuck Kartman left. I liked him a lot, and I was impressed with him. But anyway, there was a small group that went with the Carters.

The next day, I think (this is all in Oberdorfer's book, I think), Gary Luck, the general, called me, and he said, "I need to see you immediately on the highest urgency!" I said, "Fine." I was at the office. He said, "Would you mind letting me come to your home? I don't want to be seen coming into the embassy," and so forth. So we met, just the two of us, and he said, "I received a call just a little while ago from Shali - Shalikashvili," [General John M. Shalikashvili], "the chairman," [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff], "that they are prepared very quickly to send the first group of...it was upward of 20,000 troops to Korea. Then he said, "I didn't request these troops. Did you?" I said, "No. You know I wouldn't. I mean we work together." He said, "Well, this is a decision they've taken without any consultation." It was part of that stuff going on, you know. And I said, "Well, you know, this is absurd because if those troops arrive, we don't know what kind of hell will break loose! We don't know what this would precipitate with the North, and we've got 70,000 or 80,000 American civilians here in South Korea, and we're responsible for the British and the Australians and the Canadians and all the rest, you know, all these people; we are responsible for their evacuation, physically. We've gone through NEO exercises, and I had had absolutely no confidence whatever they would work" because in the middle of the chaos, people will be trying to find their children from school, and Koreans who wanted to evacuate and might storm the gates of the South post, the command post." I mean the whole idea, that we could all gather there and walk in and get on buses and leave, to me was just ludicrous while we're being bombarded from the North. But anyway, I said, "You know, we do not have a plan in operation for evacuation. I mean we've got some plans, but we don't have" – I mean we're talking about tens of thousands of people, and gosh! So he and I sat down and drafted a cable back to Washington saying, you know, this cannot take place. We're not ready. We have not given any consideration for an evacuation.

Now this whole incident has gotten a lot of play. Kim Young-sam said that he heard from me that we were going to evacuate the civilians, and that he ordered me not to do it, and that he called Clinton and told him this was impossible. Well, that didn't happen at all. None of the logs at the White House indicate that call, and I know that he did not tell me that because it didn't happen!

Secondly, the issue of how we were going to handle them was going to be something that had to be done, you know, first in Washington, and then vetted out on the field. This cable was very direct and absolutely uncompromising, and I remember a conversation I had with Bob Gallucci

after I came back. He said, “You have no idea how bracing that cable was in Washington!” He said, “We had never received a cable that was cosigned by the commanding general and the ambassador saying, ‘This will not do!’” He said, [laughter] “They backed off!”

Well, of course, the point was that all of this, as this turned out didn’t put us on the precipice, because in the meantime Carter was in the North gradually making progress toward a freeze of the facilities at Yongbyon. Now Marion Creekmore had been sent down from the party in the North to Panmunjom in the DMZ to make a call to Washington; but he couldn’t get through to Washington, so he called me on a secure phone, and he told me what Carter was proposing. This was after the first day, and I said, “Marion, that will not fly!” I mean it wouldn’t fly; it’s not just a question of: are we getting what we want and all that stuff? It would not have been a resolution of the issue, and I said, “You’ve got to make it clear to President Carter that he must hold out for a freeze. I mean a total, unconditional freeze that’s monitored; otherwise the whole thing’s dead!” Well, it turned out that by the time Marion got back to Pyongyang with that message.

Within the first few weeks of my arrival we got a cable, sent out to all heads of mission around the world, saying that the State Department was cutting our budget ten percent or maybe more, I don’t know.

Because Seoul had grown so fast, I mean the work at the Embassy had grown so, because of the importance of Korea and then issues of North Korea and all, we were already stretched unbelievable thin. I mean, really, we had no fat in our embassy, and I was just furious to think that, without any discrimination, they just did a world wide cut, with no appreciation of the difference of priorities, or urgencies, or crises, or anything else. So I fired back a cable to Christopher saying, it’s my experience, both on the board of several corporations and at the university, that when you make cuts, the cuts are necessary, but you don’t just cut them indiscriminately across the board; that’s the easy and cheap way out.

I did not get any remission. [Laughter] No, no, it’s just insane.

Well anyway, getting back to the Carter thing, here he was up in North Korea, and he did strike a bargain with Kim Il Sung that they would freeze the Yongbyon facility, which was our concern, with a quid pro quo; and the quid pro quo had to be an equivalent amount of fuel and electricity that would replace it foregoing of the nuclear reactor. It turned out we later confirmed that and ratified it in Geneva; it came to Geneva accords or agreement [Agreed Framework] (this is not Gallucci’s doing) and...set up the Korea Energy Development Organization, KEDO.

But it rankled very much with the White House, particularly because Carter announced it on open television, which I think was a serious mistake. His move to take credit for it effectively compromised his good faith with the Clinton administration. He made them look silly in an attempt to come out with the credit.

So when they came back across the DMZ on a Saturday, while I was waiting for them to return, I got a call on the secure phone that we have in the DMZ in our military place; and it was Sandy Berger on the phone; and he said, “Jim, I have one directive from the president.” And I said, “What is that?” He said, “Tell Jimmy Carter not to come to Washington, but to go back home to

Plains.” I said, “Sandy, are you sure you want me to deliver that message?” He said, “That is the message you deliver to him.” I said, “Well, I can tell you right now, it will not be well received!” And he said, “Well, that is the message!” I said, “Well, I’ll be the messenger, but I can’t guarantee that it’ll be heeded!”

So on the car going back to Seoul, I broached it as gingerly as I could, and Carter exploded. Of course he was feeling pretty high about the fact that he’d gotten an agreement, and here he was being told, “Shove off to Plains.” So when he got to our house, he went in the closet where the secure phone was and called the White House, and he got Al Gore, and he and Al went at it for it seemed like interminably, but probably 45 minutes. I could hear him shouting through the soundproof door! [Laughter]

Finally Mrs. Carter went in to join him because she was so concerned that he might have an apoplexy or something! So they did agree that he would come back through Washington to debrief; Al agreed to that; and then we went out on our front, and he had a news conference to report on his trip.

But he had already come by to see President Kim Young-sam, who, as I mentioned, had been very antsy about this whole thing, understandably. When he [Carter] came in [to see Kim Young-sam] he said, “We have a freeze, and Kim Il Sung has told me to issue an invitation to you that he wants to meet you as soon as possible for a summit.” All of a sudden his [Kim Young-sam’s] face was wreathed in a smile, and before we got out of the Blue House, he had already sent somebody out to announce to the world that he was meeting Kim Il Sung for a summit. This satisfied the need to be a player, and it was right! I mean it was a shrewd move on the part of Kim Il Sung, I’ll tell you.

So anyway, Carter went on home, went on back to Washington, and was not met by the President, or the Vice President, or the Secretary of State; I can’t remember whether it was Winston or Tony Lake that met him. It may have been Lake; I’m not sure; I mean I just don’t recall. That’s not something I was involved in.

Q: Yes, somebody can research that point...

LANEY: Yes. By the way, in the meantime, I told you that my daughter and her family were there. The night after Gary Luck, General Luck, had come to see me all agitated, we were both very concerned and fired off this cable. They were staying with us, and I was walking Wendell, the husband, around; and I said, “Wendell, this thing is getting really serious, and I don’t know where it is all headed.” At that point Carter hadn’t returned. And I said, “It would be a great relief for me if I didn’t have the additional burden of my own children here and grandchildren here. You know, my wife is one thing, but I don’t need that additional worry, and you know, where to put you all, and I just don’t need that.” And he said, “Well, why don’t we go down to Malaysia, to Bangkok, and go up to Chiang Mai, and then we’ll come on back after things blow over, if they do?” I said, “That’s great.” So in a couple of days they left and went to Chiang Mai, and about a week later they came back and were with us for another week.

At that point, you just don’t want, in a sense, a psychological hostage. It’s one thing for your

wife to share it with you - but it's another thing for a visiting child and their family. So anyway, that was part of the picture.

Then at this point we breathed a great relief! We thought, well, you know, we don't need to have the - oh, and by Saturday, I'd gotten a cable from Washington - that is, the Saturday that Carter came back - I'd gotten a cable. Of course by then we had known through CNN that they'd reached an agreement. So things were greatly relieved.

But this cable from Washington said it's urgent that you come back for discussion of the evacuation! [Laughter] I said, "No, it's not urgent for me, but I'll send somebody." So I sent somebody down about three levels, because the issues, the pressure it caused, they were behind the curve, you know, as usual.

And about that time we had to leave to go to Scotland because I was being given an honorary degree by St. Andrews University at its commencement in July 1994. So we were there for several days and very festive and all that sort of thing, and then we were going to fly over to Dublin for a few days in Ireland. It was just a vacation, and we were going to see Jean Kennedy Smith [Ambassador to Ireland June 1993 to September 1998], and so, lo and behold, the morning after we'd gotten - we'd just gotten there -

In Dublin, we'd just gotten there. The phone rang, and we had Christopher on the line, and he was in Europe, and Winston was somewhere else down in Washington, and I was in Dublin, and I don't know who all was on the line; I guess Tony Lake or someone. Anyway, Kim Il Sung had died [July 8, 1994].

So you know, this is, where does this leave us? This was the issue. I mean everything was, what does this mean?

So I was instructed to fly immediately back to Seoul [laughter], be at post. So I did; in fact, I didn't even get to go over and see Jean Smith. We left and that took care of the summer.

Well by that time, Bob Gallucci was beginning to set up the machinery for working on the ratification of the agreement that would be between North Korea and the United States, and so forth, and that took the rest of the fall. The big issue, there again, was the domestic politics. For all the carping and complaining and foot dragging in Congress, South Korea and Japan were paying 85 percent of the cost of the KEDO agreement. It was ridiculous the way we carried on, as though we were the only ones writing a check. But that all to say, that it was a political issue for Kim Young-sam, because this is big money, you know.

Now the interesting thing is that all the time that Kim Young-sam was in office, he complained bitterly about the United States sidelining him. In fact, the Four-Party Talks were designed primarily to bring Kim Young-sam into the picture, along with North Korea and China. This was a device that we thought would relieve, would sort of equalize the thing, move it along a little bit. It never got off the ground, but that was a brilliant idea! [Laughter] That was announced by Clinton and Kim Young-sam at an April 1996 summit in Cheju Island in Korea -

Kim Young-sam would tell me periodically, in a very confidential way, he said, “You know, I have sent the chairman of such and such a corporation to North Korea to meet with the leader to find out what we can do.” I thought, you wily rascal! You’re complaining about us, and then you’re telling me!”

Q: Taking in some of the initiative.

LANEY: There were a lot of...Kim Young-sam came back to Washington for a formal visit in November 21-23, 1993 after the APEC meeting in Seattle, and I had only been at post six weeks. And there we were seated at the table with the Clintons and Kim Young-sam. But then the meeting, that happened in the Oval Office, which I did not attend, in fact, it was only the two presidents; and Christopher wasn’t invited, but he just walked in, stormed in - he was so upset at being left out. But the foreign minister of Korea Han Sung-joo cooled his heels outside with Bill [William] Perry and me in the cabinet room.

But anyway, in that meeting Kim Young-sam laid down a condition. We had said we wanted to move in a kind of broad and general way toward the North, and he scotched that idea with President Clinton, much to the discomfiture of all the people that had been working on it clear up until that very moment. He just came out and said, “No!” I mean he dug in his heels. As it turned out in the long term, it didn’t really matter much. But it was an interesting...he constantly, if he was not fully included or made to feel a meaningful participant, there was this obstructionist tendency. As you noted, it’s quite understandable the president of a country wants to feel like he’s in charge of his own destiny. But...

Q: In fact, in another sense with all the Korean issues, the main actors are not only the North Koreans and the South Koreans, but the Chinese and the Japanese have a piece of the action, and we do too! And the issue over time is: how do you include all those people so that they feel they’re in on the action? As you said, one of the devices was the Four-Party Talks.

LANEY: That was a device that Tony Lake and I set up. Tony was over in Seoul...it was kind of in a reconnaissance, and we were riding around; and I said, “Oh, Clinton was scheduled to go to Beijing,” (that April), and I said, “He should stop by Korea.” Tony said, “He can’t do it!” Then I said, “Yes, he can do it!” So we had argued this back and forth, and finally on one of our meetings, just the two of us in a car I think, he said, “How long is the runway to Cheju Island?” I knew then I’d won, because it had to be big enough to carry the presidential plane.

But the idea of the Four-Party Talks was hatched, and I’m not sure I understand why this was so necessary, but it was done so secretly that nobody in our embassy was supposed to know about it, anybody, except me! Nobody! And he wouldn’t talk to anybody in State about it; he was only going to talk to the president and that kind of stuff. Well, you know the result of this is not going to be well received, you know; and as it turned out, the Chinese were miffed because they hadn’t been properly briefed. North Korea said, “Well, we don’t know anything about this. You’re talking about a Four-Party Talks, and you announce it down there with the two presidents, but we’re not party to the announcement. How do you just bring us in?” This sort of stuff.

But it was still a move in the right direction, and it did mollify Kim Young-sam, the president of

South Korea. From that standpoint alone it was a good move.

By the way, there was a real contra tone in regard to Clinton's visit to Cheju. One morning about two or three days before he left Washington to come out to Asia I got a call real early in the morning. It was General Luck, said, "They don't have any idea there's a 12-hour difference between Seoul and Washington! [Laughter] They just pick up the phone!" But anyway, here on the phone was the head of the advance team for the presidential visit, and he said, "Ambassador Laney, President Clinton has decided that he wants to leave an hour earlier, like at 11:30 at night, so he can arrive in the early morning and have a good game of golf. We understand there's a good golf course there." I said, "There is a good golf course." I said, "You know that Kim Young-sam doesn't play golf?" He said, "Well, that doesn't matter. I mean the president can play with Mrs. Clinton." I said, "I don't think that's a very good idea." I said, "Now you're scheduling the president of the United States to fly in at six in the morning to Cheju Island, a resort, and Kim Young-sam has already been there spending the night, and they don't meet until twelve for lunch? But the Clintons spend all morning on the golf course while Kim Young-sam cools his heels?" I said, "How do you think that's going to play in Seoul?" He said, "Well, I think you can explain it." I said, "No, I can't!" and I said, "Furthermore, the whole purpose of coming over here is really to obviate the problems we've been having by Kim Young-sam feeling out of the loop, and here you're going to make him wait for five hours, and all of Seoul sitting there, their president is waiting, while Clinton, who flies halfway around the world, plays a round of golf?" I said, "That is unacceptable!" "Well, he is the president!" I said, "Come on now! I don't think we're discussing that! No one's doubting he's the president! The question is whether or not playing golf is wise!" So it was not a very happy conversation.

The Clintons arrived, and we held a conference over at the hotel. He didn't play golf, and so he and Hilary walked around the golf course holding hands and stuff like that. Well, when we got ready to brief him - now this is the morning the briefing, here was Christopher, and Perry, and Tony Lake, and Sandy Berger, General Shali, General Luck, and me - I mean you know, the players - oh, I forgot Winston Lord. We met in the briefing room, and they went over, and they moved a portable blackboard to block the window. I thought this is strange. I said, "What are they doing that for?" He said, "We don't want the president to look out on the golf course and get mad again!" I said, "Oh, Lord!"

I mean now here are the top figures of the United States moving the blackboard because the president is out of sorts because somebody told him he couldn't play golf! [Laughter]

Well, as it turns out, after we had our briefing, and he was civil to me; I mean he never raised the issue; Hilary and Berta, my wife, had lunch up in their apartment, in the Clinton's suite; and after our briefing and everything, President Clinton walked in and greeted them. I don't think it was malice of forethought, but my wife said to President Clinton, "I'm sorry you weren't able to play golf!" [Laughter] And he looked at her with daggers and he said, "Someone you and I both know told me it would cause an international incident!" And Hillary said, "Bill, that's enough! I think you better leave us alone!"

This is what we're dealing with friend. I'm not characterizing that as being the total picture, but it's amazing! Nobody can treat a president as a human being and say, "No, we can't do that!" I

mean this is insane! I mean literally insane! This is not an imperial world. For God's sake, I don't understand it! I'm not for all that stuff. I love to honor leadership and you know, that sort of thing, give respect and esteem, but to pander...and I know I've read Shakespeare's series of histories. I know the problem!

Anyway, Cheju otherwise was a great success.

I mean the balance is fairly...I gave my briefing, and I was annoyed that Clinton didn't seem to pay any attention to it. He was fiddling, and he was looking around, you know, this sort of thing. I thought, good gosh, you know, in this briefing I'm giving him words of wisdom, and he's not paying any attention! Well, lo and behold, he went out with Kim Young-sam before all those television cameras and gave an absolutely stunning statement that included all the points made. He hadn't missed a one! So he's good! He's smart as he can be!

Q: Just to wrap up on the Four-Party Talks, my understanding is it then takes about another 14 months of talks with the North Koreans before the actual first Four-Party Talks meets in December of 1997 or so.

LANEY: Yes, they didn't do anything. Yes, and we had so many incidents in the meantime with North Korea, you know: getting the KEDO going; the obstruction of North Korea about the site and the labor and all that stuff of the light-water reactors was really a hassle; and you know, on our part, they expected us to lift the sanctions after the agreement was signed, and we didn't; we lifted some, but some of them we never did lift. So we didn't meet our obligations, and we said we would move toward normalization, which, of course, we never made any steps toward. So there was no gradual move toward a mutual confidence that would allow some actual things to happen. It was always legalistically minimalistically defined, you know. And you know, that's dealing with the North. I mean they are really hard to deal with!

Q: My impression is sometimes in these circumstances, you're dealing with people who don't have a lot of self-confidence and a lot of sophistication, and that therein comes your dug-in heels...

LANEY: They may not have a lot of authority. Every time they have to go back and make sure they haven't gone further than they should or gone astray. Of course in that society, [laughter] I figure that's not a healthy way to live!

Q: You've spoken highly of about working with General Luck, a very sharp officer.

LANEY: Yes, right. He once told me, he said when we were talking about - oh! One of the things he said was, "They're talking about bombing Yongbyon in order to get rid of a possible atomic bomb." He said, "Now let me think this through. We're going to bomb a place because we think they might have a bomb, and that will precipitate a war that will kill a million people. I think that's a pretty good odds if you're crazy."

[Laughter] Then he went on to say, "I've been in every war since I was old enough to go to war, every war America's fought, and not one of them was worth a damn! But," he said, "I'm a good

soldier, and I know how to fight, and when they tell me to fight, I'll fight, but," he said, "war is hell!" He said, "I've seen it. Don't kid yourself! You don't want war." I loved his honesty.

I mean this is a guy, this wasn't shirking or playing. This just, you know, I've been there, and I know it! You know, these desk warriors are one thing, but it's in what you have solved. He said, "What do they solve? Now you ask it, when it's over, what has been accomplished, you know." Now, you know, he's looking at post World War II and all. But it's a serious issue.

Okay, back to the grindstone [laughter].

Q: One of the things I wanted to ask you about is, you're coming into this environment. The embassy is yours. You are the captain of the ship. What does the embassy look like to you? I mean how many agencies are out there, you know? Isn't Commerce and Agriculture? I mean what does this ship look like as you're starting out, people serving you?

LANEY: Well, first of all I have to say that I was impressed by how little authority State had over the occupants in a lot of their buildings - Agriculture, Commerce, you know, CIA. I mean you can go down the line, or nominally responsible to you and you are nominally over them, but in fact, they have their own budget and their own personnel, and you know, you really don't have - whether it's in the whole budget I can't remember, but it's not really under your control. You know, it's separate agency stuff. Having said that, I was very pleased with all the principals I worked with.

Q: Here's the list of the officers who were there when you arrived from the Spring 1994 Key Officers Overseas pamphlet...

LANEY: Oh, this is a helpful list.

Q: Well, this State Department publication is primarily for business people and others who want to contact an embassy.

LANEY: Ah, in any case...I felt that my relationships with station chief were very good. I made a point of working with them, knowing what they did. In some cases I was often briefed by the USFK people out at the base, the overhead stuff, and got briefings in conjunction with the military on some of that stuff. On one or two occasions I actually asked where - in fact, once when I was back in Washington, I had breakfast with John Deutch (Deputy Director, CIA) at the White House mess to ask for additional assets and so on from the CIA. At that time I felt it was very important; we were not quite strong enough; we had more than we could handle. So my role in at least being in coordination and in counsel was one that was very satisfying to me in that regard. I know a lot of places where that relationship was prickly. In fact, I know one of my predecessors had a hard time getting along with the commanding general. The relationship between the ambassador and other senior people in country was not always easy; there would be those who... But in both of those cases, the station chief and the USFK (U.S. Forces Korea) Commander I felt, you know, very comfortable and thought that it was a productive and constructive relationship.

But you asked me about the whole embassy.

Q: Because it's one of the largest embassies around, wasn't it?

LANEY: It's pretty big. I mean all together I guess there were 450 or 500 people, but about half of them were Korean Nationals working there. But it was a big embassy; we needed it to be a lot bigger, actually. I mean it just needed it. We were over, over, over taxed, the political section, and gosh, it was small compared to the enormity of our job! But anyway, we were constrained by our wretched facilities, just terrible facilities; they were not only outdated, but they were in poor shape and equipment always breaking down.

And they're still trying to build an embassy. I've never seen anything like it, the slowness of the whole thing. It's just been a - I mean a lot of reasons for it, including the government of Korea itself; but still it's been very difficult.

But you know, I met with my principal minister counselors every week for about two to three hours in my office. This was in addition to the country team that met whenever it was on Friday morning, to which General Luck sent I think a brigadier as representative, in addition to the military attaché [Col. William R. McKinney, USA], and the naval attaché. Well, I liked to have that group just thrash out policy issues, then talk about policy considerations, and I wanted to hear each one of them; I wanted to hear what they said. I'd ask them, I'd poll some issue and I wanted each one of them to address it from their standpoint. I didn't necessarily seek their counsel for a decision, but I wanted to hear them talk about it. So that was one of the ways that we operated.

You know I guess in most embassies the DCM and the ambassador have adjacent offices, so it's easy communication. But I spent a lot of time down in the political section - I walked around a lot; I didn't summon people. I went into the station chief's office a lot, just sat down, sometimes unannounced, and down to the political section, and so forth. I wandered the embassy a lot. I don't mean I just spent a lot schmoozing; but when I had questions, I would go ask them rather than ask them to come up and see me simply because I wanted to get the feel of things, you know, size up their staff and all. All this stuff is what I did when I was president of Emory and I knew it worked, so I did it. It was very surprising for a lot of them. Apparently some ambassadors are very full of themselves. I don't know; I'm not - I don't have anybody in mind, but I mean I get that impression from...for instance, the first meeting of the country team they all stood up, and I said, "Is this the normal thing?" "Yes." I said, "Well, you don't need to do that anymore."

Well, they all sat down! [Laughter]

I have a very adequate view of myself. I'm not at all...I don't need to prove anything, and I didn't see any reason to rub their noses in it. I had long since learned that I can run as fast as any of them, and I don't need to have to hide by anything. So there we are.

Q: That's something about the way the embassy was organized. Now, of course the other part of your job is interacting with the Koreans.

LANEY: Yes.

Q: And here you are, with language capability because you've been there before, you have friends throughout Korean society, you are an ambassador who has a relationship with a country. Do you get a chance to get out and see those old colleagues?

LANEY: Yes. We had a modest social life with our old friends. It wasn't very, you know, demanding, something we had to do all the time. Every Christmas we had a carol sing in the embassy residence to which we invited our friends around, not so much the bigwigs, like corporate heads and stuff like that, but just our friends; and they were so thrilled to be invited to the embassy.

Often we would walk around. This often gave my bodyguard heartburn, particularly at night. We loved to walk the streets of Seoul at night because it's so vibrant. One night I remember we got on the subway and rode out to one of the universities for a concert, and we got on the subway, and we were standing; the subway was full. And this man, he announced to everybody, he said, "This is the American ambassador. May I offer you my seat!" [Laughter] So they all clapped, and it was a big deal, you know, and I thought, "Good Lord!" [Laughter]

It was pretty funny!

One of the other things I did, and I've forgotten this. I realized early on that Kim Young-sam, the president, was very poor at communicating to his own people; and as a result many of the things that we were doing were misunderstood by the Korean people because there was no communication, you know; and they were left to rumors and the scurrilous stuff in the newspapers and things like that.

So about at least every other month I would have a full-hour television interview with a Korean interviewing me, a Korean of some stature, like a former ambassador to the United States or a former foreign minister or something, with hard questions, you know, what's this, and what's that, and so forth. I just loved it, because first of all, it gave me enormous presence in the country, and I wasn't at the mercy of the print; I mean it was more immediate. But secondly, I could explain, even for the good of Kim Young-sam, what we were trying to do; and I think it was of value to him or to his government that I would do this, and I never got a word of criticism from the government about these things. It wasn't like this...I wasn't trying to politic, I wasn't trying to influence domestic policy, I was explaining what I thought we were trying to do together, and so forth. Sometimes I would be asked hard questions about trade policies; or the United States looks like it's doing this, it's not in our interest, Korea, and so forth. So I could have a chance to explain that.

But I enjoyed that, and I gave a lot of speeches. I gave a speech to the Asia Society in the spring of 1996 in Seoul. The Asia-wide meeting of the Asia Society was held in Seoul; and I spoke, and Dick Holbrook was there speaking, and the foreign minister of Korea spoke, and I don't know, this was a big program, a day and a half in total. I prepared a speech called, "[North and South Korea:] Beyond Deterrence," and it was an attempt to break out of the mindset that we were still

frozen in the cold war and spoke primarily of the need to engage North Korea in ways that could allow it to have the freedom to begin to make the reforms that China had undertaken.

If you look back in the late 1960s, our attitude toward China is almost identical to our attitude today toward North Korea: we saw them as an enemy, they had let their people starve, and it was a strong military leader, and so forth; and I said, “Now, you know, look where it is now.” I said, “There’s nothing that is categorical that says this cannot happen in the North.” I said, “I don’t know that it will, but I know that it’s worth the effort, and we need to have some boldness in our approach and so forth.” And I didn’t get this vetted in Washington, and as a matter of fact, it was well received because it was well received in - I gave the same speech at the Council on Foreign Relations. It was very well received there! [Laughter] So Washington wasn’t bothered by it!

Q: Well now, in the embassy, you have your public affairs officer to assist you creating these venues and creating these opportunities.

LANEY: Sometimes. Some were my own. I mean those invitations were mine, not set up by the public affairs; although the public affairs officer was very good. This is not a backhanded putdown or anything. Bill Maurer [William H. Maurer, Jr.] was the officer the whole time.

Q: And he would have good contacts in the press -

LANEY: Excellent, and he, you know, was on the ball for normal things, and things that were going on, and news releases, so he would see that they got proper play.

I mentioned before we started, about a visit to Kwangju. I said, “I want to go to Kwangju.” They said, “No, you don’t want to go to Kwangju.” I said, “Yes, I do!” I said, “I believe in human rights, and I think that I don’t want to duck this.”

Q: Now Kwangju, for the listeners, is where the riots -

LANEY: Where the riots in 1980 took place, the spring of 1980, the riots and the brutal suppression, a very bloody suppression. Anyway, so we set up a thing; I was to go to Kwangju. I was not to go to the cemetery, because they said that would be incendiary. I don’t understand. I was always restless with my handlers because I, on the whole, think I have pretty good instincts, and I find they’re always much too cautious, you know. But nevertheless there are some times when I realize I need to listen to them.

But we had a meeting with some of the aggrieved people in Kwangju, a private dinner, that is, with no press or television or anything, and I just wanted to listen; I wanted to hear their side of the story and so forth. I was not attempting to placate them; I just wanted to hear. In a way, I was going down and just saying, “Look, I’m here, and I want to hear you, you know;” and they appreciated it. When the dinner was over and we walked out of the little room where we’d eaten, there were television and print media waiting for me, and what did you talk about, and I said, “I’m sorry, but this was off the record. I’m down here because I’m interested. As the ambassador of the United States I’m down here to express my concern about what’s happened. I’m not here either to apologize or to explain, but I am here because I’m concerned.” The next day we drove

on across the middle part of the south of Korea to a Buddhist monastery up on a mountain.

And we stopped at our rest stop along the way, and somebody in my entourage said, “The Blue House is trying to reach you.” I said, “How do they know where I am?” And he said, “Oh, they know all right!” [Laughter] Well, as it turns out, the daily papers in Seoul carried a verbatim interview with me about Kwangju. Well, I’d given no interview! But this was a full-page interview, pure fabrication, the whole thing, just absolutely made up! And the Blue House was just incensed; they were just livid! I said, “I didn’t give an interview!” “Yes, you did! It’s here in the newspaper.” I said, “Look! I did not give an interview. This is all a mistake.” And so we had to go back, and so I unleashed a broadside against the irresponsibility of the press that would make up an interview. Well, then the next brouhaha was not the subject of the interview or the interview itself or anything; it was that the American ambassador has trespassed his welcome in criticizing the local press. [Laughter] And I said, “You’re dog gone right I’ll criticize it.” [Laughter] Well, as it turned out, I had to give an interview to one of the papers that would be on the record and would be really what I said, a long interview, explaining the whole thing, and they ran it! And after that it was no more. But anyway, these are the trials and tribulations of public life, as anybody that’s ever been there knows.

Q: The interview you did arrange was through your contacts?

LANEY: My friends who I’d had many years before and they had contacts and friends that were the editors of a couple of the papers, and they were the ones that arranged for me to have an interview that could in a sense explain what really happened and get it right before the public.

Q: In one sense, that’s, you know, where diplomacy works. You’re finding local allies to help you explain the American position within their context.

LANEY: Right. There was a lot of that.

Q: There’s a couple of things that come to mind, not only in terms of your contact with the press, your ability to sort of speak directly to the Korean people, but you were talking about this road trip. Did you have many opportunities to get out of Seoul and travel around, and did you have the sense that you might have done more or less than your predecessor?

LANEY: No, I wouldn’t make any kind of comparison on that. I think Don Gregg traveled a lot. But I did, and I not necessarily made road trips because there are time constraint, but I often would fly down to Pusan, or went down, or choose events, like the christening of a new tanker at their big shipyard, and I went down. I happened to have another family of ours, of grandchildren, daughter, and husband, and that was, you know, both a fun occasion and kind of quasi-official one. And I would often get invitations to speak. For example, I was invited to speak at Yonsei University. I was the first ambassador to speak since I had invited Sam Berger in 1963.

No American ambassador had been because the tension with the students, you know, very sensitive about all that, and they didn’t like to kowtow and that sort of thing. I spoke a lot at Seoul National University and Korea University to various groups, seminars about trade, or about policy, and that sort of thing. These were not necessarily public, they were not necessarily

reported, but they were excellent forums, and I enjoyed those very much because it harkened back to my time in the university and all.

Q: In terms of directing the efforts of your staff, Foreign Service and otherwise, did you encourage them to get out?

LANEY: Well, as I said, I met with my staff every week and would go over the major issues that they were confronting and that I wanted to deal with. I left the running of the embassy and its administrations to the DCM and was happy with that. We talked every day several times. I would visit - in fact, I would be invited by the minister counselor of various things, agriculture, commerce, trade, whatever, intellectual property or whatever it was - science and technology, that was it. I'd be invited periodically to come and meet with their staff and talk. They took the initiative on that, and I liked that very much. I did not feel, except at a policy level, that I had much I could offer, the actual day-to-day workings of most of these departments, you know. They knew the drill, and they were doing their job. They could bring problems to me, and when I would visit with them, we could discuss the issues they were facing, and that's the only way I provided leadership for that; otherwise the ordinary running of things was with the DCM. I did have pretty much an open door, so I don't think anybody, any of the officers in the embassy, felt that they were shut out from discussing things with me.

Q: Now, while you're in Seoul, you're actually coming back to the United States from time to time.

LANEY: A lot!: Six to eight times a year.

Whenever I wanted to I came back. Whenever I felt I had something I wanted to discuss. When I came back after the crisis that was resolved by Carter's visit and the Geneva Framework Agreement, most of my time would be spent either at the White House or the Pentagon, in the NSC and the Pentagon. Bill Perry was a very fine interlocutor; he always wanted to know what the situation was, the state of play, and we had a lot to talk about; and I found him the most receptive. My times with Secretary Christopher were more formal; he always wanted to see me and was very cordial, and sometimes he would bring some staff in and ask me questions, but I never felt like there was either the deep interest or the curiosity that wanted to lead me out. Peter Tarnoff was a friend, and I often had lunch with him when I came back, but that was almost more of a social call; he would ask me about things, but it was more like I was briefing him. And I always saw Winston; we often went to events together at the White House, or you know, formal things, just that were happening while I was there; but I had long since learned that, you know, his plate was so full, and it really was with China and Japan, and all that.

So that by now I had established, particularly with the NSC, with Sandra Kristoff and her assistant Jack Pritchard [Charles Pritchard], who was, until last summer, Bush's point man on North Korea [the U.S. representative to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)], I had established with them good relations, and we talked about everything, and increasingly with Lake and Berger. These would not necessarily be schematic talks where I'd aim to cover this or that; these would be sort of sharing - you know, where we are within our goals, what does it look like, sort of assessments - and that was the same with Bill Perry, and to a

lesser extent with the CIA. So I never had a -

Q: Assessments associated with North Korea?

LANEY: Primarily, and also with the South Korean political situation, how solid is it, and where are we, and that sort of thing.

Q: I see in 1995 you came back in May and gave a presentation to the Asia Society in Washington, DC. So this would have been one of those trips -

LANEY: I didn't come back for that purpose. I was back, and I was - I mean I was invited because I was incidentally going to be there.

Q: But what you're saying is part of your way of operating style was frequent trips back to Washington to make sure you had the face time to go over the issues with the Washington players.

LANEY: Yes, and you know that meant since I was really in a way stepping out, that kept them with me. Rather than being guided so much, I was trying to push and do this, and I'd go back to make sure that I wasn't off the reservation, or that they felt that was okay; and I never once, ever, had anybody say, "No, I wouldn't do that," or "That's too far," or you know, whatever. There was always an appreciation and saying, "That's fine." So you know, I don't think - first of all, I'm not a daredevil; I know I'm not just striking out just to be making waves. So I had no inner tendency to want to just be novel for the sake of innovation, and I needed that kind of support and connection; you know, I couldn't just be by myself out there.

For the first year I was in office out there, I spent an enormous amount of time with Korean foreign ministers. We would meet as late as midnight, at his house always, never at mine. There was a certain aversion to be coming to the -

Q: Called to the councils? [Laughter]

LANEY: Yes. And sometimes we would meet in a restaurant incognito; we would never come in together, and we'd never leave together; it was fascinating! There was a real sensitivity about not appearing as though I had very much presence or influence. On several occasions the president himself asked me not to show the flag when I came to the Blue House. I said, "Mr. President, I cannot go without showing the flag." He said, "Well, would you then park next door," [laughter] which I did, and I walked over. This is marvelous! You know, when I say these things, I say them with human nature and, you know, these are issues: that they cannot be seen to be toadying to the United States.

This is a major issue. As you can see more and more they're sensitive now, even more than they were when I was there. You know, in a sense I think I was a good guy. You know, I was not seen as bullying and that sort of thing; although I was very strong with them, and I'd try to massage it.

Q: Because, of course, the Four-Party Talks and the KEDO thing, this was probably one of the

first times that action was being taken that also involved North Korea.

LANEY: Yes, there was heavy sensitivity there, right.

Q: Everybody's presence and status -

LANEY: Was at stake, yes.

I do want to insert here that Charles Kartman was an exceptional Foreign Service officer, my DCM, and I felt implicit confidence in him and in his judgment, and this is very, very special, to have someone in which you feel that. We had great sympathy, you know, I mean I don't mean the deep friendship, but we had a simpatico in terms of how we saw things; and only once or twice did I feel he went too far, then I would reign him in, and more or less gently. But nevertheless, I never knew Chuck, except on one personnel issue inside the embassy, to commit what I felt was a mistake, and nothing else. I mean that's a remarkable record, and I felt very well served! Of course he was ambassador to KEDO and head of KEDO, which is pretty much defunct now, but...he should be ambassador to Seoul; he's good. I don't know; of course, he's probably tainted by being too much in the KEDO thing and Clinton's policy.

Q: Talk about stereotypes and how they work through the domestic structure.

LANEY: Oh my, it was terrible...terrible to see a man's career so stultified by that, because he is able enough and bright enough to move beyond it. Anyway, but I did want to put that in for the record.

Also, I want to say that toward the end of my career there, there were two station chiefs who were exceptional, and both of them I became friends with and felt we really shared a lot. There was an ease with us in terms of what we were doing and all, and both of them have gone on to much higher, very significant posts. In fact, that's why there were two toward the end, because one of them was only there probably six months and he was moved on to Washington. But I felt that we were able to talk about a lot of things that happen on the underside of Korean society and politics that were not visible or accessible to most people, and I really needed to know that. You know, I needed to know what the KCIA was doing, and what kinds of shenanigans were going on, and who was where in terms of the political situation. I'm good hearted, and I am upfront, but I'm not naïve, and I didn't want to be blindsided by something, and they were extraordinarily helpful in that.

Q: However difficult that may have been, this is, of course, precisely everybody's professional job in the Embassy to find out how the local society operates and make sure Washington understands that so that it can understand the sensitivity when you're saying, "Don't do that!"

LANEY: Right. But they were good men; they were very able men. I was well served by my staff; I have no complaints about the staff. I felt at the time, sometimes, that I wanted them to work harder, or I wanted them to be smarter, but on the whole they were good.

Q: Now I've worked in posts where we use the ambassador's table to bring in mid-level local

government officials, give them a little prestige. Was that the situation in Korea, or the environment there was quite different?

LANEY: No, that might have been a good idea; but I have to tell you, we were really busy. I'm serious! We worked. You know, I was up early. I'm an early riser anyhow; I usually get up at five, and I worked, and I was in my late 60s at the time. I worked until ten or eleven o'clock at night, you know, going to this and that, and seeing this and that and all, and a lot of it was - I mean everybody would be busy, but a lot of this was freighted with extraordinarily high stakes, which is, you know, it takes a lot out of you! [Laughter] There's a lot of heartburn there. You know, there were times when I would go to sleep I'd think: what are we going to do if, you know, something happens here? What are we going to do with all these Americans here? You know, this is a terrible responsibility! Fortunately we didn't have to face that.

Q: In addition to some of the North Korean issues, what were some of the economic issues that the mission watched?

LANEY: Well, there was a lot of concern about intellectual property rights; there was a lot of concern about patent infringement. One situation, I think it was with Amoco. They had had a joint venture with a Korean company, which allowed them to build a plant for this very special technique, this technical process, or whatever it was; and it was owned by Amoco. It was a very carefully guarded secret. And after about five years, while I was there, the Korean company decided to build a second plant, and they duplicated the first plant, and then they told Amoco that they could have the first plant and go home. And so Amoco was, of course, aggrieved that the Korean party was violating their patent rights and also that they had broken their partnership. So I was supposed to solve that. [Laughter]

I mean that was one of the kinds. Then we had real brouhahas about trade. There was an enormous problem about American products appearing in the Korean market. They didn't want any American cars; there was a huge import tax on all American cars. I said, "Well, look how many cars you're selling to the United States, and you don't want us to sell any here."

"Well, that's different!" [Laughter]

So we had to deal with issues like that, and I met with a huge number of people that would come through from the United States that had business there, and often had lunches for them, and stuff like that.

Q: One of the things that I noticed was frustrating in helping American businessmen was that often more than one American companies bid on an overseas contract. So while the German ambassador could go in and say, "Here's my one company and I'll do this on the side for you," the American ambassador said, "Well, I have two good competitive companies, and it'd be nice if they were players."

LANEY: Yes, yes. Well, that's another thing there. One of the biggest pressures that came out of Washington was to get the Koreans to buy America's defense products, their F-16s and their communications and all kinds of stuff. Which reminds me, one of the most important things that

we did that I initiated was we began having monthly breakfasts with the foreign minister, the defense minister, the commanding general, and myself - the four of us. This turns out to be a - it's still going on by the way. That's still going on! That turned out to be a great device for resolving public differences or private differences and just making sure that we understood each other, and usually there was an affinity around the table. One of the problems was there tended to be a lot more turnover on their side than ours, which meant you constantly had to repeat your points.

But at one point in the summer and fall of 1996, it may have been after one of the submarine incidents, where the North sent a small submarine that was beached in South Korea, and all of the officers and submarine people were shot, were killed, they killed themselves, or else they refused to be captured - this whole crew - I'm talking about a total of maybe 18 people. It was a chilling thing! But anyway, that was a real problem with tension.

My concern then, on the DMZ, was that at the height of that tension, where we had no hot line, that we might have an incident that could escalate out of control and no way to tamp it down. So at one of our breakfast meetings I brought this up, and I said, "It's very important that when an incident happens, let say the North Koreans start something, they shoot or something, if the South returns fire, they can only return fire commensurate with the initial fire. It cannot escalate the incident." He said, "Well, we must escalate, otherwise they won't stop." I said, "No, I don't want any move taken on the part of the South or U.S. that is without approval from higher up. And so the foreign minister said, "I don't know whether we can give that." The defense minister and I said, "Well, let's work on that." This was a breakfast meeting. (I'm showing you how this operated in a very important way.) They came back the next meeting, and they said, "We're not able to give that assurance." And I said, "I want you to understand that the United States is not going to be drawn into a war because we were unable to control the escalation of exchange of fire, which really had no strategic importance at all, that it was pure accident." I said, "We have a stake here, and we're will guard this stake, but we will not be pushed into some incident. We must have control over our own destiny."

"We can't give you that."

I said, "I'll have to get this from the president. I cannot allow this to continue like this." The issue became really one of, you know, of...well, as I said, to control our own destiny. We were in a position at that point where, if it happened, it happened. Well, the president refused to give assurances I sought.

So about that time we were going to meet at APEC in Manila, and by now John Tilelli was the commanding general. He had replaced General Luck, and he was a good man; he and I got along famously. I said, "John, I want you to go to Manila with me." He said, "I don't have an invitation." I said, "I'm inviting you, and we're going down there, and we're will get this thing straight!" So we flew down on a military plane, and John sat in on all the briefings. His eyes were as big as saucers because it was a real introduction to him of the inside of policy making outside the Pentagon, you know. And I briefed Sandy Berger, and then Secretary Christopher, and the president. I said, "We have got to beard this thing right now. We've need to get a commitment from the president of South Korea that we will not allow this thing to escalate out

of control.”

So we had a bilateral meeting, and then Christopher said, “Will everybody excuse us except the two presidents.” And so they had a meeting, and we came back in, and we got it settled. Now that was a major thing, just working it out. But those breakfast meetings with the four, we call them principals, was a new thing; it had never been done before; and it turned out to be a - they looked forward to it. Every time we met, of course no press was involved in the meeting, but they always took our picture and had it in the paper, and of course the Koreans were pleased because this was...now this sort of like inviting them to the embassy, but it’s much better because we were at my house, General Luck’s house, or we would also meet at their house; it was we went round and round.

When the tension was ramping up in 1994, the other thing I instituted, because of the urgency of communication, was monthly breakfasts with all of the English-speaking ambassadors: UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States -

So the six of us would meet, and of course most of the reporting was done by me because they might not have had the contacts, that inner loop with the Korean government and all. But it was a good chance for them to quiz me and for me to hear their views, and their concerns, and apprehensions, and so forth. The UK ambassador and I got to be very good friends through that; in fact, the others too. We visited the - oh, the Irish. The Irish were included. The Irish ambassador became a friend, and the Australians, you know, Canadian...

This was not just social stuff. This was admitting them to the table for business that they would not otherwise be a part of, and I think it meant a great deal to them, and it was helpful to me, and it certainly gave us an ease of communication. So you see, I had a lot of breakfasts, a weekly breakfast with Gary Luck, and then John Tilelli, and then I had a monthly breakfast with the foreign minister and the defense minister and the commanding general, and a monthly breakfast with the English speaking ambassadors, and a monthly breakfast with the Chamber of Commerce, you know, around and round.

There were lots of opportunities to see different constituencies. And for them to take my measure, hear me, you know; and at the height of the crisis, you know, they could read how steady I was, you know. “Is he nervous?” “Does he look nervous to you?” [Laughter]

One of the times, when we met with the whole embassy I think it was, and I was to reassure them, I said, “Well, I have had my mother here, who is 92 years old, and she doesn’t seem to be nervous.” They looked around and said, and it didn’t occur to them to ask, “Well, is that foolish or not?” [Laughter]

Q: You leave Seoul in February 1997. Looking back from the time you arrived in 1993, what do you see changed in terms of priority for issues, or you know, new things that were coming up on the horizon, something had been tamped down that maybe -

LANEY: Well, I want to say that the relations...I think that the relations between the United States and South Korea were very good then. I don’t mean they were perfect, but they were

strong and warm and cordial. I know that when I told Kim Young-sam I was going home he called me and was very upset and told me to stay and all this sort of stuff.

But in regard to the issues, we had finally gotten an apology from North Korea for the submarine incident. I'd worked very hard with State Department in Washington, who was dealing with the North Korean mission in New York, and I insisted that we must hold out for that, and I said, "We have conclusive evidence, and we're not going to back down. They have to apologize!" That's the hardest line I've ever taken with North Korea, and finally they did, and they came about a day before Christmas or something like that. We had my daughter and other daughter there and her family; and her family went home, and she stayed on. So two days, three days after Christmas my daughter said, "Dad, when are you coming home?" And I said, "Oh, I don't know. You know, probably in a few months." And she said, "You'll never get back." She said, "There will always be a crisis!" And I thought, you know, she's right, and right now is a lull; North Korea has apologized, and we're sitting on top of things. This is a wonderful time to say I'm going to hang it up. So I decided that night; I called Washington; I called Bill Maurer, the public information officer, over, and I said, "Bill, I want to write a statement of resignation." And he said, "You can't do that!" I said, "I've just done it." And I said, "I want it announced in the morning that I'm leaving post on February 1."

I made the decision. This was the end of the first term in January 1997, and I had every reason to think I would be retained or kept on. But I had turned 69, and I was feeling like I'd really done my job or at least a job, and, oh, and my mother was getting older, and this all has to do with how I was perceiving Korea, and I thought that things were in pretty good shape, and I just decided to do it, and I did it. Mondale in Tokyo had already made his decision, and I thought well, heck! If he can do it, I'll do it.

LANEY: I didn't ask anybody's permission or anything. I just told them I was leaving. Nobody rebuked me. When I came back, I got a very warm welcome and appreciation from everybody. Madeleine Albright seemed kind of peeved, but that's all.

She was just starting as Secretary; Christopher had left. But Talbott, Strobe Talbott, was continuing, and he was very warm and supportive. I had made good friends with some people in the White House in key places and I had an easy access, and it was good. I was never close to Clinton; I didn't make any attempt to be and I never was. And I decided to come home, and I did, and I don't have any regrets. I called Vernon [Jordan], and I told him I was coming home, and he said, "You shouldn't do that." He was very close to Clinton. And I said, "Well, I've already made my decision, Vern." He and I had breakfast every time I came back to Washington; we were kind of buddies. And he said, "You're sure?" I said, "I'm sure!" He said, "Well, I'll tell you. You're getting out just in time!"

It (the Monica Lewinsky scandal) all hit the fan about a few weeks later! [Laughter]

But I thought, oh, I'm so glad that I'm not, you know, having to be put in a position of trying to explain it, or justify it, or apologize for it. I, you know - My decision was not based on that; I had

no intimation at all; it just happened to be the timing.

Now the interesting thing is that after I came back, I was MC (Master of Ceremonies) at a dinner at the Council on Foreign Relations national meeting (they have an annual national meeting in June), and I introduced Sandy Berger. This was in June after I'd come back; I'd resigned; I was no longer ambassador. And Sandy got up and, in response to my introduction, said, "Jim thinks he's home, but," he said, "we've got other things in mind for him." So of course everybody looked around the room, "Oh, no, what is this going on?" Well, as it turned out, what he had in mind was both Sam Nunn and I going to North Korea, which didn't turn out to accomplish a whole lot, except we established a hot line, and then I became a supersecret presidential envoy to Lee Teng-hui (President of the Republic of China on Taiwan).

At that time Sandy Kristoff discussed with me Washington's anxieties over the continued intemperate remarks that President Lee Teng-hui was making. Sandy suggested, and implied she had presidential approval, that I become an informal personal envoy to Lee and underscore the risks his remarks were causing. I was briefed by Sandy Berger and Sandy Kristoff and we arranged a meeting between the two of us to see if we got along. This project was so confidential no one in the State Department was briefed on it. I only dealt with the NSC staff on this.

So for two years [1997 to 1999] I was the courier for personal message from Bill Clinton to Lee Teng-hui in an attempt to tamp down his enthusiasms and hold him in check; and it was done with this kind of hyper confidentiality because it was inappropriate for there to be an envoy between the President and Taiwan; although, I think if Beijing had understood or would have been willing to understand the purpose of the mission, they might have appreciated it; but the NSC didn't want to run the risk. So, as a matter of fact, even the Secretary of State did not know of these visits. This was done with only Berger, the president, myself, Sandy Kristoff, and one other briefer, somebody in the system who knew Taiwan, Bush, Richard Bush.

Q: Interesting, I just finished reading an insightful book he just published, At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942.

LANEY: Bush knew about it; he was the first one to give me a briefing. My first meeting with Lee Teng-hui was in Honolulu in September 1997 in Honolulu. Lee was transiting Hawaii on his way to visit countries in Latin America [Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, and Paraguay], where a few countries still formally recognized the Republic of China. I first meet with the Foreign Minister John Chang and then Lee.

Then in December of 1997, after the financial meltdown in Asia, I went to Taipei again and this time I carried a letter from President Clinton. The night before I was to leave, I got a call from Larry Summers wanting me to go on to Seoul to meet -

Q: Summers is from Treasury [Deputy Secretary of Treasury].

LANEY: Right, right...to go on to Seoul from Taipei to meet with Kim Young-sam to talk to him about the role of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and what we were willing to do; that was all oral; it was not in writing; and at that point, Kim Young-sam was dragging his feet,

and it was making it very difficult to provide the kind of support in a responsible way to keep South Korea from going belly up in terms of liquidity. So you know, that was a significant trip: first to Taipei and then to Seoul.

The new ambassador who succeeded me, [Steven W.] Bosworth, had just arrived [Ed: Bosworth served as Ambassador from December 1997 to February 2001]. I don't think we stayed at the embassy. But anyway, I had breakfast with him, and I invited him to go with me, but he declined; I don't know why; I guess he felt it wasn't his nickel or something.

Anyway with Lee Teng-hui, I kept meeting him for about another 15 months or so, and finally I told Sandy, "I won't go anymore, because the president is now treating this in too cavalier a fashion in terms of secrecy. When I first met, I went in very quietly, without any fanfare, and was put up under a pseudonym in a hotel; I mean it was really done quietly. But I blew it the first time because, when I called the first morning to order breakfast, I said, "This is Mr. Jones." She said, "Oh, you not Mr. Jones. You Mr. Smith!" [Laughter]

And then I got a call later that same morning, and here is this hyper secret trip. I got a call in Taipei from an embassy officer in Seoul. He called; he knew me because he'd been there under my watch; and I said, "How did you know I was here?" He said, "Well, I was alerted by the White House that you were coming to see Kim Young-sam, and I called White House Travel. They told me you were in Taipei." [Laughter] I said, "So much for supersecrecy!" [Laughter] He was my -

Q: Yes, people who aren't trained in the business?

LANEY: Right. He was my control officer in Seoul. Anyway, that's why he called. I thought I had a - here I'm blowing it in terms of my pseudonym, I'm found out by a guy by the embassy, they're all abuzz at the embassy, "What is Laney doing in Taipei?" you know, and the White House, "Just sent him to Taipei." But anyway, it never did get -

Q: How many trips did you make over the...what did you say...17-month period?

LANEY: It went on through the summer of...at least through the fall of 1999.

I guess I went, all told, at least six or seven times; a trip may be every four months.; there was a good deal of traffic, and I was unpaid. You know, I was just impressed into service. I would arrive in Taipei on a evening flight and go to the hotel.

Q: You see, Lee had, they had made the decision to turn the presidency of the Republic of China into an elected position. So Lee is the first elected president under the Republic of China and in ingratiating himself with his domestic constituencies, he found himself saying things and doing things that other observers considered somewhat destabilizing.

LANEY: Well, he was getting more and more cocky and more difficult to deal with as time went on. This was after, of course, the Cornell thing [June 1995]; and I began to get very restive because I would come in with these letters, and he would read them, and then he would give me

a lecture; he was charming, we never had hard words; although I felt I had some latitude to deal with him, but I did not, of course, feel that I could just flat out...I couldn't tell him what to do! He would give me a return letter. These meetings were not eventful, but probably acted as a pressure valve.

So with each succeeding visit, I got more and more uncomfortable. The foreign minister [Jason Hu] always briefed me at breakfast before the meeting with the president, with Lee Teng-hui, and I liked him a lot. But anyway, it was an interesting thing. I didn't mind doing it; but after a while I thought the payoff was not worth it, so I quit. I just couldn't see any point in continuing; it was a drain on my interest and energy.

Q: And you didn't particularly see any payoff to this -

LANEY: No, you know, at least we kept from driving into a ditch, you know, whatever role I had in that, in terms of conveying Clinton's interests and concerns, and therefore the United States; but after a while I thought I'd just gone over the same ground every time, you know. We weren't really making progress; we were just...each time I'd shore it back up, you know, and things would stabilize for a while.

The last time, the last meeting, September 1999, most of the time I'd go with my wife, and she was my cover. We went out for dinner rather than having dinner in the president's mansion. We went to this wonderful restaurant, and when we went out afterwards, there was this host of photographers getting our picture with the president. I said, "This won't work anymore." You know, this is they're not honoring the spirit in which I'm coming, because it's as though they were trying to tell me, "We've got you. You've got more at stake in keeping a secret than we do." At least that's what it looked like.

And I wrote all that up and gave it to President Clinton, and said, "Thanks a lot, but no thanks!" On one of the early visits we were flown over to Quemoy Island and saw all that stuff. That was particularly interesting because my wife's uncle, when he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs, that was during the real flare-up on Quemoy and Matsu. He had been there, and they all remembered him. They were excited to think that Admiral Radford's niece and husband were visiting, so they commented, "This is where he walked" and that sort of presentation.

Q: Actually, that's fairly illustrative of what I understand you've done since your ambassadorship. You have certainly kept your hand in Korean issues, maintaining your contacts with the Council of Foreign Relations.

LANEY: Right. I've been back about twice a year to Korea. Most recently last November. Of course when Kim Dae-jung was President -

Q: You were talking about your work with the Council on Foreign Relations.

LANEY: Well, you know, I co-chaired a Council task force on Korea with Mort Abramowitz and made trips to China. We just sent the Council our resignations last summer after seven years as co-chairs. That was the longest - no, six years, I take that back. Abramowitz is a great guy; I

have a great respect for him.

Q: Obviously Korea is a sensitive issue, has been for a long time. How did the Council on Foreign Relations decide that it wanted a special taskforce?

LANEY: Well, in 1997, Les [Leslie H.] Gelb was aware that the North Korean situation was still festering, and that Clinton was losing his patience with it in Congress, Congress was dragging its feet on keeping its side of the KEDO deal and all, Republicans were very opposed to it, a lot of flack; and so they felt it was very important that we have a taskforce that could periodically issue reports that could, in a sense, give Clinton some running room, not necessarily just supporting him, but at least trying to break the logjam. And the most we issued, I think three reports in all, which is pretty sizable - every other year you don't have to report - with recommendations, bipartisan, and a fairly distinguished group of people on it, you know, the people who'd really been involved in foreign policy in Asia.

All along I'd been upset that we had not had the kind of high-level consideration of policy and career that it deserved because of its strategic situation. Bob Gallucci filled the post for a while, but then he went out in 1997 with me. He left and went to be dean of Georgetown. I don't think there was a replacement, but it certainly wasn't at the level it should be.

So we wrote a letter, Mort and I wrote a letter, to President Clinton because the situation had deteriorated so bad that I felt that we needed 1) to have a high-level coordinator, and 2) we needed to draw up a set of proposals, and 3) go to North Korea, and try to see if we couldn't reach an understanding on where we should go from here. Within a week he had appointed Bill Perry as the coordinator. I think that's pretty good action and enough so that the taskforce, you know, operated like that. We were trying to have influence to nudge things along constructively. We weren't trying to score points; we just wanted to see very difficult and complex problems addressed and if possible, resolved. That's what it was about.

Q: And out of that were...how...I mean one of the main actors that we're trying to influence here is North Korea. Does anybody have any idea of what North Korea responds to or is interested in?

LANEY: Well, my basic operating assumption, my axiom, all along has been that North Korea is basically insecure. They're not going to be aggressive; they don't have the capacity to be aggressive. They might have had at some point in the '70s or '80s, but that was long past. Their conventional military is so degraded because of time; they don't have enough fuel for their pilots to have any practice, you know, flying; and their tanks are old; and so forth. The two things they have: they have missiles, they have long-range artillery, which is operative; and they have or had a going nuclear program.

I was convinced that their principal purpose was regime continuity and stability; and they felt threatened that they would be taken out, and that they might collapse on the one hand, and on the other, that they would be pushed over. China of course, provided a minimum threshold of survival for them in terms of food and fuel, and South Korea provided a good bit, and in the meantime, of course, after some terrible natural disasters in the late 1990s, they have entered into

a series of reforms, which are very...they're not far reaching, but they're significant in terms of economic reforms. Agriculture is now largely uncontrolled, and it's improved the production and the accessibility of food, and so forth.

But they still are benighted, and I know that they want some guarantee of stability, of assurance that the United States won't take them out. They've, of course now with the current administration, seen what we did with Iraq, and they know that they were linked with Iraq in this "axis of evil," and it's quite logical to assume that they would be maybe next. There are people on the Defense Policy Board who do a lot of talking - Jim [R. James] Woolsey, and Richard Perle, and a lot of others - and they say, "Don't deal with them because you'll only prolong the regime. We need to get rid of the regime." Well, you know, that kind of talk is not very reassuring if you're the regime.

So I have thought: what's the down side of giving North Korea an assurance of nonaggression. If they violate the conditions of the thing, we're no longer bound by it; so okay, what's the down side? We're not going to keep a nonaggression pact if they violate it; but if they need it for purposes of going further in terms of dismantlement and all, that would work. It's hard for them to imagine just giving up their only ace in the hole before they even have any assurance of nonaggression; I mean that's a nonstarter.

The problem is, of course, that forever the hard Right has always felt that it's appeasement to deal with them at all. And as I said earlier, the fact the United States is big makes it hard for us to do anything that would look like we were being conciliatory or you know, going even half way toward the adversary. But I do think, and I could be wrong, I do think that it could be worked out.

And I think China wants it to be worked out. China has moved into a position of geopolitical prominence through the Korea situation that we never imagined four years ago; their leadership in the region is enormous. They're not just economic power, but real geopolitical. I think they've moved into the vacuum left by the United States because we're so asinine and think that we can move unilateral or bilaterally, but we're in a logjam.

In the meantime, of course, the six-party things are trying to work. I was co-author of an article in Foreign Affairs a year ago this time ["How to Deal With North Korea." Foreign Affairs, Vol. 82, No. 2. March/April 2003. pp. 15-30], which proposed a six-party approach, and I think that's a good approach, and I think it could work out. I believe we could move to the point of where, with economic support and all that, they would give it all up, only, though, if they felt they were moving toward normalization; and if normalization is out of the question for us, then I don't know how it's going to be resolved.

Now in the worst case scenario, as I've said, even if we go down this route and they show perfidy, then we at least have China, and Japan, and Russia with us, and South Korea, in going the hard road, because they will have been demonstrated to be perfidious and unresponsive. But just for us not to do anything except demand everything up front is no approach. I mean no one thinks it is except us, except the hard Right of us! I don't know!

Q: Well, in one sense you're using a characterization that has come out of the Congress. In talking about another issue many decades ago, congressional leaders spoke of being in on the takeoff, as well as the crash. I mean let them in, as you say. Let Russia, and China, and Japan get together with us setting the game up, and if the game goes sour, then you've got all these friends and associates ...

LANEY: And we know who's responsible, see, because we are not the laggards or the obstructionists. Right now we just look like we're being obstructionists.

Q: Which probably makes all the other actors insecure too.

LANEY: Well, it makes South Korea angry. It means that I met with Roh [Moo Hyun], the President of South Korea, who's in a lot of hot water himself, last year a couple months after he took office. I didn't know him before that, and I met with him for about an hour, just one on one; and his great concern, which he reiterated over and over, he said, "I did not take the oath of office just to allow another nation to drag my people into war." That's a pretty strong statement. He said, "I do not like the fact the United States thinks that it can take unilateral action regarding the nuclear situation in North Korea without our being fully consulted and in agreement." He said, "We are the ones that will bear the burden, not you." That's no fool talking!

Q: Well, it sounds a bit of mirrored image of what you were talking about earlier, about the escalation of an accident on the DMZ. You said, "I don't want you drawing me into a war just because you can't tell your guys to stop escalating."

LANEY: It is the mirror image, you're right.

Q: Well, actually Ambassador Laney, I have really appreciated your time at this. I think we've covered a lot of material. Is there anything that you see as a summary to this exposure as an 18-year-old Counter Intelligence officer, through ambassador, to your current participation in the public discussion in these issues?

LANEY: No, I don't think so. I don't know of anything that comes to mind.

Q: Well, I really appreciate your time. We have spent a beautiful day here in Atlanta.

LANEY: Indoors. You're a very gracious interlocutor. You make it easy. Of course, you know that when you get people to talk about themselves that they can do that all day. It's been my pleasure.

DAVID G. BROWN
Director, Office of Korean Affairs
Washington, DC (1995-1996)

David G. Brown was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1940. He graduated from

Princeton University in 1964 entered the Foreign Service. His assignments include Taipei, Saigon, Yokohama, Tokyo, Vienna, Beijing, Oslo, and Hong Kong. Before retirement in 1996, he served as Director of the Office of Korean Affairs. Mr. Brown was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 28, 2003.

Q: Well, then in '95 you went over to Korean Affairs. Is that right?

BROWN: That's right.

Q: You did that until your retirement in '97?

BROWN: In 1996. I only had the pleasure of working on Korea for one year.

Q: Well, tell me during that one year things were always happening on the Korean Peninsula. What was happening?

BROWN: Well, let me first do the boring stuff. The boring stuff was reorganization. Up until that time, the North Korean nuclear issue had been dealt with by a special task force run by Bob Galucci with Tom Hubbard, the DAS in EAP, as his deputy. They had negotiated the Agreed Framework with North Korea to put a cap on the nuclear activities at Yongbyong research facility. They had established KEDO, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, to implement parts of that agreement, particularly to build two reactors in North Korea to provide power in theory to compensate for the from reactors which the North Koreans had agreed to shut down. This negotiating process with the North had gotten to the point where we no longer needed a special task force, but we did need a group of people who would work on KEDO and the implementation of this agreed framework.

The first thing that we worked out in the summer that I came on board was a reorganization in which six people who had been working under Galucci were transferred to a new unit in the Office of Korean Affairs, EAP/K. EAP/K ended up being the largest office in the EAP with about 17 people in it, six or seven of whom were working on the implementation of the Agreed Framework and the rest were the long standing Korea desk which was responsible for political and economic relations with the South and for analysis of North Korea. It worked out quite well in part because Joel Witt joined EAP/K. He had been in the Political Military Bureau with Galucci and he moved to the Korea desk to lead this unit that dealt with KEDO issues. A lot of what we were doing at that time was getting KEDO up and running and supporting their initial negotiations with North Korea. In this period, the basic agreement on the construction of the new reactors was concluded, through a very tough negotiation. The negotiating was done by KEDO, but the U.S. was the principal founders of KEDO. So our office had a large role in supporting KEDO in the negotiating process.

There was a lot happening on the KEDO front in my time. One example was the canning of fuel rods that had been taken out of the North Korean reactors at Yongbyong. We had a team of three or four employees of the Energy Department at this reactor site along with several IAEA inspectors. They were working with the North Koreans to can this spent fuel and put it in canisters in storage ponds where it would be secure pending eventual removal from North Korea.

You can't imagine how difficult it was to support these people from DOE in North Korea, without any U.S. consular or diplomatic presence in the North. For example, each time they went in they had to take dollars in cash because cash was the only payment acceptable to the North. These people had to live at the reactor site where there was no entertainment whatsoever. Inevitably incidents would occur. One Saturday night, one of our people got drunk and spilled some beer on a North Korean newspaper. The paper happened to have a picture of Kim Jong-il, the North Korean leader, on it. The next day our man was accused of insulting the dignity of the "dear leader." So, it took a week to work this out.

When the negotiations between KEDO and the North Koreans would get to an apparent impasse, the North would go into a brinkmanship mode and at times bully our people in Yongbyong. They were threatened with being expelled. Or North Korea would refuse to approve replacement personnel who we wanted to rotate in to relieve those at the reactor site. Then, we would have to persuade those at the reactor site to stay on and figure out how to get some more cash to them.

Q: You were saying how do you work there?

BROWN: Yes, how do you just work collaboratively with people when there has been no basis of mutual experience in collaborative activity?

Q: Whom did you talk to? I mean you're sitting here in the United States.

BROWN: Well, the immediate channel of communication was through the North Korean mission at the UN. We did not have an office in Pyongyang. The agreed framework included a provision for establishing Liaison Offices in each other's capitals but that had not been implemented. We tried to set up the liaison office, but the North reneged on that. So we arranged for the Swedes to act as our protecting power. So, that if our people at Yongbyong ran into difficulties, the Swedish Embassy would represent U.S. interests and help them. Apart from the substantive policy issues being negotiated, there was a constant stream of practical problems to be handled. You never knew what you were going to be running into when you arrived in the office in the morning. What new thing had happened in North Korea that you'd have to deal with?

Q: Were you running into a problem that politically anything dealing with North Korea was seen as a sellout by elements within congress or the press or anything like that?

BROWN: Yes, the Republican led Congress was very skeptical about the North Koreans and the Agreed Framework. That leads me to the second thing that I thought was very important and I still think is very important which directly involved the congress. That was the issue of humanitarian assistance. In the fall of 1995 the North Koreans surprised the world by acknowledging that they had had natural disasters that had created a famine in the North. Pyongyang made a statement that it would be prepared to receive international humanitarian food assistance. This was a very significant departure for a country whose policy had essentially been to close itself off from the rest of the world. All of us dealing with the Agreed Framework realized that unless the North Koreans decided as a whole to open up their economy, it would never be possible to make the reactor project a success. So when North Korea Low announced

that they were prepared to accept foreign aid and would accept an international assessment team from the World Food Program, which was seen as very important opportunity.

The question then was how was the U.S. going to respond? In the following months, we went through three steps. The first one was how do we give the standard \$25,000 that the U.S. can hand out in an emergency. Normally, the ambassador has the right to provide this princely sum of \$25,000 on his own authority right away. So, what do you do when you don't have an office or an ambassador? Well, we got the Assistant Secretary to make a determination that there had been a famine and we would donate \$25,000. But as paltry as this sum was, we realized we had to consult with the Hill. We did so without trouble. We also had to consult with Seoul, which was then under President Kim Yong-sam who was a real hardliner on North Korea.

Then when the initial assessments from the WFP came in and the North Koreans were shown to have very substantial needs, we decided to take another step and give them a quarter of a million dollars. We went through the same process, consulting with the South Koreans and with the congress. At this stage questions were raised. How are you going to monitor aid? Is it going to go to the military? We were able to say that we would give the aid through the WFP and that the WFP would have people on the ground in North Korea supervising the way it was given out so that you would know that it was going to children and pregnant women and not the military. It wasn't easy. There were a lot of people who didn't like it, but the law is written in such a way that the Secretary of State has the ability without actually requiring any congressional approval to give humanitarian aid wherever he thinks its needed. The various sanctions on economic ties with North Korea do not apply to humanitarian assistance. The Congress had written this legislation. We were able to proceed.

When the final WFP report came out, this was actually the following spring when the North Koreans admitted they were still having food problems, we went to the Hill a third time for two million dollars of food assistance again through the WFP. We learned some tactics. We were well advised to go to the agricultural committees and figure out which senators and states had excess agricultural commodities that they wanted to get disposed. Arrange a mix of commodities so that congressmen would be happy that their constituent's interests were being looked after. It took a lot of work because you had suspicions in the congress and you had a government in Seoul which was not itself well disposed to giving aid to the North. A very different situation with Seoul than we have today. So, you had to bring the South along because if you didn't bring the South along they would go to the Hill, and the congress would become a much bigger problem, so the whole thing had to be managed very carefully.

Q: What was our reading on Kim Jong-il, his group?

BROWN: He was a mystery. We as Americans had no contact with him. He was still t that time in a period of mourning for his father's death. He dragged this out for three years. It was reasonably clear that he was in the process of trying to consolidate his grip on power in North Korea. He was very much a mystery at the time. He had an image among some as a corrupt playboy. Very little evidence was yet available on how he would act as a leader now that his father had died. He had almost no contact with the outside. This has changed subsequently, but in '95 to '96 he was a mystery.

Q: I take it we didn't have the equivalent Kreminologists that we used to have and used to sit and talk about who was doing what to whom?

BROWN: Oh, yes, you watch this and the South Koreans watched it even more closely than we did. Who was making appearances, with whom, at what kind of activities? At that time, Kim was almost always at military events. If you look at American involvement with Kim now, I mean Madeline Albright has met him. Other visitors have met him. We've had substantial dealings with North Korea on food aid, on the reactor project, on the agreed framework, on the recovery of remains of American soldiers who were buried in various places in North Korea during the Korean War. We've had the visit of the number two man in Korea to Washington. There have been very extensive contacts with their government. But in the earlier period the only real dealings we had had was in the context of Galucci's negotiations. From that you did know that Kim was, after the death of his father, able to make some sensible decisions. But at that time, no American had met him, talked to him, had any direct contact and in fact very few of any foreigners had had any contact with him.

Q: I've had two contacts one with Korea, one was an airman second class in sitting off Chodo Island, sitting on Chodo Island up in North Yellow Sea and then later as consul general in Seoul in '76 to '79, but was there the perception that an attack could come anytime? I mean, you know, we've had, it's been 50 years now of tension on the border, but except for forays from time to time, the blue house raid and a few other things, its nothing major has happened. What was the feeling?

BROWN: If you went for a briefing at U.S. Forces Korea, they would emphasize the threat posed by the North. They would be able to talk to you about the kind of training the North had been doing and show you the number of new artillery pieces that they believe had been placed in caves along just north of the DMZ. They would talk about our intelligence on chemical weapons and so forth. So, USFK portrayed a picture of the North, which was still consistent with the idea that at some point they might attack the South and try to unify the country in keeping with their propaganda.

At the same time if you looked at the balance between the North and the South, you would recognize that the North's economy had been in decline and for at least five years, that their sources of support in the Soviet Union and China had dried up, that the military looked like a decrepit organization. The North was balanced against South Korea, which was the 11th largest economy in the world. It had just been admitted to the OECD as a member developed world and had an army of 650,000 people equipped with some of the best equipment that the U.S. could provide them, well-trained on their own and with the American armed forces. My judgment and the judgment of others who weren't directly involved in the U.S. forces Korea was that the South Koreans could probably handle the North Koreans pretty much on their own. If we weren't in a confrontation with the North over the nuclear issue, I believed the U.S. really should be involved in withdrawing a substantial portion of the American military from Korea because it wasn't needed anymore.

Q: And it's an irritant within the South Korean society.

BROWN: Yes, a recurrent irritant and we've seen that of course more recently.

Q: I heard your U.S. forces Korea thing. I think it was on MacNeil/Lehrer Report last night.

BROWN: Oh, really? That's right.

Q: How many artillery pieces are there and a picture showing the goose stepping army and how many planes there are and shots of Seoul and how many people and all. I mean the problem of course being that Seoul is within artillery range of the North.

BROWN: Exactly.

Q: So, anything you do would mean horrendous losses.

BROWN: That's right and that's the way I saw North Korea, that it was a vulnerable, fragile state and that Kim's basic concern was to consolidate his own control and that this array of forces north of the DMZ was in effect a deterrent against either South Korea or the U.S. using force against him.

Q: Yes, if you do this I'll blow myself up and you'll get hurt.

BROWN: Right.

Q: Did you get any feeling at that time for something which seems to be a considerable concern on the part of China and that is anything happening in North Korea would mean an exodus of umpteen million poor, starving Koreans into China and this means that the Chinese don't want any change.

BROWN: Yes, you saw that. The Chinese didn't talk much about their bilateral ties with North Korea, but it was pretty clear to us through various intelligence channels that in the early '90s the Chinese had substantially scaled back their aid to the North and done away with friendship pricing on goods sold to the north. Then when the famine occurred in North Korea, the Chinese were clearly beginning to reassess what they were doing vis-à-vis the North. Even though they never gave any aid to the world food program, we were convinced that they became the largest donor to the North of food assistance. They are the principal supplier of petroleum, i.e., energy supplies through Northeast China. The Chinese reversed their policy in '95 and '96 and decided that this famine was undermining stability in the North and that they would have to provide substantial aid to avoid instability.

Q: Well, you talk about it, an awful lot of countries that really despise this regime are doing everything they can to keep it going. The Japanese, the United States, the South Koreans, the Chinese. How about the Russians?

BROWN: They don't have much capability in terms of resources to make a meaningful contribution, but you're right. In some ways, providing aid is repugnant because this regime is as

brutal and as inhumane towards its own people as you can imagine. It was and is a government that is prepared to see its own people starve while putting substantial resources into its own military establishment and threatening the rest of the world with weapons of mass destruction. It is repugnant. My view as the director of Korean Affairs was our policy was not to overthrow the regime but to encourage change. I saw the Agreed Framework as a vehicle for encouraging change because, as I said, if the North Koreans were going to implement it through to the end they were going to have to open up their society.

One key issue was how to tie the new reactors into the power grid. The power grid in North Korea was dilapidated. It couldn't possibly handle the power that would be produced by two nuclear reactors. The North Koreans tried to pressure KEDO into agreeing to build a new electrical grid for them as part of the reactor project. KEDO said, no. The way to get the grid is to go to the World Bank. The north didn't like that answer because they knew that would mean they would have to open up their whole economy to the scrutiny of the World Bank. They still haven't agreed to do that, but what we were trying to do was not just deal with an immediate non-proliferation problem, but to bring about fundamental change in North Korean society through the vehicle of the agreed framework. We saw the humanitarian food aid as another way for doing this. We were prepared to invite the North Koreans into the ASEAN Regional Forum. It didn't happen on my watch. It happened later. There were other things we were prepared to do, but the North hasn't followed through on many of them.

Q: It has regressed. What about South Korea itself? The time you were there, how did you view the situation in South Korea?

BROWN: As I said we were dealing with President Kim Yong-sam, who on the one hand was a fighter for democracy, but on the other hand had very negative and hostile approach to dealing with the North at a time when the U.S. was trying to engage the North on a number of fronts. So we had a very difficult time working with Kim administration. We finally cut a deal with him and the deal was this. Kim Yong-sam wanted President Clinton to visit South Korea when he went to Japan in 1996. Clinton worked through Tony Lake who was the.

Q: National Security Advisor.

BROWN: National Security Advisor. Lake went to Seoul with a message, which said, if you would agree to an initiative to get North South dialogue started, the president will come and visit South Korea. This initiative put our office in a tricky position. For reasons that never explained explicitly, the president wanted Lake to handle this relationship through his contacts with Kim's national security advisor rather than having my boss, Warren Christopher, be the point man on this issue. Perhaps Lake wanted some credit for an initiative. Anyways, Lake and his deputy asked our office for some help in drafting their telegrams to Seoul but insisted that we not inform Christopher. Nevertheless, I discreetly informed Winston Lord what we were doing, and got his agreement. My deputy Dick Christiansen, who knew a lot more about Korea than I did, was involved in this process, too. We were writing the telegrams for Lake to send to Seoul to work out the presidential visit.

The focus of the presidential visit was going to be the announcement of what we called the four

party peace talks proposal. The Americans and the South Koreans on one side, the North Koreans and the Chinese on the other side. We would start a process of dialogue about peace on the peninsula. This was a cover essentially for finding a way to get the North and the South to talk to each other. All this was worked out without in the end any bad blood that I could detect between Christopher and Lake.

Q: Well, it didn't seem to be the almost priceless relationship that developed with the National Security Advisor Brezinski and Kissinger and all that.

BROWN: No. The dynamic of this essentially was the White House didn't want anyone knowing we were trying to work out this kind of a proposal with the South Koreans because if it fell apart the knowledge that it had fallen apart would further poison North South relations. Lord told Christopher and those who needed to know knew what was going on. We did work out a statement that would be made by the two presidents. We put considerable pressure on Kim not to screw the whole thing up by making an anti-North Korean statement while the president was standing next to him. We agreed on the text of the announcement and on what each of the Presidents would say. To ensure that it would be seen in the North as a serious offer, we insisted that both the South Koreans and we would use our private channels in advance to alert the North that a proposal would be made. The meeting took place on Cheju Island. The president met for about four hours together and announced the four party peace proposal.

Our prior notification to the north was done through the New York office. We gave them a few hours advance notice so they knew what was coming and that it was a serious effort.

Q: What about the Japanese?

BROWN: They were not happy with this because they weren't one of the four. They were U.S. allies, which China was not, and they were paying a billion dollars for the KEDO. They were not happy, but they were told about it in advance and chose not to object publicly.

Q: Well that Japanese relationship ever since the Japanese colonial effort in Korea has always it still, you can't use the Japanese very easily with the Koreans.

BROWN: Though not on my watch, South Korean dealings with Japan have improved rather remarkably in the last five or six years.

Q: Things are moving. I have to say you know, we're right now going through a phase of anti-Americanism all around the world, but as I do these oral histories we're documenting efforts to try and bring peace, reconciliation with all sorts of problems and false starts and everything else. Essentially I can't help feeling that we are a major force for trying to better foreign relations and to have a more peaceful world.

BROWN: While this is a bit off the subject, one of the things that disappoints me most about our policy in Iraq right now is that we seem to be abandoning a lot that we have worked so hard for as a country for four or five decades. We are reverting dangerously to a policy of might makes right. I think it's terribly destructive to our international legitimacy and our ability to do a lot of

very positive things by working collaboratively with other people.

KENNETH YATES
Overseas Mission, International Atomic Energy Agency
Seoul (1995-1996)

Kenneth Yates was born in Connecticut in 1940. He served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1969-1962 and received a BA from the University of Pennsylvania in 1967. After entering USIA in 1967, he was posted abroad in Seoul, Kabul, Tokyo, Reykjavik and Beijing. Mr. Yates was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

YATES: I got involved in something in 1995 that was unique in my Foreign Service career. In May, 1995, I was called and told of a team that was being formed to go to North Korea as part of the liaison office. The caller, Spence Richardson, and I had a brief conversation, but I was not interested at that time. I did not think it was going to be a very pleasant situation. North Korea was cold, hostile, and difficult. But the more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea, because it was essentially the last real Foreign Service post available. Even the newly independent states that used to be the Soviet Union were essentially getting down to normal. The most exotic place I could think of was North Korea. I had spent most of my academic and personal professional life centered on Korea and this became a logical destination. I finally agreed to it with a full commitment.

I left then in June, 1995 and came back to Washington. Because I was going to go to North Korea, I could not remain a USIA officer on that detail, so I had to be seconded to the Department of State for the duration of my upcoming tour. I was one of four at the time who were going to be moved to Seoul for a brief wait prior to moving north. There were a couple of more people who were going to be joining us later. The total that would have been in Pyongyang at the time was to be seven, but we only had four in Seoul waiting to go. Initial expectations were that we would have a scant few days in the South Korean capital before entering North Korea, so a certain amount of hustle was in order. I had to get special dispensation to get business class seats on a flight to Seoul, because there were no economy seats and I could not wait without jeopardizing the smoothness of the move. Just about all trans-Pacific seats were taken by participants going to the Women's Conference that was being held in Beijing, and they were transiting through Seoul.

Much preparation had already been completed, and we fully expected that within two weeks, we would be in Pyongyang to open the Liaison Office. It was going to be housed in what used to be the old East German Embassy, which the West Germans still had but didn't need. They almost turned it back, but we asked if we might sublet two floors of the main building from them as office space. We had apartments, office space, and garages in marginally decent enough conditions that we could move in. Needed renovations to the apartment building could be made later, as more families became part of the community. That was all set. We had communications arranged. USIA had bought a computer to be used up there. Although I was going as a State

Department officer, obviously I was going to have the portfolio of public affairs while in Pyongyang. To get up to speed for my other duties, I had to return to Washington and take the consular course which I had many years before fought hard against. I was going to be essentially the principal “consul” as well as the “framework officer.” In that latter position, I was to oversee compliance with the 1994 framework agreement with the North Koreans in terms of nuclear questions.

My wife and I moved to Seoul anticipating only a short stay, but after arrival, a whole sequence of political and military events occurred to interrupt the progress we had expected. The most dramatic of these was the capture of a DPRK submarine on the east coast of the peninsula. In addition, there were Korean local elections and whether or not the U.S. had a liaison office in the North became an issue. The North Koreans themselves reneged on the agreement they had already initialed providing for a Liaison Office. The agreement stipulated that we would have diplomatic passage across the DMZ with pouches, mail, and a truck driving across the DMZ to support the Liaison Office.

There was little in the way of support for an office in Pyongyang. No communications, no food, and no possibility of some grand local market supplying us. Everything would have to be brought in, including computers, furniture, etc. We were positioning stuff in Seoul at the time. When my wife and I moved to Seoul, we packed up a few things for the trip and placed all the rest of our household belongings in storage. When we arrived in Seoul, we had nothing but suitcases of clothing and what is called a “welcome kit” that embassies usually provide to people for temporary use until their household effects catch up. We set up housekeeping in a temporary apartment while we waited to go North. It could be days or as much as two weeks. It turned out to be longer than two weeks. For the interim period until the details of the exchange of Liaison Offices could be sorted out, our small group was placed in “North Korean Study” at FSI. So I had to become a language student again. That was okay, I thought, since I could brush up my rusty Korean. At FSI, we sat, never quite full language students, since our attention was focused on the final move north, but neither did we have regular positions. It was a limbo that was to extend seemingly forever.

I finally got to the North through a program which the Department of Energy was operating with private contractors to assist the North Koreans in putting the offending nuclear fuel into canisters. If you recall, as part of the 1994 Accord, we agreed to supply North Korea with heavy fuel oil to offset the energy loss because of their agreement to take the reactor that was considered dangerous off line. That reactor was capable of producing a nuclear fuel that might be reprocessed into bomb grade material. As a result of the 1994 accord, the North Koreans would shut down the “research” reactor in return for the provision of heavy fuel oil from the U.S. and the eventual construction of two new “light water” reactors, because they were considered much less capable of producing the dangerous material.

The North Koreans had removed the reactor’s fuel and had stored it in a pool next to the reactor building. That separate building had a large water-filled pool about 15 feet deep where the spent nuclear fuel was kept in baskets at the bottom. The rods were just stuck in these baskets like pick-up-sticks and dropped into the water. That was how the fuel was kept in temporary storage before it could be removed to another site for disposal. The problem was, those spent fuel rods

had to be controlled. The IAEA had a team on the site, monitoring the fuel in the pool. The reactor was no longer working, but the problem was putting this stuff into sealed, controllable canisters which the U.S. government agreed to assist North Korea with as part of the settlement. The South Koreans were going to build these two new less dangerous reactors for the North Koreans, but they had to get these things off line right away. So the U.S. Department of Energy had contracted with a team of U.S. engineers to help the North Koreans clean up the excess radioactivity at the site and pick up the spent fuel rods from the bottom of the pool and place them in canisters. Those canisters were then to be sealed with IAEA seals and put into racks in the bottom of the pool until the two new reactors came on line and the nuclear fuel could be moved out of North Korea and disposed of.

You may recall that North Korea had threatened to leave the international Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to which it was a signatory. If it had done so, it would have been under no obligation not to reprocess the spent fuel into nuclear weapons grade material. This might then be fitted to the missiles being separately developed and give the North Koreans the ability to market the dangerous product to whomever came up with the price. Naturally, the fear was that one of the “rogue” states of the Middle East would be a ready buyer. Such an eventuality would have jeopardized the uneasy relationships in that unstable part of the world and injected a nuclear component into that situation.

Therefore, it was imperative that the dangerous spent fuel be placed in a safe storage area under the supervision of the IAEA. Since there was no American Embassy in Pyongyang, there was no protection for the American engineers going in to work on the storage project. At the urging of the Department of Energy, the Department of State agreed to supply a diplomatic escort. Since North Korea is a signatory to the Geneva and other diplomatic conventions, they felt this gave a measure of protection to the group, because there would be somebody who was protected by those conventions and who could then blow the whistle on any kind of problems that might have occurred. The assumption was that if one or several of the Americans got into trouble or was simply charged with wrongdoing, they would have no consular protection while so far from U.S. diplomatic missions. So I and the others on the team we had in Seoul, and a variety of other diplomats in Washington and in East Asia began the “circuit-riding” tasks of escorting U.S. engineers into North Korea through Beijing and at the nuclear site at Nyongbyon (it is spelled Yongbyon by South Koreans). We did this on a rotational basis. Each would go in for two to three weeks, with the travel on either end adding another week.

Q: You were working out of Beijing then?

YATES: No, I was working out of Seoul. It was an interesting concept, because the North Koreans are so prickly about anything that deals with the South. Yet they agreed to this arrangement. They knew what was going on. They knew where we came from, as we had made no attempt to hide our southern residence. But the big problem was getting enough Korean speakers to go in. It was not a popular thing for people to do. Some would be intrigued by the opportunity to enter a country that was different, even exotic, and the chance to go where so few outsiders had trod was generally exciting. But their ardor quickly cooled when they discovered the living conditions at the nuclear site and the dangers that were involved, not only from the North Koreans in a security sense, but because the site offered radiation threats that were not

under the same safety controls common in the U.S. and elsewhere. The North Korean technology to deal with matters of health and safety at the site were not as sophisticated as they would have been in other regions.

However, the North Koreans are very good engineers, and from my conversations with our engineers, most held very positive impressions of their skills and safety consciousness. They didn't have much in the way of equipment, but they were very sophisticated in their craft. That, I think, gave rise to a certain degree of mutual respect that over a period of time was very positive.

On the other hand, the North Koreans are very difficult to deal with. On my first trip into North Korea, I was surprised to find that the conditions there and the attitude of the people was remarkably similar to what I had found in the deepest part of South Korea on my first tour many years before. I had been in Kwangju in the late '60s, and the South then was more advanced than the North is today. Yet North Korea had problems of a magnitude not seen at the time in the South. When I began to travel to the North, the controversy had already begun about the failed crops and the threatening famine. Flooding had already occurred before my first visit. So when I went in, part of what I had to do was look to see if I could gather some insight into what was happening in the North. I traveled from Pyongyang to Nyongbyon where the reactor site is located. It is about sixty miles north of Pyongyang. At the time I arrived, we had to take back roads to get there, and it took about three and a half hours of driving over very poor roads. North Korea must import all of its oil, so they chiefly use cement on the roads. Cement is a local product. They also have severe winters. Anybody who lives in New England would have recognized the damage done to cement sections of road from frost heaves. The road was all broken up in places, and it really made a hard, difficult ride.

We would spend from two to three weeks in Nyongbyon, drive back to Pyongyang with the rotating engineering crews and then fly back to Seoul via Beijing. You could not get to North Korea directly from Seoul, and there was no other service except from Moscow. I guess that was only once a week. So the two flights a week, on Tuesdays and Saturdays to and from Beijing, were the best way to get in and out. You were very, very isolated. Communications were not very good. Telephones worked sometimes, and if you were in the Koryu Hotel in Pyongyang, things were not too bad, but if you were in Nyongbyon, telephone communication was very difficult.

IAEA had a guest house there which was built for their needs by the North Koreans. There are IAEA members who stay there on rotational duty monitoring the nuclear site. They also revolve in and out on a similar schedule of two to three weeks each time. There is always an IAEA representative present to monitor the nuclear site, including the reactor from which the fuel was removed.

When I first arrived, there was no real connection between the IAEA people and the American engineers, although after a while, that dissolved a bit, because they were living in the same spot; in such a unique and closed environment, after a while you get to know each other. But officially, we were not supposed to talk to each other or associate, because it was thought any warmth shown by Americans toward the IAEA people would indicate to the North Koreans that the IAEA was a handmaiden of American policy. We were bending over backwards to be cool

and distant from these IAEA representatives who were usually third world people from Mexico, Nigeria, Egypt, and places like that.

The guest house, itself, wasn't bad. Actually the food there was much better than it was in Pyongyang at the hotel. They had a cook who was able to get fair quality materials from somewhere, possibly China. Everybody was paying hard currency, and probably we were able to get anything we wanted. Nevertheless, the cook at the guest house did a marvelous job of creating what his vision of Western food was. He obviously had a cookbook somewhere, because he would come up with amazing things. Some of his creations tasted a little different, but others were really quite good, almost at a gourmet level. The fixings were not dependable, however. Sometimes there were good mushrooms, a variety of vegetables, and lots of chicken. The trouble was, when he found something fresh, you ate it for a week. We had cucumber salad every time, all the time I was there. If he found some tomatoes, you had tomato things; if he had onions, there were onions in just about everything you ate. Breakfasts were not very good, and of the three daily meals, the American breakfast is not very well understood in the rest of the world. There was no orange juice or special items like that. You could bring in your own fixings or condiments, but you could not bring in perishables, because you never knew when you were going to get in.

The rotating engineers would bring candy, M&Ms, Snickers, and favorite snack foods to keep up the sugar levels that were generally low in Korean cooking. You could bring in material to read, but you couldn't leave it in places where North Koreans would be able to see it. If one or another of the North Korean managers at the rest house came across something offensive, they would confiscate it and argue with you and tear it up in front of your face or demand that you store it away; otherwise you would be accused of attempting to propagandize the people of the North. By general agreement, however, the engineers were allowed to do almost anything on the second floor of the guest house where most of the rooms were. The situation even improved to the point where they were able to borrow a videotape machine from the IAEA people and bring in some movies, although sometimes those got into trouble if the subject matter was deemed inappropriate. The only available recreation at the guest house was a pool table and a lonely basketball hoop outside. If you wanted to use that, you had to bring your own basketball.

The guest house was on a corner outside the nuclear city. The old city of Nyongbyon is a small walled town, one of North Korea's oldest settlements. The only industry there, is a silk factory which recently had not been selling much silk. The town was poor. Arriving at the site, you had to drive through the town, cross the river, and then approach a whole new city, also called Nyongbyon, on the other side of the Nine Dragons River, after which the guest house is named. The new city is not walled in like the old but is surrounded by barbed wire and several rings of guards. There were a series of security areas, one within another, sort of like those nested Russian dolls. In the center of these zones is the nuclear building and reactor. Around that was a military compound. It resembles a treed college campus. It had been built in the early seventies to be the North Korean nuclear research center.

The North Koreans brought in a lot of their researchers who evidently were trained abroad, probably in Eastern Europe, and who essentially stayed in this compound. They were kept apart from their own society. Their life-style distinguished them from their compatriots in other parts

of the country. For example, almost all of their houses and apartments had television antennas sprouting from the roofs. That could not be seen in other areas apart from the special cadre housing in Pyongyang. Inside the secure city, they had their own factories which processed food from their own farms. They even had a Korean rice wine factory. They had begun construction on a new cultural center for films and art. Most of what they needed to exist was provided within the compound. There were schools for the children and playgrounds. Connections with the surrounding communities seemed tenuous. There was a bus that ran through the guard posts, but few people other than soldiers seemed to ride it. Most appeared to be farm people going to fields outside the perimeter. Yet despite its isolation, it appeared to be a fairly sophisticated town compared to the other cities that could be seen while traveling back and forth to Pyongyang.

As a foreigner at this unusual city, there were special disadvantages. As a foreigner, you could not live within the city. That would have created too many problems. So they built a guest house outside the security perimeter, near the Nine Dragons River on a bluff. Behind the guest house was a military installation and in front was the river and the guards. At night time, you could go out of the house, but you couldn't walk very far. You could walk down to a big tree where Kim Il Sung had once stopped to give "guidance" to the people and then return, as long as the round trip was done during daylight. In the winter with long work days and short periods of daylight, that meant that there was little opportunity for exercise. It was like being in prison. When you came back, they closed the gate behind you. It wasn't locked, but there was an armed guard at the gate holding you in. There were rice fields around you. There was not much of anything to do at all.

If you wished to be by yourself for a while, you were permitted to climb to the top of the small bluff behind the guest house and look over the river. It was pretty. There was a bench up there that you could sit on. But that was the extent of the recreational facilities. On the second floor landing was a pool table where the North Korean staff were permitted to go. It was the only point where some sort of social contact was allowed with the North Korean staff at the house. I am not really sure that it really had official blessing, but outside of a television set in the lower lobby, which never seemed to carry much programming, there was not much for our North Korean minders to do either. Several of the North Koreans got very involved in playing pool, and the friendly games got very competitive. If too many Americans got involved, however, the North Korean staff became uncomfortable and usually left.

The process involved with the "minders" is one of the aspects of living in North Korea that is kind of controversial. If you read journalist accounts of North Korea you will see a lot of commentary on the watching and "minding" that goes on with foreigners.

North Koreans have a bad reputation, sometimes it is well deserved, of closing people in. Americans always seem to enjoy a sense of conspiracy. This often leads to dramatic exaggerations of the North Korean suspicions. For example, I was told they will not allow me to walk outside the hotel, and you are controlled and watched every waking moment of the day. There will be cameras in your room and the halls. Indeed, there are large mirrors built into the walls in the halls of the hotel we were in, and it is likely, as it is in Beijing, that halls and public areas are monitored. We always seemed to be placed on the same floors of the Koryu hotel, although this could have easily been explained by the relative lack of other customers and the

high cost of fuel to heat in the winter. Indeed, when there was a sudden flush of visitors and we had to take alternate rooms, the rooms were usually cold and not made up as well.

On the first night of my initial entry into Pyongyang, I decided to get some air after the long trip to Pyongyang and take a walk. The minders congregate in the lobby of the hotel near the front door, the only way out. Mine intercepted me and said, "Where are you going?" "Well, I am going to take a walk." "You can't do that," he responded. "Why not?" "You could hurt yourself, it is dark." I was adamant and a bit stubborn perhaps, because I had been told I would be restricted and wanted to test the theory. "Well, it is not too dark, and I only want a short walk," I claimed. "I will just go out and walk a couple of blocks." My minder insisted that I stay in the hotel - "it is not advisable." Finally, I got them to agree if someone went along with me. I thought that was a reasonable compromise. Off we went, myself and two guides, or minders. It turned out they were right. It was really dark. There are no street lights even in the center of Pyongyang, and the only light you had was an occasional passing car - and they were very occasional. To make things worse, the sidewalks are not in very good repair. There are potholes, cracked concrete, and things to stumble over and break your head on. You could walk into a tree and not even see it. It was really dark. People who are accustomed to cities do not understand how dark it can really be in a city if there are no lights. Perhaps a country boy who grew up under the stars might scoff, but in a polluted city there are no stars to guide one.

It was after 8:00 p.m., but since I was hungry, I invited my stalwart but stumbling minders to go with me to a restaurant where we might get something to eat. I got only a worried response that everything was closed. Naturally, I disbelieved, thinking they just wanted to get me back to the controlled hotel, but after stumbling around a few corners, I began to become a convert. Maybe they really knew more about Pyongyang after dark than I was ready to allow. Yet I still wanted to try to find something. They thought a restaurant down the street might still be open. We stumbled off in the dark, made it to the restaurant, and indeed, it was closed. We had to stumble back to the hotel, and I ended up with them in the lobby bar, buying them a beer.

The point of that little story is that, in fact, the guides probably had my best interests in sight. It was dangerous for an American to go stumbling around in the dark. First, you probably would get lost and, second, you could really hurt yourself. Should you bring harm to yourself stumbling about in an unfamiliar city in the dark, they would be blamed for your misfortune. So reports of the deviousness of the "minders" are exaggerated and may be misleading. Of course, they want to keep track of you and do not want you fraternizing with people.

In addition, there is the myth of the "Potemkin Village" demonstration for VIP guests. Foreign accounts of travel in Pyongyang are replete with vignettes of stores stocked, but not open, and activities ostensibly only for the benefit of curious foreigners. No doubt, there are some restaurants and other establishments that are off limits. For example in Pyongyang, there are some department stores which will take foreign currency, reputedly for the convenience of tourists and foreign diplomats, and others that will only take the local currency. But there are a number of other stores, ostensibly closed, that will accept foreign currency despite the confusing instructions about restrictions. So the confusion about restrictions does not make much sense. Walk into any one of the several "foreign" department stores that are for foreign currency, and they are packed with North Koreans. Many of them are just looking around, but some people are

buying and carrying things out of the store. The bottom line is that a lot more observation is needed before conclusions can be drawn.

I wanted to go to department store #1 and was told it was off limits for foreigners. But it was featured in North Korean tourist brochures, and I wanted to get some souvenirs to take back to the South. That seemed to be the convincing argument, because I went several times to department store #1, sometimes with groups of American engineers in tow. I went through all its floors. They had a whole corner of the store devoted to stuffed animals and birds and oddities like that. You could buy foreign liquor there and shortwave radios, which I thought was interesting. North Koreans don't have much money. It is not a monetized economy. It is apparent that most of the citizenry are not accustomed to a monetized society. They receive chits for rice, free housing, free education, and free medical care, so they don't need money except for cigarettes and beer, both of which are extremely cheap. You can buy a great big bottle of Asahi beer for about two dollars.

Q: Asahi beer is a good Japanese beer.

YATES: Yes, and the North Koreans love it. It is very cheap, far cheaper than it would be in Japan. It is obviously subsidized. You can buy cheap cigarettes in North Korea also. They make cigarettes. I don't know where they get the tobacco; perhaps it comes from the U.S. via China or Hong Kong. So a foreigner who likes to smoke and likes to drink is in good shape in North Korea. Almost everything else is by chit provided by the government. This means that as a North Korean, you don't need money to exist. It is only for nonessentials that you use money. So their low wages are essentially disposable income.

Another commonly accepted theory is that of the "Potemkin Village." As I noted before, it is claimed that they put on a big show for foreigners. The stores are not really stores. They will have goods stacked up neatly, but nobody ever touches it. You go in and look around, and nobody is there, and as soon as you leave, they close it up. You ride down the street, and you see all these stores, and they are all closed. So there are no stores, nothing for the North Koreans to buy.

That is not quite true. While it would be hard to define North Korea as a consumer society, they run things differently in their society than we do. A store here in the U.S. might open at 10 in the morning and stay open until 10 at night. Not in North Korea. They won't open in the morning. They will open at lunch time which sounds to an American like a crazy system. But as was explained to me, the theory in North Korea is that everybody is a worker and after breakfast you go to work. If you opened the stores in the morning, there would be no customers, but at lunch time when there is an hour off, there are many people on the street and, sure enough, when I checked at that time, the stores were all open. These goods are all lined up neatly in the morning, because the workers have nothing to do but make them neat until lunchtime when they sell them and then afterwards straighten them all up again.

Perhaps the stores are not crowded as we would expect in our own society, but you do see people standing in line in front of stores waiting to get in. The stores in North Korea are operated, as we would recognize in the old days, as general stores where you walk up to a counter and say, "I

want a sack of flour, some lard, and crackers.” They then go and get your flour, lard, and crackers and pass them across a counter in exchange for your money. That is the way stores operate in North Korea. You stand in line to get to the counter. When you get to the counter, you order what you want and you take it home. It is a little different than the walk-around-the-supermarket-with-a-cart experience we have. Foreign observers, glancing at the empty stores on their way from the airport to the hotel and back, are not learning much about the system.

A second myth that turned out to be fiction was that there are no such things as gas stations in North Korea. You can ride around Pyongyang for hours without seeing a gas station. The reason is, North Koreans think gas stations are dirty, which I guess has some point to it, and they put them down back alleys. Sure enough, once you know the code, you ride down a street and see a little blue sign up in the corner with a little arrow on it. That is the petrol sign. You go down that alley, and the station is in the back somewhere. There are very few cars anyway, although the numbers are growing. I was in a traffic jam in Pyongyang only once. They have mostly Russian and East European bloc cars, although a fair number of Volvos, which is interesting, and a lot of Mercedes. The North Koreans or someone in North Korea deemed the Mercedes as the best car in the world and decided to build them. So for a time, there was a North Korean Mercedes that was being built. The products of that effort look like Mercedes, except that there is a five-pointed star on it instead of the usual Mercedes three-pointed star. The five-pointed star, of course, is their red star. The paint tends to be runny, and the wheel covers tend not to be the magnesium type that you are familiar with. So it is a little different, but looks like a shabby Mercedes about ten years old. I don't think they are making them anymore.

I know they never paid for the Volvos. That is one of the problems with the North Koreans; they buy things and never pay for them. When I was there, they had a Swedish delegation trying to arrange for the payment of about \$350,000 worth of Volvos that the Swedish taxpayers had paid for, because their government had guaranteed the export arrangement. Volvo got its money, but the Swedes did not. The Swedish government is trying to recover it. That is one of the problems with the North Korean economy; they do not have any money. Because it is a non-monetized economy, they do not benefit from the multiplier effect in the economy. If the multiplier effect is not working, then money is not being generated as it moves through the economy. Without generating money they can't buy anything. So it is a “catch 22.”

Our U.S. engineers would go in, in groups of about eight and usually a head engineer or the vice president of the company. There were several U.S. companies involved under contract with the Department of Energy. In fact, all of my expenses and escort expenses were funded by the Department of Energy. I was a USIA officer, working for the Department of State being funded by the Department of Energy. It was a strange arrangement.

But we would go in, if we could get in. One of the problems of getting into North Korea was that you had to have a visa, but North Korea doesn't give visas like normal governments; they give you a piece of paper with your picture on it, which they stick inside your passport. But even that wasn't good enough to get you into security places. For example in Nyongbyon, we had to get a separate pass to allow us to get through the different parts of the guard structure - the municipal guards (police), the local army guards, and the security apparatus around the nuclear center itself. When I arrived for the first time in the fall of 1995, army troops occupied mounted machine gun

nests at the access points around the compound of the nuclear city. By my third visit, about a year later, those emplacements had been removed, and there did not seem to be much of an explanation why. Security in the nuclear compound had appreciably diminished.

Still, every time you went in and came out, you had to stop at every guard point, and there were four of them to go through to get into the reactor site. Every morning, we would have to go through the four posts. If you went back for lunch, you had to go through all four posts to reach the guest house outside the perimeter. Going back to work meant going through the four posts again. You had to come to a full stop and show all your documents at each stop, every time you went in or out. They didn't inspect the drivers or the guides. The drivers had a very unique position. First, they commanded the cars, but they also probably had more authority than drivers would in other parts of the world, because they were part of the intelligence establishment.

Q: Probably like the proverbial KGB chauffeur, Colonel Chauffeur. Something like that.

YATES: Yes, that is right. By the time of my second trip, they had opened a new highway, a four lane limited access highway which ran past Nyongbyon up to Myohyangsan, which is a tourist site. That's where the Kim Il Sung memorabilia exhibition containing the gifts the former "Great Leader" received from foreign guests are on display. It resembles an airport gift shop in other parts of the world, in the sense that the selection of gifts is undifferentiated, ranging from the truly artistic to the banal.

When the drivers took their charges back and forth on this new highway and reached the crest of a hill, they would coast, which wasn't a good idea in a power steering equipped car. Remember in the '40s when there was a gas shortage because of the Second World War, people would coast. My father would do that to conserve gas. In the same manner, when the North Korean drivers would get to the top of the hill, they would shut the engine off, coast down to the bottom, and restart the engine. Sometimes, they would simply put the car in neutral and then back into gear at the bottom. Their belief, I suppose, was that they were saving gasoline. There was a great deal of debate in the American press about the lack of fuel in North Korea. The claim was that the North Koreans were running out of fuel. I never saw any evidence of that in specific terms. There were cars, trucks and buses all over the place. The buses were empty most of the time, but the trucks usually were carrying military people or people going to the fields; they carried very little produce.

You could see ox carts still hauling brush for fuel. North Korea was still very much a third-world country. They were cutting off the branches of the trees in the country side to about eight feet high, so the tree wouldn't be killed but the lower branches could be used for fuel. There were deforested places, but elsewhere, they were being smarter. They knew there was going to be more than one year of famine, and if they cut the tree down for use this year, next year they would really be cold, because there would be no trees left. So they lopped branches off at the bottom.

They were using the ice in the winter time along the rivers to take sleds to parts of the terrain that were inaccessible by road or path. They would use the sleds to go up the river and cut the

branches off trees lining the banks of the river and drag them along the ice back to the villages and homes.

Q: What was the period of time that you were making these trips?

YATES: From when I was assigned to Seoul in August 1995 until late 1996 when I returned to the US. About a year and a half.

Q: How many trips did you make?

YATES: I made three trips. The total time I spent in North Korea was about two months.

Q: Were you being debriefed when you came back?

YATES: Yes and no. I obviously reported in cable form when I got back, but a formal debriefing, no.

Q: Were you there during the death of Kim Il Sung?

YATES: No, I was there after that. However, I was there during the 50th anniversary of the Party. The problem at Nyongbyon was that there was nothing for the engineers to do, so we tried to figure out things that might provide some recreation. They worked on Saturdays, so it meant only Sundays were free. We could take a car and drive to Pyongyang. We could go to the hotel, get a room, and sit in the bar. It was at least a change of scenery, and there were sights to see.

One of the weekends on my first trip on October 10, 1995 was the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Korea Workers Party. Some of the guides knew we were interested in doing some touring and asked whether we would like to see the show, if they could get us some tickets. Most of the engineers thought that was a great idea. I told the guides that, if we could be given firm assurances that we were not going to be put into a compromising position, that we wouldn't go to any of the places we otherwise would not go to like the memorial to Kim Il Sung, for instance, we could probably go. However, if anything happened that I thought was wrong, then I would take the engineers out immediately. We would stand up and leave, possibly embarrassing our hosts. If they understood the conditions and understood that we would walk out if compromised, we would accept the offer to see the show.

Off we went. It turned out that the apparatus in North Korea is not very well put together. It is a small country but incredibly bureaucratic. The guides had lots of trouble getting us tickets, but we were finally given admission tickets to the foreigners' stand for the ceremony at the Kim Il Sung Square in the heart of Pyongyang.

We left about 7:30 a.m. and got to the square around 7:50. There were no seats, just wide flat concrete areas, arranged amphitheater style, flanking the platform where the leadership stood to wave at the masses below. On one side was the Party cadre, and on the other side, the military, and below that, the foreigners' stand for ambassadors and people from embassies on the right hand side of the podium. So we got shunted off to the right. I had dark glasses on and a hat. The

only way you could tell I was a foreigner was because I was differently dressed than the rest of them. But you couldn't tell who I was. Our instructions to the engineers were not to associate or talk with people, to just watch, no politicking.

There were a lot of diplomats there, Bulgarians, Russians, etc. We were also put together with the Party faithful from abroad: the northern Chinese who are adherents of the communist way and some Japanese from the Japanese communist party who had come for the celebration. We were all together, milling about. Things started to move at 8:00 in the morning and lasted until almost noon. It was hot, and it was long. However, it probably was the most spectacular thing I have ever seen in my life. All the citizens of Pyongyang were spread out before us.

We had one representative of the institute managing the project for the Department of Energy who was not interested in the show. He was a jogger and said that he was going to jog. The guides became very upset. "What do you mean, you are going to jog? You can't jog." The DOE rep was adamant. "I want to jog." "You can't jog," responded the guides. "Why not?" insisted the American. "Because you will be arrested if you do." "I am an American and can go anywhere I want," he persisted. "No, you can't. Nobody in Pyongyang can go anywhere they want. The city is shut. Anybody who lives in this city will be at the square by order. You don't have an option. Anybody not in the square this morning will be arrested, you included." So very reluctantly, he was dragged along with the rest of us. The celebration consisted of about half of the people of Pyongyang in a parade with floats and cheering members of work units. The other half of the citizenry was in the square waving plastic flowers, red and pink and some yellow. They choreographed these flowers into signs and symbols. Whenever they mentioned Kim Il Sung, they showed the sun. Whenever they mentioned Kim Jong Il, Kim Il Sung's son, there would be a star. The parade of silk banners was a marvelous thing to see.

The first thing in the morning was a formation of the military, which filled the square. The military leadership made speeches. They had just appointed four new marshals in the North Korean command, so those marshals were there and reviewed the troops in these very long black Zivs, big Russian cars, and a Lincoln and a couple of other Western cars. They rode in circles, reviewing the troops, and then the troops marched off. There was no brandishing of arms. Few of the assembled troops had arms at all. After the troops had marched out of the square, the mass of citizens who were "hanging in the wings" behind the buildings flooded into the square in this mass of pink. The women were dressed in a modified, shorter, version of the traditional Korean Hanbok and the men wore suits and ties. It was quite an amazing show. This continued until all had arrived at their proper place, and then the parade started.

After the military speeches and the review of the troops, Kim Jong Il came in, no more than 50 feet from where I was standing. He leaned over the edge of the baluster there and waved at all the foreigners. We were told that no pictures were allowed, and all of us respected the request. But it was remarkable to see him so close. He didn't look as sick or disheveled or as monarchical as he does in some of the Western press photos. He went off to receive the accolade of the crowd and stood there for hours, waving. He did evidence considerable boredom, and perhaps it is understandable, given that the parade went on for almost four hours and everyone had all eyes on him.

After Kim Jong Il arrived, the parade started. There were thousands of people with floats, lots of silk flags. After the four hours standing on the cement flats, we were impressed but relieved that the marathon was over. We were told we were going to take a break for lunch and then in the afternoon were the gymnastics. We went back to the hotel for lunch and then went out to the Kim Il Sung Memorial Stadium where just about all of the student population of Pyongyang was assembled. They did marvelous things with card flipping. They would make entire pastoral scenes and then a picture of Kim Il Sung, and then a picture of his son, a lot of slogans and things. Hundreds of these were done by all these school kids about 13, 14, 15 years old under direction from the ground. They had cheerleaders down there. I do not remember seeing more than one or two mistakes made in the several hours of constantly changing pictures. There were thousands of these kids.

After the sloganeering and marvelous pictures of the card flippers, the gymnastics started with an incredible display. I had seen a fair amount of Chinese gymnastics while stationed in Beijing, but the kids in the stadium gave nothing to the Chinese in their display of skills. Much of the display ran with multiple activities in different parts of the stadium simultaneously, a “multiple ring circus” that somehow all fit together into a seamless whole. People tumbling in the air, ground vaulting, and all sorts of juggling, all taking place at the same time. Kim Jong Il was there also. We were seated further away. We certainly weren’t given very special consideration up in the stands, off on the side. We could take all the pictures we wanted of the gymnasts, but couldn’t turn the cameras on the leadership podium.

Our minders carefully observed the ground rules of our attendance. The extent to which the minders were careful about the instructions I had laid down before we had agreed to go, was illustrated during the morning celebration. The TV cameras were constantly roving over the crowds and the displays of adulation, but during a lull in the celebration, began to pan across the crowd of foreigners, obviously showing the foreign dignitaries who were attending the celebration. At the time the camera came very close to where I was standing, one of the minders saw it coming and stepped between me and the camera and stood there until the camera left. I wouldn’t have cared so much, because with my hat and sunglasses, nobody would be able to tell me from any other European, but nonetheless, the point was, he kept his word which was much more important to me than any possible photography.

I found all the way along that the North Koreans were very careful about the agreements that were made. If the agreements were broken, either they had a very good reason, or they did not feel they themselves had broken them. We had one incident during my first visit when I wanted to visit the East German compound to see the Swedish representative who handled American affairs in Pyongyang at the time. I wanted to meet him, say hello, and set up procedures to be used if we had problems in Nyongbyon. Because the Swedes provided some diplomatic protection, the assistance of this Swedish representative could be invaluable in times of emergency. It was getting dark, but that was not of concern to me. I said that I wanted to take the car and go over and see the Swedish consul. My minder of the moment said, “Does he expect you?” I said, “No, but I would like to knock on his door and say hello.” “Well, it may be a problem.” “Why?” “Well, we don’t know where the German Embassy is.” That was one of the largest embassies in Pyongyang and our foreign minders didn’t know where it was? That was

unbelievable. I said, "I really have to go. I want to do this." "We will see what we can do," was the response.

It was about 4:30 in the afternoon, and it gets dark in Pyongyang in the winter time pretty early. They worked for half an hour and then came back and said, "We can't find it. We have called the foreign ministry, and we just can't locate the German compound." I said, "Well, what are we going to do?" They suggested that we take the car and try find it, so we all piled into the car I had rented and rode off into the mists of Pyongyang. We crossed the river into the diplomatic quarter where we stopped here and there, asking security guards where the East German Embassy was. In Seoul, I had seen a map with the general location of where it was but had nothing else to guide us. We took a few wrong turns but eventually did find the place. By that time, it was dark and there was a guard out in front. I got out of the car, a Westerner, and approached the gate. "Who are you and what do you want?" I was asked. "I want to see the Germans." The guard's response was a simple, "Okay." My minders had to stay in the car, since they were not allowed to go into the embassy, but I could.

I had one of the engineers with me, and the two of us went into the compound which was already completely dark. We felt our way along and saw a light in an apartment building toward the back. Europeans don't keep hall lights on very often to conserve energy. We went up some stairs and banged on a door with light showing under it. I don't know what the occupants thought, I never did find out, but they came to the door; getting a bang on the door in the middle of the night in North Korea from people you don't expect must be quite sensational. It turned out they were newly arrived, a young German diplomat and his wife. Nobody that I wanted to speak with was at home, so it was not a very successful visit. But at least I had gotten into the compound, met somebody, and gotten back out. The important part of the story is that my minders worked very hard to locate the German compound when they could have made their lives a lot easier by simply denying that we were able to go. They were really embarrassed that they did not know where the compound was, when first asked. The North Korean bureaucracy is very compartmentalized, and as I gradually learned more about that unusual government, I more fully understood why my minders had such a problem.

I have another tale that also speaks to the purposes of the minders. When I was getting close to leaving North Korea after my first trip, I wanted to take some kind of candy back to Seoul as a souvenir for my instructors at FSI and others in the South. I was unable to find anything suitable. I mentioned this problem to my minders, and they scurried off. Two hours later, they came back and said, "We have checked all over town. The only place we can find to buy something resembling what you want is up in the hotel bar." Sure enough, upstairs in the bar tucked behind the counter were some boxes of candy. It tasted terrible. But nonetheless, that was North Korean candy which I could take back to the South. But they had worked the better part of the morning, trying to locate the source of my desired souvenirs. I think their spirit of conscientiously trying to do something right is pretty strong.

I later had a different experience while on a negotiating team in my last visit. I was the State Department representative for a negotiating team that was run by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and headed by Norm Wolfe, an Under Secretary at ACDA, to negotiate some of the final parts of the spent fuel arrangements. The canning operation was ongoing, but

there were some problems with the details of the work schedule in the final stages of the canning process. Some of the positions of the North Koreans that we thought did not have any merit turned out to be based on things of which we had no understanding. That happened a number of times in my North Korean experience.

You may remember in the press a couple of years ago, we had accused the North Koreans of siphoning off the fuel oil of the first shipment and diverting it to other purposes. Their tally of how much had been taken in was different from ours. Their's showed less and ours showed more. We said, "Aha!" The press had a field day, saying that they were stealing the fuel.

It turned out that our technology was overly sophisticated and had given us incorrect readings. We used technology utilizing sound waves to measure the flow of the heavy fuel oil, which meant we did not have to put anything into the fuel flow itself. It was an acoustic process by which you could tell the rate of flow by, I suppose, the doppler effects on the reflected sound. The North Koreans were adamant that their figures were correct. They used an old propeller system directly in the flow of the oil. The number of times it went around indicated the amount of fuel flow. What happened, as it turned out, was that the fuel going through the line was at a colder temperature than we expected. Since the acoustic properties of the fuel change under those conditions, we had to re-calculate our own totals. In fact, the North Koreans were right and our figures were wrong, despite all of our high tech equipment. Nonetheless, the American press had made much ado about the possible fraud, but made much less about our foul up of the data.

A second incident of the same kind occurred when the North Koreans wanted to stop work on the canning of the spent fuel. We said, "Ah, dragging their feet." This was a charge that was leveled at them regularly. The crane was broken. They had a holiday. Their men were sick. Or the radiation is too much over the pool. They complained that the American engineers were coming and going in the replacement shifts, but their people were staying and working in the same conditions month after month. The American engineers were working 12 hour days, from 8 in the morning until 8 at night over the pool and for them it was all right, because we had these very fancy, and expensive, dose meters, which were cumulative in determining the amount of radiation that an individual was receiving. They assigned one to you on arrival, and you wore it all the time. Additionally, all American engineers were examined with a full body count done periodically to make sure they did not exceed the Department of Energy's standards for allowable levels of radiation exposure.

However, it turned out that the North Koreans didn't have any of that fancy equipment or sophisticated exams. All they had were the film badges which only indicate when too much exposure is received over a brief period. They had nothing showing the actual cumulative exposure. The way they measured total possible accumulated exposure was by taking a Geiger counter and placing the sensor out over the pool containing the spent fuel while taking a reading. A "health physics" technician would then multiply that by the number of hours the crew was above the pool. The problem was, if you do that, you are not taking into account the shielding of the platform and other obstructions from things above and surrounding the pool. Our crew with the dangling badges would have an accurate reading, but the North Korean crew's accumulation estimates were an average based on the sensor reading taken directly over the pool. That meant if

an engineer was suspended directly over the pool for that amount of time, that was the amount of dosage they would receive.

Of course, nobody would be suspended directly over the pool for that length of time, because they walk back and forth for tools, take breaks, etc. Our argument was that there was plenty of space for that, but they were adamant that, because of their health concerns, the exposure of their crews over the pool was high. Finally, we got the idea that the only way they had to determine dosage was to assume the maximum. By doing so, it meant they were spending too much time over the pool and greatly exceeded Department of Energy standards.

It took a long time to wrangle that down to where we understood what they were talking about. They had a good point, and once it was recognized, we were able to come to an agreement on time to be spent over the pool. Although we were happy to have our engineers in over the pool for longer hours, the Koreans absolutely refused. They said that if we gave them the equipment so they could test in the same manner as we did, then we could talk about it. These things are \$500-\$600 a piece, and we weren't about to start handing them out like cookies to all the Korean workers and people who were in the pool area. But in fact, they were being very careful in a dangerous situation with their people. I think in retrospect it was something very difficult for us to argue with. Their intransigence was not so incomprehensible when you began to understand it from their point of view.

One of our major problems in dealing with the North Koreans was that the Americans did not speak Korean. Even in the negotiations I spoke of, we did not have a translator. The only American who had any Korean language was me. The only place the negotiating team could go to converse was out in the street. We had to call for a recess in negotiations and all trundle downstairs and walk around the block. I would tell Norm Wolfe, the head of the delegation and a lawyer, that they didn't understand what we were talking about. First off, we should not use any legal jargon that is popular in the US, for their translator did not understand it and could not render an accurate translation. My impression was that the translator was guessing a bit and thereby throwing negotiations off the track when our points did not make any sense to the North Korean side. Secondly, the North Korean-supplied translator in translating from Korean into English was doing things that were extremely annoying to Norm Wolfe.

For example, every time they would refer to Wolfe, instead of saying "him" or "you," he would say, "Mr. Norman Wolfe," using his full name. That drove Wolfe crazy, because he thought they were needling him. He was not being needled; it was simply a case of the translator trying to be too fussy. The translator was trying to be polite, but he was doing so in a very irritating fashion.

We also saw in the negotiating team an apparent bureaucratic division, almost antagonism, within the North Korean government. The chief negotiator for the North Korean side was an engineer, Director Lee, the Director of the Atomic Energy Bureau, a very senior position in the North Korean government. The North Korean Foreign Ministry was represented by a slick looking gentleman with a silk suit, and clearly not held in the highest regard by the people from the Atomic Energy Bureau. He was a quintessential bureaucrat, one of those Foreign Ministry wonks who just get in the way. He would make caustic speeches, mentioning all sorts of inappropriate and tangential points that would cause Wolfe to get impatient and upset.

Obviously, Lee could see that this interloper was causing all sorts of trouble in his negotiation. Actually, there were two foreign ministry representatives, a lawyer who kept his mouth shut most of the time and this other, political type. The talkative representative of the Foreign Ministry was kind of chubby, which was also unusual for a Korean. Those from the Atomic Energy Bureau on the negotiating team were rail thin.

The comparison probably rankled Director Lee. The man in the silk suit would scribble notes all during the negotiations and suddenly rip off a page and pass it to Director Lee. Director Lee was obviously not interested in his scribbled observations, for he would receive the passed notes, hardly look at them, and place them face down on the table beside him. At some time during a break in translation, he would turn up a corner and take a look at the notes and then lay it back face down again. He was doing the absolute minimum to not be completely disrespectful to this person, but certainly not to listen to what he had to say. The man in the silk suit was really upset by this, because he was continually bobbing back and forth in his seat to see what had happened to his brilliant suggestions. You could see him growing visibly ticked off with Lee for not paying attention to his diatribes. It was always the same stuff.

The failure on our part was that we did not have a competent Korean translator on board who was an American and who would understand what we said, even with the ill-advised legalisms. When Wolfe would use lawyer terms, the translator did not know what he was talking about and would guess. Sometimes Director Lee, whose English was obviously better than he would admit, could straighten things out in his own mind or understood the logical stuff, but many times he could not. This prolonged the negotiations to a considerable extent. Finally, we got to an agreement, although it didn't look like we were going to for a long time. In true North Korean style, they would say "absolutely not, absolutely not," until three seconds before you break and then they would say, "Well, maybe."

One last thing. The North Koreans had put together a welcoming banquet which was very elegant at the hotel. The meal was well served, and it was excellent food. To be polite and respectful, we had to reciprocate. A bunch of Americans in the heart of Pyongyang had few options. We could not have it at the hotel, because the dining rooms were all booked. I took my minders on a field excursion to see if we might find a place suitable for a concluding banquet hosted by the Americans. We ended up in the Diplomatic Club, which is a kind of curious, run-down, end-of-the-road operation across the river in the diplomatic area. I went over to look at the place to see whether or not it could be suitable for our gala affair, but it clearly was not. It was a dump. It didn't smell good, and it was dank and dark. I had visions of eventually spending cold winter nights downing suds at the bar and listening to bad stories from drunk foreigners once we were finally here with the Liaison Office.

We were ushered into a reception room with plastic flowers. It was really more suited for a funeral parlor than for a banquet. But clearly, we had no choice and would have to make the best of it. After some long negotiations, we finally decided on a menu for the banquet. I asked them to make some changes in the room, to take out some of the junk that was useless like the TV sets, plastic flowers, etc. With a heavy heart filled with trepidation I returned to the Koryu Hotel to break the news to the delegation.

The upshot was, when we had the meal, although it was a little different than many banquets I had been to, it was fairly good. It was, in fact, quite nice in some ways. They had taken out all of the junk and dressed up their waitresses in the North Korean version of the traditional Hanbok. All appeared dramatically different from the polyester-clad bar hostesses I had seen in the afternoon and even the grim room appeared almost cheery. We were brought in through a side entrance, and did not have to walk through the tawdry bar. The North Korean manager did a nice job. Wolfe was obviously pleased, particularly since the total cost came in under the paltry sum available in the ACDA budget. The party was a success and the American taxpayer did well on that one.

By offering that kind of convivial banquet reception, the U.S. side neatly tied up the negotiations on an upbeat note. It really made a difference, because the North Koreans, like their South Korean brethren, really like a good time. They like to drink, to pass the glass around, and play little parlor games, like singing, making speeches, toasts, etc. They got very convivial. These were the hard nosed, brittle negotiators of the earlier afternoon who suddenly now were drinking buddies in the evening. I have heard the same story from academicians and others who have traveled in the North or have had relationships with North Koreans. They take off the official mask, set it aside, have a good time, and put the mask back on the next morning.

I found also one of the great lessons of all this was, if you begin to work with the North Koreans and put aside politics, they become very helpful, very warm, and in some ways very candid. It also means that you can begin to make progress where there was none before. Suddenly doors open. Things are not as much of a problem as they were once thought to be. If they trust you, the whole relationship develops and changes and they begin to rely on you in many ways for counsel on what they should do. It becomes a whole different equation.

Much of our negotiation so far has been handled by people who have no experience in Korea, do not speak the language, and do not know much about Korean history or culture. They go in there with their American eyes and American ears, and they hear things that they think are right and in their terms are correct, but are not the facts based on the way that Koreans see them. In turn, the Koreans believe they have been wronged, or worse insulted, but the Americans think it is obvious and they are simply being stiff. In the classic sense, both sides do not understand what the other one is talking about, so we cannot get agreement. I think that has been the crux of our problem with North Korea all along. By the same token, they have the same problem with the Chinese and Japanese. It is not just us, it is everybody. I think if we had the presence of mind to be able to put together negotiating teams that have the language and the culture background as well as the technical expertise required of the negotiations, we would have much greater success with North Korea.

There were a lot of other parts of the North Korean experience that I think are interesting. There were a whole host of observations and things, but I'm not sure they are germane to what you are looking for.

Q: One of the things that you read in the paper about North Korea is the adulation for both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Did that come through to you?

YATES: Oh, sure. I think over the three times I was there, the whole situation changed. I was there in the beginning when there was still the mourning period of Kim Il Sung's death. In the parade given in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Party, for example, Kim Il Sung was at the center, the son was not. Kim Jong Il was mentioned occasionally, and each time, you had a star that would be shown. He is called the star of Paektu San, the sacred mountain up on the border with China where Korean civilization traditionally came from. There is some controversy about that. As a matter of fact, it is known that Kim Jong Il was not born on the flanks of Paektu San but near Khabarovsk when his parents were living there. None the less, everywhere you go in Korea, there are portraits and squares commemorating Kim Il Sung and to some extent, too, Kim Jong Il, his son, but his son was clearly a secondary deity. In each government building, they would have portraits of the president, vice president, and council somewhere on the wall. What they would have in the foyer was usually a slogan or something said by Kim Il Sung, or Kim Jong Il, for that matter. When one or the other visited a facility, they would take a quote from the visit and carve it on the wall. This is hallowed ground to them.

Engineers are pragmatic, and it is often bone chillingly cold, so they want to get their work done as quickly as possible. We had a shipment driven in from a port, and they tore it apart getting out tools and equipment. The spent-fuel pool room was getting pretty dense with packing material and equipment, but the space in the foyer was empty. So the Americans put down saw horses and began to disassemble the shipment in the foyer until Chief Engineer Lee, suddenly spotted this and exploded. I was in one of the back rooms and was called out. He demanded, "Do you know what is going on out front?" "No," I responded in surprise and promised to take a look immediately. Of course, they had the whole place covered with trash and equipment was all over the place. He said, "I want you all to understand [meaning us Americans and engineers] that this is an important place to us and the actions of the American engineers is very, very rude. Furthermore, the canning work will not continue until this is straightened out." We had offended their sensibilities. This was like running around without a shirt or pants in church.

Taking the lesson to heart, the American engineers got the place even cleaner after they finished than it was before they started. To their credit, the engineers understood the problem and were helpful in cleaning the place up, even giving the North Koreans wide tape to tape down wires and make the place look better than ever. The North Koreans got over their pique, accepted the apology, and allowed work to resume without apparent grudge.

At another time, we had a crisis of a different sort. We brought in equipment, and it was cold, the winter was coming on, and there wasn't any heat in the building. Once the reactor was shut down, there was no hot water, and with no hot water, there was no heat. The reactor even had been used to heat the entire community. So we had to bring in kerosene heaters for the offices where we did the water chemistry and another room that was a sort of commons for the American crews. It was really cold. You haven't really felt cold until you have had to sit in a concrete building in a very cold place for a very long time. Then you feel a depth of cold that reaches into your bones. The engineers had put in an emergency request for space heaters. In good government fashion, the request was put out for the low bid, and after purchase, the new kerosene heaters were air shipped over.

They were fine and serviceable heaters, but they were made in South Korea. Labels on the boxes and on the heaters said “Made in Korea.” As soon as we got them out of the packing crates and put them on the floor in the boxes, all the North Koreans disappeared. I got called in again by Chief Engineer Lee and asked him what was the problem. He said, “The problem is, we will not work with those boxes in our building. Burn them, destroy them, but get rid of them. And the heaters as well.” I was alarmed. “But we need them; it is cold.” We finally arrived at the conclusion that the offence was the “Made in Korea” labels. So we got our jackknives out and went out and cut out of the boxes all of the stamps that said “Made in Korea.” We took the stuff out and scraped off all the little “Made in Korea” decals. We examined everything scrupulously to make sure nothing said “Made in Korea.” I went back to the Chief Engineer and said, “I think we have solved the problem. Won’t you come out and look?” He went out to look and found nothing with the offending “Made in Korea” labels, so all was now acceptable and we got our heat. The fact they had been made in South Korea was not the important thing. It was the fact that they said “Made in Korea,” to them taunting our North Korean co-workers.

The same thing happened when the first shipment of rice aid arrived in the northern port. Remember when the North Koreans became exercised over the South Korean flag flying on the back of the ship? That was the same syndrome, only written in a different size. The North Koreans were extremely sensitive to that. Whenever we would drive by car through the center of the nuclear compound of Nyongbyon, like in the city of Pyongyang, there was a Kim Il Sung square with his portrait on a billboard as the centerpiece. All cars were expected to slow down and go at a crawl in front of the portrait. You could then speed up (even when crossing in front of the portrait of Kim Jong Il) to continue along to the next check point. That occurred almost everywhere we traveled. It resembles a religion rather than politics or political control. And if you begin to think of it as a religion, you may not become a believer, but you can at least understand it as a religion and then much of what they do becomes understandable.

Kim Il Sung was seen to be a man but revered as a god. Everybody knew he was not god, but nonetheless, he became the symbol of the state, the central image around which the identity of the nation is built. Wherever you traveled around North Korea, there are plaques, pictures, and commemoration tablets that are standing where Kim Il Sung visited and gave “guidance” to the workers of the time. You can laugh at that, but like a good ward politician, he visited every little hamlet in the country. Everywhere you go, there is a plaque where Kim Il Sung stood and gave advice to the farmers or to the workers or the citizens. Wherever he made a pronouncement, there is a picture. There is a wealth of paintings of Kim Il Sung. It is a religion with its own myths and faiths. The images and portraits are the icons of the religion. There is a book of his writings that the believers can cling to. Now, of course, he is dead, and there is the ethereal part of the religion. The son has not, to date, been able to assume the same level of divinity.

I had the chance to watch a fair amount of North Korean television on my several trips north. Since there was not much else to do at the guest house once you tired of pool, it was possible to watch North Korean television. Based on the number of programs I saw, the North Koreans like to show soap opera type programs. This is done all over the world to much the same rapt attention. At least that was the habit of the guest house staff who watched the stories on the one set on the lower floor in the lobby. The most common plot line was usually stories of some hero defending the faith of the party or following the guidance of Kim Il Sung. In fact, they are

interpersonal fights, melodramas. We used to enjoy movies with a girl tied up on the tracks, and a speeding train is on the way while a man in a black hat stands by, twirling a handle bar mustache. It is the same stuff all over again. We went through that in the '30s and '40s. They have their villains and usually they are rightists, or something like that. There is still the black hat and mustache and the girl tied up on the tracks. It is the same story. The hero has muscles and the chiseled jaw like we used to have. The same stuff. That is what they watch and enjoy. The news shows and documentaries generated only boredom until the next drama.

Like all people, if the North Koreans are given a chance to enjoy something different or exotic, they usually take it. An example of this is taped music played in the cars. Most North Korean music is written in North Korea, of course, with generous nods to themes that coincidentally may have appeared in familiar western music. However, if you are in a car with a driver who got sick of the same stuff all the time, what he plays is tapes which are essentially Western music done by North Korean orchestras. That is acceptable, I guess, because they would have Western music which you couldn't recognize or thought it sounded vaguely familiar but different. Nonetheless, it sounded a lot like what we would recognize as Western classical music. They have a light band which plays on television all the time. They get singers and sing folk songs and things like that. So there is some variety. I bought some of the music. Some of it is very good; Koreans love to sing.

Q: Oh, yes. The South Koreans took to what we could call Western classical music like ducks to water.

YATES: Northerners have many of the same musical traits as their southern brothers. For example, they like opera. You would have baritones and bass singers on television all the time, singing their hearts out. The audience will sing along with them in the concerts. The camera will turn on the audience, and there everyone is singing in the audience too. So you obviously do not go to concerts to listen, you go to participate. You do the same thing in the South. Obviously, they are the same culture and people.

Q: Ken, you went back to Seoul each time, is that right?

YATES: Yes.

Q: Did you find yourself, with a Korean born wife, etc., as a source of information about North Korea? Were you playing this role when you got back, unofficially, not officially?

YATES: To some extent yes. Officially, too. I spoke to at least one Korean think tank on the subject of North Korea. I took back a videotape. One of the engineers was a camera buff, and he had a video camera with him. When we went to the 50th anniversary show in Pyongyang, he took his camera and lots of tape. He taped for hours, just about the whole thing. So he has most of the parade on tape. In fact, he is selling it now on the Internet for \$30 a copy or something like that. I took this tape with me and showed it at one of the Korean think tanks for a very conservative group of Korean commentators. I got a lot of skepticism on their part about what I had seen. A lot of disbelief by some of them. Others, not so much.

I think most Koreans now believe that unification is going to be a slow process, and they actually support that. The cost of unification in the short run will be so much that it would cripple the southern economy, and they don't want to give up their own benefits of the good life, even though they recognize the North needs additional food, especially, and a lot of investment. I believe that the question of the amount of investment that would be needed in North Korea can be a bit overblown. American scholars have made many of the estimates on the cost of unification, perhaps based loosely on the German experience. I went to a conference in Seoul on this question, and we had a number of American economists and political scientists who stood up and started quoting numbers in the billions of dollars as what would be required. There was not much direct explanation of how they got those numbers, but they talked about the necessity of almost a trillion dollars in investments. The southern Korean economy doesn't have that kind of money.

Their point was that, even in Germany when the unification was accomplished with a lot more on the ground investment in the East, the Germans were shocked to find out how much it cost to accomplish reunification and try to bring the East up to some standard that could be acceptable and compatible with the western economy. Their point was that the Korean experience would be more expensive, because the disparity between the two countries is much greater. And that is probably true, although I think it underestimates the ability of the northerners to hang in there longer to get their physical requirements met like food and shelter and education. There is a possibility that the larger investment won't be as high, because I think their expectations are lower and will continue to be, despite a closer relationship with the south.

Q: Yes, we really are talking about Koreans who can take an awful lot.

YATES: They have taken a lot. They talk about a famine in the north. It is a famine, but they have had some degree of famine for forty years. It is clear that the communist system they have does not work. There are numerous instances around the world of economic failure in communist systems. This is the last of the breed. They know what failure is. The problem is, will they be able to accept the consequences of that failure in the face of the obvious luxury and wealth of the south at the same time. If the barriers are dropped, what will they do?

The southerners expect them to enter into a mass migration south for jobs. In fact, the South is importing labor now for some of the menial jobs they no longer wish to fill themselves. This is the same kind of thing the Germans had experienced. The question is, would the northerners take these jobs from the foreigners the South were bringing in. Would the southerners also be able to provide the indicated labor force needed for the kind of industries southerners no longer do, like shoes. The south has already moved a lot of its manufacturing base offshore. The investment that went into Korea in the late sixties and early seventies, textile manufacture, shoe manufacture and things like that, are no longer in Korea. Now they are going high tech and much of the stuff they did before has gone off to China or down to Malaysia or Vietnam.

Q: Did you find yourself being used by the North Koreans because you would be the only one who knew South Korea in this group? Were you feeding their curiosity about South Korea or were they pretty careful?

YATES: They were pretty careful. I think they don't want to talk about it, because that would easily corrupt them in the eyes of their own system. Generally speaking, they did not talk about it much. After a while when you got to know people, you began to get a little bit more of that. You had to be very careful, because if you tried to push it, then they would push you out. So you did not bring it up. If they wanted to talk about it, you would be happy to do so. But you had to be careful. If they wanted to talk about it, they were probably baiting you or something akin to the games the Chinese intelligence service played. But if you backed off a little bit and took a quiet road, I think you built more confidence among them.

I had a lot of political discussions with my North Korean handlers. In the beginning, they would all give speeches, particularly if a superior was within earshot. If you ride in a car with one of their superiors next to you, the guide in front would launch into a long tirade against American inequities and the duplicity and colonization of the South, etc. They would get tiresome. More than once, I had this happen to me, but not with the same person more than once. Once they had done it, that seemed to complete a check box in the report they had to file on you. Once you are past that, particularly if you are willing to buy the beer or cigarettes, they are willing to sit down and talk about other things. I had a long conversation once about the American civil war, which North Koreans have virtually no knowledge of.

The guides that we got were not political types; they were technical people. It was a strange thing. Political types never studied English, technical types did, because it was a language that allowed you to learn about something technical like nuclear energy or math. A lot of information on nuclear energy is in English or German. So they had linguistic talents but were chemists, physicists or mathematicians. There was one of the guides who was a mathematician interested in a wider range of things. One day, we got talking about the Korean war. I mentioned the U.S. also had had a civil war at one time between the North and the South. He seemed interested and curious, with a wish to know more about it. I suggested that he read *The Red Badge of Courage* to get an idea of some of the feelings of Americans on the front lines during the civil war.

Steven Crane's seminal work was the first time that war as a terrible thing got into the literature. To Crane, it was not a noble cause but an intensely personal experience that called into question many things otherwise assumed. War not as a valiant thing, as it was portrayed in the North very often. The war on a personal level and how much it cost people, the wounded, and the suffering that was brought about by the war. It would also give the Northerners an understanding of how the suffering occurred in the South as well and how much people there suffered because of the war. It wasn't any longer a question of which side you were on, it was a question of the effect of the war that was the same on both sides. So I suggested he get the book. He said he could not get it and asked if I could give him a copy. I promised I would and in fact took a copy with me back to North Korea the next time but unfortunately never had an opportune time to give it to him. I could not put him in the position of accepting it.

USIA had put together 5,000 volumes, each in North Korean style Korean. We had it specially translated and printed in the Philippines, ready in Seoul to go north with me. Each time I would go north, I would take some volumes with me to leave around if I could. I could not leave them in Nyongbyon, because it was against the rules and would have caused trouble for everybody. But I did leave them in Pyongyang with the Swedish representative to give to people who he

thought would know about them and understand them and would be able to accept them without causing political difficulties.

I had a long discussion once with one of our guides' bosses in Pyongyang about the American Congress. At that time, Congress was really in an anti-North Korean mood. Part of the reason was that the North Koreans had denied a visa to Rep. Jay Kim who was an ethnic Korean in the U.S. Congress from California and who had applied to visit North Korea. He was turned down by the North Koreans as, I guess, a person they did not want to see. My point to them was that not granting a visa was a foolish move, because the very person who they could have counted on to have a better understanding of what went on here was kept out. And that was not a good idea. This very educated, very astute, and relatively speaking, well-read man, had no idea who Jay Kim was. The problem for me as a USIS person was, here was an obvious example where a little knowledge would have helped a very difficult situation.

I think in the U.S. we see the North Koreans as monolithic. That somehow the knowledge that one has, everybody has. In fact, they are very badly divided in terms of being super compartmentalized. I mentioned before the division between the public energy bureau and the foreign ministry. This is true throughout their society. It is true in China. You give something to one man in the Foreign Ministry in Beijing, and the person at the next desk likely will never see it. We ran into this in Beijing, trying to get our Wireless Files into the Foreign Ministry. You would talk to one man, and he would say, "I would like to see those." "Gee, we give them to so-and-so who is in your same section." He says, "That is his copy; I don't see it."

In China, as in most places, information is power. So if you go to a meeting and say, "I know what the Americans said," and the other guy did not, who gets the leg up in the Foreign Ministry? It becomes one of these internal rivalry things. Chinese just do not pass messages around very easily. North Korea is the same way. That means you have to get people who trust you in each of these areas; otherwise you may have the trust of one segment on one side, but two desks over, the bureaucrat thinks you are dirt, because he does not have any idea who you are or what you do.

That is why it was so important for us to have a liaison office in Pyongyang. We can talk until we are blue in the face about our trust and agreements and the fact that the North Koreans did renege on their agreement to cross the border, that is absolutely true. But the fact is, we would have gained far more in the placement of a Liaison Office in Pyongyang than North Korea would have gained by the placement of a Liaison Office in Washington. There is no comparison, because the systems are so dissimilar. It would have been important for them to learn more than it would have been important for them to instruct more. In terms of Pyongyang, the reverse was true. It would be an important learning point for us, but by far it would have been an opening to the society in creating understanding who Americans are and what their intentions are in the world. Now, it is ignorance that dominates things. Gradually, as the North Koreans move around and learn more, this will change, but it will take a lot of patience and time.

A couple of years back, the first North Korean delegation went to Hawaii to CINCPAC to talk about the recovery of remains. That I think was badly mishandled on our side, because we took it as a negotiation instead of what it should have been, an explanation. A similar event had

occurred with the Chinese before. I had taken it on as a personal crusade to push that because the Chinese had come to CINCPAC while I was there. Using civilian clothes, military Chinese took a look at our remains identification laboratory, which is called CILHI (Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii), and is located at Travis Air Force Base where all remains from all deceased veterans who are exhumed around the world are brought for DNA testing and whatever positive identification can be made. The North Koreans had a very simplified view of that, as did the Chinese. We brought the Chinese in quietly, no press, no negotiations, but just come as guests and stay in a hotel and be shown what we are doing. We were not asking for any promises or favors. We wanted them to just come and understand.

When that was done with the Chinese, it had marvelous consequences. We got the first American military teams into China to recovery sites in southern China where pilots from Vietnam had crashed. We wanted to investigate those sites and were able to do so in a way that was scientifically sustainable. We could send teams in, working with the Chinese and look at sites at a fair price and exhume the remains where they could be found. We had controlled the situation, so that we had firm assurances for the families back here that those remains were in fact their son, father, uncle, etc. and they could be assured of this when they had that casket back home and in the ground. In North Korea, we didn't get any of that, because the North Koreans came as negotiators, not as tourists as it were, and the effort failed. They tried to do it again in New York a couple of weeks ago, and we made, I guess, some little progress, but it hasn't gone very far. Had we gotten off our political stump and just stood down and said, "You come, you look, that is all we are asking," then we probably would have been a lot further down the line in North Korea than we are now.

Q: Who else was going in with the team when you weren't going?

YATES: They were people who were in Seoul with me. The exception was Spence Richardson who only went in once. Since he was the named head of the new Liaison Office, it was felt that having him go more would send the wrong signal. But for those of us worker bees, it was not so important.

Also, they took people out of Washington. The Department of Energy people would go at times. If you had a diplomatic passport, you could go. That was not a very good policy, because that meant people going in didn't have Korean and there were some incidents that happened in North Korea that could have been avoided if they had understood a little more Korean. We had an incident where third country people got involved with some engineer, and we had to expel that engineer from North Korea. We sent him out, not the North Koreans. The North Koreans in their humanistic fashion were very sorry. Subsequent to the expulsion, I got an ear full after I got there. One engineer had a fight with one of the guides. Nobody got hurt, but there were blows exchanged and a lot of irate words. He was immediately sent home. He was a good engineer, a welder. These guys were technicians. He was a good welder, a fabricator from somewhere in North Carolina. Not a bad person. But he was sent home and never went back, and the reason was because he got into a fight with one of the guides.

What had happened was they went to the Diplomatic Club I mentioned earlier and started drinking. There were a bunch of third world people off to the side, Cubans, I am told. They

began to egg him on. He evidently was having a political discussion with one of the guides, which happened now and then. The guides were drinking also. They never said no to a good cold beer. Nobody was really drunk, but he had a lot. Evidently from the side, these guys were egging him on. "Why are you taking this stuff? I thought you were a strong American." It just built up until he got into a real fight. I guess egos were hurt more than bodies, but we had to send him on the next airplane out and he never came back.

When I went up to Pyongyang later, the North Koreans asked why he was not coming back. They professed to have liked him. They wanted me to understand that they had not asked to have him expelled. They understood that he had done the wrong thing but did not want to see him hurt. They kept saying this again and again until I finally said, "Enough already, I understand, but he is not coming back. You only get one chance in this environment, and we are trying to be careful." We have always tried very carefully to put across to the North Koreans how much we were being super careful about their feelings. That they should let us know when there are any problems, so we could straighten things out. They liked that and took that as a mark of respect.

Another little vignette. We had trouble with the guards coming in and out of the check points. They were surly, mean, and abusive. On my first trip in, I was riding in the back seat with one of the engineers, a deputy who was in charge of the engineering group. He had his feet crossed in the back seat, one foot up on his knee. Going through, he was supposed to be in the back of the car leaning back. We had to wait and wait and wait while these guys went around the car. A guard reached in and slapped his foot off his knee onto the floor. The shocked engineer turned to me, "What did I do?" The reason was clear: the guard took that as a sign of disrespect for authority. He got a dirty look through the window and an admonition not to do that again. And off we went. He was suitably upset about it, but we got him calmed down then.

We then started a series of culture lectures for the engineers on Sundays. I gave a condensed version of Korean 101 on culture. What to do and what not to do. For example, when you pass something to someone, you always pass it with the right hand, never use your left hand. The guards always passed back the visas with their left hand, because they were showing us an indication of disrespect or their superior authority. The correct way is to use both hands, but if you can't quite reach, you take one hand and put it under your elbow and pass it with the right hand. That is correct. If you cannot do it that way, you get up and walk around until you can. You never toss things across the table. If you are having a meeting, get up, walk around, and pass things with the right hand, although both hands is the best and most respectful way to do it. Never keep your bags, computers, paraphernalia on the table. Put them on the floor out of sight. Never put your feet on the table. All these little rules were things that were necessary in Korean culture.

We got the engineers starting to do this, particularly with the guards going in and out at the check points. Regardless of how they pass it to you, always pass it back with your right hand. We started doing this. It caused some confusion among the guards going in. First off, it was interesting psychology. If you were doing something polite and somebody did something rude, who is wrong? They know. If you keep doing this, always being polite and nice to them while they are being nasty to you, no longer is it a matter of authority over the barbarians; now they are

doing something that they recognize as being culturally correct, but their own actions do not warrant that. When confronted with a biblical turning of the cheek, who is on the defensive?

The guards became confused. The more intelligent or older guards began to be polite, using the right hand to pass things back and forth, too. The older ones, who had been there for a while, began to let people through without stopping. I would get this at lunch time, going back and forth to the house. Very often, they would just wave me through. They became very comfortable with us after a while, because we began to show them a little bit of respect, and they could no longer use the mechanisms of disrespect, because the stupid Americans would not know any better anyway. Now that the Americans did know better, they were now in the wrong in their own cultural terms and that made it very difficult for them to continue the practice. Only the new guards, the ones who did not know you, would do the arrogant left-handed affront. A mutual respect began to grow and we had far less trouble.

The same was true in the pool area. I taught the engineers enough phrases in Korean like daily greetings, which they would try to use. There would be a great guffaw, because the intrepid Americans from the south always seemed to find a way to mispronounce them. What the linguistic forays did, was to disarm the hard feelings and bring out a relaxed hospitality in the pool area to the point where they began to really work with each other at a much more personal level.

Q: Did the program continue the whole time without basic interruptions during your time there, despite disturbances along the border, etc.?

YATES: Yes, but a qualified yes. The North Koreans did not want the program to stop. It was a small source of income. We were helping them, giving them a lot of equipment and material such as stainless steel canisters. Their point was that they had given everything. They had given up the reactor, and the people in the city of Nyongbyon went cold in the winter, because there was no heat. They did all the sacrificing; we did nothing. There were a lot of things that we did that were wrong. There were mistakes in the negotiations, primarily because of language, but also because we did this at lower levels which were not always the best informed or experienced negotiators.

For example, we had agreed to provide a generator and heat exchanger for the North Koreans, a boiler essentially, so they could make enough hot water to supply the nuclear site, pre-heat the heavy fuel oil to be burned in a converted coal plant so as to put hot water back into the system, and to allow the city to get some heat and heat for the site. We promised a boiler to burn heavy fuel oil in 45 days. The U.S. negotiator, for some reason, thought this was easy. They could just buy one on the west coast and ship it out, and it would be there in two weeks. What he didn't understand is that heavy fuel oil isn't burned in the U.S. anymore. It is an older form of fuel and the only place that we had existing heavy fuel oil burning capability was in the old LSTs that were decommissioned. So we had to find a place where we could get one. It meant we had to buy a design and build it. We had the technology, but it was an old technology. Sort of like going to Singer Sewing Machine for a peddle machine. They would build one, but it would be expensive. It took more than a year to get that boiler, a simple teakettle arrangement that could warm heavy oil so that it, in turn, could provide heat for homes in North Korea.

The North Koreans took that as a sign of either disrespect or ignorance or foolishness. We couldn't deliver what we promised. It would come up every morning at a conference before work. The meeting would start and the first thing Chief Engineer Lee would say would be, "Where is the boiler?" He was cold, and his people were cold, and he wanted that boiler there. We brought in kerosine heaters which were all right, but they needed that boiler to provide the hot water heat that was necessary for their living quarters. It wasn't expensive, but it made us look pretty much like fools.

The second thing was how do you get the heavy oil there? The stuff freezes. Heavy oil is like tar. If it gets cold, it gets solid, so that the trucks that were to haul the stuff had to be heated. They wanted a heated truck. We said, "No, no, we only promised you a boiler, we are not going to give you a heated truck." "How are we going to get the fuel from there to here?" They had preheating tanks, called day tanks, where you keep the fuel before you put it into the boiler. They were having trouble with the technology of converting boilers for regular oil to heavy fuel oil. You can't start a boiler with heavy fuel; you have to start it with something else like kerosene in order to get the fire burning, with which you can heat the oil and start the flow and burn the heavy oil. That technology was something they didn't have. Making that conversion was a major stumbling block for them, because we weren't providing it. All we were providing was the heavy fuel oil at the port.

From my point of view, some of the things that we were doing might be called unreasonable. They tried to accommodate us in some things, but in some cases, they could not, and they would start making speeches. They didn't know enough about us to come to us and say "Look, this is our problem and let's see if we can find a solution to this." Their solution was to pound the table and make noise, because they felt that was the only way they could negotiate something. Our lack of understanding made these negotiations stretch out far beyond their normal life expectancy. So we did it to ourselves. Not that the North Koreans are wonderful, holy, kind, generous, thrifty; they were nasty at times and would do some terrible things abroad, but their Achilles heel is in the negotiating sense; they are Koreans and their basic instincts are reasonableness, hospitality, but above all intense loyalty to their own system. If we assumed that at the start of the negotiations, we would have saved ourselves a lot of grief.

STEPHEN BOSWORTH
Director, Korean Peninsula Energy Development Corporation
New York City, NY (1995-1997)

Ambassador Bosworth was born and raised in Michigan and educated at Dartmouth College and George Washington University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1961 he served abroad in Panama, Madrid and Paris before becoming Ambassador to Tunisia, where he served from 1979 to 1981, to the Philippines (1984-1987) and to the Republic of Korea (1997-2000). The Ambassador also was a member of the Department's Policy Planning Staff, and he played a major role in the US-Japan Foundation and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development

Organization. In 2009 Ambassador Bosworth was named the President's Special Representative for North Korean Policy. He was interviewed by Michael Mahoney in 2003.

Q: So, you're there until '95 and then what happened?

BOSWORTH: Then I was asked by some former colleagues in the State Department if I would take on the task of organizing and running the institution that was being created to implement the U.S. agreement with North Korea called the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization.

Q: Say that again, the Korea?

BOSWORTH: Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, known as KEDO.

Q: Okay. So you were asked to take that on and you do it?

BOSWORTH: I did it. I wasn't eager to do it at first. In fact I spent six months working for them half time and working for the U.S. Japan Foundation half time because we had an apartment in New York which was owned by the Foundation and a house in Connecticut that we owned. We had a pretty good life and the U.S. government was in effect asking me to jump off a cliff because this was a new organization. It didn't exist. I was the first employee.

Q: Let's talk about that position. Where did that whole thing come from?

BOSWORTH: Well, there was a so-called agreed framework between the U.S. and North Korea in 1994 whereby they agreed to freeze their nuclear weapons program and we agreed to give them in return alternative energy supplies including heavy fuel oil and two light water reactors. KEDO was set up by the U.S., South Korea and Japan to implement that agreement basically to build nuclear reactors in North Korea. At a certain point I decided it sounded like a life experience that I shouldn't pass up.

Q: This was going to be funded by?

BOSWORTH: Funded by those three governments.

Q: Including the government of South Korea?

BOSWORTH: Yes.

Q: Okay, and so, but they were going to put it in the framework of in effect a corporation that was a quasi-governmental?

BOSWORTH: It was an international organization. It was sort of like an international consortium and it had a commercial task to build these reactors. Yes, it was an international organization recognized by the UN, but a specialized international organization. We had no

offices. We had no staff. We had no nothing.

Q: Who was it that came to you and asked you to do this?

BOSWORTH: It was Bob Gallucci.

Q: He had negotiated the agreement?

BOSWORTH: He negotiated the agreement.

Q: The agreement, right and the purpose of the agreement was to try to keep the North Koreans in effect from developing an independent nuclear weapons making capacity?

BOSWORTH: Right. Exactly.

Q: Okay.

BOSWORTH: That story of course is still on hold.

Q: That's why this is a most.

BOSWORTH: So, I agreed to do it, but I said I can't do it full time until I'm more confident than I am now that this is actually going to be a permanent or semi-permanent institution. Very soon the governments of South Korea and Japan assigned two senior diplomats to this enterprise as my deputies and we begin to set up this organization. We found office space in New York and began hiring support staff and receiving people who were coming in from the three governments who worked for us. Then we had to negotiate an agreement with the North Koreans which became, which was a more detailed version of the agreed framework from Geneva which stipulated what kind of nuclear reactors we were going to build and how we were going to build them. The Korean Electric Power Company, known as KEPCO became our prime contractor.

Q: Is that the North Koreans?

BOSWORTH: South Korean Power Company. The national power company. We hired Duke Engineering as our technical consultants and spent the first four months negotiating an agreement with North Korea which proved to be a very arduous task and very difficult, very complicated, but fascinating because I learned something about the North Koreans and how they negotiate.

Q: What's that?

BOSWORTH: First of all their negotiators have very little room to maneuver. Everything comes from and goes back to the very top. These are people who live on the edge of crisis all the time and they're very comfortable there. Brinkmanship is in their bones. Yet they're not very effective negotiators. If you learn how they operate and how patient and don't need an agreement within any given time schedule, you could usually do very well with them.

Q: Did you go to North Korea?

BOSWORTH: I went to North Korea when I was with KEDO twice. Once in the fall or in the spring of '96 and then again in the summer of '97 just as I was leaving KEDO.

Q: Okay, we'll come back to that, so you started there about when did you say?

BOSWORTH: I started in July of '95.

Q: '95 and you were there until the summer of '97 approximately.

BOSWORTH: It was there until October of '97.

Q: Okay, so the summer of '95 until October of '97 and you're getting this thing started and you're trying to negotiate. Now, did the North Koreans, did you feel in essence that they did want to do this, that they wanted to go through with it?

BOSWORTH: Oh, I think there's no question then at that point that they wanted to go through with it.

Q: The reactors were to be paid for by this consortium? In other words all the money was coming from this?

BOSWORTH: Yes. They were just receiving this.

Q: Plus the heavy fuel oil.

BOSWORTH: Plus the heavy fuel oil.

Q: Which was for them to run power plants as well?

BOSWORTH: Yes.

Q: Your sense is that they were as much as one can tell, that they wanted to do it and did you think, were there inspection mechanisms on the nuclear fuel side to make sure that they weren't doing something else incorrectly?

BOSWORTH: Well, that was one of the things that we had to negotiate, but the IAEA had been brought in as a result of the agreement in Geneva the agreed framework. They had come in in October of '94 to monitor the freeze of the North Korean facilities at Yongbyon. Their inspectors were onsite.

Q: Which was a freeze not a dismantling?

BOSWORTH: Not a dismantling. The dismantling was scheduled to take place subsequently after we had made progress in certain definitions of various stages of completion of the nuclear

reactors.

Q: You're getting this thing set up and you're getting going in your negotiating and how far did you get by October of '97 would you say?

BOSWORTH: We had negotiated the supply agreement. We had negotiated a number of protocols supplementing the supply agreement, governing our privileges and immunities in North Korea, our specifying the site and how it was going to be developed. We'd gotten quite a ways, but we didn't have much money because the governments had not yet appropriated large sums, so we were sort of getting by on a wish and a prayer by scraping by. We had started the task of site preparation in the North, the site was a place called Kumho, which was on the northeastern coast of North Korea, and we had taken it over. We had the presence there of the South Korean contractors were there. They had people there. We began to create basically a village, which our people lived in and worked in.

Q: Were there fuel deliveries?

BOSWORTH: Fuel deliveries were proceeding. We never had enough money for that either. The political reality is that within about a week after the U.S. and North Korea signed this agreement the republicans gained control of the U.S. congress and the conservative branch of the Republican Party hated this agreement because it was seen as basically submitting to North Korea and its forces. So, there was a strong determination from the beginning to kill this plan. The Clinton administration was not prepared frankly to invest all that much political capital in keeping it going or at least not prepared to invest much political capital in extracting money from a congressional process. So, we were on a wing and a prayer constantly in terms of our ability to finance the purchases of heavy fuel.

Q: Did the money come from the Japanese and the South Koreans?

BOSWORTH: No, the agreement among the three governments was that the U.S. would take care of the heavy fuel oil. The Japanese and the South Koreans would take care of the nuclear reactor costs.

Q: how much money were we talking about for the heavy fuel oil approximately?

BOSWORTH: Approximately, well it varied depending on what the market was doing, but it was anywhere from \$60 to \$100 million a year.

Q: Presumably that would be money that would be spent with American corporations for this oil?

BOSWORTH: We did it through international tender on the international market.

Q: Interesting. Do you think that was a mistake perhaps, that it might have generated more political oomph?

BOSWORTH: I don't think so. In global terms this was literally a drop in the bucket.

Q: But still hard to get out of congress.

BOSWORTH: Yes, not for economic reasons, but because they hated the agreement.

Q: You must have felt that in one sense you can characterize it as blackmail, but on the other hand what is the alternative I guess?

BOSWORTH: That was always my question.

Q: You must have felt that therefore it was a desirable thing otherwise why would you be working there.

BOSWORTH: No, I thought it was a very good job.

Q: You had a good job before you.

BOSWORTH: Yes. I didn't ask for this.

Q: Yes, right, no I understand. I mean did the republicans, did you ever meet or talk with any of them? What was their alternative?

BOSWORTH: They didn't have one either except some may have had the alternative of basically bombing North Korea and taking out their nuclear facilities.

Q: Yes, but obviously after 9/11 you're more alive to these issues, were they alive to the notion that the North Koreans could produce nuclear material and start selling it on the black market to people?

BOSWORTH: I think they were conscious of that. In fact remember in '93 and '94 there was a great atmosphere of crisis over this issue on the Korean Peninsula.

Q: Which is why then sent Gallucci there I suppose to negotiate something.

BOSWORTH: Gallucci was the negotiator and that's why Jimmy Carter went there and there are those who think that Carter's visit averted war. We're now revisiting this thing for the second or third time. We've been through all of these issues before.

Q: Right. You were getting the money I mean you were getting the oil delivered.

BOSWORTH: We were getting some money from the U.S. congress. We were getting the Defense Department to reprogram some funds. We had negotiated a line of credit from the Japanese. They had a line of credit of 15 million dollars, which we would draw down and then pay back when funds came in from other sources, but basically the money came out of the U.S.

Q: Was there a fixed amount of gallons of fuel or barrels?

BOSWORTH: 500,000 metric tons per year.

Q: Were they meeting that actually?

BOSWORTH: Yes, we met it. We were a little late. We would stretch the year a bit, but we were meeting it.

Q: The North Koreans in principle should have been satisfied on that particular score?

BOSWORTH: Yes, I don't think that there was ever, they never became too upset about that. I mean I think they were conscious that we were making a good faith effort to deliver on schedule and if we slipped a month or two, not a big deal. I think the reality is that the North Koreans never saw this as just an energy agreement. That wasn't why they did it. They saw it as an agreement aimed at bringing about a normalized political relationship between them and the U.S. It was that that they were disappointed. The Clinton administration until the very end didn't seem willing to take any political risk to try to bring that resolution about and then of course when Bush became president he was adamantly and flatly opposed to trying to do that.

Q: Where did Mrs. Albright stand in that? Was she willing to?

BOSWORTH: She didn't really get energized on this issue until the fall of '98. By this time I was in Korea as ambassador when various things happened that basically called her credibility into question. She then began to be more interested in Korea.

Q: Was it President Clinton himself; I mean, did this issue get to him much in that he himself was not willing to?

BOSWORTH: I don't think the issue got to him much, but that's no excuse. What happened, the one constructive thing that happened was the North Koreans fired a missile off over Japan and that got everybody's attention. Then there was a suspicion that we found another nuclear related activity elsewhere in North Korea and Mrs. Albright was very embarrassed by a very hostile reception in one of the congressional committees. What really happened was we got Bill Perry to come back as a special envoy to do a policy review and he produced a series of recommendations that basically got us back on track with the North Koreans but more importantly with the South Koreans and the Japanese.

Q: Did the South Koreans and the Japanese sort of agree that this should be the first step of a framework toward more normalized U.S. North Korean relations?

BOSWORTH: Yes, but they also wanted, well, their primary objective was stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Q: Right.

BOSWORTH: The South Koreans were very determined to try to deal directly with the North Koreans which of course the North Koreans at that point didn't want to do.

Q: Because?

BOSWORTH: Because that would convey a sense of legitimacy to the South Korean government, which they had never accepted. It wasn't until Kim Dae-jung became president in 1998 that South Korea began the so-called sunshine policy, which they began to try to charm the North Koreans into a dialogue, which eventually did.

Q: Was it foreseen at the time in 1994 when the framework was negotiated that somehow there might then be a series of steps between the Americans and the North Koreans to continue but you feel with the change in the congressional thing that that suddenly sort of was all frozen?

BOSWORTH: Sure. There was discussion. There was a provision for ending the sanctions, economic sanctions, establishment of diplomatic liaison officers, all sorts of stuff that the North Koreans expected we were going to move on. Now, they were their own worst enemies in many respects because we had North Korean submarines washing up on South Korean coasts. We had various incidents taking place that earned them the enmity of everyone.

Q: Right. In any case the political pain that might be seen to be involved no one wished to really take that on the American side?

BOSWORTH: Right.

Q: You're delivering the oil, but I suppose did you get the sense by October of 1997 that the North Koreans were becoming disillusioned even then because they weren't seeing anything else coming or at least by then it was still going along?

BOSWORTH: It was not that visible if they were discontented. They constantly harassed you and hectored you, about not doing things.

Q: Right. Meanwhile the preparations are going forward to build these reactors and so forth.

BOSWORTH: That's right.

Q: What happens to you then personally at this point?

BOSWORTH: I got a call from Sandy Berger in April of '97 asking if I would be prepared to go to Korea as ambassador.

Q: Did that come kind of out of the blue for you?

BOSWORTH: It came very much out of the blue as far as I was concerned. I had not looked for it and was not that eager to do it initially. I talked to my wife and we both become enthusiastic. She was particularly enthusiastic right from the beginning. Our time at KEDO had given her

certain contacts with South Koreans. She liked Korea a lot and I think she could envision herself as living there. I went back to Berger and said okay, we'll do it.

Q: This was basically since your earlier, your last embassy had been a republican administration, so do you feel you were seen as a nonpartisan person in essence?

BOSWORTH: Yes.

Q: Okay. Just before we get to that, you took a couple of trips to North Korea?

BOSWORTH: Right.

Q: What was your sense of that place?

BOSWORTH: It's an awful place. It's desolate, barren, sterile. You really have a sense of being dropped off the face of the earth in the 21st Century, very repressed, hillsides are all barren because they've burned all the wood, lots of erosion, an economy that was visibly not functioning. Smoke stacks that don't have any smoke coming out of them.

Q: Do you accept the notion that there probably is a huge amount of something verging on starvation in that country?

BOSWORTH: Yes.

Q: I mean it seems to be often the case.

BOSWORTH: Yes.

Q: Did you meet, how high up the leadership level did you go?

BOSWORTH: The most senior person I met when I was there was a deputy foreign minister who was seen by everyone as being the de facto foreign minister.

Q: Did you get a sense of a person at that level that you were dealing with somebody who had shall we say wide views?

BOSWORTH: Yes, wide views, but very narrow objectives.

Q: Yes, right.

BOSWORTH: Being the survival of the regime. The man I dealt with most was an ambassador at large in the foreign ministry who was my counterpart.

Q: With Ambassador Stephen Bosworth. Today is the 3rd of April. We have been talking about the ambassador's involvement with Korean affairs and just to start I want to ask sort of a general policy question, which is as follows. You had said that when the congress changed in

1994 and the republicans came in as a majority that the Clinton administration became much less inclined to take political risks in connection with its policy toward North Korea. I may not be characterizing that correctly and of course you have the chance to correct obviously. One of the things that strikes me is that if you think in the broadest terms about the formulation of foreign policy, on how things get done, that it's often a mix of domestic American interests and then the people that are actually professionally working on the policy and those things can come together in all kinds of different ways for each issue that comes up. I'm surprised a bit about North Korea because I wouldn't have thought that there would be much domestic political interest at all in North Korea. That there would be probably no economic interest, but very few people in the United States probably pay much attention to or care much about it. So where would the political dynamics of interest be in this question for example of the initial agreed framework where we were going to deliver the oil and the South Koreans and the Japanese were going to assist with the development of nuclear power plants? In a sense who would be opposed to this and why?

BOSWORTH: Well, I think people were opposed to it whose world view was such that they considered any kind of dealing with North Korea or any other government that seemed prepared to use some form of blackmail as succumbing to that blackmail. They viewed North Korea as using their nuclear threat as blackmail against us and thought it was morally weak of us to succumb to that. You're right. I don't think there was a strong high level of interest around the country in this. North Korea seemed a very distant threat in those days. It's not quite so distant now. I think people are beginning to understand why it's a cause of concern. I think first it was this question of not wanting to appear to be succumbing to blackmail. Secondly, it was the rising even then, rising antipathy within the republican party particularly on the conservative wing of that party to the Clinton administration, which was seen overall as being morally bankrupt and weak. Basically almost anything that the Clinton administration proposed these people were going to fight. After the congressional elections in '94 they had much more influence because they control to a very great extent the outcome of the congress.

Q: Take up this question just for a second. You obviously, you took this job with this new agency so you must have felt that its goals were desirable. So, how do you answer this statement that this is somehow a type of blackmail?

BOSWORTH: I think you have to look at what the alternatives are and those are the same alternatives we face today. The agreed framework was in effect the beginning of the first effort to try to engage with North Korea to bring them out of their isolation and to tie them more firmly into the rest of the world in the belief that that would tend to stabilize the situation. It would then acquire interest or a stake in behaving reasonably because if they didn't they would begin losing benefits. The alternatives to that are pretty bleak. One, we can do what we periodically tried to do and that is ignore North Korea and sort of wait for it to collapse because it is obviously a pathetically weak state in many respects. The problem with that is it has not collapsed and we I think should realize that as the regime senses that it might collapse it's going to be increasingly desperate in its behavior and its desire to attract our attention to engage with us because of things it wants and needs. The other alternative of course is to resort to military force and because of the proximity of Seoul and the configuration of forces along the demilitarized zone the use of force is not a very attractive option because the North Koreans retain the ability to do devastating

damage to South Korea, particularly metropolitan Seoul. This is not the South Korea of the 1950s. This is now a South Korea that is the 12th largest economy in the world so that a conflict on the Korean Peninsula would not only bring untold human destruction, but it would also give a devastating blow to regional and global economies.

Q: You feel then that if you're trying to put a balance up that in a sense trying to engage them in this way is the lesser of many unpleasant choices.

BOSWORTH: Exactly. I mean I, you know, none of us like the notion of having to deal with a government like that in that way, but the world is a collection of various shades of gray. Very few problems in international affairs can vend themselves to a black and white analysis.

Q: Before you took up the job of being ambassador in South Korea and you were in this other role, did you have a chance to try to engage people on the right in this country in any substantive way, serious conversations on the subject or is that possible?

BOSWORTH: I gave a number of interviews. I did a number of speeches to various interest groups in Washington, New York and elsewhere, so yes, I was speaking for the concept of KEDO. I was speaking for the concept of building cooperation with our key allies on problems that were a concern to all of us. That was one of the other aspects of KEDO that I found attractive and that I thought might provide something of a model for how the U.S. and our allies and friends would organize ourselves to deal with this sort of regional security threat other than on a giant alliance basis like NATO or other than unilateral which is the way in Asia we had customarily worked. I thought this was a good model and something worth experimenting with.

Q: But you really didn't feel I take it that you were able to make much headway in the intellectual competition or the argument with the right on this particular topic? Not that you didn't try.

BOSWORTH: Not at the time although there was one powerful argument that did have an effect and that was that because of the agreed framework what we knew North Korea could do at the site, the nuclear site at Yongbyon was frozen under the agreement. We had forced all of North Korea's production of enough plutonium to produce probably over an eight year period that it was enforced probably almost 100 nuclear weapons. That was a considerable accomplishment.

Q: Were the North Koreans getting technology from outside to do this?

BOSWORTH: They were getting some. I mean they'd had access to some technology from the former Soviet Union back in the '80s. Then as now of course evidence that's being discussed in the newspapers and we knew at the time that there was collaboration between North Korea and Pakistan. Each had something the other wanted. North Korea presumably had the techniques available how to weaponize nuclear material and North Korea had a fairly sophisticated medium range missile program. So, this was a meeting of different, but related capabilities. We still don't know whether in fact North Korea actually produced any nuclear weapons. We're not even 100% certain that they extracted plutonium, which was not reported to the IAEA. It's quite likely in my personal judgment, but that's not quite the same as saying we know to a certainty.

Q: As you said earlier, sometime in early 1997 you got a call from Mr. Berger who was I guess the?

BOSWORTH: National security advisor.

Q: National security advisor. Was it at all meaningful that the call came from him and not from someone in the State Department for example?

BOSWORTH: I suppose yes that it was because basically it reflected a level of interest within the executive branch that I do this. If I'd just gotten a call from the office of personnel in the State Department I might not have responded. I had had offers or requests from the Department over the preceding ten years to do various things some of which I had been willing to do, but did not involve a full time firm reentry into the State Department, but a couple of ambassadorships that I was not interested in doing. This one struck me as different.

Q: Do you think that the main interest in that, I mean leaving aside your own abilities obviously, was because of your familiarity of this North Korean nuclear issue?

BOSWORTH: I think they were looking for someone who had some experience in dealing with Koreans. I'd had a lot of experience dealing with South Korea and with North Korea. It was my work with the U.S. Japan Foundation that brought me into contact with Northeast Asia in general. So, they were looking for someone who was an experienced ambassador, who had done it before, who would come across in Korea in particularly, South Korea as being a serious appointee.

DAVID M. SCHOONOVER
Agriculture Minister-Counselor
Seoul (1995-1997)

David M. Schoonover was born and raised in Illinois. His postings abroad have included Moscow, Beijing, and Seoul. He was interviewed in 2005 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: In '94 you moved over to Korea, is that right?

SCHOONOVER: I did come back and went into Korean language training actually. I'm trying to remember a few vignettes of those Russian years if you will permit me before I go on to Korea just to show some of the changes and also some of the interesting things that were happening. Here's one little vignette that shows how the security situation had changed. The Soviet Union for a foreign diplomat generally was a very safe place. You were watched very carefully. Nothing was going to happen to you unless it was intended to happen. The new Russia was a very different place regarding security. Security really fell apart, and foreigners began to be targeted. We had people in our office, for example, who were robbed on the train between St.

Petersburg and Moscow, robbed at gunpoint, and visitors from USDA who were robbed at knifepoint in their hotel. And here's another interesting experience. I had visitors from Washington. As was usual, we arranged to go out to dinner together, so I made reservation at a little gypsy-type Russian restaurant. As was the practice we had to put a deposit down. At noon I went to the restaurant and left money as a deposit. At the end of the day, we all loaded up in the van and went to the restaurant. When we arrived and people were crowding around, there were police in front of it, and doors were locked. We were standing there trying to decide what to do, since we'd spent our money for dinner, and we had to figure out how we were going to deal with this. I chatted with one of the police officers to find out what had happened. There had been a shooting. As we were debating what to do, they opened the doors of the restaurant and invited people to come in. We went in, and the person who usually met us at the door—I had been there before a few times—greeted us and then he sat down in a chair and never got up the whole evening. He just sort of sat there in a state of shock, it appeared. But the evening went on, the food was served and the gypsies sang, and we had a rather pleasant evening. It was a couple of days later that I read in the newspaper about the incident at that particular restaurant and found out a few more of the details. A couple of gangs who were bringing cars in from Western Europe and laundering them somehow or other...

Q: Stolen cars, you mean.

SCHOONOVER: Stolen cars, right. A couple of gangs, I guess one from the Moscow area and one from the south somewhere had met there that afternoon to negotiate some of their differences. In the process of negotiating the differences, a gunfight broke out and a couple of people were killed. It was a rather violent, but all too typical way that business differences were settled in the new Russia at that point. Unfortunately, this was not at all uncommon. There were people who threw grenades into offices and gunfire at intersections, and people began referring to it as the new wild West, and it very much was. I remember our office driver at the hotel. Well, one morning our driver said there was a little bit of activity at the hotel last night. He said the rival mafia groups-- everyone in crime was referred to as mafia, and mafia covered a lot of different things actually--were arguing over whose territory it was to get the money from that particular hotel. So there was a gunfight in the parking lot at the hotel where we had our office. This was kind of typical of the new Russia, unfortunately. There was very much disintegration of the old stability and security that were known under the Soviets. It was not at all uncommon to experience crime and be a target of crime during that period. Occasionally I frequented a little Georgian restaurant in Moscow, and once met one of my Russian contacts, who lived near the restaurant, as I was on my way there. He expressed surprise, saying that he was afraid to go to a mafia-run place like that. Whether or not he was right about the mafia, I don't know, but the food was good, and the price was right. There were a number of unfortunate things during that time. Life got better for some people, life maybe was on the same level for some, and life got worse for some people. One saw lots of old people, as the old social security system broke down, lined up along streets trying to sell their possessions to get enough money to live on.

I'm trying to remember more things to give a little more human flavor about life overseas, particularly in Moscow, because when you are living overseas at a post like that, you are there for the work. And yet you also experience something different, and enjoy--or at least understand--and participate in the culture and what it has to offer. And I think once you lose sight of that as

part of the total experience, there would be little reason to be there. I think a couple of pleasant little things that I can recall are very interesting little experiences. Once early on in my Moscow stay I was acquainted with the head of the Agricultural Committee of the Supreme Soviet--their legislature at the time--and he came from a farm in Eastern Siberia in the province of Krasnoyarsk Kray. He invited me to spend some time with him on the farm, just to have more time to chat together and see what it was actually like, so I took him up on it. It was the first summer I was there, and I went to his farm to see agriculture in Siberia. He met me at the airplane, and we went to his farm, and I spent two or three days just living with him and his family on his farm, walking around the farm kicking clods as we might say and talking about the cows and about the crops and just enjoying that experience. And that for me was an interesting experience to be in the middle of Siberia just talking with a farmer, so to speak. But he was a very influential farmer. I don't know if he had a lot of formal education, but he had a lot of personal intelligence, a smart person.

On numerous occasions, I had the experience of dealing with some of the old-time hardliners, who probably would have preferred to see the Soviet system continue, and also to meet some of the new entrepreneurs who were figuring out how to manipulate the system to their advantage, and occasionally I would meet them in social settings. A couple of occasions stand out in particular. One of my official acquaintances invited me to his birthday—50th or 55th, I think—and retirement celebration. He had worked long and advanced to a high level under the old system. I was the only non-Russian in attendance. I spent the evening listening to his old comrades bemoaning the dissolution of the Soviet Union, wishing and scheming for its return, and speculating on who could bring it back again. I was definitely the misfit that evening. But a year or so later, I attended a celebration of some of the new entrepreneurs celebrating the completion of voucher sales for transfer of state-owned property to private hands. This group was celebrating their newly acquired wealth. Again, I was the only non-Russian in attendance. And again, I was like a visitor from another planet.

One sometimes has a medical issue during a posting, and during the Soviet days, most Embassy people in need of an operation or serious treatment would be evacuated. Our policy toward this changed, though, in the new Russia. A year or so before I left Moscow, I broke a blood vessel in my nose that required surgery, and I had the experience of going to the Kremlin Hospital in the forest at the outskirts of Moscow, accompanied only by a Russian doctor, for laser surgery on my nose.

Let me mention a few things about experiences with my children during their visits. Brian and Kathryn were in their early 20's. With Brian, I enjoyed several trips in Russia—St. Petersburg, areas around Moscow, including Tolstoy's home at Yasnaya Polyana, and Siberia. Kathryn and I visited St. Petersburg and also traveled several times to Central Asia, visiting Samarkand, Bukhara, Merv, and other sights in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Much of the Central Asian travel had to be worked out on the spot. These trips were cultural experiences for all of us. I best remember, though, one trip in particular. It was right after the fall of the Soviet Union, the beginning of January '92. Brian and Kathryn both were in Moscow, and one of Brian's friends came. I had a friend who had a son and daughter also, in their 20's, and they came to visit, having never been in Russia before. I had a party of about five young people in their 20's, and apart from Moscow and the Bolshoi and all, I set up a travel tour. We didn't have to work

through Intourist anymore after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I was acquainted with a small private tour organization and I worked with them. It was from about New Year's up to Russian Christmas, which is about the same time as Twelfth Night in early January. And we went north of Moscow overnight by train for quite a few hours to the province, or oblast, of Vologda, which is quite north, although not as far as Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. And just the experience of traveling through the snow and seeing it fall in Vologda, going through the snow to some of the local monasteries, going sleigh riding and sledding down hills like kids again and going to the Russian Christmas Eve services, were all unforgettable experiences. The atmosphere was almost overwhelming. At the church service, when they heard we foreigners were there, naturally we had to get up and speak to them. So I found myself at midnight in front of the Russian Orthodox Church trying to make a speech in Russian about how glad we were to be there with them. And I discovered that although I knew quite a bit of Russian, I had a gap in my language abilities with respect to religious terminology. But anyway, it was a tremendous experience and especially for the young people, I think.

Q: Oh, yes.

SCHOONOVER: I could probably go on and on, but the main thing I must mention is that I met my wife, Barbara Griffiths, during the tour in Moscow. She was the Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs at the Embassy during my last year there, so we were on the Country Team together. I don't know how often there is a Country Team romance, especially between two sections that work closely together—and sometimes don't see eye-to-eye with each other. But in this case, cooperation pleasantly exceeded all my expectations.

Q: What you can do, David, when you get this, you'll get the rough transcript, and if you think of any other experiences, you can add them in.

SCHOONOVER: I think there are too many... I'll take that into account, and perhaps I will if I think of something good. But frankly, there was just too much. It was a period that had so many things packed into it. I had a lifetime of experiences in about four and a half years. One could write a book, or many books, if one were so inclined and could remember everything that happened. It was a fascinating experience. I think by the end of it, I was probably totally burned out because I was just burning the candle at both ends for quite a period of time. And as we said earlier, summer of '94, back to Washington for the year of Korean language training.

Q: How old were you by the time you went into Korean?

SCHOONOVER: OK. I was 58. I had my 59th birthday while I was in Korean.

Q: Korean is one of the most complex languages to learn, and by the time one passes 30, everything is downhill vis a vis language learning. So here you are 58, 59. How does it take?

SCHOONOVER: I'm going to give you a mixed answer on that. I did reasonably well on the Korean. I achieved my two-two, which is what was required on the Korean language test, two for reading, two for speaking. That's sort of what is expected, and not everybody who was in the language class attained that because, as you said, it is a very difficult language. Some people

don't make it to the two-two in one year, they have to go on for another year. But, what I found once I arrived in Korea was that most of the officials with whom I dealt spoke English, and we had such a competent foreign national staff in our office at the Embassy, and they would assist. And I found I didn't use my Korean very much. So, I spoke my best Korean on my last day of language training, and it went downhill again after that, and at this point in time, I don't remember much Korean. I still remember quite a bit of Russian and some Chinese, but my Korean has pretty much disappeared.

Q: What was the situation. You were in Korea from when to when?

SCHOONOVER: I was in Korea from the summer of '95 until '97. Just two years. It was actually a curtailed tour. Barbara and I went there together. We both were assigned to Seoul, Korea. She was the Economic Minister-Counselor, and I was the Agricultural Minister-Counselor. Barbara curtailed her tour because of her assignment as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in Washington. So after about a year and a half there, she came back to Washington. And so, I decided that I also would curtail. I stayed in Seoul for about six months after she left, or maybe a little longer than that, and finished up two years. But I asked for the curtailment not because I wasn't enjoying Korea but simply because of wanting to rejoin my wife. I must say, I enjoyed the assignment in Korea. Again, it was different from my previous assignments. My primary focus in Korea was trade policy issues. The Embassy Agricultural Office in each country always has the same job description more or less. All the same things are listed in it. If you just read the bureaucratic language, you probably wouldn't be able to tell one country from another. But the actual job differs tremendously from one country to the other. Maybe the job is similar in some countries, but in the ones where I was stationed, each job was quite different. Korea is a country that grows on one. When I first arrived, I found Seoul rather drab, compared with many Asian cities. It was largely destroyed during the Korean War, and rebuilt. The traffic was terribly congested, and sometimes there was a lot of pollution. But when we eventually began traveling into the countryside, and into more remote mountainous areas, I discovered there are many places of great charm and atmosphere. One doesn't easily get away, though, from the traffic congestion. I have been on travel outings on the weekend, and discovered on Sunday evening that one could have stop and start traffic returning to Seoul starting almost at the opposite end of the country. Eventually, we found a lot of interesting places in Seoul, as well, although some of the temples and villages in the more remote areas still were my favorite places to visit. Korea was our first posting where we experienced the benefits of a U.S. military commissary and post exchange system. There still was a large U.S. military presence there, and many Embassy employees lived in a section of housing on the base at the south edge of Seoul. Barbara and I lived in a compound in the heart of the city within walking distance of the Embassy, and also Kyongbok Palace, the National Museum, and other attractions. I have to make special mention of the Korean staff in our offices. They were the greatest workers I had known on any of my assignments, and really nice people with whom to work.

Q: What were you doing? What was the situation there?

SCHOONOVER: In past trade negotiations, and during the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations in particular, we had concluded a number of trade agreements with Korea and/or Korea had granted a number of trade concessions to the United States in agriculture. Basically,

we were enforcing these trade agreements or trade concessions to make sure that something wasn't put in place that would offset the concession or make it null and void. That was one of our primary tasks. Another one concerned the multilateral sanitary and phytosanitary agreement, which also had been concluded in the Uruguay Round. This agreement basically said that countries weren't supposed to obstruct trade unless there were legitimate sanitary or phytosanitary reasons why trade shouldn't take place. Apart from those science-based reasons, countries weren't supposed to put sanitary or phytosanitary trade barriers into place. And we also were enforcing, or attempting to enforce, that agreement as it pertained to our trade with Korea. Korea had become a very important market for United States agricultural products. In area or population, Korea is not as large as Russia or China, but Korea at that time was a bigger market for U.S. agricultural products than either Russia or China. They were important markets, too, but Korea was very important. At the time that I was there it was either the third or fourth largest single country market for U.S. agricultural products. If one counted all of the European Union as one market, I think Korea was in fourth or fifth place. The United States exported to Korea a couple of billion dollars worth of agricultural products or more every year. So, enforcing these trade agreements was a very important part of the work. Now, there were other jobs there, too. We carried on some exchanges, and we did reporting, and a lot of market development activity. We had an Agricultural Trade Office located outside the Embassy, in addition to the Agricultural Office at the Embassy, which was focused entirely on working with trade organizations and carrying out trade promotion activities. It really was part of our operations, and fell under my umbrella of responsibility, but it was in a separate location and headed by the Agricultural Trade Officer. Another USDA agency, the Animal-Plant Health Inspection Service, also had an officer co-located with the Agricultural Trade Office. But trade policy was *the* single most important thing.

One example of a very important area was a bilateral beef trade agreement. And, well, my memory is a little fuzzy now, but I think our agreement on Korean beef imports also was included in the Uruguay Round. Australia and New Zealand also exported beef to Korea and were parties to agreements on Korean beef imports. I carried out regular quarterly consultations on the beef agreement. We would monitor trade very carefully to make sure measures were not being put into place that would cause problems with the beef trade or with trade in other agricultural products. Such obstacles might include technical measures, regulations related to food additives, and phytosanitary regulations, as well as more direct restrictions. We watched these Korean regulations and procedures very carefully in our office. We tried to determine whether measures were being put into place on products where we had received trade concessions, and we tried to assess what impact any measures might have on trade. It was our job to analyze whether any changes in phytosanitary regulations or procedures were in fact going into place because of legitimate concerns, or whether they were applied as trade protection.

Q: You say "phytosanitary". Could you spell that out?

SCHOONOVER: Phytosanitary means measures pertaining to plant diseases or pests, or plant health, generally. For example, if a pest or disease occurred, or allegedly occurred, in the United States on a particular fruit, and Korea put a quarantine ban on the fruit because of the pest, that action would be an example of a phytosanitary measure. Korea wouldn't import the product because of the possibility of being infected by that pest or disease. Sanitary and phytosanitary

measures were defined more broadly to mean measures pertaining to plant, animal and human health. We would encourage meetings of our animal and plant health officials, basically our quarantine service and their quarantine service, and have regular discussions because it is much better for the quarantine service scientists to be the ones who review the changes in procedures or regulations. We tried to set up regular meetings between our quarantine officials. They then could discuss and evaluate what was being implemented and make a better judgment about whether it was legitimate or whether it really had no basis. If there was not sufficient scientific basis, then we could have a trade complaint. Sometimes we had the basis for a complaint, and sometimes the measures were taken for legitimate concerns. But these were the sorts of things that we were watching very closely.

Q: Was there the issue that really got going in Europe about the genetically modified organisms, GMO's, or whatever they're called...

SCHOONOVER: Well, I'm happy to say at the time I was in Korea that had not become a big issue. I only recall discussing it late in my stay there. That was just about the time that it was becoming a big issue in Europe, but it had not become a significant issue in Korea. I'm not sure what may be happening now, but I think GMO's have become issues in other places, and countries have come down on different sides of the questions. Some of them may have interests similar to ours, and others have interests opposite ours on these questions. But that was not one of the major concerns at the time. But you're on to something. As I went on to future assignments, GMO's were certainly an issue.

Q: What was your impression of Korean agriculture at the time?

SCHOONOVER: Well, it was changing. It was trying to adjust to keep a viable agricultural system of viable farmers. There were changes going on, but it was still rooted in very small farms that were having a hard time being viable without going through some changes, some adaptations. But the political sentiment in Korea was that rice programs can't be changed fundamentally, rice farms must be maintained, and the rice market can't be opened. That was one area where they essentially had not opened up yet when I was there, although I recall we did do our first little rice promotion in Korea. It was one of our market promotions. But the rice market had generally not opened up yet, except for very small amounts of imports. Basically, they were trying to preserve the small rice farms. Unfortunately, they had problems doing that even without raising the question of imports or free markets in rice. They needed to modify their system somehow to preserve the sort of agriculture that they were intending to preserve. We ran through some economic calculations which showed that given the size of the rice farms, even at extremely high rice prices which were something like five times world prices, incomes from rice farming really were not adequate to retain people on the farms. These prices vary because world prices vary, so comparisons are somewhat arbitrary, but very roughly, prices paid to farmers in Korea for rice were five times world rice prices. The income might maintain someone who was in the latter years of farming, and they might phase into retirement, but it certainly wasn't an incentive for young people to stay with farming. Even farmers in their middle years looking ahead for a long period of time, could see a very meager and bleak existence if they depended entirely on rice. And so one of the things happening was that farmers were seeing the opportunity to convert their rice farms into greenhouse cultures, generally raising vegetables,

maybe tomatoes, strawberries or flowers. And one would travel through the rice patties of Korea and see plastic greenhouses sprouting up everywhere in the rice patties. This was certainly an attempt by the farmers to try to make more money and to survive on their farms.

Q: It's interesting. I was there during the mid '70's, and the willingness of then the dictator Park Chung Hee to make sure that the rice farmers were viable. It meant the price of rice was higher than in many other countries. It was a cornerstone of his policy, but that was the time that the Korean national income was about \$1,000. Of course, tremendous things had happened. You were seeing one policy, which had really worked quite well. It kept the people on the farm.

SCHOONOVER: It worked a while and kept the people on the farm, but then they were stuck with it. They had all these people on the farm, and they had farms that were two hectares or less, and there's a limit to how much you can keep pushing up the price. It got up to five times the world level, and there still wasn't enough income for the farmers to continue to be there. So they had to find other ways, and the greenhouse culture seemed to be the dominant way. Expansion of livestock and poultry production was another way. The question of opening their markets to international trade was a difficult one. Obviously, with that situation they couldn't just throw open markets to international trade and keep the same policies that they had. Now, one could design policies that would allow that to happen and allow everybody to transition to markets, that's a different question. For example, they could have gone into some kind of deficiency payment system and as they already were paying their farmers these huge amounts above world prices, they could simply have made direct payments to them. In this way, they could open markets, make direct payments to the farmers, and let the market determine what was going to happen. In a way, it was happening anyway. Farmers were moving out of rice and moving into greenhouse production. A more active role by the government in promoting this transition might have accelerated some things, but basically it was going on in any event. Rice was a hot potato for the senior officials in the Ministry of Agriculture and government, generally.

Q: You left there when, in...

SCHOONOVER: OK. I spent two years in Korea and left there in the summer of '97. Before leaving Korea, I should make some mention of North Korea. We were not traveling in the North from the Embassy in Seoul, but U.S. and international contact with North Korea had begun in a couple of respects. Firstly, there were visits to their energy facilities, related to our concerns about their ability to produce nuclear weapons. Secondly, serious food shortages had begun in North Korea, and during my tour in Seoul the United States provided food assistance. A major channel for food assistance was through the World Food Program (WFP), which established a small presence in Pyongyang, and I maintained some communications with WFP officials about the food situation, and shared some of our information with them. Our Agricultural Office at the Embassy prepared some reports on the North Korean food situation, which I think made a better assessment than was available anywhere else. The tensions between North and South still were very evident during my tour and one only had to drive a short distance north from Seoul or visit the DMZ, which I did finally before I departed, to be strongly reminded of the continuing confrontation.

MARK E. MOHR
North Korea Desk (WAE)
Washington, DC (1997-1999)

Mr. Mohr was born in New York and raised in New York and New Jersey. He was educated at the University of Rochester and Harvard University, where he studied the Chinese language. After service in Korea with the Peace Corps, he joined the Foreign Service in 1969, and served abroad in Taipei, Taichung, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Beijing and Brisbane. In his service at the State Department in Washington, Mr. Mohr dealt primarily with Far East Affairs. After his retirement he worked at the Department of Energy on Nuclear energy matters. In 1997 he was recalled to the State Department, where he worked as Korean desk officer. Mr. Mohr was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

MOHR: I received a phone call from Chuck Kartman. Chuck was then ambassador for North Korean negotiations for the Clinton administration, and an old friend from embassy Tokyo in the late 1970s. Chuck wanted me to join the North Korean division of the Korean desk. I could work as a WAE (when actually employed), which meant I could work half-time at State, and continue to receive my full retirement benefits. You recall I had been in the Peace Corps in Korea, and was certainly curious about North Korea. When Chuck told me my job would include trips to North Korea, I agreed to go back to State. I informed Tai that I was quitting our partnership. He was not happy, but he understood.

Now a little background on U.S.-North Korean relations is in order. I started my job on the Korea desk in the spring of 1997. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the U.S. had suspected that the North Koreans were starting a nuclear weapons program. They had a nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, and we believed the North Koreans were using the reactor to burn uranium. The spent fuel thus produced contained plutonium, nuclear weapons-grade material. After much tension, we concluded a bilateral agreement with the North Koreans in 1994, commonly referred to as the Agreed Framework (AF). Under this agreement, North Korea would freeze and eventually eliminate its nuclear weapons program. In return we would provide it with two light-water nuclear power reactors (LWRs) to produce electricity. After I was on the job several months, Chuck took me into his office and explained that my immediate boss, Joel Wit, was going to a think tank to write a book on the negotiations which led to the signing of the AF in 1994. The negotiations leading up to the AF were lead by Ambassador Robert Gallucci. Joel had been on his staff.

Chuck told me that someone had to replace Joel, and he wanted me to do it. So in the summer of 1998, I was back at State full time leading the Agreed Framework Division in the Office of Korean Affairs in the East Asia and Pacific Bureau of the Department of State. Life can sometimes be ironic. Two years ago, I had been selected out of the foreign service. Now, two years later, I was a full-time employee at the State Department, doing important and interesting work. Of course, bureaucratically, I had to freeze my retirement pay, and I became a civil servant. But I was happy to do so.

Q: Tell me, what were your impressions of dealing with the North Koreans?

MOHR: The North Koreans were difficult to deal with. They are the only people who practice confrontational diplomacy. They will actually yell at you. I think it's tactical: they know that this upsets people, and gives them a certain advantage. On the other hand, they have a leader at the top who makes all the decisions. There are no checks and balances, so once they make a decision, for example to freeze their nuclear weapons program, it gets done. I thought they were very good at dealing from a position of weakness, pretending they were strong and strutting around and blustering, and getting people to respond to their agenda.

I am a bit critical of the Clinton administration's North Korea policy. To be fair, their errors were ones of "benign neglect." After the signing of the AF, the president and the secretary of state went on to other issues, such as the Middle East, thinking the major "lifting" had been done, and all that was left was the execution of the agreement. Well anyone with experience in diplomacy knows that the implementation of an agreement is just as important as the negotiation. In this case, with the AF, the North Koreans had to take all their actions within one month: to freeze their nuclear weapons program, etc., while the main U.S. obligation, to build two LWRs, did not have an explicit timeframe. To make matters more complicated, Clinton signed separate agreements with the South Koreans and Japanese whereby they agreed to finance the LWRs. Clinton knew that Congress would never agree to a multi-billion dollar aid package to North Korea. Our only financial obligation, under the AF, was to supply North Korea with heavy fuel oil (HFO) for North Korea's existing electric power plants until the first LWR came on line. This was a financial commitment of tens of millions of dollars, much less than the two LWRs, which was initially estimated at just under six billion dollars, but would probably cost much more. So the South Koreans and Japanese agreed on paper to finance the LWRs, but then dragged their feet. In the event, their money only started flowing for the LWRs in 2000. The North Koreans got the impression, and I don't think anyone can blame them here, that they had been tricked, that the U.S. didn't really mean to implement the AF.

For the two years while I worked on the Korean desk, I received weekly complaints from the then political counselor at the North Korean mission to the United Nations, Kim Myong-gil. Kim noted that, although there had been much construction on site in preparation for the LWRs, there was still no construction on the LWRs themselves. He said North Korea had fulfilled all its obligations under the AF, and the U.S. was clearly "insincere." He said we needed to start building the LWRs. I said that the problem was with South Korea and Japan. He noted this was not a North Korean problem. Since the AF was a bilateral agreement, it was the U.S. responsibility either to secure the financing or finance the project itself. After hearing this complaint many times, one day I finally replied, "So what you're saying is that the U.S. should act like an imperial hegemon, grab South Korea and Japan by their necks, and squeeze them until the money comes out." He replied, "Yes, exactly so." I had to suppress a laugh.

In point of fact, Kim was right. During the time I was on the Korea desk, I repeatedly called the official at the NSC in charge of non-proliferation, Gary Samore, and argued that he needed to explain the situation to the President, and either have the President or the Secretary of State contact their counterparts in the South Korean and Japanese governments and put pressure on them until funds were made available to build the LWRs. Gary would always listen politely, but

nothing ever got done. This was particularly galling as Gary had been part of the negotiating team with Ambassador Gallucci that produced the AF. He of all people should have understood the importance of getting the funds flowing to build the LWRs, and the danger of the North Koreans coming to the conclusion that the U.S. never intended to build them, but just wanted to freeze their nuclear program. So I was very frustrated.

During my year when I replaced Joel, there was one crisis, but it was not induced by the North Koreans. The costs for the HFO rose every year beginning with 1995, but Congressional appropriations did not keep up. The organization charged with implementing the AF was the Korean Peninsula Economic Development Organization (KEDO), based in New York City. It was made up of the United States, Japan, and South Korea, the number one economic power in the world, the number two, and at the time, the number 12. In short, the members of KEDO were rich, and especially so in comparison to North Korea. Yet, since the United States was responsible for providing HFO to North Korea, and since appropriations for the fuel did not cover the costs, I was not surprised in 1998 to receive a call from KEDO stating that after the next shipment of HFO to North Korea, KEDO was broke. There could be no further shipments of fuel oil to North Korea under the Agreed Framework until more money could be secured. I immediately wrote a memo to the Secretary, pointing out that we were in crisis and something had to be done. I had written similar memos before, saying that KEDO was going broke and that if nothing were done, there would be a crisis in the future. I was ignored. Now that a crisis was imminent, the Secretary called a meeting, ordered that certain funds be transferred to KEDO, and a crisis was averted.

Of course, while I was frustrated by what I considered a lack of focus on the part of the Clinton administration, I didn't realize that events were going to get much worse under the Bush administration. Whereas Clinton merely failed to give the AF priority, Bush and his people, who never liked the agreement, were determined to blow it up. Their goal was to find an excuse to tear up the Agreed Framework. By then, I was in a different position. Joel Wit returned to the Korea Desk in 1999, and it just didn't work out, the two of us being there together.

ANTHONY C. ZINNI
Commander-in-Chief
CENTCOM (1997-2000)

General Zinni was born and raised in Pennsylvania. After graduating from Vallahova College he joined the Marines, which became his lifelong career. His distinguish career took him to Vietnam, Okinawa, Philippines and Germany, where he served in senior level positions. Attaining the rank of General, Zinni served as Commander-in-Chief of CENTCOM, where he was deeply involved in worldwide missions including Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. General Zinnia was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: Well, while you were with the Marine expeditionary force, Korea. I was in Korea twice, once during the war and once 1976 until 1979 and you know, we were very aware of the problems of

the Korean Peninsula. What did you see your role as the situation was, vis-à-vis Korea?

ZINNI: Well, our mission there was, I commanded the Marine operational forces for any Korean military operation or military mission. So we would go over there several times a year to go through extensive exercises in training and that sort of thing and so I spent a lot of time in Korea. When I was in Okinawa, I would take my regiment there for the Team Spirit exercises. When I was commander of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, we did the exercises. There were extensive, lengthy exercises on exercising different options on how we would execute the war plan for Korea. I knew many of the Koreans. First of all, there's a big Korean presence in our school and, of course, military to military relations and I knew a lot of Korean marine officers very well. So we were really well-connected and really well steeped in the whole potential war fighting of this thing and by the constant time spent over there we got to know the Koreans and their situation very well.

Q: What was your impression of the Korean military?

ZINNI: Excellent. I would tell you there is no doubt about their courage, their toughness and willingness to fight. There's obvious things that compared to our military, sometimes logistics, fire support, planning and those sorts of things obviously, they were not in the league certainly with ours, but in terms of tough units, willing to fight, knowing what they have to do, executing. In the scheme of things I had Korean units under my command, Korean divisions, Army and Marines and they were superb. Their officers were all trained mostly in the United States; they basically had our doctrine and understood our war fighting system.

Q: What was your impression of the how, and we're talking about the time you were there, had this, how our war mind developed?

ZINNI: Well, there were all sorts of reasons a war could start. It could be a miscalculation, there could be some sort of a situation in Korea where they sort of became trapped and desperate and needing to do something, or their economy is collapsing and control is collapsing. There were all sorts of scenarios for starting. From a military point of view, you didn't care how it started. It would've been very difficult, especially in the wrong times of the year where you have climate working against our obvious advantage in airpower and other things. You have the Koreans dug in into the hills and into the mountains so they're very hard targets to get at. This vast array of artillery, rockets and other missiles that they have lined up. You have a situation where Seoul and the environs of Seoul have 25% of the Korean people in them. That's about 11 million packed up right up against an artillery and rocket range. So it's not like you have a distance or sort of a battlefield. You have the capital of South Korea plus a huge percent of its population plus a lot of Americans right under the gun. If the war started as a surprise, it would be very vulnerable. As you move into place it becomes a rapid deployment to try to make sure you can close the space and time. You're going to have to evacuate civilians. Seoul could be devastated. If it's the wrong time of the year you're fighting up in those hills. That's Korean War vintage slogging infantry war. It's not a place where armored units initially can operate. And then the wrong kind of weather, the digging in of their capabilities, the use of WMD, all compounded make it a very difficult situation. There's no doubt in the end that we would prevail but it would be difficult, bloody and it would take some time.

STEPHEN BOSWORTH
Ambassador
South Korea (1997-2000)

Ambassador Bosworth was born and raised in Michigan and educated at Dartmouth College and George Washington University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1961 he served abroad in Panama, Madrid and Paris before becoming Ambassador to Tunisia, where he served from 1979 to 1981, to the Philippines (1984-1987) and to the Republic of Korea (1997-2000). The Ambassador also was a member of the Department's Policy Planning Staff, and he played a major role in the US-Japan Foundation and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. In 2009 Ambassador Bosworth was named the President's Special Representative for North Korean Policy. He was interviewed by Michael Mahoney in 2003.

Q: You arrived in October? That's a topic by the way that I might come back to later on. You arrived in October of '97 and what kind of instructions did you have from the United States government?

BOSWORTH: First, I arrived there just as the financial crisis was raging. I had had consultations in Washington and it was going very rapidly. I went to the APEC summit in Vancouver en route to Korea.

Q: APEC being?

BOSWORTH: Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum. President Clinton was there. I did not have a meeting with him independently, but Larry Summers was there. He was then deputy secretary of Treasury. He and I had a long discussion about what was going on in the Korean financial system and globally because we were by that time very concerned that Korea was in a position where 1) it could go into default and threaten the stability of the international bankers system and 2) that economic difficulty could prejudice the security arrangements. When I arrived in Korea in November, my mandate really was to try to do everything I possibly could to help stabilize the financial system and that was consuming interest for almost the first year I was there.

Q: What were you doing?

BOSWORTH: I was basically working very closely with the key Korean ministers. The new president once he was elected, Kim Dae-jung, the deputy prime minister for economic affairs and various other economic ministers trying to insure that they complied with the agreement that they had established with the IMF. Then very importantly working with both Bob Rubin and Larry Summers back in Washington to insure that they understood what was happening in Korea and to bring from them insights into the Koreans as to how to deal with the financial crisis. We were

instrumental in helping them reschedule their short term foreign bank debt, a whole series of major steps that were key to their being able to survive financially. The interesting thing about all this of course was that I did this virtually with no written instructions and in fact with only limited guidance from the State Department because my principal interlocutors in Washington were Rubin and Summers and the Treasury Department.

[Section omitted re: role of Treasury Department]

Q: This is how we'll find out. Tell me, give me a quick snapshot of the situation as you arrived in Korea then economically.

BOSWORTH: Korean foreign exchange reserves were running down rapidly. They probably had less than a week's requirements. The public was in a panic.

Q: This had happened why?

BOSWORTH: This had happened basically because Korea in terms of international finance was borrowing short and lending long. They were borrowing money from foreign banks, turning around and Korean banks were lending the equivalent of that out to Korean companies at a long term basis.

Q: Is this because there was no analog of the Federal Reserve to control the thing?

BOSWORTH: First of all, there was inadequate supervision of Korean banks. Secondly, Korean companies were very much overleveraged. They had tremendous debt to equity ratios which is unsustainable. By this time, by November this had become very visible that there had been a financial crisis in Thailand. It was very difficult in Indonesia. The Asian financial crisis was in full swing. In the case of Korea it happened very quickly. In late September the IMF had a mission out there and came back and said Korea is in okay shape, there's no problem. I went over to Treasury in October when I was getting ready to go to Seoul and asked about the Korean financial situation. I was told by senior people at Treasury then, we're not worried about Korea. We're worried about Thailand and Indonesia. Within three or four weeks this crisis had spread very much into Northeast Asia and into Korea.

Q: They're running out of?

BOSWORTH: They're running out of foreign exchange. As loans came due the banks were not rolling them over again; they were pulling them back. The public was in panic. Also, Korea was in the last few weeks of a presidential electoral campaign and a lot of feeling in Korea, one of my concerns was that Koreans would begin to look for an external villain to blame for this problem. There was a tendency briefly in that direction, but with the election of Kim Dae-jung the Koreans managed to pull themselves back together pretty quickly. I think our support for them in this period was very important.

Q: That consisted of?

BOSWORTH: That consisted of being willing to provide some emergency liquidity from the Treasury Department.

Q: How do you do that?

BOSWORTH: Through an exchange stabilization fund with the Treasury Department, which it has legal access to.

Q: They don't have to run to congress?

BOSWORTH: No. Congress is not happy about this and we in the end didn't have to use it, but it was a psychological step that was very important because it helped to restore confidence internationally if Korea was going to be able to meet its obligations.

Q: Right. You work with the exchange stabilization fund. The IMF comes in presumably prodded at some length by the United States to provide some kind of liquidity or some kind of?

BOSWORTH: Well, the IMF came in with a major agreement eventually. The IMF arrived about the same time as I did and very quickly put together their first IMF program or IMF agreement which was signed I think before the 5th of December of '97 and which frankly did not work. It did not restore confidence. The run on the Korean foreign exchange reserves continued. We then did a second agreement or the IMF did with strong encouragement from us. It was signed on Christmas Eve. That agreement worked. The currency began to strengthen. The Korean won had depreciated by almost more than 100% at this point.

Q: What was the essence of that one?

BOSWORTH: The essence of that one and the reason that it worked was not so much the requirements that it laid on Korea to do things, it was more that it frontloaded much of the liquidity that was going to be available so that international market looked at that and said well, if they're going to have that much money available, this was a 58 billion dollar bailout or a confidence restoring program of which the Koreans didn't draw all of it. They didn't draw the portion that we had committed. They did draw from the IMF and the World Bank and from the Asian Development Bank.

Q: Have they paid any of that back?

BOSWORTH: They paid it all back.

Q: They did? That's amazing. You were presumably dealing then at the most intense levels and at the highest levels of the Korean government I take in this period?

BOSWORTH: Oh, yes.

Q: Were any of these people you had known before or met?

BOSWORTH: No. A few, but not very many.

Q: Did you have trouble in the beginning?

BOSWORTH: No, I didn't. I mean they were so desperate they clearly were looking for advice. I was fortunate enough to have had some experience and exposure to these issues over my time in the Foreign Service and to some extent while I was out of the State Department. I was able I think to communicate on subjects for the most part a lot of people find rather arcane and complicated.

Q: It's interesting. In other words, you were not selected in a sense with the Korean financial crisis in mind and yet you did have this background.

BOSWORTH: No, not at all. Yes.

Q: So, how long did that crisis preoccupy most of your time?

BOSWORTH: Well, it preoccupied me for most of the first year I was there which would have been most of '98. In the second half of '98 security issues began to crowd in on us. It was in August of '98 that the Koreans, the North Koreans fired their long range missile out over Japan into the Pacific Ocean. That of course was a major event. It was in that same period that Kim Dae-jung, the president of South Korea, began outlining publicly his so-called sunshine policy and it was at that time we made a visit to the United States and spoke with a joint session of congress, laid out his program and so on. Actually for most of the time I was there these financial and economic issues were big requirements on my time. The security issue became increasingly important as we went through that period.

[section omitted re: personal anecdote about Secretary of The Treasury Rubin]

Q: You really felt that if this contagion had gone on beyond Korea and so forth that the international economic system was really looking at big problems?

BOSWORTH: I think it was. I mean the most vulnerable at that point were probably the Japanese banks who had large exposures in Korea. They had not been able to count on being repaid and there were times when it had tried to hold back all the money, their system would have been under great stress. It's impossible to look back and say, well, if we hadn't done this, that horrible thing would have happened. Clearly the threat of a substantial setback for the international financial system was very real.

Q: Do you feel more confident now about the Korean economic situation?

BOSWORTH: Yes, they've done a lot and one of my tasks there was constantly, largely in public, but also privately to prod them gently to continue doing the sorts of restructuring things and reforms that they had to do to get out of that crisis and then to lay a stronger foundation for their economy. This was something that was a little delicate because I didn't want to appear to be preaching to them. On the other hand, the government made it known to me that they found this

kind of reinforcement from the U.S. ambassador to be very useful.

Q: Right. They could blame it on you.

BOSWORTH: In some cases that was correct, but it was kind of a fine line that I had to walk to give advice, but not be sort of imperial about it.

Q: Did the Department of State, were they unhappy, did they know that you were calling Mr. Rubin on the phone at night?

BOSWORTH: Yes.

Q: Was there unhappiness about that?

BOSWORTH: I think there was, but it never became a real problem. We took it, at some point I think it was in January we started, I think the Department had instituted this sort of daily report from embassies in Asia on what was happening. We reported fully, but that did not substitute for my direct contacts with the Treasury Department.

Q: Would you say that I had talked to Mr. Rubin on this day?

BOSWORTH: I was transparent about it. On the other hand, I didn't rub their noses in it either.

Q: Also, you didn't ask for them every time you did it, you didn't say, may I call them up or something?

BOSWORTH: No.

Q: You couldn't do that given the time constraints and everything?

BOSWORTH: That's exactly right. No, my view of being an ambassador has always been that I work for the president. I don't work just for the State Department. I have a broader constituency in Washington than just one department, no. For the most part I always communicated with the White House through the State Department. I had a couple of conversations directly with Sandy Berger, but I didn't try to go around the State Department to get to the White House. There was no need to because Rubin and Summers were fully informing the White House.

Q: did you get the sense that the president was interested in this issue?

Bosworth: Very.

Q: So, you begin then, you have this economic situation. Then you begin to confront the security issues. Now, talk a little bit about that. The North Koreans launch a missile in the summer or fall of 1998 I guess?

BOSWORTH: Well, the North Koreans were becoming even at this point somewhat discontented at what they saw as a lack of progress on some parts of the agreed framework

because they had always seen that as an agreement designed to lead to full normalization of relations with the United States. They were not happy that it wasn't moving forward for them. Their missile test was clearly a demand for our attention. To that extent it worked because as a result after a lot of thrashing around the White House and State and others asked Bill Perry the former secretary of defense to come back and do a policy review at this point which actually became more than a review. It became an effort to actually develop a policy toward North Korea. I remember George Tenet visited Seoul in about the middle of '98 I believe and I was complaining to him on the security front I couldn't get anyone's attention.

Q: He was the CIA director?

BOSWORTH: He was then director of the CIA. That no one in Washington seemed to be engaged on this security issue.

Q: Where's the State Department?

BOSWORTH: Damned if I know. They weren't concerned about this and finally when Perry was brought in it was after the North Korean missile. Mrs. Albright had had a very disagreeable session up on the Hill in one of the committees.

Q: What was the substance of that?

BOSWORTH: The substance of that was that somehow she was charged with not being informed about what was happening in Korea. She reacted as you might expect to that and supported Perry's effort to come back. She then assigned one of her special assistants, actually the counselor of the State Department to do the principal action.

Q: Who would be?

BOSWORTH: Wendy Sherman to be the principal action officer on Korea and she worked closely with Bill Perry. We basically all worked together. The embassy was very much a part of all this. I went back to Washington a couple of times for meetings in the White House on the subject of policy toward North Korea. Anyway, we finally put together something that was a strategy and on that basis we moved forward. Eventually the North Koreans were persuaded that we were serious and in the last few months of the administration in 2000 we made significant process. I mean there are still major issues left, but the Secretary went to North Korea as you recall. There was some consideration given to the president's going to North Korea. I think many of us were confident that once we had gained enough momentum in moving toward a more normal relationship with the North Koreans that that would be preserved and that we would continue down that path. Then of course when the Bush administration came into office that proved to have been a false hope because they very visibly froze the situation.

Q: We'll come back to that. Let me ask you this. Did you look at U.S. interests with Korea, you've obviously got to think now significant economic interests and in this you have the security interests. Do the South Koreans themselves take, I mean do they have significant defensive capabilities of their own or are they just really relying on us?

BOSWORTH: Oh, no, they had very substantial military capabilities. They have a 600,000 person military establishment. That has much more technological capability than does the North. Now, it's not the equal of the U.S., but in terms of numbers and capability, I would argue that probably they could handle the North Koreans by themselves. The difficult is that if there were a conflict it would take them much longer to deal with the North Koreans if they did not have active and substantial U.S. anticipation. So, the cost to them would be enormous.

Q: Is the 37,000 I think that's the right number, around 37,000 troop presence, is that I mean is that a significant military presence or is it a symbolic guarantee or is it both?

BOSWORTH: It's both. I mean it is more than a trip wire. It is the sort of platform on which in theory a substantial increment or expansion of U.S. forces would be based and a detailed operation plan to get people in.

Q: To get people there in a hurry.

BOSWORTH: In a very big hurry, but it still takes time. In particularly a time like now, with what we're doing in Iraq, we don't have that much available to deal with.

Q: You see a lot of pictures of demonstrations in the paper on the part of the Koreans that seem to express an anti-American attitude. How do you characterize from your experience there that relationship? I mean is that a meaningful picture of the feeling or is that just a number of people that are on hand?

BOSWORTH: It should not be ignored. I think it's important to place it in context. Sure, there are some people largely on the left fringe of South Korean society who vehemently want the U.S. out of there. There are others, however, who find the U.S. presence difficult to accept, not for primarily ideological reasons, either out of pure internationalism or because it's not that easy to live side by side with the U.S. military particularly in a country which is now highly urbanized and where there is no space. There's no space for the U.S. military to stand. I mean they're cheek by jowl with Korean civilian populations all over the place. What was earlier a helicopter base out in a rice paddy someplace is now surrounded by high rise apartments and those people don't like the fact that the U.S. military is doing night landing exercises right next door to them. It's becoming increasingly a source of friction to have the U.S. militaries in these areas. Now, as you may know there is a discussion of pulling them back to the South where in theory at least they would be in more space. Then, the nationalist aspect of this should not be underestimated. The same Koreans who believed its important to have us there also resent the fact that we're there. There's a dualism in Korean thought on this subject that is undeniable. Korea has had foreign military forces on its territory since the late 1800s. They don't want them.

Q: Presumably there are some real cultural differences in a sense there are more significant than they might have elsewhere and those are all on a day to day basis I suppose.

BOSWORTH: I'm not sure they are more significant than perhaps our problems in Okinawa, but sure on a day to day basis it ain't easy. Both sides may try very hard, but there are inescapable

points of view.

Q: Did you feel that the U.S. military as you dealt with them as reasonably sensitive to these problems?

BOSWORTH: Yes, for the most part. On the other hand, the U.S. military is fixed on its mission as it should be. Its mission in Korea is to be ready and for our military readiness means training. To train was inevitably going to be a source of friction and disruptive. The U.S. military while some of them may have understood why the Koreans were unhappy. They kept saying to themselves, well, we're here to protect them which is in part true, but we're also there because our definition of national interests seemed to be benefited by our being there was not just an altruistic act.

Q: You say you have the security question, you have the economic issues. Let me ask you something else, as you look at the list of the immediate vicinity, one would think why for example don't the Chinese lean in more on the North Koreans or do they lean on them to try to make them more reasonable players in the world?

BOSWORTH: I think they do lean on them to some extent. There's some, there's a report that they cut off their petroleum supply for a while just to get their attention. First of all North Korea is very resistant to pressure from China. There's a long history in Korea, Chinese pressure on them to do things they don't want to do and the history of them resisting. Secondly, China's interests in North Korea are similar to ours, but not identical. The last thing China wants to happen is the collapse of North Korea. They're not willing to push them so far that they risk collapse.

Q: Because?

BOSWORTH: Because of the prospective flow of refugees across the Yalu River into China, an area of China which is heavily populated by ethnic Koreans and in their century's long concern about internal stability, are really worried that rapid influx of refugees would be destabilizing.

Q: Does this explain in part why the Chinese keep saying they want us to deal directly with the North Koreans, not in a kind of group framework?

BOSWORTH: I think everybody increasingly would be willing to deal in a group framework if indeed the North Koreans would. The difficulty is that only we have what the North Koreans say they want which is a direct assurance from us that we're not going to attack them. China can't give them that. South Korea can't give them that. We have to give it. North Korea understandably is concerned that if there is a multilateral framework of some sort that it's going to be them against everybody else so they feel rather exposed.

Q: You got, you felt that the thing was on track as the latter part of your ambassadorship was wearing down at the end of the '90s. Mrs. Albright had gone to North Korea and so forth. There's an election in 2000, President Bush is elected and what happens after that?

BOSWORTH: The most immediate thing that happens is that I left. I left in February of 2001.

Q: Was that pre I mean, that had already been planned?

BOSWORTH: Yes. I had accepted the job here at the Fletcher School in May of 2000 because I knew that my tour in Korea, I had signed up basically for three years and I knew there was going to be a new president no matter which party won. While I enjoyed it enormously as did my wife I found it very stimulating and challenging, ambassadors, we don't appoint ambassadors for life, so three years is a good run at it. Anyway, I was, the financial implications of my being there were rather painful. Everybody knew I was coming back.

Q: What happens then? You come back and then what happens to the policy?

BOSWORTH: Basically I think we then had a president who was in all ways distrustful of to say the least of Kim Il-Sung of North Korea and he didn't believe that we could deal with him in a diplomatic fashion, that we couldn't negotiate meaningful agreements. That of course caused great strain initially in the U.S. relationship with South Korea because Kim Dae-jung, the president, had invested tremendous political capital in the so-called sunshine policy. He went to Washington in March of 2001. Some of my last advice to the South Koreans before I left was don't go too soon. Don't go this soon because the new administration is not going to be ready to deal with this issue and you may not like the answers that you get. Sure enough, they didn't like them at all. Now whether going later would have changed those answers, I don't know. You may recall that Secretary Powell initially was very positive on the notion of continuing U.S. engagement in North Korea and was visibly, publicly, if not rebuked, at least reversed by the White House.

Q: Again, where is that coming from? Is it the president himself?

BOSWORTH: I think it comes from very basically two sources. One is a group of people who came into the new administration determined to destroy the agreed framework. These were the same people who hadn't liked it since 1994. Some of them came out of congressional staff positions, out of a think tank in Washington, representing basically a conservative republican wing. Secondly, and far more importantly, came from the president himself who I think very much views South Korea as a black and white proposition. This is a man for whom there is a great deal of moral absolutism as he views the rest of the world. It's viewed in his rhetoric about Iraq. He's been publicly quoted as saying that he loathes Kim Il-Sung. Then he puts them in the axis of evil when you talk about preemptive defense and we talk about a new doctrine governing the use of nuclear weapons. All of these things make our allies the South Koreans very anxious and significantly resentful and of course they produce a reaction in the North which is not necessarily one we like.

Q: Is there a sense on your part that the North Koreans are somehow engaged in the support of international terrorism?

BOSWORTH: No. They were, they supported their own terrorism against the South back in the '60s and '70s, but there is no evidence that I'm familiar with or even aware of that they've been

doing anything in that area for a long time.

Q: So, the old, the use of the word axis in the '30s would certainly imply that some direct relationship between the Japanese, the Germans and the Italians, however weak the Asian European connection was. When you resuscitate that term and you say the axis of evil, is there any sense that the North Koreans somehow have worked or had much contact with the Iranians or the Iraqis as a collective entity?

BOSWORTH: No. Ironically their strongest contact of cooperation was with one of our major allies, Pakistan.

Q: Yes. You get into this question of whether they had violated this nuclear agreement. I guess Assistant Secretary Kelly was there, would be last fall or maybe the year before?

BOSWORTH: No, it was in October of last year.

Q: He goes there and apparently they say to him, yes we did. Well, now you've got the goods on him. Was that going on in a sense all the time during the '90s or they supposedly were.

BOSWORTH: We had I suspected others did as well, but they had retained what you might call a hole card as a bargaining chip. While they froze their facility at Yongbyon which we could verify they might well be pursuing some nuclear activity someplace else. As it turned out they were. Now, we don't know, unfortunately and I don't know how much insight we have into how far along they are. As you may know, there are various paths to developing nuclear weapons. One is a plutonium path, which is the one they were embarked upon previously and which was frozen. The other is a highly enriched uranium path, which is apparently the technology, which they have been pursuing for the last few years.

Q: Is there an argument that if they've lied to us this way, then why should we?

BOSWORTH: Sure.

Q: How did you see, where do we go from here with this problem?

BOSWORTH: I think once our current preoccupation with Iraq is over we're going to have to turn some attention to North Korea. I think that there is reason to have some optimism that we can put together something in the way of a multilateral framework within which to deal with it, but I think in the end we're going to have to sit down and talk directly with the North Koreans. Now, whether they are going to be willing to bargain away their nuclear capability, I don't know. I would have thought six months ago that the answer was probably yes. Now, I'm not certain. Only because I think that they may have, that the only effective deterrent, the only effective instrument of national security for them is a nuclear capability. They are watching carefully what we are doing in Iraq. I think they are not confident that we would not strike at them if they had only their conventional military capability vis-à-vis South Korea. I personally don't believe we would ever attack them simply because the risk for South Korea would be unacceptably high.

Q: You think then that hopefully there can be some kind of arrangement made because there has to be down the road?

BOSWORTH: Yes.

Q: Let me go back and ask you a couple more things about South Korea. Talk a little bit about our economic relationship with them. Do you feel that at least in your time there apart from the economic stabilization issue, what kind of trade volume do we have with North Korea, I mean with South Korea?

BOSWORTH: It's a very important trading partner for I think for us, I think they are the sixth or seventh largest trading partner that we have. The evidence of that trading relationship is increasingly visible in this country. You look around you see KIA automobiles and Hyundai automobiles and Samsung television sets and computers and monitors and they are all over the place.

Q: Do you feel that it's a, I don't know if this is the right word, but that it is a more balanced relationship in the sense that are they a reasonably open trading partner or are there problems like we often have with Japan?

BOSWORTH: We still have some problems with Korea, but far less than we did five years ago. Their barriers to our exports are lower by far than they were. We have a tendency here to measure the value of a trading relationship only in terms of what we export to the other country. We should also be conscious that we get benefit from buying things from other countries. This is certainly true in the case of South Korea.

Q: No, I think that's fair. I think the issue is whether you have a level playing field for our exports, I guess I mean. I'm not so concerned with the numbers.

BOSWORTH: Well, the Koreans would argue that we are not very consistent. For example, we have been concerned over the last four or five years about imports of steel and what that does to our steel industry. We imposed quotas on steel imports last year. Those hit Korea even though we were never able to demonstrate that Korea was doing anything illegal under the WTO to stimulate sales of steel. The fact of the matter is that Korea has probably the most efficient steel industry in the world because they've put a lot of money into it. They argue that our adherence to the rules of free and clear trade is not total.

Q: Those steel quotas that we put on were in essence a function of American domestic policy, rather than an economic question.

BOSWORTH: Exactly. Right.

JOHN ALLEN CUSHING
Economic Officer, Korea Desk

Washington, DC (1998)

Korea Analyst, Bureau of Intelligence & Research Washington, DC (1998-2000)

Mr. Cushing was born in New York City and raised in New York and Hawaii. He graduated from Reed College and continued studies at a variety of institutions in the US and abroad. After service in the Peace Corps, he held a number of positions as English language instructor before joining the Foreign Service in 1988. Mr. Cushing served abroad, variously as Consular, Political, Economic or Public Affairs Officer, in the Dominican Republic, Korea, Benin, Papua New Guinea, and Trinidad & Tobago. In Washington, Mr. Cushing served as Korean Desk Officer. Mr. Cushing was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

CUSHING: While my wife was in the hospital in Brisbane, I was in a hotel. I was on the telephone to the Department of State trying to get another assignment. It turned out that this was just at the start of the Asian financial crisis. They did have something available in the department of Korean Affairs of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. The Korea desk had something as an economic officer. I went to that department.

We moved back to the DC area. We were in a series of temporary apartments. My wife had an extremely difficult time because she was suffering from hyperacusis. She was sensitive to the slightest noise. Her auditory system lost the ability to modulate sounds so it would be sort of like you had your stereo on full blast and then turned it off but you didn't turn down the volume so the next time you turned it on, immediately you'd get this full blast of volume. So anytime a refrigerator motor went on or running water in the sink or rustling a newspaper, it was agonizing for her. She spent the first couple of weeks in this temporary apartment. She was in the linen closet with a bunch of pillows wrapped around her head trying to avoid every possible noise.

Our son quit his job in Portland and came to live with us so that he could take her from one doctor to the next to see if there was anybody who could help. Ultimately, there wasn't.

Suddenly we were back in the United States with a broken assignment and eventually found a good apartment up at McLean Gardens on Wisconsin Avenue, a little bit south of Tenleytown. I worked in the economic section of the Korea desk and I became active in automobile market access negotiations. We had marathon negotiating sessions with the Koreans, run by the U. S. trade representative's office. I also got involved in negotiations on market access for beef and negotiations on a bilateral investment treaty. I was fairly active there.

There was a lot of emphasis on North Korea at the time so I also filled in for various other desk officers in the department of Korean affairs as needed. It was good. I was able to keep busy.

Q: What were some of the issues?

CUSHING: Well, monitoring North Korean compliance with the Agreed Framework. There was this deal where they would ostensibly shut down their nuclear reactors and put the fuel rods in

cans and put the cans under water and, in exchange, KEDO, the Korean Economic Development Organization, which was a consortium of South Korea and Japan, would build them light water reactors in North Korea to provide them with safe nuclear energy. But there was not going to be any way they could reprocess it, the fuel rods and so forth. So it was a very complicated agreement that was worked out under Bill Clinton. So that was still going on so we would be sending people to North Korea to work on that.

We did a lot with the Republic of Korea on their economic recovery, monitoring how well they were recovering from the Asian financial crisis and so forth.

Q: What was your impression?

CUSHING: They did very well. It was unfortunate that the International Monetary Fund had this sort of Procrustean Bed arrangement with all countries. A lot of small companies in South Korea went out of business because they couldn't get access to credit. It was a very draconian approach and it didn't have to be that draconian in Korea but the new president, Kim Dae Jung handled the crisis fairly well and so they were out of the worst of it within about 18 months. There were a lot of problems but they did OK.

Interestingly, during the beef market access negotiations the Koreans had a number of very discriminatory practices against imported beef from the United States. They would put it in racks in the back of the store next to the bathroom or they would put it way down on the bottom shelf where it wasn't visible or tell people they didn't have any and so forth.

The Korean delegation had this young woman who was the interpreter but the terminology got too complicated for her so I ended up as the de facto interpreter for the Korean side during the beef negotiations. This girl got more and more flustered and so I would speak to them in Korean, "Now is this what you are trying to say?" and then I would tell our side in English, "Well, that's not what they meant. They meant this." That was interesting because I became the interpreter for the Korean side and the U.S. side during the beef negotiations.

Q: How did they come out?

CUSHING: Right after that we had mad cow disease and so they shut all that down again. It was mostly cultural because for Korean beef, there are a lot of small ranchers. They have maybe three or four head of cattle on a farm and they feed them and slaughter them. They simply can't compete with the massive feedlots that are in the U.S. so they could not compete on price and probably not on quality although they said, "No, Korean beef tastes better because it is raised in Korea." The Japanese had the argument that Japanese intestines can't digest American beef. You can't use American skis in Japan because the snow is different, stuff like that. The Koreans came up with all sorts of similar things like, well, under Confucian tradition, a butcher is the lowest of the low so we feel uncomfortable bringing in meat that was butchered by Americans because we don't know what kind of sanitary conditions were used. They were just pulling stuff out of a hat. It was interesting. It was a good year.

I did one year there and then I went up to intelligence and research, INR, and I did a lot of work

on the policies of the Republic of Korea toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea. I ended up doing a lot of research on the northern limit line in the Yellow Sea because there was a line established as part of the armistice but it was not officially included in the agreement. It was an informal understanding that that was what the line was going to be. There is a very lucrative crab fishery in that part of the Yellow Sea.

Q: Is that near Kanghwa? There is an island off the coast. During the Korean War I spent a month sitting there monitoring Soviet airplanes.

CUSHING: I am not entirely sure but I know that there are a bunch of islands that are still occupied by South Korea just off the coast of North Korea and the line is supposed to go above them but the North Koreans were crossing the line to fish for blue crab and so there was a skirmish there in 1999 between North Korean and South Korean naval craft which ended with the sinking of a North Korean gunboat and several casualties. So that was a big issue.

I got involved in a lot of research on law of the sea and maritime boundaries and the status of the northern limit line because that was a fairly important issue while I was there.

I had a fellow there who rewrote virtually everything I ever wrote. I would write something and he would rewrite it entirely and then he would rewrite his own rewrite again. He was constantly rewriting and then when it got into the secretary's morning summary he would say, "That was a good piece you wrote" and I'd just bite my lip because he had rewritten it not only once but twice. I just thought oh, the hell with it. It was interesting and it was good practice in learning how to condense something complicated down to a very short report.

GREG THIELMANN

**Chief, Office of Analysis for Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs, INR
Washington DC (1998-2002)**

Mr. Thielmann was born and raised in Iowa and was educated at Grinnell College and Princeton University. A specialist in Political-Military Affairs, he held a number of positions dealing with such matters as Strategic Proliferation, Arms Control and Missile Programs. He also served abroad at several posts in the capacity of Political Officer and Consular Officer. His last position was Chief, Office of Analysis for Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs in State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Mr. Thielmann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: How did you see a change in raw intelligence that was coming in?

THIELMANN: I would say there was less of a change in raw intelligence coming in than there was in the political spin that the agency put on the raw intelligence. There was a reaction, I would call it an overreaction, in the 1999 estimate to the last time that the intelligence community had looked at this subject, which was 1995. At that time they looked fifteen years out

as they usually do and said that in some senses the coast is clear here that North Korea is the only country with the potential of getting a long-range sort of intercontinental ballistic missile during that timeframe. They said some more specific things about how North Korea would evolve. But what happened after the 1995 estimate was that the North Koreans tested a system, Taepodong I, in 1998, which then in combination with the Rumsfeld condition report on the foreign ballistic missile threat was kind of a team B alarmist version in reaction to what they perceived as an overly sanguine intelligence community look in 1995. The combination of that Rumsfeld commission report and the North Korean test which involved some genuine surprise from the intelligence community because it involved the third stage of the missile. It was actually a device to allow the North Koreans to launch a satellite which failed. But the first and second stages did not fail. I mean they were successful, and it raised all kinds of alarm that any country which can put a satellite in space can essentially put a warhead on the other side of the planet. That's sort of the physics of the matter. It was that third stage and the space launched element which allowed Rumsfeld and the highly defensive intelligence community to do a national intelligence estimate, which took a major turn from what the intelligence community had been saying in 1995. It did so by basically changing some definitions and changing some criteria that were not evident to people other than the specialists. As one example, the time in the evolution of a missile system at which we say that the system is operational or to put it another way that it actually constitutes a threat was changed to move up much closer to the present time than it had traditionally. So all of a sudden in the way that Rumsfeld, or the senior management of the national intelligence council producing the national intelligence estimate, would talk about this these countries that had been distant potential threats became within five years threats. The Rumsfeld commission said that any country that had an infrastructure that could produce a SCUD missile with a range of 300 to 600 kilometers could, within five years of a decision to do so, also produce an intercontinental ballistic missile to throw a nuclear warhead, a claim which in terms of the way it was presented I thought was preposterous. INR that I was representing on the national intelligence committee basically said so. We disagreed with the main thrust of both the Rumsfeld commission report and the national intelligence estimate, which was unfortunately aping what the Rumsfeld commission report said. So you had a little bit of the 1980 sequence of team B taking over the intelligence community and getting it to do things against its better judgement.

From my point of view as a participant in this coordination process, which lasted a period of months, what I saw was what I felt was a consensus around the table by the CIA representative, the DIA representative, the Air Force missile representatives and INR on what kind of things were likely. But somehow at the end of the process, INR was all alone in an opinion dissenting from the majority view. From my biased perspective, what happened was that the missile experts were quite sober and consistent in what they said was technically feasible and technically probable. The pressure by the Republican majority in the Congress and a willingness of the senior leadership of the CIA were such that the intelligence community basically delivered a product that was just what the Republican leadership wanted in terms of justifying moving forward with strategic missile defenses, jettisoning the anti-ballistic missile treaty which would place limits on what we could do on strategic ballistic missile defense. Again from my perspective I saw this as really a corruption of the objective intelligence analytical process and I was of course not in a position to do much about it other than to author part of the dissenting views that INR registered when the 1999 estimate was produced. But I did certainly take note of when that five years within which the Rumsfeld commission said we would be facing a world of

many more ICBM powers would be up.

After I'd retired from the foreign service, I did a somewhat scholarly piece on how wrong Rumsfeld and the intelligence community were. But, even while I had my tour in INR, we could see that some of the alarmist predictions were not coming to pass. One in particular that became public so I can talk about it is that the intelligence community was predicting that North Korea would test an upgrade to that Taepodong I system that so alarmed people. They would test a Taepodong II that would not only have this highly theoretical potential of hitting the United States but would actually have enough throw weight to deliver nuclear warhead to at least Alaska, if not the Pacific Northwest. We dissented at the time and said we didn't think you could say that was likely by the end of the year, by the end of 1999 as they were saying. The end of the year came, it hadn't happened, and, of course, still hasn't happened today that this system has been tested.

Q: Was INR, I mean you but also the powers that be, were you able to be independent or did you feel pressure?

THIELMANN: We only felt pressure around the table when the intelligence estimate was being discussed. There's considerable pressure there. Some of it desirable pressure to come up with a consensus document, to get rid of some of the quibbling and to get something that is intelligible and coherent. So there is certainly pressure to do that. But there was also a certain kind of pressure around that table because you were dealing with the nation's leading experts on missile aerodynamics, the NSA experts who through signals intelligence had made determinations about capabilities. There's certainly readiness on the part of others around the table to say, "well, who are you guys in the State Department? We have the missile experts." Or "we have the hundreds of people who have been going through these technical analyses" and so forth. But I felt somewhat resistant to that kind of pressure because I knew that we had been educated by some of the same experts on what was possible. What we were really objecting to was the way that the facts and the best judgement of the analysts were twisted, misconstrued in the final product. A lot of it had to do with things as simple as how you phrased the key judgments in the summary of an intelligence estimate -- not so much what was in the body of that top secret code word text but how you presented it -- how did you sanitize this for Congress and for the American public? This estimate was sanitized and presented to the people and it said some things which I judged to be misleading.

Q: Well, was there any, I mean was there a sort of people going at you one. Get with the program! Get with the political thrust! But other ones with you looking them in the eye and saying, I understand what's happened, but this isn't honest.

THIELMANN: There was; both of those views were expressed. In terms of the former, it was a little bit easier to maintain an irascible minority position because everybody knew this is what INR did. INR frequently had dissenting views, and we really didn't care. We really didn't care if we were the only ones at the bottom of the page saying "INR disagrees." Of course from my point of view we were strengthened in that because INR cares more than anything else about being right. Historically speaking, I think INR's record of dissenting views, at least in my experience and I obviously have seen only a small fraction of the estimates during the period I

worked there, but in terms of military technical analysis, I would stack up our record about being right whenever there was dissent. I would say we were usually right when look back historically. Our emphasis was much more on what was likely to happen than what could technically and conceivably happen. Some of this just has to do with the institutional orientations and biases of the organizations. I understand and tolerate and approve of the Defense Intelligence Agency being more interested in worst case analyses.

Q: Well, they have to. This is what they're defending.

THIELMANN: That's right, and that the worst thing that can happen is for them to have underestimated the potential threat and then to lose a war or put the nation in jeopardy and so forth. But our institutional bias was in terms of evidence and what was most likely to happen. We had to serve the senior leadership of the State Department that was concerned with using our very limited diplomatic resources to forestall likely threats to U.S. security and not to orient our diplomatic establishment against what had some five percent probability. So that was our bias, but it did result I thought in allowing us to always emphasize or point out when the others were going beyond the bounds of the probable and were misleading the consumers of these documents into overreacting to something that wasn't likely to happen. So that is why I think INR has historically developed a good record at being right or more right than often the majority was and why, when INR once again was going to dissent on a document, some of the others sort of shrugged their shoulders rather than trying to talk us out of it.

Q: Going back to this trip you took, were you getting a feel for the Japanese and South Koreans on missile development by North Korea because for them this was sort of the soul of their existence. I mean, what were the North Koreans up to? What were you getting from them or did we know more than they did?

THIELMANN: In some respects we did know more than they did, and there was sometimes a delay in the Japanese getting information that they thought was critical from us. In some cases it was information that we ourselves only through analysis months after an event understood fully what the North Koreans had done with missile tests. One in particular involved a Nodong missile that actually overflowed Japan or the water between the Japanese islands. That was one of those cases that we ourselves didn't realize at the time when there was a lag between the Japanese finding that out. Both in the case of Korea and Japan there was considerable apprehension about the North Koreans. Ironically, the main thrust of my remarks during the trip was to remind our interlocutors that some of the tone they received from the CIA representing the U.S. intelligence community did not reflect our own assessments of foreign ballistic missile developments. That is we had a somewhat more sanguine -- that's an overstatement, but let's say a less alarmist view of what was going on in missile developments than the majority opinion reflected in the briefings of the CIA and the other presentations that our allies encountered. So obviously in the case of South Korea and Japan, we were not going to try to talk them out of their anxieties. But we were trying to present as objectively and as factually as we could the pace of the North Korean program, the problems in their development program and not to present or imply as likely developments things that we felt were unlikely in terms of the speed with which the North Koreans could

progress on their long range missile development program.

Another part of this trip that I should mention though is, because of a coincidence in time, we were actually in embassy Seoul at the time when the first overland convoy to Pyongyang left the embassy. Just by coincidence I was there on the day this convoy left the embassy and then proceeded through the DMZ on its way to Pyongyang on the ground for talks that were setting the stage for a later visit by Secretary Albright to North Korea, which in turn we thought at the time were setting the stage for a presidential meeting with Kim Jong-il, which we had the feeling at the time would actually have allowed for a deal on stopping the North Korean long range ballistic missile program and their nuclear weapons program. But of course the election intervened and President Clinton spent his last weeks trying to get Middle East peace rather than trying to seal a deal with the North Koreans. Conventional wisdom at the time certainly was that the North Koreans would only make a deal if the president were personally engaged. Then of course the presidency changed, and the new Bush administration came in, and their approach to North Korea wouldn't be the Clinton approach even though they weren't quite sure what it would be.

Q: Well, you had the feeling that they backed out of all Middle East stuff. They weren't going to get burned by that.

THIELMANN: Right.

Q: If you let go it burns.

THIELMANN: Yeah, and the President repudiated Secretary Powell in I think March of 2000 when he basically said publicly that the U.S. would continue to try to engage the North Koreans. Within 24 hours the White House told the public that that was not the case. Then by my accounts for the remaining portion of my time in the State Department there was great incoherence in U.S. policy. Every time coherence started to form, there would be opponents of whatever approach or policy we wanted to adopt that would prevent it from jelling. In effect, the way I would characterize it, there really was no Korea policy other than sort of obstreperousness and derogatory remarks, public remarks on our part about the nature of the North Korean regime.

Q: On that, John Bolton was very much in that, wasn't he?

THIELMANN: Well, he was. Bolton would publicly discuss the tyranny in Pyongyang and both make comments and express policy perspectives that infuriated North Koreans and led to them labeling him as human scum and other non-diplomatic terms that were sort of probably a reciprocity for his own characterizations of North Korea. We did get the feeling on Korea that of all of the issues in which INR expressed its opinion of what was going on both politically and technically almost, the most sensitive in terms of the new head of the bureau, Carl Ford, were our views on the Korean nuclear program. I would not say that there was really political pressure to change our assessments. But we got a lot of coaching about the way we needed to say things so they would not be dismissed out of hand by the consumers of the information in the White House and elsewhere in the interagency communities. What it told analysts I think was that there were such strong feelings about, let's say the inequity of the North Koreans or the folly of seeking to

negotiate with them that were clearly coloring the way the information would be received. I'd probably have to concede in this case--and this is one of the very few exceptions--that INR may have pulled its punches a little bit -- not so much at the analyst or office director level, but at the senior INR level -- about the way assessments of Korea were formulated because of the sensitivities. One can say that that's one of the values of having someone like Carl Ford in charge. He understood the sensitivities, but there's a little bit of regret also that by pulling one's punches the information may not have been as crisp or as easily understood as it should be.

MARK E. MOHR
Department of Energy
Washington, DC (1999-2005)

Mr. Mohr was born in New York and raised in New York and New Jersey. He was educated at the University of Rochester and Harvard University, where he studied the Chinese language. After service in Korea with the Peace Corps, he joined the Foreign Service in 1969, and served abroad in Taipei, Taichung, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Beijing and Brisbane. In his service at the State Department in Washington, Mr. Mohr dealt primarily with Far East Affairs. After his retirement he worked at the Department of Energy on Nuclear energy matters. In 1997 he was recalled to the State Department, where he worked as Korean desk officer. Mr. Mohr was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

MOHR: Fortunately, a position opened up in the Department of Energy (DOE), working on the spent fuel part of the AF. The North Koreans, at their reactor in Yongbyon, had produced over 6,000 spent fuel rods. They contained enough plutonium for several nuclear bombs. They were stored at the bottom of a pool at a facility next door to the reactor. It turns out that water is an excellent insulation against nuclear radiation. So under the AF, the North Koreans allowed a team of experts from the U.S. to transfer the spent rods to canisters, then seal the canisters under U.N. supervision. Within the USG, DOE was assigned the task of canning the spent fuel rods. The officer in charge of this at DOE got promoted in 1999, and went to another job. We had been having trouble at State coordinating our policy with DOE, so I argued successfully with Ambassador Kartman that he should transfer me to DOE to work on the spent fuel canning project. I could communicate easily with the Korea desk, so coordination between the two departments would be vastly improved. DOE agreed, so in the fall of 1999, I transferred over to the Department of Energy.

By 2001, with the advent of the Bush administration, it was clear the AF was in trouble. During the first NSC meeting on North Korea, the leading White House official declared if North Korea did not live up to its obligations under the AF, the U.S. would suspend its funding of the LWRs. We had to point out to him that the South Koreans and Japanese were funding the LWRs, not the U.S. Eventually, by 2002, the Bush administration discovered that the North Koreans were cheating on the AF, by starting up a uranium enrichment program. This was probably true, but the uranium enrichment program was in its infancy, so the proper thing to do was to tell the North Koreans: we caught you cheating, now stop it. Instead, we stopped the shipments of HFO,

punishing North Korea for its cheating. The North Koreans reacted by declaring the AF null and void, kicking out the U.N. inspectors at Yongbyon, unsealing the canisters, and removing the spent fuel. They then began reprocessing the rods and extracting the plutonium. Eventually, they tested some nuclear weapons, beginning in 2006. So the Bush policy, described as brilliantly tough by its advocates, only succeeded in going from a situation whereby North Korean nuclear material was completely under our control to one whereby the nuclear material was completely back in the hands of the North Koreans. We allowed North Korea to become a nuclear weapons state. It was an incredibly disastrous U.S. policy. However in Bush's second term I believe he finally "got it" by giving Secretary of State Rice the green light to try and restart negotiations with the North Koreans under Ambassador Chris Hill. By then it was probably too little, too late. I believe North Korean leader Kim Jong Il felt Bush was hostile to him, so he (Kim) would never really engage with Bush. North Korea was left with nuclear weapons, and even now, the negotiations are not back on track.

By 2005, since North Korea would not come to the negotiating table, my job at DOE was reduced to supervising grants to various non-governmental organizations which would hold seminars on ways to reduce nuclear tensions in Northeast Asia. Finally, DOE abolished my job, in the summer of 2005. You are really in a strange position when someone abolishes your job and you agree with them. So I left DOE, and got a job at the Woodrow Wilson Center in D.C., organizing seminars involving leading scholars on China, Japan and Korea.

Q: What was happening in Pyongyang, I mean what was it like to go there?

MOHR: Interesting question. The first time I went to Pyongyang was in 1998. Coming into the city from the airport, it was as if a neutron bomb had exploded. There were literally no people anywhere along the highway into the city, and no cars, except for ours, on the road. In the city, buildings seemed deserted; you couldn't see people on the street. Traffic police were stationed at intersections, but there was no traffic. Occasionally, a bus would appear, but there were no cars. On the television, there were only two channels. Both played reports of Kim Il Song meeting world leaders. This was particularly creepy, since Kim Il Song had been dead for four years. Needless to say, television was not a means of entertainment.

Essentially, our U.S. delegation was under "hotel house arrest." It was explained to us clearly that we could only wander outside the hotel for one block, and if we wished to do so, we had to stop off at the hotel's coffee shop, where there would be someone assigned to watch us at all times. If we wanted to go outside, we had to be escorted by the "minder." Also, if we were to use the services of the minder, we had to provide the minder with a meal, no matter what time it was. I thought this outrageous, so I remained in the hotel. Each year from 1998 to 2002 when I went back the city was becoming more populated, and things got more lively. By the last visit in 2002, things were almost normal. There were people on the streets, and people eating in restaurants.

Q: Well did you just sit around? There must have been other western or other guests in the hotel sitting around too.

MOHR: Yes, there were, and we would chat, so that was a bit of a diversion.

Q: What did you do, ordinarily, take a book?

MOHR: Yes, we read a lot. But during the day, we were in negotiations, and after work, there were usually official dinners. And each trip lasted only three-four days. I mean, no one wanted to spend an extended amount of time there. One time, I almost got in trouble. I brought a mystery book, set in South Korea. While reading it, I became alarmed that the plot involved a rogue Navy SEAL, who was employed by North Korea as a spy to discover the location of U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea. I was afraid that if the North Koreans read the book—since I had no doubt that they searched our rooms while we were in negotiations—they would feign outrage and not let me leave. Fortunately, they never said anything about the book.

Q: But overall, you never could get close to them.

MOHR: That's correct. It was much like dealing with the Chinese in the 1970s. There was no real personal interaction.

Q: OK, when you left how did things stand with North Korea?

MOHR: By 2005, things were sort of in limbo, much in the same way as they are today. As I said, the North Koreans were in control again of their spent nuclear fuel, and were on their way to reprocessing it, extracting the plutonium, and testing nuclear weapons. The only good thing about the situation was that we knew North Korea did not have the technology to miniaturize the nuclear bombs to fit their missiles. Thus, their nuclear weapons program did not represent an immediate threat because they had no delivery system for their weapons. Unfortunately, the Obama administration has too much on its plate now, with wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq, fighting Al-Qaeda, and dealing with Iran, to focus on North Korea. This is too bad. Now, I don't believe North Korea represents an international threat. The people who suffer most are probably the North Koreans themselves. The regime has made it clear that it cares about security and the military first, and if there is not enough food, and people starve, too bad. It is a tragic situation, and I wish the current administration would devote a little more attention to it.

Dealing with the Bush administration on North Korea helped me put my overall career in perspective. For most of my career, I dealt with China policy. We always had the support of the White House. I thought this was the norm, because I didn't know anything else. Dealing with the Bush administration on North Korea, I never had the support of the White House. I was tremendously frustrated and disappointed. But in looking back over my whole career, I realized how lucky I was. For the most part, I was allowed to contribute to the positive advancement and improvement of U.S.-China relations. When I started out, in the 1970s, there had been a war over Korea, and a war with Vietnam was in progress. Nixon established ties with China, and Carter normalized those ties, but who knew what would happen? Now, a third war in Asia, or a war with China, seems extremely remote, if not impossible. I am greatly satisfied with my career, even if the last few years working on North Korea produced no results.

JOHN ALLEN CUSHING

**Korean Language Studies
Seoul (2000-1001)**

**Political Officer
Seoul (2001-2004)**

Mr. Cushing was born in New York City and raised in New York and Hawaii. He graduated from Reed College and continued studies at a variety of institutions in the US and abroad. After service in the Peace Corps, he held a number of positions as English language instructor before joining the Foreign Service in 1988. Mr. Cushing served abroad, variously as Consular, Political, Economic or Public Affairs Officer, in the Dominican Republic, Korea, Benin, Papua New Guinea, and Trinidad & Tobago. In Washington, Mr. Cushing served as Korean Desk Officer. Mr. Cushing was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

CUSHING: Then I went to Korean language school in Seoul from August of 2000 to June of 2001. It was a very rigorous program. There were a couple of Australians and a fellow from New Zealand. The Korean language school in Seoul had one supervisor and three language teachers and we had an agreement where we would take students from the embassies of the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, anyplace that also spoke English. So we had a couple of Australians, a fellow from New Zealand, it was a pretty small group. I think there were eight students for three teachers so it was very intense. We'd have four hours of class every day and at least four hours of homework. I studied hard every day.

The Australian woman ended up getting a Korean boyfriend and so she learned her Korean that way. She eventually married the fellow.

One of the other Americans had a series of Korean girlfriends so he learned Korean that way. I was dropped into the second year. They waived the first year because I had already had Korean language in the Peace Corps so they dropped me into the second year. We had to read newspaper articles everyday and then report on the articles and discuss them in Korean and it was very rigorous. We'd have class from 9 to 3 and then I'd come back and study from 3 until about 9 at night so it was tough.

We took a study trip in the fall. We were supposed to go off and do an independent study trip, so I took a trip to a number of coal mining towns in the northernmost province on the east coast, Kang Won Do, which is where I had been in Peace Corps so I toured the coal mines. I went deep underground at one coal mine and went along with the miners to the end of the seam. We all had these coveralls and helmets with flashlights on the helmets and so forth and got completely coated in coal dust.

The coal mining industry in Korea was moribund. It was about to close down. It was interesting because it had been very active when I was there in Peace Corps.

Q: The north had coal, didn't it?

CUSHING: The north has coal; the south has a lot of coal too. They've got more than they know what to do with. They just don't need it as much anymore. They've got nuclear reactors; all their locomotives are diesel, and very little charcoal is used for heating houses or cooking, so I think they pretty much closed down their coal industry. They were running on government subsidies for a while. I think at one point they were thinking of donating coal to North Korea simply because they had more than they could use. A lot of coal mining towns up in the mountains are ghost towns. The whole town has moved away.

The one thing they did try to do was they built a casino there which was the one place in the whole peninsula where Koreans could go to gamble. So they were getting a lot of people from Seoul coming up there to gamble and so forth. A lot of times they gave the coal miners early retirement and bought their houses and encouraged them to try to find something else to do.

I took another study trip in April of 2001 to Ulleungdo, which is an island off the east coast. They have had a significant loss of population there now. There used to be 30,000 people and now there are 12,000. They grow pumpkins and do a lot of squid fishing and other fishing. They are not too far from the Liancourt Rocks, which they call Dokdo and the Japanese call Takeshima, which are these rocks that are under dispute about who owns them. That was interesting too. I spent a week there, traveled around there. I hiked up to the highest mountain; I took a boat trip around the island and so forth. Also during my year of language study, I took music lessons on the Korean flute. I had a good year studying language.

Q: That was what year?

CUSHING: That was August of 2000 to June of 2001. We had various visitors; we had General Pak Sun Yup who had been the youngest Korean general in the Korean War who was sort of an elder statesman. We visited the Korean national cemetery, we visited the graves of Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee and so forth, did various museum trips too. I studied really hard. Being in language school there wasn't any such thing as taking a day off. You had the assignment and you had the homework and sometimes I would be the only student with the teacher so you couldn't just come in and say "I didn't do the assignment" because that's what you had to be doing. You couldn't just sit there and struggle through it making stuff up because the assignment had been given the night before so you had to do it so there I was.

CUSHING: I came into the embassy and the very first thing we encountered was a crisis related to the trafficking in persons report because there was a mandated report that had to cover every country, there was mandated legislation by Congress. You had to do a report on trafficking of persons in each country. In Korea there were a lot of Filipina and Russian girls working near the U.S. military bases, working at the nightclubs right outside the military bases. There were not many Korean girls still working there so they brought in girls from the Philippines, girls from Russia and so forth and they were being kept in abusive conditions. They were recruited in the Philippines and they were told they would be singers and dancers and so forth and then they were forced into prostitution.

The political officer just before me had attempted to work with the Korean government to get information for the report and all they said was, "We don't have this situation. We don't have a problem. I don't know why you keep bothering us. We have nothing to say to you." He was forced to say, "The problem exists, but the Korean government denies it exists." So they were ranked in the lowest possible category. They were in tier three of three tiers which is 'Refuses to acknowledge the problem and is not taking any steps to correct it' and so my first day there I was getting these frantic calls from Washington, DC asking, "Can you find out anything the Koreans have done to address the problem of trafficking in persons because otherwise they will end up in tier three and the assistant secretary doesn't want them to be in tier three. It's a big crisis." There was nothing I could do.

The next day the report came out and Korea was listed in tier three. They were outraged. I was getting all these outraged telephone calls from the Korean government saying why did you put us in tier three? It later came out that China and Japan had been informally warned a year before that they had to take some steps to correct the problem or they would end up in tier three. So the Chinese were warned, the Japanese were warned, 'Look, there is a TIP report coming out, trafficking in persons, TIP. If you don't do something, you will end up in the lowest level.'

The Koreans were never warned so when they found out that the governments of China and Japan had been warned and had been given a year to take some steps, they were outraged. Since I was the political officer who had that portfolio, I was getting these outraged calls from all these Korean government officials saying, "Why did you do this?" It was my second day on the job.

So I formed an interagency task force with the Korean government; the minister of justice, the minister of immigration, human rights council and so forth and so within a year, I was able to get them promoted from tier three to tier one. I said, "Look, you've got to start prosecuting these people."

I also worked with the labor attaché of the Filipino government. He was working with his own government. He had a problem there, because to get a working visa, an entertainer's visa from the government of the Philippines, these girls had to take an exam where they would sing a song or dance or something. They were sending in ringers to sing a song for them under a false name. They would send in someone to sing a song and then a little money would change hands and they would get the entertainer's visa.

We would visit these different entertainment areas around the military camps and talk with the girls. The owner of the establishment would say, "This is outrageous. I treat them very well. Yes, I have all their passports in my safe because they might lose them. You know how Filipinos are with money so I am keeping all their wages in one savings account under my name and when it is time, I will pay them. No, I am not starving them. They have instant noodles whenever they want. I give them an hour every Sunday to go to Mass. These girls aren't unhappy. Someone has been lying to you."

I worked together with a young fellow from the Russian embassy and we'd go out and talk to the girls from the former Soviet Union, find out what they were doing. A lot of Russian girls ended up marrying American soldiers and going to live in the United States so that was a pretty good

deal for them

Within one year working with different ministries of the Korean government I was able to get them turned around and up into tier one in the next TIP report and so Secretary Powell cited Korea as a success story.

Then we had the 2002 presidential elections, which started out with about 20 candidates. We had the Grand National Party of Lee Hoi Chang and we had the Millennium Democratic Party of Kim Dae Jung, so I covered that extensively. I interviewed all the candidates. The ambassador invited the major candidates to his residence for breakfast.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

CUSHING: The ambassador was Thomas Hubbard. Steven Bosworth was the ambassador during my year in language school but he left just as I came in. Ambassador Hubbard arrived in Seoul on the night of September 11, 2001. Just as he got off the plane, the twin towers were attacked. That was his introduction to Seoul. He was a good ambassador, very nice guy, patient, very good guy.

I covered the 2002 presidential elections. I wrote about 100 cables all told and got a nice cable from Assistant Secretary Kelly praising me for my work. That summer two school girls were run over by an American-armored vehicle during maneuvers. They were walking along a road and there was this armored vehicle where the observer and the driver were two different people. The driver couldn't see anything and the observer had to be on the lookout and somebody missed these two girls. They were about 13, 14 years old so these two girls were crushed to death under the treads of this vehicle. At the time it was the World Cup and Korea was doing very well in the World Cup so this kind of got pushed to the background.

After the World Cup was over, the Korean government said, "We want to try these two American soldiers in our court system" and the American government said, "No. Under the Status of Forces Agreement we will try them." They were both tried and the defense of the observer was "the intercom was working, I saw the girls, I screamed 'stop, stop' and the driver didn't stop. The defense of the driver was "the intercom wasn't working and I didn't hear anything and so I ran over the girls." Here are these two completely contradictory defenses and yet they were both acquitted. So they were both acquitted and left the country and the Koreans were outraged.

There were massive demonstrations that went from August all the way through December of 2002. There were candlelight vigils, they would have to ring the American embassy with police buses bumper to bumper and they'd have riot police outside of them. There were huge, huge demonstrations.

I went out and covered them by pretending to be a foreigner who didn't speak English. I would work my way through the police lines and kind of stand in the back during the speeches and memorize the speeches and collect the leaflets and the posters and so forth. The DCM said, "Well, I don't really like what you are doing. If I ever see you on TV you will be out of the

country. If I ever see you on television or I hear that you said anything, you will be finished in this embassy” but I continued to do it and never got caught. I’d go to these candlelight vigils at night.

I also observed a number of strikes, scuffles between workers and the police and so forth. There were issues with foreign workers because a number of Korean industries that technologically just should have been shut down because China was already more competitive, were being kept alive by bringing in foreign workers from say Mongolia or Sri Lanka or just any number of, countries, also the Philippines. They would bring in these foreign workers as trainees. The theory was they were there as trainees so they didn’t have to be paid the minimum wage and so there were a number of small industries in plastics and various other little factories that were being kept alive by using foreign workers. Human rights groups were saying, “Oh, these workers are being abused” and so forth. I got involved in that issue also.

Under the new government of Roh Moo Hyun they were reforming labor laws because after the economic crisis a lot of workers had been brought back in as part time contract workers, did not have the same rights as regularly employed workers and so there was a lot of tension there between the unions and the government.

The unions had assumed that Roh Moo Hyun was going to be on their side because he ran on a platform of moderate anti-Americanism. This was right during the whole brouhaha about the two girls being crushed to death. He said, “By God, when I am president, no American is going to run over two Korean citizens and get away with it.”

So he was elected and not too long after that he was impeached in the National Assembly for supposedly speaking out in favor of his political party, because the president is not allowed to make political commentary so he was suspended from office and impeached and so I covered that also.

I was also the control officer for Dr. Kissinger when he visited to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Korean War. It was an active time.

Q: How stood relations? There had been earlier a new generation that had come along and was no longer as, you might say grateful or appreciative, of what the United States had done.

CUSHING: When I was there, there was this radical Catholic priest, Father Moon, who held demonstrations in a small park about a block away from the Korean embassy, and their complaint was that the United States had conspired with the Soviet Union to divide Korea, so it was the United States’ fault that Korea had been divided.

Also in Bush’s State of the Union address he named North Korea along with Iraq and Iran as part of an “axis of evil.” No one had bothered to check with the State Department on that. We were listening to the State of the Union address and he referred to North Korea as part of the ‘axis of evil’ and so our jaws kind of dropped there and the Koreans were miffed because they were trying to get all warm and fuzzy with North Korea and they said, “Oh, look. Now you hurt their feelings. It’s going to make it harder for us.”

There was a lot of sympathy for North Korea as sort of a misunderstood family member who, if treated with loving kindness, would come around. Kim Dae Jung had the sunshine policy. He had a summit meeting with Kim Jong Il in summer 2000. It turned out the administration of Kim Dae Jung transferred secretly about 100 million dollars to Kim Jong Il in order to have the summit meeting. So essentially, Kim Dae Jung was paying Kim Jong Il 100 million dollars to allow the south to send them free rice and free fertilizer, which is sort of the same thing that I saw in New Guinea. OK, you can build us a free school and a clinic but you have to compensate us for loss of use of the land. Same kind of thing.

There were older Koreans who remembered the war and often when there was a large, anti-American demonstration at one point there would be a pro American demonstration several blocks away with Korean War veterans, Koreans who had served in the South Korean army during the war and were grateful to the Americans, and they would be waving American flags and saying God bless President Bush and so forth.

There is a statue of MacArthur on top of a hill in Inchon and there was a movement to remove the statue. People were saying "This is an anachronism of the Cold War, we're going to take it down, and we don't need it." These Korean War veterans formed a ring around the statue, saying, "We love General MacArthur and if you are going to take the statue down, you are going to have to kill us first."

The older generation was dying out. The younger generation was resentful of the military presence, which has since been scaled back and also they are moving out of that huge base in Yongsan in the heart of Seoul, moving farther south and they are pulling a lot of people off the demilitarized zone.

Q: What were the North Koreans doing? Were they doing anything to sort of play up to this? One has the feeling they are not the most subtle people in the world.

CUSHING: They were allowing family visits. People would send in applications to the Red Cross. The North and South Korean Red Cross would work together so they had these, limited reunions; there was a resort area in the north, just north of the demilitarized zone with this really famous mountain, Kum Kang San, and Hyundai Corporation set up a resort there with hotels and had these very tightly restricted tours where they'd come in by ship and stay on the ship and tour the mountain and go back to the ship and later they started allowing them in by bus but all the workers at the resort were Koreans from China. They wouldn't allow North Koreans to work there. They held family reunions at this resort at Kum Kang San. Families from the south would be allowed to go up there and selected families from the north that had been divided would go there so they had these very dramatic reunions, but on a very limited scale. The north sent a few family groups down to the south to meet, but took pains too to make sure they didn't get a look at Seoul or anything. They would be bused to these rather isolated resorts where they would meet family members from the south but there was absolutely no political discussion whatsoever and they were not allowed to exchange any presents of real value or anything. That was kind of the one concession the north made. They allowed these very tightly restricted groups of tourists into a small part of North Korea.

They started an industrial zone near the North Korean town of Kaesong where the South Koreans would bring in the raw materials and the supervisory staff and they would employ North Koreans who would be paid three or four hundred dollars a month and the North Korean government would keep all but \$50 of that. The North Korean worker would end up with \$50 a month and the North Korean government would get \$350 of his wages. There was this joint cooperative industrial area, there was limited tourism and there were limited family reunions. There was a sunshine policy under Kim Dae Jung based on Aesop's fable of trying to get the winter coat off a man. The sun and the wind saw a man wearing a really heavy coat and so they made a bet. The wind said, "I bet I can get that coat off him." So the cold wind blew harder and harder and the harder it blew, the tighter the man clutched his overcoat. The sun said, "OK, now it's my turn." So the sun shone on the man, he got hotter and hotter and finally he took off the overcoat.

So President Kim Dae Jung said, "My sunshine policy is based on the philosophy that if you are nice to these people they will come around. All you have to do is be warm and fuzzy and send them rice and fertilizer and they will appreciate it and they'll help us." Finally, in 2007, Korea elected a president that said, "This is bullshit."

I finished at the embassy in Seoul in May of 2004 and the person who was my wife at the time had an aversion to cold weather, being rather thin and sensitive to cold. So I had an opportunity to study two years of Chinese language and then go to a posting in Chengdu, but when she read the post report, she read that it was often cloudy and gloomy. The winter days were short and cold and cloudy and the winter nights were long and cold and cloudy so she said, "I'm not going there," so...

Q: Was Chengdu Harbin or Mukden?

CUSHING: No, Chengdu is down in the southwest of China. That is where the rioting mob trashed the principal officer's residence after the bombing in Belgrade where the three Chinese "reporters" were killed.

At any rate, once again misfortune struck. Back before we went to Port Moresby, we had a chance to go to Costa Rica but she said, "Oh, we've already been to Guatemala. Let's not get stuck in a rut in Central America." So we went to Port Moresby where she was attacked and almost killed. So once again she said, "Oh, I don't want you to study Chinese for two years and then go to Chengdu because it is dark and cold."

DONALD P. GREGG
Visit to North Korea
April and November 2002

Ambassador Gregg was born and raised in New York and educated at Williams College. Joining the Central Intelligence Agency in 1951 he served with that Agency in Korea and Japan, as well as in Washington D.C. both at CIA

Headquarters and in The White House, where served as National Security Advisor to President George Herbert Walker Bush. In 1989 he was nominated to be Ambassador to South Korea, where he served until 1993. Ambassador Gregg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Sort of confidence building.

GREGG: That's right, and the Bush people moved the tough things right up to the front, which is troop disposition along the DMZ and so forth. So they laid out the basis on which they would resume contacting the North, and the North didn't respond, and then came 9-11. So then the North Koreans approached me in the fall of 2001 saying we are getting nowhere with the Bush administration. Why don't you come to North Korea and talk to us. I said, "I can't really anoint myself to do that. Why don't we figure out something better than that." So we agree to four former ambassadors were going to go, under the leadership of Bob Scalapino, an renowned orientalist from (University of California) Cal Berkeley who had been to North Korea before. It was going to be Jim Laney, Bill Gleysteen...

Q: Jim Lilley?

GREGG: No I don't think it was going to be Jim Lilley.

Q: Dixie Walker?

GREGG: No. Yes, Dixie Walker. So then we were planning to go in February of 2002, and then came Bush's State of the Union speech in which he made North Korea part of the axis of evil. That trip went down the drain. So I went to a conference in the UK on the future of Japan. This was at a place, not Ditchley, but a similar conference center run in part by the British Commonwealth office. Very good conferences. There were a number of Europeans there.

I was appalled at their attitude toward 9-11. Not the Brits, but the French, the Dutch, the Swedes, the Swiss, and their attitude was well now you know what we have been dealing with in terms of Bader Meinhof and the Red Brigade. You know, what is the big deal. Don't over react. What is so special about you. For them to lack any understanding of the impact of 9-11 on the United States, I thought my gosh, if these people don't understand where we are, there is no way in the world the North Koreans can know. So I felt motivated to write Kim Jong Il a letter saying that your weapons, missiles and nuclear matters have become of huge concern to us because we have been attacked by people who would love to get their hands on the kinds of things you possess, and use them against us. That is why we are so concerned, and we really need to talk about this. It was about a three-page letter. I took it to one of the, a man named Lee Good who was the ambassador, the number two ambassador to the UN. He said to me, "How dare you write a letter like this to my chairman. Who do you think you are. Very Korean reaction." I said, "I am writing this letter to him because I think I understand how his mind works, and he needs to know this." He said, "How do you know how his mind works?" I said, "Well I have talked to George Toloroya who sat with him for several days on a train when he went to see Putin and had a long talk with him. I talked with Chinese who were with him when he visited a Buick plant in Beijing or in Shanghai. This is the kind of thing we have to do in North Korea. I have talked to Kim Dae

Jung at great length about his visit with him, and I have talked to Madeleine Albright about her visit. They all add up to a very intelligent man who is trying to lead North Korea in some new directions.” He said, “That is a good answer. I will send your letter.”

So two weeks later I was invited to go. I had not asked permission. I had kept Rich Armitage informed, He is deputy secretary of state, an old friend. He sent me a perfect little note saying Don, thanks for your note. Keep me informed as you desire, blah, blah, Rich. Perfect. The State Department said, “Would you like to have a Korean speaking Foreign Service officer go along with you.” I said, “I’d be delighted.” So they sent a young woman who spoke fluent Korean, and so in we went.

In April of 2002 I had about 10 hours of discussion with Kim Le Gwan who was the leader of the North Korean delegation to the recently completed Beijing talks, and a very hard line general named Ree Chan Dok. My meeting with him is very reminiscent of my meetings in Kwangju.. It started out with the same bristling animosity, and ended up two hours later with saying exactly what they had said, “You have come a long way, and I appreciate your coming.” We wound up understanding each other. He started out with me saying, “Why are you here? You speak first.” I said, “Well, General, I am here because I think you need to know what our frame of mind is. Yesterday I was taken up your Juche Tower,” which is a tower about the height of the Washington Monument. “It is very impressive. How would you feel if you were looking out your window and saw one of your own aircraft fly into that monument reducing it to a pile of rubble and killing everybody on the plane. We say that twice in New York and once in Washington. How would you feel?” I just looked at him. He said, “I think you have lost sight of the fact that the real fighting spirit is in the heart of every soldier.” I said, “I know that. The last thing we ever want is another war with you in Korea.” He said, “It would be a disaster for you.” I said, “Well look what we are accomplishing in Afghanistan without a single heavy artillery piece or heavy tank.” He didn’t like that. But we went on from there and you know, talked very frankly. As I say at the end of two hours we had developed a good deal of respect for each other.

I came back from that trip and wrote something that I sent to the White House recommending that somebody like Bill Perry be sent to North Korea. Well it was interesting. They said, Kim De Wan said, “Why is your George W. Bush so different from his father?” I said, “Well he is a Texan, and his father is a New Englander.” “Why is W so different from Clinton?” I said, “Well you know in a democracy that happens. You have continuity of leadership, so you don’t have to deal with that. Whereas sometimes there is a real turn. I watched one at close range from Carter to Reagan. Clinton to Bush is the same kind of thing.” “So why don’t you understand us better?” I said, “Well, I think because you are the longest running failure in the history of American espionage.” I said, “We couldn’t recruit you people. We could recruit Soviets; we could recruit Chinese.” He sort of swelled with pride. Then this was funny. He said, “Are you wearing your Ops Center hat when you are saying that?” I said, “What?” He said, “You heard me. Are you wearing your Ops Center hat?” I said, “Are you referring to a very bad book by Tom Clancy?” He said, “Yes, of course.” This is what my wife calls an airport only paperback written by Clancy and another guy named Steve Pieczenik called Op-Center. The leading character is called Gregory Dowell. He is former chief of station in Seoul and later ambassador. So it is clearly based on me. So I said, “Well I haven’t read the book. My wife has. Would you like her reaction?” “Yes.” I said, “Well, she doesn’t mind that I die an honorable death at the end of the

book, but she hates the fact that I had a Korean mistress.” That broke him all up. But I tell you that because it shows the sophistication of these people and the depth of their knowledge about us.

So anyway I suggested that there was great mystification as to why one president was so different from another. They realized they had almost had Jimmy Carter as a guest and now they were dealing with a man who referred to them as part of the axis of evil among other things. I said that you could recapture everything that Clinton had by sending somebody with a letter to the North Koreans. They are very anxious for a better relationship. You know, absolutely no response, no acknowledgment to that or anything else I sent to the White House on the subject.

Q: Well do you sense that on this subject that there is a guiding hand? I mean you have national security advisor Condoleezza Rice, you have Colin Powell in the State Department, both of whom seem to be sophisticated and have been around the block and understand. Is it that this is political or visceral? What is happening do you think?

GREGG: Well I think what is happening is that the philosophy of the Bush administration was shaped by a group of people who called themselves, before the election, they called themselves the Vulcans. That is named for the big statue of the god of fire that is on a ridge above Birmingham where Condi Rice grew up. The Vulcans consisted of Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Bill Kristol, Scooter Libby, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice. They were intellectual descendants, particularly Wolfowitz, of the Wohlstetter at the University of Chicago, who felt that we should have been much more preemptive against the Japanese before Pearl Harbor. It is also influenced by another professor, whose name escapes me, who felt that Athens should have been more pre-emptive against Sparta. So this is the doctrine that they sold to Bush, that to maintain our role as the world’s only superpower, we need to be unilateral if need be. We need to go into pre-emptive action, and we need to engage in regime change. I think those are the touchstones and 9-11 seemed to validate it.

There is the President has said you are either with us or against us, and he sees North Korea as evil. Wolfowitz recently, in referring to Saddam Hussein, he said, “Saddam Hussein was in the same category as Hitler, Stalin, and Kim Jong Il. Sooner or later those people are not just content to bring evil down upon their own people. It spills over their borders and they have to be dealt with.” Now the president has distanced himself from that kind of rhetoric. He says he is committed to a diplomatic solution. I heard Secretary Powell give a wonderful speech yesterday after flying down here. He was talking about democracy in Asia and the development of democracy in Asia. He was highly enthused about that. I am very thankful that he has stayed as Secretary of State. I think he gives us some credibility and some substance that would otherwise be lacking. I think he has a very hard row to hoe, but I think he has been given more leeway on Korea. Wolfowitz said in my presence last October, “The State Department is now in the lead on Korea.” That had not been the case in the past. But you still have people like John Bolton who is undersecretary for proliferation who is out there. He is as unpopular in South Korea as he is in North Korea, talking about coercion and sanctions.

Q: The North Koreans have said they won’t talk to him again.

GREGG: Right. I don't think they have ever talked to him. They denounced him in no uncertain terms.

Q: Right now we are going through a period where the North Koreans are sort of challenging us by going ahead with nuclear developments. Is this, how do we read this? What are they doing? What are they after?

GREGG: They are after a changed policy on our part. They are truly concerned about our military intentions toward them. I went to a Track II, six-party meeting in Qingdao last September, hosted by the Chinese. Some of them had been to the previous official six-party talks in Beijing just less than two weeks before. The same ground was covered. The leading Chinese figure there was a woman named Fouying, a very accomplished diplomat. She said, "We all agree, including North Korea, that we want to have a nuclear free Korean Peninsula. We all agree, including North Korea, that where we want to end up is a verifiably nuclear free Korean Peninsula where North Korea's security and economic concerns are adequately dealt with. The problem is we don't know how to get from position A to position B, and that is still the problem because the Bush administration says we will not submit to blackmail. We will not reward that behavior, and the new mantra is CVID, completely verifiably, irreversible dismantlement of all nuclear programs." They want Korea to do what Qaddafi had done. I saw Kelly briefly yesterday, and Colin Powell had said that some progress had been made in Beijing, but it is going to be a long slow process because we and the North Koreans are staring at each other across a chasm of mistrust. In the meantime the U.S.- South Korean relationship is in the worst shape I think it has perhaps ever been. Because the alliance which has been geared to joint opposition to North Korea as the implacable foe, in the wake of the summit of 2000, no longer works because the South Koreans now see the North Korean, these are the younger people at least, as perhaps a long lost brother who has acquired some bad habits and needs rehabilitation and tender loving care rather than punishment. The older Koreans are still very suspicious of North Korea, but the younger Koreans are very accepting of the North. They think the North would never use nuclear weapons against them. They see the United States, many of them see the United States as a greater threat to their ongoing security than North Korea. The relationship is in very difficult shape.

Q: Well you know the great concern is that the North Koreans being hard pressed for money, that there could be leakage of nuclear weapons to a terrorist. That would put the...

GREGG: Absolutely. That is a red line, and I have written the North Koreans. I am in touch with them, and I wrote them when there was a statement hinting that that might happen. When I went there the first time, I said that it is just imperative that you completely distance yourselves from any form of terrorism. They said, "We have already signed two UN measures against terrorism."

So I agreed that could happen and that is our concern. I don't think they had any intention of doing that. The sort of nuclear bazaar that has been run out of Pakistan has been of deep concern on that score.

Q: The North Koreans were at one point you know, selling drugs. Their embassies were selling drugs to maintain themselves. I mean how dire would you say their straits are?

GREGG: Well I think it is somewhat, I have talked at length to people who have been up there delivering food and medicine and so forth. They have allowed market gardens to be cultivated for the profit of the owners. That has improved the food situation to some extent. They had a somewhat better rice crop than last year, but they have cut down all their trees. They have lousy fertilizer, primitive agricultural technique. They are very vulnerable to fluctuations of temperature and rainfall, and so they have a food, they have had a food shortage, and there has been starvation. It is still bad, but it is somewhat better than it was. There is still a great power shortage. But even in my two trips to Pyongyang in April and November of 2002, I saw improvement in Pyongyang in those six months in terms of food stalls in the streets, more cars, so forth. Now Pyongyang is much better than the worst provinces up along the Chinese border are still in very bad shape.

Q: The Japanese factor recently, has that been...

GREGG: Well, I was at another conference in Japan just before Koizumi went to Pyongyang, and we had at this conference, some Chinese who were very knowledgeable of the North Koreans having spent years in Pyongyang. The major concerns on the part of the Japanese were those abductees. The Chinese said, "Oh, they will never admit this." Well Kim Jong Il did admit it. He apparently thought that that would somehow put the issue behind them.

Q: These were Japanese citizens...

GREGG: These were Japanese citizens who were kidnapped by the North Koreans so that they could use them as models top train agents to act like Japanese. Maybe 30 were kidnapped. They allowed some to return to Japan. The Japanese have not returned them. The issue has bubbled up. It has backfired, and the North Koreans are furious at the Japanese and make the point that the Japanese never speak of the tens of thousands of young Korean women they kidnapped and forced to be comfort women for the imperial army. So the, you know the thinking is at some point the Japanese will pay reparations to North Korea. Sort of that money that would be in the billions would help kick start the economy. North Korea, I felt quite comfortable there because I was dealing with Koreans, and I understand the Koreans. It is a terrible regime. It is a repressive regime. It is a brutal regime. The question is how do you get them to stop being repressive and brutal. My suggested solution is to let them develop economically, improve the living standard of their own people, give Kim Jong Il a real chance to survive. I suggested that his role model ought to be Fidel Castro who has presided over a decrepit society but still maintains some degree of respect at home. How he does it I don't know. The South Koreans hope he will be a Deng Xiaoping, a real reformer. I am not sure he is capable of that.

Q: Is somebody talking to Kim Jong Il? I mean you were mentioning Park Chung Hee, you know, who brought him bad news? Do you feel that there is contact with him?

GREGG: Well, yes. Putin refers to him as a completely modern person. They apparently get along quite well. He has got some good give and take relations with the Chinese. He has met a number of South Koreans including Kim de Jong. Everybody I have talked to who has talked to him directly says he is a highly intelligent man. For example, he reads the daily press out of

Korea on the web site every day. He goes to the web site of the Blue House.

Q: That is the White House of South Korea.

GREGG: Yes. He complimented the minister of unification under Kim De Jung saying, "You know, I really am very interested in your write up of Park Chung Hee, because I want to do some of the same things for North Korea that Park Chung Hee did for South Korea in terms of jump starting the economy. So I think he has a recalcitrant military that he has trouble dealing with. I think he has a small coterie of people around him who are fairly enlightened.

End of Reader