

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

GENERAL STANLEY J. DONOVAN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the third of December, 1996. This is an interview with General Stanley J. Donovan. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. General, I wonder if we could start by... could you tell me: When and where were you born?

DONOVAN: I was born in Portland, Maine, on October fifth, 1910.

Q: Could you tell me a little about your family?

DONOVAN: My family was just a very modest family, in Maine, we lived in a very nice house in the western part of the city. I attended Portland High School, and after that, one year at Stanton Preparatory Academy in Cornwall, New York.

Q: What attracted you towards the Military Academy?

DONOVAN: Before I met a young Lieutenant from one of the nearby posts in Portland, Maine, I had intended to spend two years at Dartmouth then become a flying cadet and get my wings. After meeting this young lieutenant, who married the girl next door, he convinced me that it might be a good idea if I entered West Point, spent the four years there, and then took flying training, which I did.

Q: What class were you with at West Point?

DONOVAN: I was in the class of 1934, and immediately upon graduation I reported to Randolph Field, Texas, for flying training.

Q: Why were you so attracted to flying at that time?

DONOVAN: I'm not quite sure. I think it was maybe the Lindbergh transatlantic flight, and I'd always had an idea that I liked these contraptions called "Airplanes" and... I guess that's it.

Q: At Randolph, just to get a little flavor, what type of airplane did you train in?

DONOVAN: Well, I trained in, to begin with, a PT-3, which was, I think, one of the earliest primary training aircraft. Then, after that I went to basic flying training, still at

Randolph, where we had some basic BT-2s, I believe, which had a much more powerful engine in the aircraft, and it was a monoplane rather than a biplane, the primary flier was a biplane. Then, after finishing, I reported to Kelly Field, Texas, for advanced flying, and I selected the bomber as my choice. I graduated from Kelly in early '36.

Q: What type of bombers were we flying in those days?

DONOVAN: At the flying training center at Kelly Field we were flying the old Keystone bomber, which is a biplane, and an open cockpit, really quite ancient. My first station was the Philippine Islands. When I arrived, the same old Keystone bombers greeted me. After about a year, they were replaced by the Martin B-10, which is a very fine airplane.

Q: When you were in the Philippines, how did you view the defense of the Philippines and Japanese aspirations towards them? You and your colleagues.

DONOVAN: I didn't have any contact at all with the Japanese, and very little contact with the Chinese. I made several trips to China during my two years in the Philippines, mostly to Hong Kong, and one time to Shanghai, and I must say I enjoyed my trips there very much. The first time I went to Japan was... My lord... 1963.

Q: Oh, I see. When you were in the Philippines, you were in the Philippines from 1936 until when?

DONOVAN: I was there 'till late 38. I mean, as you were, 39.

Q: Was the prevailing view that the Japanese were the potential enemy at that time?

DONOVAN: I would say... yes. At one time, we in the bomb squadron thought that we were going to be ordered over to China, and our airfield was going to be a golf course. Not unusual, because with the aircraft that we had at the time, the Keystone bombers, you could land them anyplace, you didn't have to have a runway.

Q: By 1939, of course, Europe was at war. You came back, where did you go at that point?

DONOVAN: I came back to Randolph Field as an instructor. I served about 6 months in the primary stage, then I moved to the basic stage of training. At that time, the Air Corps decided that we did not have sufficient facilities to train the number of pilots, navigators, etc. for the Air Corps that was predicted. We didn't have enough pilots to fill all the spots. So we contracted with civilian flying schools to train air pilots. At that time, we had approximately 18 schools under contract. I was sent to Saint Louis where we had the central district, we supervised the primary flying schools in that district. Shortly after I arrived there, we increased the number of flying schools to train our pilots, and I was given the opportunity to command one of these schools, which I did. I went to Carlstrom Field in Arcadia, Florida. We had two classes of U.S. youngsters coming down for their flying training, and then it was decided that we would train RAF [United Kingdom's

Royal Air Force] student pilots. Just about two weeks after they arrived I was ordered to Washington, where I was in charge of all of the elementary flying training, supervising the contracts we had with assisting schools, etc.

Q: And you did that until when, about?

DONOVAN: I did that until 1942.

Q: By this time, of course, we were in the war.

DONOVAN: We were in the war, yes, we were in the war. I was working for Mr. Lovett, who was the Assistant Secretary of War for Air. It had been determined that we didn't have enough youngsters in the United States that were well versed in mathematics, physics, etc. and Mr. Lovett wanted to make sure that we had a sufficient number of qualified youngsters to fill our training requirement. I was helping him on that proposition. About that time, General Doolittle returned from his trip to Tokyo [Doolittle Raid on Japan, April 18, 1942], and I had finished my work with Mr. Lovett and was under orders to go to Fort Worth, Texas, where the training command headquarters was situated. I returned to my office and was told to report to a room in the old munitions buildings in Washington, which I did, and General Doolittle greeted me. After a conversation of about five or 10 minutes, he asked me if I wanted to join him in Europe. He was going to be in command of all the light bombers in Europe. I told him I certainly would, and he said "Meet me at Bolling airfield at eight o'clock." I said "Sir, I have orders to go to Fort Worth, Texas, the Training Command." He said, "Do you want to go with me to Europe?" I said, "Yes sir" He said, "Be at Bolling field at eight o'clock." So I was there. And we surveyed the schools that were training the light bombers for two days. When I came back to Washington, on my desk were orders transferring me from the training command to Doolittle's outfit. Then we went, about July of '42, to England.

Q: Were the light bombers part of the 8th Air Force at that time?

DONOVAN: This was the very beginning, there were no light bombers there at the time. We were there, getting prepared for all the work we would have to do, and the invasion of Africa came up.

Q: Around October, 42.

DONOVAN: That's right, and we were changed from, I think it was a wing headquarters, to a bomber command headquarters, and dispatched to Africa, where we were to supervise all of the bombers. At that time, when we got there, there were just two B-17 groups in the theater. Shortly after that, I was operations chief of the bomber command, and I did something that evidently, a first lieutenant masquerading as a colonel should never do. I changed the two bomber outfit's targets to a target that the commander of all the RAF forces in Africa at that time indicated he had intelligence concerning I think it was five or six ships in the harbor of Sousse loaded with equipment for General Rommel forces. I couldn't find any of the officers senior to me. I changed the missions of the B-

17s. Each day, all the generals met at the St. George Hotel - General Eisenhower, Admiral Cunningham, General [Karl] Spaatz, all of the generals, [British and American] and others - to discuss the day's operations. General Doolittle was there, and he came back from the meeting and said, "Moose, you're the luckiest SOB [son of a bitch] in the world." I said, "Why is that?" He said, "Well, they were discussing what you had done, on your own. Everything was waxing back and forth there, and suddenly Eisenhower stopped it all by saying, "Well, gentleman, we must say, he didn't sit on his ass and do nothing." That ended that. Therefore, nobody ever said a bad word about Eisenhower to me. About three days after that, Doolittle called me into his office and said, "Moose, get yourself in trouble, not me." I thought, "Hell, back to the infantry for me." He let me stew for what seemed to me to be about four or five hours, it was maybe four or five seconds, and then he said "I'm giving you command of the 97th" one of the two B-17 groups in the theater." Well, I went through the ceiling.

Q: Incidentally, your nickname is "Moose?"

DONOVAN: I got that at West Point. I was one of the football managers. And, being from Maine, it was easy to be called "Moose." Well, I commanded the 97th until September of '43, when I was ordered back to Washington where I served on the War Department general staff in the strategy section until the end of the war, with Japan. At that time, I was ordered to Argentina as Air attaché.

Q: Had you spoken Spanish before, or had learned Spanish?

DONOVAN: Well, mas o menos, mostly menos [more or less, mostly less]. I could maybe say "Buenos dias [good day]" and "Buenos noches [good evening]."

Q: Could we talk about Argentina at that time? You were in Argentina from when to when?

DONOVAN: I was in Argentina from... The war ended with Japan in 1945, and I went immediately to Argentina. Peron was in an island prison on the river, and I think my first night there, we were staying in the Alvear Palace Hotel in Buenos Aries, with a cobblestone street right below my window, and about midnight, there was a terrific racket. It was Peron's arrival, from the prison, to take over. The troops, horses and wagons, the works, made an impressive entrance on the cobblestones.

Q: He'd been relieved?

DONOVAN: He'd been relieved, yes. He had decided to take over.

Q: Before you went to Argentina, Argentina, from the eyes of the Allies, played a very dubious role during the war, I think it very grudgingly came in at the very end of the war, it's German sympathies were not hidden during the whole war. What were your orders? To go to a hostile place?

DONOVAN: I wouldn't say it was actually hostile, although there were a very great many German sympathizers there. As a matter of fact, I've reached some of the real night of the world classics, and when the Germans came by there, they were given receptions and all that, they were treated like conquering heroes and all, but when I arrived there, I met one of the German groups who owned some very large cattle ranches, and they were still 100% German, but they were backing off a bit from the Nazi type. Before I left, I didn't see any indications of anything but good faith on the part of the Germans that were there.

Q: What was your impression at that time, while you were there, this would be what, '45, 48 about, of the Argentine military?

DONOVAN: I think their military was a pretty strong outfit. The Army, I'm not sure about the Navy, but their Army was in pretty good shape. Their Air Force was still flying rather antiquated equipment, it would not have been a very effective force, in my opinion. But they were, they were all right, I met a lot of them, that and I was in the Air force myself. I keep saying Air Force, we didn't become the Air Force until about 1948, it was the Army Air Corps then.

Q: Did you find that the Argentine military was interested in the way we fought our war? We had gone from something like 17th largest army in the world to about the top of the heap within a few years, were the Argentineans interested in what we had done?

DONOVAN: No, I didn't find anybody that was very interested in that. They were, I imagine that they were really loathing, to not discussing that because they were not in a very good position militarily. Peron, as you know, had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the Argentine army.

Q: What was your impression of how the Argentine military felt about Peron?

DONOVAN: I think they liked him very much. Of course, the *descamisados* were the real power behind it, the shirtless ones. They really thought the world of him. And Evita, she would appear, go to a factory. I had an American friend who was head of the telephone factory, and she'd come out there and say "I want to talk to the people" unannounced, and she would talk to the people and she'd appear, beautifully dressed, fur coat and everything, and I thought that was rather silly of her to go out there before all these workers dressed like that, because these were the poor workers and everything, but somebody told me that I was wrong, she did that because almost every occasion she'd say "You too could have all of the things I have if you go along with us." She was a pretty smart gal.

Q: Well, during this immediate postwar time, what would an American Air Attaché do in Argentina?

DONOVAN: My job there was to get to know all I could about the Argentine Air Force, which I did, and also incidentally, connected with that would be whatever you picked up

about the army and navy also. We would end, just kept as tight a look on what the air force was up to as we possibly could. Report any changes in their makeup, report anything that, on some of the people in there, what they were doing and if they were good at it or mediocre or what. Just, in general, keep an eye on everything that was going on in the Argentine Air Force. I had an airplane there, an old C-47 that was done up as a passenger, not as a freighter, and so I flew around quite a bit in Argentina. Mr. James Bruce was our ambassador most of the time I was there, and he and I visited just about every Army and Airbase and Navy installation in Argentina, so much so that a lot of the people thought that Mr. Bruce and Colonel Donovan were wasting their time doing everything with all these trips, and I reported that to the ambassador, and he said "Good, let's keep them thinking that way. Meanwhile, you and I know more authorities in Argentina and all the local governors, military commanders, etc. That's fine, good for us." He really was a very good man.

Q: Well then, you left what, about '48 did you say?

DONOVAN: Yes, I left, I was ordered back to Washington, and I was put into the headquarters of the USAF, in the plans division, where I was the deputy chief of the Plans Division of the headquarters. I stayed there, lets see, in about 1950, I was ordered to Strategic Air Command [SAC], and I spent almost a year in Forbes Air Force base in Kansas. Then I went to Smoky Hill, also in Kansas, where I commanded the 40th wing of B-29s. On the verge of receiving B-47s, the first jets we had, before they arrived, I was ordered out to California, to the 14th Air division, in SAC. I was promoted to Brigadier General shortly after I arrived there as commander of the 14th air division. We had the B-36s, that was quite an airplane, six prop jobs and four jets on each one, that was some airplane.

Q: When you were in the plans division, and also in this early period before the Korean war, with SAC, were we considering using nuclear weapons, and who was the enemy?

DONOVAN: Let me see now... We weren't involved in any of the nuclear activity there... maybe I got this mixed up... because when I was in the plans division, we were working on the tail end of World War II, on the possible invasion of Japan.

Q: Ah, okay, so we're moving back to... but when you came into SAC, that was what, '49, '50?

DONOVAN: '50. That's right, then I moved up from... I was in the headquarters of the War Department general staff, and then went from there to SAC, after the war was finished I went to SAC. And then the Korean War, when I first went out to Forbes Air Force base we were training B-29 crews to ship over to Korea.

Q: What was your impression of the B-29?

DONOVAN: That was a very good airplane, very good. Of course, when I got my hands on them, we were just about to transfer to the B-47, the first jet, so we were all thinking

about getting our hands on those jets. But it was all right, the airplane.

Q: Where did you go in 1950?

DONOVAN: 1950, I went to... I was in an Air Force base in California with the 14th air division of SAC. Then, shortly thereafter, I was told that I was being considered to assignment to Spain, General Aug Kissner was there with staff. One day I was told to report to Washington to see Mr. Talbot, the Secretary of the Air Force, evidently with the idea that he was to pass on whether or not I was going to Spain. Nothing was mentioned about Spain. I spent about two or three minutes with him and that was all. I then reported to General Rosie O'Donnell, who was then the chief of Personnel, who asked, "What happened?" I said "I don't know why they got me in here, spent about two minutes with him, didn't touch on anything important" He said "You're going to Spain, he passes you as long as you don't go into details. Pack your bags, you're going to Spain."

Q: You were in Spain this first time from when to when?

DONOVAN: The first time was 1955 to 1960.

Q: 1955 to 60. What did we have in Spain when you arrived and what were our interests?

DONOVAN: We had a staff qualified to supervise the construction of air fields, lines of communication, air control, and working sites, everything to make our bases secure.

To do the work, we put contracts out for Spanish firms and then supervised the Spanish to see that they did the work. For example, with the site of Torrejon, we had set up a school to train some of this workers in some of the modern equipment, they had no idea in hell how to handle some of this modern equipment and use all of the big trucks and other things. BIW trained if somebody got a contract. Then he would send somebody to be supervised and some to be trained, and whatever they needed to work on. They did a good job, the Spaniards, on the work. They were taught a few lessons, of course, but they did very well, I considered some of the bases in Spain some of the best that we have.

Q: How were you received by the Spanish military?

DONOVAN: Just welcomed with open arms. They were very, very good, they were very cooperative. Anything that we needed from them that they had in their power to do and make it available to us. At one of their air bases there, we set up a school in electronic warfare for them. We sent some of their top people back to the U.S. to our schools. Then they came back to head up the section in the schools.

Q: What was the purpose of all the bases we were building?

DONOVAN: Originally it was that Strategic Air Command had bases down in North Africa, and LaMay thought that we needed something over there so that his bombers would be effective in any operations that might come up.

Q: What was your impression of Franco during this initial period?

DONOVAN: That's a question you'll get as many replies to as you ask the question. I personally think that Franco did a damn good job for Spain, and a lot of people don't realize what he did for Spain during World War II. Hitler and Air Marshall [Hermann] Goering met Franco and Sunja, his foreign minister, who I happen to know, up at the northern border of Spain. Hitler wanted passage of his troops down to Gibraltar. Franco said, "No." We couldn't have gone in the Mediterranean if he had allowed them to take Gibraltar. And another thing that very few know, if a British or American airman was shot down and managed to make his way to the Spanish border, they were more or less escorted to Gibraltar where they made their way back to England to fly again. That was something that he did that was very helpful to our forces.

Q: Did you find that the Spanish military was interested in what was going on?

DONOVAN: Oh, very much so. All of their top people were very interested in keeping up with what was going on in Spain, what was going on in the world, how things are moving in Spain, oh, yes, they were.

Q: Did you have a feeling that the Spanish ruling class was out of touch with everything? They had not been involved in World War II, and having a fascist dictatorship made them a little ostracized it must have been a little bit uncomfortable.

DONOVAN: Well, I don't think that they really suffered any of those thoughts, you might say. I think their military was all in accord with Franco. They didn't seem to want to form any great deal to throw him out or anything like that, as a matter of fact, you recall that later on there was this attempt to overthrow the government there. An army general took over a radio station there and called for all the other generals to join him and overthrow the government. Young Juan Carlos, the king, brand new in his job, decided not to. He didn't encourage anyone else and they defeated any other attempt to take over the government.

Q: This was in the 1970s.

DONOVAN: Yes.

Q: Did you have any contact with our embassy in Madrid?

DONOVAN: Yes. Generally speaking, when you have somebody there, the ambassador has a lot to say about it. However, the job of the chief guthsmard, for example, reported directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I didn't go through any theater commander. I didn't go through any embassy or the State Department. I went right to the JCS. You might say I had a little theater of my own.

Q: You left there the first time when?

DONOVAN: I left in 1960.

Q: And were the bases complete by then?

DONOVAN: They were about 99% complete, when I left. I went down to Tactical Air Command, down as Deputy Commander of Operations in Langley Field, Virginia, and at this time the military was dealing with the foreign ministry; they were the ones that negotiated the 10-year agreement and every five years they renegotiated. So in 1963, it would do the first five-year renewal, and I was sent back to conduct those negotiations. I thought that I'd be coming back when those negotiations were finished, but I remained there until 1967.

Q: Now, with these negotiations, what were the Spanish demanding and what did we have to offer?

DONOVAN: Well, we had the military assistance advisory group [MAAG] that I was also in charge of, and under that we were training and providing equipment for all three services. In all countries we had this military advisory group, and we looked into what the situation was and then, if you could help them in some reasonable way, then we would put in recommendations on that.

Q: It seems as though every time our base renewal agreement comes up with Portugal we have a very difficult time it's always a difficult negotiation, but I take it that the Spanish one you had was not.

DONOVAN: It took just about six weeks to get the negotiation through. I had a very close relationship with Munoz Grandes, who was chief of the high general staff. He was an Army general and he was number two in the government, right under Franco. One time he told me, "Donovan, between the two of us, we put everything on top of the table, we can do anything. But one time under the table, nothing." I leveled with him every time. I just happen to have a little thing here that kind of proves that point that he had. This was the atomic bomb we lost, you know?

Q: Oh, yes, hydrogen bomb, as a matter of fact.

DONOVAN: Yes. This is something. Do you speak Spanish?

Q: No.

DONOVAN: Well, it says "Who was the first one to advise Spain?" I won't read the whole thing, you know, I just take... This is in one of the Spanish newspapers, El Pais, yes, Sunday, 26 May, 1996. And, it came out and said "Who was the first one to keep Spain advised?" Well, it goes on all about, and it says "In 1985, the North American General Stanley Donovan, _____," which means "the number one representative of the United States," I guess. It talks about how always after I spoke about

the bombs that fell there I went directly to the ambassador of the U.S., Angie Biddle Duke told him about it, and he went to see the Minister of Foreign Affairs. For my part, I saw Munoz Grandes, who was chief of the High General Staff and the vice president of government. Here's what I told you about reading Spanish.

“_____ [We put everything on top of the table].”

Q: Describing this, because this is another and interesting episode, could you describe how you heard about this accident?

DONOVAN: It was a B-52 and a tanker, and they were refueling the B-52 off the coast of Spain, and they collided. The B-52 dropped its bombs due to the collision. Three were on the ground, and one in the drink. There was a fisherman who said that he had seen what looked like a man in a parachute in the bay there, but we didn't pay much attention to that. We got three or four hundred of our airmen, and we put them shoulder to shoulder going through the surrounding area looking for the bombs, all four of them at the time. We found the three sites almost immediately, and then the Navy sent us a whole crew under a very fine admiral, and they had these one or two man submersibles. Jon Lindbergh's son was one of the crews on one of these small ships, and they had found the bomb at about the limit that these submersibles could go. It was on kind of an undersea mountain there, and they were afraid that if they misjudged it, it would slide down and we couldn't go that deep to get it. The navy did a terrific job on that. They pulled that one up. Around where the three bombs had landed on the ground, a little high explosive explosion had sent some plutonium flying around there. Our people from atomic energy had tested those, and there was nothing there, but the Spanish were a little concerned about that. So we scraped off around the three sites and a few inches of dirt, and put in 55 gallon drums and put them on a freighter. I don't know what happened to it after that. Went out beyond my control then. The Spanish were very satisfied with that. The atomic energy people went in made another investigation, said, “We can still grow tomatoes here.” That was the only stumbling block we had, the Spanish were very cooperative. Of course, we did all the work back there, they were only in the beginning stages of their atomic energy program.

Q: Did you get involved in the famous swim with the ambassador at that time? I've interviewed a man who was a junior officer at our embassy at that time, and you know, talking about the famous swim.

DONOVAN: As somebody had the idea, Ambassador Duke and General Donovan, would they have a swim in the water where the bomb dropped? We said, "sure" and some smart aleck said, “Well, sure, but do you think they'd take their sons?” So Angie took his son and I took my son and we bathed in the water. Not a bit of contamination. Prior to that, there was a hotel there that had closed for the season, but they kept it open so that the officers from the 16th Air Force and others there for the search were quartered there. The owner had graciously kept it open so that we could have a place to stay. All of our troops were in a tent camp nearby. I decided that I would have a paella at the hotel. All of the fish and everything in that paella would come from the waters that were supposedly contaminated. Then I had all of my officers over for lunch. Everything, the cooking and

all, was up in that hotel. The owner of the hotel, who happened to be a Spanish general, General Cabanus, came by. I knew him and he said, "What's going on here?" And I said "Oh, we're going to have paella. People seem to think that the waters are contaminated, so everything going in that paella, except the rice is going to come from the supposedly contaminated waters." He said "Do you have room for one more?" That convinced a lot of people that we were on the right track.

Q: When you first heard about this accident, other than saying "Oh, my God" I suppose, what was your immediate reaction and of your staff? How did you arrive at the conclusion about how you were going to treat this and what you were going to do? Because you were the first person in authority to find out about this.

DONOVAN: Yes, that's true. We knew that there were hydrogen bombs aboard that aircraft, and we knew that from eyewitnesses down there that lots parachutes had come out of it. The B-52, what I knew of it - we had at that time B-52s ready to go in case of emergency, and that they were loaded with atomic bombs. And I think, we got the word from SAC. Those things happen fast with something like this.

Q: When something like this happens, the initial thing is "What are we going to do?" Could you talk a little bit about this?

DONOVAN: From my point of view in Spain, as soon as I heard about it I went to see the ambassador. I told him about the A-bombs. And he, he went to see the foreign minister to tell him. After I finished with Munoz Grandes, I told the ambassador that I was leaving to find out what all this was about. Incidentally, I told Munoz Grandes that there were atom bombs on board. And he said, "Good God! I didn't tell the Foreign Minister." So I said, "You'd better get your tail end over there right away and tell him," which he did. And then a question came up from Washington: "On whose authority did you release the words that there were atomic bombs?" I told them "The ambassador's and my authority released the information. If you want to do anything about it, just do it." I don't know why they expected us to cover it up. And fortunately, very fortunately, a young Spaniard working for UPI was wandering around down there and he got in touch with a couple airman who were conducting the search, and he said, "What are you guys doing down there?" They said, "We're looking for some atomic bombs" So he reported... Hell, it hit worldwide press. Wouldn't it have been nice if the Spanish government had heard that through the United Press rather than the United States authorities? Good God.

Q: But I assume the initial reaction back in Washington was "Let's try to keep it quiet."

DONOVAN: Evidently yes, otherwise I would never have received the message "On whose authority did you release that information?"

Q: In many ways, I would imagine, after that incident, it would have in a way strengthened the relationship between the Americans and Spanish, because it showed that we weren't playing games, and we were dealing with this in a straightforward manner.

DONOVAN: Trying to keep it a secret would, I think... We'd have been really stupid. This between Munoz Grandes and me, the on-top-of-the-table served us so well there, I don't know where anybody got the idea that I was going to do anything other than what I did. Several times, we had State Defense messages coming into the embassy JUSMAAG [Joint U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group]. For example, the atomic subs, we wanted to put them in Rota, had them up in Scotland, so the word was that "Oh, you'd never get it," and then somebody put the B on me and they said well let's see what he can do about it. After everybody in Washington said it couldn't be done, I went to see Munoz Grandes, and talked to him and he said, "Well, what's going on?" And I said, "They're atomic submarines, and they're atomic powered submarines, and they use atomic bombs." And so, he said, "Now, how long did it take you to reach an agreement in Scotland?" I happened to know... We had been talking with them for I don't know how many years and we still didn't have a written agreement, and so I told him that. And I said, "But this isn't going to take us that long, is it, General?" He said, "Move 'em [them] now. Keep me advised." If you're a Spaniard, if you're level with them they'll go all the way with you, they'll do everything they can, but you can't go 99, 44 one hundredths of the way, you've got to go all the way, and I think that that proved so on a number of occasions.

Q: You left there in 1967, I take it by that time the bases were well set and things were going very well.

DONOVAN: All set up, were going very well, no problems to speak of, and then of course the thing came up under Gonzales government, socialists. Before the election, he said "No bases, and no NATO". After he got in, he changed his mind about NATO, and was still involved. Not militarily, like France. Also, he changed his mind about the bases, said "now we got a little bit of NATO going, might as well change what to do about the bases."

Q: Did you go back to Spain a second time?

DONOVAN: No, that was it from 1963 to '67. '55 to '60 was the first time.

Q: Franco was still very much in power when you were there.

DONOVAN: Yes. I was back in Spain when he died. I remember going to his funeral.

Q: How did you find your relations during both this 55 to 60 and 63 to 67 period with the embassy?

DONOVAN: I was very fortunate, John Lodge was the ambassador during my first five years there. We got along just absolutely fine, no problem whatsoever. I had several ambassadors during my second term: Bob Woodward, of course, Angie Duke, and Wells Stabler. They were all very fine men. We got along just perfectly, no locking horns or anything. We discussed things and arrived at an answer.

Q: Did the [other] American military attachés play a different role than you did?

DONOVAN: Yes, they had nothing to do with my job, although I'd get a lot of advice from them. The two things were entirely separate.

Q: What about one of the most difficult problems, always is having troops in a foreign countries. I was an enlisted man in the Air force, in Germany, Korea, and Japan, and I know, because I participated, I know what young men can do. Do you have any great problems, and how did you deal with it?

DONOVAN: Well, [there was one] particular incident, [which was over] what you'd call jurisdiction. I went to the Ministry of Justice, and worked out a perfectly reasonable and I thought very fine way of handling [any] situation. We had just managed to have it so that all American serviceman, whether they were living there or had just come in for a visit, anything they did other than anything against the State of Spain was placed in my hands. They handled everything against the government of Spain. One young man ended up in jail, for just a holding time, I guess, and he complained bitterly, because he only had a ration of two beers a day. I had a congressman back in the States saying that one of the sons of his constituents was being maltreated and everything in jail and what was I going to do about it? I almost got myself court-martialed or something because I sent a message back to him saying what I thought about that young lad being mistreated by not getting beers.

Q: What were the main problems you had with the troops there?

DONOVAN: The commanders of the units, they were the ones that had the problems. The main problems were these lads getting a little drunk and raising hell downtown. We had one case where a Navy ship came into Malburn, and some of the crew went into a bar, and finally threw everyone out, closed the doors, and raised hell in the bar. The captain of that ship was really great, he sent word to the mayor, saying "Let me know the cost to repair the damage to everything in that bar, all the liquor, all the tables and chairs, cause they had really raised hell." The commanding officer of that cruiser was really great, did a good job. When I went there, everything was smoothed over. There were some really serious things, we had a couple of rape cases, which were difficult to handle.

Q: How did you handle rape cases? This comes to mind because we've just had a very nasty one at Okinawa.

DONOVAN: At that time, we didn't have any real trouble, because there were only one or two that I knew about (There may have been more.), [and they involved] prostitutes. I'll never forget that, because the Spanish reaction was "We consider raping a prostitute as bad as raping any other woman." And they were right; rape is rape. But we didn't have much trouble at all.

Q: You left there in 1967. Where did you go?

DONOVAN: I went to Turkey, I was the United States representative to the CENTO. I

was there from 1967 until I retired.

Q: What was the situation in Turkey during the '67-'69 period?

DONOVAN: Well, the situation there, everything was under control, there were five Lt. Generals, one each from Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran, army generals. Air Marshal Sir Tim Piper and I were the two airmen. Each of us had a number of staff officers. They formed the working staff. We made English the staff language. That worked out very well, it was a very good organization, it's out of existence now, it was on a downward spiral while I was there.

Q: How did you view the Soviet threat during this period?

DONOVAN: Well, we were a little concerned about that, because occasionally the Turks would have maneuvers that ran along the Russian border, and one time an Army Major General in our crowd, he was chief of the MAAG there. He had a little two place airplane, and the pilot landed in Russia instead of Iran. All hell broke loose. He adopted the proper attitude, because I heard he complained about the food. And as a result of complaining about the food, he got the imperial treatment and all the caviar and sturgeon he could eat over there. So he made out all right. Landed in the wrong place, there were CENTO maneuvers going on on our side, so they didn't know what to do, but they treated him all right.

Q: What was your impression of the Turkish military at that time?

DONOVAN: Very, very fine outfit, they had discipline, they were really top dogs. The five military deputies were down in Crete where the British have a base, and the Greeks and Turks were fighting all the time it seems. We were there, all of us, and we were on this airfield under British control, I don't know why they had it, but it was in their control. We were heading back to Turkey, well, the Turks had decided they were going to put more forces in Cyprus, the five of us were talking to the Turkish representatives, and we said "You get on that horn, and you're not getting off that damn horn until you get us clearing to get into Turkey. Wouldn't that be great, the five military representatives of CENTO out of the picture while Turkey goes to war when the whole CENTO should be involved in it? We were.

Q: So you retired in 1969?

DONOVAN: Yes, see the Air Force has retirement based on your grade and years of service. For example, colonels, brigadier generals, 30 years, out. Anything above that, 35 years, out. I had Army time, too.

Q: What did you do in Spain after retirement?

DONOVAN: I was with an outfit called Financial Marketing International. I worked with them for a couple of years. New York was really backing this outfit, so they finally

decided they weren't going to have an office in Madrid, so that job fell apart.

Q: I want to thank you very much for this. This is very interesting.

DONOVAN: Oh, and then, I became the president of a security company there. Locks and guards and all that, and I was fired, as the Spanish government decided that no foreigner could be the president of a security company, so I was put on the Board of Directors, a much better job.

End of interview