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

RUST DEMING

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 8th of December 2004. This is an interview with what is it Rust?

DEMING: Rust, R-U-S-T.

Q: R-U-S-T. Any middle initial?

DEMING: M.

Q: M. Deming. D-E-M-I-N-G. What does the Rust stand for? I haven't seen that.

DEMING: It's a family name. It was my grandmother's paternal name, and my parents decided to inflict it on me.

Q: Did you immediately become Rusty?

DEMING: Yes, I'm one of those people whose nickname is longer than his given name.

Q: I know. For example, I've been interviewing Rand Beers and of course you can imagine that ends up as Randy.

DEMING: A lot of confusion. I was Russ, Russell.

Q: Yes. Let's start at the beginning. Can you tell me when and where you were born?

DEMING: I was born in Greenwich, Connecticut, on October 11, 1941.

Q: Oh, just prior to the war.

DEMING: Yes, but I'm not responsible for the war.

Q: I was born just before the stock market crash. Let's talk a little bit about your family, first on your father's side. Do you know where the Demings come from?

DEMING: Yes, they come from England, from Bath, England in fact. They go back, Julian Deming was the first governor of Connecticut and on my father's maternal side, he's the great grandson of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Q: He was a consular officer.

DEMING: He was consul in Liverpool and so we had that in the family. We are of course steeped in the Hawthorne history since it is such a prominent history.

Q: Well, then, how about let's sort of go for your grandfather. What was your grandfather up to?

DEMING: My father's father was a doctor in New York and Connecticut, a country doctor.

Q: Where in New York and Connecticut?

DEMING: In Westchester, NY and then in Redding, Connecticut. He served in the Army medical corps in the First World War, and one of the pieces of family lore is that he was called down to New York to treat Titanic survivors after the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. He married my grandmother who was about 30 years younger than him. My grandfather lived into his 90s. I remember him quite well.

Q: What do you know about your grandmother?

DEMING: My grandmother was the granddaughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Her father was Julian Hawthorne, Hawthorne's son. He had eight kids. I remember about seven of them, my great aunts and uncles. She was a beautiful red headed woman who died quite young at 67. I remember her from when I was a young kid. Her husband who was 30 years older outlived her.

Q: Well, then your father, where was he?

DEMING: My father was born in Westchester, New York in 1909. He's still alive. He's almost 96. He'll be 96 next February. He became very enamored of the New Deal. He went off to work for TVA and then he joined the State Department. He became a Foreign Service Officer at the age of thirty-nine under the Wriston program after the end of the War when the State Department civil service was integrated with the Foreign Service. In 1948, he was sent to Bangkok as first secretary and PAO, head of USIS. I was seven, eight, nine years old in Bangkok, and I remember that period extremely well.

Q: Where did your father go to college?

DEMING: He went to Rollins College in Florida, which is a very progressive school.

Q: How did he get down there?

DEMING: He went to boarding school in New England, Loomis, which is now Loomis-Chaffee, where I went as well. He became intrigued by a man named Hamilton Holt, who was president of Rollins and one of the foremost educators and progressive thinkers in the 1930s. My father went down there. After graduation, a family friend offered him a job at the Tennessee Valley Authority in Knoxville.

Q: on your mother's side, where did her family come from?

DEMING: They came from Michigan. My mother's maiden name is Macpherson. Her family came from Scotland via London, Ontario. My great grandfather moved from Ontario to Michigan and became a Michigan lumberman. He and colleagues helped cut down the white pines of Michigan, and they settled in Saginaw. My great grandfather and my great grandmother's families built summer homes on a lake in northern Michigan which we still have in the family. It's been there 120 years, along with summer homes of other family members in a beautiful virgin forest along a lake shore.

Q: They save some trees.

DEMING: Yes, they saved some for the family summer resort. So, my mother grew up in that environment. Her father went into the lumber business as well, and after the pines in Michigan were gone, he moved to Florida for the cypress. She went to Florida and became interested in Rollins College and that's where she went and she met my father there. That's the origin of that marriage.

Q: Why were you up in Connecticut, well, you were born in Connecticut.

DEMING: I was born in Connecticut, and we still have family in Redding, Connecticut. My father at the time was teaching at Fairfield Country Day School in Greenwich, Connecticut where he went in 1940 after leaving TVA. He later moved to Washington to work for the government.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

DEMING: One of each, I'm the oldest. I have a brother who is three years younger and a sister who is five years younger.

Q: Was it by Thailand that you sort of remember family life or before that?

DEMING: Oh, before that. I remember going back to when I was two or three years old. We lived in Rockville, Maryland in a house that still exists on South Adams Street. Rockville was real country then. There was an airport between Rockville and Bethesda. I have very vivid memories of our trip to Bangkok in 1948 on KLM.

Q: You started elementary school in Maryland?

DEMING: Yes, I went to a nursery school. I went to Green Acres Nursery School, which still exists. It had just been started by very progressive Jewish educators, and my parents were very much into this approach to life. I just felt a little like a guinea pig being sent to this school, but it was a lot of fun. Indeed, it was one of the schools that still try to get me to contribute to the alumni fund, although I only went there for only two years. By the time I was in third grade, I was in Bangkok.

Q: You were in Bangkok from '48 to when?

DEMING: '51.

Q: What was it like?

DEMING: I loved it. It was a very charming, very colonial kind of city. Bangkok was still a rural city. The "klongs," canals, were still there. The canals were later filled in to widen roads, and Bangkok lost much of its charm. I just had tremendous freedom there, either because my parents had great confidence in me and our household staff, or because they were completely irresponsible. Perhaps it was a combination of both. I rode my bike everywhere, and I enjoyed horse riding lessons every day after school which often took me all over the countryside. One of my fondest memories was my father's driver who would take me on weekends to his home in the country, often unbeknownst to my parents. They didn't know I was out riding water buffalo in the Thai fields and just having a wonderful time. It was an ideal childhood.

Q: How was the school?

DEMING: I went to a school at the Anglican Church in Bangkok. One of the things that turned me off mathematics was I had to learn addition and subtraction in pounds and pence before it was decimalized. That was pretty discouraging. Every morning we had to go to chapel, so I learned all my Anglican hymns at an early age, but it was a very international school. I was one of the few Americans there amongst Europeans.

Q: Did you pick up any Thai?

DEMING: I did. I had kitchen Thai. I spoke it quite well. I can get around very well with my kitchen Thai when I go back there.

Q: Then after you left there in '48.

DEMING: '51.

Q: '51.

DEMING: We went back to Washington for four months and then we headed to Tokyo. We arrived in Tokyo in the fall of '51 and we were there until the end of '53. It was a very interesting period because there was a transition between the Occupation and the

return of Japanese sovereignty. The peace treaty went into effect in April of ’52. I remember General Douglas MacArthur. My father took me down to the Daiichi Building where the General worked. I remember the chrome helmets of his honor guard lined up as MacArthur would pull up in his big Packard and stroll out of his car, with Japanese all lining the sidewalk, bowing to him. Then I remember the shock when he was fired by Truman in 1951 and then unceremoniously departed Japan.

Q: How about home life? Was there sort of around the dinner table and all, was politics discussed about anything?

DEMING: Yes, everything was. I remember that from a very young age, I was fascinated with current events. I loved to go to newsreel theaters. I read the airmail editions of Time and Newsweek from cover to cover, those little thin things.

Q: Oh, yes.

DEMING: I was intrigued by the world and America’s place in it from a very early age I guess because of exposure and because my parents were always talking about things going on in the world.

Q: Your father was an Information Officer?

DEMING: He was with USIS when it was integrated in the State Department. He went to Tokyo as a deputy PAO there, but every assignment after that was outside of USIA.

Q: As a kid did you end up in pachinko parlors?

DEMING: Not at that point.

Q: I was thinking this would be almost impossible to avoid.

DEMING: Yes. I remember the clang, clang, clang, but I never went in to play at the age of nine, 10 and 11.

Q: Good heavens.

DEMING: But in Tokyo I did have my bike, and I rode all over town. I still find some alleys and backstreets in Tokyo that I knew as a kid. The first year, I went to a U.S. military Occupation school, which was located in a place called Pershing Heights, which was the former Japanese army general headquarters. Our lunchroom was the room in which the Tokyo War Crimes trials had been held, something I didn’t figure out until a couple of years later because no one talked about it at the time.

Q: Was there much contact with the Japanese kids and all?

DEMING: In our neighborhood there was. My brothers and I played stickball with Japanese neighbors in the back of our house. We had a big yard, and the kids would come over, and we would play with a little rubber ball. Other than that interaction, it was a fairly isolated time. It wasn't until I went back to Japan later on that I really got a chance to get more integrated into the society.

Q: You were there when the occupation ended.

DEMING: Yes.

Q: That was when?

DEMING: April 22nd, 1952. I remember during the Occupation we had military license plates on our car, and at midnight our driver changed them to the blue diplomatic plates to symbolize the restoration of Japanese sovereignty.

Q: I was actually there as an enlisted man. I was down in _____ at the time and all of a sudden I stopped occupying Japan and I was now an ally of Japan.

DEMING: Difficult. It took a while for the transition to take place. I think General Eisenhower said the most difficult thing about ending the Occupation of Japan was getting the American colonels out of the villas. The first house in Tokyo we lived in was a villa that had been owned by a Japanese baron, and he and his family lived in the servants' quarters. We occupied the big houses, and we never saw them except for glimpses. It was always uncomfortable for me, and during my subsequent assignments in Japan, I was afraid I would run into one of the family members. It was a very colonial kind of a situation.

Q: When you left there, I mean obviously given your later career did this leave you with a feeling particularly after Thailand and Japan, a feeling for the orient at all?

DEMING: Yes, I was very fond of it. This was reinforced when my father went back as Consul General in Okinawa in 1957, when Okinawa was still under American administration. He was both consul general and political advisor to the military high commissioner there. By that time, I was in boarding school in Connecticut, so I only went out for summers. I went out for two summer vacations and one spring vacation.

Q: You went to Loomis from when to when?

DEMING: From 1956 until 1960.

Q: I went to Kent.

DEMING: Oh, silver spoon football.

Q: I think they were just starting that for those who don't know their ____.

DEMING: A guy named Boynton or something like that.

Q: Yes, well, I was there way back ____. I was there from '42 to '46. I graduated in '46. How did you find Loomis?

DEMING: I liked it a great deal. It was lonely at first because. This was before the age of jet travel and indeed before the State Department paid for kids at boarding school to visit their parents overseas. I spent vacations with relatives. In addition, international phone calls were very expensive and had to be booked days in advance. So there was not much contact with my parents which I found difficult and lonely. However, the quality of the education and the camaraderie made up for it, so it was the right decision.

Q: What subjects kind of turned you on?

DEMING: Quite naturally, international relations, economics, and political philosophy. For the first year I was quite a lackadaisical student. Then I took a course in political philosophy in my sophomore year by a guy named George Warren. He used the book The Worldly Philosophers by Robert Heilbroner and a number of other very good books outlining political philosophy, and I became very intrigued with it. He was a teacher who didn't give much positive feedback. I remember once he turned back an exam and he looked at me and said, "You're pretty good at this stuff, stick with it." That was very important encouragement.

Q: Oh yes. How about reading? What kind of reading did you do?

DEMING: Mostly current events. Every year I won the Time magazine current event quiz. Remember that thing?

Q: I won it once.

DEMING: It was just a matter of reading a lot about current events and absorbing trivia.

Q: Yes.

DEMING: It simply reflected the fact that I'd like to keep up and read. Non-fiction intrigued me, but I also enjoyed fiction.

Q: Any books kind of stick in your mind that you particularly enjoyed?

DEMING: Well, one of the more formative books was Crime and Punishment. I really found that a stunning book. At the time Catcher in the Rye was in vogue, and I related to Holden Caldwell's prep school experience. Most of my reading outside of class reading was nonfiction.

Q: How about sports?

DEMING: Yes, I was not a superstar, but I played basketball, football and baseball.

Q: You couldn't duck it at those schools.

DEMING: I really enjoyed it. Having been brought up overseas, I was really concerned about being an American, and baseball was one of my tickets back. I was pretty good at it but a better fielder than hitter. I also pitched. I really focused on sports a lot, and I enjoyed football and basketball a great deal.

Q: Did you get a chance to go out to Okinawa?

DEMING: I did, I went out three times. When our parents went out in the summer of 1957, I went with them. We went by ship on the *President Cleveland* to Tokyo and that was always great fun. Then we flew down to Okinawa, and I spent six weeks there. I was 15 years old, and there was a group of American college kids on summer vacation, and I started hanging around with them. We went scuba diving, and we had parties. One of my best friends there was named Paul Blackburn who was the son of the admiral in Okinawa. Paul joined the Foreign Service in the 1960s, and we served together in Japan. Paul just retired a few years ago. He's over at the State Department declassifying things. We made our acquaintance in Okinawa.

Q: Is he a Japanese hand, too?

DEMING: Yes, he spent a lot of time in Japan and Southeast Asia. Paul is a couple of years older than I. He was a student at Haverford at the time.

Q: Comes to my mind when I came into the Foreign Service in '55 was John Sylvester whose father became a Japanese hand.

DEMING: Yes, I know John. He was Consul General in Okinawa.

Q: Were you able to sort of pick up more than the normal knowledge of Japan and all this time now with Japan becoming a focus?

DEMING: Well, just by osmosis. I didn't make a serious academic study of Japan, but I read and was interested in Japan. I was aware of what was going on politically, economically and socially in Okinawa and Japan. I picked up a lot of insights and knowledge.

Q: Did you get any feel from your conversations with your father at the dinner table and all going back and forth there about the issue of the reversion of Okinawa?

DEMING: Yes. In fact, my father was there in a very difficult and critical period. He was in a difficult position. He was political advisor to the High Commissioner of the Ryukyu Islands, an Army three star general. The general was in effect my father's boss. At the

same time, my father was Consul General with a separate reporting channel to the Embassy in Tokyo and the State Department. On a couple of issues, he differed with the U.S. military, and he had the delicate task of whether to use his own channels to Washington or go along with the American generals. My father's own oral history recounts some of these difficulties.

One issue went all the way up to the White House. This issue involved the American military's desire to stop paying rent to the Okinawan owners of the land on which our bases were located. The military wanted to change this system to what they called a "lump sum payment", essentially making a one time payment to the Okinawan landowners to buy the land. My father and others argued that this would sever the tie between the Okinawans and their land, and they would lose the continuing rental income, and thus their economic stake in the American military presence. It would be a disaster in terms of our relations with the people of Okinawa and build opposition to our presence there. This issue went all the way to the cabinet, and Eisenhower came down on the side of the State Department, saying this was the wrong thing. There was an awful lot of broken crockery with the military, but my father received a lot of credit from John Foster Dulles.

Through my father's experience in Okinawa, I got a very good sense of State/Defense relations, as well as relations between the uniformed military and the Foreign Service. The State Department has the responsibility managing our long-term relationship with the host government and thus advocates an accommodating approach that builds good will. The military, on the other hand, has immediate operational and training requirements that sometimes conflict with the sensitivities of local communities and the host government. I got a very good education on how that all worked.

My father got along very well with the military, and there were some very good men there, including the two high commissioners he worked with, General Moore and General Booth. The Marine commander in Okinawa, David Shoup, who won the Medal of Honor in Tarawa, became a close friend of my father, and Shoup later went on to become Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Q. Well, then you graduated in Loomis in '60. Did you know where you were, or did you have any idea what you wanted to do or go?

DEMING: Well, I always knew I wanted to do something associated with international relations. That was my real interest, but my main focus at that time was getting out of New England after all those long winters at a school without girls. My parents had gone to Rollins College, as I mentioned. I'd been down there with them a number of times and said to myself, "Boy, this is a pretty nice place", which it was, and still is. I was interested in two colleges. One was Haverford, outside of Philadelphia, and the other one was Rollins. I decided to go to Rollins. I had a very interesting four years, perhaps not the most academically challenging, but one of my great life experiences.

Q: So, this was '60 to '64. You say Rollins started out as an experimental school?

DEMING: Well, yes. It was founded in association with the Congressional Church in the late 19th Century, but then it was taken over by Hamilton Holt, one of the most progressive educators of the early 20th century. He attracted a lot of very high-powered people to the campus during the 1930s and '40s.

Q: Did it duplicate in any way the Chicago and St. John's College, Hutchinson's kind of great books?

DEMING: Not the great books. The emphasis there was on very small classes, what they called a conference system and eight to one student to faculty ratio. The educational philosophy went through various stages, particularly with respect to student evaluation, including a period of no exams which didn't last very long. Also, Hamilton Holt was president of the United World Federalists which advocated a utopian view of world government, so that influenced the pedagogic approach. By the time I got there, Rollins had become more traditional, but the emphasis was still on small classes with free discussion.

Q: Well, '60 to'64. This was a very interesting time particularly down in the South. In the first place, did you as a kid get caught up in the election? You weren't really a kid, but the election of 1960.

DEMING: Yes, that was the first election I was involved in. I was a very big Kennedy supporter, and one of my claims to fame was to pin a "Kennedy for President" bumper sticker on the car of Christian Herter, the Republican Secretary of State. My parents lived in Georgetown, about four houses down from Herter's home on P Street, and he had a garage with a door open. I went by and I put a Kennedy sticker on his personal car. I thought that was pretty clever.

Q: Well, tell me, how Southern was Rollins when you went there in 1960?

DEMING: Well, it was a mixture. About half of Rollins students were from the Northeast. Rollins was their second or third choice college, people from prep schools and so on. Frankly, there were a lot of very wealthy kids. The other half were from Florida and elsewhere in the South, many of them on scholarships, the first ones in their families to go to college. It was a very interesting mixture. I joined a fraternity, essentially a jock/athletic group. I wouldn't want to use the phrase "animal house", but it was pretty close. Most of my colleagues were from the Northeast, but the rest were from the South, so I got a real education. I discovered to my surprise the Civil War, at least in the South at that time, was not really over. There were very strong memories and prejudices.

Q: If you talk to somebody, it was The war.

DEMING: Yes. I remember once joking with a friend of mine from Georgia, introducing him to a friend as being from Sherman, Georgia. He was not amused. You couldn't joke about that.

Q: I know. Literally my grandfather was a general in Sherman's army and some people, now nobody cares, but this was not a joking matter.

DEMING: Indeed, when I first went down to Florida, there were still white and colored restrooms and drinking fountains. I just found it shocking and outrageous. I was brought up mostly overseas. Both of my parents were very liberal, and being overseas I was not exposed to American racial prejudice. It didn't exist, or at least wasn't apparent, in the world that I was in. I remember when I was in Bangkok as a young child, my parents and I went aboard a visiting U.S. naval vessel, which I found very exciting. A black mess steward served us drinks, and I said to my mother, "I thought only Americans were on our Navy ships." My mother responded, "He is as American as you and I, and don't ever forget it." I haven't.

Q: Tell me how you and the college responded to the civil rights movement, right in the middle of the South in a liberal school.

DEMING: Yes. Well, in a way Rollins was a hotbed of rest. It was a pretty laid-back place. The issues of the day were debated, but it wasn't like more active campuses in the North and the West. When I was at Rollins, Vietnam was not really a national issue. When I was at grad school, there was much more debate. The traumatic event during my period at Rollins was the Cuban missile crisis because we were right there. For a week or so, we were really concerned that we would be at ground zero.

Q: It's interesting because you would think that being of a liberal persuasion in an area that was not particularly liberal had lost its liberality?

DEMING: To some degree we were "limousine liberals," because there were very few minority students on the campus at that point. Now there is more diversity at Rollins.

Q: Were there blacks?

DEMING: Yes, two or three in a campus of 1,200 people. Tokenism at its worst, and it was a fraternity school.

Q: Which fraternity were you in?

DEMING: Sigma Nu.

Q: How did you find sort of this concentration of the fraternity system and all in a period of really changing views?

DEMING: I found it very antiquated. I joined the fraternity because it was the thing to do, and I had a lot of friends in it. However, when I actually went into the initiation ceremonies, at that time Sigma Nu had a racial clause in its covenant that free men should not associate with descendants of slaves. I was sort of taken aback by the whole thing.

Sigma Nu came out of VMI in Lexington, Virginia and so had very deep Southern roots that I really hadn't figured out when I joined. No one paid much attention to that stuff, but it did show some of the more negative Southern traditions that were observed by the fraternity system.

Q: The reason I'm asking all this is it's interesting to grab some social history at the time. Did you find that there was a difference between Connecticut and Florida? I mean this is old South.

DEMING: Oh, yes. As I said, half of the students there were there from the old South. I found it a very valuable experience. If I had gone to school in New England, I would have been unaware of this aspect of American culture. As I said before, the Civil War was still alive. I became much more sensitive and much more understanding of the different view of history, the different perspectives and the sense at that time there was a certain sense of alienation in the South from what was then seen as the mainstream. Much of this has changed in the last 40 years, with the evolution of American politics and the civil rights act. At that time, the South was still a different society, a different world, and I learned an awful lot. I looked at it in a way as another foreign experience.

Q: Right, well, as I was saying, this is part of a culture, which ain't yours.

DEMING: And having been acclimated to looking at cultures from the outside, it was natural to examine it without being judgmental.

Q: How about religion? I mean you know up in New England they have religious schools, when I was there it was run by monks but I didn't pay a hell of a lot of attention. It was stiff upper lip Anglicanism and it wasn't the born again type thing.

DEMING: Well, Loomis was nominally congregational, and we had to go to morning chapel every day for 15 minutes, with everybody mumbling. Some students got up and gave a homily. The closest thing to a rebellion was the refusal by a few students to stand up for the hymns. That was a way of protest to whatever was going on.

Q: I mean you didn't pick up any of the born again Baptist type thing at Rollins?

DEMING: No, nobody wore religion on their sleeve at all. It existed, but not on the campus.

Q: It was coed wasn't it?

DEMING: Rollins was coed, very coed.

Q: I have to ask this because I experience it, how about the impact of the Southern belle? I mean for somebody brought up in New England and all of a sudden.

DEMING: Boys boarding school.

Q: And particularly coming up with these girls at that period who were still sort of brought up to flirt.

DEMING: It was a lot of fun. In fact, I married one of them. My wife is from Florida. I met her at Rollins.

Q: Nobody who hasn't experienced it could really understand the impact of these young ladies.

DEMING: Yes. There were some of the most beautiful women in the country.

Q: Oh yes, how about, I guess there was something academic, what about academics?

DEMING: Academics. I enjoyed life down there a great deal, and I eventually found the library, but it wasn't my first destination. I was a political science and English major. I had one or two science courses, but nothing very heavy. We had some very interesting political science professors. One former Foreign Service Officer, a man named Lionel Summers, taught international law. There were a number of others, including a professor named Paul Douglas who had been president of American University. He and others had taught at first line universities and then came down to Rollins in their retirement years. I learned a lot academically on political philosophy and international relations, but I enjoyed the English courses just as much. I loved to read everything from Shakespeare to modern American, British, and French writers so it was a very liberal education in the traditional sense.

Q: Did you get much of an exposure to the Cold War at that time? I mean we had the missile crisis.

DEMING: The missile crisis was the most dramatic. In addition, one of the visiting scholars on campus was Edward Teller who was fairly conservative.

Q: Oh yes, the father of the hydrogen bomb.

DEMING: The father of the hydrogen bomb. Certainly, among the faculty, there were a number of émigrés who were very anti-communist. There were others on the faculty who had a quite different point of view. There was no dominant doctrine there, no central philosophy. It was very intellectually open in that regard. The nice thing about it was that the school was small enough so you would go to lunch with Edward Teller and debate issues and pontificate. He didn't listen much, but occasionally he let you talk. We had that kind of relationship with the people who came.

Q: Was there any reflection at that time of, well, I guess the Cuban immigration really hadn't, they were just plain refugees

DEMING: We had nobody that I could remember from the Cuban émigré population at the school. Later on, that became quite an element there, but not at that time. We had a couple of Hungarian émigrés at the college.

Q: In ’56.

DEMING: The ’56 crowd, yes.

Q: Yes. Were you getting anything about the Orient there while you were there?

DEMING: No, virtually nothing. I don’t think there was even a course on Far Eastern history there. I took courses on European history, Spanish history, and I learned a few things about Latin America because that was a natural orientation for a Florida college.

Q: But Vietnam was.

DEMING: It wasn’t really bubbling up until late ’64 and ’65.

Q: Well, then when you were getting ready to graduate in ’64, what happened?

DEMING: Well, I wanted to go to graduate school, and my parents were in Washington, and I wanted to go to Washington. I got into the American University School of International Service and spent two years there. I decided it was time to get serious about academics, so I really worked hard. There were some very interesting people at AU. One of them, another formative professor of mine, was a man named William Yandell Elliott who was a longtime member of the Harvard faculty and one of Henry Kissinger’s teachers and one of the formative influences on Kissinger. When he retired from Harvard, he came down to AU and taught a seminar on political theory. I got into it, and I was fascinated. He took me under his wing, and I wrote a paper that intrigued him. One of his big things was how internal values in each society shaped a country’s foreign policy. He’d done a study of this on Germany and other European countries. I took his model and applied it to Japan. It was something he had never thought of before. I got a lot of credit I didn’t deserve because it was something that was new to him. Anyway, I wrote a thesis on that.

In other courses, I had a professor named Abdul Said, who is still around, on political theory, a very interesting man. I took a couple of courses on East Asia as well, a course on Japan from Ed Griffith who was in INR at the State Department at the time. I really enjoyed it, and I worked hard and did well. While I was there, one Saturday I took the Foreign Service written exam and passed it and then in the fall of 1965 I took the orals in Washington and passed them.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions?

DEMING: Yes. I took the exam when I was an undergraduate at Rollins, in my junior year. I passed the written, but I failed the oral with good reason. I was not ready to go into

the Foreign Service. In my first oral exam, they never asked me a question about East Asia and Japan because it was in my background. They had a couple of people with Latin American backgrounds, and they kept asking me questions about border wars between various Latin American countries. I groped around, but I knew enough not to try to fake what I didn't know. And there was a lot on economics.

I took the written exam again when I was at American University, and I passed it with a much higher score. I found the oral very enjoyable. I felt comfortable, and the atmosphere was congenial, and I thought I had passed before I was told so. I went to the registrar, and about three months later they called me up and said we've got an opening in the March class. Do you want to take it?

Q: March?

DEMING: March 1966. I said, "Sure." I'd finished all my course work and all my comprehensive exams at AU, but I hadn't finished my master's thesis. I thought, "Well, I better go anyway." I joined the 72nd A-100 course.

Q: Let's go back a bit. You were taking political science, political theory. It seems to have changed a lot in that I mean how did you find it at the time and I don't know whether you've been exposed to it now and all, but political science and political theory has gotten terribly into computer monitors. It seems like it gets further, it got very far removed from the real world.

DEMING: Yes, even at that time, I was very skeptical about the ability to quantify political science and international relations. One of the dominant theorists of the time was a man named Kaplan who did systems theories which was not quantitative but focused on how various sub-national, national, and multinational systems fit together. I found that a useful way to look at issues and help understand them, but extremely dangerous if you tried to apply it too rigorously because the world was too complex and didn't fit into these little boxes.

I went to Stanford to get an MA in the early 1980s when political theory was much more quantified. Having been a practitioner for a number of years, I found many aspects of political theory even more removed from reality. My friends in the academic world tell me that there is a tremendous pressure to make "political science" into a predictive, quantitative science.

Q: White coats.

DEMING: Political science has tended to be dismissed by other "scientists" as some sort of fuzzy-wuzzy gobbledygook that was not intellectually rigorous or predictive. There was pressure to put numbers on everything in order to make it more academically respectable, but I felt that the more exact political science becomes, the less relevant it is in the real world. Most practitioners have found it very difficult to apply anything except broad principles of political theory to the real world.

Q: Well, then you didn't mention, when did you obtain your significant other?

DEMING: We were married in my senior year in college.

Q: What was her background?

DEMING: She was from Florida. She had grown up in Gainesville, Florida. Her father was at the University of Florida, and she'd come to Rollins as a scholarship student on the merits of her poetic ability. She was dating my "big brother" in the fraternity, and we went on a double date, and the rest is history, as they say. She was a year ahead of me. She was teaching school when we got married. After I graduated, we moved up to Washington, and we got an apartment in McLean Gardens while I was at American University, and that's where we were when I went into the Foreign Service.

Q: So, you came in 1966?

DEMING: Yes.

Q: What was your basic officer, your A-100 course like?

DEMING: It was one of the last small classes before the Foreign Service ramped up for Vietnam and the CORDS program. We had 26 students. One of my A-100 classmates was Ray Sykes who went on to be ambassador to the UK. Roger Morris was also in the class. He went on to work for Henry Kissinger on the National Security Council, quit after the Cambodian invasion, and was one of the people on Nixon's "enemies" list. After leaving the Foreign Service, Roger wrote a bio of Richard Nixon. I made a number of other close friends, some of whom I'm still in touch with. I was the last member of the class to retire.

The course chairman was named Alex Davit. I remember his advice: Don't wait around for someone to tell you what to do, because no one ever will. Just figure out what needs to be done and go out and do it.

Other members of my class identified me as the son of a Foreign Service Officer and assumed I knew everything about the Foreign Service. Of course I knew very little about the Foreign Service.

Q: Was your father, since Okinawa what did your father do?

DEMING: He came back to Washington in 1959 and joined the newly formed African Bureau as office director for East and South Africa. "Soapy" Williams (G. Mennen Williams) was the assistant secretary during the Kennedy years. In 1961 my father was appointed the first ambassador to Uganda. I never got out there because I was in college, and this was before the Department paid for college students to visit their parents abroad. My father spent four years in Kampala. He came back in 1965 and then went to Chapel

Hill, North Carolina, as diplomat in residence for two years. Then he came back and ran what was then the Interdepartmental Seminar at FSI.

Q: It was sort of morphed into the senior seminar.

DEMING: Yes. He retired when he became 60 in 1969. We overlapped in the Foreign Service for four years. In fact, he came to visit me at my first post in Tunis.

Q: Your specialty when you came in.

DEMING: Except for two administrative specialists, all of our class came in as generalists without an assigned cone. Coning was done behind the scenes.

Q: Were you, in the first place, had Vietnam begun to make an impact?

DEMING: Yes. I should mention that when I was at American University, Vietnam was becoming a big issue. A visiting professor there at the time was Hans Morgenthau from the University of Chicago. I don't know if you recall, but Hans Morgenthau was in the realist school of political science. His fundamental view was that Vietnam was a big mistake because it was beyond our sphere of influence. It didn't relate to our vital interests, which were Europe and Japan. We were squandering our resources and our credibility by going off into an area that clearly belonged in China's sphere of influence. As a realist student myself, I found his thinking rather attractive.

I can't say I was active in the anti-war movement, but I went to a lot of the "teach-ins." I became very skeptical of the whole effort in Vietnam, not so much on moral grounds, but basically because I thought the effort was doomed to fail. I saw the war as a post colonial struggle, and I believed we were on the wrong side of the equation. Ho Chi Minh was not simply a communist. He represented Vietnamese nationalism. On the other hand, we had inherited a French colonial regime that was corrupt and going to go down the tubes. I thought we were making a big mistake.

We had lots of heated discussions on Vietnam both inside and outside of class. It was a very polarizing issue even then. It continued to be an issue after I joined the Foreign Service. In fact, our A-100 class was very divided.

Q: I mean did you feel free at the time to sort of debate, I mean was this a subject that came up often?

DEMING: Oh, yes. Indeed, there was an attitude that if you didn't debate it, if you didn't have a position, you weren't seen as really involved or serious.

Q: Well, then were they _____ a quota on your class to go to Vietnam at the time or not?

DEMING: No, we only had one classmate who went immediately to Vietnam, and unfortunately, he was killed there.

Q: Who was that?

DEMING: Robert Little. He was consul in Da Nang and was killed during Tet. Bob was a very good guy, from Harvard. I later learned that he had been captured and tortured by the Viet Cong. Nobody else in our class went to Vietnam as a first assignment, and at that time if you were married, you wouldn't go. As I mentioned earlier, most of the following classes went into the CORDS program destined for Vietnam.

Q: Well, they were told. If you want to join the Foreign Service you had to be willing to go.

DEMING: Yes.

Were you trying to get to the Far East at the time?

DEMING: No. Obviously, I had interest in Japan, but I didn't expect to go there for my first assignment. They gave us a list of posts that were available for junior officers. We were able express our preferences, but few of us believed it would make much difference. They sent you where they wanted to send you.

Q: It was what used to be known as April Fool's.

DEMING: Yes. I think I was told in our consultations that given my interest in the Far East, I would probably not go there for my first assignment. I'd go somewhere else, which made sense. They asked me whether I wanted to stay in Washington or go overseas, and I said I wanted to go overseas. They passed around the assignments, and I learned I was going to Tunis, and I thought that was great. I took the books out and started reading them. I'd had a lot of French over the years in school. I couldn't speak it of course, but I could read. I went off and took FSI French for three months and got up to an adequate level.

Q: You were in Tunis from '66 till?

DEMING: From October '66 until July of '68.

Q: When you got there in '66 what was the situation in Tunisia?

DEMING: Well, Tunisia was our loyal ally in North Africa under Habib Bourguiba, the pro-Western founding father of Tunisia. We had an enormous AID mission. Tunisia was our largest aid recipient per capita, and it was considered one of USAID's great success stories. Tunisia used our assistance effectively, there was little corruption, and Bourguiba focused on developing the country's human resources through education and empowering women. At the same time, Tunisia was a one-party state, and Bourguiba became increasingly authoritarian as he aged. There was quite a bit of political ferment when I was there, particularly because Bourguiba had handed over economic power to a socialist

named Ahmed Ben Salah who put agricultural land into cooperatives, a policy that was very unpopular and proved disastrous to agricultural production. Shortly after I left in 1968, Bourguiba fired Ben Salah and returned the country to a more market-oriented economy.

The American ambassador at the time was a man named Francis Russell who served in Tunis for a total of seven years. He was in his fifth year when I was there. He was one of these people who used to be called "in and outers," well connected people who went in and out of the government as administrations changed. He was a very solid guy who had previously been ambassador in Ghana. There was some internal criticism of him as being too protective of the Bourguiba regime. Indeed, during my period there, we had a couple of incidents over Embassy reporting that the Ambassador considered too critical of Bourguiba and his policies or which raised issues that he didn't want to raise. So, there was a degree of internal ferment in the embassy on the question of reporting. I learned the lesson of never blocking reporting on the basis that it raised inconvenient or unwelcome policy questions.

Q: What was your job when you got there?

DEMING: I was a rotational officer. My first job, one of the toughest I ever had in the Foreign Service, was acting GSO. The GSO went on home leave and then got sick, and I filled in for about six months. The embassy had about 60 pieces of property for the AID mission and for the embassy, houses we owned or leased. We had to maintain these pieces of property and this proved to be a real challenge. At the time, foreign exchange was very scarce in Tunisia so spare parts were very hard to come by. Almost all the houses had antiquated heating systems. While Mediterranean winters were mild by our standards – the temperature rarely went below 40 - it was very damp and cold when the already inadequate heating systems broke down.

I spent many mornings on the phone with panicked wives demanding immediate service. Their husbands all outranked me, so I was in a delicate situation. I had to manage a FSN labor force made up of Tunisians, French and Italians workers, overseen by a retired RAF flight captain who was drunk most of the time. Trying to get this fractious work force together under the drunken aviator taught me very valuable lessons on how to organize, negotiate, and put things together to achieve an objective. It was a perfect assignment. I regret now that there's not more of a rotational opportunity for young officers.

I then spent a couple of months in the Budget and Fiscal office. I learned what an allotment was, what an obligation was, what liquidation meant, and the basics of financial management. I was trained by a young Tunisian Jewish woman, and thanks to her I became one of the few political officers who actual understood Embassy accounting. She later left Tunisia and married a multimillionaire from Miami. She and her husband come back to Tunis each summer when I was Ambassador, and we became good friends thirty-five years later.

I then moved into the consular section for six months and again was tutored in the intricacies of consular procedures by an FSN.

Q: He told you what to do.

DEMING: He told me what to do and explained it, and I learned an awful lot. We had a couple of nasty death cases of American citizens. One case was an American who died in the south during the summer. In Tunisia, a Muslin country, they don't embalm because bodies are buried immediately. Tunisian authorities shipped the body up to the embassy and put the coffin in the parking lot over a long weekend where it exploded in the heat. It was one of those nightmare scenarios. I also had to negotiate the release from jail of a couple of young Americans. It was tremendous on the ground experience.

I then moved into the areas where I spent the rest of my career, first the economic section for six months and then the political section for six months.

Q: What was the political scene there?

DEMING: As I mentioned, Tunisia was becoming increasingly authoritarian under Bourguiba who was beginning to clamp down more and more. There was growing dissent from various elements there, and as I said, there was a feeling in the political section that we should be reporting more fully on the discontent and the pressures that were mounting. The ambassador, on the other hand, wanted to portray Bourguiba as being in complete control. The real crisis occurred during the six-day war in June of 1967.

Q: This was between Israel and Egypt.

DEMING: Syria and Jordan were also involved. The Tunisians had been out in front of other Arab states on the need to recognize Israel, but the war inflamed public attitudes toward Israel and the U.S. Radio Cairo broadcast very vitriolic commentary which inflamed the Tunisians public. Street demonstrations quickly formed. We were about a mile and a half from the center of the town, but the British Embassy was right in the center, at the end of the Avenue Bourguiba. The mob sacked the British Embassy and then came down Avenue de la Liberte where we were and headed toward the American Embassy.

Communications at that point were not very good, and we didn't know quite what was going on. We heard reports of trouble, but suddenly the mob came down the street, climbed over the wall and destroyed all the cars in the parking lot, including mine, and then stormed the embassy. We barricaded the embassy, and everybody moved upstairs. There was a big open staircase. The Marines were throwing tear gas grenades down the stairwell to keep the people out, and we were on the phone at all levels with the foreign ministry and others because the police hadn't shown up. Finally the police came, the mob was dispersed, no one was seriously hurt, but it was a very scary moment. For weeks afterwards, when we opened closet doors, we would be confronted by the rancid residue of the tear gas.

The attack on the Embassy put the ambassador in a rather embarrassing situation because he had been assuring Washington of the stability in Tunisia, particularly because some of the demonstrations began to take on an anti-regime flavor. It was a very unsettling period.

In the aftermath of that incident, something happened that I never fully understood but was very disturbing to me as a young officer. The head of the political section was a man named Steve McClintock, a very good guy.

Q: I knew Steve. As a matter of fact, I knew his parents because they lived next door to me in Annapolis.

DEMING: Yes. Steve was very kind to me as a young officer. He took me under his wing. He spoke excellent French with a horrible accent, a kind of Irish-French accent. He was the ambassador's interpreter for things official. The ambassador went off to see the Prime Minister, a man named Bahi Ladgham. As I recall, the meeting was related to compensation for the damage done to the embassy by the mob. Something happened during that meeting which the prime minister interpreted as, if not an insult, something that shouldn't have been said. The ambassador blamed McClintock for an error in interpretation. McClintock was bounced out of there in about three days and sent to Paris to rusticate. It was the end of his career, and Steve died prematurely about 15 years ago. We never understood what had happened, but our boss was gone, and this created a rather difficult atmosphere in the embassy for all of us.

Q: Well, I take it then that in a way you were much more exposed in a small embassy, but that sort of thinking at one level you were uncomfortable, unhappy with the role of the ambassador on solid professional grounds.

DEMING: Russell was a very competent man, I am sure, but Steve McClintock was my boss, and I objected to the way he was treated. Steve was frankly rather irreverent sometimes, even before all this happened. He had a tendency to criticize the "old man," in sort of a smart-alecky kind of way. It did seem to me, and it still does in retrospect, that the ambassador was very protective of the regime and that Washington was not being well served by the kind of reporting that was going out. I was not directly affected because I was doing much more neutral reporting about things.

Q: What were you doing as a political officer?

DEMING: I did a lot of reporting on the student movement, which was very active at the time, and on women's rights issues. It was one of the areas where Tunisia was well ahead of other Arab states. We used to do a weekly report to Washington, called a "Weeka", and I was in charge of that. That was one place where I had to be sure to get the coloring just right so as not to convey a negative image about the regime. This was of course before the days of email and encrypted phone calls. Communications were either by airgram, official-informal letters or by cable. The "Week" was our principal way of communicating in a semi-formal way with Washington.

Q: How did you see the student movement? Normally students are against a regime particularly an authoritarian one.

DEMING: Well, that was one of the aspects. It was certainly not openly against the regime, and the government did everything it could to pull leaders of the student movement into the system. These efforts were generally successful, but the movement sometimes got out ahead of the regime in response to major events. The Six Day War was that event during my tenure. The demonstrations in response to the war had anti-Bourguiba undertones. I would go out to talk to students, which was not also easy, but I think we did some very interesting reporting on the kinds of concerns they had. At the same time, we had to be careful that our reporting on the student movement did not indicate that the place was about to blow up.

Q: Well, during the six-day war the Egyptians never recovered from the preemptive strikes that destroyed their airports. The word was put out I think still believing in little places that these Israelis couldn't have done it, it must have been the Americans who did this. Were you getting this?

DEMING: Oh, we were. In fact, about a month before the six-day war, the Blue Angels, the Navy acrobatic team, had visited Tunis and put on a display at the Tunisian airport before several thousand people. After the Six Day War began, the rumor started to circulate that the Blue Angels were coming back to strike Tunisia, and Cairo Radio was broadcasting that the Americans were fully involved. These rumors and reports stoked the mob that came down the street.

The other major issue was trying to get Tunisia to be even more forthright in support of the Vietnam War. This brought Averill Harriman to town. I was his control officer. I found him a very interesting man. Bourguiba was hedging his bets a little bit at that point, and he didn't want to appear to be selling out to the Americans. There was tension because Washington did not think that the Tunisians were being as forthright in their support for Vietnam as they should be.

I was also the control officer for a very young Senator, Edward Kennedy, who came to Tunisia with his wife Joan and his colleague Senator John Tunney, son of the boxer. He and Tunney had little interest in Tunisia but very much wanted to ride a camel in the Sahara. Kennedy handed me a wad of one-hundred-dollar bills and asked me to charter a plane for the flight to the south. I did as instructed and then entertained the wives while the husbands were amusing themselves in the desert.

I remember another control officer episode. A large Congressional delegation, headed by Massachusetts Congressman Silvio Conte, came to Tunis as the first stop on an extensive trip to the Middle East. Conte brought his teenage daughter along, but she had forgotten her immunization card which used to be an essential travel document. The ambassador came to me and asked me to do the necessary. I recalled that a US Naval vessel was in port in Tunisia, and I arranged for the ship's doctor to give Conte's daughter a repeat of the necessary shots and issue a new immunization card. As I was doing this, the

Congressman's staff in Washington had found the card and arranged for it to be sent to their next stop. Conte was furious that I had unnecessarily subjected his daughter to a double dose of shots, particularly since she had reacted badly to the first round. He confronted me at a reception at the Ambassador's residence, but I convinced him that I had been acting in good faith and we parted amicably. In fact, his daughter had no reaction to the new shots since she had already become immune.

Because of my reputed success as a control officer, I was put in charge of Vice President Humphrey's January 1968 visit to Tunis. It was a complicated and high-profile visit, and I learned an awful lot.

Q: How did that go?

DEMING: It went very well. In fact, I won my first Superior Honor Award as a result of the visit. Because of the visit, I was unable to be with my wife when she delivered our twin daughters on New Year's Day at the hospital at Torrejon Air Force Base near Madrid, Spain. My wife and our daughters arrived in Tunis on the same day that Humphrey departed, and I remember greeting them briefly before rushing off to be sure that all the bags were on board the Vice President's plane.

I found that as a junior officer, managing VIP visits was one of the most valuable experiences one could have. Being a rotating officer in a small embassy is the best experience you can have, particularly when there is a lot of action going on.

Q: Did you get any feel for the role of the French at that time?

DEMING: Yes, the French were very dominant at that time. There were still about 10,000 French living in Tunisia as teachers and administrators. When I went back as ambassador thirty-five years later, the French presence had disappeared almost entirely. Although the French were still a dominant influence in the 1960s, Bourguiba had decided even before independence that Tunisia should not become overly dependent on the French. Bourguiba considered the U.S. as an essential counterweight to France, and he genuinely admired American values. Bourguiba turned to the U.S. to train and equip the Tunisian military, and the Tunisian military is still based on the American system and American equipment. As a result of Bourguiba's commitment to the U.S. and the West, and because of the efficiency of the Tunisian regime, Tunisia became the largest per capita recipient of American aid. Tunisia remains a "poster child" of USAID success stories. The high-profile American role in a former French protectorate produced some tension between Paris and Washington, but Bourguiba balanced the two powers very effectively.

Q: Did you get any feel for Bourguiba himself?

DEMING: Yes. He was a very dramatic and charismatic figure, one of these people who could give an off the cuff speech for two hours, bringing people to their feet. As time went on and certainly by the time I got there, he had become a bit of a megalomaniac. His picture was everywhere, and the newspapers were full of adulation. There was no room

for anybody else. As the years went on, he got in the pattern of arbitrarily dismissing prime ministers and others as the whim struck him. He had a wife, Wasilla, his second wife (his first wife was French) who was very powerful and reputed to be behind a lot of the personnel moves.

At the same time, Bourguiba did a tremendous amount for the country. He believed the key to the country's success was development of its human resources, including women, through education, health care, and economic progress. As I mentioned earlier, the Tunisian economy was going through a rough patch under the economic "czar" Ahmed Ben Salah who had convinced Bourguiba that the country needed to collectivize all the agricultural lands and otherwise control the economy. We opposed these policies on ideological and practical grounds. The year after I left, Bourguiba fired Ben Salah, and Tunisia got back on a more market-oriented course.

Q: What about the two neighbors? Let's take Algeria first. It couldn't have been a very happy relationship between the two countries?

DEMING: No. The Tunisians like to say that they were not able to pick their neighbors and would have chosen otherwise had they had the opportunity. Algeria was still in turmoil from the independence battle with the French, and some of the violence had spilled across the Tunisian border. Relations were very stiff, and there was no real commerce between the two countries. There were a number of border incidents while I was there. At the same time, in Libya, King Idris was in control, and we still had a military base at Wheelus so that border was very stable.

Were you picking up any fundamentalist movements around at that time, Islamist fundamentalist groups?

DEMING: Not that I was aware of. Our biggest concern was Nasser's "pan Arabism" and the growing influence of the Moslem Brotherhood based in Egypt. This movement was as much based on Arab nationalism as Muslim fundamentalism.

Q: What about Egypt and the Nasser movement and all that? Was that something, I mean we were quite concerned with that weren't we?

DEMING: Yes. As I said in reference to the Six Day War, Radio Cairo had a big impact on Tunisians, with its appeal to Arab nationalism and its condemnation of the European and American imperialism. Before the Six-Day War, Tunisians were not particularly politicized, but that changed rather dramatically.

Q: Well, had there been many Egyptians in Tunisia? One of the big exports of the Egyptians were Egyptian teachers, Egyptian doctors.

DEMING: Bourguiba was very smart in that regard. He kept them out. One of the things that radicalized Algeria was allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to take over its education

system. In Tunisia, Bourguiba did not let that happen. He controlled everything. It was all Tunisian. He did a very good job in an authoritarian way.

Q: Did you run across any references to someone who Bourguiba apparently held in great regard. I think it's Homer Doolittle.

DEMING: Hooker Doolittle.

Q: Hooker Doolittle.

DEMING: Yes. He was the consul in Tunis during the first stage of the War, when Tunisia was controlled by Vichy France. The Germans occupied Tunisia in 1943, after the American landings in North Africa. The Germans went to Bourguiba, who was leading the independence struggle against France and said that if he joined the German cause, Tunisia would gain independence after the War. Bourguiba refused because he didn't trust the Germans and believed that the Allies would prevail. Hooker Doolittle reported this to Washington, and after the War he was one of the influences urging the U.S. to push the French to release Bourguiba from prison and put Tunisia on the road to independence The Tunisians still give him a lot of credit. There's a street in Tunis named after him. When you talk to Tunisians of a certain age, they all remember this. The role of the U.S. in pressuring France for independence is still widely regarded and respected there.

Q: It was one of those little insights into the importance of a Foreign Service Officer who did the right thing at the right time.

DEMING: Yes. He made a difference. The new generation of Tunisians is probably completely unaware of this history.

Q: Yes. Well, then when you left there, you left there in '66?

DEMING: '68.

Q: Did you have any idea of what you wanted to do?

DEMING: Yes, Japan. I had made this wish known on my "April Fools" sheet, but I was surprised when I received a letter from our personnel system assigning me to the Japanese language training in Washington. While I was in Tunis, I had considered asking to go to Beirut to study Arabic and making a career in the Middle East. My interest in this waned as a result of the Six Day War since I felt that being an Arabist in the American Foreign Service would be a very isolating career, given our domestic politics. I didn't anticipate Camp David or other events that gave Arabists a central role in American foreign policy. However, in 1968 Arabists in the Foreign Service were a rather besieged group.

In any event, I had very fond memories of Japan, so I was very happy to go study Japanese. We left Tunis in June of 1968, along with some very good friends, another

junior officer, Ed Alexander and his wife Jane. We flew to Marseilles and rented a Volkswagen bus to accommodate our combined four adults and five children. We drove up the Loire Valley to Paris, spending a week driving, eating, drinking, and touring. It was great fun, particularly for the men who were in the front seat snacking on bread and cheese while the women were changing diapers in the back seat. It was not quite as bad as that, but I have better memories of that trip than my wife does. We spent two days in Paris, mostly on organized tours, and then took the boat train to London. We went on to Southampton to board the United States, one of the last transatlantic American ocean liners, for a very nice return.

In August, I began Japanese language instruction under the direction of Eleanor Jordan, the dean of Japanese linguists in the U.S. She had set up the Japanese language programs at Yale, Cornell and elsewhere, and the State Department had asked her to come to Washington to run both the Japanese and the Vietnamese language programs. We were at FSI, at that time located in the basement of Arlington Towers. The class was very small, consisting of four FSOs including Tom Hubbard, who just came back from being ambassador to Korea, Steve Ecton who was an A-100 classmate of mine and went on to a distinguished career, and David Brown, who is now a colleague of mine at SAIS.

The course was very intense. Dr. Jordan was very strict. She had a Marine boot camp approach to language learning, that is she instilled fear and demanded that we go beyond ourselves. She did not speak Japanese herself, but she was a linguist and understood how to teach it. She had a cadre of very talented Japanese teachers. Eleanor's pattern was to come into our class at the end of every day and say to us that we were just not making enough effort, we were not serious. How could we call ourselves Foreign Service Officers? This went on for six months. By the time we finished under this kind of negative reinforcement, we learned that we had achieved more than any other class of Japanese students at FSI. She seldom gave us praise, rather playing on our competitive instincts and our insecurities. It was a very cruel, but a very effective way for motivated and talented students to learn a language.

Two of my colleagues were assigned directly to the Yokohama language school for an additional year of training, Tom Hubbard and Dave Brown. Steve Ecton and I went off to assignments in Japan, with the understanding that we would go to Yokohama after that. I went to Osaka as an economic/commercial officer. The Consul General was Bill Sherman, a very good man who has been a mentor to me ever since. I spent two years there.

The main event during my tenure was the Osaka World's Fair, Expo 70. We had thousands of visitors and lots of VIPs. One of the most intriguing visitors was a Colorado millionaire and big Republican contributor named John King who came to Osaka as the President's representative for "America Day" at the Fair. He brought his own plane, a Lockheed Electra, and he and his wife spent a great deal of time filling it with Japanese antiques bought on shopping expeditions to Kyoto. I accompanied them on these shopping trips and got to know the store owners quite well. Whenever I visited Kyoto

after that, the shop owners would chase me down the street, asking “Is Mr. King coming back?”

With the exception of Expo 70, Osaka was a fairly quiet post. I spent my time working on economic reports, helping American businessmen make contacts with potential customers and agents, and managing my small Foreign Service National (FSN) staff.
I also worked hard on improving my Japanese.

Q: How did you find Japanese? What hit you all right and what didn't?

DEMING: Well, the easiest thing about Japanese is the pronunciation. It's not a tonal language, it's very straightforward. But grammatically, it is very difficult, and its structure is the opposite of English. The verb comes at the end of the sentence; you build up to the verb, so you have to know exactly where you're going before you start the sentence.

Q: It's a little bit like German, too.

DEMING: Yes. In addition, Japanese express themselves in very indirect ways. You couldn't simply translate an English sentence into Japanese; it would come across as very abrupt and even rude. Rather one had to learn the circumlocutions that Japanese are so fond of. I have a pretty good language aptitude, but I was not nearly as gifted as some of the others. I don't have the ability to parrot back what I hear. Rather I have to intellectualize a language, understand the structure and rationale of a language, which makes learning more time consuming. After I finished my tour in Osaka in 1971, I went to the language school in Yokohama for a year to get to the 3+ level.

Q: How about the writing?

DEMING: The reading is just a matter of memorization. It's much easier, but it takes a lot of time. I never learned to write Japanese well, to reproduce accurately the characters, since there was no real need for that. The emphasis was on speaking, understanding, and reading. Writing is an entirely different kind of a skill. One of the faults of the Japanese language program at the time was the complete separation of speaking and reading. My view was the oral lessons should begin immediately in written Japanese, using initially the Japanese phonetic alphabet, “hiragana,” and then introducing ideographic characters at a measured pace. I found it much easier to understand and remember the words if I knew the characters. The characters have within them ideographs, called radicals that often give you an idea of what the word means. If you just see the phonetic word, using either roman characters or “hiragana,” it is often difficult to understand what it means, particularly because there are so many homophones, words that sound the same, in the Japanese language.

Q: Did you get a feel while you were taking Japanese you say you saw the Arabic as being somewhat isolated. I've known people like say John Sylvester and all who disappeared into the Japanese black hole and were never seen again.

DEMING: Yes. I wasn't thinking of it so much from the perspective of career progression point of view; rather, I thought it would be very frustrating to work in Arab countries when there was so little support in Washington for the Arab point of view, particularly with respect to Palestine. At least in choosing to become a Japan specialist, I would be in the mainstream of American foreign policy. In the Arab world, I felt I would always be struggling against the Washington policy orientation.

Q: Which remains today.

DEMING: Yes, as I found in Tunisia during the Iraq war.

Q: Well, then what about when you were in Osaka from when to when?

DEMING: I was in Osaka from March of 1969 until June of 1971. The offices of the Consulate General were split between Osaka and Kobe. The consular section and the housing compound were in Kobe, but the Consul General's Office and economic and commercial sections were in Osaka, about 30 minutes away.

Q: Bill Sherman.

DEMING: Bill Sherman was the Consul General. My family and I were housed in apartments behind the Kobe consulate which was like an old Howard Johnson's Motel. Because we had three kids, they put two side-by-side apartments together, so we had parallel kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms down each side. It was a very funny arrangement. I commuted everyday by train, walking from the apartments up to the station at Kobe and then by train into Osaka. It was a very good opportunity to observe Japanese and their lifestyles, and I'm glad I had the experience, although it was a bit of a grind.

As I mentioned earlier, the Consulate General spent a lot of the time preparing for Expo '70, and much of my time was taken up with this. I was also responsible for commercial and economic reporting. I discovered that no one in Tokyo or Washington really cared what the Consulate General did in the reporting area or more broadly. I think this is generally true of consulates since the diplomatic, political and economic action tends to be centered in the capital cities where the embassies are. On the one hand, this lack of attention gave me a lot of freedom to pursue issues that I thought were relevant to American interests; on the other hand, it was hard to know whether anybody in Tokyo or Washington found the reporting useful, since there wasn't much feedback.

I spent a lot of time while I was in Osaka trying to improve my Japanese. There was a very good Japanese teacher there, a man named Ueda. I expected to go on to the language school in Yokohama, and I wanted to get prepared for that.

Q: What were you doing fairwise?

DEMING: Expo '70?

Q: Dealing with the fair.

DEMING: Before the fair opened, the Consulate General had to make arrangements for the staff of the U.S. Pavilion to find office space, obtain housing, and get credentialed. Then we had to work out with the Japanese authorities the arrangements for handling American visitors, both VIPS and ordinary tourists, to make sure that we got the kinds of support that we needed. In fact, we expected many more American tourists to come out to Expo '70, but few came. Osaka at that time was hard to get to and had very little tourist infrastructure. My boss, Rod Armstrong, had me produce a book in both English and Japanese with tourist information and guidance, and we gave to all the hotels and inns around Osaka. It was an interesting project, but I'm not sure it was used very much.

During the fair itself, which lasted for nine months, we had responsibility for escorting VIP visitors. I must have gone out there 100 times with the various delegations, including congressional delegations.

Q: How did the fair go?

DEMING: We were still in the middle of the Cold War so there was great competition between the Soviet and American pavilions, which, along with the Japanese pavilion, got most of the visitors. The American pavilion was a geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller. It was supported by air pressure and was visually striking. The center of the American exhibit were the Apollo capsule and the first moon rocks brought back by Apollo 7. The Russians exhibited their larger spacecrafts. The most intriguing exhibit I think was the Canadian pavilion. It featured the natural beauty of Canada through films, and I always enjoyed going there. We had good relations with the Soviet pavilion, and I spent a lot of time negotiating with Russian officials to get American visitors to the head of the line.

Q: How were relations from your perspective with the Japanese at that time because we were right in the middle of the Vietnam War.

DEMING: There were a lot of demonstrations against the American military presence in Japan, our continuing occupation of Okinawa, and our policy in Vietnam. We lived, as I mentioned, right behind the American Consulate General in Kobe, which became a target for Japanese demonstrators, particularly on the weekends. The Security Treaty was revised in 1960 for a 10-year period, after which it would be extended automatically unless one side or the other revoked it. The Japanese left had forced the resignation of the Prime Minister in 1960 over the revision of the Treaty, and they were gearing up again for 1970. The demonstrators marched around the Consulate compound, chanting "Yankee go home," and "Ampo hantai" (Against the Security Treaty). I remember our twins, who were then two years old, standing in their cribs at night mimicking the chant, so some of the first words out of their mouths were "Yankee go home." This may account for the fact that one of them is now an avid Red Sox fan.

These protests against the Security Treaty, our occupation of Okinawa, and our policies in Vietnam did not spill over into our working relationships or personal ties with Japanese... There was a certain ritualistic quality to it, as students in particular felt an obligation to be politically active against the government and the establishment, and America was very much associated with the establishment. With the agreement to return Okinawa in 1969 and the end of American involvement in Vietnam in 1973, the heat went out of the anti-base movement.

Q: Did you have much contact with the political people or economic people?

DEMING: Particularly economic people. Osaka was an economics center. I had the opportunity to visit many manufacturing plants in the course of reporting on various industries and escorting American visitors. The headquarters of Matsushita, or Panasonic as it is known here, was in Osaka, and the president of the company lived next door to the Consul General, so we had very close ties with that company but also with many others, We did very little political reporting or seeking out political contacts. In fact, the Embassy did not encourage us to get in contact with the Diet members in the area because it wanted to do that in Tokyo. We were told to mind our own business, which did not include political reporting.

Q: Were we concerned at that time of the trade deficit between Japan.

DEMING: Yes, trade was a focus of our policy toward Japan. A lot of my time was spent on trade fairs and other activities to try to promote American exports. We had something called “America Week”, run by the Department of Commerce, that involved working with a Japanese department store on a promotion of American products. The trouble was that Commerce did not define what an American product was, so the department stores simply featured American brand names that were made in Japan under license, having little if any impact on increasing American exports. I wrote a long letter afterwards to Commerce about the need to tighten this thing up. My letter ruffled a lot of feathers, but I also got a lot of credit for pointing out what needed to be done. In fact, I held up the Foreign Agricultural Service promotions as a model. FAS imported the American products, worked with local importers to establish a supply chain, and over time made Japan the largest overseas market for American agricultural products. Commerce, on the other hand, was willing to settle for anything with an American flag on it. In fact, Commerce discontinued the America's Week program because it recognized that it was an ineffective means of promoting American products.

Q: Did you bump heads with the Japanese policy of essentially having all sorts of things to preclude American products from coming into and sold in Japan?

DEMING: Well, we did not engage on trade policy in Osaka; that was the business of the Embassy in Tokyo. However, we saw plenty of evidence of the Japanese proclivity to import only what they could not produce at home.

Q: Did you get any feel for the embassy?

DEMING: The embassy was pretty remote. We'd get a visit every now and then from the ambassador or the DCM. Once a month we would have a pouch run to the embassy to pick up classified material, and the duty would rotate around to all the officers. I did it four or five times, either flew or went by train. The pouch run was a chance to hobnob with people in the embassy, but otherwise we felt pretty isolated. We had no classified electronic connection except by the most basic means. We read cables weeks later when we brought the pouch down, but we felt pretty far apart from the policy world.

Q: How about the military bases? Atsugi was that up there?

DEMING: No, Atsugi was near Tokyo. The major American military bases had all disappeared from the Osaka-Kobe area by the time I was there.

Q: Were there any reverberations about our using Okinawa as a base to bomb Vietnam with our B-52s?

DEMING: On a national level, yes, but it wasn't a local issue, except in Hiroshima which was in the Osaka consular district. 1970 was the 25th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, and there was some discussion within the consulate general and within the embassy about whether we should use the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima to say something that might be construed, if not as an apology, at least as an acknowledgment of the tragedy we had caused. This idea did not get a very favorable reception when we sounded out the Department.

Q: That's tricky in Japan as we've known from the Nola Gay episode not very long ago at the Smithsonian.

DEMING: The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain very sensitive issues in both countries. Our ambassador, Armin Meyer, did go down to Hiroshima in 1970 but not on the anniversary of the bombing. I believe he may have been the first ambassador to visit the city and sign the book in the museum there which is always a delicate exercise. I went down to Hiroshima several times to meet with the American director of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, a joint American-Japanese research institution to study the long term radiological effects of the bomb on the survivors and their descendants. This operation has since been turned over entirely to Japanese, but at the time there were a number of issues involving the financing of the Commission that we had to deal with

Q: What happened when you left Kobe Osaka in '71?

DEMING: I went to the language school in Yokohama.

Q: Was Yokohama sort of an anointing process saying you are going to be a Japanese language officer?

Yes. By the time you get into the second year of Japanese, the State Department's investment in you is pretty substantial, and I was already assigned to the political section of the embassy coming out of the language school.

Q: Did you have any feel for it at this point, sometimes being new to the Japanese language officer corps, I mean was there a set of mind or a desire or policy wise or otherwise.

DEMING: Well, the reputation has been that the Japanese language officer corps is not nearly as organized or as tribal as the Chinese language officer corps, partly because Chinese language officers went through such difficult times after the War with the fall of China, McCarthyism and so on. Nevertheless, there was, and to some extent still is, an identifiable cadre of “Japan hands” in the Foreign Service. When I first went to Japan, the DCM, Dave Osborn, was the dean of Japanese language corps. He spoke really excellent Japanese. My Consul General in Osaka Bill Sherman, who went up to Tokyo to be Political Counselor, was next in line and became my mentor. Then there were younger officers in the embassy, Frank McNeil, Bob Immerman, Bill Clark, Bill Breer, and my contemporary Tom Hubbard, who were clearly members of the Japan school.

Q: I’m sure there were various times particularly with the Arabic language officers, was there, were they essentially comfortable with our policy towards Japan or sometimes you can have language people who say my God we’re really screwing this up.

DEMING: Yes, I think this is particularly true for Arabic language officers because American policy toward the Middle East has often appeared in conflict with our interest in developing good relations with the Arab world. In the case of Japan, the tensions between the American political leadership and the career service have been much less pronounced. During my career, there were periods when many of us felt that we could be doing a better job of managing our relations with Japan. I have in mind the “Nixon shocks” of the early 1970s, particularly our failure to signal in advance to Tokyo our opening to Beijing. In addition, those of us charged with the political side of the relationship were sometimes concerned, particularly during the “Auto Summit” at the end of the Bush I administration and in the early years of the Clinton Administration, that the American political leadership was overemphasizing bilateral differences on trade and not spending enough time building our strategic alliance. But by and large, I do not think there has been a fundamental divide between the political leadership and the career service with respect to policy toward Japan.

Q: You were there before the Nixon shocks?

DEMING: I was there during the Nixon shocks.

Q: Well, we’ll come to that. That was a couple years later wasn’t it?

DEMING: It was while I was in Yokohama.

Q: All right, first let's talk about the Yokohama experience. How did that go?

DEMING: It went very well. I had used my time in Osaka trying to improve my Japanese. We had an excellent Japanese language teacher there, a guy named Ueda-san. He was really one of the best instructors in Japan. I would spend at least an hour a day with him, and on weekends we'd often go off on trips with my wife and others to Japanese inns and hot springs. I made a lot of progress during my two years in Osaka, and I came to the Yokohama language school with a good foundation.

At the time, the language school was housed in the old Consulate General building in Yokohama. The language school was downstairs, and my family and I occupied one of the apartments upstairs. Living above the school had its advantages since in the evenings I could make full use of the language lab and the audiovisual tapes. I really put in a lot of hours. I'm not a gifted linguist, but I did very well by virtue of applying myself, and I came out of the school with pretty strong Japanese.

Q: Did your wife pick up Japanese?

DEMING: Not really. We had three small kids at the time. She studied Japanese part time, but she never had the opportunity to develop it.

Q: Yes. You were there when Nixon I mean we had an opening to China?

DEMING: Yes, we had a number of Nixon shocks. The first one was the abrupt end of pegging the U.S. dollar to gold. The yen quickly went from 360 to the dollar to 270 to the dollar and down from there. The second Nixon shock was the announcement that Henry Kissinger had made a secret trip to China to arrange a visit by President Nixon. The Japanese were under a lot of internal pressure to move towards China, and we held them back. We repeatedly assured the GOJ that if our policy changed, we would give them enough notice so that they could rearrange theirs. Because of Nixon's and Kissinger's concerns about leaks, the Japanese were in fact given no heads up at all. The shock was extremely embarrassing to Japanese political leaders who felt that the U.S. had ignored their interests. It really was a shock in every sense of the word.

Q: Well, was there, I mean granted you were not sort of at the embassy at this point, but you must have been hit by a lot of Japanese saying what the hell is this.

DEMING: A large part of our language program at that stage was reading newspapers and listening to Japanese television so you got all the commentary on this, and I got a full sense of how shocking this was. The "Nixon shocks" stimulated an internal debate in Japan because there was a strong Taiwan lobby that wanted to stick with Taiwan, and there was a strong China lobby that wanted to move very quickly toward recognizing the PRC. In fact, Japan did surpass the U.S. policy in regard to normalizing relations with China. Within a few months, Japan had broken relations with Taiwan, recognized China, and supported China assuming Taiwan's seat on the Security Council, despite our strong opposition to the latter. The Japanese took a certain satisfaction in getting ahead of us, but

the "Nixon shocks" are still one of the seminal points in U.S- Japan relations since the Second World War.

Q: That and your analytical skills were still in full swing while you were a student there, but in talking to your colleagues, did you feel this was you say _____. Were the Japanese looking at us through different eyes from then on?

DEMING: Well, they were much more wary and much less trusting and more inclined to define and act on their own interests. I think that was healthy for the relationship. I think one of the first manifestations of this was Japan's response to the 1973 Middle East oil embargo. Japan moved very quickly to distance itself from U.S. policy. The GOJ, deeply concerned about access to oil, was ready to submit to the demands of OPEC and the Arab states. In fact, Japan almost broke relations with Israel but pulled back at the last minute.

There was a famous meeting with Henry Kissinger. He asked the Japanese to maintain unity with the oil recipient countries and not to break ranks in terms of dealing with OPEC countries. The Japanese prime minister said to Henry Kissinger, "Can the U.S. guarantee our supply of oil?" Kissinger said, "Of course not." The Prime Minister responded, "Well, that's the end of that discussion. We'll do everything we need to do to get oil." This reflected a much more hard-nosed policy and much greater willingness to take on the U.S. when our policies conflicted with Japanese interests.

Q: The Yokohama school in '71 to '72?

DEMING: Then I went up to Tokyo to the political section on the internal side. I was in charge of the opposition political parties and the labor unions. That was a very good place to use your Japanese because most of the people I dealt with did not speak any English.

Q: Okay, this would be from '72 to when did you do this?

DEMING: This is from '72 to '75.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

DEMING: The ambassador then was Armin Myer.

Q: He was really a Middle East hand, wasn't he?

DEMING: He was a Middle East expert. U. Alexis Johnson had been ambassador to Japan, but he was brought back to Washington to serve for the second time as Undersecretary of State. There was a long gap in filling the position in Tokyo. The story I heard was that Johnson was looking for someone to fill the job in Tokyo. Armin Meyer had come out of Tehran and did not have an assignment. He wandered into the Under Secretary's office, and Johnson asked him if he would like to go to Tokyo. That's reportedly how it happened.

Meyer had a difficult time. Frankly I fault some of the Japanese language officers for not giving him full support. He was seen as someone who came to Japan without any background and not very well prepared to deal with a society where there are many centers of power, and managing our relations was very complex. Some people said he kept looking for the Shah of Japan, and there wasn't a shah, particularly not the Emperor. Decisions were made at the mid-level of the bureaucracy, which was divided, and filtered up to political leaders that were divided by factions and interest groups. There was no one person to go to get a commitment. Meyer never quite got this and was often by-passed by special envoys from Washington.

Q: Who was the DCM and the chief of political?

DEMING: Dave Osborn was the DCM when we first arrived. Dave Osborn had been Ambassador Johnson's DCM and had been Chargé. He left very shortly thereafter, and Richard Sneider became DCM. Sneider spoke some Japanese but was not strictly a Japan hand. He had headed the negotiations to return Okinawa to Japan, and his main job in Tokyo was to complete this task.

Q: Who was the political counselor?

DEMING: The political counselor was Bill Sherman for most of that time. It was a difficult period. The China shocks and the 1973 oil crisis created tensions in the relationship, and trade issues, particularly the textile issue, became major bilateral problems. The Nixon Administration chose to cut the Ambassador and the Embassy out of many of the trade negotiations, with secret American emissaries sometimes arriving in Tokyo without our knowledge.

Q: Well, before we get into exactly what you were doing, you had mentioned there were various centers of power, no shah there. As a political officer, where did you see the centers of power and what was the importance of where they came from? This was in the '72 to '75 period.

DEMING: On most foreign policy issues, the foreign ministry bureaucracy, particularly at the mid-level, the office director level, had control of policy formulation. Policy decisions percolated their way up to the political level. There were of course major exceptions to this. After the "China shock," China policy was taken out of the hands of the bureaucracy by the political leadership, particularly Prime Minister Tanaka who moved quickly to establish relations with Beijing.

Our most important contacts were often between the political counselor and first and second secretary levels in the embassy and their counterparts in the foreign ministry because that's where all the ideas were coming from. Important demarches were of course made by the Ambassador and DCM, but these discussions tended to be more rigid and less informative than conversations at lower levels. It was an ideal embassy for a young political officer because we were dealing with people who were at the center of the policy process.

Q: Tanaka was sort of unique, wasn't he?

DEMING: Yes, he was called the bulldozer, and he really was very strong. He was a guy who rose to the top in Japanese politics without the university pedigree that most Japanese leaders had. He was a man who became the master of pork barrel "machine politics", and controlled Japanese politics through economic and political favors, on the one hand, and fear on the other. Tanaka was a tough, rough hewn character in the Jimmy Hoffa mold, but he was also very effective at getting things done. Even after he was forced to give up the Prime Minister ship because of scandals, he continued to have an immense behind the scenes influence on Japanese politics as the "Shadow Shogun." For more than ten years, no one became Prime Minister in Japan without his support.

Q: The Foreign Ministry largely controlled foreign policy, but what about economic and trade policy?

DEMING: This was a more complex area. In simple terms, there was, and still is to some extent, an "Iron Triangle" of big business; the bureaucracy, led by MITI and the Finance Ministry; and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the party the controlled the government from 1955 to 1993, and, then again from 1995 to the present. Labor unions and the opposition political parties have had only a marginal influence on policy making. In terms of the manner in which the U.S. dealt with Japan on trade issues, there was no "one stop shopping." We had to deal with the bureaucracy, of course, but this was not sufficient. We also had to engage with the LDP and look for allies in the Japanese business community. Even the prime minister could not make a commitment on his own if the issue cut across the interests of important political or economic groups. This was exacerbated by the strong emphasis in Japan on consensus. It was almost a unit veto system; if one element of society didn't want to go along with a decision, it could stop things from happening.

Q: Well, how, you know, you're faced with, say you're the ambassador at that time, you have to rely on your mid-career, mid-officers to go work on the foreign ministry, the ministry of trade to get things, rather than try to go see the man?

DEMING: You've got to go to touch all the bases. The most important thing is that you have a consistent message. Everybody must sing from the same song sheet. The Japanese are generally very good at internal coordination, while, as you know, the American bureaucracy is not always united. In the Embassy and certainly when I was DCM, we really tried to make sure that everybody was pulling in the same direction.

Q. This wasn't your field, but still you must have been getting reverberations from it, particularly trade representatives. You know, on trade you've got people coming from the special trade negotiator and then he or she's got people coming from various parts of industry that want various things. This must have.

DEMING: Yes, it was fairly chaotic, and it was hard for the Japanese to figure out what our real priorities were sometimes. The famous case was the summit meeting between Nixon and Sato when President Nixon put a lot of pressure on Sato to control textile exports to the U.S. and Sato said "zensho shimasu," which literally means in Japanese "I'll do my best" but in a Japanese cultural context, it really means "I'll give it shot, but don't expect too much." The President of course saw that as a commitment; the Japanese did not. When Sato didn't deliver, Nixon felt he had been betrayed, and this created an atmosphere of distrust between the two sides.

Q: Let's talk about, how did you go about your business?

DEMING: When I first went to Tokyo, I was dealing with labor unions and opposition political parties, elements in Japanese society that were on the fringes of the power structure. It was a great position for a young language officer to get out in the political world, make contacts, talk to people, and write reports on the concerns and attitudes among the labor unions and opposition parties. I got to know a lot of people, some of whom I still stay in touch with 35 years later. I had to get out there and use my language, but I was not in any sense in the middle of the policy process.

Q: The opposition party, was it labor, was it liberal democratic party or?

DEMING: Well, there were four main opposition parties at that point. The largest was the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) which was essentially a Marxist party tied to the main labor federation, Sohyo. The JSP's basic agenda was to keep Japan from becoming a militarist country again and making sure the "peace constitution" wasn't changed. The JSP also opposed U.S. foreign policy generally, including the Mutual Security Treaty.

The second party was the Komeito, the "Clean Government Party," which drew its support from a Buddhist sect. The Komeito was pragmatic and expedient, not ideological. They had a strong but limited base and were somewhat distasteful to many Japanese because they were quite evangelical. Then there was a small moderate party, the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), which had broken away from the JSP in the 1950s. Finally, there was the Japan Communist Party (JCP), which we, the embassy, did not deal with. I dealt mostly with the JSP and DSP.

Q. These parties had free reign to demagogue whatever they wanted to do because there was no responsibility associated with them.

DEMING: Yes. They were a permanent opposition with little hope of ever gaining power so they could and did act irresponsibly. Indeed, when the JSP did come into a ruling coalition in the early 1990s, a member of the party whom I had known for a long time said to me, "We've never taken a responsible position in our life; what are we going to do now?"

Q: The communist party was considered to be taking orders from China or from Moscow?

DEMING: From Moscow, from the most part, but the JCP was often at odds with both Moscow and Beijing. The party did well at the local level in big cities, because its members were seen as generally honest and very good at getting the garbage picked up and other daily tasks, but at the national level it never rose beyond a small percentage of the vote, and that vote was largely an expression of protest.

Q: Was the Japan Socialist Party tied at all to the socialist movement in Europe?

DEMING: Only nominally. The JSP would go to the Socialist International, but since it never experienced political power, it was much less pragmatic, much more ideological and anti-American. The Socialists in Japan never evolved as the European social democrats did.

Q: Well, how about going there? I mean here you are, this is your bailiwick and you've got, we'll talk about the Buddhists in a minute, but you've got the social democratic party. How were you received? Were there any interesting incites you were picking up on this party?

DEMING: There were some people in the Socialist Party that really didn't want to deal with Americans at all, whether it was for ideological reasons or because they were concerned about the reaction of the left wing if they were seen talking to Americans. Others were very happy to deal with us and welcomed the opportunity to come in to try to explain their position. A lot of my time was spent on trying to explain the U.S. position on Vietnam which was by far the most divisive issue. I didn't make much headway, but at least I got our position out and got to better understand the dynamics of the party. I focused particularly on trying to identify the next generation of leaders, people that we needed to stay in touch with. I also tried to increase the contacts between young Americans and the Socialists to help make them become more pragmatic. We sent a number of JSP members to the U.S. on the USIS visitor programs (IV programs), and we tried to ensure they were well received in Washington. I am a big supporter of the IV program. This program has made a lot of friends for America over the years, including many JSP members who came back from their three weeks in the U.S. with a much less ideological view of the United States.

Q: Did the labor unions take any interest in American labor unions?

DEMING: Yes, when I first started this job, the AFL-CIO was still quite active in its international programs. A guy named Harry Goldberg ran the AFL-CIO's international operations. He came to Japan quite often and invited moderate Japanese trade union groups to Washington. There was a moderate labor confederation, made up largely of private sector unions, called Domei which was affiliated with the DSP, the moderate socialist party, not the leftist socialist party. The other major labor organization, Sohyo, was tied to the JSP and was mostly made up of public sector unions. Sohyo therefore had much less in common with the AFL-CIO than did Domei. Domei also supported the

International Federation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), a Cold War counterweight to the communist dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

We also cultivated ties between the Japanese auto labor unions, which were part of Domei, and the United Auto Workers (UAW) which at the time was not part of the AFL-CIO. Leonard Woodcock was the head of the UAW, and he was a very moderate, interesting man. He visited Japan a number of times. Despite the trade problems in the auto industry, the two labor unions tried to maintain friendly relations between Japanese and American autoworkers. The UAW was of course the most internationalists of our unions, and we spent a lot of time trying to promote the UAW's ties with Japan...

Q: Was labor causing problems policy wise with us? I mean would there be strikes against this or that agreement?

DEMING: In the 1960s, the leftist trade federation, Sohyo, was at the center of the anti-American, anti-base demonstrations. When I first went to Japan in 1969 and 1970 in Osaka, there were a lot of anti-American demonstrations, focused on Vietnam, the return of Okinawa, and the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty (MST). These demonstrations began to fade in the early 1970s with the return of Okinawa to Japan and the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. More broadly, labor became less political and less militant as Japan became a middle-class nation. As with the U.S. labor movement, union membership declined in Japan, and labor's political influence waned.

Q: In these other opposition parties, how about women? Were they coming in or were you seeing women getting into the process more or not?

DEMING: Well, one of the leaders of the Japan Socialist Party was a woman named Takako Doi who later became head of the party. In the 1970s, Ambassador Mansfield made quite a splash when he invited Ms. Doi and other JSP leaders to lunch at his residence, and I used to call on her regularly when I was Political Counselor. There were other women active in Japanese politics, a number of whom have become cabinet ministers, but none before or since Ms. Doi has become the head of a party.

Q: But from a practical point of view in your reporting and all, were we paying much attention to your particular field?

DEMING: No. The work I was doing was on the margins of the interests of the Embassy and the USG. As with any country, the main focus of the Embassy and the U.S. government was on the people in control of policy in Japan, which were the bureaucracy and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. I was dealing with the opposition which had little influence, but as I said it gave me a tremendous amount of freedom, and I got to know many interesting people and learned an awful lot.

Q: How about union officials? Were they, I mean, were they part of the, did they parallel what was happening within the government at all?

DEMING: They played their role, but their impact was primarily on economic policy. Every spring there was a coordinated wage negotiation between management and labor in Japan, called the "Shunto," which means "spring struggle." There would be large demonstrations and carefully orchestrated strikes across the country. The labor leaders played a very central part in this annual ritual. By and large, labor unions behaved very pragmatically because they did not want to take any actions that would weaken the firms that employed them. Strikes were short lived. They were usually announced in advance, and they would terminate in six or eight hours, designed to make a point, but not to be disruptive

Q: Was this a period where you were looking at the Japanese model of manufacturing and all, thinking gee this is great or was this a little later?

DEMING: That was a little later. In the 1970s, Japan was seen as threatening to a whole range of U.S. industries as its products were flooding U.S. markets. Trade disputes worked their way up the value-added scale. In the early 1970s, the fight was over textiles, then steel, followed by televisions, autos, semiconductors and so on. During this initial period, Japanese textiles were the problem.

Q: For Nixon this was extremely important because this was where he was making inroads in the South. Nixon was making inroads in the political, for the Republicans in the South.

DEMING: Yes, much of the Southern strategy was based on the South Carolina textile industry, so, it was a hot political issue, and, as I mentioned, textiles created major tensions between Nixon and Prime Minister Sato.

Q: Turning to the Buddhist party, you say, where were they coming from?

DEMING: This was a party that came out of a Buddhist sect, Nichiren Shoshu, and a post war religious organization called Soka Gakkai. The party itself is called the Komeito, and it gained considerable support in the 1960s, primarily among urban voters who had become disoriented by Japan's defeat, followed by its recovery and rapid economic growth and urbanization. It really appealed to this lower middle-class group of people who found the society's values in flux and were looking for something to believe in. In the 1960s, the Komeito grew rapidly, but its appeal waned as many Japanese found distasteful their aggressive, door-to-door tactic of soliciting new members. The Komeito now gets about 15% of the vote, with urban women making up the bulk of its support base.

Q: Sounds a little bit like Jehovah's Witnesses.

DEMING: It was the same kind of thing. A lot of Japanese are just put off by that. I enjoyed dealing with some members of the party who were very sophisticated and intelligent, but I found others rather smarmy.

Q: What were they after?

DEMING: The Komeito's platform emphasizes peace and anti-corruption, but cynics argue that the party is completely opportunistic and is after power any way it can get it. They just want a piece of the action. Right now, they are part of the ruling coalition that Prime Minister Koizumi put together, but there is a wide scale perception that the Komeito could easily join the opposition if it got a better deal. However, the pacifist orientation of the Komeito is quite strong because women play such an important role in the party.

Q: Was there any relation, I remember this goes back to an earlier period, but I'm probably mispronouncing it, but Zengakuren?

DEMING: That was a student organization.

Q: Where did they fit? I never hear of them anymore.

DEMING: No. I think they are still around, but Zengakuren lost its appeal with the fading of the anti-base movement, the return of Okinawa, and the end of the Vietnam War. The campuses in Japan have become much less political, much more focused on career preparation, as they have in the U.S.

Q: Well, I mean speaking of this, going through my experience in a country like Italy, where its women go to church, the men don't particularly. They're Catholic nominally and they show up for Easter, but was this true also in Japan, were the women sort of taking care of, were they the majority in temple attendance and that sort of thing?

DEMING: Yes, the Japanese are very eclectic about religion. Many practice both Buddhism and Shinto. They also are fond of Christian ceremonies, including weddings. Many of the weddings in Japan include Christian ceremonies because Japanese like the rituals and the white gowns. Christmas is celebrated by giving "Christmas cakes," which has no religious significance. There is a story going back to the Occupation, when the Japanese were adopting everything Western, that one of the big department stores had a display in its window with Santa Claus on a crucifix, slightly confused symbolism.

Q: I was an occupier back in '52 and I can remember at Christmas time watching all the Santa Clauses, Christmas trees, it was the dimmest thing.

DEMING: Yes. The Japanese are very pragmatic, very eclectic, in their approach to religion. On New Year's Day, they go to the Shinto shrines because that's a New Year's tradition. For weddings, Japanese women often include a Christian service, along with Shinto and Buddhist rites. Funerals are usually Buddhist because Buddhism has an afterlife of sorts. Japanese pick and choose. Women probably are more religiously observant than men, but the rituals are important in Japanese society, and there is social pressure to show up at the right time of year to do the right thing.

Q: What about social life when you were a political officer? Was there much penetration of family to family or anything like that?

DEMING: Not very much. Japanese generally entertain outside the home, except for family and intimate friends. We had a few Foreign Ministry and journalist friends who entertained us at home, but they generally had lived abroad and become used to it. Homes are generally small, and men and women lead separate social lives. Most of the entertaining is at night in bars where Japanese males go after work to have a couple of beers with colleagues or contacts. They can write it off on their expense accounts. I often went out with politicians, labor leaders, bureaucrats and journalists. The Japanese tend not to do hard business at social affairs. It is meant to get people together to build relationships. You can slip in a little work, but if you do too much of that, it will spoil the atmosphere. Our weekend, social life was with friends in the embassy or diplomatic community. We had a bunch of European friends and others with whom we would go on picnics and on hiking trips. Once or twice a month, we'd go out of town with a group to a hot spring or other resort. That was great fun.

Q: Was the foreign ministry, where were these men coming from? The ones you were saying were really kind of formulating the policy, but who were they?

DEMING: Many of them were second generation; their fathers had been in the foreign Ministry. They were from the best universities, University of Tokyo, Kyoto University and others. It is a very elitist approach, in some respects the way the American Foreign Service was before the War when it was largely made up of Ivy Leaguers with the right credentials. The Foreign Ministry has a very good training program. After joining the Ministry, new recruits spend a year in the Ministry. Then they are sent abroad to universities in various countries for two years. They go to the U.S., the UK, France, China, Russia, Egypt, etc where they not only get the language down, but they make friends, and they get acculturated. They then spend most of their careers dealing with the areas where they're trained.

Foreign Ministry people are identified by which language "school" they belong to based on this training. There are American School diplomats who have spent two years at Harvard or at Williams or at Princeton or somewhere. They know the country well, and they've had numerous assignments here. For example, the current Japanese Ambassador, Ryozo Kato, went to Yale Law School, served in several positions in the American Affairs Bureau in the Ministry, and was also Consul General in San Francisco. Thirty years ago, the American and Russian schools were the most important, followed by the Chinese and British. Now, it is more diverse, reflecting Japan's more diverse interests.

Q: Did you have the feeling that these officials, did they understand, you're saying the Japanese centers of power are difficult for somebody looking for the Shah. Well, anybody coming to the United States thinks that just because it's the State Department you can get something settled if they're an ambassador. They're playing on a wrong wicket or something like that.

DEMING: I think the Japanese are generally very skillful in understanding the centers of power. One of the toughest things they have to deal with is Congress because it's so diverse, and the members are generally preoccupied with domestic issues. They certainly know how to operate with Washington agencies and certainly in the State Department, The Japanese are very good diplomats.

Q: How did you find the media there?

DEMING: Quite predictable and stereotyped. Like the French press, the Japanese press makes little distinction between news and commentary. The most influential newspaper is probably the Asahi Shimbun, which represents a left of center perspective and has rationally seen itself as the defender of the "peace constitution." During the Cold war, the Asahi was not formally anti-American, but took a very skeptical and often cynical view of U.S policy. In the absence of a strong opposition party and with the domination of the LDP, the Asahi saw its responsibility as keeping Japan from being dragged off by the U.S. on one adventure or another. That's changed quite a bit.

There are newspapers with greater circulation than the Asahi, including the Yomiuri and Mainichi, and a highly respected economic daily, the Nihon Keizai, equivalent to the Wall Street Journal. The Japanese are perhaps the world's most avid newspaper readers. There are two daily editions, morning and afternoon, and circulation of the most popular approaches 10 million.

Q: Were any particular newspaper boards or staff part of your bailiwick?

DEMING: Yes, we tried to cultivate journalists as sources of information and to get our perspective across. I found there was often a difference between the stance of individual reporters and that of the newspaper they represented. Often, a reporter would write an article that took a position quite different from the editorial page of his newspapers. Many journalists were very well informed about domestic politics and were willing to tell us privately much more than they put in print, particularly if we picked up the bar bill.

Q: The Vietnam War by the time '72 to '75 we were both winding down and then we left precipitous in Vietnam. How was that playing from your perspective?

DEMING: I think that there was a fair amount of unease about our withdrawal from Vietnam. As I said earlier, the Japanese were not very supportive of the Vietnam War. They thought it was a mistake. Even though the government did not openly criticize us, the war was very unpopular publicly. There were occasions during the war when Japanese demonstrations blocked the movement of U.S. tanks from depots to the port. At the same time there was unease about whether our retreat from Vietnam signaled an American pull back from Asia. This was reinforced when Nixon stopped in Guam in 1968 and announced the "Guam Doctrine" which said that Asians had to take primary responsibility for their security. We did a lot of work in the years following the "Guam Doctrine" to emphasize our continuing commitment to Japan's security.

Q: Was the reassurance, I mean when you stripped it of everything, was there concern about a bigger China, you know China doing it? I mean China or the Soviet Union.

DEMING: Yes, there was, but the Soviet Union was seen as a much more immediate security threat at that point. China was still in the developmental stage. Japan's concerns about the Soviet Union greatly increased after the Russian's 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. It was a real wakeup to the Japanese.

Q: Yes, that was '79.

DEMING: Yes, the Japanese joined us in the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics in protest. The Japanese, like many Americans, had been lulled by détente into believing that the Soviet bear was becoming cuddly, and there was nothing to fear. The blatant aggression against Afghanistan really shook them up. The Reagan administration used this new sense of threat to strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance, and there were new security initiatives that came out of that period.

Q: Well, going back to the '72 to '75 period, I mean I've always felt probably the greatest gift we ever had with the policy was the Kuril Islands and the Soviets sitting on those were seen, well, they're still sitting on the damn things and why they let that. They could have made nice with those and they didn't.

DEMING: These islands are not technically part of the Kuril Islands. They are four islands that are south of the Kuriles that Japan calls the Northern Territories. Japan gave up its claim to the Kuril Islands themselves in the San Francisco Peace Treaty because these islands were taken by Japan after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. However, these four islands never belonged to the Russians. At the end of the war when the Russians moved down the Kuril chain, they occupied these four islands that have never belonged to Russia. The U.S. supports the Japanese position on this. At one point the Russians said they would return two of the islands if Japan refused to renew the security treaty with the U.S. in 1960. The Japanese, of course, rejected that. The issue remains unsettled and has blocked a peace treaty between Moscow and Tokyo. The return of the islands is certainly a major card the Russians could play, but there is strong nationalist sentiment that makes it very difficult for Moscow to give up territory without paying a large domestic political price.

Q: What about relations during this time with Korea? What was the Japanese attitude toward Korea?

DEMING: Well, obviously this is a bitter historical legacy to overcome because Japan occupied Korea from the beginning of the 20th Century until 1945. During that period Japan brought over lots of Koreans as labor, both voluntarily and forcibly, and there is now a Korean population in Japan of almost one million. The Japanese occupation of Korea itself was quite harsh. With the division of the peninsula in 1945, Japan, because of its alliance with the U.S., supported the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the south without

developing a parallel relationship with the north. This divide was reflected in Japanese domestic politics, with the Socialists supporting North Korea, and the GOJ and LDP supporting the ROK. In 1965, Japan normalized relations with South Korea and as part of this process Tokyo agreed to provide a large economic package. There's still a lot of distrust, but this distrust is beginning to be overcome as a new generation of South Koreans and Japanese are more and more at ease with each other. One of the most popular programs in Japan is now a South Korean soap opera. At the same time, the South Koreans for a long time banned Japanese films, Japanese television and music because Japanese language and culture was imposed on Korea before and during the war. Now cultural ties are opening up so things are changing. However, Japan has no formal relations with North Korea, and the North Korean abduction of Japanese citizens and its efforts to develop nuclear weapons have greatly complicated efforts to move forward.

Q: What about on the cultural side? I mean I realize that this is still the USIA, but I mean you were watching TV, going to movies and plays and that sort of thing. Did you get any feel for where sort of the cultural side of people were coming from? Were they getting a dose of anti-Americanism or anything like that?

DEMING: We did periodically. There were some books that would portray Japan being led to disaster by the U.S., but by and large I think the American pop culture in Japan has been a tremendous influence as it has been elsewhere, whether its music, movies, television, or food. A lot of the television shows in Japan were syndicated American shows. A lot of Japan's exposure to the U.S. is, for better or worse, through pop culture in all of the elements of Japanese daily life. You know many Japanese think McDonalds is Japanese. There are more McDonalds in Japan than there are in the U.S. The same thing is true for Kentucky Fried Chicken. There are a lot of superficial elements of American society in Japan.

At the same time, I have found in Japan that there's not very much serious treatment of the U.S beyond the elite. In some of the scholarly journals there are some very good studies and articles every now and then, but it doesn't extend very widely. There is a bit of a stereotypical portrayal of the U.S. and that has become more negative in the last few years, as it has elsewhere in the world.

Q: to just sort of get grabbing at slices of Japanese life, were you seeing the lives of teenage culture or not at that point? As I gather today this is pretty damned important in Japan today, but back in the '70s?

DEMING: Oh, the trends go in waves with teenagers. At one point, when we were there in the '70s and early '80s, one of the trends was for kids on weekends to go up to Meiji Park, put on Elvis costumes, and do rock dancing in the street in a very mechanized way. They'd go through these various kinds of trends. When Japan normalized with China in 1972, there was a big China boom, and everything Chinese was very popular. Now of course with the cell phones and electronic gadgets, it's a whole different world from what it was then. It's a very active place. There's always some new trend that lasts a few months and then disappears, and something else takes its place.

Q: Well, then in ’75 whither?

DEMING: In ’75 I came back to Washington to the Japan desk. I was the political military officer on the desk in charge of working with the Pentagon on the alliance. It was a very active period.

Q: You were doing this from ’75 to when?

DEMING: To ’77. The most serious issue involved nuclear weapons. There was a former commander of the 7th fleet, a retired admiral named Gene LaRocque, who became head of the Center for Defense Information, a group that questions military spending and policy. He put out a publication stating that when he was commander of the 7th fleet, he never took nuclear weapons off his ship when he went into Japanese ports. This flew in the face of Japan’s “three non-nuclear principles” of no manufacturing, no possession, and no introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan. The Japanese interpret this to include the possible presence of nuclear weapons on U.S. naval vessels that call at Japanese ports or transit Japanese territorial waters. LaRocque was the first senior military officer to explicitly state that the U.S. Navy acted contrary to Japan’s stated policy. That of course created a real crisis in the relationship, with the opposition and press strongly criticizing both the Japanese and American governments. I spent a lot of time trying to deal with this issue.

Then we had the Lockheed scandal where it turned out that Prime Minister Tanaka and others apparently had taken bribes from Lockheed so that the second Japanese airline, ANA, would buy Lockheed Tri-Star jets. That became a big scandal with a lot of military overtones to it and helped lead to Tanaka’s resignation.

Q: Well, how did we deal with, let’s take the nuclear issue.

DEMING: We stuck with our traditional policy that we neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons anywhere, and we abide by our obligations to Japan. That was the mantra we went through, and we had to make sure that everybody around the world stuck with that. You had a loose cannon every now and then who said things that they shouldn’t say, and we would just buckle down and weather the storm. Some years later, in 1981, former Ambassador Reischauer, who was a Harvard professor, gave an interview to a Japanese newspaper in which he said the U.S. Navy always brought nuclear weapons into Japanese ports. That created another crisis, but I was off the Japan desk by that time.

Q: At the working level, were you getting sort of talking to the navy and saying hey, don’t do this or?

DEMING: One of the major contributions I made was to compile the record of all the discussions between the Japanese and the U.S. since 1945 on this and other sensitive defense issues. It was not easy to do because there was no central file, and the documents

were highly classified. On the basis of this historical record, I undertook to educate our friends in the Pentagon and elsewhere that dealt with these issues. It was very important that we knew exactly what the historical record was, what both sides had said to each other over time.

Q: Did you find your counterparts at the Pentagon I mean one always thinks of the military as being rather hard charging and damn it don't they understand, we'll do it our way and all that or were you able to see understand the shades and how best to handle?

DEMING: Yes, the one advantage was that the policy of "neither confirm nor deny" with respect to nuclear weapons was pretty well inculcated into the military. Trying to get them to understand the political sensitivity of all the nuances of this policy took some effort. We had very good support. The only gaps were ones of education and knowledge which we tried to fill so people would understand the history and delicacy and why this could really unglue the U.S.-Japan alliance if it wasn't handled properly. We had no major blowups with the Pentagon.

Q: Was there any residue over the battle of Okinawa? I'm talking about between the State Department and the Pentagon because we had, and I guess still has, a major military base there.

DEMING: Yes. We returned Okinawa to Japan in 1972, but we still have many bases and about 25,000 American military stationed there. The negotiations on the return of Okinawa began in the mid 1960s. The Japanese kept pushing us to return these islands which had been an integral part of Japan. The major decision was made in 1969 when President Nixon agreed with the State Department and many in the Pentagon that our relationship with Japan would be threatened if we did not return Okinawa. In a summit meeting with Prime Minister Sato, formal agreement was reached, and the turnover was scheduled for 1972. In the intervening three years, there were strenuous negotiations on the terms of the return because we wanted as many residual rights as we could get for the bases that would remain, and we wanted financial reimbursement for the capital improvements we had made in Okinawa. The Japanese, of course, pushed the other way.

Dick Snyder, who later became DCM and then ambassador to Korea, was in charge of these negotiations. The State Department was in the driver's seat, but everything had to be cleared through the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Basically, the State Department set the tone, and the negotiations came out very successfully. It was agreed that the American bases in Okinawa would operate under the same rules as those in mainland Japan. The Japanese paid us a large amount of money for the capital improvements, most of which we turned over to a U.S.- Japan Friendship Commission to fund cultural and exchange programs. There have been a number of books about how these negotiations were a model of how to do things.

Q: But from the military side one almost thinks of the mayor of Naha and other things that are going on there. During the time there that you were on the political military desk in Washington, were there any problems with Okinawa?

DEMING: No. By the time I returned to the desk, Okinawa had already been returned, and the adjustment went relatively smoothly. I think, by and large, our military leaders in Okinawa have recognized that they can't stay there without the support of the local population. The biggest problems have been occasional criminal incidents and accidents. With the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and the return of the islands to Japan, Okinawa was not a major source of tension in our relationship during this period.

Q: Was there any flurry or concern during the tree chopping incident in Korea? This was in the fall, late summer of '76 I believe.

DEMING: It created a lot of tension with North Korea, but that did not spill over onto our relations with Japan in any major way.

Q: I was wondering whether our troop commitment in Korea was an issue because it later became, I mean during part of the time when Carter was running and talking about taking the second division out, this scared the hell out of a lot of Americans. I was in Korea at the time, and you know this is very disquieting. I was wondering how this was playing from your perspective.

DEMING: By that time, I was not on the Japan desk. I was up in the Secretariat, but I was involved in this issue during the transition period between the Ford and Carter administrations. Carter had made a campaign promise to withdraw all American troops from South Korea. A lot of the people in the State Department and Pentagon, as well as some of the political appointees who came in with President Carter, did not like this decision. We spent the first year and a half or two years of the Carter administration trying to walk back this decision. The intelligence community, military community, the State Department all thought it was premature to pull our troops out, and the Japanese of course were extremely uneasy about what this might do to their own security. It demonstrated the dangers of carrying out a campaign pledge that was not fully thought through. Fortunately, the decision was turned around, but the episode did lasting damage to our credibility in Korea and Japan.

I want to mention one other thing that was very interesting during my period on the Desk. The Emperor of Japan, Hirohito was making his first visit to the U.S. in 1975. I was assigned as a young desk officer to accompany the advance party from the Imperial Household Agency and the Foreign Ministry around the country and then to accompany the Emperor on his three-week tour of America. In the spring of 1975, I joined an advance team headed by the Grand Chamberlain of the Emperor, a man named Tokugawa who was the great grandson of the last shogun. The team included about 20 Japanese from the Imperial Palace, the Foreign Ministry, and the police. Besides me, the USG representatives included someone from the State Department's Office of Protocol and the Secret Service.

We went around the country beginning in Williamsburg where the Emperor was to begin his visit, then on to Washington where the official portion of the visit would be held. We

then went to Pocantico Hills, New York, where Nelson Rockefeller, the Vice President, was going to entertain the Emperor at the Rockefeller estate there. We continued on to New York City, Boston, Woods Hole, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, La Hoya and finally to Hawaii. It was a very interesting three weeks traveling the country and negotiating with the various mayors and governors, some of whom were quite difficult. For example, in Chicago with Mayor Dailey, there was a struggle between the state of Illinois, Cook County, and the city of Chicago about who was the primary host. In Hawaii, we had the same kind of difficulty with the governor of Hawaii, the mayor of Honolulu, and the leadership of the Japanese-American community. I learned a lot about local American politics. I was thrown into these struggles to mediate and sort these things out. Then when the Emperor came, I went around with the entourage for three weeks, and it was a fascinating experience. I watched the Emperor interact with Americans, including John Wayne in Hollywood and Mickey Mouse at Disneyland.

Q: How did this work because you know the emperor certainly, this issue was made not to implicate him as a war criminal, but the emperor's hand I think was apparently much more in that whole wartime thing than one wants to think about.

DEMING: There are biographies that have come out in the last few years that argue that the Emperor was not simply a mild botanist who was pushed around by the military but played a much more active role. At the time of his visit, the focus was on putting the War behind us, once and for all. The emphasis was on all the positives. The Emperor said the right things about the regrettable occurrences in the past. We ran into almost no negative reactions. I remember when we were staying at the Waldorf Towers in New York, the King of Norway happened to be there at the same time, so the anti-whaling people showed up to protest against two of the last whaling nations. People were outside the hotel with signs urging Japan and Norway to end their whaling. That was about the only sign of any kind of anti-Japanese feeling. All the rest went very smoothly.

Q: What was your impression of the emperor's interest in things?

DEMING: He was a marine biologist who indeed published several articles. I found that he really came to life at the marine research labs at Woods Hole on Cape Cod and at the Scripps Marine Lab in La Hoya, near San Diego. It was clear that his interest was genuine. Otherwise, he struck me as a very shy man who was not comfortable with public performances. He went through his duties and read his speeches in a very formal way. He did have interaction with Americans, but they were all quite stiff. The one place where he loosened up was at Disneyland, and I have a photo at home of me standing behind the emperor and the empress while he chats with some children sitting on the empress's lap. He really did relax and enjoy that. He was, as they say, rather inscrutable in terms of what he was actually feeling and thinking.

Q: Well, you know, I've heard stories of rigidity of the Japanese court, a little bit like the court of the Hapsburgs towards the end where basically the court chamberlain kind of calls the tune and all.

DEMING: Yes, it's very structured, with a very strong sense of tradition and propriety. Everything has to be done the way it is supposed to be done. No risk taking with anything, but I found on a human level the court people were very interesting. I mentioned this man Tokugawa who was the grand chamberlain and a historical figure. He was the man that carried the recording of the Emperor's surrender speech to the radio station to be broadcast, evading attempts by extremists to seize and destroy the speech. I remember on the advance trip we were flying from Chicago to San Francisco. It was a beautiful day across the U.S., and I was sitting next to one of the members of the palace staff. We were looking out at the Great Plains, with the U.S. unfolding beneath us when he said to me, "How did Japan ever go to war with a country this big?" It was the first time he had ever been out of Japan and seen a foreign country.

On the actual trip, we arrived in San Francisco and were reaching the end of the trip. The visit had gone very well, and all of us were beginning to relax a little. My colleague from protocol, a man named Roger Wallace, and I decided to invite Mr. Tokugawa to join us in the bar at the top of the St. Francis Hotel for a "Ramos Gin Fizz," a signature San Francisco drink. We took him up there, and he enjoyed the drink and began to relax and talk.

Q: Well, I think of somebody who was accompanying the queen of Thailand around in Houston or in Texas and one of the things that he was telling all the hostesses and everybody else the Thai royal family don't like The King and I and that whole thing and everybody as soon as they met the queen would say, "Oh, I just love The King and I." You couldn't get away from that. Was there anything of that type of thing that the American community when they came across the king or the emperor had problems with?

DEMING: No, I don't think so. As I mentioned, their interaction was quite formal. There was in Los Angeles a big reception by the Hollywood community, and the Emperor was intrigued by Colombo, the television program, and Peter Falk.

Q: It's a detective series.

DEMING: Yes, Peter Falk was there, and he and the Emperor had a conversation. There were other folksy things that happened. When we arrived at the Beverly Hills Hotel, we had just gone up to our rooms. Apparently, the Empress's ladies in waiting had disappeared to go off to do some shopping, and I found the Empress wandering down the hotel hall and into the open door of my room, asking "Can somebody help me?" I did whatever it was she wanted, but it was a human touch that the Empress was temporarily abandoned by her staff.

Q: Did you find, did the Pentagon have a solid staff of people used to dealing with Japan because of course we've had military people there since 1945 and it's been an extremely important relationship. Did you find that they had the equivalent to a corps of Japanese speaking officers in there?

DEMING: No. As you know, the military tends to rotate rapidly. The Army does have area specialists, known as FAOs (Foreign Area Officers), but at least in my experience most were under-trained in both language and area skills. Moreover, the FAO career track was not a very promising one, so the very best officers were not attracted to it. In addition, FAO officers often served only a short time in their area of specialization. I believe much of this has changed since 9/11, and our experience in Iraq has demonstrated the importance of a firm knowledge of language and local history and culture, but in my career in both Japan and Tunisia, I was generally disappointed in the level of our military's area expertise.

That being said, at the policy level, the civilian officials and military officers in DOD dealing with Japan were, by and large, a very talented group. The Defense Department's Japan policy was run by the East Asian Office of ISA, International Security Affairs. The Deputy Assistant Secretary in charge of this office, and his military and civilian subordinates, were among the very best. Those who have served in this position include Mort Abramowitz, later ambassador to Thailand, Mike Armacost, later Under Secretary of State, and Nick Platt, ambassador to the Philippines and Pakistan. Some of the military assistants included Admiral William Crowe, later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Colin Powell. In fact, I first met General Powell when he was in that position. The Japan policy was very much in the hands of some of the best and brightest.

The JCS played much less of a role. I dealt with both when I was at the Japan desk, but ISA was the place where things really got done. Usually, the ISA deputy assistant secretary and the DAS in State's EAP bureau had an excellent relationship. This certainly pertained when I was the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and my counterpart at ISA was Kurt Campbell.

Q: Well, then you moved up to the Secretariat?

DEMING: Yes, I was a staff officer in the Secretariat.

Q: This was when?

DEMING: '76 to '77.

Q: '76 to '77.

DEMING: Yes. I was there during the transition from Ford to Carter and helped manage the settling in of Cyrus Vance. I made a trip to China with Secretary Vance in August of 1977 which was the first overture by the new administration toward China. It was a difficult trip because the Chinese wanted to move forward with normalization of relations while the Carter administration had made the decision to first deal with the Panama Canal Treaty. They decided that they could not undertake both at once because this would overload the circuits in Congress and more broadly.

Q: Each one was very political, I mean a lot of opposition.

DEMING: A lot of opposition. For that reason, it was Cyrus Vance's job to inform the Chinese that they were going to postpone normalization until later in the administration. The Chinese of course played it for all its worth. "Where's Kissinger?" "Where's Ford?" "Where's Nixon?" "Where are our friends?" "You guys are betraying us." It was a difficult visit. I remember at the banquet, we were served sea slugs, and I interpreted that as retribution. It was fascinating. Deng Xiaoping was just emerging after the death of Mao and Chou-en Lai. The Chinese entertained our delegation at the beautiful Summer Palace on the outskirts of Beijing. Deng Xiaoping, as the Chinese do, came around to each table to click glasses, and it was my first encounter with this man, short of stature but highly charismatic. Before the visit, we were uncertain where he stood. During the visit, it became very clear that Deng was in charge.

Q: Did you get any feel, I mean I realize that you were working with an entourage and all that, but did you get any feel for the difference between dealing with the Japanese and the Chinese and how they?

DEMING: The Chinese certainly were very disciplined. Every Chinese official took exactly the same line around the dinner table. One of the things the Chinese were saying to all of us at this time was the danger of Japanese militarism. Comparing notes afterwards, every table, every conversation was the same: "You have really got to be careful around the Japanese. They're becoming more and more militaristic." So, the Chinese were much more orchestrated, much more on message, much less diverse than the Japanese. In other words, the Chinese were representing an authoritarian regime, and the Japanese were representing a democratic country. In that context, the Chinese were very impressive because they knew exactly what message they wanted to get across, and they did that.

Q: Well, they also seem to, I mean compared to many other countries they seem to be able to use the exoticness and the setting and all much better than almost any country I can think of for getting people, it's practically a profession, plotting out the palace and the orchestra and all this, but it seemed to be a very impressive production.

DEMING: It is. It's very orchestrated, including using the dinner in the Great Hall of People to impress guests with the history and grandeur of China. At the same time, the impact was diminished by the unmistakable reality that you were in a communist country. When I went out in the morning for a jog or shopping, a thousand eyes followed, not just for surveillance but out of curiosity.

Q: What about, you mentioned, let's go back to the time up to '77 or so, what about Japanese militarism? Was this really a concern of ours at all?

DEMING: No, I don't think so. I think that the lessons of the War are very deeply ingrained in Japanese society. Indeed, during most of that period, we were pushing the Japanese to do more; increase their defense spending, bear more of the Cold War burden, and loosen up the restrictions on its military. The Japanese were resistant to these

pressures in all sorts of ways. Even without the counterweight of the Socialists and Communists, the Japanese recognized that the most prosperous and peaceful period in their history had been the period since the end of the War when they renounced any kind of militarism. There was no desire to tempt fate again, and there was no reason to. The U.S. was seen as a reliable partner and guarantor of Japan's security. If Japan did build up its military, this would certainly complicate its relations with South East Asia and with China and Korea. We kept trying to reassure our Chinese friends as well that they needed to understand that Japanese society today is not like it was in the '30s.

Q: Did you get any, what sort of things were you doing in the Secretariat?

DEMING: In the Secretariat, I was in charge of staffing the East Asian Bureau, the Latin American Bureau and one functional bureau. There were two of us on each team, there were four teams, and we would work shifts of 10 hours each. We would screen all the papers for the Secretary that came up from downstairs to make sure that they were well drafted, concise, and focused on the right issues. There was a lot of interaction between us and the Bureaus, and we were constantly harassing the Bureau's to get things up. Rather routine, but the most fun were the trips. Besides the China trip, I went to Grenada with Secretary Vance for an OAS meeting, the first time any Secretary had been to Grenada. It was before the controversial new airport that the Cubans built. The airport at the time was built into the side of a mountain. We went down from Andrews in a military version of a DC-9, but it was the first time a jet aircraft ever landed there. The pilot hit the runway and then just floored the reverse. Things were flying all over the cabin. When we took off, the runway was so short that we only had enough fuel to get to Barbados, which was about 50 miles away. The prime minister of Grenada at the time was a guy named Gary.

Q: This was the new jewel guy, wasn't it?

DEMING: No, this was before. His big thing was a need for an OAS investigation into UFOs in the Bermuda Triangle. I happened to be the note taker at a meeting where he was trying to convince Secretary Vance to inaugurate the study on UFOs in the Bermuda Triangle.

Q: You might explain what UFOs are.

DEMING: Yes. Unidentified Flying Objects, and of course there was always speculation that things were disappearing in the Bermuda Triangle.

Q: Yes, these were basically creatures from other.

DEMING: Flying saucers or whatever. Anyway, it was one of the more surrealistic meetings I have been in. My other impression of Grenada was the beautiful smell of nutmeg and the torrential rains. We were in these little huts, and we had to run from one hut to another in torrential rain. I did other interesting things in the Secretariat. I went up to the UN to help Andy Young get his office operations in shape. I also went to Rome and

Tokyo to advance a trip by Vice President Mondale who I later worked for in Tokyo when he was the ambassador to Japan. I spent about 14 months in the Secretariat, and then I moved to work on nuclear nonproliferation policy.

Q: Where did that fit, nuclear nonproliferation?

DEMING: It fit in the bureau called OES, (Oceans, Environment, and Science). It was a new functional bureau, and in order to give it some momentum, the Department asked Tom Pickering to become Assistant Secretary, one of our most dynamic officers who went on to become ambassador to Jordan, El Salvador, Israel, Moscow, India, the UN and Under Secretary of State. This was a period right after the Indian explosion in1974 of a "peaceful nuclear device," and the Carter administration made nuclear proliferation a centerpiece of its foreign policy. A central part of this policy was trying to increase the distance between peaceful nuclear programs for power generation and those suitable for developing nuclear weapons. We were trying to convince countries to avoid a full nuclear fuel cycle which meant forgoing the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel to extract the plutonium. Plutonium could be used for nuclear fuel, but it also could be used for nuclear weapons.
Japan was a big part of the issue because Japan was moving in the direction of a full nuclear cycle because of its energy needs. Japan already had a reprocessing plant at Tokai Mura, which was about to go online, and we were trying to convince the GOJ not to do that. The Japanese were very concerned about energy security after the energy crises of '73 and '78 which made for a very difficult negotiation.

I was the deputy director of the office of nuclear non-proliferation policy and spent a lot of time working on the Japanese issue and with the Europeans as well. I spent three years doing it. It was a fascinating time, with a lot of trips to Europe and to Japan and elsewhere and working for Tom Pickering. It was a very educational and useful experience.

Q: Well, what were the essential issues in the different countries? I mean was everybody, each one different how they approached this?

DEMING: Yes, I had never before been in negotiations with the Indians, and the Indian logic was not our logic. Their logic was the absolute reverse. Their logic was, "Look, you have nuclear weapons, you've used nuclear weapons; when you get rid of your nuclear weapons, then come back and talk to us about our nuclear program. Until you've done that, there's nothing to talk about." Our response, and I think it was a valid line, was that a country's national security would be diminished, not increased, by acquiring nuclear weapons, and you, India, Pakistan, are at the forefront of this. It's in your interest to set the example. India and Pakistan were not the only countries we were concerned about at the time. We had a so called "dirty dozen" that had in the past or were currently undertaking nuclear weapons programs. Some of these countries, including Argentina, South Korea, Brazil, and South Africa, have since abandoned these programs. Others like Iran and Israel have not.

Q: I mean was there a problem in the, you know, I think it's been both something probably common now that Israel has had nuclear weapons for some time, but we couldn't talk about it?

DEMING: We couldn't talk about it; we couldn't openly acknowledge the existence of its nuclear program.

Q: Why that?

DEMING: Well, I think there were two reasons. First, the issue was so politically sensitive in the U.S. that no one wanted to touch it. Second, and more legitimately, we were afraid that any U.S. acknowledgement of an Israel nuclear weapons program would simply be used by countries like Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan to justify their own programs. In recent years, I believe, we have been more open about the Israel program since it is not a well-kept secret.

We were also concerned about the peaceful nuclear power programs of countries like Japan and France because they involved the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel to extract plutonium, a key material for nuclear weapons. We were afraid that if France and Japan went ahead, this would set an example for other countries which posed a proliferation risk. The world would then be awash with separated plutonium, and there would be little hope of controlling proliferation. It was a very interesting issue. I wrote a lot of the policy papers and speeches.

Q: Well, you were, were you there during the Three Mile Island thing?

DEMING: Yes, that was in 1979 when I was in OES.

Q: I was wondering whether you were seeing a turn away from nuclear energy while you were there at least on the part of the United States.

DEMING: That is certainly true on the part of the United States, because of environmental concerns and local resistance to the construction of nuclear reactors and spent fuel storage. Of course, Three Mile Island was a major factor.
The U.S. had already decided to abandon reprocessing as a commercial venture for civilian nuclear reactors. We had a reprocessing plant down at Savannah River, but it was shut down. So, we had already moved away from that part of the nuclear fuel cycle and so felt comfortable encouraging others to do the same thing. The French had a big program. The British had a program and still do. The Japanese had a big program. Those were the ones we were most concerned about. The Carter administration launched something called the International Fuel Cycle Evaluation program (INFCE) which we were trying to use to develop new ways to promote civil nuclear power while minimizing the risks of proliferation. This program essentially died with the end of the Carter administration, but reprocessing has not become as prevalent as we feared, largely because of economics (it is still cheaper to use low enriched uranium and store the spent fuel) and safety and environmental problems. It was a very good educational experience

for me. I spent time at Los Alamos and other national labs, learning the intricacies of nuclear science, and I learned a lot about the domestic and international politics of non-proliferation.

Q: Did the Soviets play any part in this at all?

DEMING: The Soviets and we generally had the same approach. As so-called nuclear weapons states, we were both very conservative with respect to the spread of nuclear technology. We were the "haves" against the "have-nots." There were no major divisions between us and the Soviets. The Soviets were happy to have us carrying the heavy water, no pun intended, with the Europeans and Japanese.

Q: Did you get any feel about the nuclear weapons lobby or something in the United States? You know this comes up with testing and all that. Did that come across your radar?

DEMING: Not too much. We weren't dealing with the testing issue. I found the culture of Los Alamos and the other nuclear labs very interesting and sometimes a little disturbing. The nuclear scientific community was fascinated by the physics of nuclear weapons and was eager to show us how it all worked and what improvements might be made in the future. That was their job, and it was essential to our national security, but sometimes I got the impression that they often didn't think about the broader implications of what they were doing.

Q: Well, were we drawing up scenarios of what could happen at the time? I mean was there a scenario maybe we used say if the Argentineans or Brazilians get these things something will happen or India and Pakistan both have them, this might happen and all that?

DEMING: Not in the offices that I was in. We were all focused on preventing the proliferation of reprocessing and other nuclear weapons technology. We did not discuss worst case scenarios which in a sense would have been admitting defeat.

Q: Well, was reprocessing, did it make sense for people, sort of commercial sense for people to use this without a threat.

DEMING: No, our argument was that it didn't make commercial sense. Uranium was a scarce but not an uncommon mineral. It was much more efficient to enrich uranium, use it as fuel in nuclear reactors and then either store the spent fuel or dispose of it in nuclear repositories. The other side of the argument was that spent fuel contained energy value in the form of plutonium which should not be wasted. In addition, proponents of reprocessing argued that that there were no economically or environmentally credible ways of long-term storage or disposal of spent fuel, except for reprocessing. To a degree, our critics were correct on both accounts, but our point was that the risks of reprocessing were too great, and we needed to find an alternative. Once you separate the plutonium,

you have a material in abundance that can be used in nuclear weapons, and that would be a disaster that none of us could afford.

Q: By the time you left where were things going?

DEMING: We were trying to shut down the Japanese reprocessing plant, but Japan considered this plant essential to its energy security needs. We finally reached a compromise that involved our agreement to its operation under very tight restrictions. The Japanese had a big accident at the plant some years later, and it was shut down for a few years, but Japan is still dedicated to recycling spent fuel, arguing the long-term depletion of fossil fuels and global warming.

Q: Well, what was this about '77 or so?

DEMING: '77 to '80.

Q: Then where did you go?

DEMING: I then went to Stanford for a year to get a master's degree in East Asian studies under the Area Studies program that FSI runs. It was a very interesting year, a very busy year. I did a two-year program in one year because I already had the language requirement.

Q: Well, let's talk about that. I think it's interesting for a practitioner of foreign policy to come up against the academic world. Where was Stanford at this, where did it stand in its approach to Asian policy?

DEMING: Well, on East Asia, at the time, there was an increasing focus on the political economy, the interaction between politics and economics. Japan had become an economic model that was of increasing academic interest, particularly in Silicon Valley where Stanford was located. One of the professors that I had was a man named Dan Okimoto who had made his name in studying how the Japanese had managed their own industrial development and the politics of that development. I already knew a lot about Japan, but I learned a new angle at Stanford. I took courses on China, including a very interesting anthology course on Chinese village structure and a course on Chinese foreign policy. Harry Harding, who is now the head of the Elliott School at George Washington University, taught a course that involved writing book reviews on scholarly works on China. I worked hard, got all A's, and learned a great deal about the broader context of East Asia. I also learned a lot about the academic world, the not-so-subtle competition among faculty members, and the ethos of Northern California. The year was a good investment in all respects. I still have many friends at Stanford.

Did you find that you were dealing with a generation of professors who were the result of the anti-Vietnam movement or not?

DEMING: Only one. There was one professor there who was very much in the mold you suggest. He was very much shaped by the Vietnam experience. I took a course he taught on American postwar foreign policy in Asia. He was a very provocative and stimulating teacher but perhaps a little too ideological. He argued very strongly against our intervention in the Korean War; I argued that this intervention was essential to maintaining the post-war structure and deterring further aggression. He and I got along very well, and I thought the course was good for the students in teaching them to challenge established interpretations of recent history. At the same time, he had a clear political agenda. In fact, he lost his faculty position the year I was there, although I never learned exactly why.

Q: What was sort of the view of both China and Japan as economic rivals to the United States? Was this a concern?

DEMING: Well, at the time Japan was the emerging economic superpower, and China was not on the same scale. Japan's movement into semiconductors and other high-end technology was a challenge for the U.S. Silicon Valley was just beginning to develop, and Stanford was at the center of this. Perhaps more than any other university in the U.S., Stanford interrelated with the high-tech business community. Companies like Hewlett Packard were developed by Stanford students. A number of my professors had consulting contracts with these businesses, and there was a great focus on what can we learn from Japan, what are the lessons we can extract from the Japanese model. So, I was at Stanford at a very dynamic time. Japan was seen both as an opportunity and as a threat to American business.

Q: How comfortable were you with say the political science view at that time in '80 and '81 with sort of the model system and all that, I mean you know it's always been the theoretical versus the practical; the Foreign Service Officer generally comes out of the practical field and all that.

DEMING: Yes, as I said earlier about my experience at American University, I found the model sometimes intellectually intriguing but really hard to apply. Having come to Stanford 15 years after entering the Foreign Service, I was even more oriented toward the pragmatic, practical, on the ground experience based on facts and reality rather than theory. At the same time, it was very useful to step back and look at the theoretical approach and see how much of what you had learned from a practical point of view fit into that. It was stimulating. Maybe subconsciously I took away things that I applied later on that I didn't realize I was applying, but I had never consciously applied the theories I was exposed to at Stanford.

Q: How did you find people looking at the Japanese model because I think this was about the time when it probably wasn't called the Japanese challenge like there was the American challenge in France and all? But, you know, was this a period where the Japanese way of doing things was getting very exciting to many people?

DEMING: As I said earlier, the Japanese model was intriguing to many at Stanford and more broadly in the U.S. The Japanese seemed to have mastered quality control and "just-in-time" production. There was also great interest in the way Japan financed its development. Japanese companies relied primarily on bank loans rather than equity for their financing. The theory at the time was that this meant they could focus on long term development and did not have to worry about quarterly profits as American companies did. The only short-term pressure on Japanese companies was to keep up their payments on bank loans, and these banks were often part of the same commercial "family" and thus very indulgent. American companies, on the other hand, depended on the stock price so they had to deliver profits every quarter, inhibiting long term strategies.

As it later developed, the Japanese model led to a lack of financial discipline, which in turn created a bubble economy that burst and produced a decade of recession. In contrast, American economic recovery was led by small firms, backed by venture capital, willing to take enormous risks to exploit new technologies and create new corporate models. Silicon Valley is a phenomenon unknown in Japan. With the exception of the turbulent post-wars years that allowed upstarts such as Honda and Panasonic to emerge, there are few small Japanese companies that come from nowhere and create whole new industries. Japanese industries have become much more bureaucratized and conservative, and they found it very difficult to adjust to changing technology.

Q: Were you getting any smell from what was Silicon Valley? I mean a whole new world was being created. The whole computerization.

DEMING: Yes, Hewlett Packard.

Q: Yes, Hewlett Packard.

DEMING: HP was the first Silicon Valley firm that was prominent, and I was aware of it in 1981. Apple had been in existence for only four years at that point. There were a few computers in the Stanford bookstore, but they were too expensive. I had to type my papers on a typewriter. That seems so antiquated now. I must say I was not very aware of the new cyber world about to burst on the horizon. It was there, but it wasn't obvious to me.

Q: Where did you go after Stanford?

DEMING: I went back to Tokyo to be head of the external political section in the embassy.

Q: This would be 1981.

DEMING: '81.

Q: Rust, you were in Tokyo from '81 to when?

DEMING: ’85. Four years.

Q: You were what, political?

DEMING: I was head of the external political section. The political section was divided into three units, internal politics, political military and external relations which meant foreign policy.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

DEMING: Mike Mansfield was ambassador.

Q: What was the state of sort of relations between the United States and Japan in 1981 when you got there?

DEMING: It was a very interesting period because two things had happened. First Ronald Reagan had been elected president in 1980 and the Reagan administration came in with a very strong policy of strengthening our alliances with countries in East Asia, particularly in Japan. There was a lot of emphasis on building up the alliance between the U.S. and Japan. Second, Nakasone had become prime minister of Japan after a period of rotating prime ministers. Nakasone was a very strong nationalist who wanted to strengthen the alliance with the U.S., particularly in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It was a very positive period in our relations.

Q: Okay, you were saying.

DEMING: The leaders of both the U.S. and Japan had given the alliance new vitality. Mike Mansfield had been appointed by Jimmy Carter and did not expect to stay on when Ronald Reagan was elected. However, the two had become acquainted when Reagan was governor of California and stopped in Japan, and they hit it off. They related, I have heard, as two Irish working-class guys who made it up the ladder. The result was that President Reagan asked Mansfield to stay on which he did until the end of Reagan’s two terms. Anyway, it was a very dynamic period in U.S. Japan relations. I was very lucky to be there in one of the best jobs in the Embassy.

Q: Well, who was DCM by the way?

DEMING: The DCM when I first got there was Bill Clark who was succeeded by Desaix Anderson.

Q: Well, now how did you find the people you’d known before in the Japanese foreign ministry and all? Had they undergone any particular change do you think, attitude?

DEMING: I think Japan was becoming more assertive. This was a first job where I really got to deal with the Foreign Ministry on a full-time basis. My job basically was to make sure that we were fully aware of everything Japan was doing around the world in areas of

interest to us and to make sure that they were aware of our interests. We had a four-person section. The focus of my time was on the Middle East because at that point the Japanese were moving towards stronger relations with the PLO and Iran, and we wanted to be sure they didn't go completely off the reservation. Arafat came to Tokyo during that period, and he was received like a state visitor. We were trying to keep that under control. I also spent a lot of time on both North and South Korea. Nakasone made a big point of trying to improve relations with South Korea, which we strongly supported. At the same time, he was trying to balance this and improve relations with North Korea. There were other issues in Southeast Asia. The most dramatic thing that happened on my beat there was the Soviets shoot-down of the Korean airliner, KAL 007.

Q: This was over the Kamchatka Peninsula.

DEMING: Yes, the Kamchatka Peninsula. The first word of that came from the Japanese military who had intercepted the transmissions between the Russian pilots and the ground controllers. The Japanese military had given the tapes informally to their U.S. military colleagues which they weren't supposed to do. They were supposed to go up the chain of command and then be handed over at a more senior level. We had them immediately, but we couldn't acknowledge we had them because we hadn't gotten them through channels. Washington wanted to make a big show at the UN using the Japanese tapes, and we pushed the Japanese very hard to let us do this. I was dealing with the head of the Soviet Division, a very able man. There was a tremendous resistance from the Japanese about making the tapes public. It was my job to go to the Foreign Ministry and push this. I remember being in the office of the Soviet Division director. He was one of these very rare Japanese bureaucrats who wanted to get things done at any price. He said he would make it happen. We worked out a plan for higher level meetings that would seal the deal, and we got permission to use the tapes in the UN. It was an example that when the Japanese decide to do something in a hurry outside of their normal channels, they can do it. It was a crucial decision that helped cement the alliance with the U.S.

Q: How did the shooting down of the KAL plane reverberate in Japan?

DEMING: Again, after Afghanistan, it was seen as another sign that the big Russian bear was very much alive and not just a creation of the U.S. There were many people in Japan in the period after the war who wanted to keep Japan out of the Cold War. The invasion of Afghanistan, followed by the KAL shoot down, really shook the Japanese public's perception of the Soviet Union and thereby strengthened their appreciation for the alliance with the U.S. It proved very helpful to both Prime Minister Nakasone and the Reagan administration in strengthening the defense cooperation between Japan and the U.S.

Q: In this four-year period, '81 to '85, how were relations with the Soviets? I mean we still had what were they called the Northern Islands issue? Were the Soviets making overtures trying to do anything to the Japanese?

DEMING: There were some things going on behind the scenes. Some young political leaders in Japan who wanted to make a breakthrough on the issue of the Northern Territories that stood in the way of a peace treaty with the Soviet Union, which represented one of the last pieces of unfinished business from World War II. In particular, there was a young LDP Diet man named Ichiro Ozawa who undertook back-channel discussions with Moscow. He kept us very much informed of what he was doing, but he was making secret trips to the Soviet Union. In the end nothing worked because the Russians simply were not prepared to make a deal on the territorial issue at that time.

Q: How about with China?

DEMING: China was not a big issue of contention between the U.S. and Japan. The Japanese, of course, had been greatly shocked by the Nixon overtures to China 10 years earlier, but they'd moved forward. They'd normalized with China. Their relations were moving forward, and we spent very little time trying to manage Japan-China relations because they were essentially going the same direction that we were going with respect to China.

Q: How about in ASEAN and all that?

DEMING: Nakasone was trying to improve Japan's relations with ASEAN which we supported fully, but the reality was at that time that Japan's primary interest was with the U.S. in terms of strategic orientation, and ASEAN was a secondary field of activity. Nakasone became famous for saying that Japan was an unsinkable aircraft carrier for the U.S. to use in the Cold War against the Russians. In addition, at the G-7 summit at Williamsburg in 1984, Nakasone for the first time identified Japan's security interests clearly with those of the West on the issue of the SS-20s. As you remember we were negotiating with the Russians about removing their SS-20 medium range nuclear missiles from Eastern Europe, and the Soviets were threatening to move the SS-20s to Asia. The Japanese made clear that they viewed Western security as indivisible to make the point that it would not enhance Western security to move Soviet missiles from Eastern Europe to Asia where they would threaten Japan. In return for American and European agreement to pursue a "global solution" to the SS-20 issue, Japan identified its security interests fully with the West and the U.S. in the struggle with the Soviet Union. That represented a major strengthening of the U.S.-Japan alliance and may have helped contribute to the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union.

Q: Well, while you were on issues, I would have thought that the fact that the Soviets were making noises about moving their intermediate range missiles SS-20s towards Japan would have sent up all sorts of anti-nuclear concerns and all that within the populace.

DEMING: Well, as I mentioned, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the KAL incident had a great impact on public attitudes in Japan toward the Soviet Union, and the SS-20 issue further stimulated Japanese concerns about Russian behavior. I think from a strategic point of view, the Japanese already felt threatened by Russian long-range ICBMs, and SS-20s represented only an incremental addition to that threat. More

fundamentally, Japan had real confidence in the U.S. nuclear umbrella, and the Japanese believed that as long as the U.S.-Japan alliance was healthy, the Russians would not dare attack.

Q: How about oil and oil policy? I mean that must have been a major concern for the Japanese?

DEMING As I mentioned earlier, after the 1973 oil crisis Japan made a major effort to cement ties with the Arab oil producers and indeed moved closer to supporting the PLO versus the Israelis in terms of the West Bank and Gaza. The 1977 oil crisis reinforced that. As I mentioned, I spent a lot of time trying to keep the Japanese on the reservations in terms of Arafat and the whole Israeli-Palestinian issue. In terms of dealing with OPEC, the Japanese were good partners with us. They were founding members with us of the International Energy Agency in Paris, an organization designed to be the oil consumers' counterpart to OPEC. By the 1980s, Japan was much more confident about energy. Japan had successfully absorbed two oil shocks and had built up large oil reserves and greatly increased its energy efficiency. Japan had also reduced its dependency on oil from the Arab world by diversifying its sources. Indonesia became Japan's largest supplier of oil for the first time. Even though Iran was still a major oil supplier, Japan was less psychologically and economically dependent on the Middle East. Nevertheless, Japan spent a lot of time trying to strengthen ties with the Arab world and Iran.

Q: Well, how about Iran? This is at the, it hasn't gone down much, but at the height of our unpleasantness toward Iran because of the hostage crisis and all that and Iran's got a lot of oil. How did that play?

DEMING: The Japanese had active economic relations with Iran. In particular they were providing funds for a big dam project called the Karun Dam Project. We were opposed to Japan's support for this project, but the GOJ argued that the dam had nothing to do with enhancing Iran's strategic position and everything to do with improving the condition of life for ordinary Iranians and cementing Japan-Iran political ties. During the period I was there I spent a lot of time trying to keep this project from coming to fruition, and indeed it never did.

Q: What was our real problem with it, was it just dealing with Iran?

DEMING: It was dealing with Iran. Our argument was that the project would give Iran financial resources it could use in other areas. Of course, after the hostage crisis there was a tremendous emotional hangover in the U.S. with respect to Iran, and this was reflected in our policy. Some would argue that it was counterproductive to our interests to cut off ties with Iran and demand that our allies do the same. We had the same kind of fights with the Europeans, particularly the Germans, about their economic dealings with Iran. Even with the cover of European involvement in Iran, the Japanese were still reluctant to go head-to-head with us on this issue. They didn't want to break with the U.S., but they tried to do as much as they could with Iran without provoking a strong backlash from us. The Japanese had learned by this time that the best way to deal with the U.S. was to tell

us what they were doing, not to hide it from us, because we would find out in any event. For example, I would be called in by the director of the Middle East Division who would explain what Japan planned to do and why and emphasize that this represented no major change in policy, even if it did. I would report back to Washington, and they would send me a blast back. I would go back into the Foreign Ministry and push back, and the Japanese would make certain adjustments in their policy. It became an elaborate dance, with each side seeking to avoid an all-out confrontation. In the final analysis, Japan, and Nakasone in particular, did not want to do anything in areas on the periphery, such as Iran, that might undermine fundamentally good relations with the U.S.

Q: Were there any U.S. Japanese issues that were particularly notable during this time?

DEMING: In my area, political relations, the issues were the ones I mentioned. In the economic area, there were a lot of tensions at this time, over automobiles in particular. The Reagan administration was, first of all, a free trade administration. At the same time, the administration was very politically sensitive to pressures from American industries. It was during this period that we came up with voluntary restraints on the import of Japanese autos to the U.S. This arrangement did not set a formal limit on Japanese auto shipments to the U.S.; instead, Japanese auto makers "voluntarily" limited their exports to something like 1.6 million vehicles a year. We encouraged the Japanese to produce more autos in the U.S. It took them a while to get that message, but as you know now about 60% of the cars Japan sells here are produced in North America.

Q: Yes, I have a Toyota. We have two Toyotas. The latest one, I think 60% of the Toyota was built in the United States and 40% I mean parts and all came from Japan.

DEMING: Yes, that's been the pattern, and autos are no longer a big bilateral issue between the U.S. and Japan, but at that time it was a big issue. Fortunately, I was in the Political Section, not the Economic Section, so I didn't have to bear the brunt of trade problems.

Q: Well, tell me, what was your evaluation of the Japanese foreign ministry and the Foreign Service at this time?

DEMING: They were at the height of their power I think. The best and the brightest were in the Japanese Foreign Ministry. As I mentioned earlier, the center of power was at the office director level. That was where policy was debated and formulated. Nakasone was an activist prime minister who would deal directly with people at the office director level. Officials at this level would be sent over to the prime minister's office to brief him directly. The working level of the foreign ministry was much more tied into the policy process than was true at the State Department. There were virtually no political appointees in the Foreign Ministry except for the minister himself and the parliamentary vice minister so policy was made by career officials. The Diet and the LDP only played a marginal role in foreign policy, for the most part, and there were few other bureaucratic competitors to MOFA on non-economic foreign policy. Therefore, the Foreign Ministry had a real monopoly with very talented, well trained people, who researched issues very

carefully, analyzed Japan's interest, and tried to chart a course that represented a risk averse strategy for the most part. MOFA tried to do things to advance Japan's interests that wouldn't arouse opposition either at home or abroad. I found the Ministry extremely professional.

Of course, the U.S., as Japan's only ally, guarantor of its security and most important export market, was in a very privileged position, and this made our work in the Embassy much easier than in many other places. Particularly during the Nakasone administration, MOFA's brief was to tell us everything they were doing. I would go into the Ministry on a daily basis, two or three times a day sometimes, and I'd come back and would dictate my notes to my secretary who typed the telegram. The Japanese were such good briefers they made it very easy for us because they would speak in paragraphs. You didn't have to do a lot of reconstruction to produce our cables. We put our comments and analysis at the end. It was a perfect political officer job because we were dealing with professionals who largely shared our interests and were articulate and very open.

Q: Well, did you find that at this point there had developed an informal relationship where you and some of your colleagues and some of the Japanese foreign ministry people sit around and have a beer or something like that?

DEMING: Yes, at various levels of formality. When I went into MOFA to get a briefing, it would be in a formal setting, in their office. Then to get the background on issues I'd take my Japanese counterparts out to lunch. In these settings you could explore the bureaucratic considerations surrounding issues and get a much fuller understanding of what was going on. I would try to do the same. For example, I would say "Here's the scene back in Washington; we could tolerate this, but we couldn't tolerate that." Then when you really had a problem, you would take somebody out for drinks at night and try to chart a solution. We did this quite often with good effect. The ambassador, the DCM, and the political counselor all had excellent connections at their level, but sometimes it was easier at my level to deliver delicate messages and launch trial balloons because it was more informal. My counterparts would know that I was conveying an authorized message, but it was done in an unofficial setting so they could respond in the same vein.

Q: From your perspective, how was Mike Mansfield, as you know, I mean you had a job and you viewed the ambassador as an instrument and how did you find him?

DEMING: I am a great admirer of Mike Mansfield, a man of few words, but great wisdom and absolute integrity. He was a perfect personality for the Japanese because he came across as a wise elder statesman who knew the issues, but never put himself forward aggressively. Before I came out in 1981, a U.S. Navy ballistic missile submarine, the George Washington, had, while submerged, struck and sunk a Japanese fishing boat near Japan. The submarine surfaced briefly but did not make any effort to rescue the crew and did not notify authorities of the collision for ninety minutes. Most of the crew died. The navy commander of the ship said he was under standing orders not to stop or make his presence known because the submarine was supposed to remain unobserved Anyway;

it was a big flap and caused a big fight between the Pentagon and the State Department on how to handle the problem.

When the official Navy report on the accident came out, Mike Mansfield went over to call on the Foreign Minister, presented the report, made a 90 degree bow in front of the television cameras. He did it all very deliberately because he wanted to send a message to both the U.S. military and to the Japanese that we were taking responsibility, we were at fault, and we were apologizing. That really cemented his image in Japan as someone who understood the country and took things seriously. That was typical of his kind of wisdom. He was a man of few words. In our staff meetings, which we had twice a week, Mansfield would say little and expect his staff to do the same. He did not have any patience for long winded discussions or self-promotion. He wanted people to get right to the point, tell him only what he needed to know and do. Mansfield was a terse but excellent briefer of visitors from Washington, organizing his presentation around a series of facts and figures he had absorbed. About every three months the Embassy would reprogram him and bring him up to date. We elected to do that, mostly through memos but also through sitting down and talking to him. He was a marvelous man, a man who was very kind to people.

Q: Did you sense when you were there, four years is a long time in a country, and did you sense a change in Japanese society that things were changing?

DEMING: Well, as I mentioned under Nakasone and because of the broader evolution of the society, Japan was becoming more assertive and less timid about pursuing its own interests. This was at the height of Japan's economic boom, or the bubble as they call it now, and Japanese incomes were going up dramatically. Prices of everything were going up dramatically. It was also a period of growing Japanese arrogance. This was when Ezra Vogel's book came out, "Japan as Number One", and people really believed that Japan had a magic formula that avoided the problems that the other Western industrialized countries were having. There was a certain degree of self-satisfaction and arrogance in Japanese behavior, but more on the economic side. On the political side Japan was still subordinate to the U.S. strategically, which made my dealings with the Japanese much more straightforward than they were on the economic side. Japan was growing more resistant to U.S. pressure on trade issues. The Japanese argued that American economic problems were primarily due to our failure to get our budget deficit under control and to improve the competitiveness of our industry, not to Japanese imports.

Q: Did you have much contact with key members of the Diet? There must have been a chairman of the foreign relations committee or something like that?

DEMING: Yes. I mentioned Ichiro Ozawa was at that time the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary which is the Prime Minister's right-hand man in terms of getting things done. He was about my age, and we dealt with him a lot because he was a very activist guy. In broader terms, we met often with members of the Diet who dealt with foreign policy. We entertained them at home, and we'd get together more formally once every six months with the Foreign Relations Committee. Our contact with the Diet was designed to build

relationships and good will and to keep ourselves informed of their views, but it was seldom focused on specific foreign policy issues. As I mentioned earlier, foreign policy was really formulated by the Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's office. It was important to stay in touch with Diet members and for them to understand our views and positions as background for our dealings with the Foreign Ministry, but we generally did not see Diet members as a means of advancing specific issues. With respect to trade issues, however, the various interest groups in the Diet had real power so they were worth cultivating.

Q: How about the media?

DEMING: We spent a lot of time with the media in terms of informing them of what we're doing and why we were doing it, but we really couldn't compete with the Japanese bureaucracy in terms of getting the story out. The Japanese press was organized in "press clubs" in each ministry that lumped together the reporters from all the newspapers. They were spoon fed by the ministry. For example, the Foreign Minister meets at least once a day with the MOFA press club, as does the Vice Minister, the senior career official. Our contacts with the Japanese media were not designed to compete with that kind of relationship. We met more informally with reporters to talk about the background of issues and to use them as sources of information. They were very well informed about Japanese politics and internal bureaucratic maneuvering, so we'd often entertain Japanese reporters to find out who was doing what to whom inside the bureaucracy and in the political world.

Q: Well, did you feel any need to go out and inform the public in Hokkaido or Kyushu down further south about foreign policy? In other words, get out in the hinterland as somebody who is trying to deal with the United States it makes sense to go to Texas or to Chicago or.

DEMING: We had cultural centers in seven places in Japan, and they did public affairs programming. I was so busy with my daily dealings with the Foreign Ministry that I couldn't really leave town very often. I did do a couple of programs, particularly in Okinawa. If there was one place in Japan where local attitudes affected our interests immediately, it was Okinawa because of the bases.

Q: Was the mayor of Naha still the same guy?

DEMING: No, he was long gone. In fact I sat next to him on an airplane. I flew back from Okinawa and here was Senaga next to me on the plane. I never let on who I was or that my father had been involved in his dismissal.

Q: How about say, I always think of the Australians having a great deal of interest in Japan. Did we coordinate with say the Australians, the British or the French or something I mean was there coordination?

DEMING: In fact, I organized a luncheon every few months with my Australian and New Zealand colleagues and a separate lunch with my French, German and British counterparts, which we called the quad. All of these embassies were well informed and shared many of our interests with respect to Japan. We generally knew more than they did, but I often picked up useful tidbits and perspectives, including comments to them from the Foreign Ministry about U.S. policy that we weren't given directly, so it was very helpful in that regard. We gave more than we got in those exchanges. When I became political minister, I did the same thing at the next level up and indeed the same thing when I was DCM.

Q: What about the Chinese? How were our relations or did you have relations with the Chinese?

DEMING: Very formal. We would have been happy to have more contact, and we had a number of Chinese language officers on our staff, but at that stage Chinese diplomats were very tightly controlled, and they couldn't go out to lunch alone or do anything like that. Every now and then several of us in the political section would be invited over to the Chinese embassy for lunch, but it was very formal with little substantive exchange. We had much more interesting contact with the South Koreans

Q: Yes, South Korea, they don't hide the light under a bushel.

DEMING: No, they're not shy. They were very well plugged into Japanese internal politics and that was what we generally talked about. Most of the rest of the diplomatic corps members didn't have very much to contribute on domestic Japanese politics.

Q: What about the North Korean angle?

DEMING: There were about a million Korean residents in Japan, about 70% of whom were affiliated with North Korea. The North Koreans were very effective in organizing the Korean residents in support of their interests. There were North Korean schools and the North Korean affiliated residents controlled the "pachinko" or pinball parlors that produced a lot of foreign exchange for Pyongyang. In fact, until recently, pachinko was the major source of hard currency for the North Koreans. The Japanese let this happen because of the domestic politics of it. The Japan Socialist Party and others on the left supported North Korea. This has changed dramatically in the last decade because of revelations about North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens and its nuclear program. North Korea is now pretty much an orphan in Japan.

In the early 1980s, there was pressure on Nakasone to try to balance the improvement of Japan's relations with the ROK with initiatives toward North Korea. There were some unofficial overtures toward Pyongyang, but nothing really developed in that area.

Q: Did you get involved with delegations, I guess they were almost commercial, delegations from states, cities and all this, but was there much sort of political exchange between the two countries?

DEMING: There were occasional Congressional delegations, CODELs as we called them, mostly focused on the economic area, people coming out to make points on the trade agenda. We did have Ronald Reagan's state visit while I was there in 1985.

Q: How did that go?

DEMING: It went very well. It was again very stylized, very set, but Reagan knew how to do ceremonial things well. I remember him having lunch with the Emperor, and President Reagan entertained the Emperor with various stories about Hollywood, which went completely over the Emperor's head. It was an important visit symbolically, but there was not a lot of substance.

Q: Well, then, how did you find living there at that time?

DEMING: The Embassy built a new apartment complex, and we were one of the first inhabitants. When we went back to Japan in 1981, we first lived in a commercial apartment while they were completing the Embassy apartments. A few months later, we moved into a very nice functional apartment in the "American ghetto" comprised of about 600 Americans. I think there were about 250 apartments and townhouses in the complex. The compound was very functional, but it did isolate one a bit from everyday Japanese life. There was no alternative. At this time, the property values in Tokyo were just going through the roof, so there was no way the Embassy could afford to rent or lease outside housing

Unlike the first time we were there, we were so busy that my wife and I had little chance to get out of Tokyo on weekends for vacations and other things. In addition, the cost of living had gone up dramatically because of the yen-dollar ratio so it was extremely expensive. My wife taught English at Japanese girl's school to help make ends meet. We found ourselves pretty much trapped in the city, unlike our previous tour when we had a great opportunity to travel throughout Japan. That became increasingly true as I went up through the levels of responsibility in Tokyo. We had less and less discretionary time to do things on our own, particularly outside of the Tokyo region.

Q: How did you find your relationship to the Japanese desk in Washington?

DEMING: It was interesting because in my job as the head of External Affairs section, I dealt primarily with desks other than the Japan desk. I was dealing with the Middle East Bureau and the Korean and Chinese desks because it was covering Japanese foreign policy, not bilateral U.S.-Japan relations. The formal contact between the Embassy and the Desk was done by the DCM and to a lesser extent by the Political Counselor. I would deal with the regional offices in the State Department on particular things when I needed guidance on our policy or when I wanted to pass something on informally. At that time, Japan was seen as an increasingly influential player so there was a lot of interest in the State Department in getting Japanese to support our position or to avoid Japan doing something that cut across our interests.

Q: Were we ever able to use the Japanese term, it's probably the wrong term, but essentially as the cat's paw, somebody to go out and do something that we want somebody else to do at least to be in the forefront?

DEMING: Yes. Japan did offer itself as an intermediary on certain issues and on certain countries, including Iran. By and large our response was "Thank you very much, but we have channels if we need them." Frankly, Washington did not completely trust Tokyo to maintain confidences; there was a history of leaks. At times that we did ask Japan to make points on our behalf or to suggest points that they could make on their own behalf without citing us as a source, which was very useful. In terms of using them as a formal channel to convey our positions, that did not happen very often

Q: You mentioned that we wanted to keep the Japanese on the reservation as regards to the PLO. What were our concerns?

DEMING: The concerns were that Japan would formally recognize the PLO and indeed might even distance itself with Israel. As I mentioned earlier, in 1973 Japan came quite close to breaking relations with Israel under pressure from the Arab oil producers, but thanks to our pressure, Tokyo resisted that. The Japanese at least at that time had a rather romantic feeling about the Palestinian movement. Arafat was seen as this revolutionary figure representing a true national movement. I mentioned when he came to Tokyo, it was almost like a state visit. We were nervous that Japan might go further than us and the Europeans, and this would break Western ranks on how we approach the Middle East. With various negotiations going on, we wanted to be sure that the Japanese did not upset what we were doing. By and large, the Japanese did, in the end, do the right thing, after demonstrating to the Arab world that they took the Palestinian cause seriously. Supporting Arafat became a symbolic aspect of that.

Q: Did the Arab diplomats play much of a role in Japan?

DEMING: No. On the oil and economic side, they had their ties and connections. The Egyptians were active and very good, and the Iranians were quite skillful. Jordan also had influence because of ties between the two royal families. There are not that many left.

Q: How about the Indonesians?

DEMING: The relations were very complex, very intense. As I mentioned earlier Indonesia became Japan's major oil supplier in the years after 1973. Indonesia is in many respects the center of ASEAN, by virtue of its population and resources so it was a big focus of Japanese diplomacy. We didn't deal very much with the ASEANS. I dealt mostly with the Thais who, along with the Singaporeans, were the most accustomed to contact with Western diplomats. I found the Malaysians and the Indonesians very hesitant to engage in any real dialogue about what was going on.

Q: Well, then you left there in 1985? Whither.

DEMING: I went off to the National War College for a year as a student.

Q: How was that?

DEMING: It was a great year.

Q: ’85 to ’86?

DEMING: I wanted to go to the War College because I wanted to understand and cement my ties with the U.S. military. On the basis of my experience in Japan, I recognized that there was a profound gap between the civilian world and my generation of military officers. In addition, I thought it would be useful to have a year to step back and look at things. It was an excellent year. We had a very good class. Pete Pace who is now the Deputy Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was in my class. Pete Pace later came to Japan as chief of staff of U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) when I was DCM, so he was my military counterpart. The relationship we had established at the War College was very useful in that regard. There were other military officers there that I dealt with later on.

I found a cultural gap between the military and civilians, largely because of Vietnam. My generation at the War College came of age with the Vietnam War. Most of the military officers had served in Vietnam as first and second lieutenants or ensigns, and they had great difficulty recognizing that the war had been a mistake. On the other hand, most of the civilians, including myself, had not served in Vietnam and generally believed that the American intervention represented an enormous misunderstanding of the nature of the war and U.S. interests. One week at the War College was devoted to Vietnam, particularly the impact on American society. There was a focus on 1968, with the Tet offensive in the spring, LBJ’s subsequent withdrawal from the race, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and the “days of rage” at the Democratic convention in Chicago. Many of my military colleagues felt betrayed by a civilian society that had withdrawn support for the war and made the military the scapegoats. They did not fully appreciate that American society was coming apart at the seams, and the week of discussions on Vietnam and 1968 was very helpful in closing the gap.

I think the most valuable aspect to the War College was the mutual understanding that developed between the military and civilians and between the military services. It turned out the Navy knew little about the structure of the Army, and vice versa. During our first week, an Army officer in our twelve-member unit got up at a blackboard to explain how a squad, platoon, company, battalion, regiment and division were organized. A Navy officer did the same with respect to a carrier task force. My military colleagues had a very stove-piped view of the world and even of their own service. For example, a Navy submariner did not know much about the surface or air Navy. It was a fascinating education for all of us. On the academic side, there were a lot of interesting lectures, a lot of good courses on strategy. I read Clausewitz and Sun Tzu for the first time and got to understand the military point of view. It was equally valuable I think for my military colleagues to learn something about the State Department.

During the year we had some good trips, both in the U.S. and abroad. We went out to Cheyenne Mountain and down to Cape Kennedy for a nighttime shuttle launch, the last shuttle launch before the Challenger explosion. We also went out to the Trident submarine base at Bangor, Washington and went on a ballistic missile submarine.
For our overseas trip in the spring, I was in the first group that went to both East and West Germany. We spent a week in East Germany and a week in West Germany. This was in April of 1986, and the impression all of us got was there was little near-term chance for unification because the two Germanys had become two very different societies. Germans on both sides said that unification was only a distant dream. Three years later, the wall was down.

Q: Well, then in '86?

DEMING: In the summer of 1986 I became the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the State Department, The Assistant Secretary was a man named Gaston Sigur, a very interesting guy. Gaston was an academic who had a Ph.D. in Russian studies, but he had spent a lot of time in Japan with the Asia Foundation, in the days when the Asia Foundation was funded by the CIA. He had become active in Republican politics, and he came into the Reagan administration in 1981 as the senior person on East Asia at the National Security Council. When the Reagan administration was reelected in 1984, Paul Wolfowitz, who was Assistant Secretary, went off to Indonesia as ambassador, and Sigur moved over to become Assistant Secretary. We'd become acquainted, and he asked me to become his special assistant. In this capacity, I made sure the East Asian Bureau was responding to his needs and following his directions, and I traveled with him whenever he went abroad.

It was a marvelous year. It was a period when the coordination between the NSC, the Pentagon and the State Department was as close as it has ever been. Gaston Sigur was at the State Department, Rich Armitage at the Pentagon, and Jim Kelly at the White House. All of these people knew each other well, were pragmatists, and all of them could deliver their bosses. We would have a meeting every Monday morning in Gaston Sigur's office, called the EAP informal, with senior representatives from the NSC, the Pentagon and CIA to discuss the issues of the day. If that group came to a consensus, that consensus generally became U.S. policy because the people at the meeting had the confidence of their bosses. It was a model of how the interagency process should work but rarely does

Q: You were doing this from '86 to when?

DEMING: '87, one year.

Q: Any major issues that came up or relationships?

DEMING: As I said, I did a lot of traveling with Gaston Sigur. The two most interesting trips were with Secretary Shultz to China in the fall of 1986 and to Singapore, Indonesia, and Australia in the spring of '87. On the China trip, we of course had discussions in

Beijing, but then we visited Darien, or Port Arthur, in Manchuria; Qufu, the birthplace of Confucius; Guilin; and Shanghai. We traveled by plane, train, boat, and motorcade and got a very good sense of China.

On the second trip, we attended the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference in Singapore and then went on to Sydney for a meeting with the Australians. As we were flying from Singapore to Sydney, we picked up rumors that the South Korean president might invoke martial law in order to hold on to power. Secretary Shultz came back to where Dr. Sigur and I were sitting on the plane, and he said, “Gaston, I want you to go to Seoul.” Gaston responded “Well, what do you want me to do there?” Shultz responded, “I don’t care, just go there and make it look like we’re doing something.” Dr. Sigur and I got off the plane in Sydney and flew overnight to Tokyo and then on to Seoul. Gaston had a very effective avuncular manner that was well attuned to dealing with Asian personalities. We spent three days in Seoul, going from one power center to another, meeting with the President, various generals, and opposition leaders including Kim Dae-Jung, who later became president, who was then under house arrest. When Gaston and I got to Kim’s house, a bunch of KCIA goons surrounded our car and started to shake it, trying to intimidate us into leaving. We did not turn back and had an excellent meeting with Kim.

Gaston’s basic line in all the meetings was simply to compliment the South Koreans on all they had done to move toward democracy and to emphasize how important it was to continue on this path. He never made any threats, but Gaston achieved the results we wanted simply by being there, by giving the message that we wanted things to work out peacefully, that South Korea was now a mature society and had to do these things right. The steam quickly went out of the movement toward martial law, and there was a peaceful transition to a democratically elected president that marked the birth of real democracy in South Korea.

Q: What was the issue in South Korea at the time? There had been an election?

DEMING: Yes. Chun Doo-hwan was the president, and Kim Young-sam was about to become president. There were rumors that the Korean military might not accept this transition. Kim Dae-Jung was under house arrest. His people were agitating, and it looked like things might be coming apart at a time when the ROK was set for real democracy. Having Gaston there, talking to the right people, giving the right kind of body language and vibes made all the difference. It wasn’t the kind of thing you could chart out exactly, who said what to whom, but the whole mood changed. It was a real lesson to me on how diplomacy by body language works. Showing up in a capital and setting the right tone could make all the difference in the world on how things developed, even without a master plan of how to do it. Gaston essentially made it up as he went along.

Q: Did you have Koreans coming up to you and saying, what’s this all about and that sort of thing?

DEMING: No, they knew what was going on. Just the fact that Gaston was there on the instructions of Secretary Shultz sent the message. I also made a number of trips to Japan

with Gaston which helped get me back into Japanese affairs. I really enjoyed working for Gaston.

Q: Well, then after this '86 to '87 period, what?

DEMING: Well, I very much wanted to do something other than Japan because I'd done so much of Japan. There was talk of me going to Korea as political counselor, but in the spring of '87 Ambassador Mike Mansfield asked me to come back to Tokyo as Political Counselor. As I said, I had great admiration for Mike Mansfield, and after talking to my wife I agreed to go back to Tokyo. I served there until 1991.

Q: Had much changed in Japan when you got there?

DEMING: A lot of things were in the process of changing. Emperor Hirohito's health was deteriorating, after more than sixty years on the throne, setting off a wave of self-reflection in Japanese society. On the U.S. side, the Reagan administration was about to be replaced by the Bush Administration, and our relations with Japan became much more contentious on the economic side. This was a period when Japan was on the cover of Time magazine as a potential threat to the American economy, symbolized by the purchase by Japanese companies of Rockefeller Center, Pebble Beach and other "trophies." The atmosphere on the economic side was really quite poisonous. As Political Counselor, I didn't deal directly with trade issues, but economic friction began to have an influence on everything we were doing. I spent a lot of my time on political-military issues because I dealt daily with the U.S. military. We had a "Joint Committee" meeting every two weeks with the Japanese. The U.S. representative was the Chief of Staff of U.S. Forces Japan, a Marine two star general, and I was the deputy representative. We dealt with all of the day-to-day issues involving our bases, and much of the focus was on Okinawa. It was a more difficult, more contentious period.

Mike Mansfield left in 1989, and Mike Armacost became ambassador. Mike Armacost was an old friend of mine, so I was delighted to be able to work for him. Mike took a much firmer line with the Japanese on trade issues than Ambassador Mansfield had. The Uruguay round was in its final phase. In our eyes, the Japanese were not stepping up their responsibilities to open up their markets, particularly their agricultural markets. We put a lot of heat on them. Armacost pushed very hard.

The major event during that period was the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the Gulf War in 1991. As you recall, the immediate response by the U.S. and the West was that the invasion could not be allowed to stand. Unfortunately, the Japanese didn't get the message at all. They saw the Iraq invasion of Kuwait as a "fire on the other side of the river;" something that didn't really have anything to do with them. Japan saw its interest as simply keeping their oil supplies flowing and figured that Iraq's control of Kuwait would not interfere in that flow. Japan did not appreciate the broader geopolitical implications of the invasion, and even if some Japanese understood the implications, they concluded that it was not Japan's role to get involved. When we went to them and said,

well, what are you going to do to participate? They said, "Oh, you mean us? That's not our job."

We recognized Japan's limitations on sending military forces because of its peace constitution and domestic political opposition. At the same time, we felt it very important that Japan make some kind of human contribution, put some "boots on the ground," to demonstrate that Japan had a shared interest in responding to a clear violation of the international system from which they benefited so much. This became a real crisis for the Japanese. They didn't know how to respond to it. It was just too hard. We went through very nasty negotiations, with delegations coming from Washington pounding the table and telling the Japanese that they needed to do something. The GOJ responded by offering $2 billion, then another $2 billion, and finally a total of $13 billion By the time this had happened, there had been so much anger and so much frustration that the money was dismissed as "too little, too late." even though it more than paid for all of our expenses in the Gulf War. At the end, we got into a very nasty and counterproductive argument about exchange rates. The Japanese said they had pledged $13 billion at the exchange rate at the time of the pledge. The value of yen subsequently declined so by the time the money was transferred, the dollar amount was less than $13 billion. Our Treasury Department insisted on the full $13 billion, and the fight became public.

The atmosphere of the relationship became very sour and bitter. Coupled with the economic issues, I think that was a real sense that the whole fabric of the U.S.-Japan alliance was beginning to come apart. In the end, the Gulf War was successful. The U.S. took a lot of satisfaction in our success and largely forgot about our frustration with Japan. At the same time, the Japanese learned a lot of lessons about the need to go beyond money in terms of international contributions. In the fifteen years since, Japan has done a great deal to put in place new laws and mechanisms to allow Japan to play a larger international role.

Q: On the economics side, although this wasn't your thing, was there at staff meetings or informal conversations, was anybody pointing out that the Japanese economic situation was a bubble and that it had severe weaknesses? I take it was the bank loans, unsecured bank loans and that sort of thing.

DEMING: There was concern about the amount of fiscal deficit that Japan was running. Although our policy was to encourage Japan to stimulate its economy in order to increase demand for imports, some of our Treasury colleagues were cautious about pushing Japan to get further into debt because that could destabilize the Japanese economy. The political pressure from Washington was not so farsighted. The political pressure was to reduce the trade deficit, take the heat off American auto makers, things like that. So while there may have been some U.S. officials who had macroeconomic concerns about Japan, little of that was really factored into our policy at the time. Policy often lags reality. It takes a while for policy makers to catch up with what's really going on. In retrospect, it was very clear that the Japanese economy was very overheated. We had exaggerated the economic threat posed by Japan all along, but it was easier for any administration to beat up the Japanese rather than deal with our own problems. At the same time, Japan did continue

protectionist policies long after they were justified, in fact acting in many respects as a developing economy when Japan had become the second economic power in the world. Our pressure to open markets was therefore fully justified, if somewhat oversold as the cause of our own economic problems.

Q: How did you find our American military in Japan, but other places, had we developed a solid corps of military men at the senior ranks who knew how to deal with the Japanese or was it a learning procedure for each new successor to various _____?

DEMING: By and large, I was very impressed with the caliber of the U.S. military leaders, and many of them had more than one tour in Japan. By the time they got to their senior positions in Japan, they had a good understanding of Japan and knew how to carry out their responsibilities. However, the commanders were usually on two- or three-year tours, and unfortunately the most able of them usually moved on the most rapidly to more senior positions. We had some very good people who were transferred early to four-star positions. Another problem was that the Commander of the U.S. Forces in Japan, an Air Force three star, was also the Commander of the Fifth Air Force, which meant he had Air Force responsibilities as well. Depending on the personality and background of the general, some of the generals spent more of their time on the Air Force side of their responsibilities and were less interested in their joint position as overall commander of U.S. Forces in Japan. From the perspective of the Embassy, this represented a misplaced priority, but it was certainly understandable, given that the future of these general officers would largely be decided by the Air Force.

By and large, our military counterparts were a very able group of people, and they worked very well with the embassy. I think that we had an easier relationship with the military commanders in Japan than our counterparts in Korea. In Korea there was a four-star head of U.S. forces who reported directly to the Pentagon while in Japan the commander was a three star who reported to Pacific Command in Hawaii. In sum, in Tokyo we generally had more influence on political military issues than our colleagues in Embassy Seoul. In addition, the stature of our Ambassadors in Tokyo, people such as Mike Mansfield, Walter Mondale, and Mike Armacost made it much easier for the Embassy to deal effectively with the generals and admirals.

There was a natural tension between the Embassy and the military commanders. The military was, quite naturally, focused on the training, readiness, and operational flexibility of U.S. forces in Japan. They wanted to be able to carry out their military responsibly with minimum constraints. The Embassy recognized these operational needs but was also concerned about maintaining long-term Japanese support for the alliance. This meant avoiding steps by US forces that would create domestic political problems for the GOJ, even if this meant temporally compromising our forces' readiness.

The most common issues involved training, particularly night carrier landing practice by the carrier air wing. Each time the carrier at Yokosuka put to sea, the carrier air wing had to practice landing at night at a base near Tokyo. This meant a large number of planes would repeatedly come in over local communities, touch the airstrip and then go off at full power, a very noisy and disruptive exercise. Whenever there were school exams or

local elections scheduled, MOFA would plead with us to delay the exercise, and we tried to negotiate an acceptable compromise with our military colleagues. The problem was later somewhat relieved when the Navy agreed to use Iwo Jima, a thousand miles from Tokyo, for much of the training, but we are still looking for a permanent solution.

A lot of my time as Political Counselor was spent on the issue of getting the Japanese to provide more financial support for U.S. forces in Japan. Under the Security Treaty and the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) concluded in 1960, Japan has the responsibility to make "areas and facilities" available to the U.S., and the U.S. will pay all other costs associated with our presence. However, with the growth of the Japanese economy, the trade deficit, the rise in the value of the yen, and U.S. balance of payments problems, there was pressure from Washington for Japan to do more. After the Gulf War and Japan's failure to put "boots on the ground," this pressure increased. In this atmosphere we successfully negotiated an agreement where the GOJ agreed to pay the salaries and benefits for all the Japanese labor working on American bases, about 20,000 people. In addition, Japan agreed to undertake a major program to build new facilities on American bases and to pay for the utilities for Americans on and off base. This amounted to more than $4 billion per year, a major contribution to the alliance. We negotiated that in the Embassy, working with the U.S. forces. It was a great success.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, how were the Japanese responding to this? I mean was this, were they essentially understanding and willing or were they dragged in?

DEMING: We were not shy about using leverage, but the Japanese recognized they had to do something. In view of the strength of the Japanese economy, the three-fold rise in the value of the yen which greatly increased the operating expenses of American forces in Japan, and Japan's inability to make a military contribution of their own to the alliance beyond the defense of Japan, the Japanese knew that the health of the alliance was at stake. The Japanese portrayed this new financial support as a "sympathy budget" for the "poor Americans." This may have made the initiative more acceptable to the Japanese public, but it irritated many of us because we thought that the agreement represented an appropriate Japanese contribution to the alliance. The Japanese Finance ministry never liked the agreement, but the Foreign Ministry saw it not only as a way to strengthen the alliance but also a way of gaining leverage over the U.S. because if you pay for something, you have some say on how it is implemented.

For this reason, we never pushed the Japanese to assume any of the operational costs of U.S. forces in Japan. This would have in effect made us mercenaries. Moreover, we were in Japan as much for our own interests as for Japan's. The agreement has been very successful, but there is now strong pressure from the GOJ to reduce this support, on the basis that Japan is now deploying forces overseas and because of the overall pressure on the Japanese budget.

Q: What was your impression of the Japanese military at this time?

DEMING: The uniformed military in Japan was still very much cut out of the policy process because of the residue of distrust from the War. As I mentioned earlier, the Defense Ministry itself was not a full ministry, it was an agency. The head of the ministry was part of the cabinet but did not have the same status as other cabinet members. In addition, many of the officials in the Defense Ministry were drawn from other ministries, such as Finance, MITI, and the police. There were very few homegrown defense ministry bureaucrats, and the talent of its human capital was limited Within that framework, civilian control was deeply embedded since there was a deep conviction that the uniformed military should never again be allowed to play a dominant role. So, the military were very reluctant to get into any discussion about policy. That has changed a little bit with the recent elevation of the Defense Agency to a full ministry and the creation of a Joint Staff, but the Foreign Ministry still plays a strong role on defense policy.

Q: Were there, did you get involved in any, I hate to say rapes, automobile accidents, that type of thing with our occupying troops, occupying, I mean our troops stationed there.

DEMING: When I came back as DCM in 1993, there was a major incident in Okinawa which I'll get to later on. But during this period, we had a few serious incidents, but we did have one really stupid incident. A U.S. Navy destroyer stationed at Yokosuka was clearing its guns as it came back into port. It was about ten miles offshore. To do that, they put in a big canvas bag filled with wads of paper into the breach and just blew it off. For some reason, the crew of the destroyer decided to aim the charge at a Japanese Coast Guard vessel, and the wadding hit the Coast Guard vessel and mildly injured somebody. If it had been a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force vessel, they would have probably laughed it off among colleagues, but the Coast Guard was a civilian agency manned by civilians, so it was a big shock to them and became an incident. The captain, a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander, was relieved immediately. That was the end of his career. These kinds of irresponsible things happened occasionally.

Q: Well, then you left there in '91?

DEMING: '91.

Q: Were you beginning to feel tired of Japan?

DEMING: I had really enjoyed it, it was very stimulating. I knew what I was doing. I enjoyed what I was doing, and it was important work. That combination was not always easily achievable in the Foreign Service. I came back to Washington to the obvious position as Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs at the State Department which I held from '91 to '93, during the transition from Bush to Clinton.

Q: How did you find the Bush I period, George Herbert Walker Bush, his administration? Was it, had there been any particular change emphasis or anything like this?

DEMING: Yes, I think there was a change, certainly in the State Department. Under Reagan, the Secretary of State had been George Schultz who was somebody who had a strong interest in the institution of the State Department, like Colin Powell later on. He relied primarily on Foreign Service Officers to fill key positions. He was greatly appreciated by the personnel of the State Department, and the system worked very effectively. Under George Herbert Walker Bush, it was very different. James Baker was the Secretary of State. He is a man whom I admire very much, a very smart and capable person, but he had no real interest in the State Department as an institution. He had an inner circle and tended to treat the rest of the State Department as somewhat suspect.

When I came back as Japan Country Director, it took me a while to build relations of confidence with the 7th Floor. The people I dealt with the most were Bob Kimmitt, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Arnie Kantor, his successor, and most of all with Bob Zoellick, the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs. There were all extremely able, hardworking and dedicated people whom I respected a great deal. The Japan Desk had a special relationship with Zoellick because of the prominence of trade issues and Bob's strong interest in creating a more balanced economic relationship with Japan. We really became an extension of his office, keeping the EAP front office informed but working directly with the 7th Floor.

Secretary Baker and his people like Kimmitt, Kantor, and Zoellick would reach down and pick out elements of the Department that they needed and trusted, but they often institutionally bypassed much of the system. It was a good experience for me as the Country Director to learn how to operate in this very different environment.

After Bush lost the 1992 election, our full-time job became preparing for the transition to President Clinton. The Clinton people came in with a very clear agenda for Japan: rectifying what they saw as the dangerous and unfair imbalance in our economic relations. The Clinton people managing international economic issues had a basic premise that we had been much too soft on Japan on trade and investment. They argued that during the Cold War, the U.S. had been reluctant to push Japan too hard on trade because of the importance of maintaining a solid alliance to deal with the Soviet threat. From their point of view, American policy makers were so concerned about preserving the strength of the alliance that we'd overlooked many Japanese sins in the economic area. With the end of the Cold War, they maintained, we could now afford to put pressure on Japan, and it was seen as essential to the health of the American economy that we aggressively pursued our trade agenda with Japan. The symbol they used was the U.S.-Japan relationship as a three-legged stool: The military and political cooperation legs of the relationship had received great attention and were strong, but the economic leg was broken and needed to be fixed.

Even before the Clinton Administration took office in January 1993, it began a formal review of Japan policy. There was a series of long meetings, and I was the representative from the State Department. The meetings were chaired by Mickey Kantor, who became the U.S. Trade Representative and Laura Tyson, who became chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. There were various other people destined for Treasury, Commerce,

and other economic agencies. Few of the participants had any real interest in the US-Japan political relationship, and they were greatly suspicious of State Department people who were seen as too soft on Japan. It was the beginning of a very difficult three-year period in the US-Japan relationship and in our policy toward Japan.

With the new administration came a new ambassador. Mike Armacost stayed on for several months, but in April President Clinton nominated Walter Mondale to be ambassador. Mondale was given a slate of names for possible DCMs, mine among them. After an extended interview process, Ambassador Mondale asked me to come to Tokyo with him as his DCM.

Q: Was Winston Lord the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs?

DEMING: Yes.

Q: How did he work out?

DEMING: Winston is a very able and likeable person, and we got along well. Obviously, his primary area of expertise was China where he had served as Ambassador. Winston had the right instincts about Japan and said all the right things, but I don't think he really ever felt completely at home in dealing with Japan. The Japanese sensed that he was really a China guy, and this made them a little standoffish. He got to Japan quite often, but there wasn't the kind of surefootedness that he enjoyed in dealing with China.

Q: Was this a problem that really basically since the opening to China in the '70s that you know this became a fascinating place, everybody wanted to go see the Great Wall and China dominated, Japan kind of stayed there not really changing very much at least to appearances so that Japan was no longer sexy and China was.

DEMING: I think it was a very real problem. Of course, our motivations for the opening to China were fundamentally strategic. China was a counterweight to the Soviet Union, and we saw China in a global context, while Japan was seen primarily from an economic and historical dimension. To some extent, there was a tendency to take Japan for granted as an ally. Senior U.S. officials spent more time dealing with China which required more careful handling by the U.S There was another factor as well. The Chinese, frankly, are much better than Japanese about engaging in broad strategic discussions, and this tends to fascinate American interlocutors. The Chinese are very comfortable with big visions, big ideas. The Japanese, for all of their strengths, tend to focus on narrow issues, so for many Americans they're not as intriguing to deal with.

On the political military side, particularly during the Reagan administration, there were excellent "alliance managers, "people like Rick Armitage and others, who recognized that U.S. and Japanese long-term interests were much more convergent than the potential shared interests of the U.S. and China. The Reagan Administration recognized that the U.S. could not afford to allow Japan simply to lie fallow as we pursued our economic agenda. The GHW Bush administration also made Japan a strategic priority,

notwithstanding our difficulties over the Gulf War. On the other hand, the Clinton administration, as I mentioned earlier, was focused entirely on economic issues in its first three years. It wasn't until Joe Nye, a professor at Harvard who had served in the Carter Administration, moved to the Department of Defense in 1995 that we began to refocus on the alliance. As Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Dr. Nye launched the East Asian Strategic Review (EASR) to establish a post Cold-War rationale for our military presence in the region. It was a critical development.

Q: Going back to your time as political counselor, Tiananmen Square was '89 wasn't it?

DEMING: '89, yes.

Q: How did that reverberate in China? I mean in Japan.

DEMING: Much less than in the U.S. At first the Japanese followed the U.S. and Western Europe in cutting off official visits to China and imposing other sanctions. At the same time, the Japanese recognized that they could not be seen as lecturing the Chinese on human rights, having invaded and occupied half the country. At the public level, there was widespread shock and revulsion at the brutal Chinese suppression of the demonstrations. I think the Tiananmen incident did tend to reinforce in Japan that Japan's values were really quite different from those of the Chinese, in terms of day-to-day respect for human rights, dissent, and political participation. However, the basic Japanese attitude was not to derail the entire relationship with China. Indeed, Japan was the first G-7 nation to get back to business with China after Tiananmen.

Q: Were we, we took this very strongly. I mean this was a severe blow in Tiananmen Square. Did we try to sit on the Japanese and say this isn't business as usual or did we just leave that relationship alone?

DEMING: I don't think we put too much pressure on the Japanese. I think we recognized the complexity of Japan's relationship with China. As you remember, within the U.S. there were divided views. One of the reasons that Winston Lord became Assistant Secretary in the Clinton administration was because he had broken with Henry Kissinger, his mentor, and written an op-ed in the New York Times. Kissinger argued that we could not allow this problem to disturb our strategic relationship with the Chinese. Lord countered that Tiananmen represented a fundamental clash of values. So even within the U.S. there was this split on how to handle it. The Japanese kept a low profile and avoided anything that was clearly in violation of the spirit of U.S. sensitivities, but they quietly worked to try to ensure that their overall relations with China were not damaged.

Q: Back when you were director of Japanese affairs from '91 to '93, did the Clinton administration focus on what was it, APEC or whatever?

DEMING: Yes, APEC.

Q: Was that seen as a plus?

DEMING: Yes. The Clinton Administration strongly supported the idea of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation which is what APEC stands for. In the previous Bush administration, there had been concern, particularly by Secretary of State Jim Baker, that some Asian leaders, led by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, wanted to put some distance between themselves and the U.S. and keep the U.S. at the edge of the region. Mahathir came up with the idea of something called East Asian Economic Caucus, EAEC, which would include Japan, China, Korea and the ASEANs, but not the U.S. Jim Baker and the Bush administration were deeply concerned. The U.S. was a major player in the region, politically, economically and strategically, and we would look dimly on any organization that kept us out. APEC was seen as a vehicle for a more inclusive arrangement that would include not just the U.S. but also Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. A lot of energy was put into APEC, with some good effect.

Q: How did the Japanese respond to these initiatives?

DEMING: Japan was playing it down the middle. Indeed, Japan and Australia were the real parents of APEC, primarily as a means to keep the U.S. engaged in the region. At the same time, the Japanese were very cautious. They wanted the U.S. in the region, but they wanted to cultivate their relations with the ASEANs and thus did not want to reject EAEC outright. Some Japanese argued that the U.S. had its regional organization, NAFTA, and the Europeans had the EU so it was natural that the Asians set up their own organization. Why should there be a double standard? The Japanese government was very careful. Occasionally, a Japanese official would say something supportive of Mahathir and the EAEC, but the GOJ would pull it back when the U.S. reacted. At the same time, the Japanese, particularly MITI, were very supportive of APEC as a way to keep the U.S. involved in the region. They would try to have it both ways and were pretty effective in doing so. In the last decade, Asian regionalization has moved forward with the institutionalization of the so-called “10 plus 3, the ASEANs plus Japan, China, and Korea, while APEC has withered to a large degree.

Q: Well, then in ’93 you went back as DCM?

DEMING: I went back in the fall of ’93 as DCM to Tokyo with Walter Mondale.

Q: Did you have any feeling that you knew your subject too well, but *there were things going on certainly in the fall of the Soviet Union and other relationships that as a Foreign Service Officer you were in a way. I’m speaking professionally, not career wise, that you didn’t have a feel for what was happening say in the Middle East or particularly in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe and all that. Did you get that or not?*

DEMING: Not really. As I noted, much of my time in Japan was spent dealing with foreign policy issues, including the Middle East and the Soviet Union. I kept very well informed on developments there and elsewhere. In addition, during my year at the War College and the trip to Germany, I had a feel for the contrast between the end of the Cold War in Europe and Asia. Europe saw the dramatic collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the

Soviet Union, the Berlin Wall, and the unification of Germany itself. In Asia, the impact of the end of the Cold War was much less profound, and it was unclear how rapidly Asia would catch up. The Russians were still occupying the Japanese Northern Territories, the Korean peninsula remained divided, and the Chinese civil war was unfinished in the form of the Taiwan-PRC split. So the Japanese kept reminding us that despite the dramatic changes in Europe, there was still a lot of unfinished business in Asia.

My main concern during my first years as DCM was that we not allow our focus on economic friction to completely obscure the alliance which was still vital to American interests. It was very difficult to get senior levels of the Administration to focus on the alliance because the Clinton people came in with the mantra that "it's the economy, stupid." As I said, it wasn't until 1995, when Joe Nye moved from CIA over to the Pentagon, that the alliance got the attention it deserved. Ambassador Mondale and I talked a lot about this. How could we get somebody in the Administration engaged on the alliance side of things? We were frankly looking for somebody like Rich Armitage to play the same kind of strategic role he played in the Reagan and Bush I administrations. In fact we went to Joe Nye at one point and said "Here's the job, somebody's got to do it, you go do it."

Q: Now, what was the background of Joe Nye?

DEMING: Joe Nye was a professor at Harvard who came into government for the first time in the Carter administration and was Deputy Undersecretary dealing with nuclear nonproliferation, and I got to know him then. He then went back to Harvard. He wrote a number of books on the theory of interdependence and the importance of "soft power." He emphasized how important it is for the U.S. to use its soft power, not just its hard power, in foreign policy. He and a professor named Keohane wrote a classic textbook in the 1970s on interdependence theory -- on how the integration of the world economy would increase stability and ease conflict resolution. Joe Nye is at the opposite end of the pole from Samuel Huntington, also at Harvard, who wrote his seminal book in the early 1990s predicting the "Clash of Civilizations" in the wake of the end of the Cold War. Of course, Huntington's thesis got a lot of attention after 9/11, but Joe Nye is sticking to his guns. Anyway, this is who Joe Nye is.

When Dr. Nye first came into the Clinton administration, he was head of the National Intelligence Council at the CIA. In that capacity he oversaw lots of intelligence estimates, but he had no policy authority. In 1994 or 1995, he moved over to the Pentagon as Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs. In that position, he became much more influential. His first task was to put out the East Asian Strategy Review, EASR, which made the case for the continued relevance of American alliances in East Asia and the necessity of an American forward deployed military presence in the post-Cold War era. He argued that the American military presence was like oxygen that provided the stability for the region which allowed it to prosper and develop politically. Even though most people were not conscious of this "oxygen," it was absolutely vital. The EASR report became the basis for refocusing on the U.S. Japan security alliance. Under Joe

Nye's leadership, working closely with Winston Lord and Ambassador Mondale, we put together the 1996 US-Japan Security Declaration that redefined the alliance.

Q: Well, you were DCM from '93 to?

DEMING: '97, rather '93 to '96 and then I was chargé for almost a year after Ambassador Mondale left, from December 1996 to September 1997.

Q: Okay. In the first place, how was Walter Mondale as ambassador?

DEMING: Mr. Mondale was a very interesting, very decent, very intelligent and very good man. I remember that a very senior American television correspondent told me that Walter Mondale was the most honest and decent man he had ever covered in American politics. I strongly believe that. After his defeat in the Presidential election of 1984, Mr. Mondale, as he prefers to be called, returned to private life in Minnesota as a lawyer. He and his talented wife Joan shared a great commitment to public service, and when the offer to go to Japan came his way he took it.

After Ambassador Mondale was nominated, he undertook a strenuous course on Japan. As Country Director, he asked me to arrange for him to meet with the most well-informed scholars, businessmen, and other experts on Japan, as well as to offer my own analysis. I was impressed with the intellectual rigor and honesty with which he approached this task. We went to Boston for meetings with people at Harvard and MIT, to Palo Alto to see people at Stanford and high-tech leaders in Silicon Valley, and to Seattle to meet with Ken Pyle and others at the University of Washington and to visit Microsoft. I was very impressed with the approach Mr. Mondale took. He briefly set the stage for each discussion, indicating the areas he would like to cover and posing a few precise questions, but letting each interlocutor say what he or she wanted to say. I learned a lot, and I am sure he did.

Ambassador Mondale's overall approach to US-Japan relations reflected his own background as a Democratic/Farm Labor Senator from Minnesota. As someone who was in tune with American labor, Mr. Mondale very much understood the need for an economic focus in our relations with Japan. At the same time, he understood the strategic importance of cooperating with Japan. Coming into the embassy I think was a bit of an adjustment initially for him, as it is for any political figure. I didn't appreciate this at first, but then I understood that people in the political world pick the people who work for them. They gather their people, and there's a great sense of personal loyalty. Walter Mondale, like any other ambassador, came into a system where there were career civil servants who worked for whatever political leader emerged at the time. When he went to Japan, he had very limited choices. He could pick his DCM from a list provided to him by the State Department. He could bring from outside the State Department his own secretary and one other special assistant. I think initially he felt uneasy about this because he was concerned that it would be difficult to carry out the new Administration's and his own agenda with a staff that had worked for the political opposition for twelve years, that

is eight years of Reagan and four years of GHW Bush. I think his concern was, "How can I make my mark, how can I do my thing if I don't have my own people?"

Ambassador Mondale very quickly understood the fundamental loyalty of the Foreign Service to the elected political leadership, and after a few months he became one of the greatest champions of the Foreign Service. I think he was terribly impressed with the caliber of the people and their dedication to the national interests and that they were equally loyal to whatever political administration and whatever political leaders were elected by the American people. Mr. Mondale did bring out a personal aide, a speech writer, but he left after a year because I think the Ambassador found that the career officials assigned to the Embassy, whether from the State Department or other agencies, were doing the job he wanted done.

When he first arrived in Tokyo, Ambassador Mondale's focus was understandably on the economic agenda. This reflected not only the Clinton's administration's priority, but his own convictions about the need for a level playing field. At the same time, as I mentioned, we were both concerned about the lack of adequate attention to the alliance, and I think we both played a role in getting Joe Nye to take on the alliance management responsibility to help balance the economic focus.

Q: I asked how did Ambassador Mondale use you?

DEMING: Well, first of all, before he went out to Tokyo, we had a combined ambassador/ DCM course that lasted about three hours. The basic message that was given to us by retired ambassadors and others was that the key to success was to never have any distance, any gap, between the ambassador and the DCM. They should be completely open with each other, and there should be no divergence, certainly in public, between them. I think we both took that to heart. He used me first of all to run the Embassy, the internal aspects of the embassy, to make sure that it was responding to what Washington wanted, to what he wanted, to advise him on the Japanese scene and who was who and to suggest opportunities for him to use his influence to advance the agenda. He also used me to do the things that he didn't have time for or didn't want to do, whether it was to entertain certain groups or speaking to this group or that. It worked out very well. We got along very well. I think that the Embassy functioned very well. It was an ideal situation.

Q: How did you find the embassy put together? Some embassies, particularly very large ones, they've got a group of very disparate agencies.

DEMING: I spent a lot of time trying to coordinate between the various agencies, particularly on the law enforcement side. We had the FBI. We had Customs. We had the Drug Enforcement Agency and various others. They were quite stove piped in terms of their own channels to Washington, and we put together a law enforcement group that I chaired that met every couple of weeks to try to bridge some of these gaps with some success, although there were some inherent rivalries and suspicions that carried on. On the economic side, we had a number of different players from different agencies and trying to get those together was sometimes difficult. On the scientific side, we had the

National Science Foundation, we had the National Academy of Science, and we had various military research groups. We set up a "science cluster" so people knew what the others were doing and to ensure we weren't overlapping with our Japanese contacts. There was a lot of that going on.

In terms of my personal time, I spent a lot on political-military issues, working with the U.S. military in Japan. My counterpart was the chief of staff of U.S. forces Japan, Marine Major General Peter Pace who I mentioned is now the Deputy JCS chairman of the joint chief of staff. He and I had been at the War College together. The Ambassador dealt with Lieutenant General Dick Myers who was the Commander of U.S. Forces Japan and is now chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We went through a lot of crises together and tried to solve a lot of issues. The basic rule we established was that the Embassy and the U.S. military would never go back to Washington with a split position if we could possibly help it. We would solve issues in country, and we did this, without exception. I think this was a remarkable achievement. It demonstrated that we had such a degree of trust between us that we could work it out. When we went back to Washington with joint Embassy-U.S. Force Japan cables, the most senior levels of the USG listened to what we had to say.

Q: What were some of the crises you had to deal with?

DEMING: In September of 1995, two Marines and a Navy corpsman kidnapped an 11-year-old Okinawan girl, took her out in a van, and gang raped her. It had all the elements of an explosive situation. There was tension between the U.S. military and the Embassy on how to handle the incident. From the U.S. military point of view, it was important to protect due process and the rights of the accused servicemen and not to do anything that implied that they were guilty before they had gone through the appropriate legal process. From our point of view, we needed to move rapidly to get ahead of events by apologizing and taking appropriate responsibility. Ambassador Mondale happened to be in the U.S. when this happened. He got back a day or two later, and one of the first things he did was meet with the Foreign Minister and apologize. The military was very uneasy about this apology, the lawyers in particular, because they were concerned that it could be regarded as "command interference" in the judicial process. But from our point of view, we had to get ahead of the political curve to avoid an explosion. Thanks to Ambassador Mondale's intervention with Washington, the President personally apologized a day or two later and that helped a great deal in containing the incident.

The next issue was whether and when to turn over the accused to Japanese custody. The individuals that had committed the crime had dropped the girl off and then gone back to their American base where they were arrested by U.S. MPs. The Japanese wanted immediate custody, but under the Status of Forces Agreement, if the U.S. arrests an American serviceman for a crime against a Japanese, Japan does not get custody until these people are indicted. In the Japanese system, the indictment is a very long process. They don't indict until they have the whole case lined up and ready to go to trial. There was tremendous pressure building to get these people off the U.S. base and into Japanese

custody, even though the Japanese police were able to question the suspects on the U.S. base. It was a perception issue.

Both the embassy and the U.S. military agreed that we needed to protect our prerogatives under the Status of Forces Agreement. At the same time, we wanted to diffuse the public outcry as quickly as possible. The solution we found was to lean very heavily on the Japanese to issue the indictment so we could hand over the prisoners, and they did this in record time. At the same time, we worked out an agreement with the Japanese that in future cases of "heinous crimes like rape and murder," the U.S. would consider favorably a GOJ request to turn people over before indictment. That agreement was not popular with the military lawyers, but it took a lot of the heat off us in Japan

The Okinawa rape incident came at the worst possible time because the trade issues had created a lot of tension in U.S.-Japan relations, and anti-American feelings in Japan were already running high. The rape incident sparked a public debate in Japan about the need for U.S. bases, at least in their current numbers, after the end of the Cold War. Moreover, for the first time since the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1972, Japanese in the mainland took a real interest in what was happening in Okinawa. In this very difficult environment, President Clinton was due to come to Japan in November for the APEC summit. We were really scrambling to try to get things back in order. In the event, the President postponed his trip because of the deadlock with the Congress over the budget. He didn't come until the following spring which turned out to be a blessing because it allowed enough time to get the Okinawa incident behind us. Overall, I think the Embassy, working with U.S. Forces in Japan and our military counterparts in Okinawa, did the very best we could to manage a very difficult situation. That was the most dramatic situation I faced.

Q: Did you find your military counterparts, I mean they understood, I mean the dual sensitivity, the legal sensitivity plus a political sensitivity.

DEMING: Yes, on different levels. The military lawyers behaved like lawyers: "Don't give up a thing, don't admit anything." The senior military officers recognized the need for political steps to defuse the crisis, but at the same time they didn't want to put in jeopardy future operational rights and restrict themselves. There was a lot of tension to all of this.

Q: What happened to the servicemen?

DEMING: They were tried by the Japanese and given what I would call a very lenient sentence of three or four years which they have now served, and they have been released. Once the Japanese got custody, they dealt with them very quickly and fairly and leniently to a great degree, but the political heat had gone out of it by then. One of the things that I learned from this incident is the importance, in Japan and elsewhere, of acting quickly to take responsibility. If you face up to the situation and admit responsibility immediately, you take a lot of heat out of it. If you drag it out, you just create all sorts of unnecessary problems.

Q: There always seems to be and we spend an awful lot of our time apologizing and quite rightly so with the Japanese. Did the Japanese ever find things to apologize to us?

DEMING: That's a good question. Well, it's amazing that there are almost no incidences of unprovoked violence against Americans in Japan. It's remarkable in view of the fact that Japan is hosting 50,000 foreign troops.

Q: And these are young men full of piss and vinegar.

DEMING: There was not really an analogous situation, but I can think of a moment when the Japanese had to come to us to apologize for something. The U.S. Navy and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces were training together off Hawaii, and a Japanese destroyer was firing at a target that was being towed by a US Navy A-4 aircraft. Somehow, the Japanese radar or gunner locked onto the aircraft rather than the drone and shot the airplane down. Fortunately, the pilot got out.

Q: They did it again.

DEMING: Yes, but this time the two navies got along. The US Navy handled the incident beautifully. They downplayed the whole affair, treating it as a normal training accident, pointing out that the A-4 was over 30 years old and due to be retired. We obviously got a lot of apologies from the Japanese. It was a tremendous embarrassment to them, not just because of what happened but because it showed what looked like the amateurism of the Japanese navy.

Q: But speaking of apologies and all, did the subject, I mean this relates a lot to Japanese Chinese relationships and all. Did the subject of Nanking, by the way did the book come out about?

DEMING: By Iris Chang, the poor girl who recently committed suicide?

Q: Yes.

DEMING: It came out when I was back in Washington.

Q: Okay, but I was wondering whether, were the Chinese or ourselves, you know the Germans had gone to a lot of work to accept responsibility and all. How about in Japan during the whole time we're talking about?

DEMING: There have been various efforts to deal with history between both sides, and the Japanese have indeed expressed regret for that unfortunate period, from the Emperor on down. However, there has not been the kind of reconciliation that there has been between France and Germany, and I'm not sure that this will be possible for the foreseeable future. It seems to me that over time attitudes have become more inflexible and stereotyped. There are a number of Japanese politicians who have publicly refuted

the details of the Nanking massacre, some even saying it was a fabrication, not just an exaggeration. Others acknowledge the atrocities but argue that all sides did awful things during the War. Some on the left accept that Japan needs to take more direct responsibility for its actions during the War, but most are unwilling to face the backlash from veterans' groups and nationalist groups in Japan.

There has been confusion in Japan over honoring the sacrifice made by the millions of Japanese soldiers and sailors who lost their lives in WWII and justifying the cause for which they fought. The center of the issue is Yasukuni Shrine, dedicated to all those who died in Japan's wars, and their souls are enshrined there. It is natural, appropriate and necessary for any nation to honor those who have sacrificed their lives for their country, and Yasukuni is the place that does this in Japan. Unfortunately, the shrine also enshrines Class A war criminals, and the shrine and the associated Yushukan museum present a very unapologetic version of 20th century history, with Japan essentially portrayed as a victim of European and American imperialism, dedicated to liberating Asia from its colonial yoke. It has become the center of neo-nationalism in Japan.

Because of the controversial nature of the shrine, the Emperor stopped visiting Yasukuni after the war criminals were enshrined in the 1970s, and most Japanese prime ministers have stayed away. Prime Minister Koizumi, however, who came into office in 2001, made a campaign pledge to visit Yasukuni, and he did this every year of his five-year term. This brought tremendous criticism from China and South Korea and set off a debate in Japan about the shrine and the war. There is a fairly small but growing revisionist element in Japan that basically accepts the Yasukuni argument that Japan was doing nothing more than what the Europeans were doing in their sphere of influence in trying to develop their own empire. They argue that perhaps Japan was a little late in the game, but it played by the same rules, only to be condemned by Europe and the U.S. because of their own imperialist ambitions and racism.

More broadly, many Japanese see the war with China as a "war of aggression," but very few see the war with the U.S. in the same light. Rather, the broad perception in Japan is that the war with the U.S. was really imposed by the U.S. America cut off scrap iron, then oil, and finally gave Japan ultimatums that Japan had to relinquish everything it gained since 1933 as a condition to remove the embargo. Many Japanese do not make a connection between Japanese aggression in China and the actions the U.S. took against Japan.

The other big factor is the differing views of the war in Japan and the U.S. is Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Whatever responsibility and guilt Japan felt was absolved, in their view, by Hiroshima and Nagasaki which they almost universally see as a massive war crime. Because of the atomic bombings and the fire bombings of Japanese cities, many Japanese see themselves as victims. The American argument that the nuclear attacks were necessary to force Japan to surrender and to avoid the hundreds of thousand casualties on both sides that would have resulted from a land invasion of the main islands is almost universally rejected in Japan.

So, there has been no real reconciliation about the war, either within Japan or between Japan and some of its Asian neighbors. In Southeast Asia, I think the War is seen as part of the past. History has not been a big issue since Lee Kuan Yew moved off center stage. The new generation in Southeast Asia is focused on the future. China still uses history as a tool for generating nationalism at a time when authority of the Communist Party is declining, and in the ROK, the history issue is still a political football. I have talked a lot to my Japanese and indeed some Chinese friends about the need for a much more concerted effort to try to reconcile.

Q: Were we looking at education?

DEMING: Yes, joint commissions to look at how history is taught, more exchange of students and other people. There is an awful lot of innate prejudice and misinformation to overcome.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover when you were DCM?

DEMING: Yes. In fact, I was chargé for more than a quarter of that period. Ambassador Mondale would leave in the summer for two months and leave in the winter for one month, and I was there for almost a year after his departure and before the arrival of Tom Foley. That period of chargé gave me an opportunity to do a lot of things that perhaps other DCMs didn't have the chance to do. Ambassador Mondale was away in December each year, and in December the Emperor had two receptions for the ambassadors or heads of mission. One was his birthday party on December 26th, and the other was on New Year's Day. As chargé, I went to the Palace twice each year in those four years, and my wife and I became quite well acquainted with the Emperor and Empress. In fact, my wife was in a poetry group that the Empress attended from time to time. We had the honor of hosting the Empress twice at our residence when the poetry group met there. That was one of my wife's many contributions to my service in Tokyo.

Q: On the Emperor and Empress how did you see their role? The Emperor had been brought up by I mean there was a Scottish nanny and all that.

DEMING: Quaker.

Q: Quaker. How did you see, I mean, what was the Emperor and the Empress like? What were they like in their roles?

DEMING: Of course, their role after the end of the War was very ceremonial and constrained. The Emperor did not come to the throne until 1989 when Emperor Hirohito died so he was in his late '50s when he became Emperor. The Empress was the first commoner to marry into the royal family. She was from a very wealthy Japanese business family. She had a very difficult time at first because she was treated very harshly by her mother-in-law, the Empress, and by the courtiers who wanted to mold her.

Q: Well, my understanding is that it reminds me somewhat of the old courtier of the Hungarian empire. I mean the protocol types, sort of the bureaucrats essentially almost ran the show.

DEMING: They did. It was very difficult even for the Emperor himself to make his own wishes known and acted upon. Nevertheless, the current Empress is a very interesting woman. She was educated at Sacred Heart, which is a Catholic girls' school in Tokyo, and spoke English very well and enjoyed getting out of the confines of the palace. I think one of the reasons she enjoyed coming to our house was because she was out of the golden cage. There were not very many opportunities for that. We found both the Emperor and Empress very nice, unassuming, and approachable people.

Q: Well, was there any move afoot to sort of open up, I mean to get away from the purely ceremonial. I'm not talking about taking over power, but I mean to get out more?

DEMING: There is now. As I mentioned earlier, there has been a great deal of discussion recently about amending the constitution which was essentially handed to the Japanese by MacArthur in 1947. One of the issues being discussed is the role of the Emperor, which is now limited to that of "symbol of the state." Some of the more conservative elements in Japan talk about restoring the Emperor as head of state, whatever that means, and giving him more than simply a perfunctory ceremonial role. I don't think that this will go very far. Japan is a firmly established constitutional democracy, but there may be some at least terminology changes in the role of the Emperor. One of the crises facing the imperial household right now is the fact that the current crown prince and his brothers do not have any male heirs. The Crown Prince and Princess had a child three years ago, a female, so now there's talk about amending the Imperial Household Law to allow women to assume the throne. There have been occasions in the distant past where women temporarily occupied the throne, but there's never been a permanent reigning empress in Japan. This may be something that's coming and will involve the position of the Emperor and Empress. (Author's note: the brother of the Crown Prince and his wife had a son in 2006 who is now the heir to the throne, and the issue of amending the Imperial Household Law has become mute.)

Q: What about the educational system, I mean one of the things that concerns many of those outside of Japan is, that Japan hasn't sort of fessed up to in its educational system to why Japan isn't liked. We're talking about the results of the Sino-Japanese war and.

DEMING: The Pacific War.

Q: The Pacific war.

DEMING: Yes, that's been a long period of great sensitivity in Japan on how to treat history, particularly in their textbooks. At first, the textbooks were thoroughly scrubbed by the Occupation authorities, and there was a pretty straightforward history written into the Japanese textbooks about Japan's aggression in Manchuria, China, and Southeast Asia, and its attack against the U.S. After the end of the Occupation, a very conservative

Education Ministry allowed some Japanese textbook publishers to put the coverage of the war and its origins into more neutral terms. For example, some textbooks took out words about invading China and put in words Japan to the effect that Japan had "entered" China, a more neutral characterization of what went on. The Chinese and the South Koreans raised very strong objections every time the textbooks were revised in this direction. The teachers in Japan were generally very leftist so they would fight the Ministry of Education to try to get a more straightforward accounting of history. Over the years, there has been a steady erosion, one could say, of the more condemnatory treatment of Japan's behavior in the 1930s and '40s. Now textbooks tend to treat history in more neutral terms, and there's continuing pressure to sanitize them even further.

There is a younger generation in Japan now that I think is tired of apologizing for the War. As I said earlier, for many if not most Japanese, the U.S. use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki neutralized whatever guilt there was, and Japan became the victim rather than the perpetrator. Also, the fact that General MacArthur and the Occupation authorities chose not to treat Emperor Hirohito as a war criminal or even remove him from the throne is seen by some as absolving all Japanese.

In any case, many in the new generation in Japan don't think it's their responsibility to apologize for whatever errors were made 50 or 60 years ago, and they are tired of the Chinese, in particular, rubbing history in their face. As I said earlier, the Chinese do use this as a tool to stimulate domestic nationalism as a source of unity in China. I'm very worried about this sort of negative circle that's going on. The Japanese are getting more nationalistic and resistant to historical reflection. The Chinese are also becoming more nationalistic and using anti-Japanese sentiment as a force for national unity. On the other side of the equation, the economies of Japan and China are becoming increasingly integrated, and there are many other positive connections. Nevertheless, the lack of historical reconciliation is likely to be an important factor complicating Japan-China relations for years to come. With the U.S., there's been so much positive history since the Second World War on both sides that the War rarely comes up anymore, except on the Turner Classic Movie Channel.

Q: Well, that's a question I was going to ask. You know a staple of our on the Turner Classic Movies, but almost everybody subscribes to it, but I was wondering in Japan we all see John Wayne going out and getting those damn Japs and that sort of thing. I mean does this set off these movies seen there?

DEMING: No, they're not widely seen. When Japanese here happen to tune in some Saturday afternoons to Turner Classic Movies and see how the "Japs" are being portrayed, they are shocked, but it hasn't become an issue. In Japan, of course, glorifying war movies, as such, are sort of verboten. There have been some excellent Japanese films about the suffering associated with War, but you don't see triumphant Japanese movies about the war. There are, however, surrogates. Godzilla is really a creation of the post war period. They had to have a neutral demonization to have this big monster come out of the deep, but as you remember, Godzilla awoke because of American H-bomb tests. It was a

substitute for the kind of war movies that we produced. In addition, "Manga," or comic novels, have been free to treat the War in both historical and counter-historical fashion.

Q: I spent a good part of my time in Yugoslavia and I also served in Germany and I was always surprised that so many of our movies and they seemed to, they ran in Germany, showing the Germans getting beaten up by Audie Murphy or something.

DEMING: I would argue that the treatment of Germany was less demonizing perhaps than Japan because it was seen as less alien. We also tended to attribute responsibility primarily to the Nazis, not to the German people as a whole. With respect to Japan, we tended to blame Japan as a nation and a race.

Q: You know, it was an interesting thing, we're drifting a little away from this, but I came from a generation, I turned 18 in 1946, so I didn't go into the military then, but I did at one point occupy Japan and then I was defending Japan. We switched over and then I went to Korea. At that time movies like Sayonara, Japan was no longer the demon, but awfully quaint people and very sexy girls and as an occupier/defender I found this very true. It was an interesting time to be there.

DEMING: I think that has helped build the human connections that have made our relationship since the War much more positive.

Q: Yes. I found, I can understand, but I think the Brits for example have held on and the Australians have held onto their anti-Japanese.

DEMING: Yes. They had an aspect of War history that we didn't, which was the interment of a lot of civilians in Singapore and Malaysia, both Australians and the Brits. We did not have many American civilians as Japanese prisoners, except in the Philippines where there were some nurses. I think that the way those civilians, particularly the women, were treated built this bitterness. In addition, Japan took away the British and Dutch empires in Asia, so there is that added layer of historical bitterness that doesn't exist with the U.S.

Q: Did you find that in your dealings with the British Embassy, I mean, was this an area they had to deal with more than we did?

DEMING: They did. Yes, they had to deal with history quite a bit, particularly the Dutch, with respect to the legacy of Japan's occupation of the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. For the British and the Dutch, history was much more alive than for the Americans, for the reasons I mentioned and because we had a much more positive post-war relationship with Japan than they did.

Q: When you were there speaking of history, two things I think may have happened during your watch, maybe not, but one was the publication of this book The Rape of Nanking.

DEMING: Yes, by Iris Chang.

Q: Which is a very powerful book. Did this reverberate?

DEMING: Yes. In fact, I was back in the U.S. It became a widely covered book, and Iris Chang, the author was on all the talk shows. The Japanese ambassador was asked to go on MacNeil Lehrer with Iris Chang, which he did. I talked to him beforehand, and he indicated that he intended to point out that some of the facts in her book were distorted, including the number of victims. I said, please, please, don't argue the numbers because that would be seen as missing the point. It would be like the Germans saying that the victims of the Holocaust were only 5.5 million instead of 6 million. I read the Iris Chang book, and it was emotionally moving and conveyed the big picture very well, but it was not a rigorous academic history. But it made the point that terrible things happened in Nanjing for which Japanese military was responsible.

Q: It was a horrible occurrence.

DEMING: A horrible occurrence. Many Japanese recognize this, but there are right wing people in Japan who say it has all been a fabrication that never took place.

Q: Nanking in the way became the equivalent of the Holocaust. We have the Bataan Death March.

DEMING: The Japanese have Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Q: Oh, yes.

DEMING: Anyway.

Q: Speaking of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were you there when the Enola Gay exhibit was done and this caused a great deal of controversy well, you might explain what the controversy was about.

DEMING: Yes. I've forgotten the name of the professor there that did a very straightforward historical analysis of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the planned Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

Q: You might explain what the Enola Gay was.

DEMING: The Enola Gay was the B-29 that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, commanded by a colonel named Tibbets. The Smithsonian put the forward section of the Enola Gay on exhibit six or seven years ago. When they did that, they developed a very straightforward history of the War and the dropping of the atomic bomb, the damage it did and the radiation effects and all that. Veterans here reacted very strongly to any detailed description of the damage and suffering caused by the atomic bombs. The Japanese then became involved, and the result was a very drastic cutback of the

explanation. It now amounts to something like "Here is the plane that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima."

Q: Yes, and it also mentioned that Tibbets said to get ready to be ready to drop a bomb on Germany or Japan. At the time I don't think this was specifically aimed at the Japanese; we were quite happy to drop it on Berlin.

DEMING: Yes. Part of the narrative of the Japanese right is that we wouldn't have done this against Caucasians. One of the most sensitive points is the widely held American view that the use of the atomic bombs saved both American and Japanese lives by ending the War more quickly. Many Japanese argue that Japan was already defeated and that we used the bombs to intimidate the Soviet Union. In addition, accepting that justification of the atomic bombings is seen as dismissing the suffering of the victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Q: I mean you're talking to somebody who was of the right age to go into the military and when the atomic bomb I felt that gee, I'm not going to have to take part in the invasion of Japan and given what happened in Okinawa. I can't tell you how many people who sat in the chair where you're sitting now who said and then after the European war, I was getting ready to go to Japan and I was scheduled to go in the first wave.

DEMING: I frankly believe that at least Hiroshima was necessary.

Q: Nagasaki was.

DEMING: Yes, we can argue about Nagasaki, but I am convinced that without that the shock of Hiroshima, it would have been extremely difficult for the Japanese to overcome the resistance to surrender, and there would have been no basis for the Emperor to intercede the way he did. Another factor leading to Japan's decision to surrender that is often overlooked by Americans is the Soviet entry into the War on August 8, 1945, the day of the bombing of Nagasaki. This Russian "betrayal" was almost as big a shock to Japanese leaders as the bombings.

In the end, I believe that for all the tragedy it caused, the bombing of Hiroshima probably did save tens of thousands of lives on both sides, and it was necessary to bring the War to the kind of conclusion that gave us the kind of stable peace we have enjoyed. I have said that quietly to some Japanese friends, but I'd never say that in public in Japan because people can't accept that or understand this reasoning.

Q: Did you find an identified as a strong right-wing group there, how would you define the right wing by the '90s?

DEMING: There has always been an extreme fringe right wing, a neo-fascist kind of right wing, that goes around in sound trucks, particularly near the Russian Embassy, blaring about Japan's need to restore sovereignty in the Northern Islands and take back the rest of the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin. Some of these groups were affiliated with the

Japanese underworld, with the Yakuza, and there was a tendency toward violence. They occasionally beat up and even kill people. They are a fringe group, dangerous but pretty much irrelevant in the political process.

More broadly, there are the old conservative Japanese who are now fading away, who served in the Imperial Army who regard Japan's wartime conduct as no worse than anybody else's, and that it was a victor's justice. The Tokyo War Crimes Trial is seen by many as justice imposed by the victors. This group has been muted over the years, but now to the extent they're still alive they have come out of the closet. The new Japanese generation is more outward looking but at the same time more nationalistic. As I said, they're tired of apologizing for the War. Many believe that Japan should behave as a normal country, and they're looking forward rather than backward. To the extent that Japan is becoming more nationalistic, I think it is more of a forward looking and positive nationalism, focusing on how Japan that can play a more active role.

I remember when I was Country Director for Japan in 1991, which was the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Political Counselor in the Embassy in Washington was a man named Togo. His grandfather had been foreign minister when the War began, and he came back as Foreign Minister at the end of the War. He was sentenced as a war criminal, and he died in Sugamo Prison where we incarcerated war criminals. He was one of the more liberal Japanese at the time who opposed the War, but he was in the wrong place at the wrong time and thus was tried as a war criminal. While he was in prison after the War, Togo wrote a book trying to explain Japan's rationale. It's an excellent book.

In 1991, the young Togo and I had lunch to discuss how we might mark this anniversary. He suggested that for the 50th anniversary, the U.S. and Japan put together a joint commission to come up with a common historical interpretation of what led up to the War. I responded, "Maybe we should let our grandkids do that. It's just too much historical baggage for the current generation." I think I was right.

Q: My brother was on a battleship at Pearl Harbor. This can't help but.

DEMING: What I think Togo was really looking for was American recognition that there were reasons for Japanese behavior, some of them related to the policies the U.S. undertook. It's true of course. Our immigration policy in the 1920s and 30s excluding Japanese, our refusal to support a racial equality clause at the Treaty of Versailles after WWI, and our unenforced ultimatums in the years leading up to WWII all contributed to the conflagration.

Q: We're just getting around to settling the Civil War, but there's been a considerable change in the Civil War treatment that I remember as a kid and how it is today, but it has taken that long.

DEMING: Yes. This reminds me of one thing Ambassador Mondale did that I thought was very courageous. April of 1995 was the 50th anniversary of the firebombing of

Tokyo. That was a raid on Tokyo by B-29s coming out of Saipan led by General Curtis LeMay, one of the architects of strategic bombing. They used incendiary bombs on a windy night, and it killed more than 100,000 Japanese in Tokyo. It was a firestorm. People died in the river, and the river boiled. It was one of the really horrible events of World War II. It killed more people than the bombing of Hiroshima did. In 1995, the City of Tokyo organized a commemoration at a public hall in Tokyo, and the city sent the Ambassador an invitation. I, as DCM, and the Political Section were extremely cautious about whether the Ambassador should go to this. We were concerned that the Ambassador's attendance could be interpreted in the U.S. as some kind of apology and invite a backlash from American veterans. We gave our cautious bureaucratic recommendation to Mondale, but he said, "No, it's 50 years later, I think I should go." He went to the commemoration, and this gesture got a tremendously positive response in Japan. We did get some protest mail from former POWs and their families in the U.S., from those who said that their father or grandfather was a B-29 crew member and was held prisoner and so on. Ambassador Mondale did the right thing, and I really admired his political and human instincts that rejected our cautious bureaucratic advice.

Q: This is the thing. If you get a senior politician, I mean somebody who has been around the block who obviously Mondale has, they have an extra nerve or something like that that those of us who have grown up in the bureaucratic thing, we tend to be terribly cautious.

DEMING: We're very risk averse.

Q: Every once in a while, there's a time to jump ahead and this is where that political instinct comes into play and it's very good.

DEMING: Another case where Mr. Mondale demonstrated the same kind of political courage again was on a very difficult issue. Our Peace Treaty with Japan in 1952 ended all the war claims. The Treaty stated that all claims were taken care of and there would be no further claims against each side for damages caused by either side during the War. Of course, when we included this provision, the U.S. and our allies had very much in mind the punitive Versailles Treaty and all the resentment this created that helped lead to WWII. The treaty with Japan was debated very fully in the Senate at the time. There was opposition to protecting Japan from all further claims, but this view did not prevail. The Treaty was signed and ratified and represents the commitment of the U.S. As we approached the 50th anniversary, some of the American POW families began to file claims, primarily in California courts, demanding compensation for damage done to them as Japanese prisoners of war. There were some state courts that supported the suits, and these were appealed to the Federal courts. The U.S. government was asked to come in as a friend of the court and present its views. There was a lot of pressure from Congress and from the former POWs to demand that the Japanese pay compensation. The position of the State Department and the Justice Department was that since the issue had been settled by the Peace Treaty which had been fully debated in the Senate, the issue could not be reopened. The full faith and credit of the United States was on the line. We suggested that if the Japanese wanted to do something, ex gratia, on their own, that would be fine, but

the Executive Branch could support in the courts the claim by American POWs. Mr. Mondale was very straightforward about this and testified publicly about it. It was not a popular position in the U.S., but it was the right one. Fortunately, we had very good lawyers at State and Justice who did not waiver and were willing to take the political heat. You can imagine how hard it was to defend the Japanese, given their treatment of our POWs, but that issue had been debated and decided in the 1950s.

Q: This would not be comparable because they weren't Japanese, but did you have to, I mean I imagine the subject of the internment of Japanese Americans is thrown in your face quite often isn't it?

DEMING: No, not really. I think probably because the Japanese-Americans really had handled it so well and because, indeed, we did make a settlement a decade ago where the U.S. Congress passed a law giving each one of the internees a symbolic sum.

Q: You mentioned the right wing and the I don't want to use the wrong word, Yakuza. Sounds like a hot bath. Anyway, it's a criminal.

DEMING: Japanese law enforcement takes the position that a criminal element will exist in any society, and it is often better to have this element organized and identified rather than uncontrolled. For this reason, they tend to tolerate the Yakuza as long as their activities are confined to gambling, prostitution and things like that. When they do move into areas that are considered legitimate, like finance, the Japanese authorities try to draw a line very clearly there. There was a period there when some Yakuza tried to extend some of their activities in California and that was stamped out pretty thoroughly by close cooperation between U.S. law enforcement and the Japanese police. I don't think that that exists anymore, and indeed the Yakuza is losing some of its cohesion in Japan, for better or worse.

Q: What about drugs, was this a concern?

DEMING: The drugs of choice in Japan are largely methamphetamines, mostly produced in Asia, largely in North Korea, and then smuggled into Japan. I don't know if you call methamphetamines hard drugs or not, but cocaine and heroin have not been major problems in Japan, I think probably because of social cohesion and because of the strong police controls and partly because of the wide use of alcohol as the means of self-medication. But methamphetamines have been a problem. I think they're probably less a problem now than they were, but Japan has not had the kind of hard drug problems that we've had in the U.S.

Q: Was there this thing that I experienced in Korea, the Kisaeng party where the men would go to a Kisaeng house after work and a certain number would get stinking drunk and a couple sort of designated carriers would take them out. I mean it was almost a business contact or something.

DEMING: Alcohol plays quite an important role in Japan. Japan's a very tight society. People are under tremendous pressure, and the one socially acceptable release is alcohol. The tradition over the years has been that after work, a "salary man" goes out drinking with his colleagues, generally a male bonding thing. The commuter train service ends fairly early in Japan, about 11:00 pm, so people have to make their last train home and that puts a limit on the evening, but people drink a lot. It is situational drinking. My impression is that the number of classic alcoholics who are completely socially debilitated by the use of alcohol is fewer in Japan than in the U.S., but there's a great deal of binge drinking in Japan. I'm not a doctor, but they say because of certain enzymes the Japanese tolerance for alcohol is less. It takes much less to get them to a level where they are sick. Late at night 10:00, 10:30 at night you see quite a few people staggering out of bars with a buddy helping them home. I think young Japanese are more health conscious now, and there's more of a commitment to family life so it's a healthier environment than it was.

Q: Did you find that in order for you and the officers to do business, was this a problem, restricting this?

DEMING: Well, it depends on what area of the Embassy. When I was working in internal politics, that's where the politicians just love to drink and the newspaper reporters who knew everything about internal politics and who you need to cultivate, also loved to drink. When I dealt with the Foreign Ministry, that wasn't their lifestyle and so we would go out for dinners, but they were very civilized. It was seen as slightly anti-social if you wouldn't join somebody in a drink. This was interpreted as your unwillingness to let your inhibitions down. The Japanese are very tolerant. They used to excuse murders that were committed when somebody was drunk because they weren't socially responsible. It's gotten a little stricter now, particularly with respect to driving under the influence. But if you have a couple of drinks, it gives you license to say what you really think about things. You don't have to get drunk, but you need to have a couple of glasses of beer or something like that to make it clear that you're willing to let your guard down.

Q: I've often wondered, we do have Americans who say of Christian scientists or Mormons or something who were basically religiously opposed to drinking. I think this would be an inhibitor.

DEMING: Yes. It can be awkward, but there are ways of dealing with it. For one thing, you can get your glass filled and not touch it, just let it sit there and that's fine. There are of course Japanese who are diabetic or have other health issues and can't drink so this is understood. However, if one makes a big show about not drinking, that is not well received because it can be interpreted as a suggestion of moral superiority. Today, the rules are more flexible; people are more relaxed about not drinking. Alcohol isn't necessarily the required ingredient for every social occasion, but it still helps.

Q: We may have touched on it before, but I was wondering within the bureaucracy particularly foreign affairs were you finding more women coming into positions of influence or not or was it changed?

DEMING: More and more but still very few by our standards. The Foreign Ministry thought it had achieved a great deal if it had three women in an entering class of 20 people.

Q: Sounds like us 30 years ago.

DEMING: Women are expected to perform at the same level and put in the same hours as men. They used to have to resign when they married and certainly when they had children. Now, there is more flexibility, but non-family childcare is still frowned on in the early years of life. The normal pattern for professional women is to come in and then to get married and then to drop out during childbearing years until the children are launched into elementary school at least and then they come back, if they come back at all. My wife had some very interesting conversations on this when she was in Tokyo with her many friends in the Japanese community. Even among her most educated Japanese friends, including women who were educated in the U.S., most of them defended strenuously the emphasis on the family. They argued that no matter how much professional interest a woman has, she owes it to her kids and society to drop out for that critical period, the first three, four and five years of life. It is a valid perspective.

Q: It's perfectly valid.

DEMING: Yes. There is some movement in this direction in the U.S. as well, but American women are not about to put aside the gains they have made in the professional world over the last decades. In Japan, the Crown Princess is a classic case. Masako Ogata is a brilliant woman, educated at Harvard and Oxford, who was on her way to a brilliant career in the Foreign Ministry. Fifteen years ago, she married the Crown Prince, and she has disappeared from the face of the earth essentially except for her official duties. You may have seen reference to some of the agony she's been through. The Crown Prince himself has complained in public about the treatment she's received by the Palace staff.

Q: Yes. What about did you have women officers, particularly political economic officers, and consular officers, too, at the embassy? Was this a problem dealing in this society? How did it work?

DEMING: No, we used to say that in Japan first of all you're a foreigner and second of all you're a woman. The Japanese tend to respect people for the position they hold. The woman who was head of the Political-Military section at the Embassy dealt very effectively with both the U.S. military and the Japanese uniformed military and Japanese civilians. There have been a number of senior women in the Embassy in Tokyo who have had very few problems in their professional relations with Japanese. Japan is what I guess the sociologists would call an attributive society. You are what your name card says you are, and you are treated on the basis of your position in the hierarchy, not on the basis of your gender or personality.

Q: Yes. How about the military there? What was our evaluation, you know you were getting from our attaches and your own reading of the Japanese military?

DEMING: Since the Second World War, the Japanese military has been in a very subordinate position, particularly the army. The criticism in Japan of the Japanese military was primarily directed at the Japanese Imperial Army. The Imperial Navy, pretty much just by the nature of its role, was more liberal, more internationalists, and more refined, and generally better born than the Army. In addition, it operated offshore and thus was less subject to accusations of war crimes. In any event, under the post-War constitution and by virtue of the Occupation purges, the uniform military in Japan had no political role at all. They were completely under civilian control and had a very limited public face. The senior U.S. military commanders were the primary interlocutors with the senior Japanese military. My limited contact with the Japanese military was largely in the context of my socialization with the U.S. military. I found Japanese military officers very talented, dedicated, and professional people, who were reserved in expressing any opinion.

Q: Given, well, we just had a huge disaster in the Indian Ocean, a tsunami and its military force that can respond to disasters. Was there sort of an outlook of training saying really an awful lot of your work is going to be dealing with disasters, was this?

DEMING: Japan is a country of earthquakes and fires, and the Self-Defense Forces has as one of its most important missions the responsibility to respond to natural disasters and domestic emergencies. Generally, they've done a very good job. There were some problems in responding to the Kobe earthquake in 1995. There was no legislation allowing the SDF to take control of emergency operations, reflecting the post-war distrust of the Army. In addition, Kobe was one of the most anti-military regions in Japan. The military was very reluctant to go down uninvited. The police were not prepared to handle a disaster of this magnitude. Since 1995, Japan's emergency preparedness is in much better shape. There is now a very clear emergency apparatus in place, with clear chains of command, operation centers and other coordinating mechanisms.

The Japanese military had been very effective in overseas relief as well as peacekeeping operations which began in Cambodia and have since extended to Africa, the Middle East, and East Timor. After 9/11, the SDF performed superbly in the Indian Ocean and Iraq, as well as in the response to the earthquake and Tsunami in Southeast Asia. In sum, the SDF is very professional, and the uniformed military is beginning to move beyond the legacy of the War and become a much more recognized and accepted part of society.

Q: One last question, you mentioned the Kobe earthquake. I don't think we've mentioned that previously. Could you talk about, I mean this is a big earthquake.

DEMING: It was a very big earthquake. I think about 6,000 people were killed, about 20 Americans among them. We were up in Tokyo. We were always having little shakes. We had a shake about 6:00 AM in Tokyo. At my house, the windows rattled which was not unusual in Tokyo. I then turned on the TV, and the first reports were pretty sketchy

because initially communications had been cut off. Soon, it became very clear that there had been a major disaster in the Kobe area. The phone lines were soon working, fortunately, and we got in touch with our Consulate down there. Nobody had been killed or seriously hurt, but there had been a tremendous amount of property damage to our consular housing, with everything falling off the walls and so on.

I learned a lot about the psychological damage this kind of thing can do. We did not have at the time a good understanding of post traumatic stress, and this created considerable stress between the Embassy in Tokyo and the Consulate General in Osaka-Kobe. Once we found out that the Consulate General staff was okay and nobody was seriously injured, our focus in the Embassy was on ensuring that other Americans in the area were accounted for. There were thousands of Americans in the area at the time. However, it turned out that our Consulate staff was completely paralyzed. They were just so traumatized. They really thought they were going to die. We didn't understand that in Tokyo at all. Our detached view was, "We're glad you're OK; Now, go do your job."

Once we understood the Consulate General needed help, we sent a team down to Kobe, under our very able and aggressive Consul General in Tokyo.

Q: Who was that?

DEMING: Wayne Griffith. He went down there with about 10 people, and they went to every hospital and did a great job of getting an accounting of everybody. It was a textbook case of an effective consular response. However, to the Consulate General in Osaka, it appeared that our decision to send an Embassy team to Osaka reflected a lack of confidence. "They're sending these outsiders from Tokyo to do our job." Our view was that we were trying to assist them. The result was a lot of tension between the Embassy and the Consulate General. The worst part of it was that the split ended up in the State Department newsletter. There were two stories about the Kobe earthquake, one by the Consular section in Tokyo and one by the Consulate General in Osaka, with no connection between the two.

It got to the point where we had to finally call in the regional psychiatrist. A very able man named Wayne Julian. He spent a lot of time trying to sort this out. In the end, it took a couple of years, after people were transferred out before the situation settled down. It was a real education to me and others in the Embassy that just because somebody isn't hurt doesn't mean that there hasn't been a lot of damage done. We should have been much more supportive and understanding.

Q: It's interesting. I was consul general in Naples in 1980 and we had a bad earthquake and it still is mentioned in the paper today, the Post and you know, our building shook like hell and I realized it had been made by Neapolitan constructors, contractors which made me a little nervous, but we didn't suffer that. It was bad, there's no doubt, it killed about 1,300 people, but the embassy was very good. We kept the line open. Of course, I was the consular officer and I'd been through a previous earthquake in Skopje and I

wasn't there, but up in Belgrade, but I was kind of an earthquake hand. We didn't have that. It depends.

DEMING: Yes. This was such a severe earthquake that people were thrown out of their beds. The water was cut off. Our Consulate General had to boil swimming pool water for a number of days. The Embassy did not do a good enough job of appreciating what the staff of the Consulate General went through.

Q: It is one of those things that we all learn. The trouble is you learn and then another generation succeeds you and it's the experience will be repeated.

DEMING: Yes. During my period as Chargé, in the first three months of President Clinton's second term, we had a series of high-level visitors. First, Treasury Secretary Rubin came out, then Vice President Gore and then Secretary Albright. The focus was very much on the Japanese economy. There was growing concern that the Japanese economy was slipping into a prolonged recession, and Japan needed to do something drastic in terms of fiscal stimulation to get its economy going again, as part of its responsibility not just to itself, but to the global economy. Bob Rubin, the Vice President and Secretary Albright all gave this message to Prime Minister Hashimoto.

The Prime Minister's response was to reassure us about the health of the Japanese economy, arguing that "Sunshine is just around the corner; we have it all under control." It turned out that Rubin and company were absolutely right about the depths of the Japanese economic problems, and it took the Japanese another seven years to really come to terms with it. It was striking that Japanese leaders were so convinced that the old ways of doing things, of just waiting out the recession until high growth returned, were going to work. They didn't understand the way that globalization of the international economy had created a much more competitive and open environment. The Japanese economy was rigid and weighed down by bad bank debt. Lending was still heavily based on long-standing business and human relationships, not on sound business judgment. It was really tragic. Japan had, at that point, a chance to take the steps necessary to bring itself out of the recession, but it took a lot more suffering before Japanese leaders made the hard decisions necessary to get the Japanese economy back on track.

I can share one anecdote about the visit of the Vice President. We were on our way to the Palace to pay a call on the Emperor. The Embassy had written out scenarios for all of these events, including a scenario for the visit to the Emperor. The scenario said when the Vice President walked into the audience room at the Palace, he should bow toward the Emperor, and the Emperor would bow back and ask him and Mrs. Gore to be seated. I was riding in the car behind the Vice President in the motorcade. Suddenly the motorcade stopped, and the Secret Service guy in my car said the Vice President wants you to get in his limo. We were about five blocks from the palace, and I got in his limo. He said, "Look, it says here I'm supposed to bow to the Emperor. What does that mean? I don't want to have a picture on the front page of the Washington Post of me bowing to the Japanese Emperor." I said, "Don't worry, all you need to do is nod your head. It is nothing that will be misinterpreted." It was very interesting. It never occurred to me, but

it was a very natural, very understandable concern for a politician. One has to be very careful. There were no press photographers there anyway, so it was never a real problem, but he was very sensitive to appearing to bow to a foreign sovereign.

Q: Was there a cadre within Japan of modern economists? I would assume modern economist Japanese who saw, we've got to do this and that and I mean were they up against the politicians or up against the bankers? You know, I mean there's sort of the Chicago boys.

DEMING: Japanese private economists have much less weight than in the U.S. The strength is the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Japan. The Ministry of Finance has been the dominant ministry in Japan since the War and perhaps earlier, except for the military before and during the War. It is made up of the best and brightest, and they take great pride in Japan's economic track record since the end of the Second World War. Given their status and demonstrated success, it has been very difficult to challenge their policies. They, the Bank of Japan, and the private banking community believed they knew what was good for the Japanese economy. Private economists, the most important of whom were trained in the U.S., did not have much policy influence. The people who did make a difference were some of the foreign economists in Japan, from Deutsche Bank and other foreign banks. They write newsletters that are circulated to the international financial community and have an impact on peoples' opinions and decisions about buying and selling currencies and stocks. Internally, I did not see the kind of debate you would see in the U.S. on economic policy. In addition, the necessary remedies were very painful in terms of bankruptcies and layoffs, and the Japanese were socially and politically incapable of doing the kind of ruthless things that we did in this country, such as AT&T firing 20,000 people in order to "rightsize" itself. The Japanese could not fire people in large numbers because it would break the post War social contract.

Q: The French can't, and the Germans can't either.

DEMING: The Japanese were trying to grow their way out of the recession and bad debt crisis, just as they had done in the past. They just couldn't make the hard decisions, and these decisions became harder the longer Japan procrastinated. It was really too bad for the economy but very understandable in terms of Japan's post-War patterns.

Q: What about the agricultural side? I understand the Japanese rice farmers and others are heavily sitting on great property heavily subsidized and all, but it's considered the state. You know you would have to be somewhat self-sufficient. I mean was this a problem?

DEMING: Yes, it is. This is beginning to change, but it is still a problem. First of all, Japan is a country of rotten boroughs. That is to say, the rural areas are overrepresented in the Diet because the allocation of seats does not reflect the movement of the population into urban areas. Until recently, there was as much as a three to one discrepancy between the weight of a rural and an urban vote. It is less today, but still the politicians who represent rural areas are over-represented and among the most powerful.

Second, there has been a strong argument in Japan that, as an island country with little arable land, it needs to do all it can to achieve food self-sufficiency, despite the fact that there's no possible way that Japan could be self-sufficient.

Third, there are family connections with the countryside and nostalgia about rural farm life, just as we have in the U.S. Until recently, for many Japanese farmers were not simply farmers, they were grandfathers, uncles and aunts because of the massive movement of the population since the War into the cities. Most Japanese had direct rural connections, and farmers were real people, not just statistics. In addition, there has been a strong feeling that Japan needed to protect this sort of classic way of life. Fourth, Japanese raise the issue of water and erosion, arguing that Japan needs to keep the land cultivated for environmental reasons.

For all of these reasons, Japan has taken a very conservative position on agricultural issues in WTO and other trade negotiations, not just with respect to rice, but other agricultural products as well. They just wouldn't budge. Now that's beginning to change. First of all, the farmers are dying out. The younger generation is not sticking in the farms; they're going into town. In addition, the overall Japanese birth rate is falling. Next year, the population will actually begin to decline. Japan is the first industrialized country to have this happen. In addition, the family connections are breaking down. People in cities are now urban voters, and they have less of a sentimental feeling about the countryside. Third, the Japanese government recognizes that the Chinese are outflanking them right and left on negotiating free trade agreements with other Asian states and that Japan needs to take a more flexible attitude on agricultural imports if it is to compete with Beijing for influence in the region. Even though Japan is our largest agricultural market, primarily for beef, Japanese restrictions on a range of agricultural products has been an irritant in our relations, particularly with respect to WTO negotiations. We consider that Japan is a country that has benefited perhaps more than any other from the free trade system, but they have not fully shared the burden of maintaining this system because they have not allowed American agricultural products, or even more importantly, developing countries to compete in their market. That is slowly changing, but it is a very slow process.

Q: Was this a constant theme of your work?

DEMING: It was a periodic theme depending on the state of WTO and other negotiations. Trade was certainly a constant theme, particularly during my first two years as DCM. We went into these very intense trade negations under the Clinton administration with the Japanese, but agriculture was not a big part of that.

Q: On trade negotiations, which you know really was sort of the Japanese American war that continued. It was trade negotiations, how did the embassy play it? Basically a team had come out from Washington or go to Washington and we would act as the supporter or something?

DEMING: Let me talk about the Clinton era because, as I mentioned earlier, trade was a major priority. We undertook a whole series of sectoral negotiations, including on autos, glass, insurance, auto parts, medical equipment, and various other things. The problem was that it was badly coordinated in Washington. Commerce was given responsibility for autos and auto parts. USTR was given responsibility for other manufactured items and insurance, and Treasury for financial services. The Embassy and particularly Ambassador Mondale had to pull our negotiations together so that the Japanese received a consistent and coherent message. So, an awful lot of time was spent on the phone with Washington trying to coordinate our various positions. There was a coordination mechanism in Washington in the form of The National Economic Council (NEC), but it didn't really function effectively

Ambassador Mondale himself took a very strong view on trade. He thought that Japan had escaped for too long its responsibilities and that it had no excuse for keeping its markets closed. It was still behaving as if it were a developing country. At the same time, Ambassador Mondale felt that the U.S. government needed to establish a clear set of priorities and clear objectives and to transmit these clearly to the Japanese. It was very difficult for the Administration to set priorities because that would mean downgrading somebody's pet issue. It was up to the Embassy to sort it out.

Q: I talked to, I can't think of her name, the lady who was in the Department of Commerce and used to come out and negotiate on something and she was saying how helpful this is to either the commercial section or the Foreign Service Nationals. The Japanese were always slipping her notes saying this won't fly, do this, do that. She said she relied on them and they were, the advice was dead on. I mean she was full of praise for how to maneuver in this very tricky world.

DEMING: We were lucky in terms of having really first-class Foreign Service National employees who were absolutely loyal to the embassy and tremendously valuable.

Q: Well, then you left there and Foley had not come out?

DEMING: No, I left about a week before. My replacement DCM arrived before Ambassador Foley.

Q: Who was that?

DEMING: Chris LaFleur. He arrived, and I left three days later. That was by design. Foley wanted me to stay until he arrived, but I said no. It's much better to get your own DCM on the ground ahead of you and let him get settled in.

Q: Yes, it makes good sense.

DEMING: I left in September of 1997. I'd been asked by Stanley Roth, who had just become the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, to be his Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia. However, the position was not open until the

summer of 1998 because Chuck Kartman was there, and his tour didn't finish until then. It was arranged for me to come back and go up to the UN to be the East Asia area senior advisor during the UN General Assembly from September through December. So I rented an apartment on East 54th Street and came back to Washington on the weekends to see my wife and family. I had a great time. It was not a session of the UNGA where East Asian issues were very prominent. There was Cambodia and a few other things, but I would go around and talk to other delegations and lobby for our position and keep abreast of others' views. It was quite unstructured. I learned a lot about the UN and met many interesting people.

Q: Well, while you were there and also while you were in Japan, were you picking up reverberations of whoever was the head of the UN that was Japanese in the Bosnia, Akai or something like that?

DEMING: Yes, Akashi.

Q: I've talked to people who served there to say the least have very negative feelings about the _____.

DEMING: I was not very familiar with the whole Bosnian operation, but I had the impression that Akashi got mixed reviews. He did an excellent job in Cambodia earlier. The Japanese did have some very able individuals in the UN system, including Sadako Ogata who was head of the UN Commission on Refugees for a long time.

Q: Yes, positive things on Cambodia and Bosnia. Well, anybody who deals with the Balkans usually comes out the poorer for it. What was your impression of the United Nations sort of as the new boy on the block getting in there?

DEMING: Well, I'd been up there before. I spent three months there at the Law of the Sea Conference in 1977 so I was somewhat familiar with how the UN worked. It's a whole subculture that has its own customs, habits and ways of doing business. I guess my dominant impression was that there were an awful lot of talented people. The second impression is they spend an awful lot of energy and skill doing things that don't have a lot of impact. I'm thinking of the hundreds of drafts of resolutions and statements, translated into five languages. On the other hand, there were some important issues, including Security Council reform. The U.S. supported the idea of adding Japan and Germany as permanent members of the Security Council, and we were working with some of our friends to make this happen. I found these negotiations and maneuverings very interesting, and I got to know some of the key players.

Q: Did India get, you think about it, if you're going to have a security council reform, India is an obvious one, Japan and Germany.

DEMING: Yes, India was an obvious candidate, but it wasn't a member of the group Japan was in. Then there was the so-called "Coffee Club," led by Pakistan and Italy, which was trying to sabotage any effort toward Security Council reform. Italy did not

want to be the only major European country left out, and Pakistan did not want to see India join the exclusive club of permanent members. In sum, I think the UN does many good things on secondary issues; if it didn't exist we'd have to invent it. However, the UN has yet to demonstrate that it is really capable of dealing with the big issues, like Iraq, where the great powers are involved, and that seems to be the choice of the great powers.

Q: But it's there.

DEMING: It's there.

Q: What about, what was your impression of the Japanese and their role?

DEMING: They were very good. They put some of their best people at the UN, and they were very well informed. When I was there, the U.S. Perm Rep was the former governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson. He is a very interesting guy. We made it our business to be sure the Japanese were kept fully in the loop which we thought was the best way to get their support. The Japanese were the second biggest contributor, right behind us, to the UN, and they were clearly frustrated that they weren't in the Security Council where many decisions were being made that involved their money. It was very much in our interest to make sure that they felt a full participant, and we really worked hard on that. They were very good and very supportive.

Q: Well, then you moved to principal deputy assistant secretary, what was the place? East Asian affairs?

DEMING: East Asian and Pacific affairs, EAP.

Q: You did that from '98 to when?

DEMING: To the end of August 2000.

Q: Who was the head of that?

DEMING: Stanley Roth was the Assistant Secretary.

Q: What's his background?

DEMING: Stanley Roth worked on the Hill for a long time. He worked for Steve Solarz when Solarz was the chairman of the Asian subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee. Solarz was defeated because he got redistricted into a district where he didn't speak the language. It was Hispanic. Roth came into the first Clinton administration as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Defense Department. He then moved over to the White House as the senior Asian person on the NSC staff. When Clinton won reelection in 1997, Stanley was nominated as Assistant Secretary. One of the first things he did after he was confirmed was to ask me to become his principal deputy

which I was very grateful for. It was a very active period. North Korea, of course, was the main issue, and I worked very closely with Wendy Sherman, the Counselor at the State Department who was put in charge of a group to try to deal with North Korea. Former Defense Secretary Bill Perry came in to run the "Perry Process" to review policy options on North Korea.

Q: He had been the former?

DEMING: Secretary of Defense. I had to testify on the Hill a couple of times about North Korea and about our support for the KEDO process, the Korean Economic-Development Organization, which was a U.S.-ROK-Japan funded entity to build more proliferation resistant nuclear reactors in North Korea. There were many on the Hill who were very skeptical of this idea, and U.S funding for KEDO was very sensitive and controversial on the Hill. Stanley concentrated primarily on Southeast Asia, Indonesia in particular which was going through its own turmoil with the end of the Suharto regime and the crisis in East Timor, and on China. I concentrated on Japan and Korea. I traveled to Asia I think three times with the Secretary of Defense, twice with Bill Perry and once with his successor, Bill Cohen, as the senior State Department person.

Q: Let's talk first about what was our policy towards Japan?

DEMING: Well, the trade issues had spent themselves by 1995 when we concluded an agreement on autos with Japan. Everybody on both sides was exhausted. Meanwhile, as I mentioned, the Japanese economy was going through a recession, and our economy was taking off with the "dot.com" boom. Therefore, our attention on the economic side turned to getting Japan's economy back on track. But more importantly, the U.S.-Japan alliance became once again the focus of our relationship. The rape in September of 1995, as I mentioned earlier, set off a debate in Japan about the purpose of the alliance with the U.S. and led to the U.S.-Japan Security Declaration of 1996, and the revision of the U.S.-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation in 1997. We were focused very heavily on revitalizing the alliance and strengthening our cooperation with Japan, particularly with respect to the situation in North Korea, and in dealing with China as an emerging power. Trade was not completely absent.

I remember perhaps my biggest Walter Middy moment, in the summer of 1999. President Clinton was supposed to go to the APEC meeting in Indonesia, and then onto Japan and South Korea. Because of a crisis with the Congress, the President had to skip the APEC meeting, and Vice President Gore went in his place, accompanied by my boss, Stanley Roth. The President was still going to go to Japan and Korea. There was a meeting at the White House to pre-brief him, and Secretary Albright asked me to go over with her to the White House to brief the President on the trip. We gathered in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin was there, along with Gene Sperling, the head of the National Economic Council, Sandy Berger, the National Security Advisor, and various other people. There were about 15 to 20 people at the table, and I was sitting behind Secretary Albright. President Clinton came in, and he was very agitated. He said, "I just looked at the briefing book and talking points. I've been to Japan twice, and this is

the fifth Japanese prime minister that I've met with. We've been talking about the same issues, with the same talking points about their economy, and nothing has changed. Why are we even going on this trip? It's a waste of time. They keep saying the same thing and nothing ever happens. The economy is still stuck in the doldrums. They can't make any hard decisions. They've got a government that doesn't seem to be able to function at all. What's wrong with Japan? Can anybody tell me what is wrong with Japan?"

Sandy Berger looked at Secretary Albright, and she turned around to me and said, "Rusty, do you want to give it a shot?" I stood up and I said, "Well, Mr. President, let me give you my half-baked analysis." I presented my thoughts on where the Japanese political system was and what was wrong. We got in this dialogue across the cabinet table for about 10 minutes. Gene Sperling, the head of the National Economic Council, told the President that he should go to Japan to speak directly to the Japanese people and publicly criticize their leadership for failing to step up to their responsibilities. I had the temerity to say, "Mr. President, that's the wrong advice. You should do what you do best. You should empathize with the Japanese people. You should make clear that we're on their side. But if you criticize their leadership publicly, all you're going to do is unite the Japanese in criticizing the U.S." Anyway, we got into a discussion across the table. The President asked if I was going on the trip tomorrow. I said, "I'm not planning to." He said, "Well, you are now."

The next morning, I found myself on Air Force One. We went out to Dulles in fact because the runway wasn't long enough at Andrews to take off with the fuel we needed to get to Japan. Before we took off, the President came back to where I was sitting. Air Force One has this compartment in the middle of the plane for guests, such as congressmen. I was there with Larry Summers, at the time the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, who was along as well.

The President came back to chat and said, "Thanks for a great briefing yesterday. It was very interesting." Anyway, we took off and about 30 minutes later one of the stewards came back and said, "The President would like to see you if you have time." I gathered my thoughts and walked up to his office in the front of Air Force One. I was understandably nervous about going to see the President, and I forgot an important protocol issue. Sandy Berger had an office next door to the President's, but he was sitting there with his feet up reading the New York Times. If I had had my wits about me, I would have knocked on Sandy's door and told him that the President had asked to see me, but I didn't. I just walked into the President's office. I spent about 30 minutes one on one with the President. We talked about Japan, and it was fascinating. He is a really engaging, smart guy. Sitting across the table, he asked lots of questions about everything from Okinawa to how we should handle the agenda in Tokyo. Finally, Sandy Berger came in and said, "Deming, you are not supposed to be alone with the President. What have you told him to do?" I said, "Don't worry, Sandy." He joined the conversation which ended a few minutes later. It was very interesting. Throughout the trip, the President would take me aside or call on me to ask my views.

Q: This is tape five, side one with Rust Deming. Yes? You want to repeat that?

DEMING: Yes, I was mentioning my encounter with the President on the way to Japan. Just to go back to the meeting at the White House, afterwards Secretary Albright had another meeting at the White House, so I walked back to the State Department. By the time I got back to my office, my phone was off the hook. My secretary asked, “What happened?” The word was going around that I had kept the President from going on a rampage. When I met my boss Stanley Roth later on the trip, he thanked me for saving us. I think, aside from all of the ego stuff, the conversation with the President did make a difference because I think it helped convince the President to take a much more constructive line with the Japanese than he might have if he had listened to the more economic types who were looking for a public fight. I believe they were more interested in playing to the domestic American audience by showing how hard the President socked it to the Japanese, than trying to convince the Japanese. So, for the rest of the Clinton Administration I was one of the main people on Japan.

I went on another trip to Japan with the President at the end of the administration, to the G-7 summit in Okinawa in August 2000. That trip lasted a week. We went from Japan to Korea and then we went to Guam and then back.

Q: Well, let’s talk about these trips if we can. The first trip was the one to Japan and then what, Korea and Guam?

DEMING: And Guam and back.

Q: That’s the one he asked you.

DEMING: Yes.

Q: How did the president respond when he got there?

DEMING: He did a very good job. He held an informal “town meeting” which he was of course very good at. He talked about our own experience in dealing with the savings and loan crisis and other things and how we turned our own economy around. He avoided any aspersions on the Japanese leadership. He talked about how we did it, how things came out. He emphasized the positive. “You’re a great people, you have great opportunities,” and so on. He really did it very effectively.

Q: You know, you mentioned talking about Japan for a half an hour. I just finished recently interviewing Russ Egan who was our ambassador to Jordan, and he said, he was at the White House portico saying goodbye to King Hussein of Jordan and the president took him aside and they sat down for half an hour and he talked about Jordan. He said, this is the only person who ever debriefed me in the whole government about Jordan.

DEMING: He’s really interested in what you’re talking about. He has a tremendous intellect, very engaging. I found it was one of the most interesting conversations I had on policy.

Q: Well, on this trip, how did it go over in Japan?

DEMING: It went well. I think it set the right tone. Obviously, Japan did not reverse its economic policy to get itself out of the recession, but it created very positive feelings. Then in Korea, it went very well. We went up to the DMZ to visit the U.S. military. That was the first time I'd been up there in a long time, and the whole experience was great. Then Guam was very interesting. Guam of course was very supportive of the U.S. military, but the island government was very frustrated because the U.S. had reserved all this land for military use, but it wasn't being used. Therefore, Guam was receiving little economic benefit. Guam leaders made speeches about being loyal Americans and supporters of the U.S. military. At the same time, they urged that the reserved land either be put to military use or be released so it could be used for commercial development. In the last few years, the U.S. military has begun to make much greater use of Guam, but at that point the Air Force base at Anderson Field was not being used at all. I sat next to the congressman from Guam who was on Air Force One from South Korean to Guam. He told me his father had jumped ship in Guam after the War, and that is how he had ended up there. I learned a lot about the history of Guam.

Q: Well, why don't we talk about the other trips with the president? What other ones were there?

DEMING: Well, the other trip was the trip in July 2000, the last overseas trip by the President before he left office. It was to the G-7 summit in Okinawa. I was asked to go along as the senior State Department person. We were supposed to stop in Tokyo, but the President was up at Camp David negotiating with the Palestinians and the Israelis as a last effort for a Middle East peace deal, so our departure to Okinawa was delayed, and we skipped Tokyo. We ended up taking off at 3:00 a.m., and the President was absolutely exhausted. He was also frustrated because it wasn't clear that the negotiations with the Israelis and Palestinians were going to produce anything. We stopped at Elmendorf Air Force base in Alaska and then went on to Okinawa.

The Okinawa summit went very well. On the way back, because it was his last scheduled overseas trip, the staff had a little party in the conference room on the plane to celebrate. I was invited to come up, and it was very nostalgic. It was the senior staff and the people he worked with on the national security side, Jim Steinberg, the Deputy National Security Advisor, and others. I felt I was at a family party. I really had no business being there; it was just by happenstance that I was on the plane when this took place. During that trip, there were not the same kind of policy arguments we had on the first trip. The trip had been mapped out pretty well. There were no major questions. The President did call me up to his Air Force One office once during the trip to talk about Okinawa for about 20 minutes.

Q: By this time what were you getting from Okinawa? I mean was there you know you'd had the rape problem and all this, but was Okinawa fully integrated into Japan would you say?

DEMING: Well, Okinawa had become quite well integrated into Japan, but before the rape in 1995, the Japanese mainland had more or less forgotten about the burden the island bore because of American bases. Since the U.S. returned Okinawa to Japan in 1972, there had been little focus among the people of mainland Japan on the islands. There was a general feeling that it was better to have the majority of U.S. bases in Okinawa rather than on the main islands, and when incidents occurred in Okinawa, there was generally little reaction on the mainland. The rape changed all that. The incident produced a shared sense of outrage in the whole of Japan and stimulated a debate about Tokyo's neglect of Okinawa. There was a sense in the mainland that Japan had been willing to let the Okinawans bear this disproportionate burden of the American security presence without taking much interest. Okinawa became a much more sensitive issue in U.S.-Japan relations.

To respond to the crisis, the two governments put together a group called the Special Action Committee on Okinawa, SACO, to deal with the base issues, particularly the relocation of the Marine Air Station at Futenma which was in the most populous part of Okinawa and an accident waiting to happen. We made considerable progress on some of the lesser issues, but on the core issue of Futenma, we could not reach an agreement that was acceptable to the U.S., the GOJ, and the people of Okinawa. There was no good place to put this airfield.

For his visit to Okinawa, the President wanted to consider doing something dramatic on the Futenma issue. He raised the idea with me on the way out to the summit, I told him that the issues were very complex, and the process did not lend itself to dramatic steps. I urged him not to raise expectations that something dramatic was going to happen. I emphasized that it was going to take a lot of time. The President was very careful on that. Of course, the reason he was going to Okinawa was for the G-7, so there were not many bilateral negotiations scheduled with the Japanese. The summit was primarily focused on global issues. The President was very sympathetic. He understood immediately the kind of burden imposed on Okinawa, an island of a million people, 100 miles long and 10 miles wide, with 25,000 American military and about 15 American bases. He also understood that the American military presence there was essential to our interests and indeed to Japan's interests, and we had to be very careful about the way we approached changing it.

Q: Well, then sort of when you were back in Washington, let's talk about North Korea. First about South Korea. Were we comfortable with South Korea at that time?

DEMING: At that time, I think we were pretty much on the same wavelength with the ROK. Kim Dae-Jung was President of South Korea, somebody who came out of the leftist movement in Korea, almost executed at one point, and I think President Clinton, the Clinton Administration, found him very much on the same wavelength. One of Kim Dae-Jung's priorities was moving forward with the so-called "Sunshine Policy" with respect to North Korea and that was consistent with the Clinton Administration's efforts to open up North Korea and to move forward on the nuclear agreement. The personal

relationships between the people in the administration in Washington and in Seoul at that time were excellent. Personally I felt that there was a little bit too much enthusiasm on our side to move quickly with North Korea. I had reservations. Secretary Albright very much wanted to go to North Korea, and she did in late 2000, after I had left EAP to prepare to go to Tunisia.

Q: That's a little bit, the Henry Kissinger going to China thing.

DEMING: Yes. There wasn't anything that came out of the trip, but I was concerned the North Koreans would misinterpret the visit as a sign that if they just held out, we would come to them. Secretary Albright did go, and no great damage was done, but then there were reports that the President very much wanted to go to North Korea. I was out of the East Asian Bureau by that time, but I thought that would have been a major mistake. Fortunately, the President became occupied with other issues, and he did not go to North Korea before he left office.

Q: Well, there's always the idea that I can persuade people.

DEMING: Overall, I thought the Clinton Administration had a very good policy process on North Korea. It was not easy, particularly given the extreme criticism in the Congress of the 1994 Framework Agreement that called on the U.S., ROK, and Japan to provide North Korean with nuclear reactors. This agreement was seen by many in Congress as rewarding North Korean for bad behavior. Under the 1994 agreement, we undertook to provide North Korea with light water reactors in exchange for the DPRK dismantling its Soviet built reactors which were much more dangerous from a nuclear weapons development point of view. In addition, we agreed to provide North Korea with fuel oil in the interim to allow it to generate electricity. The ROK and Japan funded the reactors, while the U.S. had the responsibility to provide the heavy fuel oil.

I testified on the Hill a couple of times about the need to meet our obligations to provide fuel oil. It was not easy. The attitude on the Hill was that North Korea had broken previous agreements, but we were rewarding it instead of punishing it. Anyway, as we used to say, the Agreement was the least bad option of all the other bad options for dealing with North Korea. Because of the lack of confidence in the policy, Bill Perry was called in to review the policy. We used to meet over here at FSI.

Q: We're talking now at the campus at Arlington Hall.

DEMING: At Arlington Hall. It was a large group. We put up butcher block paper on white boards, laying out all of the options and all of the pros and cons. This process came to the conclusion that we needed to stay engaged with North Korea, that war was not an option for a variety of reasons, and that we needed to keep trying to negotiate a settlement along the lines that had been originally agreed by Bob Gallucci and others when they negotiated the framework with North Korea in 1994. It was essentially an endorsement of the current policy. Negotiations with North Korea were a long, slow slog. The Agreed Framework might have achieved its objectives, but it collapsed when the

Bush administration came in, taking a much more critical view. Later, there was the discovery that North Korea was enriching uranium in violation of many of the obligations that it had undertaken. This revelation undermined political support for the whole process.

Q: Were we looking at, at one time there was this term, you know, what if, a scenario, what if North Korea collapses because of famine or internal coup, anything, the so-called hard landing or the soft landing. In many ways its effect on South Korea. Was this part of your?

DEMING: We did look at that. When the Agreed Framework was concluded in 1994, I think there was an assumption by many people that a North Korean collapse was just around the corner. It was hard to see how it could survive, given all of its problems. The collapse of communist regimes in East Europe was very much in the back of our minds. One of the greatest concerns would be the humanitarian challenge, how to deal with a collapsed society. Certainly, the South Koreans were nervous about the implications of a sudden North Korean collapse, having seen what Germany went through with absorbing East Germany. I think the per capita income differential between East and West Germany was something like three to one; it was something like 12 to one between the ROK and North Korea, so unification would be a much bigger burden for South Korea. The South made it very clear that they were not looking for a North Korean hard landing, that a soft landing was essential. In 1999 and 2000, there was a humanitarian disaster in North Korea, caused by crop failures due to draught and mismanagement. We were dealing with that through the World Food Program, but few of us expected this to cause the regime to collapse. The transition from Kim Il-Sung to Kim Jong-Il had gone relatively smoothly, and there were no signs of fundamental regime decay, so we did not spend a lot of time on immediate collapse scenarios. Our focus was on how to engage North Korea, modify its behavior, and solve the nuclear issue.

Q: Was a feeling that the nuclear issue was one that it was a weapon of blackmail as opposed to a weapon of aggression?

DEMING: There were two theories about North Korean motivations. One theory was the nuclear program was a negotiating tool. They build a weapon and then are willing to give it up in return for the right package, which would include not only economic aid, but U.S. diplomatic recognition, security guarantees and other elements. The other theory was that North Korea considered its nuclear program an existential issue, that they felt that without these weapons, what happened to Iraq would happen to them. Nobody, of course, knows the answer, and maybe the North Koreans themselves don't know, but I think that our wisdom was that we certainly had to test the first premise before we decided on the second. In other words, we had to put on the table something that met their legitimate concerns about security, about economic salvation, and about regime survival, including U.S. diplomatic recognition of the regime. Then if that didn't work, we could look at other alternatives. First of all, it would be irresponsible not to test that premise out; and second, we were not going to get support from other countries unless we had demonstrated that we had gone down the road of diplomacy as far as we could go. So,

our strategy to try to engage North Korea made sense to us. Others, of course, argued that engagement simply rewarded bad behavior. But when you pressed the critics to come up with an alternative, there was no answer. All the options were distasteful. In terms of how you best protect your interests and the interests of our allies, the policy we decided on seemed to be the best way to go.

Q: How did you find the role of the Chinese and to a less extent the Russians during this time you were there?

DEMING: This was before the Six Party Talks were instituted, which put China in a central role. We focused on trilateral coordination among the U.S., the ROK, and Japan. We had something called the TCOG, the Trilateral Coordination Group. Before the U.S. engaged with the North Koreans on anything, we met with Japan and the ROK to coordinate policy. The Chinese were not in this coordination mechanism at this point. They were consulted, but there was no formal mechanism that brought them in. We talked a lot about having the Chinese onboard, with respect to both positive and negative scenarios. On the positive side, if we were going to offer North Korea some kind of a package, the Chinese had to support it. On the negative side, if things went bad and we turned to sanctions or other punitive measures, these would not be effective unless the Chinese were onboard. At that stage, there was not a systematic effort to engage the Chinese. That has since changed, and I think the Six Party Talks were the right way to go in that regard.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Chinese during this time? Where they were going, not only that, but with the Japanese and all? I mean did you have much contact?

DEMING: Not really. I did not go to China during my tenure as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State because Stanley Roth and another Deputy, Susan Shirk, dealt with China. For the most part, I did not get involved. There was one China issue that I did get involved in. I happened to be Acting Assistant Secretary when the U.S. accidentally bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. I was out at a party in Georgetown about 7:00 pm, and my cell phone beeped. It was the Ops Center telling me that something had happened. I came back to the State Department, and Secretary Albright came in. The Chinese were absolutely convinced that the bombing was deliberate. The U.S. had conducted the war in the Balkans without a single American casualty, and we had not made major errors. Then we bomb the Chinese Embassy and not only bomb the embassy, but bomb the communication center in the embassy. The Chinese public became very inflamed over this issue. There were large demonstrations in the streets, and our embassy and consulates were surrounded by mobs. We were up all night at the Department, getting frantic phone calls, very scary phone calls, from our embassy in Beijing and from our consulates saying the Chinese authorities were doing nothing to protect our facilities. There were no police, there was no protection. We were frantically on the line to Chinese both in Beijing and in Washington. At midnight, Secretary Albright and Tom Pickering and somebody from the Pentagon went to the Chinese Embassy to call on the Chinese ambassador and get him out of bed and say, “You’ve got to do something.” Finally, the Chinese authorities began to respond, and the situation calmed down. I was in the

Operations Center for three days with little sleep. I met with the Chinese ambassador and tried to convince him that this was an accident. I think now that many Chinese accept that the bombing of their embassy in Belgrade was an accident, but it took a long time for this to sink in.

Q: What were you getting from our military?

DEMING: Remember the story? The Pentagon targeting people apparently had an old map. The Chinese Embassy had moved five years earlier. They were aiming at a Serbian military facility next door. The other issue I dealt with the Chinese on was their treatment of Falun Gong, a Chinese spiritual organization that resembles a cult. For some reason, I was designated to be the person to call in the Chinese ambassador in on this issue to complain.

Q: Every once in a while, I see them out in front of the Chinese Embassy.

DEMING: Yes. Personally, I always found the group rather distasteful, but the Chinese were treating them as criminals. We were under instructions to tell the Chinese to deal with these people in a legal and less prejudicial way. It was a rather painful demarche. The Chinese would come in, and the Chinese ambassador would rail at me about how awful these people were.

Q: What were they doing I mean other than getting out and doing arm exercises or something? What else was there about them?

DEMING: I think just being generally disobedient and doing things that were not authorized. I don't think there was any violence, but the Chinese say that they dragged people back who chose to leave the cult. I think I was designated to do it because nobody higher up wanted to do it, and I was the lowest level in the Department that could actually convoke the Chinese.

Q: Well, I can't think of, you weren't there during the surveillance thing or whatever I was?

DEMING: No, the EP-3, no.

Q: That was.

DEMING: I was in Tunisia.

Q: I imagine you were rather thankful.

DEMING: Yes. Thanks to Colin Powell, it was handled effectively. It could have been very nasty.

Q: Yes. Well, all of a sudden, you're back to being a little more than a GSO, but you're right back where you started aren't you?

DEMING: In Tunisia? Yes.

Q: Yes. How did this happen?

DEMING: It's an interesting story. The way the whole ambassadorial process works is quite interesting. Every year, about one-third of the ambassador positions come open because an ambassador's tenure is normally three years. Every year, the White House gives the State Department a list of those ambassador positions which are coming open the following year that the State Department can nominate people for, in other words, the ones that the White House chooses not to fill with political appointees. The list for the openings in 2000 came around, and the powers that be in the State Department made clear to me that they wanted to get me a post and asked me to indicate which posts interested me. The list for Asia was very sparse that year. Papua New Guinea, Singapore which is almost always a political appointee. I think Laos was also on it. The only major post in Asia was Australia.

I also saw Tunisia on the list. I thought that might be interesting. I'd been in Asia for a long time, and I thought it would be interesting to do something else. I said, "Well, Australia would be great, but if that doesn't work out, Tunisia would be good." Stanley Roth, my boss, was very enthusiastic about Australia and pushed very hard, but the Director General of the Foreign Service, Skip Gnehm, said he wanted to go to Australia. I give Skip a lot of credit because he was very straightforward about it. We had a meeting and he said, "Look, if it comes down to you and me. I'm probably going to win this one with the Secretary. How about Tunisia"? I said, "That's fine." Of course, NEA, the Bureau covering Tunisia, had its own candidate, so my parachuting in was bound to ruffle feathers.

Q: I could imagine that there could have been an explosion.

DEMING: Well, this happens all the time. It was done to us in EAP. I knew David Welch who was the Principal Deputy and a good friend, so we worked it out. Tunisia has had a pattern of going to people outside of NEA. My predecessor was Robin Raphael who had served as Assistant Secretary for the South Asia Bureau and served in India and Pakistan, but she had not served in the Arab world, so there was a pattern of interlopers. There is a group called the D Committee that decides on ambassadors and other senior positions. After I was selected by the D Committee, I went through this long process. There was vetting upon vetting. First you fill out internal papers for the State Department. They do all of the security, IG, other reviews. Then it goes to the White House for a preliminary clearance. The White House gives a preliminary clearance and then it goes back and there are more clearances. Then you're formally nominated by the President. A candidate can't do anything really until he or she is formally nominated by the President.

Once you are formally nominated, you go through this whole thing with the Senate Foreign Relations committee staff. There are more questionnaires and forms, particularly on one's financial affairs. Once the forms are completed, nominees are vetted by the committee staff, and eventually you're put on the calendar for a hearing. I had a hearing with three others. One nominee was going to Bangladesh, one going to Algeria and myself. I forgot where the other person was going. Anyway, it was a rather perfunctory hearing. I was asked two or three questions by the chairman of the subcommittee, Sam Brownback. He raised questions, mostly on religious freedom in Tunisia. The committee then reports the nomination to the full Senate, and it sits in the Senate. In my case, the nomination was not acted on until the end of 2000 because it was an election year, and the Senate kept postponing confirmations. I finally was confirmed and sworn in by Strobe Talbot, the Deputy Secretary of State. Walter Mondale attended my swearing in ceremony.

Q: You were there from?

DEMING: I was there from the beginning of 2001 to August 2003.

Q: Well, okay, what was the situation sort of politically and economically in Tunisia in 2000?

DEMING: I had the very interesting perspective of having served there in the 1960s. It was a country that had made enormous economic and social progress in the 32 years since I'd left. The per capita income was now about $3,500 a year where it had been $300 when I left. Literacy was virtually universal for people under 25, including women, who were universally educated. There were six million tourists a year coming in largely from Europe to enjoy the beach resorts and the culture of archeology and other attributes of Tunisia. Its economy had moved beyond agriculture and textiles to electronics, auto parts, even semi-conductors and various other high-tech items. The country had really made enormous strides in its development.

The missing element, of course, was political progress. It was still a one-party authoritarian state. The founding father, Habib Bourguiba, had been displaced in 1987 by his prime minister who had come out of the security services, a man named Ben Ali. Ben Ali had overthrown Bourguiba in a midnight coup on the grounds that Bourguiba was senile and no longer capable. This was largely true. Indeed, many Tunisians initially welcomed Ben Ali's succession. He opened up the society, liberated the press, and opened up the political system. Then the Islamists won about 15% of the seats in the parliamentary election, and this scared the regime. There was some violence by the Islamists against tourists trying to sabotage the tourist industry. The regime became increasingly authoritarian. The name of the ruling party was changed, and small opposition parties were allowed, but they were very controlled. The press was very tightly controlled.

When I got there, I found a real disconnect between the level of development, the level of sophistication, and the level of education, on the one hand; and the amount of freedom of

expression and freedom to participate in the political system on the other. That being said, the Ben Ali government was friendly with the U.S. We had good relations. We had historically strong military ties with Tunisia. Stu Eizenstat who was the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs, had established something called the Eizenstat Initiative to increase economic contact with the Maghreb countries, Morocco and Tunisia in particular, and this was showing some signs of life. In addition, more and more Tunisians were looking to the U.S. for higher education.

Q: Before I assume it had been Paris?

DEMING: Yes, it had been Paris. English was now being taught in the third grade in Tunisian schools. The Internet of course had a big impact on the impetus to learn English. In addition, many British tourists came to Tunisia. There was, as I said, more and more orientation toward American higher education, which we tried to promote. I went to Tunisia with the agenda of trying to build on this trend of increasing human and economic contact between the two countries. I also wanted to push quietly for liberalization of the political system and encourage greater freedom of expression. I made clear to my European colleagues, including the French ambassador, that the U.S. could never supplant the European Union, Tunisia's major market and major economic and political partner. I emphasized that the U.S. and EU shared fundamental objectives, including integrating Tunisia fully into the West and encouraging the liberalization of its political system. The French were particularly suspicious about what the U.S. was really up to, despite the fact that the EU was economically, culturally, and politically much more influential in Tunisia.

I was looking forward to pursuing this agenda, but I found that my tenure was largely dominated by damage limitations, unfortunately. First, there was the perception that the Bush administration was not serious about the Middle East peace process. The perspective of the new administration seemed to be that Bill Clinton had wasted a lot of his capital on trying to bring about peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and the Bush administration was not going to make the same mistake.

Q: I think they sort of stated that, hadn't they, very much so and sort of became increasingly supportive of Ariel Sharon.

DEMING: Yes. The perception in Tunisia, at least, was that we were a one-sided supporter of Sharon and unsympathetic to the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. We were accused of turning a blind eye to the actions of the Israelis against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. I did my best to put our policy in context, explaining frankly the frustration that we felt by the perception that the Palestinians had not stepped up to the plate when they had the opportunity to do so. The Tunisians were quick to point out that the deal presented to Arafat by the Israelis and by President Clinton in 2000 was not a deal that Arafat was in a position to accept because the issues of Jerusalem and the right of return of refugees were beyond his ability to address. They argued that these questions were not only Palestinian issues; they were Arab/Muslim issues, particularly the status of Jerusalem. Indeed, I think many in the Clinton

administration acknowledge that it was a mistake not to involve the Egyptians and the Saudis at an earlier stage because they would at least have to sanction, if not give support to, a broader deal.

Q: Is this a never, never, I mean they really feel this? I mean this is sort of a never, never land.

DEMING: It's symbolically very important. Tunisians realized in the end that there were going to be a lot of compromises made, and the refugees were never going to return to Israel, but they wanted us to acknowledge these issues in some symbolic and financial way. Jerusalem, of course, has a central role in Islam and in the Arab world. Anyway, I would have this discussion with Tunisia intellectuals on many occasions. Then, of course, September 11th changed everything. I had just gotten back from vacation in the States when the attack took place.

Q: This was 2001.

DEMING: In fact, on the night of September 9th, my wife and I had flown from Dulles to Frankfurt on our way to Tunis, and we had flown over Manhattan. It was a beautiful night, and we had a spectacular view of the World Trade Center, two days before it was destroyed. On September 11th I was having lunch with my DCM at a restaurant in town, and I got a call from my secretary saying that a plane had run into the World Trade Center. My first reaction was this was likely a small plane, like the plane that had flown into the Empire State Building in the 1940s.

Q: In '45.

DEMING: Yes, I thought it was perhaps a Cessna coming out of Newark that had gone off course. Anyway, we hurried and finished our lunch, and I got back to the Embassy just in time to see the second plane hit the second tower. My first instruction to my staff was not to call the Department. They've had their hands full. Just watch CNN. Nobody is going to be able to tell us anything that CNN doesn't report. There was a rumor going around that a car had exploded in front of the State Department.

Q: I had just left the State Department on a shuttle bus and I happened to have my radio on and my earplugs and I was listening to something else and I quickly switched to the news and they said a bomb went off. I was there.

DEMING: All sorts of crazy stuff. The immediate Tunisian reaction was shock, horror, then great sympathy. At first no one in Tunisia could believe that it was Arabs that might be involved in this. One Tunisian said only the Israelis or the CIA was capable of doing this; he argued that Arabs were too disorganized and incompetent to pull this off. We heard all sorts of conspiracy theories for a while. Then there was shock and indeed embarrassment when it became clear that the perpetrators were Saudi Arabians.

I met with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister. Tunisian officials first expressed shock, sympathy, and support. Second, Tunisian officials said, "We told you so. We told you Islamic fundamentalists were dangerous people. You and the Europeans and particularly the Brits have been criticizing us for years for putting these people in jail, for exiling them, and you've been calling it human rights abuses. Now I hope you all understand that we are right on this, and we are in this together." In other words, 9/11 gave Tunisian authorities a further rationale for the kinds of things they were doing against their own Islamists and other political opposition groups.

The third reaction in Tunisia to 9/11 was that while this was a horrible event and could not be justified, the attack was still understandable because of our "one sided support for Israel." We were also criticized for giving support to regimes like Saudi Arabia. Secular Tunisians have contempt for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. They see these governments as 14th Century relics which support religious extremism in Tunisia and more broadly. They said, "Don't you ever learn that these governments are not your friends?"

Q: Were the Saudis putting money into Madras and things like that in Tunisia?

DEMING: Not the way they were in Algeria because the Tunisians kept them out. What the Saudis did was to invite young Tunisians to come to Saudi Arabia for "religious tours" and then use these trips to try to radicalize them. The Tunisians, to their credit, recognized that extremism was fed by gaps left by the state in the social and educational fabric, and the government tried to fill these gaps, with mixed results. At the same time, the Tunisian government did use the Saudi attempt to promote fundamentalism as a rationale to justify their own behavior against their own Islamists.

Q: Well, did you, I imagine your relations in an Arab country at this time, I mean you had your problems dealing with the Tunisians, but I imagine also a lot of problems dealing with the Department of State and all because they you know expected full support and yet in Tunisia and other Islamic nations they were saying you know, you've got to do better with the Palestinian cause and all that.

DEMING: Well, the Tunisian government was smart enough to offer us support, but it did so quietly. President Ben Ali made clear to me that Tunisia would cooperate with us on law enforcement and intelligence issues. They were very helpful in that regard. What they didn't give us was a lot of rhetorical and public support, and we never pushed hard on that. We understood the domestic pressures they were under.

Q: You were sort of out of the line of fire there?

DEMING: Yes. We were okay. We did have excellent support. Subsequent events did provoke reactions in Tunisia. The U.S. intervention in Afghanistan at first was portrayed in the press as the U.S. overreacting and heading into a quagmire, just as the Soviets had earlier gotten bogged down in Afghanistan. After the Taliban was removed from power, Afghanistan disappeared from the headlines in Tunisia. Tunisians had little identification

with Afghanistan or the Taliban in particular. The basic attitude was that the U.S. could do whatever it wanted to there. Discussions with the Tunisians would usually return to the Palestinian issue. The Tunisians have never really contested the right of Israel to exist. It is rather the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the failure to establish a Palestinian state that is an issue. The argument we heard a lot was that if the U.S. wished to undercut the roots of terrorism, it needed to deal effectively with the Palestinian issue.

When the U.S. invaded Iraq, the atmosphere in Tunisia became much more difficult. Tunisian didn't accept the terrorism connection. They didn't accept the WMD connection, both of which turned out, didn't exist. They saw this as an anti-Islamic, anti-Arab crusade. This seemed to be confirmed when the President used the word "crusade" early on to describe the U.S. action.

Q: Yes, it does for some reason you have to realize crusade of course in our terms means sort of a general fight against evil, but crusade of course means crusade against the holy, against the Islamic forces.

DEMING: I spent a lot of my time both with individuals, in small groups, and publicly in speeches and newspaper interviews trying to explain the context. The Embassy received very little useful guidance. I relied heavily on the wireless file and the American press for information and policy guidance. I tried to do the best I could to construct a rationale for American actions because there was little policy coordination in Washington. My line basically was that, "Look, the U.S. has been thoroughly traumatized by September 11th. We feel more vulnerable now than any time since the Second World War or maybe since the War of 1812, and we are going to do what we have to do to protect our national security." I said that when we looked at Iraq, we saw the combination of a radical regime, an outlaw regime, which had the potential to bring together the combination of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. We're simply not going to allow that to happen. I argued that Iraq had its chance to come clean and that by taking the issue to the UN we were exploring every possibility for a peaceful settlement.

After the invasion took place, the Embassy stayed out of the public arena until the dust settled. About a month before the U.S. invasion, in February of 2003, I was called back to Washington for a Chiefs of Mission conference, and I asked to meet with President Ben Ali before my trip.

Q: Let's stop. [Change tape]

DEMING: In my meeting with President Ben Ali, he said to me that if you invade Iraq, you're going to create turmoil in the Middle East. You're going to radicalize young Arab populations. You may create a civil war in Iraq. It's going to demonize the United States and make it much more difficult to accomplish anything. But if you decide to do this, we will do everything we can to quietly support you, but of course in public we will have to be very careful.

I came back to Washington in February for the Chiefs of Mission conference. We were told beforehand by our leaders in the Bureau that the war was going to happen, so we needed to take this into account in our discussions with Administration officials. We were urged to focus on U.S. policies after the war, on the plans for the occupation of Iraq. We met with the most senior people around, I won't name names, but you can imagine. I and others, particularly those who had much better Arabist credentials than I, made the case that this was not going to be a cakewalk. The military aspect would be fine. No one worried about that, but afterwards there was almost certain to be turmoil in Iraq, and we needed to have a lot of people on the ground to prevent looting and to establish law and order. We also suggested that the U.S. internationalize the occupation as soon as we could so it wouldn't look like an American occupation. The general response we got was, "Don't worry. We have people like Chalabi who are going to come in and take over. It's going to be a decapitation operation."

Q: By this time was it apparent that I won't say the Pentagon because the Pentagon consisted of the military and the civilians. It was a civilian leadership, not the military leadership the civilian leadership seen under Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz.

DEMING: We were talking to all of these people. I believe that many of the Chiefs of Mission were really quite alarmed that we were not making better preparations for the post war period. We also felt we were subject to some kind of a loyalty test, especially the Arabists in the State Department. "Are you with us or against us?" kind of thing. It was very uncomfortable. I went back and sat through the war and then tried to make the best case possible that weapons of mass destruction would be discovered, that while the war may initially be shocking and destabilizing, it will have the right kind of outcome.

Q: I mean here, let's get sort of personal on this. I have you know, doing these interviews and all before the war and during the war and after the war I have had people who I've never seen sort of my Foreign Service colleagues, the professionals be almost sort of unanimous about saying this is if not a big mistake it was done extremely poorly for not planning and all that. This does not run across political lines. I mean this runs across, this is almost a professional opinion. How was it as the American ambassador sitting in a foreign country and here is the real test of selling a policy. I mean did you have a problem selling the policy?

DEMING: I didn't have any moral compulsion trying to sell the policy because that was the position I was in. However, I found it difficult to put together what I considered an effective rationale because there were so many gaps in the logic, in the rationale, for what we were trying to do. As I said, in my speeches and conversations in Tunis, I bet heavily on the existence of weapons of mass destruction as ultimately going to justify our intervention. I got out of town just in time, before it was conclusively proven that no such weapons existed.

Q: The testimony of Colin Powell was before the UN was considered to be sort of, I mean, Colin Powell is an honorable man and he wouldn't do that and yet when he got up

there and he said that, I think it brought a lot of people into line in the United States. Did that have an effect on you?

DEMING: Well, it may or may not have had an effect on me, but it didn't have much of an effect on the Arab audience, both the official and the public one that I was dealing with. I think there was just a tremendous amount of skepticism. Of course, the Tunisians were very plugged in. It was interesting that a senior Tunisian official who I won't identify further said to me, "You know we in Tunisia have historically identified with secular Arab regimes, and we really distrust fundamentalism. We have made a division between the secular and the religious, and our natural identification is with states like Iraq and Syria, even though they may be led by thugs." This official acknowledged that Saddam Hussein was a thug, but he argued that secular countries like Iraq and Syria represented the future of the Arab world, not Saudi Arabia, not the Gulf states. He argued that Iraq and Syria, along with Egypt, were the heart of Arab civilization and that was where America's real interest lay because these were secular societies. I had to agree basically with that analysis.

Q: I would have also thought that there would be a strong identification in Tunisia with the intellectual left in France for example. I mean was there and I would imagine the French were not particularly supportive.

DEMING: Yes. In Tunisia I saw the confluence of the Arab and the French media worlds coming together. Everybody has a satellite television dish in Tunisia. They watch Al Jazeera and various other Arabic language satellite channels from the Middle East, and they watch the major French channels, and they read the French press and the Arabic press. What I saw during the Iraq war was Arab emotional anti-Americanism and French intellectual contempt come together in a very nasty way.

Q: And there you are.

DEMING: The French ambassador and I were good friends, but the French more broadly were very critical and seemed to take a certain delight in the difficulties the U.S, found itself in Iraq. As you say, the French intellectual impact, the impact of the French media on both the left and the right played well among the Tunisian "classe politique." I found myself during and immediately after the war in a strange group of bedfellows who supported the war - the Brits and the Poles and a few others. The French and the German ambassadors were good personal friends, but they didn't want to be seen anywhere near the American ambassador.

Q: How about did you have any problem with your officers? I mean because this was the rationale for the war, I mean there was a rationale for establishing a freed democratic Iraq that could make quite a difference, but I mean the rest of the rationale didn't hold much water.

DEMING: We had very frank private internal discussions. I said to my country team, "Look you know, we all have questions about the wisdom of doing this and where it's all

going, but we're all here representing the United States government, and we support this policy. We can talk about it internally, but outside we collectively will come up with the best arguments we can, and let's see it through. The main thing is to make it work and to mitigate the damage." With my Tunisian friends, I would urge them to put our actions in Iraq in the broader context of American society and American history. Some of the groups that I had the most difficulty with were the Tunisians who were the most knowledgeable about the U.S. and the most pro-American. Many of these people had been educated in the U.S. and had made a big investment in relations between Tunisia and the U.S. There was a society called the Tunisian American Friendship Association. I had periodic lunches with the members. During this period, they would say, "Look, this is not the United States that we thought we knew. The country we knew was the country that supported international law, that built the post war international system, it is the country of Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, the country of democracy, of human rights, not a country of aggression, not a country of arbitrary action, not a country that refuses to give us visas." The visa issue became a big problem, and I'll get into that in a minute.

Q: Oh, yes.

DEMING: I would say, "Look, please put this in context. If you look at American history we go through these patterns, and September 11th was an extremely traumatizing event. It's understandable that we're taking what you might see as extreme measures to protect our security, but please have confidence in our ability to right ourselves over time and to remain open internationally." I would cross my fingers when I said that, but I really believed it was true. It was very hard for those people to understand where we were going. It was one thing for those who were already intellectually contemptuous of the U.S., but for those who identified themselves with the U.S., it was one of the most difficult audiences we faced. On the visa issue, the issuance of visas essentially collapsed after 9/11, particularly for Arabs. We had to go back to Washington for clearances. Coordination in Washington was abysmal, and clearances rarely came back. It was understandable that we went through this, but the process took so long, and it just killed the growth of interest in American education. Students started going to Canada and elsewhere instead of the U.S.

Q: Well, it's a real tragedy. We're going to feel the long-term effects of this.

DEMING: I've felt this way for a long time. One of the greatest things we do is the IV program and education programs, like the Fulbright. People who come to the U.S. on these programs return 99% of the time with a positive experience. I saw this all the time. We regularly met with Tunisians returning from the U.S. Some would say that before they went, they really didn't like the U.S. very much, but they reported they had had the best experience. They found Americans were so interesting and greatly enjoyed home stays. Even during the war in Iraq, we had a group that went on home stays in Illinois and Detroit, and they came back with enthusiastic reports.

Q: Well, this brings up a point you were saying you weren't getting good direction for particularly I mean here you are in the Middle East. You would think you would be getting good direction.

DEMING: Policy in Washington was split in so many ways. The first thing I would do was read the wireless file, particularly whatever the President or Secretary of State, or Assistant Secretary Bill Burns had to say. I would read the transcripts of the State Department, White House, and DOD daily press briefings, draw on other public statements, and then read the New York Times, read Le Monde, read other press to try to get the back play of what was going on and then put it together. It was more valuable to read the raw material and then try to tailor it to the Tunisian audience than to use the lowest common denominator guidance coming out of the bureaucracy in Washington.

Q: What about by this time it was public diplomacy, were they getting, they were in pretty much disarray weren't they? I mean they didn't really have a head.

DEMING: Yes. At the time the leadership of the public diplomacy in Washington refused to recognize that the problem was our policy, not that we weren't reciting the administration's mantra loud enough. We got very little help or useful guidance there.

Q: Could you push visa applications exchange programs you know I mean at a certain point, could you push some through the system?

DEMING: You really had to be very careful. I tried not to play too many games with visas. I thought it was not smart. There were ways an ambassador could make an exemption for people, and I did for people that were really important, I didn't do secondary ones. If somebody came to me and asked for a favor, I said no, I couldn't do that. After 9/11, the State Department was under great scrutiny on the issuance of visas, and the State Department's reputation was on the line. Mary, what's her name got fired.

Q: Ryan.

DEMING: Ryan. I wanted to protect the integrity of the State Department.

Q: I mean did you feel as ambassador in an Arabic country that you might say almost McCarthy like forces were looking over your shoulder back in Washington?

DEMING: I didn't care about that. I don't know whether they were or not. I was just doing the best job I thought I could do for my country, and I was at the end of my career anyway. What were they going to do to me, make me retire? Obviously, one was more careful with e-mails. I think people were more discreet in emails than they would have been otherwise. Some of my colleagues in the Middle East Bureau got in trouble for emails that were a little too critical of Administration policy.

Q: I was going to say you were there at a time when all of a sudden, the e-mail exploded. How did you find, what was the effect on your work of the email?

DEMING: I found it very helpful because you could put things in context. When we did a major cable to Washington, we had the option of sending a draft back by email of what you were going to send front channel in order to get a sense of how this was going to play. This helped us judge when was the best time to send our message and to get a sense of sensitivities we should be aware of. Classified email allowed us to get that sort of feedback. Sometimes I just sent cables anyway because I didn't want anybody to mess with them.
There were also some sensitive issues where classified email was very helpful. In the post 9/11 setting, there were some funny things going on involving the U.S. military and others with respect to anti-terrorism related programs. It was very clear that the Department had little idea of what some Washington departments and agencies were doing in the field. Fortunately, we had a very good interagency team in Tunis that kept me in the loop on instructions they were getting. I would communicate this kind of thing by email or secure telephone to the Department and urge it to find out what's going on.

Q: When you have a time of almost chaos the Ollie North thing.

DEMING: People filling a void.

Q: Going more towards just Tunisia itself, you had two very peculiar neighbors. You had Algeria with its very difficult fundamentalist problem and then you had Libya run by a man whose sanity is questioned, Qadhafi. How did these interact on you?

DEMING: As the Tunisians like to say, they don't have the ability to choose their neighbors. Algeria is very different from Tunisia. First of all is the terrain. Algeria is a mountainous country divided into valleys, and this topography has contributed to tribal and regional differences within the country. It's not an integrated population. There are also greater ethnic differences, with a larger Berber population. The colonial history is also very different. The French integrated Algeria into France. It was made part of metropolitan France, and the French wanted to make Algerians French. Tunisia was a protectorate, and there was never an attempt to incorporate it into France. There was also no war for independence in Tunisia and thus little of the bitterness that still exists between Algeria and France. The Tunisians have always been uneasy about Algeria because it is so big and because they consider the Algerians more aggressive, more arrogant, not nearly as Mediterranean as the Tunisians like to portray themselves.

In recent years, Algeria has made some progress in dealing with the fundamentalist movement that has torn the country for decades, and there are no longer the minor border skirmishes. There is also more cross border contact, but the efforts to create an integrated Maghreb market including Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria has not moved forward, primarily because of the Algerian-Morocco dispute over Western Sahara. With respect to Libya, Tunisia has never regarded Libya as a threat because it is so small and so tribal. Twenty-five years ago, Qadhafi and Bourguiba agreed to merge the two countries, but the idea was rejected by the Tunisian elite and collapsed within days.

Q: All those countries have gone through that sort of thing.

DEMING: There are about 30,000 or 40,000 Tunisians who work in Libya, and thousands of Libyans come across the Tunisian border daily to shop. There is duty free shopping at the border. It's a big bazaar down there and a lot of human connections back and forth. Tunisians love to ridicule the Libyans as sort of country cousins. For example, there was a big Libyan-Tunisian soccer match in Tunis a few years ago, and the football tickets looked somewhat like the phone bills the Tunisians receive. The Tunisians sold their phone bills to Libyans as football tickets, and they rejoiced in the stories they told about fooling the Libyans.

With respect to Qadhafi, Ben Ali takes some credit, probably with some justification, for helping to persuade Qadhafi to open up to the outside world. Tunisia played a helpful role in the U.S.-Libyan normalization, including the Pan Am settlement. Ben Ali told me once that Qadhafi was beginning to ask questions about the Tunisian development model. This represented a change, because earlier Qadhafi criticized Tunisia for promoting tourism, saying that he didn't want his people to be waiters in hotels and to make foreigners' beds, because it was demeaning. Now, Libya is beginning to look at tourism as one element of development. The Tunisians are the first to admit that Qadhafi is unstable, unpredictable. He can go in any direction. However, even when he was playing with the development of nuclear weapons, the Tunisians never thought this program was directed at them and never took it very seriously. In addition, the Tunisians feel a sense of assurance because of their close connections with the EU and the U.S. which they believe will deter Algerian and Libyan adventurism.

Q: Well, speaking of a place with a European connection, is there Henry Kissinger at one point was told by his advisor, well, you've got to let Europe know what we're going to do and he said, well, what is the telephone number of Europe. Now, is there, I mean at this time the EU was really connected, but did something represent the EU's or essentially France?

DEMING: It was very interesting to watch the European Union operate in Tunisia. Coordinating EU policy toward Tunisia was a bureaucratic nightmare. The EU ambassadors and the EU representative met once a month to coordinate policy, but my understanding was that these meetings primarily focused on the economic issues. There was a clear division in terms of policy towards Tunisia among the Europeans. The Mediterranean littoral states, the French, the Italians and the Spanish, were much more concerned about stability. Their great concern was the outflow of refugees, and they placed a priority on the stability of North Africa and were much more tolerant of the regimes in place. The Brits, the Scandinavians and the Dutch were much more concerned about human rights. The Germans were in-between, depending primarily on the personality of the ambassador. Some of my European Union colleagues would tell me that sometimes they would get instructions from Brussels to go in on a human rights issue. However, the EU could only make a demarche if there was unanimity among the ambassadors, and they rarely got unanimity on human rights questions because there were split views of how to deal with Tunisia.

The French policy while I was there changed rather dramatically because of the end of "cohabitation," the end of the Socialist participation in the French government. The French Socialists were much more aggressive on human rights and really championed some of the Tunisian dissidents. When the Socialist lost their parliamentary majority, the French government became purely conservative. As a consequence, the importance of human rights issues in France's relations with Tunisia declined. The Ben Ali government openly celebrated this change in French policy.

Q: How about the Egyptian connection?

DEMING: The Egyptians had very proper relations with Tunisia. There was a period, during my first tour in Tunis, when the Muslim Brotherhood was more active. The Tunisians were very uneasy about radicalization coming out of Cairo. That was no longer true when I was ambassador. The Tunisians did have some concerns about stability of the regime in Egypt, given all the pressures and difficulties there, but relations were excellent. We had very good relations with the Egyptian ambassadors who were very helpful to me. I found that among the Arab ambassadors, the Moroccan, the Egyptian and the Jordanian were very helpful to me, even during the Iraq war. We regularly exchanged views on the situation in Tunisia and the region. The Algerian was also quite effective. I had very little in common with any of the Gulf states. The Saudis were off in another world, as were the Omanis and the Kuwaitis. The Syrian was an interesting guy, but his main concern was to try to get a visa to the U.S. when he retired.

Q: Were you there when there was a bomb that went off in the synagogue?

DEMING: Yes, in Djerba. It was April 11, 2003.

Q: What was behind, what did you get from that?

DEMING: The Tunisians were very worried about the implications of this incident for the tourism industry, that they initially denied that the explosion was the result of a terrorist attack. They said it was an accident. Indeed, the Foreign Minister called me immediately on his cell phone to say "I just want you to know that this was an accident, it wasn't terrorist related at all." This story fell apart pretty quickly. The Foreign Minister called me back sheepishly the next day and said, "Well, it was terrorism." Before the attack, the Tunisians were quite complacent about internal security. They thought they had the Islamists under control, and that their extensive security apparatus was in a good position to head off any such attack. What happened was that a Tunisian came back after being radicalized in Afghanistan and Germany. He had become part of a network, and he'd been in Tunisia as a sleeper for about six or seven months. He then received a phone call from Europe on his cell phone. He then blew up a gas tanker trunk in front of the synagogue in Djerba and killed 14 German and two French tourists who just happened to be in the area. This incident really shook up the Tunisians, but it also gave the authorities a further rationale to crack down on Islamists and other dissidents. This was the first big terrorist attack after 9/11.

Q: Yes, it was. How did we view at the embassy what were you, with Ben Ali, here is how long this will last, what's going to succeed, whither Tunisia?

DEMING: When I first came to Tunis in 2001, Ben Ali's term was due to end in 2003. Under the constitution then in force, he had to leave office after his current term. There was speculation that he would indeed prepare the groundwork and hand over power to somebody else within the party structure which would have been a transition of sorts. When I got there, we didn't really see any signs that Ben Ali was preparing for a transition. After September 11th it became very clear that one of the side effects of September 11th was to justify President Ben Ali's decision to stay in power as the "indispensable person," given all the uncertainties.

The regime began an orchestrated campaign to amend the constitution. There were a number of minor amendments proposed, but the major change was to remove the limitation on the number of terms the president could serve and replace it with a provision that a candidate for president had to be 75 or younger. This would give Ben Ali two more terms. There was a plebiscite, with a lot of fanfare. The Tunisian regime was very good at these kinds of circuses, but it produced tremendous cynicism at all levels of Tunisian society. The "vote " of course was reported as overwhelmingly in favor of amending the constitution. Washington never took a position on this whole thing, nor did the EU. It was done legally for that matter.

I said privately to those around the President and indeed to the President himself on one occasion that I thought, without reference to specific dates, that the greatest contribution that President Ben Ali could make to Tunisia would be at the appropriate time to have an orderly transition. This would really move Tunisia toward being a real democratic country and be the great legacy that Ben Ali could leave. Ben Ali had his virtues. Some Europeans characterized Tunisia as a country that was well managed but badly governed. Ben Ali was a competent manager. The government worked effectively and was generally efficient. There was petty corruption but not on the scale found in many Arab countries. The corruption that was a problem was big scale corruption, involving the President's extended family, and this had become a real cancer.

On the broader political dimension, there's no real sign that things are changing. Indeed, I think that restrictions on the press, which have gone up and down, were tighter than they ever had been before. It's sort of a joke because everybody had the Internet and everybody had a satellite dish. Tunisian authorities tried to block the Internet, but everybody had a way around it. I remember once I was at a party, and I was complaining to a Tunisian friend that I couldn't get into Yahoo. He said, "You have to go to Yahoo Japan and come in through there."

Q: Yahoo being one of the major servers of it.

DEMING: Everybody was figuring out how to evade the restrictions. One of the most disappointing things that happened was Ben Ali's remarriage about 10 years ago to a

young woman who was his hairdresser. He has only daughters by both of his marriages, but his new wife had seven brothers, and they all managed to implicate themselves in the economy in very distorting ways. Previously in Tunisia businessmen were allowed to function pretty much on their own.

Bourguiba was fairly clean. His wife had a few things, but it was under Ben Ali that crony capitalism became a big issue that undermined Ben Ali's reputation at all levels of society. Cab drivers, people on the street, passed on the latest rumors about the transgressions of the "family". "Have you heard about this?" "They've taken over this house over here. They've expropriated that property", that kind of thing. That's very dangerous. One of the results of this was that there was a more fundamentalist trend, even among educated people. The Tunisian intelligencia, members of the so called "political class," would express to me their concerns about their own sons and daughters, many of whom were listening to some of the Islamic evangelists on satellite television from the Gulf and growing beards and putting on scarves as a way to protest the internal repression and to show solidarity in response to what was seen as the external attacks on Islam.

Q: Did you feel that it was the, well basically the corruption that was becoming so apparent?

DEMING: Corruption, the lack of free expression, essentially being out of step with the rest of the world and plus the sense of Islam per se was under pressure from the U.S. and in Europe, particularly in France.

Q: Oh, sure.

DEMING: If one studies the Arabs who have been radicalized, many of them were radicalized in Europe. Indeed, most of the Tunisians who are active in Al Qaeda have been radicalized in Europe. These people go aboard, become isolated in these societies, and then get picked up by the local mosque and become radicalized.

Q: Yes, and they're not well accepted in Europe. One of the theories is that I just want to grab something here, that what has increased fundamentalism and all is the well being of the people yet this really isn't true. It's really people coming out of countries that for the area are relatively affluent.

DEMING: Yes. After 9/11, we would have very interesting discussions at the dinner table with Tunisian intellectuals about the whole nature of Islam and the failure of most of the Arab world to modernize. There were many very thoughtful Tunisians who have written about this challenge, but mostly in French and in France because it was easier and safer to do that. Their concern was not so much the Tunisian government but the fear of retribution by Islamic radicals. These writers wrote about the need for there to be a reformation of some kind in Islam, some kind of separation of the mosque and the state. A number of these scholars mark the decline of the Islamic world from 1492 when the Moors were pushed out of Spain, and Islam began to fall back on itself, looking to the

past rather than toward the future and losing close contact with Europe just before the reformation and the Renaissance. These intellectuals saw the Moslem world as now without a clear means to interpret Islam for a more modern age or draw a line between the secular and the religious. In their view, this is made more difficult because Islam is a religion that purports to cover every aspect of human life and because the Koran is the dictated word of God, not the interpretation by a bunch of apostles. It makes it very difficult for theologians and philosophers to find more modern, flexible interpretations. There was a general agreement that this was the great challenge for Islam to overcome if Islamic states were to become a dynamic force in the world. These scholars argued that it does not help that the U.S. and others were being perceived as anti-Islam because this just pushes Moslems toward the radical extreme. I think this sense of being attacked by the West accounts for some of the younger, better educated people feeling isolated and marginalized and wanting to find some way to identify themselves. The answer to radical and violent Islamic fundamentalism is very complex. I think we need to have a much more nuanced approach than we do right now.

Q: When you left there, this is after your full tour basically. Is there anything else we should cover, do you think, in Tunisia?

DEMING: Let me say a word about the role of my wife Kristen in Tunisia and throughout my career. I was fortunate to marry a woman whose artistic and literary interests meshed very well with our life abroad. She was especially interested in poetry and she naturally reached out to the Japanese poets and Tunisian artists. In Japan, she joined several Japanese poetry groups, including one that was honored to have occasional visits from Her Imperial Majesty, Empress Michiko. She hosted many poetry events for Japanese tanka, renku and haiku poets, professors and students at our residence and at the Ambassador's residence when I was chargé. She wrote articles on culture for the Japan Times newspaper and initiated a weekly haiku poetry column for the paper with her Japanese co-author. She was one of the English consultants for Tomoshibi Light, the collected tanka poems of the Emperor and Empress of Japan. Then in 1991, she was invited to attend the Utakai Hajime, (New Year's Poetry Reading Party at the Imperial Court), a national poetry competition held each year at which the winning tanka poets hear their poetry chanted in the presence of the Imperial family. She attended again in 1995.

In Tunisia, at a tense period in U.S.-Tunisian relations, Kris quietly reached out to the wives of Arab ambassadors and invited them to our residence. Many had never been invited to the American Ambassador's residence. She kept her male staff away from the event, using only women servers. In that way, the women could relax and remove their head coverings if they wished. In an all-female party, everyone could relax, get to know each other, tour the residence, and try out some American-style tea and sweets. Kris made many friends for the U.S. during a very delicate period.

Q: Well, let's just touch on the time that you went from there to the National Defense University?

DEMING: Yes. I decided I wanted to retire about a year after I returned to the U.S. and looked for a year of transition in Washington. There was an opening at the Institute for International Strategic Studies at the National Defense University for a visiting fellow. When I came back in February for the Chiefs of Mission conference, I went over to talk to NDU, and we reached an agreement that I would spend a year there. I wanted to use this year to re engage on East Asia because I thought my post Foreign Service life would be primarily focused on East Asia. As much as I enjoyed my time in Tunisia, I'm not an Arabist or Middle East expert. East Asia is really where my expertise is. I spent a year at the National Defense University, writing papers and going to conferences. I published two papers, one on the evolution of the U.S. strategic view of Japan since the Second World War which was published by Stanford University and a second one that came out two weeks ago on the debate in Japan on amending the Japanese constitution. I went to a lot of conferences around town and around the country to get back into the loop on Japan and East Asia and to get my credentials back in order and get myself more visible in that area. In fact my year at NDU did provide a transition back into East Asia. Since I retired, I have been working in this area, including as an adjunct professor at SAIS in Japan Studies.

Q: Well, back to this, when you were back in Washington for the I guess it was NEA chiefs of mission conference often somebody who is not, I mean this wasn't your bailiwick particularly. Were you picking up from your fellow ambassadors most of whom had served in NEA and in the Arabist world, a sense of isolation or the fact that they'd been bypassed in two ways. One the war in Iraq and the other one was that the Arabists including under the Clinton administration had increasingly been pushed over to one side in a small select group of people who had been dealing with affairs that impacted on Israel. Did you get this feeling?

DEMING: On Iraq certainly, there was a sense of frustration. On the Middle East Peace Process, I think that the Arabists have come to terms with the fact that Middle East negotiations were going to be dealt with by special negotiators. There was great respect for Dennis Ross who had been doing this for so long, and I didn't sense any bitterness there. I think there was broad agreement that we needed to deal much more seriously with the Middle East peace process. We couldn't just stand aside and let events take their course.

Q: At the National Defense University, were you in contact with the American military thinkers and all that and if so, how were they perceiving the Iraq issue?

DEMING: Yes, it was. The National Defense University and INSS in particular prided themselves on being independent and able to have open policy debates. Before I got there, the National Defense University had put together a colloquium before the Iraq war on dealing with post-war Iraq. It became controversial because some in the Pentagon became unhappy with these meetings because they raised a number of questions on potential problems. This was seen by some policy makers in the Pentagon who were pushing for the war as designed to sabotage the effort by making it more complicated than they thought it should be. A lot of people at NDU were quite pessimistic in terms of

post-war planning. There were some people on the staff of NDU who dealt with the Middle East who were very outspoken. Some regularly spoke on NPR and other media outlets, sometimes criticizing aspects of our approach to Iraq. Indeed, we had a number of uniformed military who had been in Iraq on TDY. One Marine colonel came back in May 2004 after four months in Iraq, saying that if we had a plan and a strategy, it was the best kept secret out there because nobody had any idea what it was. There was a sense that we really didn't have our act put together on the civil affairs side. Now, NDU is really geared up to try to assist on post conflict management, and this kind of planning has become a very sexy game around town. The military, as you know well, wants a clear mission, wants a clear objective. The military is ready to carry out well defined missions, but it resists taking on muddled missions that don't have clearly defined objectives and limits. In Iraq, we are trying to build democracy and win public support in a hostile environment. I'm amazed how well the military has done under these very trying circumstances. It's very frustrating.

Q: Well, Rust, I want to thank you. This is probably a good place to stop.

DEMING: Thank you very much.

Q: I really appreciate this.

Addendum

After I retired from the State Department in September of 2004, I was called back to the State Department twice for special assignments. In 2005, I was asked to coordinate the visit of the Japanese Emperor to Saipan, the capital of the American Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana, near Guam, another American territory in the Western Pacific. In 1944, Saipan was the site a major battle between Japan and the United States, and the American victory there gave us airbases within range of Japan, including the base at Tinian from where the Enola Gay and Box Car launched the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. About 6000 Americans and 40,000 Japanese were killed in the battle, along with thousands of local residents of the island and many Korean laborers. The purpose of the Emperor's visit was to pay tribute to the Japanese who had lost their lives there, something that he had done in Okinawa but never at a battle site outside of Japan. Saipan was chosen because it was just 1000 miles from Tokyo, under American control so security would not be an issue, and the local population had a generally favorable attitude toward Japan, based on Japan's pre-War economic development of the island and the thousands of Japanese tourists who come to Saipan each year for the beaches.

My role was to accompany the Japanese advance team to Saipan to work out the details of the Emperor's visit with the local authorities and then to return to Saipan for the actual visit a month later. During the advance trip, the Japanese agreed to broaden the focus of the Emperor's visit to pay tribute to all those who lost their lives in the battle, not just the Japanese. This was accomplished by the Emperor going to the Memorial Park in Saipan that has the names of the American soldiers, Marines, and sailors who lost their lives, along with the names of local citizens who perished in the battle. The Japanese memorials on the island are concentrated below "Banzai Cliff" at the northern end where

the Imperial Army made its last stand and where thousands of Japanese civilians leaped to their death. This is where the Emperor went to pay tribute to the Japanese victims. The Japanese also hosted a lunch for the Governor of the Northern Marianas' and other local officials.

The visit itself went smoothly, but there were a couple of issues that needed to be negotiated. Local officials wanted to turn the Emperor's visit into a festive occasion to promote tourism, but for the Japanese it was a very solemn event. The compromise was the lunch the Emperor hosted after all of the tributes had been paid. The second issue was more delicate. It turned out that next to the Japanese monuments at the end of the island was a monument to the Korean laborers who had been brought to the island by the Japanese military, many of whom had perished in the battle. When the Emperor's schedule came out a few days before his visit, certain Korean groups protested that there were no plans for the Emperor to honor the Korean victims. In the event, the Emperor did make an unscheduled stop at the monument, and that issue was resolved.

My second return to the State Department was in 2010. Kurt Campbell, my colleague at the Defense Department when I was P/DAS in 1998-2000, became Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Obama administration. Kurt asked me to come back to EAP as a part time Senior Advisor to help manage our relations with Japan at a very delicate time. In late 2009, the LDP, which had dominated Japanese politics for half a century, for the first time lost a Lower House election. The Democratic Party of Japan took over the government. The new government under Prime Minister Hatoyama came in on a platform of "rebalancing" Japan's relations with the U.S., including renegotiating the bilateral agreement on the relocation of the Futenma Marine Air Station in Okinawa. There was considerable disagreement and confusion within the new government, and Kurt asked me to make periodic visits to Tokyo to sound out my contacts on what was really happening.

I spent about two days a week at State. Every three or four months, I would go to Tokyo for a week to make the rounds of my friends in the political and bureaucratic worlds. I checked in with the Ambassador when I came in and before I left, and I took Embassy officers on some of my calls, but I had the advantage of long acquaintance with these Japanese, and I was in a "semi-official" position so my contacts would often be more open. When I returned to Washington, I would write up my conversations and offer my analysis for the Assistant Secretary, and he would often forward my reports to Secretary Clinton. Kurt was also kind enough to include me in senior policy meetings and meetings the Secretary had with Japanese officials. It was an ideal position to be in, and I learned a great deal.

In March of 2011, when I was still engaged as "Senior Advisor," my role suddenly changed. The Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs, Kevin Meyer, had held an "off the record" session with students and others at American University several months earlier. In early March, a record of this conversation emerged in the Japanese press, including some remarks that were interpreted as being insulting to Okinawans. This caused an uproar in Japan at a delicate time. Kurt Campbell went to Tokyo just after the

story broke, and it became the focus of his discussions. I received a phone call from Kurt in Tokyo at about midnight Washington time on March 7, asking if I would be willing to serve on an interim basis as Japan Director, a position I had held twenty years earlier. I agreed. I assumed the position on March 8, and on March 11 the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown hit Japan. I found myself in charge of a Task Force in the Operations Center, coordinating the U.S. response to the crisis. It was exhilarating but exhausting. For the next two months, responding to the March 1 disaster was the focus on my attention. There was initial confusion on both the U.S. and Japanese sides, but we quickly put in place mechanisms to facilitate our cooperation, centered in Tokyo. We gained a great deal of appreciation from the Japanese for our assistance, including having the U.S. military in Japan directly engaged in relief operations.

My tenure as Japan Director also included a major effort to get our alliance with Japan back on track after Prime Minister Hatoyama left office in 2010. His successor, Prime Minister Kan, was much more amenable to rebuilding ties with the U.S. We arranged the first "Two plus Two" meeting in four years, the meeting between the American Secretaries of State and Defense and their Japanese counterparts that is the major coordinating mechanism for the alliance. The meeting took place at the end of June 2011 and represented an important step forward. The Joint Statement announced at the meeting identified the new Japanese government with all of the agreements and premises of our security relationship build up during the years of LDP rule. This essentially ended the partisan divide in Japan about the US-Japan alliance and restored momentum to our security relationship that continues to be built upon today

In August 2011, the new Country Director for Japan arrived, and I returned to my retired life, including my duties as an Adjunct professor at SAIS. My period at State from 2010 to 2011 was a rare opportunity to return to the "game," and I found it stimulating and rewarding. At the same time, I was happy to turn over these duties to the generation to whom they properly belonged.

End of interview