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

FREDERICK Z. BROWN

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INTERIVEW

Q: Fred, I wonder if you could give me a little of your background. Where did you come from?

BROWN: I was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, just to the west of Philadelphia on the "main line" in 1928. I went to school at Radner Elementary School in Wayne, Pennsylvania, and then to The Haverford School for eight years, in Haverford, Pennsylvania. My home is actually Villanova, across from the University.

I graduated from The Haverford School in 1946 and spent four years at Yale University.

Q: What was your major?

BROWN: My major was one of those funny, divisional majors. It was called Divisional Major Number Two, which tells you a lot. Literature, art and philosophy. Basically it was a liberal arts degree, an A.B., with a good deal of latitude to take whatever courses I wanted and most of my courses ended up being in political science, international relations, history and English, with a smattering of French and philosophy, music and the required scientific courses. So it was basically a liberal arts degree. I graduated in 1950.

Many in my class were veterans. Very heavy veteran contingent. So I was 18 when I went in and most of the people I was with were 22, 23, 24.

Q: How did you become interested in foreign affairs or the foreign service?

BROWN: My interest in the foreign service began well back in high school when my cousin, a gentleman by the name of Brewster Morris, who eventually was Ambassador to

Chad, but I think more importantly, was, for two tours of duty, the deputy principal officer in Berlin, which equated to the American Ambassador to Berlin during the forties and '50s and '60s, until we established relations with the GDR.

Brewster Morris was my ideal. When he would come home on home leave from Germany, Hitlerian Germany, before World War II, I would see him. Then after the war he served in Moscow, London, Bonn and Berlin. So he initiated my interest in the foreign service. I took classes in high school at Haverford School in international relations. They were my favorite courses. At Yale, international relations was my preferred field.

Two weeks after I graduated from Yale in June of 1950, the North Koreans invaded the South.

Q: You and I have the same patron saint. Kim Il Sung.

BROWN: Yes, in effect my guiding light was Kim Il Sung and Joseph Stalin, and very soon after graduating from college, I was faced with the familiar choice of enlisting in the armed forces or being drafted. I chose to enlist in the United States Air Force in September of 1950.

I spent five years, nine months in the US Air Force. Serving overseas in Libya, for a year and a half; Morocco, for three months; on TDY; and other places--Texas, Georgia and Colorado.

Q: What were you doing?

BROWN: Initially I was an enlisted man. I didn't have time to get a commission. I was overseas by November of 1950 and only when I got back did I go to Officers Candidate School. I started out as the base historian, at Wheelus Field, Tripoli, Libya. It was still under British administration. I was there at the time of Libyan independence.

I was what is known as an "intelligence specialist." I came back to the US in 1952, went to OCS, got a commission as a second lieutenant, and spent almost three years as an officer in Emergency War Plans of the Strategic War Command. I was assigned to a B-47 wing doing photo intelligence, radar prediction, emergency war planning for nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Mostly at the Second Bomb Wing at Hunter Air Force Base in Savannah, Georgia.

Then I got out of the Air Force, went back to school, learned everything I had failed to learn at Yale University, and got a master's degree in political science at the University of Colorado, in Boulder, Colorado in 1957. My concentration there was very heavily into international relations. I did my dissertation on policy making in the National Security Council, which in 1956-57, was not a very old institution. It was something that people hadn't really studied yet. It came into being in 1948, right? So it was only eight years old. Actually Henry Kissinger had written the best material on decision making at that time, a

book called Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, and I was in my masters program, involved in that. I took two semesters toward a Ph.D. at Berkeley, where again I was studying for a general political science Ph.D. but having taken the foreign service written exam in December 1956. In the spring of 1958 I was told that, having taken the oral, either I accepted the appointment into the foreign service or I was indefinitely deferred. So I was faced with the choice in the spring of 1958, of either continuing my graduate work at Berkeley or entering the foreign service with an FSR appointment, which I accepted. I came into the service in April of 1958.

Q: Did you take the basic training into the foreign service?

BROWN: I took the A-100 at the Foreign Service Institute. As I recall it was eight or twelve weeks.

Q: Could you sort of typify the officers who came in with you? What was the outlook?

BROWN: My recollection is that our class was a transitional class away from the traditional Ivy League recruitment that was so familiar to us in the 30's and 40's, into a much more geographically distributed selection. As I recall we were a class of about twenty some people. Virtually all of us, oddly enough, had either a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree from an Ivy League school. But the B.A.'s in the class were very widely distributed all over the country. So it was a class that was beginning to move away from the Ivy League fixation of previous decades.

Q: Were they mostly veterans?

BROWN: A lot of our class were veterans, but by no means, all. Walter B. Smith II and I were the two oldest people in the class. I was 29 and during the A-100 or shortly after, I turned 30. So I was fairly old. In fact I may have been the oldest person in the class. There were a smattering of very young people. Twenty two, twenty three, twenty four years old. But I would say that most of the people in the class were not veterans.

Q: That is a change then. What about minorities and women?

BROWN: We had two women in our class. Don't forget this was the era of tokenism. We had two women in our class, one of them went on to be ambassador, Melissa Wells, to several African posts and maybe at the United Nations, as well. UNESCO, something like that.

I'm trying to think if we had a black American. My recollection is that we did not. I would have to look at my class list. There were several Jewish Americans, but I must say it was pretty much a WASP class, generally speaking.

Q: What was the outlook? Why were you all in and what did you see yourselves doing?

BROWN: This was a pre-Kennedy class. Not pre-historic. Pre-JFK. I would say that our outlook was "enlightened Eisenhower," shall we say. This was the waning years of the Eisenhower administration. As I recall, I am speaking mainly for myself, but I think I was not unique. We had a very strong sense of service. In the good sense of the word. The foreign service as a calling, almost a religious calling. The people that I became close to shared the belief that what we were doing was very, very important and that it was part of a tradition and part of a service calling. We believed in the preeminence of the United States, Americana. I believed in the Strategic Air Command and massive deterrence. I believed in the success of American interventionism in many places around the world. Nobody questioned the correctness of Guatemala, or Iran or some of the other places that we had dipped our hand into in the late forties and early "50s. This was the middle "50s and part of the Cold War's operational current. I can remember one exception, a gentleman who left the foreign service fairly early, Craig Eisendrath, the youngest man in the class, Jewish, from Chicago, public school background. Probably the brightest person, I felt, in the class. The youngest, the brightest, the most avant garde. He was one of the few who would question this basic assumption. But by and large we were fairly conventional. I am sure very unlike the classes that came in in the late "60s.

Q: What were your first assignments?

BROWN: I went right from the A-100 course to sixteen weeks of French. I already had a very strong background in French. And I came out with a 3+ 4.

Q: This is a 3+ in speaking and a 4 in reading.

BROWN: Right. This was to get me off of language probation. The practice at that time was that if you did not have your language proficiency satisfied, you had to go to language training. I only had something like a 1+ speaking in French and I had to go to language school. In the fall of 1958 I was assigned as a personnel technician in the Bureau of Personnel. It used to be in the old building, 19th and Pennsylvania Avenue. In an annex there.

My boss was Bill Harrop, now a distinguished ambassador. Among the others were Joseph Starkey, Joan Clark, still in the foreign service, Sheldon Vance, Phil Chadbourn, Joseph Jova, Ed Rice, who was the Director of Personnel at the time. But my immediate boss at the time was Bill Harrop. Also Thomas Judd. I was in Washington Regional Assignments. PER-WROS. My job was to assist the assignment officers in working out the technical details of assignments from overseas to the State Department bureaus and to other agencies, USIA, Commerce. I did that for a year.

Q: One note. At that time you probably had a hard time getting interest in Washington assignments. Wasn't the majority of the thrust for people to get out?

BROWN: I know most of my colleagues wanted to go overseas immediately. I think I had mixed feelings. In fact, I welcomed the chance to be in Washington because I had been

bouncing around since 1950. In various assignments in the Air Force and then for less than two years in Colorado, and then ten months in Berkeley. My personal feeling, as I recall it, and this is quite a while ago, is that I welcomed the chance to settle down in Washington for personal reasons. So that didn't bother me much. In fact, I had no strong feeling about where I wanted to go.

I was there less than a year. I then went over to be staff aide to William "Butts: Macomber.

Q: Could you talk about him?

BROWN: How many days do we have?

Bill Macomber was one of the most important people in the Department's Dulles era. He was known as one of the pillars of John Foster Dulles' inner office. Butts Macomber was a tough, irascible, bright, difficult man. Known for his instant temper and his intolerance with regard to small and large errors on the part of others. He was at that time, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. This was after Mr. Dulles died, as I recall. John Foster Dulles died in the winter or spring of 1958 or 1959. I moved over into Congressional Relations around July or August of 1959.

We can talk a lot about Butts Macomber. I saw a lot of him later on when he was Under Secretary for Management.

Q: Part of this is trying to get views of people. How did he operate in congressional relations, as you saw it?

BROWN: Macomber actually came from the Hill to the State Department. He was originally on the staff of John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, at a time when Cooper had ambitions for higher office, higher than the senate. So Butts came from a congressionally-oriented background. He believed in a way that Congress was God, and that the State Department and the foreign service were not sufficiently aware of the importance of Congress. It was very interesting because thirty years later, I moved up on the Hill, having retired from the foreign service, and found exactly the same thing. Perhaps we ought to come back to this at some later point with regard to the insensitivity, the naivete of the American foreign service with regard to the legislative branch of our system. And at the time I thought Butts was totally irrational when it came to responsiveness to the desires of Capitol Hill. In retrospect, I now see that he was correct.

Macomber did something that I am sure cannot possibly be done today. He read and edited every single letter that went from the Department of State to a Member of Congress. Every one. Every night at five or six o'clock, we would "do the papers" and at this time we would bring in a stack of papers, perhaps eighteen inches to two feet high, which were the final versions of congressional replies.

You will recall at that time, there was no such thing as word processing. So any time you changed a single character, the letter would have to be completely retyped. There was no instant retype. So it was a really difficult operation.

He would go through the stack of letters and mark up virtually every one. Very rarely did a letter go through without his marking it up. He was an absolute fanatic about responsiveness. We had the two day rule then, which I think is probably not observed now, that any congressional letter must be responded to within forty eight hours. And by God, he enforced it. He would pick up the phone and call an assistant secretary or deputy assistant secretary, not to mention a country director, or whatever they were called then, and just ream that individual out over the phone. He would swear at him, use profanity, bad profanity. He would order them to come up and dress them down. And he had the ability or the power position, in our bureaucracy, to do that. He would humiliate, humiliate the assistant secretaries because of the stupidity in his view of the reply to a congressional letter.

So I did a lot of that. I worked with the deputy assistant secretary, Jock White, and an eminent gentleman whose name I can not pull out of my head right now, who was in charge of foreign aid, as we called it in those days, the AID program. I worked very closely with two of the deputy assistant secretaries on Hill matters.

Macomber ran that shop in a very strong manner.

Q: How did you survive?

BROWN: I survived fine. He never gave me a hard time. Macomber had a wonderful personality in terms of his ability to relate to an individual. He had this blunderbuss side to him but he also had a warm, personalized approach to life. Which I found very appealing. He took a shine to me. Perhaps because he was a Yalie and I was Yalie. All his family was Yale. Perhaps because I had been in the military. I had one vivid memory of Butts Macomber. One afternoon, very late, he always took off his jacket and was there sweating in a white shirt, working away. We started talking about what my background was. This gives you a sense of the mix of personal interest, yet ego, that Macomber had. He said, "Well, Fred. You were in the military, and you went to Yale," and we talked a little bit about my background. Then he said, "How old are you?" And I said, "30." He sort of smirked and he got up and he went over and looked out of the window and puffed on his pipe and he said, " You know, by the time I was your age, I had jumped with the OSS in Europe and I had jumped in Burma, and I had already done this and that." This was on the one hand sort of putting me down but also trying to explain to me who he was. It was a very interesting thing. In other words, "Young man you haven't done a hell of a lot with your life," and I thought I had at age 30. Of course there are people who are presidents of countries these days. But I'll never forget that because it sort of captures Macomber's bittersweet attitude towards people. He is intensely ambitious and hard-driving, but there again, a man who was driven by the concept of service for the country. Absolutely.

Q: You left that to go overseas and your first assignment was where and what were you up to?

BROWN: I left the congressional relations job in July of 1960 and I was assigned as vice consul, deputy principal officer, shall I say, at the American Consulate in Nice, France. That assignment was actually made the year before, when I was still in personnel. And I will never forget, sitting in personnel, as the assignments were being passed around and a gentleman, Phil Chadbourn, who later was chargé in Vientiane, ended his career in Marseille as consul general.

Q: He was there many years.

BROWN: Yes, Phil retired in place. In Marseille. I think he lived in the Riviera.

Phil Chadbourn at that time, in 1959, was head of foreign service training, FST. I remember, Phil Chadbourn coming into my office with someone from Far Eastern Personnel, I can't remember who it was at the time, and sitting down at my desk, and saying, "Fred we have just the assignment for you. We need a couple of bright young fellows to go to a place called Cambodia. Do you know where it is?" I said, "yes, vaguely." "We need somebody to go into Cambodia and language training. It is a fascinating job. It is a very sleepy place, but interesting people. And would you be interested in spending a year in Cambodia and language training?" Well that was about the last thing in the world that I wanted to do. I wanted to mainstream into the things that were really happening. Of course, in retrospect, had I taken Cambodia and language training, I would have been there from 1960 to 1963/4 and it would have been absolutely fascinating. I would have been lined up to go back in the waning days and maybe get killed.

Anyway, I didn't do it. The job I applied for was Kinshasa or one of the constituent posts in the Congo which was then undergoing a pretty bad time. I said, that's where I want to go. I want to go where the action is. I remember Bill Harrop coming in with the assignment sheets for the paneling session and I said, "Hey, did I get the Congo." He said, "No Fred. You don't want to go to the Congo. Where you want to go, is Nice." They handed me the paper and I said, "Well Nice is kind of uninteresting." He said, "Fred, you want to go to Nice."

One of the reasons why, I learned later, that I was assigned to Nice was that I think I was well regarded by the system at the time and the principal officer in Nice at the time was known as, shall I say, not a strong officer. And I think it was thought that what he needed was an energetic, highly motivated, hard charger to go support him. I think it worked out that way. Because I definitely got those vibrations at the Embassy in Paris. So I ended up going to Nice, against my objections.

Well as it turned out it wasn't a bad place to be.

Q: What were you doing?

BROWN: It was a two man post. I'm not sure if it is still there. It has been opened and closed several times since. I really did all of the work. The principal officer was there for representational purposes only and I was vice consul. I did a great deal of classic consular work. A lot of non-immigrant visas, a lot of processing immigrant visas for Marseille, the consulate general issued the immigrant visas. But I did a lot of non-immigrant visas, including some very distinguished people; Rudolf Nureyev. I did his work when he defected from the Ballet Russe. He joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. A lot of protection work. A lot of notarials, a lot of citizen services. We had 3,000 American citizens living in my district, on the Cote d'Azur, which was the province of Alpes-Maritimes, and I can't remember if we had the province to the north. But we had Alpes-Maritimes which was the main one, which contained from the Italian border all the way over to St. Tropez. So it was a rather glamorous district. We had a lot of very interesting people there. Authors, artists of various sorts, singers, etc. But I was also accredited to the Principality of Monaco and in that capacity had the opportunity to see Princess Grace and Prince Ranier a lot. I was then single and I dated the nanny of Princess Grace who was then having her first or second child. Albie or Stephanie, I can't recall. But I saw a lot of the Raniers, dinner at the palace. I also did, in addition to the normal consular work of which there was a great deal, the home port of the Sixth Fleet was there. The Naval Support activity was Villefranche-Sur-Mer and I was charged with the responsibility of working with the Naval Support activity whose office was up on the third floor of the consulate building. So I saw a great deal of the Sixth Fleet, Admiral Donald McDonald and his staff. My closest American friends at that time were the flag rank officers and captains of the Sixth Fleet.

Q: How did you find the naval officers? How was their knowledge of local politics and problems?

BROWN: I found them very enlightened. To be honest with you. There were some people, I guess, who were not so enlightened. But what I liked about Admiral McDonald and his staff was the fact that they relied on me to guide them in protocol matters. And every time there was a new ship in port in Villefranche, or there were port calls at Cannes. And the aircraft carriers used to come into Cannes because that was a bigger, and a wonderful place for shore leave. Much better than Nice, really. Because you couldn't really anchor off Nice, you could anchor off Cannes. I would escort the captains of these vessels or the commanding admiral of the group to calls. I can remember precisely where we would go. If we were in Cannes, we would call on the mayor of Cannes, and the Sub-prefect in Grasse, and if they called in Villefranche, we would call on the mayor of Nice and the Prefect of Alpes-Maritimes, located in Nice. If they called in Antibes or Menton, I would go there, meet the captain and take him ashore and take him to the appropriate people. It was always very meticulously done. Very carefully done. They were very assiduous in their respect for local customs and practices. My recollection is that it worked out very, very well.

Q: Your next assignment was somewhat out of this world. You went to Thailand.

BROWN: Something happened on the way to Thailand. At one of my farewell parties, and I can remember exactly just what one it was, in Cap d'Ailes or Menton, it was a lobster. It was a lovely farewell dinner, as only the people in the Cote D'Azur can offer. Champagne and so on. It was either a lobster or a soupe de pistou, a bouillabaisse, which must have been hepatitic because 21 days after that party, I came down with hepatitis. I spent from July of 1962 until November of 1962 with a very severe case of hepatitis, which delayed my arrival in Bangkok. I was slated to be staff aide to the ambassador in Bangkok, who at that time was Kenneth Todd Young, since deceased. Father of Steve Young who ended up being one of my close colleagues of Vietnam a number of years later. In any event, by the time I got to Bangkok, that position was filled, and I was shunted over to the civilian staff of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, where I was in the intelligence business. What I did was write basically black propaganda, anti-communist propaganda for use in various SEATO publications as part of the paper war conducted by SEATO against Beijing and Moscow. My job was to work with Pakistanis, New Zealanders, Australians, French, Filipinos and do the biweekly background papers and reports of an unclassified nature that were placed in universities and opinion influential locations in an effort to point out how bad the communists were. I n retrospect that was a fatuous, rather nonsensical activity. In fact SEATO had very little reason for existence as an operating entity even then.

Q: How did you see it at the time?

BROWN: At the time I saw it as fatuous. I did. I saw no point in what I was doing.

Q: How about your fellow officers?

BROWN: There were only two or three Americans assigned to the international staff. Deliberately. The head of the international staff at that time was Nai Pot Sarasin, who was a distinguished Thai political figure. He was succeeded by a Filipino general, Vargas, who was nowhere near as effective. But the international staff was generally made up of other countries who were seeking a cushy assignment. Basically, my American colleague who was Françoise Queneau, who had been assigned to Laos, later assigned to Vietnam; Françoise and I did most of the writing of this biweekly what ever it was, intelligence report. The rest of the people did very little. My recollection is that these were political assignments from Manila, from Canberra, wherever. The international civilian staff at SEATO Headquarters was basically there on holiday.

Q: Did the embassy pay much attention to you?

BROWN: They paid as much attention to me as I wanted. Every week I went over to the political section and read the classified material. They kept a safe for me. I would go over there and I would read it. And in some cases I would take that information and rework it

into the SEATO documents that I did. I certainly was well treated at the lower level of the embassy. But to be perfectly honest with you, I was terribly highly motivated in a professional sense to get in with the embassy and to do one thing or another. I am being very frank about this. What I was interested in was Thai culture and getting to know Thailand and having a good time. Because Thailand in the early '60s, for a bachelor, was really like pig heaven. I must say I took advantage of that. I was permitted to teach English at Thammasat University by the director general of SEATO so I did that virtually every morning. Spent some time there. I was a member of the Royal Bangkok Sports Club, so I spent time there in the afternoon, polishing my tennis. I had access to both the SEATO commissary and the American commissary. It was good living. I must say that, to my regret, I did not look upon that time as a way to sort of build my career. Because it was an offbeat assignment. It was not a good assignment for a young foreign service officer who was supposed to be up and coming. The fact that I was picked to be staff aide to the ambassador was indicative of sort of fast track assignment.

I don't know. I lived it up. I had a very good time, traveling around the countryside in the company of an officer with whom I came into the foreign service, Albert A. Francis who ended up being one of the two brilliant Thai language officers in the foreign service. Did you ever know Al?

Q: No I didn't.

BROWN: But that is what I did. I was offered a chance to go to Thai language training out of SEATO. I declined that because I had applied for Russian language training.

My assignment ended early. I left after eighteen months in Thailand. I left in June of 1964 to go to Russian language training. Because in the back of my mind I always had this desire to be a Soviet specialist.

Q: The real stars of the foreign service in the post-war years, even the pre-war years, were the Russian specialists. Was this still the impression you had?

BROWN: Yes, that's where the action was.

Q: Not only the action, but this was the absolute top grade people.

BROWN: Yes, and this is why I went for it. I had been given to believe just exactly what you said. I had come to observe that. The elite were Eastern Europe and Soviet specialists. I wanted to be part of that elite, and I was told that the chances of getting in were relatively small. First of all because I was unmarried. They had this ridiculous notion that single officers should not serve in Moscow because they would be subject to compromise. Well later on I was to find that in Moscow, I was freer to do what I wanted than anybody else. And the people who were compromised to my knowledge were all married officers. I happen to know three married men in Moscow who were caught in flagrant delicto with infrared cameras. And the only reason they could be compromised

was because they were married. Whereas I, who had an active social life, the KGB had complete recordings of all the Mozart and Mahler symphonies from my bedroom, which were used as cover music. And I would announce it, with the name of the conductor and orchestra so that the KGB would be able to file their recording in a way that others could enjoy later on. But I was never compromised in Moscow, because what I did was in the realm of normal activity.

But in any event it was considered a bit of a coup for an unmarried officer to go to Moscow. I was one of two people in that category who were sent to Moscow in 1965. But I did look upon Russian language training and Soviet specialty. I made a conscious decision to leave the Far East as it was then called and to go on to Soviet specialization.

In retrospect I see this as rather bizarre. Because I later made the decision to leave Soviet affairs and go to Vietnam to save the world, in 1966. I went into Vietnamese language training in 1967 and I never had much desire to go back to Soviet affairs after that.

Q: You were behind the curve.

BROWN: Either ahead of it or behind it. But there again, I had the opportunity in 1963 to volunteer for Thai language training which would have been over in 1964 and then come back to the embassy. I turned that down and instead entered Russian language training in August of 1964. Spent a year in Washington and then went from there to Moscow for a two year tour.

Q: From 1965 to 1967 you were there. Could you explain what the embassy was like and such?

BROWN: The practice in the foreign service for a relatively junior officer, and at that time, when I went to Moscow, it seems to me, I was an FSO 6 at that time, I had not been promoted to FSO 5. I forget when I was promoted to FSO 5. But I was fairly junior, although not by any means a young man, by current standards of that time, but the practice at that time, for someone who is not absolutely fluent in Russian, and when I left the foreign service all I had was an S 3 R 3, was enough to do business but not much more than that. But unless one were a member of what you might call the in group, in Soviet Affairs, had been to Garmisch for the finishing school there. Those of us who were not in that category, and I certainly was not, were assigned to non- political officer jobs or non-economic officer jobs. My first assignment was as assistant administrative officer, which actually turned out to be one of the most useful assignments in the embassy in terms of using Russian language. I was the personnel officer for a staff of a hundred Soviet employees. I dealt with the UPDK, the organization for the servicing of the diplomatic corps. In that capacity I was down every day to the UPDK complaining about the elevator that wasn't being built, trying to get Ambassador Kohler's shower repaired, and so I had a lot to do with the Soviets. My Russian actually improved quite a bit in Moscow, but you improve only in the area where you work unless you make an effort to go outside your vocabulary opportunity, so to speak.

So my first year was as assistant admin officer, and I worked for a gentleman, the admin counselor, Sanford Menter. I was his deputy, I also did a bit of budget and fiscal work although not a great deal. I supervised the Russian language training for the embassy. But my real job was to relate to UPDK and the housekeeping function of the embassy, including personnel. There was a personnel officer for American personnel. So nominally I was her boss and when Menter would leave the post, I would be acting admin officer. So that was my first year.

Then the second year was sort of graduate school for people like myself. I went out to bargain for positions on the fifth or seventh floor in the embassy, which ever was the political section. I ended up not getting one of those jobs but I went instead to the publications procurement officer, PPO, which was a euphemistic term for collection of intelligence. The PPO, actually there were three Americans assigned to the PPO job. I was the senior officer and I had a deputy and I had a staff officer working for me and he did the accounting basically. The job of the PPO was to buy books, maps, postcards, anything in writing about the Soviet Union, and to send this back to Washington in the diplomatic pouch. It was a full time job for basically three people. Because we went around to every bookstore in Moscow, and scarfed up everything we could. Sometimes in two copies, sometimes in fifty copies, depending upon what the material was. It was quite an art to go into the political bookstore or the economic bookstore, and look at a book and determine how valuable it was to the consumers in Washington. The consumers in Washington were the obvious ones, CIA, Library of Congress, Rand Corporation, and then DIA and a whole galaxy of lesser agencies who relied on the embassy to collect Russian language materials including maps. So we not only did this all over Moscow, and there were hundreds of bookstores in Moscow to cover, some more valuable than others. A lot of repetition. You see the same material in every store. A very carefully controlled press industry as you can imagine. But we also took trips out into the countryside and in that capacity I traveled all over the Soviet Union. I went to Leningrad several time, Kiev, Riga, Baku, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Novosibirsk, I was the first American official to visit there at the Academgorodok, to establish liaison on behalf of the Library of Congress, with the Library of Academgorodok, Alma Ata, Tashkent, Fruensi, Yakutsk, Irkutsk.

So I traveled all over the country, not only bought books and maps, talked to people, but did as much as one could in the way of photography and other informal activity. All of this was written up in airgrams. Heaven knows, no telegrams. That was a waste of time. You did airgrams and it would go back to the consumers in Washington. The PPO was considered to be one of the more important ways of learning what was going on in the Soviet Union.

Q: In terms of the political section, you were going out more.

BROWN: In many respects it was more interesting that the political section. I sometimes traveled with people from the political section. I often traveled, as it turned out, with a very fine gentleman by the name of Christopher Squire, who was the science attaché

there. He accompanied me on three or four trips. We accompanied each other. Chris eventually went to Vietnam as a province senior advisor, and then came back and was consul general in Leningrad for several years and then headed up the Soviet service of the Voice of America before he retired. Chris died not a year ago. Did you know Chris?

Q: Yes, I called him to interview him and he said he had to go into the hospital.

BROWN: Yes, he had a brain tumor. Very tragic. Chris and I traveled all over the Soviet Union.

Q: How did the Soviet security apparatus operate?

BROWN: They were all over us. They would frequently close every bookstore in a given town. Of course we had to clear all of our travel and get it approved by the Soviets. The Soviets bought us the tickets. The women that ran what you might call the special services unit of the embassy, bought you tickets to the Bolshoi Ballet or whatever and did all of the travel arrangements for you, internal travel was a lieutenant colonel in the KGB, Elena. Everything was done with the complete knowledge and planning of the KGB. Frequently when we would go to a town, we would find that virtually every store was closed for "sanitary day" (cleaning day). The word would go out that the PPO was coming and close up. Often, it appeared to us, that this was left in many cases to local discretion. In some cases the store would be open and the director of the store would say, "Well, screw Moscow. Come on in and buy. I need to get my quota out." And they let us. Because we would come with several thousand rubles and we would make their week. To go in and buy fifty copies of the Economic Gazette of a local republic. They liked that. And oddly enough, the thing that astounded the Soviets the most, was the technology of our packaging.

In the Soviet Union, a paper bag is a precious thing. At least it was in those days. Usually you had to bring your own. But we would come into a bookstore with collapsed corrugated boxes under our arms and several rolls of that plastic tape in which nylon was imbedded with one of those fancy machines to cut it with. We would come in and buy a thousand rubles worth of stuff, maybe several hundred books and the salesman would say, "Now how are you going to carry these. Take these, we don't have any boxes." We would say, "Well we have boxes." "Nah, you don't have any boxes." So we would get out these boxes and throw them together and with the tape, seal them up. We would collect a crowd of a hundred people as we did this. They couldn't believe it. They said, "That tape won't hold it." So what we would do was take a yard of nylon scotch tape and squeeze it together and make a rope and say well you pull this. We would have six Russians on either side pulling, trying to break this rope. They were astounded. That was really the big attention getter, when we would go in and buy books.

Not surprisingly, in many of the ethnic areas such as Tbilisi, Yerevan or Tashkent, you would find people who were very friendly. Whereas in the Russian areas, or in Moscow, not so much. Leningrad in particular, they were very tough. In the ethnic areas, the areas

that are now in such discontent and uproar, you would find a more tolerant attitude. But the KGB was always there, they went with us everywhere. We often had to hire a car, which would be a KGB car basically. So they knew where we went and what we got. I am absolutely certain that the stores that were open the day before had been told to put any book of a sensitive nature and put it under the counter. So our job was to run around and try and find these things. They knew exactly what we wanted because we had two Soviet employees full time working in the embassy, putting the books together. Every week we would sent out half a ton of books. So the Soviets knew exactly what we were sending out. It was a quid pro quo. A very ineffectual quid pro quo in my view.

The Soviets had at that time as many as fifty people doing the PPO function in Washington. They still do. They carry it to exotic lengths in terms of subscribing to publications, and scarfing up an immense amount of material on the United States. In order to protect themselves against interference in that activity, by the FBI or whatever, I think the Soviets had come to the conclusion that they had to allow PPO to operate in Moscow. So they let us operate on a short leash, and do that activity.
One of the prize things that you always tried to get was a telephone book. They were hard to get. I remember one of my predecessors had managed to (I won't say steal) to appropriate a telephone book from the office of one of the local officials that he called on in one of the provincial towns. He thought he got away with it and the day that he was about to leave that town, I forget where it was, there was a knock on the door, and the KGB were there and said, very politely, "Mr. So and so, we would appreciate it very much if you would give us back the telephone book."
"Oh, gee, did I have a telephone book? I must have picked that up by mistake." So they kept an eye on things very closely and were very carefully about monitoring the people that we talked to.

Q: Let me ask you a question about Soviet personnel at our embassy. Believe me we have gone through a great push to get rid of as many Soviet personnel as possible. I was in Yugoslavia for five years and we had Yugoslav personnel whom we assumed, if not willingly, then unwillingly, were reporting to their communist masters. At the same time I found that as an officer, this was a wonderful window to the people by talking to them and all of this.

What about Soviet personnel. Is it better to make all the employees American?

BROWN: From my experience I got to close to zero in terms of feedback with the Soviets that worked at the embassy. The personnel system in the American Embassy in Moscow was a battleground. You looked upon it as a daily engagement. The chauffeurs were all very well turned out. Well groomed. Obviously high-ranking officers in the KGB. There was no doubt about it. They feigned an ignorance of English but we all assumed that they were fluent English speakers. For our purposes, we chose to speak to all the Russian employees in Russian, to improve our language capability. But there was no sense that I ever got from a Russian employee, that I dealt with, that somehow I was

picking up local color or helping my understanding of the Soviet Union or life in Russia. None. Zero.

Q: It was absolutely the reverse in Yugoslavia. Although there was obviously a straight line to the security apparatus.

BROWN: Life was very closely controlled then. During my time in Moscow, I was under oppressive KGB surveillance only once. It was towards the end of my tour, and because of a personal situation that I was involved in, I think this KGB sensed that and felt that now was the time to put pressure on me. All of a sudden they slapped 24 hour surveillance, close surveillance on me. That meant a KGB car behind me and my own personal car, which I used a lot. I went out a lot at night. Bumper to bumper tail. Following me into restaurants. Standing beside me at the urinal. Sitting at the same table with me at a restaurant. Really full court press. That was the only time that happened to me.

Q: What were they trying to do?

BROWN: My recollection is that this took place towards the end of my tour and there were things going on. I was involved with some people. Not Soviets, but on a personal basis. I had a fairly steady girl friend, a German girl. I think they felt that there was some gain to be made by making me feel nervous. It only lasted a short time. But I could tell you that other officers in the embassy were under this kind of pressure frequently. But except for that one time, I do not recall feeling the KGB presence oppressive. I must say that I spent, of my two year tour there, I must have spent four or five months living at Spaso House. Particularly at times when Ambassador Kohler was away, they wanted an officer there to sort of keep an eye on the silver. The Soviet staff was not above appropriating some of the furnishings or the food. Particularly the food in Spaso House's freezer. I spent a good bit of time there.

As a general observation, my time in Moscow was a very rewarding tour and I felt very little of the oppressiveness and pressure and boredom that many people felt in Moscow. But those were largely wives, families. Moscow was a terrible place for families at that time. The apartments were very bad, very cramped. There was not much to do for the wives. Most of wives didn't speak very good Russian. A couple of them spoke excellent Russian and used that opportunity to move around and learn about Soviet life and Russian life in a very rich and cultural environment there. But by and large it was tough duty for the wives. I was unattached. I could go out by myself and I didn't have to worry about babysitters and things like that. And there were many companions in the Western, European diplomatic corps. So I had a ball. An absolutely wonderful time. Socially, I went to the Bolshoi as often as I wanted to. I got to be quite a ballet fan, opera, plays. There were constrains on my social life with Soviet citizens. I did not get very far in that. I must say.

The one time I developed a social relationship with a Soviet girl, immediately the KGB did move in on that and began to control her and I immediately broke. You had to

report every contact you had of a social nature with a Soviet citizen at that time to the office of the special assistant. But that said, I felt very free. I had a great time.

Q: How did Ambassador Kohler operate? Both in Russia and in the embassy.

BROWN: Thompson replaced Kohler. I was there mainly in the Kohler era. Then there was a gap and then Thompson came in. The DCM at that time, and I saw much more of the DCM than anybody else, was John Guthrie who subsequently went on to be DCM and chargé for much of the time, in Stockholm during the heavy Vietnam War era. Then I guess he went down to South Africa.

Kohler, to be honest with you, did not make a very strong impression on me as an ambassador. The relationship with the Soviet Union at that time was not very good. Vietnam of course had heated up by the time I got there. In 1965 the American forces had moved into Vietnam. The Marines landed in Da Nang several months before I got to Moscow. So the American buildup was going on. The American ground war was in full swing. 1966-67-68-69 was the peak of the American involvement. So it was not a warm relationship.
We were quite compartmentalized, I can tell you that. My job as admin officer, I had no need to know what was going on and as PPO I had no need to know. I guess I had one regret. One should not have regrets, but in retrospect, I did not do as much on the political side as I might have. I am not sure how much there was to do. The people who were too active were immediately PNGed, were compromised, like Don Lesh, like Bill Shinn, two of the great Moscow University graduates came into the foreign service, were fluent speakers, and the Soviets were ruthless with them. They would figure out who the best people were, compromise them and get rid of them.

By contrast the Soviets pop out so many American specialists that you can't PNG them all. I suspect that we still suffer from the same short sighted training of our foreign service officers. I am a good example of it. As a four or six year tour and then you let them go, and go off and do something else. And so the government spent a lot of money on me, and I didn't make good on it. Maybe they got their money back in terms of Vietnamese language but this is a terrible problem in the foreign service and we ought to come back to this later on. Because I got into that angle of it when I got back to personnel later on with regard to East Asia assignments. It comes back to the concept of service, of dedication of one's life in a sustained way to a given area, or given specialization. So much in our culture argues against that kind of dedication.

Q: You left Moscow in 1967.

BROWN: Let me add a note that is not strictly professional, but I think it should be recorded.

The phenomenon, tragic phenomenon, of service in Moscow in that era, was the high incidence of divorce. I must say that among my colleagues and dear friends, of the

American Embassy in Moscow, a number of them were subsequently divorced. Either as a result of Moscow, or soon thereafter. I suspect if you did a statistical analysis of Foreign Service families, you would find that the incidence of divorce is higher among those who have served in Moscow. It's just an aside observation. I am not sure why, whether it is the isolation, the difficulty of the wives, the obsessive quality of Soviet affairs. I don't know. I know it to be a fact, thinking back to the people I was close to there, many of them are now divorced or separated. I just put that down as an item.

Q: As you say this I think of my impression. I was in Yugoslavia, where it was not really oppressive, but the rate of divorce was very high. I think part of it was because, this was all about the same period. This is where bright young people wanted to go. The officers tended to be rather intolerant of family life, too. They got so involved in their work. I don't know.

BROWN: To go on. During my time in Moscow, I became very interested in the "pacification program" in Vietnam. I had always had a very deep interest in the concept, the theory and practice of revolution. That was one of the things that attracted me to Soviet affairs. And I had gotten into that in Thailand, in terms of role development. How do insurgencies occur, and what you do to combat insurgencies. The question of social reform. Social equity. Why systems are oppressive and why the people we work with in many cases, the United States is friendly with, tend to have governments that are repressive, and create within themselves the seeds of their own destruction.
Of course you may say that this happened in Vietnam.

But in any event, I was struck, I remember very clearly in about mid-1966 with some of the material that was being published at that time in the State Department Bulletin, and the Foreign Service Journal in what was then the OCO or CORDS program (Office of Civilian Operations) in Vietnam. The CORDS program was Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support. It was the same thing. Mainly the pacification program, which in Vietnam only got going in 1966-67 and really took off in 1968 at the time when the political decision was made to get out of Vietnam. Only then did we begin, in serious fashion, to put into place in the countryside of Vietnam, the kind of nation-building on the civilian side that should have been done many years before. This of course is part of the theme of Neil Sheehan's book on John Paul Vann.

Q: It was called A Bright and Shining Light-America and Vietnam.

BROWN: I am finishing the book now. It does not tell all the truth, in my view, despite its 800 pages. It tells a lot of the truth.

In any case, I became fascinated with the concept of taking Vietnam, the Vietnam that we supported, the South, and working with the people to defeat communism, to carry out the social revolution that I felt had to be carried out if our effort there was to be successful. I became very interested in this in an intellectual fashion but also in terms of getting out into the countryside. I have always been one to get out and work with the people, to get

my hands dirty. I saw this as a great opportunity. I always believed that you had to learn the language if you were to really understand what goes on in a country.

In Thailand, I picked up a great deal of Thai. I studied Thai and was able to acquit myself fairly well. In Russian, I did okay in Russian, but I volunteered for the CORDS program. And was accepted. And it came about, two years to the day after serving my Moscow tour. I could have- -the logical thing for me to have done, actually, would have been to go to an Eastern European post. Or back to the Department to work in INR on the Soviet Desk. I think I could have done that. But instead I volunteered, in the spirit of John F. Kennedy, to go save the world in Vietnam. Again, a bit behind the power curve, I guess. But in any event, I started Vietnamese language training with CORDS class number five. The 5th class. In August of 1967. I graduated from the CORDS program with an S-3 in Vietnamese in September of 1968. Went off, again the oldest person in the class. Most were kids. I was then forty. Forty years old. My ear was not as good as some of the other kids. Most of the people in the class were in their '20s.

Q: What motivated the people?

BROWN: A lot of the kids off on a lark, not knowing really what they wanted to do. They were foreign service reserve, limited appointment people who came in to get on the action and go to Vietnam and fight the vicious Cong. Be with the beautiful girls. Get out in the countryside. There was some of that. There was also some very idealistic, highly motivated people who felt that this was the way to serve the country. We had to help the South Vietnamese win their battle. There was a very pronounced strain of that. I can tell you that when the Tet Offensive came along in 1968, right in the middle of our class, it knocked the hell out of our morale. We thought, "Jeez, what are we doing?" "Why should we be involved in this?" And then you add, all this other turmoil going on, the anti-war movement was getting going in the spring, you had the assassination of Martin Luther King, the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, Washington burning. I remember having to walk back from Arlington to my place in Washington, because the bridge was closed. They were burning things in Georgetown, burning things on 14th Street.

Q: You probably saw the same thing I did, which was troops of the 82nd Airborne, in black jackets and helmets, walking through the main street in Georgetown.

BROWN: That's right. I remember them pushing me off the sidewalks, saying I can't walk there. "What do you mean, I live here," I said. "Get out of here." I remember that very clearly.

So that had a big impact on a lot of us, and many of us felt in going to Vietnam at the time, "Why are we going there?" But also, the feeling, "Let's get the hell out of Vietnam" became more and more pronounced as I stayed. I stayed on that tour of duty until April of 1970. Of course, Johnson declined to run again, Nixon was elected. The announcement was made that we were getting out of Vietnam. The Paris talks were proceeding, etc., etc., so this whole momentum was going in that direction. None the less, the motivation was

very, very strong in 1967 and really carried through. Those of us that went to the provinces in the fall of 1968, happened to get in on what turned out to be the most successful era of the Vietnam involvement. In the countryside. Largely thanks to the terrible communist losses suffered during the Tet Offensive. Which, particularly in the Mekong Delta, where I was assigned, and we can get to that in a minute, and in Vinh Long province, in MR4 which was comprised of thirteen provinces (Military Region No. 4, which was the most southern of the regions in Vietnam). My province was Vinh Long Province, right in the middle. At any rate, during the Tet Offensive, it was in that area that the Viet Cong infrastructure had been absolutely devastated. Probably to a greater extent than in MR3, which was the area around Saigon, to the north. Or even in MR2, which was the largest military region, in the center of Vietnam.

In the Delta, much of the activity of the Tet Offensive was carried out by local Viet Cong battalions, as distinguished from the North Vietnamese battalions that were so prominent in the center and northern part of South Vietnam. They were badly torn up. Badly torn up. Not only in the Tet Offensive itself, but in the second wave which took place in May of 1968. As a result, what you had was a vacuum beginning in the summer and fall of 1968, into which was thrown immense American resources. And I was part of those resources. Virtually everybody in my class, of CORDS 5, were posted in the Mekong Delta. In my province, Vinh Long province, of 500,000 people, we had deputy province advisors 11 young civilians. We had a civilian Vietnamese- speaking bright, shining new officer in all of the districts. Amazing. In addition to a very heavy contingent of province headquarters, which was where I was. I started out there as head of the revolutionary development program, the second ranking civilian in the province, American civilian, and was moved up to be deputy province senior advisor, the ranking civilian. Head of all of the civilians. Frequently a chief of a 200-man joint military-civilian team. Provincial Advisory Team No. 68. At that time it was the golden era of pacification. I prefer to call it rural reconstruction.

What we were trying to do was take many of the precepts of communist political and social organization, and apply it with American resources and democratic twist, and a participatory twist to the South Vietnamese environment. Vinh Long was one of the places it worked fairly well.

Q: What was the capital?

BROWN: It was Vinh Long town. Then there were seven districts. The capital had a population of 50-60,000.

Q: What was the economic basis?

BROWN: Vinh Long was a very well-endowed province from many respects. Geographically, it was located--it is now Cuu Long Province. I visited there, by the way, a year and a half ago. Went back and saw my old place--between the two branches of the Mekong River. So the Mekong River flows on either side. So you had an excellent water

system on either extremity of the province. Then you had a canal, called the Mang Thit Nicolai canal, built by the French, at the beginning part of the century, which traversed it right down the middle. Then you had National Road No. 4 constructed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, which connected Vinh Long to the capital of the Mekong Delta, Can Tho. You had some very strong anti-communist religious minorities there. In addition to the Catholics, you had the Hoa Hao, which controlled one district, and then you had the Cao Dai, which controlled another district. These were assets to the rebuilding of the province. It was very fertile ground, alluvial soil, as most of the delta is. But this was particularly good, because it had been cultivated and canaled and developed during the years. It was one of the favorite provinces of the French, and indeed in the Diem eras, Ngo Dinh Thuc, had been the Archbishop. His cathedral there dominated Vinh Long town. Vinh Long was traditionally a province of absentee French and rich Vietnamese landlords. Interestingly enough, one of my Vietnamese teachers at FSI was the daughter of the man who was then the president of the Vietnamese Senate and later to be Foreign Minister, Tran Van Lam, and later to be president of Vietnam in its waning days.

In any event, Tran Van Lam's wife came from Vinh Long and they were representative of the landed, monied absentee Francophile Vietnamese aristocracy which as we both know, were part of the problem in South Vietnam. Part of the problem why we lost. Why the government was never able to fully capture the allegiance of the people who, basically were very hostile to the French era.

Vinh Long was really one of the provinces that exemplified this particular aspect of colonial French society and post colonial era. The province chief that I worked with very closely during my entire time there Duong Hieu Nghia, a full colonel in the army. The army of the Republic of Vietnam. He was a dangerous man. Dangerous to Thieu, the president. Nghia was a dashing, armored officer, who knew how to run a tank and an armored personnel carrier as a major in 1963. Gosh, five years earlier. He was the man who commanded the armored personnel carrier that escorted Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Nhu from their hideout in Cholon in Saigon, to their death. I am not sure Nghia fired the bullets, but he was sitting on top, commanding the APC while one of Duong Van Minh's special agents actually fired the machine gun into Diem and his brother who were bound, lying in the APC, helpless. And later they were also bayoneted and messed up badly. Anyway Nghia was the guy who commanded the APC that carried out this operation in November 2 or 3, of 1963. He was considered a man too ambitious by half by Thieu and was never trusted, for some reason. Of course this is another one of the reasons why the generals who took over after Diem's downfall, and the whole era of the coups and counter coups, '63, '64, '65, and it was only because of the Tet Offensive, which destroyed most of the countryside that Nghia was brought from relative obscurity to go down there and command that province. He did a magnificent job.

He was a tough son of a bitch. But very enlightened in many ways. Very personable guy. In my view, the kind of province chief that, had this kind of individual been running the provinces of Vietnam all during the war instead of the sycophants that Diem employed as

province chiefs, the course of the war would have been very, very different. I worked very closely with him.

(Continuation of interview, March 19, 1990)

Q: You left Vietnam and you went back to Washington for a very short tour. Could you tell us what you were doing?

BROWN: In the winter of 1968-69 I received a visit from the then Director General of the Foreign Service John Burns, who spent a day or two in Vinh Long Province as part of his tour around Vietnam, for the purpose of recruiting officers and strengthening the State participation of the CORDS program. It was one of the great ironies of the whole American effort that it was only in 1969 when the political decision had been made to get out of Vietnam, and Vietnamization was in full swing, that the State Department finally realized the importance of having a strong State representation in the CORDS program. I cannot recall how many State officers were in the CORDS then but I do know by 1970, when I got back to Washington, and was given the assignment people for the CORDS program, junior officers mainly, that by the end of 1970-71, the CORDS program, State foreign service complement, had increased rapidly. I was given a mandate. Burns came out to Vietnam to survey this question, and when he left I subsequently got a cable from him asking me to come back to Washington to enter Personnel again and be his CORDS person. Which I did.

Q: Give me an idea of how Burns and the institution see our participation in CORDS at that time?

BROWN: This is a whole volume unto itself because the participation of the regular foreign service really should be the subject of a very detailed analysis, because what I think some people in our service finally realized was the rather extraordinary opportunity for political activism that was offered by the CORDS program. It was the only place in the service that you could really get into nation-building and revolution-making, to be honest with you. And a lot of us were in it for that reason. Or felt called to be involved for that reason. Up until that time, it was strictly a volunteer program. Some people raised their hand and went. I remember Terry McNamara for one. Steve Ledogar up in Military Region One. Frank Wisner and some other people had gone in. But basically it was not a program that people sought out.

With John Burns as Director General and his special assistant Jim Farber, who came with him to Vietnam, the attitude had changed. In fact the mandate had come down from Robert Komer, and elsewhere in the White House that the CORDS program, the pacification of Vietnam, was an essential element of American policy in Vietnam. But of course at an even higher level, the decision had been made to get out of Vietnam. The thought was, as Nixon took over the presidency, as I understand correctly and from reading his memoirs and other memoirs such as Neil Sheehan's biography of John Paul Vann, there was a feeling that the United States could remain in Vietnam in some degree

of another three or four years. Which actually was the case until 1973. During this period there would be a certain intensive effort made in the countryside to bring about the political, economic and social revolution that had been distinctly lacking in Vietnam until that time.

In any event I was called back to Washington and entered on duty as I recall around June or July 1970 as John Burns' special representative for the CORDS program. My sole responsibility was to recruit mainly junior officers. The decision was made by then under secretary for management Macomber, to first assign people to the CORDS program and a massive effort was made to pack the program full of junior officers, generally Class 7, Class 6 some Class 5 people. And my responsibility was to do exactly that. Several new classes of FSO-8s and FSO-7s were brought on board in the '70-'71 period only on condition that they go to Vietnam on their first tour. A number of people turned down the appointments to the Service at that time.

Q: This was a period of great protest. So to say this was to be much more specific than even in the military. Because if you enlisted in the military you might end up in NATO or something like that. Whereas we were saying, "Go to Vietnam." Not everyone did but....

BROWN: It is one of the great ironies.

It might show a certain consciousness-lag in the American Foreign Service. In my personal view, had the State Department understood the importance of bringing about political change among "our Vietnamese" in Vietnam, instead of relying upon big battalions in the Westmoreland Search and Destroy strategy which is so well documented in the Neil Sheehan book, if we had done that in 1963, '64, '65, to a much greater degree in the predecessors of CORDS, OKO and the provincial reporting program, etc., which were good but very, very small, adjuncts of policy at that time, if we had adopted a different attitude at that time, then the course of the world might have been very different. Of course you would have had to have a corresponding de-emphasis of the military aspect of the war which I don't believe would have happened.

In any event I was responsible for the forced assignment of a number of officers. Interestingly there was no lack of volunteers at the senior levels. By that time it had become known that being a CORDS province senior advisor in Vietnam was first of all a fascinating assignment because you got to be number one or two on a 2-300 man provincial team doing very, very interesting as we euphemistically call it program direction in the Foreign Service.

Q: Which means having executive responsibility.

BROWN: Which means running something, being involved in the war and often in fascinating provinces. By that time frequently working with Vietnamese senior officers who were rather good, finally. So we had no lack of what were then FSO-3s, FSO-1 now or Senior Officers.

Q: Foreign Service Colonel level.

BROWN: Yes, Foreign Service Colonel level. We had no lack of volunteers. But there again, the people who volunteer, in many cases in my view, in my recollection, people who were sort of desperate for a good assignment. We didn't really get the top notch, with a few exceptions, we didn't get the people such as we had gotten before. Like Frank Wisner, who was a province senior advisor, and some others of that caliber. We often got people who were somewhat older - no disrespect for age, I was quite old when I entered the program - but people who were rather anxious about advancement in the Foreign Service took this as a possibility of getting promoted.

Q: Wasn't this also held out as saying extra credit will be given on promotion panels?

BROWN: That became a very, very difficult question. I have not done a detailed study, and there again I think some thought is required on this.

Part of my mandate was to get good onward assignments for people coming out of CORDS. So during that year period, I not only assigned people to CORDS, I made sure that people coming out of CORDS
were given good assignments. My recollection was that I was fairly successful in doing that because I had Macomber's and Burns' backing. So the Personnel Division would be talking to the regional personnel saying "Hey look, we have this young guy FSO-6 coming out of a year and a half of the CORDS program and he's done a great job and we want him to get a good desk job. As I recall we were fairly successful in that. Later on however in 1972, '73, as people finished up their tours subsequently, I am not sure that was the case. Certainly for senior people coming out of the CORDS program it was not always possible to get them good jobs as I recall. But in any event, these promises were made to the incoming classes in 1970 and 1971, during my time there and as I recall, scores, I can't remember the precise figure, but certainly as many as a hundred young officers went into the CORDS program, including women. The famous Alison Palmer case, you probably remember. Alison Palmer was in the CORDS headquarters as I recall, in Nha Trang, MR2 (Military Region Number 2) and she, as I recall, requested a CORDS assignment. Any way, there is a long tale of what happened in her struggle for equal opportunity for women in Vietnam. There were many problems associated with the CORDS program. A lot of these young officers were married, and had one small child, and the question of whether or not their family could either accompany them to certain places in Vietnam or had to be put in Bangkok. We had a large number of young families temporarily housed in Bangkok. There were special visiting privileges in the same way that the military had. My job during that year was to get the whole program going. I should mention another bureaucratic aspect of this. It is indicative of the way Vietnam operated going on its latter years from the American perspective. There was resentment among the AID FSR career AID types and the career Vietnam types.

Q: Language officers?

BROWN: No. I am talking about people who had made a career out of Vietnam. Who by 1970-'71 had been involved in Vietnam affairs, in some cases, for ten years. I'll mention a name fondly, George Jacobson who by that time had become a de facto head of the CORDS program below the Ambassadorial level, be it Komer or Colby. Jacobson had been in Vietnam for many, many years. He was a retired Army colonel. I refer you to the Sheehan's book which gives a lot of background on him. In any event Jacobson was a classic bureaucratic manager and he looked upon this influx of young and particularly senior level Foreign Service Officers who stayed as a threat to the rice bowl of many of the people who were his colleagues. Who were retired army majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels who had gone into AID on the civilian side of the CORDS program and made a career of it. I remember going to Vietnam after I had been in the job a couple of months. I went over for a tour, and my presence in Vietnam was actually resisted by the CORDS bureaucracy because they felt that I was too energetic in assigning State Department officers to billets that would normally be reserved to these career Vietnam types, not these young political types coming in from the Foreign Service. That is an interesting aside to it; particularly true for province senior advisor positions which were very much sought after. Part of the deal that the State Department made with the White House was that the State Department would not be regulated to simply supplying the infantry. They wanted the officers. So for every three young district senior advisors, we wanted one province level officer, and this was resisted. Resisted very strongly. And Jacobson and the whole CORDS bureaucracy as a whole said, "No, no, no, you've got it wrong. What we need are these bright young guys trained in language who go out to work in the field. That's where they can really do some good. We don't want them up there in the program management level." So this presented interesting...

Q: Let me ask you something here. About this time I was serving in our embassy. My impression, please correct me if I'm wrong, was that many of these career men were not very successful officers in the military and probably would not have been relatively moderate-ranking people in almost any organization. And they had seen this as an opportunity-- this often happens during a wartime situation--to entrench themselves. Many had mistresses. They had really set themselves up very nicely. Was this your impression?

BROWN: Absolutely. There were some very fine officers in the CORDS program both military and civilian, but by and large the retired military guys that converted over subsequently, and took appointments with AID often at very, very fat salaries, plus all the special things, 20% extra for hazard pay, family allowances and visitation and all the accoutrements.

Q: Visitation that their families could stay in Manila or Thailand or back in the States.

BROWN: So that they could enjoy a very nice life in Vietnam.

This was not always the case. A number of people I worked with were first-rate ex-military guys or career AID guys, but there was a large complement of losers, mediocre people who were attracted to remain in Vietnam--John Paul Vann was a quintessential example of it--by reason of the beauty of the women, deliciousness of the food, the proximity of danger and adventure but not too close, and the opportunity to be involved in a rather remarkable undertaking even in its waning days. (Vann, please understand, was a superbly effective individual despite the side that the Sheehan book emphasizes.) Particularly because it was in its waning days. Because after 1971-72, there were very few American units in combat, in fact the last American combat unit left sometime in 1972. A lot of Air Force remained. As you recall the Easter Offensive of 1972. But the last American combat units really for all intents and purposes, were withdrawn during 1971.

I'm getting ahead of my story a little bit. I want to move back up to Da Nang, but the hey day, the golden days of provincial work in Vietnam was from the summer of 1968, the post-Tet period, through 1971 into 1972, when the government of the Republic of Vietnam, was reaching its peak of effectiveness, and the government's control of the countryside was probably the greatest it would ever be. This is when the Foreign Service officers were really also at their peak of effectiveness. I guess the peak number of FSOs in the Vietnam program, the CORDS program, probably was reached sometime in 1971, maybe early 1972. And your figures will reveal more accurately than my memory but it strikes me that at one point we had 300 Foreign Service personnel trained in Vietnamese. Not all of them were in the CORDS program.

I'll give you two specific examples because I think they are interesting, of how the CORDS program operated in 1970-71. One of our very senior members of the Foreign Service still on active duty, M. Charles Hill, many years later special assistant to George Shultz, now a career minister. I can recount the situation with Charlie Hill, a very dear friend of mine. He was at Harvard in 1970, studying in the Chinese program. He was a linguist and he had taken a year at Harvard. He came out of Harvard as a very well regarded middle level officer. He was ripe for the CORDS program. His profile was everything that you wanted. He was a strong manager, knew Chinese very well, knew Asia very well. He was considered to be one of the most up and coming officers that we had, and he got on the CORDS profile. He received word that he was assigned to CORDS. Well he refused to go. His case became one of the very first test cases of the forced assignment policy. Macomber got into it and so did John Burns, obviously as did Cleo Noel, then director of personnel for John Burns. To make a long story short, Charlie Hill was given three choices, go to CORDS, or take an assignment to the American Embassy in Saigon, to prove that he was not against going to Vietnam. His third choice was to resign. Well, Charlie Hill chose to take a position in the Embassy in Saigon. He said that he had nothing against going to Vietnam, but "I do not believe in the CORDS program. I do believe in the Foreign Service and going where I am assigned, but this is out of the Foreign Service, so to speak." So Charlie Hill ended up in the Embassy in Saigon as special assistant to Ellsworth Bunker. Charlie Hill stayed on a long time. He stayed on three or four years and came to be one of the solid supporters of the Mission Direction. He ended up as executive director of the mission in Saigon to Bunker and then

came back to Washington and of course the rest is history. He was special assistant to Bunker during the Panama negotiations, he went to Tel Aviv as political counselor, came back as executive director of the department, etc. etc. onward and upward, in our system to become career minister. Charlie Hill was the test case of the forced assignment policy.

Another example was the young man that I picked to go to Da Nang with me in 1971 as vice consul. His name is Craig Dunkerley. Who also has risen to senior officer status now, mainly in European Affairs but also in Japan Affairs too. Craig Dunkerley was somewhat hesitant about going to the CORDS program. He was not hesitant at all about serving in Vietnam. He ended up first as vice consul and then as political officer in the American Consulate General in Da Nang in the 1971-73 period. Craig did a brilliant job as a very young officer. He was the kind of individual who was part of the protest movement in college. He came right into the A-100 course, I interviewed him. He was an actor, a drama major in college, and he was recommended to me by the director of the A-100 course (the junior officer course). In any event Craig Dunkerley had serious misgivings about our policy in Vietnam. Nonetheless he volunteered for about six or eight months of Vietnamese language training, and picked it up quickly. He ended up in Da Nang where he, and I've seen him recently (this is now twenty years later), had really the seminal experience of his life as vice consul and then political reporter of Central Vietnam. So I am sure you could multiply these examples by several hundred as to how people fared.

Q: We had a considerable number of the young men and women coming in. Most of them were...Foreign Service essentially recruits an elite and the elite in those days was usually in the protest movement. Against the war in Vietnam. Was there some soul searching or brain washing? What was going on that got these young civilians to go into Vietnam?

BROWN: Well, I will never know how many potential officers were lost, frankly when they were given this letter, which said you are hereby appointed an FSR-8 on condition that you accept as your first assignment, a CORDS assignment. There were always exceptions to that, of course, but it was a general policy for about a year or two. I don't know how many people were lost because of that. I think one could infer from the way the program operated that people who accepted the letter of invitation to join the service, to take an appointment, were generally willing, although reluctantly, to take an assignment in the CORDS program.

The forced assignment of junior officers did not last very long. My recollection is that there were not more than three or four incoming classes of FSO-8s and 7s that were subject to this. It lasted until and through 1970 into 1971. The program, for several reasons, was dropped. One big reason was the handwriting was on the wall. That if you appointed an officer to the program in 1971, and he took a year in training, that he wouldn't get there until 1972, and the thought was that if we stayed in Vietnam in the provinces through 1973 that was probably it. That was correct. Because many of the people who went into training after I left that personnel assignment, many of those people were the ones who ended up in Vietnam in 1973 and 74 and were the political reporters

and consulate generals around Vietnam up until 1975 when the place collapsed. But many of them were the ones who came in the program in 1971-72, because of the long lead time.

Q: What sort of feedback were you getting? Our generation had learned how to live with the military, and many of us had served with it, but you were getting a new group that was coming out that was very suspicious of all these things. How did these young people relate to them. And the military relate to them?

BROWN: It's hard for me to make a generalization on that. I do know in many cases some of the most unlikely people, the ones I was in training with for example, in 1967, I was fifteen to twenty years older than them. Some of them I would classify as hippies, or protest movement people or simply adventurers. Some of them were AID employees, not regular State people. So these people who I would have considered very unlikely ended up being excellent officers with a capital O in the provinces of Vietnam and got along very well with the military. Others did not do as well. It is hard for me to generalize. But I will say that if I could make this generalization, the top notch FSOs of middle grade, when they were assigned to the provinces as district senior advisors, deputy province advisors or province senior advisors, found that working with the US military had a lot of pain, a lot of difficulties, but by gosh was a rather rewarding experience in that CORDS environment because of the unique relationship between civilians and military. In my province, for example, we had eleven or twelve civilians. I was the ranking civilian in Vinh Long as deputy province advisor, and frequently acting as province senior advisor, and I worked with between 100 and 200 military men under me. Majors, captains, first lieutenants, by and large. I found it a most rewarding experience. I think my experience was not unusual at all.

Q: How were things going then? What was the atmosphere in Washington?

BROWN: When I got back in 1970 we were still deeply involved in the war. By the time I got to Da Nang, as principal officer in 1971, the Vietnamization program was in full swing and the units were being removed. Perhaps we ought to move to that period.

I left this particular personnel assignment in July of 1971 and arrived in Da Nang the same month as principal officer there replacing Francis Terry McNamara, whom I had replaced, oddly enough in Vinh Long province in 1968.

Q: When I was in Saigon, Da Nang's consular affairs were handled by my department in Saigon and so Terry was technically under me. It was purely a paper relationship however. By the time you arrived, Da Nang was a consulate.

BROWN: And it did do a good bit of consular work. But its real purpose was political reporting and I had two vice consuls under me, one of whom did nothing but consular work. There was plenty, marriages, notarials galore for citizenship purposes. Occasionally a protection problem. But it was the other vice consul and my job was 99% political, in

terms of reporting and representation. As the American presence dwindled down, the consulate became more important, and in 1973, in January of 1973, of course, the CORDS program ended and all the CORDS program people who stayed on for development purposes, AID administrative purposes, were shifted and put under the consul general which I then became. By that time, when I arrived in July of 1971 there were 100,000 American military personnel in Military Region One. 100,000. I said goodbye to the last military man on January 30, 1973. His name was Colonel William Walker and I'll never forget watching him get on the last DC-7 leaving Da Nang airport and waving goodbye and thought, "Jesus, that's it. There's no more American military in Da Nang." Absolutely incredible to think. Actually there were American military who stayed behind to operate the quadripartite military commission and these were American helicopter units that were put under control of the ICCS (International Commission on Control and Supervision which was set up under the Paris agreement of January 1973) in effect. So these were helicopter units that had something else painted on their helicopter. They were replaced eventually by Air America units which were virtually the same helicopters, and in our consulate general in the 1973 era, we had a number of Department of Defense personnel in civilian clothes who were there for intelligence gathering and reporting purposes. Then we had a large contingent of CIA which was under the consulate general which had not been the case before. When I arrived the CIA had a huge station in there which reported directly to Saigon but when we became a consulate general the CIA was moved out of its rather luxurious quarters and moved into the consulate general building there in Da Nang.

In any event I went there, to a five US personnel post, myself, two vice consuls, an administrative officer and an American secretary. And it stayed that way until January 1973 when it was upgraded to consulate general, because of the peace accords, and I stayed until July 1973. At that time my colleague, the deputy for CORDS, each one of the four military regions in Vietnam had a deputy for CORDS who was an American civilian. In many cases they were retired military, but in the case of when I arrived, in fact here is another example which I should have cited along with Charlie Hill and Craig Dunkerley, is John Gunther Dean, whom we all know is one of the grand ambassadors subsequently of the American Foreign Service. I think he's had more ambassadorial posts than any Foreign Service officer that I can remember, six or seven now. John Dean came out of the Bowie Seminar at Harvard in 1970. He was looking for a job. (Have you interviewed him yet?) He has just retired after being Ambassador to India, and before that to Lebanon. Denmark, Cambodia and Laos. But at that time John Dean, and he would be the first to confirm this, was a placement problem, because he was so bright and cantankerous and so ambitious. John never hid his light under a bushel, but I remember John Dean flying down from Cambridge in 1970 and Burns said, "Hey Fred you've got to find a job for the hot shot from Harvard. We're having a little bit of a difficulty finding a job for him. He's been to the Paris peace talks, he's a real go-getter. See what you can do."

John Dean flew down from Cambridge and I described the CORDS program and he said, "Wow, that's sounds like just the kind of thing I would like to get involved in. How can I get a job in that program." "Well," I said, "It just so happens that I have a job...." He

ended up as deputy, the number two job, to a senior AID fellow in Military Region Number One, Da Nang, and then when that gentlemen left, John Dean took over as number one. He was my colleague during much of the time that I was there. Did an excellent job. He had a propensity for this kind of job. Military organization in a war zone, basically, and John took to it like a duck to water. We saw a lot of each other and indeed suffered through the Easter Offensive of April, May 1972 and flew together and tried to get into Quang Tri Province, the capital city there that was on the verge of falling, north of Hue, right on the DMZ. On the way back, John and I were riding along in the helicopter and we took a number of rounds and were forced to descend in the helicopter very rapidly and almost crashed. But we went through quite a bit together and John left in the summer of 1972 to become DCM in Laos, DCM to Mac Godley, I guess. Then he stayed in Laos and did a number of things there including trying to contain counter coups on the part of the conservatives in Vientiane. For his good work he was made Ambassador to Cambodia as I recall, replacing either Coby Swank or Tom Enders and became famous for carrying the flag out of Phnom Penh in April of 1975. But this all began with John Dean's initial assignment to the CORDS program where he became well and favorably known to people like Charlie Whitehouse, to Sam Berger and Ellsworth Bunker and Bill Sullivan, the people who were basically running the American involvement in Indochina.

The CORDS program in central Vietnam in Military Region Number One was moved over under the program direction of the newly established American consulate general in Da Nang. And the same thing obviously happened in the other three military regions. Tom Barnes became consul general in Can Tho, Monty Spear became consul general in Nha Trang, and in Bien Hoa, Military Region Number Three, I forget. In any event foreign service officers were there by statute I guess. To be a consul general you had to be a career foreign service officer. And there were a lot of problems in that regard. I had a terrible problem in Da Nang because I took over an organization which at that time was being run by a retired army colonel. The deputy for CORDS. He thought he was going to become consul general. Well it was not to be. I was appointed consul general by Ellsworth Bunker and the guy that I had been number two to, became my number two. And he did not like that a bit. He saluted and did it for a while but it was a painful experience for him. He was a former army colonel who had been in combat and he was a heliborn assault pilot. Knew how to fly helicopters and all that. He was, I think this happened in many places around the country, as the American presence changed radically in 1973 with the Paris peace accords. I was succeeded by Paul Popple, former consul general in Milan, Italy, and I left.

Q: What was the situation there and what were you doing?

BROWN: For the first year and a half, while I was principal officer I was doing mainly political reporting dealing with some of what was left of the political party system in central Vietnam. Where it was strongest in all places in Vietnam. The VNQDD, the Dai Viet, the Tan Dai Viet, all the small nationalist parties that were the residue of the anti-French struggle, and the anti-Viet Minh struggle, and the anti-Viet Cong struggle in the

previous decades. They all had their headquarters in central Vietnam. My duty was relate to them and also to the An Quang Buddhist movement in Hue. You recall the American consulate had originally been in Hue and it was burned down in 1964 during the riots there and was moved subsequently to Da Nang. More secure environment. My job was to relate to the Buddhists and I regularly paid calls to all the An Quang pagodas in Hue and in Da Nang. My job was mainly that and to increasingly relate to the senior Vietnamese officials in Military Region One which comprised of Da Nang, Hue and five provinces, Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, Quang Ngai, where probably the bitterest fighting in the entire place had taken place in the period of fifteen years. The Street Without Joy, etc. The nature of the job changed radically with the Paris peace talks. I became principal officer of some two hundred people in the consulate general. We had small subsidiary posts in Hue, Quang Nam, in the city of Hoi An, in Quang Tin for a while in Tamky and in Quang Ngai city itself. So it was a consulate general with as I recall four constituent listening posts, generally one or two Americans with four Vietnamese working in those constituent posts. As consul general I had supervisory responsibility for political reporting which then took on immense importance. We were beefed up during that period. We had six or seven officers on detached duty from Washington. A lot of them were old CORDS types.

So a lot of our political reporters who came back in January of 1973 were usually assigned usually on a six-month duty, were former CORDS types, former political reporters, political section people from the American Embassy in Saigon. Again this was a forced assignment for many of these people, other accepted it with great pleasure. As I recall we had six or eight people in our political section of our consulate general, including a political reporter in Hue and one part time in Quang Ngai.

Q: You have a government run by a former army general, Thieu. Democracy is a pretty fragile flower and so was this just feeding Washington or what good did this do. Couldn't one person do the job, "the political situation was chaotic..."

BROWN: It was more than the political situation, it was the security situation. To be perfectly honest with you, I spent a minimal amount of time in the political reporting of the closed sense. It was reporting on the geo-political situation in MR1. It was quite clear in 1971 that the North Vietnamese were not going to abide by the Paris peace accords and my job was to report on the security situation in every district, every province under my jurisdiction. And my reports were not just about the political party maneuverings in MR1 but about how the morale in the western district in Quang Nam was holding up. Whether or not the government of Vietnam was doing what was necessary to organize the people. It was basically the job of reporting the prospects for survival of the Republic of Vietnam. I became increasingly convinced that the prospects were very, very bad.

Q: How were the peace accords viewed by you and your Vietnamese contacts. Was this considered a sell-out, a graceful way of getting the hell out?

BROWN: I suspect the situation in my military region, central Vietnam, was different and more precarious than the rest of Vietnam. In the Mekong Delta, MR4, you had a very,

very different situation, where the government had de facto control over the majority of the people and the territory in MR4. The situation changed in MR3 and 2. But in MR1 you had a precarious situation, with the Demilitarized Zone, a World War II-type battle zone with three or four divisions on each side heavily equipped with artillery, well-honed fighting forces facing each other across a phony military dividing line, you had the North Vietnamese army anywhere from fifteen to twenty miles to the west of the major populated areas. You had a geographic situation which was intolerable, in which the mountains in many cases came down to within a few miles of the sea, the Que Son Mountain Range, south of Da Nang was a spit of mountain territory that stuck out and almost cut the main road going south from Da Nang to the three provinces to the south. It was an intolerable situation. You had the Vietnamese military units, ARVN Divisions, 1st and 2nd, and 3rd, plus the paratroop division and the marine division, a total of six divisions assigned permanently in defensive positions to defend the major centers of Da Nang, which by that time, a million, a million and a half people, a big city; Hue which probably had 500,000 people, not to mention the four other provincial capitals, which were quite large provincial towns. To me it was an intolerable and untenable situation. I think the military people realized how untenable it was in 1973. My counterpart became in 1973 Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong, now a broken man, a computer programmer in Arlington, Va. At that time I used to see General Truong every day for a briefing, I sat next to him in the military briefings to which I was privy. In his headquarters, and one of the changes that I suggested, was that instead of my sitting next to him, in the front row, as we had these daily military briefings, to move the Americans to the background. That was quite a traumatic thing. The daily briefings to which all the officers went, etc., etc., finally the ranking American officer is moved from the front row, sitting at the right hand of the Vietnamese to the back row. I'm told that later on, my successor was excluded from that briefing entirely, which I think was an excellent idea. Because the name of the game at that time, as I discussed with General Truong, was to get out from under the Americans in a hurry, to the extent that you could. That's nice to say but the Vietnamese were flying American airplanes, they were driving American APCs and tanks, they were using American M-16s and they relied on Americans 100% for ammunition and oil. So it is one thing to say, divorce yourself from the American presence, psychologically, politically, geo- politically, it's one thing to be able to say that and another to be able to do it. In material terms. This was the basic dilemma, in my view unsolvable dilemma, of Vietnamese between 1973 and 1975. It proved to be their undoing. But General Truong and I talked about this quite a bit and I said, I remember my last meeting with General Truong when I left in July 1973, I said, "Under no circumstances trust the Americans. You are in the process of being abandoned." He said, "I know that." I said this in the context of a number of rumblings that Thieu was not doing what was necessary to make the Republic of Vietnam stand on its own two feet. There was talk about who would replace Thieu. Would there be a coup. General Truong was one of the few people looked upon as potential presidential material. And another coup. I was a great admirer of General Truong and often said to him, "If you are going to make a move, you'd better make it soon, because this country... The Americans are leaving. Don't count on the United States to come back." At that time, Watergate had not broken, although it was in the process of breaking. I claim no clairvoyance at that time to

predict what would happen to the ability of the American president to support the Vietnamese as we had been. But I had the uneasy feeling that the whole thing was going to fall down. From the geo-political point of view, if you looked up at those mountains, you could see where the North Vietnamese divisions were. I'd go up in my airplane on the way to Saigon and divert a little bit to the west and you could see the clouds of dust as the North Vietnamese were building their four lane highway south, putting in their 16 inch fuel pipeline that would lead all the way south, hundreds of miles to the south, which would fuel their tanks which eventually took Saigon. The hundreds of tanks which eventually defeated the ARVN in the south, they were not dropped by parachute and they were not manufactured by peasant guerillas, they were driven down the main highway through the Ho Chi Minh trail after getting off Soviet vessels in Haiphong. There is no mystery about how the north finally beat the south. But at that time I had an uneasy feeling that this whole thing was very, very unstable. If only because the population center of Da Nang was within easy reach of North Vietnamese rockets and we were rocketed all the time in 1972. There were no rockets in 1973 during the peace agreement. But all during 1972 after the Easter defensive we'd get rockets coming into the CORDS compound. There were a number of people killed, not CORDS people, but Vietnamese in the vicinity. They had the total ability to do it. In fact they had the ability to launch those rockets while there was still 50,000 Americans sitting in Da Nang. They still could rocket the place.

Q: In Saigon, the morning weather report would also include in which districts rockets fell.

What was your experience during the Easter Offensive.

BROWN: Charlie Whitehouse was then the deputy ambassador, he'd replaced Sam Berger, to Bunker. He was sort of Mr. Outside, having been dep-CORDS for Military Region 3. He was Mr. Outside. He did all of the relationships with the people in the countryside. In any event, I remember very clearly getting the word from Saigon, that an offensive was imminent and indeed it took place in a matter of hours after that.

First of all North Vietnamese divisions came across the DMZ, north of Quang Tri. They also came across to the west of Hue and attempted to capture Hue. They did capture the province capital of Quang Tri and drove down to within thirty or forty miles of Hue. They were stopped by massive American bombing and by the mining of Haiphong harbor and by bombing of Hanoi itself. The United States replied in massive form in a way that nobody, nobody expected to be honest with you. American naval vessels stood off the coast of Quang Tri and bombarded the North Vietnamese. Aircraft carriers were in action. Arclight strikes by B-52s were used (saturation bombing by units of three, six or nine B-52s flying wing to wing dropping 75 to 100 tons of bombs each) against North Vietnamese. Concussion type bombs, parachuted bombs, fire bombs, everything you could imagine. The first division of the ARVN, the paratroopers and the marines fought very, very well, and with the American support managed to halt the North Vietnamese offensive in the Hue-Quang Tri area. The ARVN 2nd Division was decimated as was the

3rd Division and retreated in panic. It had to be reconstituted completely after the Easter Offensive which lasted several weeks and then there was a period of stalemate and General Truong was appointed the new commander of MR1 and took over job of reconquering a lot of land that had been lost in Quang Tri which he did but he never got back to the DMZ. Never got back. He did recapture, barely, the province town of Quang Tri which I remember had been leveled completely. There was no pile of bricks higher than two or three feet, which had been a town that housed 50,000 people.

Q: Yes, as I recall. I visited there before.

BROWN: Did you? Yes it was built by the French, by and large, and it was completely destroyed. There was a huge influx of refugees. We received 500-700,000 refugees, the numbers are pretty amazing, into Da Nang. We had to, the CORDS people, John Gunther Dean, set up emergency feeding sites. We took over the old marine and army camps north of Da Nang, you recall where the marines had landed in 1965, huge expanses of military barracks were turned into refugee camps. I remember escorting Ellsworth Bunker there, and there were 2-300,000 refugees in the camp. I remember going with him to visit the refugee areas there in 1972. So we had a massive problem of taking care of the refugees who had fled, remembering the Tet Offensive in 1968 which after all, was only four years only. Everyone fled. One of the little-known massacres, these are the kinds of things that our friends the North Vietnamese never get due credit for. Everyone will remember the My Lai massacre but nobody will remember the convoy of death which took place in April of 1972 when the last remaining inhabitants of Quang Tri City were retreating south. They were mainly ARVN dependents, men, women and children (ARVN being Army of the Republic of Vietnam), people in the 1st and 3rd Divisions that had been garrisoning, marine corps division that had been garrisoning the northern military sector there. They and their families were retreating south along the highway from Quang Tri and were ambushed by the North Vietnamese who slaughtered, I don't know what the final count was, but you're talking 100- 20,000 people slaughtered by small arms fire and mortar fire. The communists used their favorite tactic of knocking out the lead vehicle and rear vehicle and stalling everybody and slaughtering everybody in the middle. The blame for that is 50% for the North Vietnamese and 50% for the government of Vietnam for having conducted such an inept convoy. I remember going up to that highway and driving along and subsequently taking pictures and smelling the death all along the highway. This was little reported. One man who did report it was Josiah Bennett who was then in the political section in Saigon and Joe Bennett, to his great credit, went up and reported it and tried to make a big thing of it, and didn't get anywhere. People didn't want to hear about it in 1972-73. I think the Vietnamese component of the effort was increasingly overlooked by the American side. We wanted to get the hell out. You recall Nixon and Kissinger had gone to Shanghai, the Shanghai Communique was about the same side, he had his summit meeting with Kosygin. Rapprochement was in the cards, the United States kept up its rapprochement with the Soviet Union. At the same time we were opening up to China. The famous Shanghai was in May of 1972. Kissinger had gone on the secret trip to China in 1971. So the word was, get out of Vietnam. I think the North Vietnamese were rather unhappy that the Chinese would receive Richard Nixon at

virtually the same time that he was bombing the hell out of Hanoi and mining the harbor of Haiphong, and causing massive damage to North Vietnam. Likewise the Christmas bombing of 1972, the Chinese sat still while the United States bombed the North Vietnamese back to the negotiating table. Some people will claim that if that bombing at Christmas of 1972 had continued another week, North Vietnam would have surrendered on almost any terms. That is an unprovable assertion but in any event I was very much involved in the reporting of the progress of the Easter Offensive back to Charlie Whitehouse. I did it every night by phone. I sent in cables and this got me in a little bit of trouble with John Dean who was reporting through his channels and there was an interesting dual-channel arrangement here (back channel, etc., etc.).

Q: Were you reporting the same thing?

BROWN: Sometimes not. I would report, my reports as I recall, were far more alarmist than John Dean. And John Dean had to go through his CORDS channels, everything had to be more upbeat. "We've met the enemy and they're ours, and all that." As I recall, my reporting was more blunt. Because I went out and would talk to the French priests who had come with these Vietnamese villages in 1953 and had settled in Quang Tri and had lived there from '54 to '72. They were forced to flee for their lives into Hue. I remember very clearly talking to these old French priests who had stuck with these parishioners all these years. What they had to say was just terrible. I guess my concern was my fear that Vietnamese society would not be able to reconstitute itself as a result of this cataclysmic event in the north.

This was the time when John Paul Vann was killed, leading the defense of the highlands, Military Region II and III. He was killed in June of 1972. This was really a watershed event because the North Vietnamese were able to make inroads into the territory theretofore controlled by the government of Vietnam, ARVN. This was very important because it set the stage for the peace agreement of 1973 and people on the ground realized that the North Vietnamese would do this again. No respect for agreements. It was really a race against time. And it was clear that the Americans were getting out of Vietnam. Thieu was forced to sign the Paris peace accords in 1973, and that was it. And then it began. So I was there for the first six months of that roughly two year period from '73 to '75 during with the Republic of Vietnam existed pretty much on its own. Albeit with immense American material support, billions of dollars a year, and a thousand men in what used to be MACV Headquarters. In '73 it changed from MACV to the Defense Attaché Office. The largest Defense Attaché Office in the world. So I was there roughly for the first quarter of that cease fire.

Q: I assume you used to go down and meet at the embassy in Saigon.

BROWN: All of the time.

Q: Were they seeing things differently? Was Bunker still the ambassador?

BROWN: Bunker was still the ambassador through May or June of 1973. I could have stayed on. I was just as glad to leave. But Graham Martin didn't want me. He came in in April or May, because the lines of reporting changed. Up until that time I had the ability to send cables directly to Washington. That was stopped immediately, and all my cables were censored after that by the embassy. The ambassador has the right to do this. I do know that I began to correspond directly by pouch with the Vietnam Desk in the East Asia Bureau. My theme was that this was a no win situation. Central Vietnam is going to go. It is going to collapse. The psychological environment is such that anything can trigger the collapse of the military units and indeed that is what happened. It happened in a way that I did not foresee. Because central Vietnam went first. You recall Kontum, Pleiku. They defeated the ARVN there and that triggered the hysteria in MR1 because it was foreseen that we had the population in MR1 of 6 or 7 million people. It was perfectly obvious that MR1 was incapable of defending itself. Absent a huge deterrent strike on the part of the United States. It was the only thing. Because Thieu kept removing some key forces from MR1, paratroopers, for example, and one of the marine corps divisions. And it left MR1 hideously exposed. Even by the time I left, and my word was that the thing wasn't working. And that this was an untenable, extremely difficult situation.

Q: From your perspective the embassy was trying to put on a rosier hue.

BROWN: I felt that going down to Saigon and sitting in one of those mission council meetings, where they'd call down the four consul generals and Creighton Abrams, senior military guy there at that time, and he was replaced by lower-ranking generals, I felt a sense of other-worldness. That modern air-conditioned, carpeted...

Q: I was in a not very air-conditioned annexe with consular problems. A whole world.

BROWN: But in that building you went up to the seventh or eighth floor, and you saw how they operated. I felt that it was.... Particularly, Ellsworth Bunker, who was a man of a certain age, even then. I felt it was an unreal atmosphere. Very, very strange. Look, I don't claim that I knew then what was going to happen. I do know that I was terribly uneasy and that I felt that the world as we knew it was going to come to an end. I didn't know when it would be, whether it would be '74 or '75 or 1980. I had no idea. But I did know that we were on the edge of a tragedy. I did know that.

Q: You came back in the summer of 1973. I assume you talked to the people on the desk.

BROWN: Yes, I talked to Bill Sullivan.

Q: How did they feel about the situation?

BROWN: My recollection, and giving it not much thought, is that they didn't give a shit. Just interested in getting out. Get out. Our interests lie elsewhere. I felt that the Vietnam working group, the Vietnam problem used to take over the whole EA bureau, but my

impression was that nobody was very interested. "Yes, very interesting, Fred. Thank you very much. Bye, bye." kind of thing. People really didn't care.

Q: So what did you do then?

BROWN: I entered the senior seminar. Sam Berger had come back and was not permitted to take up his assignment as diplomat in residence, University of Hawaii. Because of the war protests, they considered him a criminal. So Sam Berger was given a consolation prize of being director of the senior seminar for foreign policy. It was a delightful year. I settled in for what I thought would be a long Washington tour, having had a succession, let's see one, two, three one year or less assignments in Washington. I really had never had a Washington assignment. Never. My being a bachelor, I was interested in settling down. I bought a house. So I settled in for my senior seminar assignment.

Q: After which they tossed you into another major hot spot.

BROWN: It was very curious.

Q: How did this happen?

BROWN: I finished the senior seminar in June. I had no onward assignment. Interestingly, I had been offered the job of political counselor in Phnom Penh, by John Gunther Dean, in March or April of 1974, and I turned the job down. The reason was, I liked John Dean, I would have enjoyed working for him, but I had really had it with wartime service, in Vietnam, and I felt that my personal life was less than satisfactory, and I decided I really could not countenance another job like that so I turned it down. He never forgot that.

And indeed if I had taken the job I would have come out with him on the same helicopter just a year later. In any event I did not have an assignment although I was given the job of personnel director for East Asia and Pacific. I had only been on the job a month and I remember sitting at home watching the American Embassy in Nicosia being sacked, our ambassador, Rodger Davies, being murdered. At that time, I said, "I wonder where Cyprus is. Looks like an interesting place. I'm glad I'm not there." I remember watching the Turkish paratroopers drop into northern Cyprus in July of 1974. Watergate had come to a head. Nixon was about to resign. Everybody was thinking about that. The impeachment proceedings were going ahead etc., etc., etc. Cyprus was the farthest thing from my mind. I was looking for an interesting low key job in Washington. I was in my office doing personnel work. I had been there about a month, and I got a telephone call from a gentleman I had never heard of. His name was William Rex Crawford, Jr. I took the call and he said, "Fred, I wonder if you would come up and chat with me a little." I said, "All right, where are you?" He said, "I am in EUR/SE." I said, "Uh oh." Southern Europe.

I went up there and to make a long story short, Bill Crawford was then the ambassador to Yemen, where he had been DCM previously. He was going back to his

second tour as ambassador. His third and fourth year in Yemen. He had been DCM in Cyprus for four years from '68 to '72, before becoming ambassador to Yemen. Bill Crawford was a classic foreign service officer. An Arabist. Spent all of his career in Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, etc. and then had gone to Cyprus. In any event, Rodger Davies had been murdered, Bill Crawford had been nominated to be ambassador to Cyprus and he was looking for a DCM. As it turned out, retrospectively, I didn't know this at the time, his criteria for a DCM were very different from the DCM that had already been appointed, and was in Greek language training. A senior officer who Rodger Davies had picked. But Rodger Davies had been murdered and so Bill Crawford, having the privilege of picking his own DCM, he wanted somebody who did not necessarily know much about Cyprus. He had already been there for four years, and felt very confident about that. He did not want somebody beholden to the Greek lobby. He did not want somebody identified with Cyprus policy at all, because we were in terrible shape. He wanted a manager. He wanted somebody with military experience, with refugee experience, because at that time we expected hundreds of thousands of refugees in Cyprus. He wanted somebody with insurgency experience, because there was some expectation that the Turks would continue their offensive and that there would be a regular insurgency environment in Cyprus. The EOKA-B thing all over again. It was a very uncertain situation. We talked on a Friday and I said, "Je-sus. Cyprus. I'd really like to think about it over the weekend." He said to let him know on Monday. So I thought about it over the weekend and called him up on Monday and said okay. "How soon do you need me there?" He said, "Can you be ready by Wednesday?" I said, "No I can't, I have a house, I have a few things to tie up," so anyway. Bill Crawford took off on Wednesday. He was rushed through the Senate very, very quickly, bam, bam, bam. He had a very small swearing-in ceremony on the eighth floor there. Bill Crawford took off and he said, "I want you there within ten days."

I checked out of my personnel job. Briefed as much as I could with people who knew something about Cyprus. I talked to one of the previous political counselors and asked, "if you had any advice,"--this was Tom Boyatt--"to give me about this forthcoming job, what would it be? He said, "I'd give you two warnings. Watch out for the Greeks and watch out for the CIA. Keep your eye on both of those." Very interesting advice. So off I went for two days of briefings at the embassy in London, very much involved because the British were supplying us. The British offered bases in Akrotiri and Dhekelia. There was no way to get into Cyprus. I had to get in by British military aircraft. I made the rounds at Whitehall with George Lambrakis, who was then political counselor there, handling the Cyprus problems there. Went out to an anonymous British airbase and got on a windowless airplane and flew down to Cyprus and was virtually dropped in at Akrotiri Air Base, met by somebody in an armored car. Driven up to Nicosia and there I was. I had arrived. I remember having lunch with Bill Crawford. He was lying on a couch. He had a flu bug of some sort. He had been up all night the night before sending out cables. He said, "Well nice to see you, let's have lunch and then we can get to work." I didn't know diddlysquat about Cyprus when I arrived. But he didn't want anybody who knew anything about Cyprus. He wanted somebody quick on his feet, to manage the embassy, to worry about refugees. We had a AID program that very soon got going. Emergency relief. Disaster relief. So that began my Cyprus chapter.

Q: You were on Cyprus from '74 to '76.

BROWN: I arrived in early September 1974 and I left in March of 1976.

Q: You were Deputy Chief of Mission. What were your main concerns.

BROWN: Initially my main concern was helping the ambassador who had just arrived there himself, to reconstruct the embassy personnel system which had been hurt, and morale, which had been pretty badly damaged by the events of the summer which included the coup that had deposed Archbishop and president Makarios; the attacks against the embassy; the invasion by Turkey of northern Cyprus; the splitting of the island in two, the murder of our ambassador plus one local employee, numerous menaces against American personnel. Our embassy was in a vulnerable position. You recall we had a Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) unit in the part of Cyprus ultimately controlled by Turkey. We also had a naval communications listening post there. There were a number of consequences there and a splitting of the island in two that required a reorganization of the mission, and a realignment of personnel, lots of readjustments. Our local personnel were thoroughly shattered. Many of them had lived in the northern part of Cyprus which was now occupied by Turkey. All of them were loyal to the United States, but many of them were critical of our role. We had a very difficult foreign service organizational problem after that cataclysmic event.

Q: I want to ask a real nuts and bolts question. You say you went in to restore morale. How did you see you were going to do it and how did it work out?

BROWN: The first thing is personnel. I think I mentioned that Bill Crawford chose me in part because I did not have a deep Cyprus, Greece or Turkey background. The Deputy Chief of Mission that Rodger Davies had chosen to go out and join him was a Greek language officer. Bill Crawford felt that that was not appropriate in the new circumstances.

So the first thing we had to do was reorganize the personnel in the embassy. This meant moving out several of the employees who had been rather profoundly shaken by events. Seeing their ambassador with his head blown off, in effect. We changed a number of our political and economic officers. There was a change in the other agencies attached to the embassy. This took place over three to six months.

Second, we had to somehow regroup the local personnel. Assure them that we were going to stay on the island. That we were not going to leave. We had to spend a lot of time simply working with our employees.

Thirdly, we had to physically upgrade the embassy. To protect it against further attacks. And indeed there was another attack against the embassy in January of 1975. In which the first floor was invaded. One wing was set afire. Ten cars were burned in our courtyard.

And our American personnel were retreating upstairs to the roof, to the vault. For either the last stand. Or for protection. Or evacuation by the U.N. peacekeeping contingent, when the Greek Cypriot mob broke into the building and almost killed us. We were eventually saved by the Canadian contingent of the UNFICYP military detachment on Cyprus.

This is by way of saying we had to do a lot in terms of physical protection of the embassy. We did not do enough initially. It was only six months later that the second threat became apparent.

So there was a lot of basic messing about just to straighten the mission out. There was also the addition of an AID component.

Of course Cyprus, prior to 1974 had been one of the most prosperous countries in Europe. The invasion of Turkey and the coup against Makarios, changed all that. There were three or four hundred thousand refugees created. So we had to add a AID component, disaster relief to the mission. I spent a lot of time working on that.

I guess the most important political activity that we engaged in was the attempt somehow, while Makarios was in exile, to bring the temporary government under Glafkos Clerides, who had taken over as president after the failure of the rightest coup, taken over as president of the Republic of Cyprus, trying to find some way to bring about rapprochement between Greek Cyprus and Turkish Cyprus. I spent, and Ambassador Crawford, spent the majority of our time talking to the leaders of the legitimate government of Cyprus, Clerides, and the Turkish minority who were, twenty percent, across the green line in the northern part of Cyprus. The big activity then was, if you want, "peace making," rapprochement, political reconciliation--it is very, very difficult. It hasn't been done to this day. Look where we are today, sixteen years later. Cyprus is still divided. At the embassy we had to try to do all these things simultaneously.

Q: In your heart of hearts, did you think there was an answer?

BROWN: There was a window that was open, briefly, roughly between September 1974 through January 1975, when Makarios was out of the country and in exile. Clerides who was a more moderate man, was president, pro tem of the country. I think there was an opportunity if the Turks had shown more flexibility on certain key elements on a settlement on Cyprus. Having to do with the status of Famagusta and Varosha, the new town of Famagusta, where much of the Greek investment on the island was located in the form of luxury hotels, restaurants and fancy apartment buildings. In terms of what would happen to certain areas to the north of Nicosia. I'm trying to pull the names of these places out. The very rich citrus growing areas--Morphou. And also the status of unaccounted for Greek Cypriots in the north who were assumed to have been murdered by the incoming Turkish army. We had a list of eight or ten very important political elements. Also the size of the international airport of Nicosia. Which is still closed, by the way.

There was a list of items on which I think progress could have been made. Which would have built confidence between the two sides that might have ended up in producing a federation of the Turkish area and the Greek area. Which would have been much better than what you have now, which is an island, totally split, with a defacto Turkish government comprising 20% of the population in the north, and the legitimate U.N.-recognized, US-recognized Republic of Cyprus in the south, in the capital of Nicosia.

So there was a time, about three or four months, where we worked night and day, the U.N. Secretary General special representative, who soon became Perez De Cuellar, the current secretary general. At that time it was Weekman-Mumoz. I think there was a possibility as long as Makarios was out of the country.

Makarios came back and solidified Greek Cyprus, totally, as he had before, until the attempt to overthrow him. Solidified Greek Cyprus in a much more rigid fashion. Makarios was basically overthrown in July of 1974 because it appeared to the EOKA elements and the Greek colonels that Makarios was adopting a more tolerant line toward the Turk Cypriots. Ironically. So that was the reason for overthrowing him. That and the residual unification of Cyprus with the homeland of Greece. Basically abrogating the basic independence of Cyprus. But when Makarios came back he played a rigid rightest wicket which was adamantly opposed to any kind of concessions to the Turks.

Q: How was it to deal with the Turks?

BROWN: Yes, I used to see the Turks. We had to have a rather formal relationship with the Turkish embassy. We had two kinds of contacts. One with the embassy in Nicosia which was beefed up with very high powered diplomats after the invasion. That was our formal meeting place to discuss political matters. The actual discussions of the Cyprus issue really took place in Ankara, in Washington, and at the U.N. and in London and in Geneva. So what we did was at a relatively low level.

Q: It was not going to be decided on Cyprus at this point.

BROWN: What we did was of a rather local formal nature. Our second source of contacts was with the provisional government of Rauf Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader. There we had to walk a very fine line because obviously the legitimate government of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriots, did not like the American embassy talking to Denktash. Getting across the green line into the Turkish area was a difficult matter. You had to go through phalanxes of armed men a la Beirut.

We also had contacts with the Turkish military, about thirty to forty thousand, in the north of Cyprus, who kept a rigid iron grip on that area. We used to go up there in order to show the American flag up there, to show that we were still interested in northern Cyprus. And to get access to American citizens--Greek Cypriots American citizens. So we had a lot of contact with the Turkish side.

Q: What was the Turkish attitude towards the Americans?

BROWN: The Turks were using American tanks, they were wearing American boots, they were flying American airplanes. Of course you had at that time Congress cutting off military supply to Turkey as a result of the use of American military equipment that had been supplied under our FMS program for defense purposes.

I found the Turks very hard. Very unbending. And not in the mood to negotiate. We had to fight for every inch of ground. On consular access. On protection of American property. Not to mention the more political matters. The Turks were very, very tough.

Q: Maybe splitting up is a lot better than trying to intermingle.

BROWN: That is a difficult question. There was a period in the Republic of Cyprus' history and it probably goes from 1970 to 1973, known as the golden age, in which the religious and ethnic tensions were at a low point. The way the Cypriots worked it out among themselves was that in the north and in the south there were both Greek minorities and Turkish minorities in the villages. And for the most part, in the villages, the Greeks and the Turks got along in that period. Even though there had been terrible pogroms in the 1960s. The British colonial government had used the Turks as the police against the Greek majority. This had left a bad taste. It goes back a long way.

In answer to your question, the attack against the American Embassy in January of 1975 was precipitated by the United Nations convoying of the remaining Turks on the southern part of the island to the north. After that was completed, 99.9% of all Turks were in the north and 99.9% of all Greeks were in the south. The island was almost totally divided. With approximately 30% of the territory in the north belonging to the Turkish Cypriots and the remainder to the Greek Cypriots, with 3% of the island under the British sovereign bases.

Whether or not that is a better arrangement, only time will tell. My feeling is that Cyprus lost a priceless opportunity to have a binational society perhaps on the order of Canada. Of course Canada is not without its problems. But there is too much history on the island. Too much history. What you are seeing now is just a settling into the island which may last another ten or twenty years or three centuries. I don't know.

Q: How well did you feel you were supported from Washington?

BROWN: I have to say I had superb support. Isn't that terrible to say, that the Department supported us! I think we had excellent desk officers and an excellent executive director in Joan Clark, who was EUREX and who responded overnight to our requests. I made one egregious error administratively in not getting authorization to put up steel shutters. Almost overnight, after we had been attacked by this mob, almost killed, I just went out and ordered our administrative officer to do what was necessary with a local contractor overnight to put up metal shutters that would stop AK47 bullets. That meant an expensive

operation and for one reason or another, I did not get the correct direct authorization from the Department to do that. I was covered. Nobody said, "Well Fred, you goofed. Come out." I could have blamed it on my admin officer but I was chargé at the time and I didn't. It was my decision. So I had superb support. All the way along. In personnel. In logistics. In communications. They sent us TDY communicators from Europe. I really can't complain.

Q: In a crisis, it works often.

BROWN: But it depends on people. On Joan Clark and people like her. We could have had a hard-ass executive director who simply didn't see it.

When the embassy was attacked in January of 1975 again, I received a communication, a personal letter from the secretary, for the then president Clerides. I don't think Makarios was back then. It was a simple message.

"I have instructed Mr. Brown to tell you that if there is any further attack on the American embassy, if an American citizen or any Greek Cypriot employee of the American embassy, is harmed in any way, the United States will cease all activities having to do with Cyprus, will cut off negotiations and will have nothing further to do with the attempt to find a solution on Cyprus. Yours truly, Henry Kissinger."

So I went over in the clothing I was wearing. Full of stink and tear gas and a little bit of blood. I went over and called on the Foreign Minister and delivered this note. Just put it on the table and said, "This is what we have to say to you." That took care of it.

The message came when I needed it. It was given to me in a matter of hours.

Q: Was there the feeling that the Greek Cypriot government was tacitly behind this?

BROWN: Yes. My feeling is that they would not have permitted us to be killed. I do know that I was retreating up the stairway up to the vault area, with my two Greek Cypriot guards, my chief marine gunny who had a couple of shotguns, and our security officers. We had decided that if the mob came around the corner and up the stairways, we would fire. We had used all of our teargas.

The marines had not used their weapons. And don't forget. This is fairly early on in the era of attacks on American embassies. Cleo Noel had been killed in the Sudan and one or two other people. But basically this was early on in the era of attacks around the world. So we didn't have a lot of experience in how to handle it.

But the marines. I must compliment the marines. We had supreme marines all during my time there. Unlike the horror stories out of Moscow.

Q: Do you think they were particularly selected?

BROWN: We had well trained and well selected marines. I never had any problem with the marines. They were pretty much under my close supervision. We always had superb marines and very good security officers. The incipient problem that was brought to my attention before I went out there, with regard to the Central Intelligence Agency. I never had any problem with that. I was always given straight answers. I asked as to sources, methods, not to mention information. I didn't have any problems.

Q: Speaking of this. Our embassies at Ankara and Athens were also important. How did you feel being in the middle and the work of our embassies there?

BROWN: You realize that the Cyprus crisis was the cause of the overthrow of the Ioannidis, Papadopoulos' regime in Athens. The coups against Makarios was the cause for the downfall of Ioannidis regime, which had been in power seven years. Which was considered to be a plaything of the Nixon Administration and Johnson Administration before that.

So in Athens, you had a whole new ball game with the new president and a far more leftist regime which replaced Ioannidis. I felt that my relationship in Nicosia with Athens was fairly good and fairly easy. It was not so with Ankara.

In Ankara we had William Macomber as ambassador, who took a very protective attitude towards the Turkish government. Much of the disagreement which Embassy Nicosia had, was with Embassy Ankara, on what the Turks should do quickly with regard to cooling the situation. We were very much concerned that the Turkish forces were going to continue on to occupy the rest of Cyprus. There was a real fear about that. The whole thrust of diplomatic activity in July and August and into September, was to make sure that Turkey didn't occupy the whole damn island. Then we really would have had a mess. So in answer to your question we did have very different points of view with Bill Macomber in Ankara.

Q: You then came back and spent a year as deputy and acting spokesman for the Department of State.

BROWN: I was pulled out on a few days notice in March of 1976 and I came back and was deputy to Robert Funseth as spokesman. My title was Deputy Spokesman and Director of Press Relations in the State Department. This was the final nine months of the Ford Administration. I worked directly with Larry Eagleburger, with David Newsom and Phil Habib. Others very close to Kissinger. I also worked very closely with Secretary Kissinger himself. Day by day clearing guidances and that kind of thing. A very different kind of operation than the spokesman's job now. Very much under the thumb of the Secretary, day by day. And Kissinger being intensely concerned about his image with the media, everything we did was attuned to his personal whims. As represented by Larry Eagleburger, really.

Q: The Secretary's image was an important factor.

BROWN: Even today it is. With Secretary Baker.

Q: How did you find dealing with the press? How was the State Department Press Corps?

BROWN: It is a mixed bag. There are some brilliant people. Fair, objective, sensitive. There were some other people who were always grinding an ax. Who were unreasonable. Who were trying to trick you, to bait you, to make you fall into traps. The noon briefing is a unique institution. It is really the only daily news briefing that the press really follow. The Pentagon may now be followed fairly closely. But in those days, nobody went to the Pentagon press briefings.

Q: And it is televised. Was it then?

BROWN: Infrequently. Under Kissinger. He didn't want his spokesman to be on TV. When President Carter came in and Secretary Vance, they made the decision early on, Hodding Carter did, to put it on TV. And that is when Hodding Carter became famous. His reputation was made at the noon briefing. But Kissinger did not want his spokesperson to be out in front.

I did the noon briefing quite frequently. But Funseth always traveled with the Secretary from that March period up until December. Then in January when Funseth left and the new administration came in, Vance came in, and Hodding Carter was appointed as spokesman, I was acting spokesman. Because it took quite a few months to get Hodding confirmed. Working with Vance was an entirely different arrangement.

Q: Could you compare and contrast?

BROWN: Kissinger having been National Security Advisor and/or Secretary of State since 1969, here we are in 1976. My God. Kissinger was American Foreign Policy. Cyrus Vance was a former Secretary of the Army. Paris negotiator with the Vietnamese. An eminent person. Trilateral commission. Member of the New York establishment and all that. But there was no comparison. Vance was feeling his way. And I was, as someone who had been there going on a year, I was relied upon as a resource, on how to deal with the press. And I spent a good deal of time with Secretary Vance and Hodding Carter, and Warren Christopher was the deputy secretary, initially, with Secretary Vance. Working with Secretary Vance was a joy. They relied very heavily on me to formulate the guidance and approach on a day to day basis in terms of presentation to the media. In other words, I wasn't formulating policy. But in terms of how you dealt with the media, they were anxious to get advice.

Q: From other accounts, even when the Bush Administration took over from the Reagan Administration, they were best buddies and all that, but it was almost a hostile takeover

in public affairs. And certainly when the Reagan Administration took over from the Carter, it was a hostile takeover.

BROWN: Well, they wanted me out of there. I remember having a few confrontations with Andrew Young who was appointed our Ambassador to the United Nations. And I was in a position of contradicting Andrew Young's statements at the U.N. and he and some people on his staff used to refer to "those foreign service officers trying to undercut me at the U.N." So there was a little bit of that. But Secretary Vance was a gentleman from the word go. And the people around him were basically easy going. Although you had people like Richard Holbrooke, Tony Lake, Patt Derian, a lot of people who were very ideological in their approach. But I was treated as a professional and people like me were. I can't say that this was a great problem. Now if I had stayed on, it might have been. Yes. But I was looked upon as a transition. So from January to sometime around April, I was the acting spokesman as Hodding observed what was going on. Hodding made the basic decision against my polite recommendation to make the spokesman concurrently the assistant secretary for public affairs. When I had the job, it was separate. The spokesman and the press relations department were separate. When Hodding took over, very soon thereafter, he combined all three. S/PRS spokesman, and public affairs assistant secretary all were the same person. That made it a different kind of job.

Q: So then you moved out. You became country director for Indochina briefly, this included all three countries, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia? From '77 to '78.

BROWN: In December of 1976, after Holbrooke had been identified as the nominee for assistant secretary for East Asia and the Pacific, Holbrooke asked me if I would be deputy assistant secretary for Southeast Asia. For personal reasons about which I am not going to elaborate, I declined that offer. I said I was going to stay on as acting spokesman for a while and I would accept a lesser job under Holbrooke. I was given the possibility of several different jobs in EAP. I took the job of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia Country Director, as Holbrooke's prime man, if you will, for normalization of Vietnam. I was not in the position, for various reasons, to accept the position of deputy assistant secretary at that time. So I had been basically at a virtually assistant secretary position, and I did not wish to continue with that. That's for the record.

I did Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia until August of 1978, a period of about 14 or 15 months as Bob Oakley's Country Director. Bob Oakley was the one who was then chosen to be deputy assistant secretary in EAP for the Southeast Asian countries. Oakley invited me to become Country Director for VLC.

Q: What was the outlook towards dealing with the problem with recognition and how to deal with Vietnam. What were you doing?

BROWN: Jimmy Carter had made clear that one of his foreign policy planks in the summer and fall of 1976 was that the United States should "heal the wounds of war. Put the war behind us. Recognize Vietnam and establish a new relationship. On the condition

that the Vietnamese would help us resolve our residual missing in action problem." Holbrooke felt quite correctly that the window of opportunity to perform this normalization act was only going to stay open a certain amount of time. And that the shock of the events of April 1975, the collapse of our position in Indochina, etc., that sooner or later there was going to be an aftershock. Indeed he was right. We still have it today. In any event, one of the first things Jimmy Carter did, or Secretary Vance did, was to announce the appointment of the Woodcock Commission, which went to Vietnam with a distinguished group bipartisan group of Members of Congress and public leaders, to get Hanoi's agreement to do what was necessary to put the POW-MIA issue behind us.

The Woodcock Commission was a deliberate effort early on in the game of February 1977 to get this out of the way so that we could move on with normalization. The Woodcock Commission was basically successful. The ins and outs are in the book that I did on this. But it permitted the first round of normalization negotiations to get going in May of 1977. I was not involved with that. I was still doing the spokesman thing. Nor was I involved in the meeting in June 1977. I only came on board in July 1977.

To make a long story short, there were two meetings during which if the Vietnamese had foresworn their desire to get reparations, or money or assistance to heal the wounds of war, as they put it, $4.25 billion dollars that they claimed Richard Nixon had promised them if they were good boys. If the Vietnamese had just gotten off the reparations kick, we would have normalized very rapidly in the spring or early summer of 1977.

The Vietnamese did not do that. They made a terrible blunder. They were misled by their anti-war friends, the anti- war movement still alive in the United States. People who told them that we the United States owed Vietnam.

Q: It was such a non-starter. Just as a concerned citizen, looking at this. The hell with that.

BROWN: Yes. Incredible. Even in the second meeting, the Vietnamese Phan Hien, the main negotiator, came out on the steps of the Vietnamese Embassy and proclaimed that the United States owed Vietnam $4.25 billion. As soon as that was on the wires, within a matter of a half of a legislative day, there were resolutions on the floor of Congress, saying "under no circumstances will the United States pay any money to Vietnam." That cooled normalization. It went rapidly downhill from there.

The Vietnamese perm rep to the United Nations had sponsored Vietnam to come into the United Nations--and they entered and Andrew Young walked arm in arm with a Vietnamese perm rep to install him. This was a demonstration of our earnest, if you want. That we wanted rapprochement. Because we never had very good relations. Then that very same Vietnam perm rep, a little bit later, was identified as receiving stolen classified documents from a USIA foreign service officer. It is a long and complicated cloak and dagger story there that began in the summer of 1977 which delayed the normalization process.

We had another meeting at Christmas time in 1977 in which the Vietnamese went almost to the point of giving us everything we wanted. Some surrendering on AID and all that. At that time you had the differences of opinion between Secretary Vance and National Security Council on the pace and scope of normalization with Vietnam because of the movement on the China- US normalization. So there were a lot of other factors coming into play. Then the foreign service officer and his accomplices were arrested in January of 1978. There was a trial that lasted until June. We had no meetings with the Vietnamese.

How can you meet with the representatives of a country that had just been receiving several hundred secret cables taken out of the USIA message center? So it was a very ticklish situation. By that time, in the spring of 1978 it was very clear that the Vietnamese were going to invade Cambodia. It was clear that when they did that, China would react. You had a very complicated situation. There were a lot of boat people coming out of Vietnam. The Vietnamese were treating the people under their thumb in the south very badly. Congressional resentment was growing. It was felt that they were not coming clean on the Missing In Action question. A whole host of things happened in that intervening year that had soured the climate for normalization. The window that Holbrooke had seen quite correctly as being a little more than half open was now closing and indeed it did close soon thereafter. When the Vietnamese and the Soviets signed their mutual defense treaty in November of 1978.

I had a last gasp meeting with the Vietnamese in Honolulu on the MIA issue in July of 1978. At that time, in private talks with me, it was a technical meeting on MIAs but in actual fact they were political talks informally. I was the political contact. In which the Vietnamese representatives said bluntly, "What do you want. We're ready. You can have anything you want. You can build your own embassy in Hanoi, bring in your C5A's, prefabs, sea bees, anything you want. We don't really care about reparations anymore. That's gone by the board." But this was a private talk, not public. And I reported all of this back and it became a very controversial gambit on the part of the Vietnamese who finally met with Holbrooke. Nguyen Co Thach, their foreign minister, Mike Oksenberg, and Holbrooke met in New York in September and early October. At that time the Vietnamese made official what they had said unofficially to me in July. By that time it was too late. We knew they were going to sign with the Soviets. We knew the Chinese were going to be unhappy. We knew they were going to invade Cambodia. And Zbig, in the argument between Vance and Zbig, President Carter came down on the side of delaying normalization of Vietnam.

Q: Zbig played a much tougher role than Vance.

BROWN: Yes, but by that time I don't think there was much that Vance could have done. Frankly. In a way you couldn't have normalized with Vietnam in November of 1978.

Q: In dealing with the Vietnamese earlier on, did you find them, I mean, were they taking a rigid line?

BROWN: It was the Paris negotiations between 1968 to 1972 all over again.

Q: They were used to a hard, long...

BROWN: The Vietnamese were still on their wartime footing in 1977. To a certain extent, they are today. But they are much more sophisticated now. They did not appreciate the domestic- political factors involved in American policy.

Q: Things had changed.

BROWN: Exactly. The same thing was happening to them in reverse. They were headstrong. They were busy crushing the market economy in the southern part of the country which could have been an immense help in reconstructing Vietnam. Instead they were trying to impose a rigid command economy, Marxist- Leninist institutions that created this great outflow of boat people. It ruined the economy in the south. Inflation. Everything. They did the same thing in 1976, 77, 78 that they did in 1954 and 55 when they took over. Ideological. Hardline. "Screw the bastards. We are going to impose our way of looking at Vietnamese society. The people we have conquered." It didn't work. Their attitude was reflective in their foreign relations.
The ASEAN countries were ready to welcome Vietnam if it had shown some sign of compromise, openness and liberality. Non ideological attitude. The countries of ASEAN were quite open to that. And they made that very clear. That they wanted to welcome Vietnam into their world. Vietnam said no. We are going to have our own world. Our world is better.

Of course the Vietnamese were scared to death of the Chinese. By that time Vietnam had thrown in with the Soviet Union as its main supplier, as its geopolitical supporter, and it was scared as to what China's reaction would be. With some justification.

Q: One last question on this thing. As for as attitude, (1977-78 period) did you, dealing with the three countries there, feel that the Vietnamese had fairly run their course? Obviously Cambodia was going to come into it. But other than that, did you feel that the "domino idea" was at all a problem. That Thailand, Singapore and other places, Malaysia...

BROWN: I don't recall worrying about that.

Q: In other words their type of government, Marxist-Leninist, no longer seemed to be on the roll in the area.

BROWN: Well the Khmer Rouge were in control in Cambodia.

Q: But the domino theory was almost a write-off after Vietnam.

BROWN: No I don't recall that being a problem. I think there was a lot of uncertainty as to what the future might hold. Most of us felt that Vietnam would be preoccupied with its own problems for quite a while. It was only when Vietnam invaded Cambodia, arrived on the border of Thailand in January 1979 that this sort of fear of Vietnamese aggression rose up again.

Q: You were Country Director for a fairly long time, for Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore.

BROWN: I left the Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos job in August of 1978 and went as a diplomat in residence at the University of Minnesota, Macalester College, in Minneapolis-St. Paul. I had recently been married and my wife received an appointment as a professor at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Classics and we decided to take a year off. I was, frankly, a bit burned out from my experiences in Vietnam, then in Cyprus and back in the spokesman job and frankly fed up. It was clear to me in the spring of 1978 that normalization of Vietnam was going nowhere. And I took the opportunity to be diplomat in residence. Then during that year, we had a child and I took a year of leave without pay to stay on for the first year of my child's life. My wife continued to teach there and I had a very nice two years in Minnesota. This did not help, to put it mildly, my foreign service career. I came back, Holbrooke was still assistant secretary, in 1980. The waning days of the Carter era. I came back to be Country Director for Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Burma and Narcotics Affairs in East Asia.

Q: What were your main concerns then?

BROWN: My main concerns then were the growth of ASEAN as an important factor in US policy in the region, the continuing threats to Thailand security from the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, I spent a lot of time trying to raise the awareness in Washington of the importance of Indonesia. I worked very closely with Ed Masters, our ambassador in Jakarta, to raise the visibility of Indonesia on our geopolitical screen. I think we were successful in doing that. I also worked very hard on US-Malaysia issues. The Tir Agreement. The question of moving Malaysia gently, quietly into some kind of security cooperation with the United States which was done with very little fanfare but with good effect. With Burma we were trying to construct a new relationship, which at that time we felt that was moving in a more liberal direction. We tried to work with the NeWin regime to do that. Increased our narcotics cooperation.

These are the kinds of things I worried about from the summer of '80 to the summer of '83. I spent three years on that job.

Q: Could you describe your impression of Richard Holbrooke?

BROWN: Dick Holbrooke is a many leveled personality. He is a brilliant man. Brilliant in conceptual, intellectual ways and brilliant in an activist, bureaucratic maneuvering, political maneuvering way. He is a many leveled individual.

He rubbed many people the wrong way. He's arrogant. Intellectually arrogant. Personally very ambitious. But with a very, very keen policy sense. On many of the issues I dealt with him on, very finely tuned to what was important. Very much a maneuverer. Perhaps too much for his own good.

He ran afoul of Zbig and Oksenberg and many other people. He is a man of ideas. A man of action. Who also was somewhat ideological. Many accused him of being reckless, rushing headlong into things, without really thinking through the consequences. I don't think you can blame Holbrooke for the proposal to remove American troops from Korea. That was part of the Carter program. It was an article of faith. Holbrooke was very clever in walking the cat back from the end of the limb and getting the United States out of that untenable position.

Q: I know. I was in Korea at the time. This was obviously disastrous. This idea of removing our troops.

BROWN: Yes, Holbrooke is a man of many parts. He had to deal with Marcos. And persuade Marcos to lift martial law which he did, the first week Reagan came into office in 1981. But Holbrooke spent a lot of time on US Philippine base negotiations. He was not adverse to waltzing with Mrs. Marcos, with playing up to Ferdinand Marcos and that whole unfortunate, totalitarian regime. That's what it became. At the same time being critical of them, Holbrooke had to walk many lines at the same time. He was a very powerful man within our bureaucracy. In that era the geographic assistant secretaries were very powerful. Likewise under Secretary Shultz. Of course, later on they were, too. Unlike the situation now, in the State Department, where the geographic assistant secretaries are clearly inferior. There is almost no connection. In those days Holbrooke had direct access to Vance. He had direct access to President Carter, when he needed it.

Q: From a purely bureaucratic point of view, you felt comfortable because your boy up there could get things done.

BROWN: Yes. He could. He was not an easy man to work for. Very great personal likes and dislikes. He happened to like me. He happened to dislike a lot of other people. A lot of people hated him. A lot of people respect him. And I think if you asked people who worked closely with Dick Holbrooke during that period and look back upon it, they will say that Holbrooke was one of the most effective and clever assistant secretaries for East Asian and the Pacific that we have had.

Q: You were there during the change of administration. From the Carter administration, which was somewhat to the left, to the Reagan administration which was much more to the ideological right. What was the impression in your bureau? Did you really feel the tremors of this? Or was it more benign as opposed to what happened in the Latin American bureau?

BROWN: Well, John Holdridge came in as assistant secretary, a career foreign service officer. I must say that I did not feel the ideological tremors so much in my job. There were the usual problems of political appointees, there were one or two sort of forced off on the bureau, not very bad at all.

Q: The Reagan Administration foreign policy was more concentrated in Latin America.

BROWN: Yes frankly I don't recall any problems. There was one problem with the appointment of a political appointee to be ambassador to Indonesia by the ideologues on the Republican side. This was defeated though. It never got through. I don't need to give his name.

John Holdridge actually was moved out because of certain disagreements having to do with China. I am not sure what all the reasons were. I used to know at the time. But Holdridge was sent out to be ambassador to Indonesia and replaced by Paul Wolfowitz. Now Wolfowitz was from policy planning staff, I guess. Of course he has since moved on to great things. Wolfowitz was a political appointee from conservative background who turned out to be one of the best assistant secretaries anybody has had in any bureau. Excellent assistant secretary. Presided over the change of regimes in the Philippines and did a lot of other things. And then went down to be ambassador to Indonesia and then has come back to be number three in the Pentagon.
I must say I was not greatly put out by the maneuverings of the first Reagan administration. We managed to get our papers through, to communicate. Through the NSC. I didn't have too much trouble. To be honest with you.

Q: You had an association with Alexander Haig.

BROWN: Very little.

Q: What was your impression? He is sort of an odd character in the business. He sort of self destructed.

BROWN: He did indeed. I didn't have too much to do with him. I was traveling with Deputy Secretary Stoessel to the ASEAN Ministerial Conference in 1982 or 1981, when Haig was forced out. He was in office nine months to a year. This was in June or early July of 1982.

Stoessel had to be called back home in a hurry to take over as acting secretary because Haig had resigned.

Q: But you didn't feel any particular Haig influence in East Asian Affairs?

BROWN: I can't say I did.

Q: You then left about this time.

BROWN: I left in August of 1983 and went to the USIA promotion boards for three or four months, and when I retired in March of 1984, I was still looking for a job as a senior officer. I was then at the top pay grade and it was not easy to get the kind of assignment that I might have liked.

Q: It was a particularly bad time in the Department of State. We had a senior officer go out, and there were political appointments and all.

BROWN: I guess for the record, I should say, to make this fully documented, that I could really not complain too badly over the jobs that were offered me. As my final assignment I had an opportunity to become the State Department's candidate for ambassador to Brunei. Which Barrington King eventually got. For various reasons, I was not in a position to accept that nomination. I was offered chargé in Vientiane. I did not accept that. So there were two chief of mission jobs that I had the opportunity to take. Wolfowitz offered me both of those jobs because I was leaving. He then said, "if you want to wait around, you could then become director of regional affairs." I felt that I could not do that. I did not want to come back into the bureau in this waiting mode. Now of course, there are senior officers waiting for a directorship all over the department. For some reason I didn't want to do it.

Then I had the opportunity to be hired by Senator Charles Percy, then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to replace Broadus Bailey who was leaving the job. Colonel Broadus Bailey, former Army attaché in Vientiane. And I tossed my hat in the ring for that job. I was asked on Friday if I would accept it by Senator Percy. He gave me until Monday to make up my mind. This meant deciding to leave the foreign service, whereas in the House, you can often work for a Member of the House of Representatives on secondment. The Senate is much more difficult, particularly the sensitive job of the foreign relations committee. They feel that you cannot work for two masters. You can't be a foreign service officer beholden to the Secretary of State and still be loyal to the Chairman of the committee. I think they are correct. I found that out.

But it was a very tough decision to make. Because I'd only twenty-six years in. That was before the fantastic raise in pay that we got, in the late '50s to early '60s, thousands, up to now whatever it is. So it was at some financial sacrifice that I made the decision to leave the foreign service and accept this job with Percy. It became particularly risky when Percy was defeated six months later, and I was left hanging out to dry, because the new chairman of the foreign relations committee was Richard Lugar, a much more conservative man, and I had no guarantee that I would be kept on. Jobs like that are intensely political and you are there at the pleasure of the chairman. As it turned out, Lugar did keep me. I think it was mainly because of the Philippines. Because within a few weeks of going on the committee staff, I embarked upon a long term project on the Philippines and traveled in the summer there with my Democratic colleague Carl Ford, who is now Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia.

In any event we got very much involved in the Philippines and the report that I wrote with Carl Ford in the summer of 1984 for the foreign relations committee on the situation in the Philippines became rather influential and became important to the committee. And I was asked to stay on by Lugar mainly because he felt he needed continuity on the Philippine issue and saw this as a looming problem. Aquino having been murdered by the Marcos regime the year before, it was clear that the Marcos regime was going to crumble. Either in a neat pile or in a messy pile. The name of the game at that point was to protect US interests in the Philippines. To make sure that the transition would not cause chaos and be harmful to our political interests. Not to mention the interests of the Filipino people.

So Lugar saw my contribution to the committee as the continuity on this issue. As it turned out, I became very close to Lugar and became very active in 85 and 86 during the presidential election and indeed went over and acted as his representative with Marcos and Mrs. Marcos and General Ramos, in the summer of 85. And wrote another report that really I think was influential in pointing Lugar in the direction that he eventually took.

Q: For the record, are these reports available?

BROWN: Yes, they are.

Q: How would you describe them so people could find them?

BROWN: The initial report by Carl Ford and myself is dated September 1984 and is called "The Situation in the Philippines". It is a long report. We traveled there for a period of over three weeks. To many, many provinces. Made two different trips. Interviewed a lot of people. A lot of the opposition. The report that we wrote had a very profound effect on the Members of Congress who read it. It was used as a weapon to criticize Marcos. It came from a Republican committee chairman, Percy.

The second report in the summer of 1985 was called "Visit to the Philippines," of which I am the unique author. Again it was a two week trip. Going back, checking out some of the villages and areas that I had been to before. This time meeting for four or five hours with President Marcos and Mrs. Marcos. People in their administration as well as a much broader range of opposition people, including Cory Aquino. The report came out in August of 1985 and it really helped Lugar move to the front on the Philippine issue.

He had a series of three hearings in the fall of 1985 which set the stage for the election. With US participation as observers in the Philippine elections. That was my role as his main staff person, if you will, on the Philippines. But also on Indochina.

I visited Vietnam and Laos with Senator Frank Murkowski, who was chairman of the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee of the foreign relations committee. So I was active on Vietnam affairs too.

Also on Australia and New Zealand affairs at that time.

Q: On the Philippine affairs, Lugar was, without any exaggeration, was the key player in this. What motivated this gentleman from Indiana to somehow get involved in a major policy issue?

BROWN: At political risk to his own career. In fact he is still not without risk on that issue. Because if the Cory Aquino government in 1991 or 1992 dissolves into a pool of chaos, then he will be criticized in history, and by his political foes, as having been instrumental in putting her in power.

His motivation? Lugar is an extraordinarily capable man. He is intellectually first rate. He is capable of reading three or four books over the weekend and understanding what he has read. Unlike many Members of Congress, he absorbs information very rapidly. He asks the right questions. He has a genuine, down home, American belief that democracy happens to be the least worst form of government yet created by man. And American national interests are best served by promoting democracy in every country in the world. How you go about that is tactical, intensely political. It can be devious, etc., but the name of the prize is people power if you want. Or giving people the chance to determine their own future politically. Anything he could do to advance that, was useful.

And indeed he wrote a book on the subject called Letters to the Next President and it has been out for a couple of years. I basically wrote the two chapters on the Philippines. But he took the Philippines, Guatemala, South Africa and a couple of other foreign policy issues. Central America in general. And used these as examples of constructive American involvement, in promoting the cause of democracy. It was in our national interest. That was the whole theme of the book. It is a rather interesting book actually. It was little noted at the time. In that book, a researcher will find the most complete account of Lugar's personal involvement, I mean the foreign relations committee's involvement, in the Philippines and the removal of Mr. Marcos.

Q: You went out as an operator for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, went out and did your own investigation. In the first place, did you find this role a bit odd in a way?

BROWN: Yes, very.

Q: Here you are wearing a different hat and yet doing something you've done many times before. Maybe with a bit more freedom and room to play around and more access.

BROWN: Great access. I've never had a more wonderful job.

Q: How did you feel about this and about the Senate role and the relations with the embassy in the Philippines?

BROWN: You see, I was able to do what I did in the Philippines, and back in Washington on the Philippine issue because of immense help and trust from key foreign service officers. Namely John Maisto, who was country director for the Philippines, James Nach, who was political internal in the embassy in Manila. Certain attachés out there. And then later on as the thing matured, Paul Wolfowitz, Rich Armitage, Mike Armacost and Mort Abramowitz. These were the key people in moving the Reagan Administration quietly but firmly in the direction of easing Marcos out.

My role could not have been effective at all unless I had very close relations with Jim Nach and John Maisto. They were the key people. If you want to point to two people who were more influential in US policy, Nach and Maisto. I worked very closely with them. Also with an AID officer by the name of Merritt Broady who has been twenty years in the Philippines and knows where all the bodies are buried. I went around the countryside in the company of these people and was introduced to ideas and trends and deep political reverberations. That I managed to reflect in my written material. I owe that primarily to Maisto and to Nach, who permitted me to do that.

But it was a strange role. If I had not had a relationship with these people, if it were not for Vietnam fifteen years earlier, and with other people having a sense of trust, and work with the people in the East Asia bureau, I could not have done that. It was a very strange role.

Q: This could not have been done by a hotshot, young ideologue, hired by the Senate from the academic world, to go out and prove these...

BROWN: He would be frozen out. First of all he would be arrogant and not know how to work with people.

I'll tell you. When I got to Manila the first time, this was only six weeks or so that I had been on the job, I was given a briefing by the CIA rep and by the DCM. It was a total fraud. Total fraud. In which they said Marcos is in control. The New People's Army is not a threat. There is no problem. We've got everything under control. Not so. I was told exactly the opposite by the people working for that level of the embassy.

I went out around the countryside, and I was so disturbed. And Carl Ford was so disturbed by what we saw, and what we were told by Filipinos, as opposed to the embassy, that we came back to Washington, wrote out our finding and said we must go out again for a longer visit. Senator Percy said yes, by all means, go. We went out for two more weeks. It is very difficult to go out there time and time again. We simply bypassed the top level of the embassy and went out with their people.

But you see that there was a very strong awareness at the working level in Washington, in the embassy and the Agency and the DOD that American policy had to do something about Marcos.

Q: You are talking about people at the working level, dealing with and essentially saying, okay we can't push this up through the State Department. We are going to use the Hill.

It is the people you hired to do it at the State Department who are saying, use the Hill for this. Luckily they had an operative there in one Fred Brown.

BROWN: Right. That's the way it was done.

Q: It was a cooperative measure at...

BROWN: It was a very unusual operation. I would talk a lot to John Maisto, Rich Armitage, and to Wolfowitz during the fall of 1985. The hearings that Lugar held were basically going against, pushing the Administration too fast, in a way. Yet Armitage and Wolfowitz wanted it to be pushed.

It was almost a symbiotic relationship. It was unspoken. We never put it down as succinctly and you and I are describing it. Because it would hurt.

Charlie Greenleaf, who was then the AID associate director for that part of the world. And the use of American AID monies were a crucial lever against Marcos at that time. Crucial lever. We were withholding hundreds of millions of dollars. In fact some of that money has yet to get to the Philippines. We were using American AID money to force Marcos to do certain things. Get rid of General Ver who was accused of assassinating Nimoy and the whole bit.

So it was a very unusual working relationship. It was a big gamble on the part of Richard Lugar to go over there and lead that mission.

Q: Was President Reagan sitting almost like dead weight?

BROWN: Yes.

Q: Lugar had a direct line to the President.

BROWN: No. Lugar's link to the President was not a direct line. He had to be very careful. Donald Regan was still in power as special assistant, chief of staff. The National Security Council was not on board. They wanted to be very cautious. They didn't want to do anything to rock Marcos' boat. And George Shultz had to be persuaded that this was the right thing to do. We worked very, very carefully. A lot of things were unspoken. But well understood. But the role of the Foreign Relations Committee become key from the summer of 1985 on. Interestingly, the Democrats were not as effective as the Republicans at that point.

Q: This often happens when you are dealing with real changes. The Republicans do it better because they come from a more accepted, conservative field. If they are going to do something radical, recognizing China, it is often a lot easier.

BROWN: Yes and Steve Solarz deserves a great deal of credit for carrying the flag of the opposition against Marcos.

Along about the summer of 1985, Solarz became far less important. Because it would have to be the Republicans who removed Marcos. It couldn't be the Democrats. And Solarz indeed rejected the idea of the US observing the elections in the Philippines because he was convinced that Marcos would simply use that election in February of 1986, to legitimize an indefinite tenure in that office. Whereas Lugar said, let's find out. Let's give the opposition a chance.

Q: This tool was used later. But this is really the first time that I can think of where an election really was monitored very closely.

BROWN: It was won by a cable news network.

Q: Stolen elections are stolen elections.

BROWN: That's right, and Solarz thought the same thing would happen. An interesting footnote. I have just spent a couple of hours talking to a Soviet academician. A very eminent person who is doing a deep study of the role of people power and the American role in the Philippine election of 1986 as a way of bringing about political change. He is very familiar with the affair. It is very interesting how the Soviets have understood the impact that this kind of political action has. It is political action. What we did was political action. We used funds from the National Endowment for Democracy, we messed around in a legal fashion. Using the media to spotlight. The Soviets are very keenly aware of the role of the media now. In influencing political activity. That is obviously why they cut off media access to Lithuania. That is just a footnote to what you are saying.

Q: Using both at the working level and going to another branch of the government to get something done. Fascinating.

BROWN: Of course that is the beauty of the American constitutional system. Occasionally it does work in a remarkable way.

Q: If it doesn't work here, it will work there.

BROWN: It is based on people of good will and good intentions. It can go terribly wrong, as in Irangate. It can go terribly wrong. But when it is right ... It takes a bit of luck. And of course it takes the Filipino people who did the work.

Q: Micromanagement of foreign relations. How do you feel about Congress taking such an active role in foreign relations with the exclusion of the Department?

BROWN: Obviously it bothers me a great deal. During my time there (I was almost three years to the day of working for the Foreign Relations Committee), I was constantly bothered by the inclination of my colleagues to quickly move in and try to micromanage and force things to happen in a way that the Hill should not have been involved. I was constantly bothered by that.

But I was bothered by another thing. I was bothered by the lack of appreciation. The almost "know nothing" approach of the Foreign Service and the State Department with regards as to how Capitol Hill works. I think we have a lot to learn on that. The foreign service is a lot better than it was but there is almost as much ideological prejudice against Capitol Hill among many foreign service officers as you will find among congressional staffers against the foreign service. The Helms phenomenon, if you want.

In Capitol Hill you have these young whippersnappers who are politically motivated, personally motivated and want to make their mark and basically are irresponsible. There are a large number of those. You don't find foreign service officers like that. But none the less I found it unfortunate among the many FSOs in the bureaus that I dealt with, a lack of understanding of the political domestic environment, in which a Member of Congress operates. Here we spend our life as political officers in the foreign service, what have you, understanding foreign political situations, and reporting on them and analyzing them and recommending policy. Yet we don't have a very sophisticated understanding of our own system. I think this is rather surprising.

Q: As a consular officer, we were very much aware on our side of the political pressures on congressmen. Because we would see the mail. Not that we could always respond. But we bloody well knew that you were very carefully dealing with Congressman so-and-so about issuing visas to Eastern Europe.

BROWN: Most foreign service officers know that there is something called constituent pressure. What I am saying is that I think on the part of some of us, there is a sort of contempt for the fact that this is the way our system works. "God damn. Congressional pressures. Why does that have to happen!" Well we happen to live in a democracy. This is the name of our game.

Q: At one point my ambassador was George Kennan, of great fame. Who had no feeling for the American system whatsoever.

BROWN: In Yugoslavia?

Q: Yes. One last thing on the Senate. Jesse Helms. How did you observe him at the time? What were his motivations?

BROWN: Helms is a dangerous man. I lost my job on Capitol Hill basically because Helms called in support to get rid of Lugar. When the Republicans lost the election of 1986, the November of 1986, the Senate changed hands, from Republican to Democrat. Claiborne Pell became chairman. And then the question was, who would be ranking minority member. Now Lugar had become chairman of the committee in 1984 only because Jesse Helms, in 1984, had decided that he would prefer to have agriculture than foreign relations. In 1986, however, Jesse changed his mind and said, "I want to be ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee." Lugar did not fight hard enough against Helms. And Helms won.

We were given a very short notice to clear out our desks. I burned most of my classified material, rather than let the Helms people get their hands on it. I had file cabinets full of sensitive material which I burned.
Helms was a menace. I think he is a menace now. It is not only him, it is the people around him. He hires some very sharp but skewed people.

Q: What is the motivation?

BROWN: The motivation is that he represents a perspective in the American body politic which is reactionary, hostile to many of the values that you or I might hold. Has almost a pathological distrust of the Department of State. The problem really goes back to Alger Hiss, Yalta and Roosevelt, all that. It goes back a long way. He has people working for him that consciously pursue a vendetta against the Department, by whatever means they could choose.

Q: Looking back on your career in the foreign service and the senate, what gave you the most satisfaction?

BROWN: For me, the most important thing about the foreign service is enjoying the journey as opposed to the accomplishments or whatever. For me the most poignant thing is my relationship with Indochina. Which I am now pursuing. I am trying to help construct a new relationship with Indochina. That is the thrust of my book. I am very fond of the Vietnamese, as the people, and of Vietnam, as a country. Regardless of the "vicious" communists. Second, my work in the Foreign Relations Committee...

End of interview