

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

UNDER SECRETARY PHILIP C. HABIB

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Initial interview date: May 24, 1984
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background

Born and raised in New York of Lebanese-American parents	
University of Idaho	
Forestry work and interests	
NYA (National Youth Administration) program	
U.S. Army - WWII - Operation Beach	
Sorbonne; University of California at Berkeley	
Teaching assistant at University of California at Davis	
Entered Foreign Service - 1949	
Ottawa, Canada - Economic Officer	1949-1951
Ambassador Stanley Woodward	
Environment	
Speech writing	
Wellington, New Zealand - Economic Officer	1951-1955
Ambassador Robert Scotten	
Royal Economic Society	
Duties	
Environment	
Travels	
State Department - Intelligence and Research Bureau - Economic Research	1955-1958
Soviet intentions	
Colleagues	
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad - Political Officer	1958-1960
Caribbean Federation members	
Travels	
Consul General Walker Orebaugh	
Colleagues	

State Department - Office of Communism in Economic Activities Douglas Dillon Guinea policy	1960-1962
Seoul, Korea - Political Counselor Contacts and travels	1962-1965
Saigon, Vietnam - Political Counselor Ambassador Cabot Lodge William Porter and CORDS	1962-1967
State Department - Deputy Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia responsibilities Bill Bundy The 11:00 Group The Thursday Group Korean troops in Vietnam Wise Men Group Dean Acheson Clark Clifford (Secretary of Defense) Briefing Lyndon B. Johnson Lyndon B. Johnson's April 1968 Vietnam speech Paris Peace Talk staffing	1967-1968
Paris, France - Temporary Duty - Paris Negotiations Bombing halt negotiations "Safe House" meetings Secret meetings Cyrus Vance Staffing Anna Chennault Henry Kissinger involvement Freddy Weyand Dick Walters Personnel First encounter with Kissinger (Vietnam days)	1968-1971
Korea - Ambassador Heart attack Assistant Secretary offer Park assassination attempt	1971-1974
State Department - Assistant Secretary/Under Secretary Vietnam War progress	1974-1977

Ambassador Graham Martin	
Mayaguez incident	
President Ford's Far East visits	
Issues as Under Secretary	
Cyrus Vance	
Middle East trips	
Duties	
Heart attack	
Stanford University - Diplomat in Residence	1977-1979
State Department - Senior Advisor to Secretary of State	1979-1980
Caribbean issues	
Retirement (Temporary)	1980
Stanford University - Senior Fellow	
Private business - Hawaii	
Advisor to Secretary of State Al Haig	1980
Arab-Israeli issues	
Ditchley House negotiations - 1982	
Shuttle diplomacy - Arab-Israeli	
Lebanon-Israel negotiation issue	
Syria and PLO troops in Lebanon	
Lebanese Civil War	
President Assad of Syria	
Retirement	
Honorary degrees and awards	
American Foreign Service Association	
Women and the Foreign Service	

INTERVIEW

Q: Okay, Phil, here are our first questions.

HABIB: You wanted to know whether or not my parents were married in the States. Yes they were. They came here to the United States with their families. Well, my father came individually as a young man. He was in his late teens, I guess. His older brother had come before him. What they were doing was escaping the Turks. My mother had come over with her brothers, and they met in the States and were married in the States. They came in the latter part of the 19th century from Lebanon. They didn't know each other before they came.

Q: What towns did they come from?

HABIB: My father came from the Sidon area, my mother came from a little town north of Beirut. I suppose it was one of those semi-arranged things in the sense that someone decided that this man would make a good husband, and someone decided they better get rid of their sister and mutual arrangements were made. They were married in New York.

Q: They were both Maronites.

HABIB: No, my mother was not a Maronite, my father was a Maronite, but naturally in the States we were raised in the Roman Catholic church when we were kids, except on special occasions we'd go to the Maronite church. But I can also remember going with my mother to church. They're all under the jurisdiction of Rome so it was part of the greater Universal Catholic Church. Like so many of those people, of course, when they immigrated, they brought their families. For example, my father's older brother came, then he came, and when they had settled in they brought his younger brother and his mother who was the only one left in the family. Their father had died when they were young. So my grandmother came with them. I remember she lived with us until she passed away, I was about 7 or 8 years old. And naturally, as a result I would presume the language spoken in the home was always Arabic, but I was the youngest in the family. As a result by the time I was growing up English began to replace Arabic, so we spoke a mixed language in the home. They would speak to me in Arabic, and I would answer in English and as a result my Arabic is not as good as my older brothers, or my sister who spoke better Arabic than I did. And then I left home when I was 18 years old and went to school, so it all faded. My association with that immigrant ethnic world faded when I went west to go to school. As you probably know I was born in Brooklyn, lived almost all of my early life in an area of Brooklyn called Bensonhurst, which was about...I think, even in that district today, the Congress has more Jewish voters than any other district in the United States. It was an almost solidly ethnic Jewish neighborhood that my immediate congressman's home was in. And I went to school...on Jewish holidays, for example, the school would practically shut down. I never went to school on a Jewish holiday.

Q: You probably learned more Yiddish than Arabic.

HABIB: I learned a little bit of Yiddish. I learned how to curse in Yiddish very early in my life. But I was also what they called in Yiddish, the shoppers boy. The one who goes around and light the fires on Fridays. It was a fairly orthodox neighborhood. Sometime I'll send you a tape that I made. I was speaking at a Jewish Federation meeting not long ago, and one of my childhood friends was there. I had seen that he was invited, he was the president of another Jewish Federation. All my childhood friends were Jewish, everyone. And they asked me at this meeting after dinner one night to reminisce about what it was like to grow up in a Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn, and somebody taped it. It was very spontaneous, very extemporaneous. I'll send the tape because its a very amusing account, you know what it was like, and never dreaming, of course, that 50 or 60 years later I

would be involved in events that are fundamental to both. In fact, the State of Israel and Lebanon all of it came together in my old age. The primary school I went to was just a block and a half from where I lived. Within a radius of two blocks there were two synagogues, one of them was Sephardic, and one of them was Ashkenazic. One of them catered to a community of Jews that had come from Syria, interesting enough, Syrian Sephardic Jews. And then there was the other group that were the Eastern European immigrants--Russians, Polish Jews, Romanian Jews, and the categories were all there. At any rate, they didn't have many German Jews because they were the elite, they lived up on Riverside Drive and Ocean Parkway, they didn't live down where we were.

Q: The Sephardic, they still spoke...

Habib: They spoke Arabic. The group that I lived with when I was a boy at the age of about 7 until I went to university at 18, we were a very tightly knit group. There were about 8 to 10 of us at various times, never any more. We were organized...in those days you had these cellar clubs. We had a clubroom in the basement of one of our member's homes. I was the only non-Jew in the group. Three of them were Sephardic, Syrian Jews, the rest of them were of Eastern European origin. Some of them Orthodox, some of them Reform. It was a very amusing mix, of course, in many ways, it's very unique. And of course it made me very early in life aware of not only Jewishness, but it also made me aware of anti-Semitism because, being that I traveled in that crowd, I was one of them and everything they felt, I felt. Well, beyond that anti-Semitism is basically directed against Jews, and beyond that people would assume that I was Jewish even though I wasn't, especially if you come from Brooklyn. If you have a big nose, automatically you have to be Jewish. So all my life I've been very sensitive to that problem of anti-Semitism, so its a factor.

About two years ago now when I sort of became notorious in international service, the teacher from the primary school I went to wrote me a letter saying, the students here are following you because they all know that you went to this grade school, and sometime would you correspond with them. So I wrote her and said, I'll come and visit you, and I finally got around to it.

Q: This was a public school?

HABIB: A public school, PS 205 in Brooklyn. And I finally got around and visited the school, and they had a day in my honor. The children had obviously been following me because in their classrooms they had pictures of me, and they had pictures of the various countries where I'd been. They were using it to give the kids a little feeling, at a young age, for international things, including geography. And by golly if they didn't turn up one of my teachers, my sixth grade teacher, and I remembered him because he was remarkable...Harry Weber was his name. He was retired, an old man of course, and he and his wife came to this day in the school. It was a wonderful day. There was a full spread on the front page of the New York Post, with pictures and all after the occasion. It

was one of those experiences that you remember. The kids used to write to me, and I'd sometimes write back to their teacher so they'd know I hadn't forgotten them.

Incidentally, it was that teacher particularly, Harry Weber, Harry remembered me, and he remembered me because I was very interested in the world and how to get places, and how to travel, and I was. Harry remembered, even I didn't remember. He must have records from his teaching days. He remembered we got to talking about different parts of the world, and I was telling the class about different parts of the world, and he asked me how I knew this, and of course I got the travel folders and all that sort of thing. I was very interested in the world.

Q: Sounds like my students(?).

HABIB: Well, that's the way you develop your interest to carry on in life. I was always interested in geography, always interested in out-of-doors, nature. I was very much involved in nature. I was a boy scout. I was always outdoors. On weekends I would go hiking. We used to go up to the Palisades, the Bear Mountain area up into the hills. If we didn't have that long we'd go out on Long Island where there was a little bit of greenery. And then in the last couple of years before I left, especially when I got out of high school, we got to going up to Fire Island. Fire Island has gotten notorious since for other reasons, but in those days there was an end to Fire Island that was a State Park down by the lighthouse. It was sand dunes and very open and you could go there and you could camp. We used to set up our tents. I remember in my sixteenth year when I graduated from high school, I spent a few weeks out there, just living alone. My friends would come over on the weekends. There were no roads to that place, you'd take the ferry to get there. I just loved the out of doors, and when I graduated from high school of course there was no money, it was the middle of the depression and I couldn't go to university, but I was taken up with this idea of making my life out of doors. When I graduated from high school I went to work after I'd had that little vacation on Fire Island. I went to work in a factory in Brooklyn. It was a sheet metal plant manufacturing metal boxes, metal cabinets, metal medicine cabinets, and I was the shipping clerk. We assembled the medicine cabinets, put the mirrors in them, packed them and prepared them for shipping. It was the first job I ever had. I was sixteen years old, I got paid \$10 a week for a 52 hour a week. And when I left it two years later I was making \$15 a week, but I had a deal with my father. My father was a grocer.

Q: That grocery background...all my mother's family were grocers.

HABIB: My father had worked in a bank up until the crash of '32 when his bank went under. He began doing odd jobs, he was an accountant--he knew how to keep books. My father was an educated man, he had gone to St. Joseph's College, the Merrimack college as a boy. He was educated in the French tradition and spoke excellent French. My mother spoke French also, interestingly, because she came from an educated family. But my father said, we have no money to send you to school. If you want to go to school, you go to work, get a job, you don't have to contribute to the house.

Q: You were what?

HABIB: I was the youngest.

Q: Of how many?

HABIB: Four. There had been five but one had died as an infant. The other three, my two brothers and my sister, worked and contributed to the family, when they could get work. That was a complicated story too in those days. I remember my oldest brother working under WPA. I can also remember him on strike when he was working in the garment trade, he went on strike and he was fired. He later became a union official. As a matter of fact he was well known in the garment workers' union, my oldest brother. He was a brilliant man, died very young. All my family died young.

Q: He must have been a token Christian in the garment industry.

HABIB: No, he was one of Dubinsky's people. He was an organizer and then he became a business agent. He's still remembered. The old timers all remember him because he really was a brilliant man. But in any event my father said to me, you save your money. So every Saturday when I would get paid, I would give to my father my pay, and he would put it away for me. The factory I worked for was in Brooklyn, so I used to ride my bicycle to work so I wouldn't have to pay subway fare, 5 cents. The factory was on Bergen Street, it was about a 45 minute bike ride from our house, and I used to cycle to work and cycle back to save five cents, which is what you were saving, five cents each way.

Q: I used to do that when I was in college.

HABIB: I used to take my lunch naturally, or if I didn't take my lunch we used to be able to get-- for 15 cents--you could get a pretty good lunch in those days, a bowl of soup and a sandwich, 15 cents. At any rate, I saved my money. I went to work in 1936 when I graduated from high school. In 1938 I applied to go to school. I didn't tell my father I was doing all this. I remember I applied at Syracuse, which had a school of forestry because that's what I wanted to go into--my interest in the out of doors, nature, natural things was very great.

Q: Seeing so few trees in Brooklyn.

HABIB: We used to see a lot of them on the weekends too. But I also applied at the University of Idaho, and I was accepted. I was accepted at all of them, but I decided to go to the University of Idaho.

Q: Did you get a scholarship?

HABIB: Well, I'll tell you a story. No, I was out of school, I was never a very good student in high school, I was too busy having fun. By this time I was 18 years old. So I went to my father and said all right, I've been accepted at this school, the course starts in September, and I want to go, where is my money that I've been giving you for two years? For two years I had been giving my father this money. And my father looked at me and said, things got very difficult, and he had to use the money for the upkeep of the family, these are not easy times. And the money was not there. Of course, I got absolutely furious. I was terribly upset. My brother, my father, they were all supportive, nobody blamed my father. After all, he wasn't putting the money on the ponies, he was a very devout, very serious family man, he supported the family with the aid of my brothers and sister who would bring home small sums of money. Pop had a grocery store on Atlantic Avenue, which was the heart of Lebanese community.

Q: My sister lived on Atlantic Avenue.

HABIB: I was born on 8th Street which is right off Atlantic Avenue. That's becoming a very nice area now.

Q: A lot of Arabs live there.

HABIB: There, on the avenue, you'd be surprised. Those brownstones are getting so expensive. They're being fixed up by the young couples who work on Wall Street.

Q: Like my son-in-law.

HABIB: At any rate, it was decided that I would go to school. I remember very well. I took a bus. My father gave me some money and my oldest brother--the one I told you by that time was working for International Labor Union...my oldest brother who had been a brilliant student, he graduated from high school, I think, when he was 14 years old, and had received a full scholarship to go to Rutgers University. He was the top student in the state of Jersey at that time--we were living there for a few years--he didn't go because times were rough, and they didn't want this young boy to go away from the family. So he had gone to night school at Brooklyn Poly, studying chemistry in fact. He was then working in this trade union, and he said he'd see what he could do to help me with money. I remember, I think I left home with \$90 in my pocket and a bus ticket. I went across the continent by bus, and the bus ticket was such that I didn't have to spend a night anywhere.

Q: This would have been about when?

HABIB: 1938, the Fall of '38 I went to Idaho, across the continent in a bus. I never got out of the bus.

Q: You hadn't been west of the Hudson by then.

HABIB: Well, I'd been to New Jersey, that's as far west as I'd ever been. I rode across the country in a bus day and night, maybe you'd have to wait an hour or two to connect with another bus, a Greyhound Line went right on through--into Spokane, south of Spokane down to Moscow, Idaho. I remember the fare was somewhere less than 100 bucks, and that was my first glimpse of the great United States, and it was a very impressive thing for an 18 year old kid. I can still see the moon when we were driving across South Dakota and North Dakota, the Dakotas by moonlight I remember that. And it was a beautiful trip. At any rate, I arrived in Moscow, Idaho, I didn't have a room to stay, I didn't know where I was going to stay, I didn't know anybody, didn't know a soul. I went up to register and they had a place there where you could room and board. I roomed in a home, I couldn't afford a dormitory, I roomed in a home with a family, I had a roommate. We had a little attic room in this house, two of us, Daryl and myself. I used to have to walk quite a ways to get to the campus, but it was cheap. And I started the first semester, and fortunately I got very good grades the first semester. I remember the Dean called me in and offered me a scholarship to pay for my tuition. The tuition at that time was \$100. So I got the scholarship and I didn't have to pay my tuition, and I never had to pay tuition again in the next 3-1/2 years at the university. They maintained this tuition-free...well, I lived with this family for a while, and then the next summer I went to work in the woods...I never came home the whole while I was in university, couldn't afford the trip. As a matter of fact, I didn't see my family until I was a 2nd lieutenant in the Army in 1942. Meanwhile my mother had died, and I never saw my mother again. I saw my father for the first time in 1942 when I graduated from OCS in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. My father came down to see me graduate.

Q: Did you do ROTC?

HABIB: You did two years of ROTC but I didn't take advanced ROTC, so I was drafted in 1942. As soon as I graduated from college, I was in the Army within one month.

Q: Okay, now back to your summer jobs.

HABIB: I used to work in the woods. The first summer I worked for the Forest Service on the blister rust control program, which is a disease of white pine. I worked in the woods the entire summer, and in those days you could work in the woods and save your salary. We didn't get paid huge amounts, but you got a bunk, you got your food--we lived in tents the first summer up in the St. Joe National Forest, in northern Idaho. We'd go out early in the morning, work all day, and come back at night.

Q: Was this treating trees?

HABIB: What we were doing was removing the alternate host. The alternate host for this disease is the gooseberry family, Ribes, wild gooseberries. They're the alternate host. In order for the disease to spread it has to have an alternate host, and we used to eradicate the Ribes. It was called the Blister Rust Control Program. As a matter of fact, over the years it was done and it was quite effective, otherwise you'd lost all the white pines in

Idaho. In any event, I'd work all summer, save my money and when I'd go back to school in the Fall I would have enough money to get through. There was another program at that time called NYA, National Youth Administration. The National Youth Administration had a program which you could earn, as I remember...

Q: \$40 a week.

HABIB: No, no, it wasn't that much. When it started out it was \$13 a month you could earn under NYA.

Q: We made 40 cents an hour.

HABIB: 25 cents an hour. I'm earlier than you possibly. Anyway, the NYA would take students. The first year I was in NYA I was swabbing out johns in the dormitory. Then I got the cushy job the next year, I was custodian, librarian, or whatever you want to call it, of the School of Forestry Methodology Collection, dried fungus. I used to have to keep the cards made out, and the filing of them, and the records, and that sort of thing, of the dried fungus collection which was a very nice job. I could work anytime I was free. At any rate, I got that \$13 a month. And the second year I was there I had saved enough money by working in the summer on the Blister Control Project. And I got along fairly well. I was still wearing the suit that I'd graduated in from high school for my best suit. I remember it had a Clark Gable back. Do you remember the Clark Gable...pleated in back...

Q: And a belt.

HABIB: It was a blue suit that my father had bought for me for \$17, I remember it very well. I remember the bargaining that he went through to get me that suit for \$17. I'll never forget it. But in any event, what we would generally do is we'd buy a good stout pair of pants in the fall after we came out of the woods, forest green twill trousers, and enough shirts to get you through, a sweater and a coat for the winter, and that was it, and you'd go through the winter. And then come Spring you'd go out in the woods, wear out that pair of pants, and then you'd get another pair of pants for the Fall. I did that each year. That was great. The first year I had a full summer's work, and then I was a sophomore. In that school there was a summer camp and you had to go to summer school, and that was a shattering thing because it meant...eight or ten weeks and that was a period when you couldn't work. Not only that, you had to pay fees and tuition, room and board.

Q: That would have been about 19...

HABIB: The summer of 1939...I'm trying to remember what I did in the summer of '39. Oh, it was the summer of '40 and the summer of '41...now what did I do the other two summers? There's a gap in my memory and I'll have to figure it out. One of them I know what I did, and then I know what I started out to do before I went into the Army...there's a gap in my memory, I'll have to figure that gap out.

Q: It's a long time ago.

HABIB: It's a long time ago. Anyhow, the summer camp thing really put a crimp in me, it was terrible. As a matter of fact, when the summer camp was over I went right to work fighting forest fires as part of a fire fighting crew.

Q: That was tough.

HABIB: Nothing is tough when you're 20 years old, and I was in very good physical condition, lean, tough and muscular.

Q: Did they have Indian fire fighters up there?

HABIB: No, we were all various mixtures of anything, but they were not solid crews. There were a lot of CCC crews in those days. But we were treated a little bit differently by the rangers because we were forestry students, and they would use us to supervise a group, even as a student. But I fought fires all over northern Idaho, I mean big fires, forest fires, and learned a great deal about how to do that. But I remember that summer when I had to go to summer camp was so difficult because when I got back to school in the Fall...I remember very well, it was two weeks before the opening of school. We had a nursery in the school, and the guy who ran the nursery, the manager, was a friend of all of us, and he let me sleep above his garage. He had a cot up there and I slept on that cot. I got myself a part-time job...that's an area around Moscow, Idaho where they're famous for seed peas, and there was a seed cleaning and packing plant. These are seed peas and they're packed in 50 pound sacks, 100 pound sacks. And my job, which was the night shift, was to clean the sacks by putting them up against an air blower. I'd clean the sacks and then I would stack sacks, eight hours a night, 25 cents an hour and I'd work eight hours a night. I did that for about two weeks, in the daytime I was living in this little area above a garage. I remember very well what I used to do. I was desperate to save money because I needed the money to get me through the school year. For breakfast every morning I would get some apples--there were plenty of apples around free--I'd eat apples, I'd buy a loaf of bread and a jar of peanut butter, and I'd eat peanut butter sandwiches and apples. And then one meal a day I'd go down to this greasy-spoon where for 25 cents you could get a three course meal, soup, the main course, and dessert, and I managed to save a few more dollars. But still no money. So that year was a very bad year for me.

Q: That was your junior year.

HABIB: That was my junior year. It ruined my grades in the sense that was the year when my grades fell off because now to get through the school year, what did I do? I started out in the Fall, I had a NYA job, I was living with Roy Keeler, a kid from Wyoming in a little room that wasn't big enough to swing a cat in, the two of us had shared. The house was the only Chinese family in town, they ran a Chinese restaurant. The only Chinese family in the town of Moscow, and Roy Keeler and I lived in a room above them that they were

renting out to roomers. And I washed dishes in a greasy-spoon restaurant, I remembered it was called the Bangles Cafe. Bangles was a sports game. And I washed dishes, and let me tell you every single day in the summer time I was down there washing dishes in that restaurant, and on weekends it was long hours, particularly on Saturday night. The net result was that with the NYA job, washing the dishes, living in these cramped quarters, my grades just plummeted. Whereas I'd been getting A's. The first two years that I was in the School of Forestry in Idaho, I was the top student. I got the highest grade of any student. There's a bronze plaque still on the wall of the School of Forestry where every year they put the name of the student in each grade who had the highest grade. When I was in Idaho last year for a special occasion, I was the distinguished Idahoan of the year and they gave me an award. It was a very nice occasion. The plaque with my name on it as the student with the highest grades for the years '38-'39, '39-'40 was there. Not for '40-'41 or '41-'42 because my grades just fell off.

Q: When your grades dropped did you jeopardize your...

HABIB: No, they kept you going. The Dean liked me and kept me going. By that time I had established the reputation as the best student, so no matter what happened it hung on. I never lost the scholarship interestingly. The Dean was very nice to me. For some reason or other he liked me. You know, professors get to like certain students, and he liked me. And I think the fact that I had gotten the highest grades the first two years, nevertheless my reputation was great. But at any rate, that was a very rough year because I'd fall asleep in classes. As a matter of fact there was a great picture in the annual for one year of me sound asleep in a classroom. The reason they put it in was because that was not a common posture I was in. I was tired.

Well, it came to the big year, and I realized I couldn't go on this way. Then something very nice happened. The group of boys that I had known as a child in Brooklyn, the Lone Eagles we called ourselves, that was the name of our Club, the Lone Eagles. We had rayon jackets with Lone Eagles on the back. The Lone Eagles, with whom I had corresponded at various times, the Lone Eagles knew about my predicament, and they gave me \$100, a lot of money. I took the \$100, I quit the job at the Bangles Cafe, and I moved into a cooperative dormitory. I had the NYA job, I had the \$100, and I had whatever few bucks might have been left over from what I'd earned the previous summer fighting fires and working in the pea factory. And that got me through the second semester, living in this cooperative dormitory where we could live...these dormitories were wonderful. They were wooden buildings, two to a room, a little tiny room...

Q: On the campus?

HABIB: On the campus, built by the university, and the students ran the dormitory on a cooperative basis. We hired a cook, that's the only person we hired, and we had a manager who was a student who got paid to be the manager, to keep the accounts, and do the buying. We all worked. Sometimes you were passing, sometime you were hash slinging, sometimes you worked in the kitchen, sometimes you were swabbing the floors.

Everything was cooperative. You could get through, believe it or not, one month, the total cost, the cost of the room pro rated--I think the room was \$27 a semester, and the food, you could get through a month on about 17 bucks, for one month. Of course, I had no other expenses because I never had dates. It wasn't that I had no other expenses, that was the period when I learned how to drink, we used to buy beer and get loaded, but only once in a while. Beer was 15 cents a bottle. Or sometimes you'd get a pint of Green River rye whiskey and go to the local grange dance and see if you could pick up some of the farmer's daughters. I mean those were the days when we lived a fairly wild life, the student life of the pre-war period. It would be considered tame today.

Q: Ninety-eight cents a pint for New England Rum.

HABIB: I remember Green River, which was a blended...I forget what it was, a bourbon or a blend, it was cheap, and it was very rough. But I remember we used to go to the Grange Hall on Saturday night and see if we could meet some of the farmer's daughters so to speak. We were all poor. The group of foresters, who were a close knit community on the campus, most of us didn't have any money. My roommate, Hal Watson, he was the son of a Mormon family, and Hal and I were roommates for the rest of my tour. We roomed the last half of that year, and then the full year the following year. Hal was a great fellow. I'll tell you a story about him. I went home with him at Christmas time for example, whereas the previous year I'd gone home with my roommate in those days--that's where I met my wife. He was from Reno. I never went back to see my family. At Christmas I would take a vacation by going off with my roommate, and each time I went to their home, and stayed with them. And my sophomore year was Henderson, and I went home with him and that's where I met my wife in Reno, Nevada, where his family was from.

At any rate, I got through the junior year with lousy grades. Then the next summer I was a full-time lookout on the Payette National Forest down in central Idaho, and I lived on a mountain top at about 10,000 feet, and I'd watch for fires the whole summer long. Before the fire season got in full force, we were stringing telephone wires, and working on the roads. At any rate, I spent the whole summer as a lookout. Very good pay, I think I got paid \$125 a month. It was good pay, and of course you had the cabin to sleep in and all I had to do was buy my food because I lived alone all summer. I think I didn't see more than two or three people the whole summer.

Q: So you were on duty when the fire season started.

HABIB: Oh, yes, when the fires started, when lightning struck... You'd have to check it every once in a while, and then if you got a lightning storm at night you woke up and looked around. You could see the lightning striking. I remember one night we had a spectacular storm, lightning hitting all over the place, and a fire would start here, and a fire would start there. I remember I would call in the fires...

Q: Did you have radio or telephone?

HABIB: I had a field telephone. I remember at one point they said, you go take care of that one yourself. And in the early morning I started out with an axe, shovel, no bucket, we fought fires with axe and shovel, and a couple of sandwiches on my back and I went down the mountain, crossed the valley, up the mountain to get to the fire, worked on the fire, turned around and went back up the mountain. I was in fantastic shape because in order to get my water all summer long I had to go down the mountain about a mile, and then back up it. I'll tell you what, carrying 45 pounds of water on your back at 10,000 foot elevation, you develop muscles and lungs. At any rate, I was in excellent physical condition. I made a lot of money that summer. I went back to school.

Q: No place to spend it.

HABIB: I remember when I came off the mountain, the first meal, I walked into a restaurant...it was in McCall, Idaho, and I told the waitress that I wanted a sirloin steak smothered in pork chops. She looked at me, that's right I want the biggest sirloin...I hadn't had any fresh meat, I want a sirloin steak and laid across it I want pork chops. That was my first good meal after I came off the mountain.

At any rate, I went back to school, I was well off comparatively speaking. I still had my NYA job, I still didn't have to pay tuition, and I'd saved over 400 bucks that summer and that was enough to get me through the whole school year. \$400 was plenty to get me through the school year

Well, I graduated that year and like many others the war had broken out in my senior year. Pearl Harbor came when I was a senior, a Sunday morning. I was naturally asleep, somebody came running in, woke the whole god-damned dormitory up to tell us that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. And, of course, the first question was, where the hell is Pearl Harbor?

Q: You were a good geography student.

HABIB: I think I knew where Pearl Harbor was, but I don't think very many people did. In any event, we were all registered for the draft, of course, but they deferred-- if you were a senior you got deferred--but as soon as you finished the school you were going to be drafted. Well, school ended, we all graduated. I remember graduation was distinctive by the fact that I actually bought myself a new suit, for which I think I paid \$25.

Q: You could buy a tuxedo for \$25.

HABIB: And I went to work waiting to see what would happen with the draft. I went to work for a lumber company, at that time it was called the Boise Payette Lumber Company. I was working as a company forester, we were cruising timber in Idaho. That company later became Boise Cascade. I was the assistant to the company forester. We'd cruise timber, and we'd make the map of the timber. Cruising timber is measuring timber

so you would know how much timber there was in a given area, and I used to run the compass for him so he could map the area properly. It was up and down the mountain, state line, through the brush, through the trees, no matter what. You get in pretty good shape again. And lo and behold there came the draft. The board called me and obviously I stopped by and they said...

Q: You'd effectively established residence in Idaho.

HABIB: Yes, I'd never left Idaho. By now it was four and a half years since I left home...four years as I remember. I remember I got the word that I was going to be drafted. And I went in, and they drafted me, and I raised my hand, and they said, you're now a private in the United States Army. In those days they gave you two weeks to finish up your affairs. So I decided to go down to Reno, Nevada to visit that girl that I'd met three years ago. I had corresponded with her, a beautiful blonde from Reno. We had had a sporadic correspondence for three years. So I went down to Reno, Nevada, and the next day I got married. And that was how I got married

Q: All within the...

HABIB: All within the two weeks and we took our honeymoon. You want to know how we got our honeymoon. We got \$100 from her mother. Her mother loaned me \$100. Her mother, of course, was not very happy that her daughter was marrying this broken down strange looking kid with no future, who was going to be a private in the Army. In those days the starting salary, if I remember for a private, was \$50 a month.

Q: \$52.

HABIB: So we took off on our honeymoon. We went to Lake Tahoe, and from Lake Tahoe we went down to Yosemite--you could see that I was still interested in...we went down to Yosemite and stayed in the Great Ahwanee Lodge. About 25 years later I took my children back to Yosemite, and we stayed in the same lodge. At any rate we got married...

Q: It was August 27th.

HABIB: I was drafted into the Army on August 25th, I was married on August 27th, and I left on the troop train for basic training two weeks later. I remember I had to come back up to Idaho...

HABIB: It was Christmas of 1938, or was it '39, no, it was Christmas of '39 I met my wife through Henderson, who was my roommate that year and he took me home to Reno. We drove down to Reno. What a ride. We borrowed a car, a convertible, you can imagine what a ride it was.

Q: Open?

HABIB: Yes, it belonged to one of the forestry students who wasn't going to use it. At any rate, that's when I met...

Q: Gas was 18 cents a gallon.

HABIB: His father was well to do, he was the manager of a packing plant. He didn't actually work for money. He was very free with his dough, he never stinted, he bought the gas. He knew I was broke. At any rate, we went down and spent Christmas at his home, and that's where I met my wife. His mother worked for his father, her mother worked for his father. And one day we got a chance to meet this daughter of hers who at that time would have been about 19 years old, and was a gorgeous blonde, so I naturally was very enamored. We saw a lot of each other during Christmas vacation and then I went back up to Idaho and we corresponded. Three years later I went back down there, and we got married. After the honeymoon, she drove me back to Boise...I'll never forget that car. It was a LaSalle convertible. She owned it, I didn't have any money. It was a great car. Anyway, she drove me up to Boise, I went into the Army, got on a troop train and went to Ft. Douglas in Utah to start my Army career, basic training. We started basic training there but then I was assigned to a battalion that interestingly enough was stationed on the Feather River in California in the valley. The battalion lived in an old CCC camp, and it was military police battalion of all things. It was guarding the rail lines, the Western Pacific Railway, against sabotage. Well, that's where we got our basic training, and then we were assigned to the battalion...beautiful country, Feather River country, I remember very well. I later went back there about 20 years later, my wife and I, as a matter of fact we camped in the area of the old battalion headquarters where I got basic training.

In any event, I was a private just like everybody else, we finished our basic training, and I got assigned to the headquarters of a battalion. And guess where it was. Reno, Nevada.

Q: No kidding.

HABIB: No kidding, which is where my wife was. My wife was working. She was a legal secretary. She was making very good money, legal secretaries make good money, and she was a top notch legal secretary working for one of the big firms in Reno. She was making excellent dough, and lo and behold, the battalion headquarters in Reno, in an old camp outside of Reno, and I get assigned to the intelligence section of the battalion headquarters. By that time I was a private first class, and I got assigned to battalion headquarters, and I got promoted from private first class to to staff sergeant, which was a big promotion. I'd jumped corporal, I'd jumped a full buck sergeant, I was a staff sergeant, three strips and a rocker. And I began making very good money myself as a staff sergeant. My wife was working. We had a nice apartment in town, and we still had her car although there wasn't much gas in those days. In any event, I put in for OCS and I got assigned to go to Officers Candidate School, the engineer's school because of my forestry background. I went to Ft. Belvoir, Virginia and became a 2nd lieutenant. She didn't come to Ft. Belvoir. When I got my bars I was stationed up in Massachusetts at the Air Force Base, Chickapee near Springfield, and she came back and joined me. I was assigned to an

Air Borne battalion, it was a glider battalion, engineer and glider battalion. We lived in Springfield, and she worked. She could always get a job because of her skills, she worked as a secretary and made a few bucks. Then the battalion was moved to Grenada, Mississippi, Grenada Air Force base for training. We had the gliders, the C-47s, and all our equipment was assembled, and we lived in a town called Coffeerville, Mississippi, which is right down the road from Oxford. Coffeerville, Mississippi, was where we found a room. I remember the room was not very big, it was one room, a bedroom-living room, and one small room for a kitchen, and a wood burning stove. We had a bedroom/living room which you could heat up and get it red hot and maybe you'd get a little heat. That's all the rooms we had. We rented these rooms in a house from a lovely southern lady called Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Johnson was very nice to my wife. Once again my wife got a job working for a local law firm, she then got a letter from them saying she was the finest legal secretary in the state of Mississippi when we left. In any event, through that we got to know a few people around town. So we spent the basic training period in Mississippi.

(Gap in tape.) Then we were sent back to England to prepare for the famous drop across the Rhine. Fortunately we stayed on the airfield and the operation fizzled as you remember if you've ever read the book "A Bridge Too Far". We were supposed to go into the area where the British brigade was.

Q: Did you go into France?

HABIB: No, we were on boats, never did go on gliders for some reason or other. The paratroopers went in, and the combat flyers went in but they never took us in. We went back and were ready to go across the Rhine and that was called off, so we never did go in on a combat drop--thank god, because those things were coffins. Those things were terrible. If you survived the landing...even when in training, we would tip over; no one got seriously hurt but it was bad, no question. In any event I spent a couple years in Europe and came home.

Q: Where in England were you based?

HABIB: Before the invasion, first we were in the Oxford area, Cotswold, then we went out of Southampton on a boat and landed on Omaha Beach. We landed about two weeks after June 6th, my battalion was brought in. I remember we spent the first night up on the bluffs overlooking Omaha Beach, and I remember my first experience with the Germans, they would come over at night--they didn't dare come over in daytime--and they would bomb the area, or try to. But the anti-aircraft was more dangerous than the bomb because the shrapnel would be coming down and we'd be in the foxholes. And then we moved out of there, went up into the Cherbourg peninsula right behind the troops, and they took Cherbourg. And we built the first flight field on the Cherbourg peninsula; we were working on airfields. And I remember my battalion built the first field that would take heavier planes. Then we started following behind the troops across France repairing front line airfields, building and keeping them going. I remember I was involved in the famous bombing that proceeded the movement with Patton's third army which had landed at

Cherbourg and came up across and went right past us. It was some show. They sent 1,000 bombers over and we were standing there watching. The ground was shaking. I was just a few miles away from Saint-Lô, and the third army came through and that was the great breakout. We didn't know what the hell was going on. What did we know at our level? We didn't know who was winning, we knew what we were doing alright, we were there.

When the war ended, my battalion was in Germany, but I was not. I had been detached from the battalion. I was engineer officer-in-charge of three air bases outside of Paris. Villacoublay, the great military base was mine, and two others that were temporary airfields. The French air force used it, we had taken over and we rehabilitated particularly Villacoublay so they could be used. And the war ended. I rejoined my battalion in Germany, and then some guy said...

Q: The record says you were captain.

HABIB: Well, I was a 1st lieutenant by that time, and then I was promoted to captain at the end of the war. I remember a guy coming around saying, any of you guys want to go to school? We were all waiting. We were counting our points to come home. Well, I said, what's this school business? At that point I was the commander of a prisoner of war camp. I hated it. I mean, I didn't like running prisoners. They were using them for clean up and construction. We were in Wiesbaden, Germany and building the air force headquarters, and I was in command of a prisoner of war camp, is what I was. I was the Commandant in a prisoner of war camp. And this guy came around and I said, geez, anything to get out of this. Well, this was a program called Training with Civilian Agencies. And, if you wanted to, you could go to school in England, you could go to Berlitz, you could go to Paris at the Sorbonne. So I put in for it. By that time my French had improved to the point where I could claim some competency in French. So in October of 1945, while I'm waiting for my points, so I could come home, I got the call, you want to go to school, you can go to Paris. I went to Paris to the Sorbonne, and they had a three-month course they called French Civilization-- you took language, you had seminars, you took history, geography, philosophy. Jacques (inaudible) was our lecturer in philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1945. I had a room at a place called the Paris Pavilion, and it was a marvelous experience. It was better than running a prisoner of war camp. And that was sort of the clinching element in my sort of awareness of what you might call the foreign community. Well, anyway, soon our numbers came up and we returned to the States and were discharged.

Q: When did you get back to the States?

HABIB: I got back to the States in February of 1946. I went back to school. I decided to pick up where I was before the war. Before the war, my last year, my senior year, I had received a scholarship to the University of California School of Forestry to do graduate work. My professors were always urging me to do graduate work. I was a hell of a good student, except for that last year when my grades fell off but I was still recognized as sort of the best student in the school. So the professors for the good students would try to tell

me to do graduate work. And I had a scholarship. So what the hell, I'll go back to where I was going to be four years previously. So instead of going to the School of Forestry in the University of California in 1942, I went in 1946. Only this time they didn't give me a scholarship--they said that was four years ago...

Q: Did you start in the summer session?

HABIB: No. Well I did start in the summer session doing something. I took a few months off and in the summer of '46 I registered...I knew that you had to have two languages for a Ph.D., so I took German because I didn't know German. French, I didn't have to because I knew French. I took German in the summer, then in the Fall I registered for the full courses in the Department of Agriculture and Economics. And I spent the next three years there, the usual thing, after the first semester I became a research assistant. Then I became a teaching assistant.

Q: Did you get a Master's degree?

HABIB: No. I went straight to the Ph.D., and I taught an elementary economic section up at Davis, California. I used to go up there to teach.

Q: Oh, I visited that campus.

HABIB: I was on the Berkeley campus. They gave courses up there. They wanted me as a teaching assistant.

Q: This is basic economics?

HABIB: Basic economics. Economics 1A. I was one of the teachers. While I was in Berkeley, I was a research associate assistant to one of the professors. We did research on various crop problems. My first publication--I was the co-author of a pamphlet issued by the University of California--on the asparagus situation, or the spinach situation in California. I was the co-author, I had done the statistical research.

Q: Filed in the Library of Congress?

HABIB: I filed in a lot of places. There's another one on the premium peach market in California. My first publication, however, was as co-author of the spinach situation in California. At any rate, it was not bad training in terms of economic reporting in the Foreign Service. Let's face it. I later wrote hundreds of crop reports as an economic reporting officer in my first post in the Foreign Service. My first post in the Foreign Service, I was assistant agriculture attaché in Canada.

Q: Were you?

HABIB: Yes, and I used to write crop reports. I was an FSO assigned to the economic section, and I was assigned to the agriculture attaché as his assistant. I wrote hundreds of crop reports in the two years in Canada. In any event, I finished my goals. And a recruiting team came around. A State Department recruiting team, and they were looking for people with different backgrounds. They didn't want the old Harvard-Yale-Princeton political science, international relations major.

Q: That's why we both got in.

HABIB: They wanted guys from ranked colleges who were doing something different, and they were particularly looking for guys with economics. They spoke to the graduate students at Berkeley in our department. And I said to one of the guys, "Let's take the exam, what is this Foreign Service"? It was a three-day exam in those days, written, with a language exam on top. I took the exam in San Francisco...

Q: This is the Fall of '46.

HABIB: No, this was '48. The Fall of '48 I passed my oral examination. I began doing the research for my thesis, Ph.D. thesis, which was entitled, "The Economics of the California Lumber Industry." I did a lot of original research that had never been done on this sort of thing. Nobody had ever looked at it from that standpoint on the question of economies of scale, location theory and that sort of thing. I did all the research, assembled all of my material. And in the Spring of '49 I had to get a job. Well, I had an offer from the forest service to come back to Washington as an economist in the headquarters of the Forest Service. I had an offer from AID, which one of my professors had gotten for me, to be an economist at his mission, and of all places the AID mission to Korea. And if you will look in the State Department listing of posts and people in 1948-49, in that period, you will see my name listed as an economist-statistician in the AID mission in Korea. They had written to me, offered me the job, and before I signed up finally, I had the job, it was offered and, if I remember right, \$5700 was my pay, I forget the rank. Well, I was a married man with education. I had taken the Foreign Service exam in '48 and I hadn't heard from them. One of my professors knew a guy in the State Department, called Paul Savage. I said to him, "I wish I knew what was going to happen." He said, "I'll call Paul Savage and find out what's happened." He called Paul Savage--it was May of 1949, May or June--to find out. Paul Savage said, "I'll let you know." And he called back my professor, and said, "he's going to be appointed very soon."

Q: You had taken both your written and orals?

HABIB: I had taken the written exam, and the oral exam, and had passed them both. Yes, I'd flown back to Washington at my own expense in those days.

Q: The only one place you could go.

HABIB: The only place you could go for the orals was Washington. I had flown back at my own expense. I remember I'd bought a new suit because I thought I'd better have a decent suit, the best suit I'd ever owned that I bought in my life. My wife, as usual, was working so we had plenty of money. In those days that was a lot of money. At any rate, enough to buy a good suit. And I passed the orals, and I was waiting. Paul Savage told my professor that I was going to be appointed and, lo and behold, in late June I got the word that I was in the July '49 class. At that point I'd dropped the AID, and told the Forest Service that I didn't want to take the job in the headquarters of the Forest Service in Washington in the economic division, and went to the Foreign Service.

Q: Where did you live while you were in Berkeley?

HABIB: Oh boy. We lived in San Francisco because my wife had a good job in San Francisco. And I lived in the heart of the San Francisco tenderloin. We had a one and a half room apartment, with a Murphy bed that pulled out of the wall, in the heart of the tenderloin district which in those days, of course, was deadly - drinking and prostitutes. Nowadays, its gambling, drinking, prostitutes and drugs, and murder. It is the area of San Francisco which the mayor in the present day is trying to clean up. But it was the toughest district in San Francisco. We lived right in the heart of it. When I tell people today, who I knew from California, that I lived in the tenderloin on the corner of Jones and Eddy, they can't believe it. I remember the rent was \$36 a month. My wife worked and made a good salary, I used to commute to Berkeley.

Q: You had a car by then?

HABIB: No. I didn't have a car until 1948. So for two years I commuted, and finally we bought a car, and I used to drive over to the campus, but not until my last year. The first two years I commuted on the old T train. I used to walk down to the end of Market Street, not too far from where we were, and get on the train that crossed the bridge to Berkeley. Then, when I taught at Davis, I used to take the train from Berkeley up to Davis, and back in the evening. You know, between the GI Bill, my pay as a research assistant which was about \$110 a month if I remember right, and my wife's salary, we had enough money to live.

Q: You could go out to dinner once in a while.

HABIB: We used to go out regularly to Chinese restaurants. In those days you could get a fantastic meal in Chinatown for a couple of bucks. We didn't have any luxuries or anything, but we were young...

Q: My wife was working in San Francisco in those days.

HABIB: San Francisco was a wonderful city, and the Berkeley campus was a great place, that's a great campus. They treated graduate students very well, especially in the department I was in. And the graduate students - for example, I shared an office with

another graduate student. The guy I shared with was an Israeli student. My roommate, for one year, was a graduate student. My roommate in terms of office, meaning he wasn't Israeli, Asafra, born in Israeli, Vernon Hursh, and also a graduate student. He never went back to Israel. Vernon later became the head of the Department of Economics at UCLA, believe it or not. And the last time I saw him, he was the head of the department. I think now he's the president of something at UCLA.

Q: But he was a Sabra?

HABIB: He was a Sabra. That's the first time I ever heard the word "Kibbutz". He was from a kibbutz. I think he was doing his thesis on something to do with kibbutz, if I remember. Vernon and I were naturally good friends. It was an interesting collection of students at Berkeley at that time. First of all, most of the Americans were veterans, graduate students were almost all veterans. One of them was an Iraqi. I remember him very well. Hassan was the president of the Arab Students Association at Berkeley. He was a graduate student in agriculture and economics. Years later, he became the Director of Economic Development in Iraq before the fall of the monarchy, then he was finished. He married an American. Another one of the students was a Turk. Rushard was indebted to me the rest of his life because in 1948-49, Rushard came to me. He was enamored of an American divorcee with two children, and he kept saying he was going to marry her. And I kept saying, Rushard, how the hell can you marry her? What will your family...he came from a very prominent Turkish family, how can you go back to Turkey with an American divorcee that you've been sleeping with. In any event, she's got two kids, and you're going to take her back to Turkey, because he was determined to go back. Rushard was determined to go back to Turkey, he was not going to stay in the U.S. And he thought about it, maybe I'll stay in the U.S., I won't go back. No, no, you're determined to go back, you've got to go back to your country.

Q: How would she adjust?

HABIB: How would she adjust, and what would your family think of her. Finally, Rushard decided he couldn't marry that girl. I left the campus before he did, and he went back to Turkey. He later became the civilian head of the department of agriculture, he later became Under Secretary of Agriculture in Turkey. And he and his beautiful Turkish wife came over to the United States when he was professor of economics at the University of Ankara, and Under Secretary of Treasury. He came and stayed with me in Arlington, Virginia with this gorgeous Turkish wife of his. And he and I quietly reminisced about the girlfriend at Berkeley, and laughed about it.

Q: Saved him from a tragedy.

HABIB: But, in any event, unfortunately Rushard was killed in an automobile accident several years ago. He was a very, very fine person. I helped him - because his English wasn't very good - I helped him write his thesis because he couldn't write English that well. Another one of our students was a guy called Garvey Murak. Garvey was a Haitian,

a wonderful fellow. Garvey's English was lousy, but he was a graduate student. He sat next to me in economics because he couldn't understand what the hell they were talking about. So I used to tell him in French what the lecture was about. Then his English got better and better. Garvey Murak married an American black, whom we all liked. Garvey went back to Haiti and became the director of one of the great development projects. And then his family had a falling out within the regime, Papa Doc, and Garvey ended up working for the UN in New York, and from time to time I would hear from him or see him. As a matter of fact a few years ago, when I was Under Secretary of State, he was looking for some help with UNDP and Brad Morse was with the UNDP, and I put in a word with him with Brad Morse.

Q: UNDP...

HABIB: Well, Garvey was one of my friends and a graduate student. You know, you met people like that. I remember there was a guy from Brazil, then, of course, there were guys from all over the U.S. Some of the guys I still run across from time to time. Down in Arizona where I go, there was a guy who was the head of agriculture and economics at the University of Arizona who was one of my classmates. It was a good group. One of my classmates was vice president of the University of Wisconsin later on. Now he's the Washington representative of an association. The last time I saw him, we had a meeting on how to use the land grant colleges for the development of relations with the Eastern Caribbean, and he was brought to a meeting at the White House.

Q: Old school ties.

HABIB: Why not? But at any rate, we better run.

Q: Phil, that's great.

May 29th with Phil Habib. Phil, you got to Washington, and entered the Foreign Service, and went to the Foreign Service Institute, and you probably expressed a preference for your first post. Where did you want to go to start with?

HABIB: It wasn't very clear what the score was. About that time I thought I wanted to go to India, and I think I put in India. I ended up going to Canada. What happened, they needed somebody in Canada in the economic section. I would be the assistant agriculture attaché being that I had had some economic analysis experience in crops, and I'd had some professional training at the university, they decided to send me to Canada. I spent two very pleasant years there. There was an awful lot of reporting. We used to have a very heavy, regular reporting schedule, and I shared it with the agriculture attaché. He was a marvelous man, called Francis Flood. He died some years later. Francis was an old newspaper man, a lecturer. Francis Flood was the first man to ride a motorcycle across Africa from Lagos to the Red Sea, along the southern Sahara. They rode two motorcycles, his companion wrote a book about it which Francis gave me. He was an adventurer. You know, rafted down the Yukon, and the Irrawaddy, and things like that.

Q: Was he an agriculture specialist?

HABIB: He was an agriculture...he came out of Oklahoma originally. Francis would never claim to be an economist, he was just a practical guy who knew how to write. At one time he was head of the Foreign Agricultural Service. He was a very prominent guy, but beyond that he was just a wonderful human being. And he and his wife treated me extremely nicely. My first post, and I was lucky to have a boss like that. We got along from the first day.

Q: Who was your ambassador?

HABIB: The first ambassador was Laurence Steinhardt, who got killed in an airplane crash in Canada as a matter of fact, flying out of that airfield up there in a C-47. And the next one was Stanley Woodward, who was a great fellow, a great guy. I still love Stanley. I used to travel with him. Dean Brown and I used to write Stanley's speeches for him. He was a political officer, I think it was his second post. Dean Brown was a political officer, and I was in the economic section, being the assistant agriculture attaché. Stanley liked to give talks, and travel around the country to the different groups. Dean and I used to write his speeches and travel with him often and take care of the press. So it was a very good exposure to me. First of all, writing speeches, both on political and other matters, and then handling the press for him when we'd go places, handling the luggage, if you had to.

Q: Hold the door open.

HABIB: No, he was not that kind of guy. We used to have a great time with him. You know, we'd be traveling west through Canada and by the time we'd get to Winnipeg, he would send his secretary out to get a copy of Robert Service poems, and we'd read "The Cremation of Sam McGee," or one of those things. He loved to read from Robert Service. We'd come back from a reception, or a dinner, and we'd sit in his room. The famous one that we all loved the best was probably "The Cremation of Sam McGee."

Q: I used to know it.

HABIB: The Marge of Lake LaBarge. It's one of the amusing Robert Service's poems where Sam McGee was from Tennessee - is the way it started out. I did, as I said, an awful lot of reporting, a lot of commodity reporting on everything. As I used to tell the guys who worked for me years later, when they wouldn't get their reports in on time, I'd say...everything was deadline, you had to get a report in by a certain time, and I'd say, "when I used to sit up all night writing a hops report, a British Columbia hops crop report, just to get it in on time, and you guys left it..." "Of course, nowadays everybody wants to make high policy from the day they enter the Foreign Service. But in those days you learned from the bottom up, and I wrote commodity reports about everything from poultry and eggs in Ontario, the crop situation in Montreal, the wheat situation in the western province, very important reports in terms of the commodities.

I used to tease some of the guys that are ambassadors now who I used to help train years ago about how they didn't realize how important it was to get something in on time. The one thing that Francis Flood and I used to pride ourselves on was that all our reports went in on time. If I remember right, we had 65 crop reports a year.

Q: Better than one a week.

HABIB: Better than one a week. He used to write some, and I used to write some, which meant you had to get the information, you had to get the statistics, you had to go to the departments in the government in Ottawa. You had to know somebody in the trade. Also, it probably was the first time I ever sat in on an international negotiation. It was in Ottawa. I remember when the Secretary of Agriculture came up to negotiate something about potatoes with the Canadians. I was part of the delegation. It was good experience. In those days, of course, the Foreign Service didn't take care of you as thoroughly as they do now. You had to find your own place to live. I remember the first place we lived in was real Victorian. I remember getting up in the middle of the night with a tennis racket banging the bats down because they were flying in the bedroom.

Q: You had to bring along all your furniture too. Or buy it.

HABIB: We didn't have any. As a matter of fact, I used to play a lot of poker in those days, and I won enough money playing poker...within this group, we had about six of us, we used to meet once a week to play poker--small stakes. But I was very lucky, I used to win regularly. My wife is awfully fond of saying when the fellows would come to our house to play poker, they'd point to the furniture and say, well, I lost that, and I paid for that one. I remember we went down to Sears Roebuck's in Ogdensburg, New York and bought furniture for the first house that we had. I still have two overstuffed chairs, that have been recovered at least three times, from that first furniture, and a couple pieces of sort of a bedroom set. That's about all I've got left from that first batch of furniture I ever bought in the Foreign Service.

Q: Very fine pieces.

HABIB: Yes, that's right. I've still got them. It was hell in Canada, that's what I remember about Canada, about how cold it could get in the wintertime.

Q: I remember once being told in Ottawa when complaining about the cold in August, and they said, oh, you should have been here last month, we had summer.

HABIB: I remember once I went to Manitoba, I was in Winnipeg...I guess Stanley or somebody was making a speech somewhere, and I walked from the consulate to the place where the speech was being given, it was 37 degrees below zero. I had never been so cold in my life. The consul said, come on, it's not far, we'll walk. Of course, he had winter underwear on, and a fur hat and everything else, and there was I in just a plain old

common overcoat. Well, anyway, we survived. In those years we had some very nice trips across Canada. The Ambassador once took a speaking tour from coast to coast, and I wrote the speeches, took care of the press, went to the formal dinners. The first time in my life I ever wore striped...well, the first time I ever wore a tux was in Canada. Never owned one, never wore one all my life until I was in Canada. But the first time I ever wore striped pants was on a formal occasion and I borrowed a pair from a guy at the embassy because I didn't have any.

Q: Did you have any children by that time?

HABIB: The first child was conceived in Canada, was born in New Zealand - we had left Canada.

Q: Like us, we made three transfers halfway through pregnancy.

HABIB: The first one was born in New Zealand. We got to New Zealand about three months before the baby was born. And, three months after we left New Zealand, the other baby was born.

Q: But you had about two years in Ottawa.

HABIB: Two years in Ottawa and then we went to New Zealand. And the other thing I did in Ottawa, which took a lot of my spare time, I was trying to finish my thesis. I hadn't finished my thesis, so I hadn't gotten my degree. The degree was not granted because my thesis was not completed. I had completed all the research, I had to write it. I had written part of it out in California, but then I entered the Foreign Service. I remember when I was in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute, I'd get home at night and I'd sit there trying to write it in the heat of the summer of '49. When we got to Canada I was so damn busy working, learning a new job, I didn't have time to work on my thesis. But I finally got around to working on it, and finished it and sent it off to the university. And they sent it back to me with some requests for corrections, elaborations, and it sat there and sat there and I had a full time job, I was working my head off. But in the summer, I guess it would have been before I went to New Zealand in '52...guess what, talk about coincidences, you asked me about Bob Clodis. Bob Clodis at that time was a professor. He came up to Canada for a vacation and stayed with us...I had a little summer cottage, and he stayed with us there, and Bob said, come on, we're going to finish the thesis. All I had to do was make these corrections. It had been sitting there for months without having the time to do it. Bob said, we're going to make them. And having him there to talk about the thing, I finished it off with Bob Clodis, and my wife typed it all out. And I sent it off, and I got the degree. Otherwise, if it hadn't been for Bob Clodis, I often wonder whether I would have made those last few...you get out, and something else is very hard to do.

Q: The record said that you got your Ph.D. in '52. Were you present for it?

HABIB: No, I was in New Zealand.

Q: You left Canada in '51.

HABIB: Yes, I left Canada in the Fall of '51, and actually stopped by in California, saw the chairman of my committee, he said it's fine, the thesis is acceptable, and I went on to New Zealand, and the degree was granted a couple of months later. I wanted to finish it in order to get the degree, and I'd done so much work on it, a lot of the research. It was just a question of writing, and writing, and writing, and I finally got it done.

Q: We're both lucky having wives with good typist skills.

HABIB: She typed it enough times, I'll tell you that.

Q: So you went to Wellington, and you had home leave in between.

HABIB: It was a short home leave because I really didn't have much of a place to stay. We stayed with some friends.

Q: Did you go to Brooklyn?

HABIB: No. I had been down to Brooklyn when I was in Canada, so I didn't go there. By this time my father had died. I went to see my brothers and sister once or twice from Canada, and my oldest brother came up to Canada and went fishing with me. He was a great fisherman, he came up with his son and went fishing.

Then we went to New Zealand where I was economic officer. It was a two man economic section, and I was the chief economic officer. I think I did 99.9% of the reporting. I had a lovely fellow for a boss. He was the commercial attaché, a sweet man, but he let me do a lot of the work.

Q: Who was that?

HABIB: Emil Kekich, a lovely man. He was very kind to me. I was lucky - I had good bosses in the sense they were decent guys. Roy gave me all these assignments - if you want to do it, you do it.

He was economic officer, and I did a lot of the economic analysis, budgetary analysis, balance of payments analysis, commodity reporting, WTDRs, all of the routine of an economic section, there were two of us. And then when the agriculture attaché was away, I'd substitute for him and do his crop reporting. I had very good bosses which is nice. The ambassador was Bob Scotten. Bob was a sweet man, and his wife was one of the most charming women I've ever met. We still see her. She came to our house in California last month and we spent a few days. He had been career, then retired and came back in again as a political appointee. He'd been ambassador in Latin America, or Minister in Ecuador, or somewhere like that. But he was relaxed, and he was an ambassador of the old school,

but a sweet man. I loved them both, they liked me. The first DCM I had was a guy called Brown, and he was replaced by Norris Haselton. Betty is like a mother to my daughter, she watches over her like an aunt. She calls herself Aunt Betty to us. Norrie and Betty were wonderful. And then when Norrie was transferred, Sam Berger was named DCM. Sam and I became very close over the years. Sam was a sort of mentor to me.

Q: He was my DCM in Athens.

HABIB: That's right, he was DCM in Athens, he was ambassador to Korea. He stopped in Washington and changed my assignment and took me with him to Korea as political counselor. And then, of course, years later I did him a favor. I had something to do with Vietnam, and I saw to it that he got sent as deputy ambassador to Vietnam in the last days of the war. But Sam was a very marvelous fellow.

(Gap in tape)

She lives in Washington. She has a place in Hawaii, spends the winter in Hawaii and stops in California, plays bridge with my wife. But one thing I did in New Zealand which was very beautiful later on. I learned how to speak in public. I gave a lot of speeches, Rotary Club, Chambers of Commerce, from one end of New Zealand to the other, and I belonged to the Royal Economic Society. As a matter of fact, I was the first foreigner ever elected to the council. I was very active in the society, went to all the meetings, and that's how you get to know people. I knew hundreds of New Zealanders up and down the coast, from one end of the country to the other. I traveled all the time in New Zealand when I had a chance. You could get around, you'd get in a car and you could drive the whole north island, or else I'd go south. We'd didn't leave the country for our vacations. I remember we took a vacation and drove to the south island, Mount Cook, and all around. Interesting things happened to you. I remember we were traveling and we kept running into this couple, a young American woman and her husband, they were just married and sort of taking the same route that we were taking. We'd run into them at each hotel. This was in the 1950s. Well, ten years later, lo and behold, I meet the same guy and the same American wife, he was a New Zealander. He, at that time, was administrator of the island of Antigua in the British West Indies when I was stationed there, and we renewed our acquaintance. But I did a lot of speech making, and I did all sorts of things. I used to go to rugby matches every weekend with a civil servant, the senior civil servant. The only club I belonged to was the Civil Service Club where the senior civil service would go to drink beer and play pool, and amuse each other.

Q: Well, that was a small enough post.

HABIB: Oh, as active as we wanted. We made a lot of friends, people we still see to this day. You know, 32 years later and we still write to them, and they write to us. Some of them we met stationed elsewhere, guys we met stationed here in Washington that we knew when we were young in New Zealand. One of the New Zealand ambassadors here later was one of my best friends, years later. He was ambassador here in Washington.

When I was in New Zealand as second secretary, he was a junior officer in the foreign ministry. I did a lot of speech-making.

Q: Was there housing?

HABIB: We started out in a rented flat, and this went on for a while, and then the ambassador approached me one day - there was a nice house that the military attaché lived in, and the military attaché was being transferred. And the ambassador said, "I don't see why we should give that house to the military, we'll give it to you." The government leased it and it was a lovely house, magnificent grounds, small but beautiful and my wife was crazy about gardening and we made it a show place, because we'd built gardens all over the world. That was the first real garden that we built. We had flower beds--I still have pictures of it, it was magnificent, and we did it all at our own expense, nobody gave us money in those days. But we liked to do it. We had maybe 15 or 20 flower beds, rose bushes, a vegetable garden, everything. Well, that was the last year. A baby was born there, the oldest child was born there. In those days they insisted you spend two weeks in the hospital. My wife spent two weeks in the hospital, and I think the whole thing cost something like \$28, because they had socialized medicine. I remember I used to go to the drug store to get medicine, there they didn't pay for prescription drugs. I used to insist on paying, I said but I don't pay taxes, I think I have to pay. It was more bother to them than just putting it on the books.

I did another thing there which I was always very proud of. The famous Milford Track Walk. I walked the Milford Track which is a three day walk over the mountains in the southern tip of New Zealand. Beautiful, beautiful scenery. I got some magnificent photographs that I took.

Q: Back packing?

HABIB: Yes. Well what you did was if you backpacked, you went from one...they had huts built at one day intervals. You started at a hut, you walked all day, spent another night in a hut, walked another all day, spent another night in a hut, then you walked down into the fjord. There were 27 of us in the group, a bunch of New Zealanders, very, very outgoing, lovely people. A couple of Britishers, a couple of Australians. Years later, I remember the British couple that was on the trip, an elderly couple, he was a lawyer, a solicitor. Years later when I went to England, we went out to visit them in their home in the suburbs of London. We looked at pictures all over again of the famous walk. It is a beautiful walk, beautiful country up over a pass and down into the fjord, South Island.

At any rate, I traveled New Zealand from end to end, and I knew people in every corner of New Zealand, was widely acquainted in the city itself. So I got around a lot.

Q: Did you get into sailing down there?

HABIB: No. What I got into in New Zealand in all my spare time in the right season was hunting birds. I used to hunt pheasants with the deputy director of agriculture. The Foreign Agriculture attaché had a great place up country, and then I would go down and I would hunt quail and ducks with a sheep farmer down in the South Island who had a most beautiful place right on the lake, a small lovely home. But you know, everything in New Zealand was simple. Nobody lived high on the hog down there. I remember we had a housekeeper-nurse for the baby, a lovely retired English nurse. She was actually a nurse, and she loved the baby, and she took great care of her. It was a simple life, very pleasant, lovely people, and I learned a lot about the business, did a lot of writing, did a lot of speech-making. Whenever anybody wanted somebody to go to speak in some small town in New Zealand they'd ask me.

Q: It was a good way to make friends.

HABIB: And I had good bosses. Norrie Haselton was a real gentleman. Sam Berger was a brilliant man. Roy, who was my immediate boss, was a sweet man and to this day we are very good friends. Poor Roy was not exactly what you would call overly ambitious, but he retired from the Foreign Service some years later. They were awfully nice men. In those small posts you got to know each other.

Q: And we were a small service generally in those days, and 1200 at the time the Wriston program came over. I think I was told when I came in in '47 that I was about Foreign Service officer number 780--there were 780 ahead of me.

HABIB: It was a good post. I did a lot of nice, interesting things. Then we got to Washington.

Q: Washington '55-57 in INR.

HABIB: That was the period when they decided to put FSOs in INR, remember? And I've been told that I was the first FSO, actually chosen as a normal rotations to be assigned.

Q: I would have been sitting around a placement panel about the time you were sent in.

HABIB: They picked me obviously because of the background I had in advanced training. A lot of the people in INR at that time were the fellows that had been there for years. But I got assigned there and I spent three years there. It was all right, I didn't object. First, I started out doing economic research.

Q: What branch of INR?

HABIB: I was in DFI, it was called the division of functional intelligence, where they did economic research. Then I got into something that was very interesting because it exposed me to a lot of the Soviet stuff. I was one of the principal watchers of what the Soviets were doing in the underdeveloped world. We began publishing a weekly account

of everything the Soviets were doing anywhere in the underdeveloped countries. That was the period when people used to talk about Soviet penetration in the underdeveloped countries, or Soviet economic activities. We used to call it Soviet economic military assistance and all that, and we were the authority on the subject. At the same time we worked jointly with CIA in the publication. It came out every single week. And every year we did an annual. It meant that you got into a lot of the Soviet stuff, and as a result I learned something about what the Russians were up to around the world, which was very useful later on. I spent three years doing that - it was something. Also, the second baby was born, and I bought the first house I ever owned in my life. I paid \$20,000 for it under the GI Bill. A lovely little house.

Q: In Bethesda.

HABIB: No, it was in Virginia, a great location. It was the cheapest house in Lake Barcroft.

Q: That probably wasn't even developed at that time.

HABIB: It was being developed for the first time, and I bought this house for as little as \$20,000 with a GI loan. The interest, if I remember, was 4%. I wish I still had the house, it's still there.

Q: I wish I'd bought a house at that time.

HABIB: My problem was I was very stupid. I sold the house when I got transferred because I needed the money, and I made \$5000 profit. I was broke, I needed money. I'd saved some money in New Zealand, that's what I used to buy the house and get it equipped, furniture. The house was bare and we must have spent everything we'd saved in New Zealand on equipping the house, and another, a second baby--we had two babies in the house. I remember I bought a used car, I never had a new car, but carpooling into the Department. The house was good, it could have lasted a long time for us. I was here for three years, and then I got transferred and I needed the dough to get set up for the next post. I lived from salary to salary in those days.

Q: Didn't we all.

HABIB: It was very difficult to save money with two kids and a house on my salary. So, when I left, I sold the house, which was one of the big financial mistakes in my life.

Q: It could be worth \$100,000 right now.

HABIB: That house would be worth \$150,000, minimum, now. In any event, I sold it. As a matter of fact I bought a car to take to the new post, clothing, and all that stuff that you need for a new post, and went to the Caribbean.

Q: You were in Washington during the Wriston thing.

HABIB: Yes. A lot of people who were in INR, who were civil servants, used to talk to me--"should I join, what's it like," and I used to tell them, "come on in, it's a great job." And many of them did. Some of them lasted, some of them didn't. Some of them didn't like the Foreign Service, took one assignment abroad, and would get out.

Q: It was rough on a lot of people.

HABIB: Again, I was very lucky, I had very good bosses. I was really lucky most of my career. I can only think of one or two guys that really irritated me. In Washington, my immediate boss was an excellent economist. And then I had a woman for a boss for a while, a lovely person, she was very considerate and it didn't hurt me to have a woman boss for a while. The division chief was Ed Dougherty, and Ed and I have been friends through all our life ever since. As a matter of fact, we served together years later in Korea. He was DCM when I was political counselor, and we've been friends ever since. Ed was an interesting man, a very thoughtful man. So that experience in Washington was another thing for me, it exposed me to Washington. I used to sit in on departmental committees, CIA, Treasury, Commerce and State.

Q: Also, it expands your acquaintance within the Service.

HABIB: You got to know people. I also got to know a lot of people in the Department who later on were around. There were guys that I met in that period that I still see from time to time. There were guys in that period that I would meet again somewhere else overseas in later assignments. As I said about Ed Dougherty who later was DCM. I just had lunch the other day with Henry Owen, who was in INR at that time. There were a lot of guys I met in that period. Joe Greenwald, Hal Sonnenfeldt. Hal was in INR on the Soviet desk.

You asked me why I'm going to Cleveland. Because Coby Swank is the director of the World Affairs Council in Cleveland and Coby twisted my arm to come to Cleveland and make a speech for them. And Coby was in the Soviet sector, I met him in that period. It was the first time I met some of the Arabists, a guy doing research on the Middle East, Harry Symmes. There were a number of those guys that I met in that period. I would never have met him if I weren't around Washington and in INR. An interesting bunch. Doing what I was doing about following Soviet affairs all over the world meant that I had to get acquainted with what was going on all over the world. So there I was, going to meetings on Latin America, South Asia, Africa, and I was picking up a bit of knowledge about all of these places in the world which later was very helpful to me when I became Under Secretary.

Q: You learned the basics.

HABIB: ...that I never knew before. I didn't work very hard. It was sort of a nine to five job, you didn't feel compelled to come in on Sundays. You weren't working on high policies, but what you were doing was informative.

Q: I think that was the only period in my life I had a nine to five job.

HABIB: That's right. That was the only time in my life I ever had a nine to five job.

Q: Very little social life, you weren't on any embassy's guest list.

HABIB: That's right. You socialized with your friends that you made. We were back into gardening again, we planted trees, built flower beds out of the clay soil. I went out there last spring, I was in Washington, and saw the crab apple trees that I planted were in full bloom. I planted ten crab apple trees, they were in full bloom.

Q: And I know that red soil, it's pretty rough to deal with.

HABIB: I used to get loads of top soil to dig in the grass. It was a good experience from that standpoint.

Q: Then the time came to go overseas again.

HABIB: At that point we used to do our preferences. I think my first preference was India, I was fascinated with the idea of going to India, I thought it would be interesting. I wasn't particularly interested in going to Western Europe. I would put down my preferences South Asia, Africa, Middle East, Latin America, everything. I wasn't interested in civilized [countries].

Q: I never asked for Europe after my first post. I asked to be sent to The Hague.

HABIB: I was interested in the older civilizations. Well, at any rate, what was happening in the Caribbean, the British had gotten together with the people on the island, and they wanted a political officer there. They set up a new position, a political officer, and sent me as political officer to the Caribbean. I was stationed in Trinidad, but we were responsible for the area at that time.

Q: So you had a roving commission.

HABIB: No, well I roved. Our consular district extended from Antigua to Trinidad. At that point the Federation headquarters were there, and I got very much involved in the policies of the Federation, elections. It was good training reporting on elections. I spent lots of hours running around chewing the fat with politicians. An interesting period. Probably one thing, we got a little bit too deeply involved.

Q: We were in the Caribbean Commission. It used to be we had to deal with them.

HABIB: Frances McReynolds is what I remember.

Q: Yes, I worked with her in IO.

HABIB: Frances knew me very well. She us come down there, or else I'd stop in IO and see her.

Q: That's right. I first began hearing about you from Frances.

HABIB: Yes, Frances McReynolds and I were...she liked me, and she thought I was doing good work, and was very interested in what I was doing. She was interested in the Federation, which I was. I thought the Federation was a great idea and should not be allowed to fail. I think the Federation failed because we didn't support it properly. The British didn't do the right thing, but we didn't do the right thing either. We did absolutely the wrong thing by not supporting it sufficiently. We thought that was behind us, not doing what could have been done to preserve the Federation. In fact, we got caught up in this business. We had naval bases there. The Navy didn't want to give them up, and of course, the local guys wanted us out. We got involved in the famous Chaguaramas naval base in Trinidad. Eric Williams became Prime Minister, and he was dead set against the base and wanted us out. And we began to try to manipulate the situation. And one of my bosses, a wonderful, wonderful man - he had spent some time with CIA, he had a tendency to get involved in political situations, and he got me involved. We were good at it. I knew everybody, as usual. In every post I went to, the first thing I would get to know more about the post and the people than anybody in the embassy, or consulate, or whatever it was. I covered the waterfronts. I knew every politician in Antigua, I still know some of them. Some of them, I knew their fathers before them. I went down to the Caribbean in '79 to take a look and see what could be done, which I did do and made a report, which unfortunately required some money and therefore they didn't do it. Now they're spending 20 times what I recommended to be spent. I saw some of the same guys that I knew back in the old days, or their sons. A son of a man I knew very well in Barbados is the present Prime Minister of Barbados. The son of a man I knew very well in Antigua is the number two man, his father is still around. The son of the man I knew in Jamaica, the first Prime Minister in Jamaica, when I was working on the problems there. The principal leader of St. Lucia, I used to travel around the islands with him while he was showing me the problems of the island in a broken down Ford convertible - the door on my side wouldn't open. I always had to leap over the door to get in - he was the chief minister of St. Lucia. He was showing me what their problems were. He didn't like the British colonialism...this was on the threshold of independence for all these countries, all of whom later became independent individually. And I knew them all. But I got into the business of ethnic politics, black-versus white. It was an interesting period, and I learned a lot about political reporting at the electoral level, because they had elections. And I got to know my way around very well indeed.

Q: Always to allow yourself an out in case the election didn't go the way you thought it would. Well, the British never succeeded anywhere in getting an independent federation.

HABIB: Even if the federation could have been supported it has held together. The trouble is Jamaicans had been dominated.

Q: Well Jamaica is still not in the current association with those British islands.

HABIB: Of course, Guyana didn't even join the federation. They always talk about it. The Federation was still there when I left, but it faded not long after, it broke up.

Q: Who was your Consul General?

HABIB: Walter Orebaugh. He and I are still very close friends, in fact I played golf with him a couple of months ago in Florida where he retired. He was a man who had an extraordinary career in the Foreign Service. He had been consul in Nice when the war broke out. He was captured and interned by the Germans, and he escaped from a German prisoner of war camp, and he spent the rest of the war leading partisan groups behind the lines. In fact, he got the Medal of Freedom for it. He later became Consul General in Florence, and somewhere on the Mexican border. He ran the Italian and the western European desk in CIA.

Q: When they were getting organized.

HABIB: But he knew everybody. He had led partisan groups, and he knew everybody.

Q: I think Pete Hart was telling me this story one time. I don't think I ever met him.

HABIB: He's writing a book about it. He asked me to write the forward. I've read some of the chapters. He's still writing it. He's retired, we see each other even to this day. He has a place not far from the place where I have a place in Florida. He likes to come down to the place where I have. So he goes and uses my apartment. I have this small apartment down in Naples, Florida, and he goes down and spends the weekend there. It's there anytime he wants it, he just calls up the person I have to keep it clean. He was a good boss, and we became exceptionally good friends.

But in any event, he left and I had an interesting experience, I won't tell you his name, I had a Consul General who turned out to be an alcoholic. I remember one time I was waiting to meet his plane, and when he got off, all of a sudden his wife ran up, she knew what was wrong. He had to be dried out, anyhow she kept him at home for a couple of weeks. I ran the god damn office and didn't tell anybody. I don't know what you should do in those circumstances. Should you report it to the Department that the man is non compos mentis, and he's out. Or do you just do your job. So I decided, what the hell, he'd stay home while he was drying out, but it would take weeks. And I was running the office, sending all the reports in, everything that had to be done. Go up and see him while

he was drying out. The funny thing was before this experience, he kind of resented me because I knew everybody, and I knew everything that was going on. He was new and didn't know anybody, and he kind of resented me. But after I had covered up for him, from then on there was nothing I could do wrong. He decided somehow or another that I had made him, and I had. Hell, all I had to do was send a message to Washington telling them the truth.

Q: I never had a problem with a chief, I've had alcoholics under me.

HABIB: A very difficult problem to work with, especially when he was under the influence. He would get awful mad. I would fluff it off. A very interesting experience. But I decided I'd just ran the place and I ran the whole god damn place.

Q: Were you second rank in the office?

HABIB: I was an FSO-4. After Wristonization they knocked us back. I had been promoted to 4, then I went back to 5. They [promoted us] very rapidly. When I joined the Service we went from 6 to 5, and I went from 6 to 5 in the first year. Then I went from 5 to 4, and then I got knocked back to 5.

Q: I was one of 16 lucky FSO-4s at that time and stayed in 4. We were on the list.

HABIB: What had happened to me interesting enough, was that...you remember the McCarthy period when they took all that time to give everybody another full field check.

Q: And we went two years without any...

HABIB: That's right, and I lost a promotion. I was on that promotion list, I know it. But I was young and made up for it. One of the guys that worked for me there, a consular officer, later on was with me in Vietnam, and Paris, and I had the pleasure to meet with him and made him an ambassador. A lot of my boys became ambassadors.

Q: That's great.

HABIB: When I was in Trinidad I had the biggest political section that was ever put together--not Trinidad, when I was in Saigon in the '60s. I had this huge political section, and a lot of those guys have become ambassadors. And then when I was Assistant Secretary in Washington the guys I had working for me when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary, a lot of those guys became ambassadors--Bob Miller, Jim Rosenthal, Tom Corkland, John Burton. Dick Smyser who is not an ambassador, but is Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. John Negroponte, Honduras, these guys were all my boys. I took them all with me, most of them were with me in Paris. Dick Holbrooke was one of my guys I took to Paris. A political appointee but when I took him he was an FSO. A lot of those guys were first class. They did good work, and I picked them, you know, spotted them. And then later on, of course, when I was in Washington, I spotted a lot of guys. But

even at that time I was spotting good guys. Just like Sam Berger did for me. Well, anyway, Trinidad was a good post from that standpoint.

Q: Your first solid political work.

HABIB: Also the first post where I had some [authority]. Despite a small embassy because of what we were doing.

Q: From a family point of view...

HABIB: It was very comfortable. We had a nice little...not a fancy house, but a comfortable house. That was the first time that we ever really had a house, with servants. We had a housekeeper-nurse in New Zealand. But this time we had a cook and a maid, and houseboy who also doubled as a driver and gardener. He was an Indian and the other two were black. But I was in Trinidad in '79 on a mission to look the place over. Some of the people in the consulate still remembered me. Lo and behold here comes my old gardener and driver driving up to see me. He heard that I was there. He was now prosperous, an East Indian gentleman.

Q: Saved enough money to go into business for himself.

HABIB: When I left I got him a job with somebody else in the Trinidad government. He was a very bright boy. My wife taught him a lot of things, she taught him an awful lot of things, and he remembered me very well. She would teach him how to cook western style. Most servants if you take the trouble to teach them our ways of doing things, was appreciate.

Q: And don't cry at them the first time they slip up.

HABIB: In all the years I was in the Foreign Service, we only fired one servant.

Q: By this time had you given thought to specializing? They were pushing everybody to specialize.

HABIB: I didn't want to go to school. I figured I was educated enough. I didn't want to go back to university or anything like that. So while I was in Trinidad and the time comes to be transferred, what I do, I put in my preference again, I put India. But I got assigned to India. I'm sitting in Trinidad, and I get assigned to Delhi as economic officer, which was exactly what I wanted. I think I would have been number two in the economic section in Delhi. I had some very good East Indian friends in Trinidad. I remember one fellow, and I got books and started to read up all about India. About a month before I was due to ship out, I get the word from Washington that I'm not going to India. The assignment had been broken. I'm coming to Washington for a very special job. Remember I told you that when I was in INR I had done a lot on Soviet activities in less developed countries and what

they were up to. I was reporting facts. Well, somebody had decided--this was when Douglas Dillon was Under Secretary. At that time was he Deputy Secretary?

Q: I think Ball was the last Under Secretary.

HABIB: Dillon was both at one time. He had the symbol U, so he was Under Secretary. They decided to set up under him, a staff called U/CEA. He had a special assistant. The CEA stood for Communist Economic Activities. U/CEA, a small group that he put together that was supposed to develop ways of counter-acting Soviet activities in the less developed areas of the world, military, economic, the full range but particularly economic. And he had a special assistant, a guy called Bob Terrill, and then the staff under him. The staff had three sections. One of them was for European and sort of trade matters. One of them was for underdeveloped countries. And I was selected to come up and head one of those little sections. There were three of us in the section. One of them was Tom Buchanan, another was a guy called Stevens, and I was chief of the section. We were supposed to develop counter strategy to counter-act Soviet action in less developed countries. And we worked at it, in those days the way those kinds of staffs would do. But by working with guys that we knew in different bureaus, we at least made ourselves somewhat acceptable, and we would do work for them so they didn't mind. We'd write papers, figure out analyses and proposals for action. When the Congo went independent...the only thing I ever regretted about it was they broke my assignment to India to bring me back for that particular job. They wanted me because I had had those earlier years of experience of following the Soviets.

Q: But that doesn't show on the record at all, does it?

HABIB: The assignment to India doesn't show on the record because I never got there.

Q: No, but I mean...

HABIB: Sure. I was assigned to Washington in 1960 to 1962. I didn't work for Ball, I worked for Dillon. Then I worked for Ball. And then the thing broke up. They decided not to keep it there. They put it into INR for a couple months and at that point I was ready to get the hell out. I was assigned to E Bureau, economic and trade. And Sam Berger came to town, and said, how would you like to go to Korea with me? And I said, anything Sam to get out. I was actually anxious to go with Sam. I said if you want to break my assignment, you've got to go to Ball and get him to help, which he did do, broke my assignment to the E Bureau and took me to Korea with him. We did a lot of work in that U/CEA. Some of it was worthwhile, some of it was worthless. For example, we did the basic paper on the Congo at the time of independence in my little section, with Tom Buchanan and myself, and we sold that paper to the African Bureau, Mark Hurst and Jim Penfield. Henry Owen was involved. He was up in S/P at that point. And Jack Bell and those guys. We wrote the basic paper on the Congo. It was adopted and used, and it was the basis of our action in the Congo at the time of independence.

Q: Particularly because we may have misunderstood despite a messy situation down.

HABIB: We did very well. It was the first State policy...

Q: We're still in there.

HABIB: The first big policy on [Africa]. And then I did Guinea, I was out there twice in that period. Sekou Toure was breaking away from the Russians, and I was sent out and did a job of beginning to reintroduce American presence in the Guinean development, which was very important. We got an AID mission back in, and did a number of things. Bill Attwood was ambassador most of that time.

Q: Yes, and he wrote a book, The Reds and the Blacks.

HABIB: If you look in there you'll see a reference to me.

Q: I haven't read that for a long time. I hated it because of that book he blew all our station in Nairobi.

HABIB: The Beast and the Red and the Black was about the same deal I did in Guinea. After I'd been out there on survey, he and I went up and spent a couple of days in the hotel in Dakar. He wrote the book, came back to Washington and he took it over to the White House and gave it to Jack Kennedy. And I peddled it through the Department, and before we went back he writes in the book that I taught him a very good lesson. I wrote instructions for him before he went back to his post, and got it cleared while we were here. He doesn't really...in a way it's rather strange. I had a great deal more to do with turning the thing around than he did in some ways. But he had influence in the White House. I did all the figures, and he did all the lobbying. That's why it worked out very well.

Well, from there I went to Korea. Korea was an entirely different world, of course. There I not only ran the political section but I was in many ways the man's right hand man. He had two DCMs. We did some very, very good work there. Sam was a man who believed in democratic rituals. On the other hand he was very practical. He knew what you could do, and what you couldn't do. Of course, we had a junta. And elections which they kept putting on and then postponing until we laid the law down to them, and we made it stick. And that was the restoration of something like an electoral process in Korea. But in any event, Sam and I were a very active team, very active politically. And, of course, again I got to know a lot of people in my usual [way]. There were two things, learning as much as I could about the country, traveling all over and getting to know as many people as I could. I knew everybody, anybody that counted at any level, military, civilians, business, I knew them all.

Q: Did you try to learn Korean while you were there?

HABIB: I studied it at breakfast time in the morning. It's not a language you can learn that way.

Q: Or use anyplace else.

HABIB: How did I know that I would be back there in eight years. We trained a couple of guys. One guy we trained of all the guys we had in the post, only one guy could speak Korean well enough to interpret at that time. That was Ed Hurst, and the way he did it he had a year of training in the States. We sent him out there to a year in university where he lived in a Korean house. And after that he came back to the embassy. That's the way he learned. At the end of his tour, two or three years later, he knew enough that I could use him to interpret. Otherwise, I used Korean-Americans. I had a marvelous CIA fellow, David Lee, he was CIA, but he was my interpreter. He was in my political section, but he was with me all the time. And then there was another CIA guy who was an absolute language freak. He was not a Korean-American, Scandinavian origin. He was a fantastic linguist. He could interpret Japanese, Korean, or Chinese. He was one of these language freaks.

Q: Three oriental languages.

HABIB: But he was a CIA man. He was just a linguist, that's all he was. He wasn't worth much else but he was a fantastic interpreter. Well, at any rate, those three years in Korea with Sam Berger were very, very intensive hard work. We went from crisis to crisis.

Q: Crisis in the sense of internal Korean development. The DMZ was fairly quiet in those days.

HABIB: The DMZ was fairly quiet in those days. You know, from time to time getting into it but nothing big. The Pueblo came later, and the Blue House raid came later. But in any event, those three years with Sam in Korea I really got heavily involved in political action, and negotiation, all sorts of things, and very complicated maneuvering. I think that's where I made my reputation as a political officer, and manager in the political section. So one day Sam asked me to come into his office. Bill Bundy was there. I had been involved in the negotiation of normalization relations with Korea and Japan. In the Department was a drinking buddy of mine, I was at his house all the time while the negotiations were going on constantly, breakfast, lunch and dinner. I used to play poker with the Prime Minister every Sunday afternoon. I knew everybody in the country. I'd go drinking with the Minister of Defense, and the generals. I knew more Koreans than anybody except for one guy who was the military man who had been there since 1945. He knew more than I did, but he and I were great friends and he would teach me all the time. But I knew everybody, and I was very active.

Q: And you got a chance to travel around the country?

HABIB: I was all over the place.

Q: How about up around the far east?

HABIB: I went to Japan a couple of times. I went to Japan on business a couple of times. And then I took a vacation in Japan with the kids. You know, I still didn't have a lot of money to go gallivanting off. But I traveled a lot around Korea itself. But at any rate, one day Bill Bundy arrived. And he said, we're looking for the best political officer in the business, at the time as chief of the political section in Saigon, the war was heating up in 1965. How would you like to go to Saigon? It was in early 1965. He said, well, you don't have to answer, you go talk it over with your wife and let me know. I said, Bill I don't have to talk that over with my wife, that's a decision I make, and the answer is yes. At that time you could take your family. It was months later when they bombed the embassy and wounded several people, that they decided to make it a non-accompanied post.

Q: When was that?

HABIB: 1965, February, I think it was. Well, I had already been assigned as a matter of fact when it was bombed. I had been assigned to the embassy as political counselor. I was to go home and have the home leave, and then go to Saigon, and my family was going to go with me. Well, as it turned out you couldn't take your family. So I took home leave and went home and settled them in California, in Belmont, the town I live in now as a matter of fact. We rented an apartment, got the kids in school, and I went off to Saigon.

Q: The kids were about...

HABIB: Phyllis was 13, and Susan 10 I believe. I was gone two years and came home once two years later on leave. They lived there and I went to Saigon as chief of the political section.

Q: Did you stay three years in Seoul without getting home leave?

HABIB: I had nowhere to go. Saigon, of course, was a very traumatic experience. Around the clock, seven days a week. Not long after I arrived Henry Cabot Lodge came as ambassador.

Q: Who was there when you first got there?

HABIB: Max Taylor was ambassador and Howard Johnson was deputy. And Max Taylor was replaced by Cabot Lodge. And Cabot Lodge came with a fearful reputation about how he brought his own people, and he didn't use the Foreign Service at all well. Cabot Lodge was a different man. He wasn't running for president, and he was very good to me, and I became in many ways his right hand on political matters, and many other matters too. We became very close to each other.

Q: Well I technically worked for him at the UN Trusteeship Council. I think I shook his hand once, and never never saw him again.

HABIB: I saw him every single day. As a matter of fact usually the first thing every morning I'd be in there, talking over the business of the embassy and how we were running it. Then Bill Porter became deputy. When Bill Porter became deputy, we set up this separate organization to run the field program. And Bill became administrator of the field program while I was in effect deputy for the normal affairs of the embassy. In my own way, of course, Bill was the deputy. I remember we became very good friends. But that was the period when I...

Q: We had political officers out in the provinces.

HABIB: The AID program, Bill was the coordinator of all that. He was very busy running that. It was CORDS, it got to be known as CORDS, at one time it was known as something else. Bob Komer later replaced Bill. But I had a very big, and very good political section. I think we ended up with 23 officers, and of course we worked very closely with CIA. There was another group, a special group set up, the famous Lansdale group which were in many ways very difficult to get along with because they were a bunch of big dealers. But it wasn't very long before Cabot Lodge decided the political section was the one he was dependent on, and we became the center of the embassy's political and coordination activity, political and military as well. I was very much involved, again knew a lot of people. I was very much involved on military issues. I was a member of the mission's council for the embassy before they moved the people, myself, Westmoreland, Barry Zorthian, the public affairs man, Roy Worthly, the economic man, Garth McDonald before him, Charlie Mann the AID guy, Ed Lansdale for his group, Jorganson, the station chief guy. That was the group that ran the war, and some of the local boys.

Q: Coordinating the operation. Well, I think that worked pretty well.

HABIB: It worked pretty well, but of course you had first rate people. I mean, nobody was assigned in those days to Vietnam unless somebody picked them out by hand. Everybody was hand picked. And it got me into the big league. I was at the Manila conference in '66, then I was in Guam. I was involved.

Q: In the big picture in Southeast Asia.

HABIB: And it was because of that when the time came and my time was up after two years, Len Unger was leaving the bureau as deputy to Bill Bundy, and I was brought back as deputy and then I became deputy assistant secretary. And I was the deputy in charge of Southeast Asia. I was in charge of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and Thailand in the bureau. I had the Vietnam working group under me, and I was the principal liaison between the Department and the Defense Department, CIA. The Vietnam experience in Vietnam itself prepared me for the Vietnam advisory role in Washington, the planning

role. When I came to Washington as deputy, I was Bill Bundy's deputy. Bill, of course, is a brilliant man. He is one of the most brilliant man I ever worked with, and I was his deputy for Vietnam and saw him on a daily basis. I had a meeting in my office every day of the week. It was called the 11:00 group. We used to meet in my office every single day. And there was George Carver from CIA. I knew Jordan from NSC, and myself. We'd meet every single day at 11:00. Then there was a senior group called the Thursday Group which had Harry Katzenbach, Bundy, Gerald Wheeler, Paul Wormsby, Dick Helms. These guys met in Katzenbach's office every Thursday and I was there as liaison with the working group because I was the junior guy in the room. They would tell us what to do and then we would carry it out. If they wanted an instruction drafted, they would tell me, and the next morning at 11:00 I would talk it over with these guys who had gotten their instructions from their bosses, and that's how we worked. It was a very efficient way of working. And then, of course, you had the Tuesday luncheon group which met with the President, which was McNamara, Bill Rostow, and Bud Wheeler. That was the way things were done. It was a fantastic mission. When you got your instructions, when the policy was laid down, you had your own input, you could say what you thought, it was a free wheeling discussion group. But there was a lot of talent believe me.

Q: A good cause too.

HABIB: The war was undertaken for noble reasons, and fully consistent with our view of where our policy interests lay in the world. I was in Saigon when the first American troops arrived in '65. I was the assistant secretary of state in the '70s. So I spent 10 years. I went to Paris for the peace talks, and I had that little interlude when I was ambassador in Korea. Even in Korea, I was involved because we had 50,000 Korean troops in Vietnam. I remember the time I had to get the president of Korea to give his F-5s to the Vietnamese before we all left them there. I had to persuade him to give me his F-5s. Not an easy job but I got them.

Q: To take them back home? The ones we'd given the money...

HABIB: Flying in his air force, and we took them away from him. Got them from him and gave them to the Vietnamese. Of course, they're probably still flying them. That's the way it's done. It wasn't my fault. As a matter of fact the problem as deputy assistant secretary when we had this intensive period was to watch the war being managed. As a matter of fact, I had something to do with what happened in '68. The Wise Men period. I was one of the principal leaders in the Wise Men Group in 1968. I had been sent out there after the Tet offensive to look at the political situation. I went with Wheeler. Wheeler went to look at the military situation. I was put on his group to look at the political situation and we came back and we reported. An interesting period. It's been written up in a number of places more or less accurately. Henry Smith wrote about it as accurately as any in the New York Times. This is the group that Johnson used to call on from time to time. There are lists in some of these books that have been written about it. He had Harriman, he had Lodge...

Q: Bunker?

HABIB: No, Bunker was not there. He had Douglas Dillon, Arthur Dean, he had Abe Fortas. He had Arthur Coburn, McGeorge Bundy, he had Clark Clifford, Walt Rostow, Max Taylor, Buzz Wheeler. All these guys were members of this group. Of course, Dean Rusk had McNamara as secretary. He had General Ridgway--Matthew Ridgway, the famous general, Omar Bradley. A talented group.

Q: Some of the greatest talent we had.

HABIB: That's right. Dean Acheson was the most important of all. Well, when I was deputy assistant secretary, Dean Acheson--Bill Bundy was his son-in-law as you know--Dean Acheson wanted to be briefed about Vietnam and I'd go up and brief him. I used to keep Dean Acheson briefed on Vietnam. One time I said to him, if you want to get a real briefing, I'll bring some people up who will cover the whole war for you--I brought my 11:00 group. I brought George Carver, General De Puy, and Bill Jorden and myself, and we went up there and spent three or four hours telling him what was going on. This is in '68. And then the Wise Men...the way they did it, they'd get briefed and then they'd see the President. Oh, Cy Vance was a member of the Wise Men group. Well, in any event, I'd get a call to be in the Operations Center conference room at 6:00 in the evening to brief the Wise Men on the situation in Vietnam. I'd gone out with Wheeler to look it over in the post-Tet period in '68. And Bill De Puy briefed on the military situation, George Carver briefed on the communist infrastructure, the communist position, and I briefed on the political situation.

Q: That would be once a week?

HABIB: No, this is a one-shot briefing. We had briefed the Wise Men. They were never there all the time. They were just brought together, for example, in the post-Tet period. A very significant group there. Johnson wanted to get their view. Remember this is '68, an election is coming up. We'd just had the Tet offensive which was being played up in the media.

Q: I think we all know that now.

HABIB: That's right. But nevertheless...I remember when a team came into the embassy, the VC came over the embassy compound...hell, I was on the telephone in Washington talking to the duty officer in the embassy while they were in the embassy.

Q: I heard a lot about that period from Rostow.

HABIB: Arch (Calhoun) was the political counselor. Arch replaced me as political counselor.

Q: He came to Tunis as my chief in the embassy.

HABIB: Allen Wendt was the duty officer that night, and I was talking to him on the telephone in the embassy while the VC were in the building. In any event, the Wise Men - I don't remember when I briefed them, but I remember I spoke from an outline on a yellow pad. I never kept any papers, I don't know what the hell I said. All I know is its been said that that briefing was the crucial briefing, the three of us briefing. They went to the President the next day.

Q: And they didn't say anything.

HABIB: They were divided on the war, the most important part of it was Acheson. They told the President, you've got to get out of it. I remember Clark Clifford - Clark Clifford at that point had been named Secretary of Defense. McNamara left, and the first day that Clark Clifford was Secretary of Defense we met in his dining room, a small group - he wanted to put together his recommendations for the President...well, to the Wise Men. The Wise Men had gone no further when they...as a matter of fact, the day after they told the President - this also is written I think in LBJ's memoirs...if it's not LBJ's memoirs, it's in some other memoirs.

Q: He didn't write his memoirs.

HABIB: LBJ? Sure he did, from his vantage point.

Q: There's a great picture of me in his memoirs.

HABIB: That's right, in LBJ's memoirs. LBJ is supposed to have said when he got these briefings, "Who poisoned the well?" Because these guys were always supporters, Acheson, and Clark Clifford, people he counted on, telling him that we had to get out of the war. So they told him that they had been briefed. Who briefed them? Well, it was De Puy, Carver and me. Bring them over to the White House, I want to hear what they have to say. I'm sitting in my office, and a phone call comes from Walt Rostow. The President wants to see you. He heard about the briefing, and he wants to be briefed. I said to Walt, I'm just walking out the door, I'm leaving for Dayton, Ohio, I'm making a speech to a thousand students on the Vietnam war telling them the policy. Well, of course, if you insist, I'll cancel and I'll be over there. He said, just a minute, I'll call you back. Five minutes later he called me back and said, that's alright, you go ahead and make the speech. De Puy went and told the President what they had briefed to the Wise Men. But I didn't, because I'd gone to Dayton, Ohio, at the crucial briefing. This is at a period when we were bombing. The assumption was that we'd stop the bombing. I remember Clark Clifford asking me if the war was win-able or not. I said to him, "Not under the present circumstances, and the present mood." They said to me, "What would you do?" And I said, "I would stop the bombing, and try to negotiate." Well, of course, that was my reputation.

Q: Which is exactly what happened.

HABIB: So, at that point we started meeting in Clark Clifford's office - it was official now, Clifford was the Secretary of Defense, my boss Bill Bundy was there. Again, I'm the junior guy. Buzz Wheeler was there, Paul Warnke was there, Bill De Puy was there, Walt Rostow, Max Taylor. Max was also a member of that Wise Men's group.

Q: Everybody who was anybody.

HABIB: John J. McCloy. Joe (Califano), what's his name, in the Cabinet who left, is now in New York, very important. Fowler, Clifford, Nick Katzenbach, Bill Bundy, Buzz Wheeler, Paul Warnke, Bill Bundy, myself, that was the group. I wrote a paper on Vietnamization, the importance of providing equipment etc. At that point we didn't even have M-16s throughout their forces. I remember I wrote a paper about the importance of providing at least M-16s, the importance of building up the Vietnamese forces.

Q: That was the beginning...

HABIB: That was the beginning of Vietnamization. A lot of people say Laird introduced that. That was the beginning in that meeting. I wrote papers, others wrote papers...

Q: Now, this was...

HABIB: This must have been April-March of '68. At that point Bill Bundy said to me, "The Secretary of Defense is going to make a speech on Vietnam." He said, "They are going to write the speech, but they wanted a draft from us." So Bill Bundy and I wrote a draft speech for the President that went very well. Bill did most of the work, he was a brilliant guy, and I helped, we worked together on it. Bill wrote the first draft. They brought over a draft and we went over that. What I was told was the speech the President was going to make would be that night. I was home that night, turned on the TV, the President was going to make a speech, and the President goes through the speech, and I remembered it, and he gets to the end and he keeps going. I looked at my wife and said, but that's the end of the speech, he's supposed to stop there. That was the statement where he ordered the partial bombing, that's what the speech was all about. That's where we had come as a result of all of these reviews of the war. But we didn't know that the other part of the decision that he made was that he was not going to run for president. That was the last paragraph of the speech. I remember turning to my wife saying, he's supposed to stop there. There's no more. And then he went on which I didn't know anything about, very few people did know - that was the speech of March of '68.

Q: March or April of '68. Well before convention time.

HABIB: That's right, April of '68.

Q: That was a shocker.

HABIB: You can imagine how shocked I was. Here I was working on this speech and all these great ideas on how to bring negotiation about. We did what we set out to do as a matter of policy, we had a great influence between the working level, had an influence on the bosses, and the bosses then had influence. That was a good example of how the career guys, CIA, Defense, State, the White House--we were the peons. We had a tremendous influence. We followed the war every single day.

Q: And then you were trusted.

HABIB: We were trusted, people trusted us--Harriman, Katzenbach, Bundy, Dean Rusk. Well, in any event, Dean Acheson was very important at that time. We then were embarked upon a negotiating process which eventually led to the Paris peace talks, and, in all of the preliminaries of that, I was involved. And then when Harriman and Vance were chosen as head, Harriman asked me to put together the staff and to be the chief of staff. I put together the staff.

Q: You were deputy assistant secretary, and you went to Paris, and you really sort of straddled your Washington...

HABIB: I was the deputy assistant secretary until '69 when Bill Sullivan came and sat in my chair, but I still kept the title until '69. That was under Nixon, it was after the election. Nixon got elected in '68.

Q: These talks really got underway in '68.

HABIB: May 13th, if I remember right. Cy Vance and I went to the first meeting to set the rules of negotiation. Then we had the first primary meeting. Harriman sat in the chair--I've got a picture of the whole delegation the first day. I had put together the staff, recommended it to Harriman. I recommended naturally that from the White House they take Bill Jordan to handle the press and to be a member of the delegation, but also to be responsible for the press. I recommended everybody on that delegation. I took Dan O'Donahue, who was one of my boys in Korea days to run the secretariat, to set it up. He was then working in the secretariat. He was to set up the secretariat. I took Bob Miller, Jim Rosenthal, Dick Holbrooke, John Negroponte, Dave Engel, who was the best Vietnamese language officer in the business, and then I even persuaded the military to take...Harriman had picked Andy Goodpaster. And then I recommended George Seignious, and also the next guy, Paul Gorman. Paul Gorman was the Army officer that I knew who was in the Pentagon and had been in the 1st division in Vietnam.

Q: Seignious was in Europe at that time.

HABIB: He was out of that, he was somewhere around. We took him as military adviser, and his assistant was Paul Gorman, who now is the commander of our forces in the Caribbean and Central America. There's an interesting story about him I'll tell you sometime. In any event, this was the beginning of the delegation. Hal Kaplan was

assistant to Bill Jorden, he was also a guy who I had worked very closely with in Vietnam. He was the press officer at the embassy under Barry Zorthian, a brilliant guy dealing with the press on a daily basis. At any rate, these are the guys that I put together as a team, and I was the chief of staff. We did all the papers for the negotiation. We had a smaller group in a secret negotiation which I set up also. That was the beginning of the negotiation which then went on for years. From May of '68 until I left in the fall of '71, three and a half years later. Harriman and Vance were the first people.

Q: Did they keep you in Paris permanently?

HABIB: I was assigned temporary duty and I was there all the time, never left except for briefing trips back home. We started out living at the Crillon Hotel and after seven or eight months of eating out all the time, I rented a little pad, a two and a half room pad up in an old house about five minutes from the embassy. I could fall out of bed and be in the embassy in five minutes if anything happened, and we began the negotiations. The negotiations were for the purpose of a total bombing halt, and to negotiate the end of war. From our standpoint, we were willing to go for a total bombing halt, but we wanted to get a proper negotiation going including the South Vietnamese. We had South Vietnamese liaison guys there in Paris. But the actual negotiations were between us and the North Vietnamese. We started in May and by the fall of that year we had negotiated the total bombing halt under conditions of bringing about full fledged negotiations, and also with certain understandings as to what would not be done. It's beginning to fade from my memory, but it's still quite clear what we did, including such things as no major attacks on cities. We had all sorts of things which were quite clear from what had gone on in the negotiations.

We had two levels of negotiations. We had the formal talks every Thursday. We would convene at the Majestic Hotel at avenue Kleber. The delegation would file into this magnificent conference hall, and we'd sit there and read statements to each other, and go out and talk to the TV cameras, and go back to the office and meet again the next Thursday. Well, that went on for a while, and obviously we weren't going to do anything under that spotlight, so we had a couple of private meetings, and then we set up the formal secret negotiations. They had a safe house, and we had a safe house. Our safe house was staffed by the CIA, but with Defense people living there, and a couple of secretaries took care of the safe house. And they had a safe house which was supplied to them by the French communist party. Sometimes we meet in our safe house, sometimes we'd meet in their safe house.

Q: Where was their's?

HABIB: Outside on the fringe of the city.

Q: (Inaudible)

HABIB: That's right. That was the Kissinger thing. Now, we ran it secretly. Nobody knew, nobody had a clue where they were. They knew that something was wrong, but couldn't figure out what. I remember one CBS reporter said, now we've figured it out, you're meeting on a houseboat on the Seine. Yes, that's right, on a houseboat, you get a rowboat and follow us out. They never discovered it, and why? We ran it, we were professionals. Nothing ever leaked from them, or from us. We had a whole series of good meetings.

Q: Maintaining secrecy on both sides.

HABIB: That's right, and we held I don't know how many dozens of these meetings until we negotiated the terms of understanding. As a matter of fact, they were finally initialed and signed on the last day, but I wasn't there. When they were finalized and initialed, I had been ordered back to brief the President because there was a lot going on back here so I came back to Washington to brief people here on where things stood. I didn't attend the last secret meetings with Harriman and Vance which was the only time that they allowed photographs up until that time. There were photographs taken at the last meeting. I don't have a copy because I wasn't there - one of the photographs I really would have liked to have because I had been one of the players right from the beginning. Cy Vance and I had carried on most of the secret negotiations. We would bring Harriman in for the key ones. Cy and I had meeting after meeting, and a couple of times I had meetings alone - at the last stages when we were drafting terms in getting the agreement on the shape of the table. All that was done in that period under the secret negotiation.

Q: So you would have the press come in...around for those once a week meetings.

HABIB: That's right. The press was there for the once a week meetings.

Q: So they thought they knew everything that was happening.

HABIB: The time when the press arrived, after the formal, once-a-week negotiations, with nothing going on, we were having intensive 7-8 hour-long meetings with the Vietnamese that the press knew nothing about. Now the way we managed it - I set up the system. For example, let's say the meeting was in our safe house--we had a safe house in a place called St. Cloud. We had one somewhere else and a third one in another place, then the Vietnamese had a safe house out at Choisy-le-Roi. Harriman would stay out in Auteuil. Vance would be at the embassy with me. We had a CIA guy, with an unmarked car rented by this CIA guy. He was not a guy from the station. He was a special guy brought in nobody knew.

Q: Even the station didn't know him.

HABIB: Well the station knew him, but he would rent a private car. He would park the car up by the Madeleine. The meetings usually consisted of Harriman, Vance and myself, John Negroponte and Dave Engel, Bill Jorden. Negroponte and Engel would do the notes,

and I would take notes too. If it was just Vance, it would be Vance, myself and probably Negroponte, the three of us, or maybe Engel would.

Q: Did you each talk in your own language and then use a translator?

HABIB: That's right.

Q: You didn't compromise on French or anything like that.

HABIB: No, they wouldn't do that. They wouldn't negotiate in French. They wouldn't do it even in the big meetings, they would not negotiate in French. The only time they would speak French and negotiate was privately. One night I had the deputy guy over for dinner at my apartment, and we spoke French.

Q: Did you have your wife come over?

HABIB: Not at this point, not at the early stages.

Q: You didn't know how long you were going to be there.

HABIB: My wife stayed with the children at home, one kid was finishing high school. At any rate, the guy would park the car up there at a given hour - let's say the meeting was going to be at 10:00, a half hour drive so. At 9:00 Dave Engel carrying the documents in a sachel would wander up toward the Madeleine, get into the car, the driver would then drive down and he would go up the Champs-Élysées. Meanwhile, Cy Vance and I would go out the back door of the embassy and we would walk as if we were taking a stroll in the park along the Champs-Élysées, and at a given moment we would be at the curb on a certain spot on the Champs-Élysées, the car would stop, and he and I would get in the car, and we would then drive out to where Ambassador Harriman would be outside of a flower shop at a certain time. We would pick him up and we would head out. Of course, nobody knew where the hell we were going. We did that from May until October, and then we finished the negotiations. We finished them actually in October. Of course, at that point we thought we were going to be a big success. Of course, Harriman was very anxious to get this done before the elections to avert, as he put it, the greatest disaster - Richard Nixon. That was the way he felt. So he was doing everything to get Humphrey elected. Vance was marvelous. They were very political. Of course, we stayed out of the politics. In fact, I think most of those at the meetings wanted to get it done before the election too, because they were being stubborn as hell - from May, June, July, August, they wouldn't give a thing. And all of a sudden, one day, we had been pressing them what would we get if we gave a total bombing halt. At the total bombing halt we wanted specific things to happen. And finally, one day, the head of their delegation, a member of the Politburo, said to Harriman and Vance, "If we do so and so and so, will you stop the bombing?" At that point, you knew you had it.

Q: You had the agreement.

HABIB: It was just that stubbornness and reading reams of propaganda bullshit, even in the secret talks. They finally agreed to what we needed, and what we wanted, and the deal was cooked. And then something happened.

Q: Before the election.

HABIB: Before the election. First of all somebody got to Thieu on behalf of Nixon and said, don't agree, come to Paris.

Q: That was the source.

HABIB: It was done right here in Washington. A Republican went to a famous woman called Anna Chennault. Anna Chennault went to the Vietnamese and told the Vietnamese, "We'll get a better deal under Nixon." So Thieu refused to accept the agreement and sent a delegation to Paris. Clark Clifford was fit to be tied, particularly Clark. Harriman was about to climb the wall. Well finally, of course, the election was held and Humphrey lost.

Q: It could have turned out differently.

HABIB: That's correct. I'm convinced that, if Humphrey had won the election, the war would have been over much sooner. I know what we were going to negotiate under Harriman and Vance, and that was not what we negotiated under the later generation, basically under Henry Kissinger and Nixon.

Q: It took them a long time to get cranked up.

HABIB: Kissinger was somewhat familiar because he had been a consultant. As a matter of fact, the great article that Kissinger had written about the negotiations, he really stole that from us. It was in the form of a briefing which I gave him in Paris before he wrote the article. It was exactly the position that I had in some way espoused. And also I had written a special paper for Harriman on what to do about getting the negotiations on track which he was going to buy. Of course the election was held and a new group came along. First of all, Henry Cabot Lodge was appointed head. You couldn't get the thing cranked up until after the inauguration which meant you marked time until January. Meanwhile the Vietnamese agreed to come, so they formed their delegation, and the Viet Cong came with their delegation.

Q: I remember the table problem.

HABIB: A round table, with no sides--our side, your side was the formula we used. It was a simple thing to arrange. People said it took them three months to decide on the shape of the table, that was a bunch of shit. We knew what the table was going to be from the beginning, it was going to be a round table. It was the only way you were going to solve the problem. We knew that but we had to go through this whole routine of satisfying the

South Vietnamese, and beating down the arguments of the North Vietnamese who wanted the VC as an equal delegation. They talked about a four-party negotiation, and we talked about an “our side, your side” negotiation. We finally resolved the problem by a round table. We knew we were going to do that. But you couldn't solve anything when you didn't have delegations. And then we had an election and we had to wait until the new administration was in. The new administration appointed Cabot Lodge as head of the delegation and, of course, he had a so-called number two called Walsh, a lawyer from New York who didn't know anything about the problem. He was a Republican lawyer from New York who was in the early Nixon administration. But Cabot insisted that I had to remain. At this point I wanted my just rewards. I could have an embassy anywhere I wanted - I might as well get an embassy.

Q: That was '69. You were two more years there.

HABIB: In February '69 Nixon came to Europe. I had gone back to Washington and briefed the new cabinet. I briefed the NSC. Kissinger was there, Mel Laird, John Mitchell, Spiro Agnew, they brought Ellsworth Bunker back from Saigon, and John Mitchell, the famous Attorney General who later became somewhat notorious, Watergate notorious.

At any rate, I've got a great picture. I had kept the same small group, a couple of changes of people in the group - Dick Smyser joined us. Bill Jorden left, Hal Kaplan became the senior spokesman. By this time George Carver had finished his tour as the military adviser. I got word that all they really wanted to send us was an Air Force colonel as military adviser, or maybe he was a Brigadier General. A nice guy, I knew him, but he was semi-political and I wanted a ground forces officer who knew the war. This guy didn't know anything about the war, he was away from the action, a military man in the NSC. I went to Cabot Lodge and said, “Jesus, I know that guy - he'll want to tell us how to run the god-damned negotiation instead of being our military adviser.” The funny thing is I saw the guy in an airport about three weeks ago when I was flying to Atlanta - he's retired now. And I said to Cabot, “No, we can't take him. We've got to get an Army man who stays on the ground.” “Well who do you recommend?” I said, “I know just the guy, and a guy you liked, Freddy Weyand.” He says, “Where is he?” I said, “They've got him in some crummy job in charge of the reserves in Washington.” “Get Freddy Weyand.” Freddy had been 25th division commander, and a guy whom I had worked with in Saigon. So we were at breakfast at the White House, Lodge, myself, Wheeler, the President and Henry Kissinger. Lodge approached this business, we didn't want this guy Walt Rostow had fobbed off on Henry. Henry didn't know. They didn't intend to make those negotiations much anyway. So I said we'd take Freddy Weyand. And that's how we got Freddy Weyand. We saved Freddy Weyand's career, he later became chief of staff of the Army. And the reason he did was because from Paris he went to Saigon as deputy commander, and then he became commander of MACV, and then he became chief of staff of the Army.

Q: He'd been on the slow track.

HABIB: That's right, a good soldier. Just like Paul Gorman is a four-star general now, a Lt. General. Paul was a colonel with us. I pinned the DSC on him, as a matter of fact, when he left us. He was assigned to some routine job. I said, "What do you want?" He said, "I want to go back to Vietnam as a combat commander." I was in the office of Mel Laird, and I told him about this guy and said he wants a job as combat commander, he's a good man. He was a battalion commander, he was decorated by the President with a DSC. And Mel Laird turned to Bob Pursely (phonetic) who was military assistant and said, see what you can do about it. And they made him assistant division chief of the 101st Airborne. He went back to Vietnam and from there he was commander of the 4th division in Colorado Springs, and a few other assignments. He's now the theater commander in the Caribbean and Central America.

Q: That's because they got their rewards.

HABIB: Cabot came, and we began sort of floundering around. At that point Henry Kissinger entered the negotiations by deciding that he's going to run the secret negotiating. And he starts out, in my opinion and I told him later...he had Dick Walters who was then the military attaché, set up the god damned negotiation, and said nothing to us. Henry's lack of confidence in the secrecy of the Foreign Service...here I had run the secret negotiations, and he knew me. He knew me for a long time, hell I knew him when he was at Harvard. And yet, instead of getting me to set up the secret negotiations, he gets a military attaché, this secretive fellow called Dick Walters, to set up the negotiations through a Frenchmen, mind you, who was a friend of Kissinger's. I should say his wife was a friend of Kissinger's, a guy called Jean Sainteny who was an old Indo-Chinese hand. He gets the god-damned first secret meeting with them set up through Walters and Sainteny in Sainteny's apartment. And they go to the meeting and Henry thinks Walters is going to do the interpreting and speak French - he finds out the guys won't speak French in the negotiations. So he didn't have them. Instead of taking my man, Dave Engel, whom I had offered him. I said to him, I knew that they were doing this. He had with him Winston Lord, Tony Lake and this character, Walters. None of them knew anything about anything at that point compared to us. He wouldn't use...I had Dave Engel, I had John Negroponte, I had Dick Holbrooke, Dick Smyser, and he decided to do it this way. Of course, he soon learned that he had to have Dave Engel. Years later, years later, John Negroponte was head of the delegation, but he was working for Kissinger, not for me. He was on the NSC at that time. He wouldn't use the mechanism that we had, either in terms of...now, first of all, they ended up by not being secret. Lodge left because he didn't want to hang around any longer. I became acting head of the division and lasted about nine months, and then they decided to make it appear as if we were upgrading our interest and had David Bruce come. David lasted several months, I forget how long. He was there for about nine months, and he got fed up and he left. I was acting again, and then I finally broke loose and went as ambassador to Korea.

Q: Did you go to Henry before you started trying to leave there? I mean, did you talk to Henry?

HABIB: No, no. They knew I wanted to leave. Henry was operating on his own directly with the President and I would see him rarely. That was about it.

Q: The Department didn't get in at that time on guidance.

HABIB: Nothing. He didn't take any guidance from Bill Rogers. Who was going to give guidance. By this time he had enough sense to get a few guys with him. Bill Sullivan was with him. I don't think Bill Sullivan actually got there until about '71 or so. George Aldridge helped him with the drafting at the end. These are the sort of things that went on at that time. John Negroponte and Dave Engel was the interpreter. Negroponte had left the delegation and went to Stanford for a year and when he came back Henry asked me to hire him for the NSC, and I gave him a high recommendation. Dick Smyser was also one of my guys who was in the delegation who later went to the NSC. Henry used to take my advice about FSOs in the NSC. He did that from the beginning. When he first came to Washington he asked me who were good people, and I gave him the names of good people, and he took them.

Q: You played your cards well with him because he obviously liked you.

HABIB: Well, we got along because I knew him very well. As I said to you earlier, with Henry you had to speak your piece otherwise you didn't get a chance.

Q: Had he come on missions to Vietnam while you were there?

HABIB: Yes. The first time I met him was when he came to Vietnam. You probably never heard him tell that story about the time I threw him out of my office. The first time he ever came in, the first time I ever saw him. He was a professor and Henry Cabot Lodge called me in and said that Johnson was sending this professor out. Did I know this Professor Kissinger? I said, I don't know him but I know who he is, he's written that book that everybody knew about: Nuclear weapons and Foreign Policy. So this guy shows up at my door one morning. I was in one of my particular moods, so I looked at him and said, "Professor, you don't know a god-damn thing about this place. I'm a very busy fellow. If you want to learn something about it, I'll give you a couple of my guys who know the language, know the country. You go around the country, spend a couple of weeks looking the situation over, then you come back and I'll have time to talk to you. In the meantime, get the hell out of my office." That's exactly the way I greeted him. He tells the story all the time, I literally told him to get the hell out of my office, I didn't have time for him. But he followed my advice. As a matter of fact, I gave him Dave Engel, and I gave him Vlad Lehovitch to take him around, take him up country and show him around. I think John Negroponte went with him too to show him a little bit about what the hell the war was all about. Interesting enough, Henry hated to fly, you know, at that time. He was literally pained flying, but he would do it. He would grit his teeth and he'd go up in these god damned little airplanes and flit around the countryside. Then he came back and we became very good friends.

Q: I was chairman of the day, I guess, at the Senior Seminar and he had recently come back from Vietnam and we had him talk to us. My job was also to go out and meet him at National Airport at some ungodly hour like 7:30 in the morning when he came down on the Eastern shuttle from Boston. I bought him breakfast, and I even managed to get a State Department limousine. I literally spent until 10:00 at night with him that day, except in the afternoon he had an appointment over in the Executive Office Building and I more or less cooled my heels out in the corridor while he was doing that, and I found that he'd sneaked across to the White House in the meantime and came back. I remember we had a terrific storm that day and his plane was delayed getting up to Boston - he was supposed to go off on the 7:00 shuttle - and I think he got off finally on the 10:00 flight. We had sandwiches and beer waiting for the weather to clear up. Had a long time to talk with him.

HABIB: Well, after I came back from Vietnam as deputy, I used to see him at Harvard. He once had me lecture to his famous seminar. I actually stayed with him that night.

Q: That was a high honor.

HABIB: He had a bachelor apartment at that time. He was separated from his wife. Yes, I lectured to his seminar. He told that story many times. He told it to my staff when he first visited me in Korea when I was ambassador. He told that story to the assembled staff, about how good my judgement was that I threw the future Secretary of State out of my office. Those were days when we were working very hard and didn't have time to waste our time talking to people who didn't know anything. He took my advice. He actually went out and spent those two weeks flying around the country, learning what the hell the war was all about.

Q: You had three and a half years.

HABIB: Yes. I left there in the fall. I was due to leave earlier and, when Bruce left, I stayed on a couple of months and then came home. By that time, my wife was living in Paris, my oldest daughter was in college. So we came home and spent a few months waiting to go to Korea, and then took off for Korea. Arrived in Korea, if I remember, about November of '71. It was fine, found a lot of people I knew, things were moving along. Immediately sort of got occupied with the...of course, one of the things that was still occupying us was the Vietnam war. First of all, of course, in February of '72, I'd only been in the post four months, and I got ill and got evacuated to Walter Reed. I had my first heart attack, had it in Walter Reed. I was having chest pains and I went to the doctor in Korea, and he took one look at my cardiogram and put me in bed. Two weeks later I was on a medical airplane to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington. And it was while I was at Walter Reed that I had my first heart attack. It's a good thing I was at Walter Reed.

Q: Oh, he evacuated you before just on the basis of pressure.

HABIB: They were talking about an operation while I was in the cardiac care unit and I had this massive seizure, and fortunately I was there, otherwise I never would have made it. They saved me, and I spent three months recuperating, then went back to my post. They came out to the hospital to see me and said don't worry, the post is there, it's waiting for you. You get better, you go back.

Q: Who was your DCM?

HABIB: Frank Underhill. So I went back to Korea and started the recuperation. I went back in late May--remember I went to the hospital in February. In May I went right back to Korea. I remember I hitched a ride on Secretary Laird's plane, went to Korea and for the first month I sort of worked half a day, four hours, then I boosted it to eight hours, then pretty soon I began the usual...

Q: The routine of twelve or fifteen.

HABIB: Well, sporadic. Then, that fall, the negotiations on Vietnam were winding down. It was in that fall, after Henry had negotiated the first agreement, he asked me to come down to Saigon. I went down to Saigon and met him there. Then we went over the agreement, just the two of us together. He wanted my opinion about it, and I told him I thought it was as good as you'll get. It was a shame it had taken so long to get, but it's as good as you'll get and you ought to stick with it, you ought to jam it through. Of course, the South Vietnamese balked at part of it and didn't want to go through with it. That's all written up in Henry's book and then he went back to meetings with the North Vietnamese. They wouldn't make any more concessions, and that's when I think you got the Christmas bombing.

Q: That was Christmas '72.

HABIB: And they came back on, and Henry had asked me if I would come back as Assistant Secretary. And I said, "No, I couldn't do it, I was just too soon out of the hospital. The doctor didn't think I should do it." I said to him, Bob Ingersoll was ambassador to Japan, I said he would be a good man, he's a very good, sound fellow. So Bob Ingersoll became Assistant Secretary. That would be the fall of '72 or the spring of '73, somewhere in there, anyway we were very active in Korea with this business of, first of all, support for the Vietnamese and getting the equipment down there. Then there were some conversations going on between the north and the south, and we got a little bit involved. It was a very busy time, a big embassy, lots to do, the Korean communists were moving ahead very strongly. I spent a lot of time on economic-commercial matters, business, visitors, the usual thing. And then, of course, we had the military. A large military establishment, the United Nations command, it was called the 8th Army. There were all sorts of changes going on, the relationship with the Vietnamese. It was a pretty successful time. We were hoping that Park would go, and have a proper election. But he ended up by perpetuating his rule a little longer. I'll never forget that assassination attempt on him when his wife was killed.

Q: Were you there?

HABIB: It happened right in front of me. I was there when it happened. A funny thing. They were having this annual sort of national day celebration which was traditional for him to speak in an auditorium up on the edge of town. When we drove up, there were guards all along. I remember saying to Marge, my wife, something to the effect that there were a lot of guards, wouldn't it be something if there were an attempt on him. And within an hour there was an attempt on him. It had popped into my mind. Because you always thought of it anyway. At any rate, they missed him. They killed his wife. At that point, I had already received my orders to return to Washington as Assistant Secretary. I stayed for the funeral, I represented the U.S. at the funeral, then left and went back to Washington and began the two years as Assistant Secretary, before I moved up to Under Secretary. That was a very hectic period because of the Vietnam war - the war had started up again. We couldn't get money out of Congress. I was constantly up on the Hill testifying on what was going on, trying to get funds to finance military purchases for the Vietnamese. We were doing very badly. Then of course in '74 and '75 it really began to turn bad. The North Vietnamese defeated the South Vietnamese in the highlands. You had them sneaking down across the border. I was having a great deal of difficulty with the embassy because the embassy took a somewhat different attitude toward what the hell was going on.

Q: Who do you mean?

HABIB: Well, in the embassy...I'm talking about in Saigon. Graham Martin was ambassador at this time, he replaced Ellsworth Bunker. Graham is a strange man. He was wrong about a lot of things, and he is very stubborn.

Q: He didn't come out of it very well.

HABIB: It destroyed him, it destroyed him physically and somewhat mentally too.

Q: I came back with him on a plane from Rome when he was back on consultation and I had a talk with him.

HABIB: He and I had a real falling out, we later made it up. My staff was convinced, of course, that, once that breakout began, the war was over, the North Vietnamese were going to sweep right down.

Q: Well the South Vietnamese had based their strategy on stopping them well outside.

HABIB: They came down right through. Well, in any event, the great evacuation. Then we began getting involved with the question of refugees. I was up on the Hill constantly during that period, before the fall of Saigon in our attempt to try get more help for them. But it was only American power that could hold them back even though Richard Nixon

had promised them that if the agreement was broken, we'd be back to save them. Gerry Ford never got to keep that agreement, the mood of the public the way it was. I remember the famous ship, the Mayaguez, that was the end.

Q: I was back in the Department by that time.

HABIB: It was a very active time. We had the incident on the DMZ when we took some very strong measures. But we didn't do some of the things some of the people wanted to do. There were suggestions of great drastic actions, fortunately they were not carried out. I was preoccupied with a lot of things. We had China. I guess I went three times with Kissinger, and President Ford's trip.

Q: Did you go on his first trip?

HABIB: No, no. I was back in Korea on his first trip. I went on some of the negotiating trips when we were trying to negotiate normalization. And then we had Ford's trip to Japan, first trip to Japan by a President. I was Assistant Secretary at that time. Then we had the Ford trip to China. I was Assistant Secretary and I went on that, and did a lot of the preparatory work, donkey work. After the trip to China the President went to Indonesia and the Philippines and I accompanied him. There was a lot to do, I was working day and night. I think Henry and Joe Sisco had gotten along up to a point. Joe wanted out, or whether he wanted out or he didn't want out, it was about the time Joe was leaving and Henry asked me to take his job, and I took it, and I became Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and that got me involved in everything from then on, including another trip to China.

Q: It would be interesting for purposes of this book because Bob Murphy went into that job and writes in his Diplomat Among Warriors about...in a way he had been almost entirely a European man, European and Mediterranean.

HABIB: That's right, and skipped the line about everything else.

Q: That's right, but you'd had a broader experience.

HABIB: I'd had a wider, broader experience.

Q: You'd served on three continents.

HABIB: So when I moved into the job, even though I'd spent most of my career in East Asia, I'd had some experience, largely in the Washington context, which is important. So I didn't have too much trouble with shifting to a broader range of interests.

Q: Could you pretty much control your own day?

HABIB: No. The way I ran the job, I had good relations with all of the Assistant Secretaries fortunately. Even in the case of EUR they would sometimes come to me, but the guys in NEA were used to going into that office, so I began getting deeply involved in NEA. I even got involved with some of the AF stuff. Wherever anything was going on, Henry would ask me to do it. For example, I got involved in the Maldives-Honduras argument. I got involved in the Cyprus business. I went to the UN each fall to the sessions with Henry. And, of course, we had the China thing going on all the time. The China thing was always there. In the latter part we began the Rhodesian business. I was involved in all the planning for that. Then, of course, I was very much involved in personnel matters in the Foreign Service. I was the liaison with CIA in terms of covert action. I was the clearing point. I was a member of the committee that parceled out intelligence community money. I'd been all of these things that were constantly coming at us.

Q: You always had to be interested in the subjects that the Secretary considered most important at that time.

HABIB: It wasn't a question of just telling you. He handled everything, he never let anything go. Therefore, he was involved in everything. And then I got so I was the referee between the bureau and him. It changed, of course, when the administration changed. When Ford lost to Carter I was Under Secretary and I remember I got a phone call in December from Cy Vance before the new administration took office, and Cy said, don't think you're going anywhere, you're going to stay right there. I had known Vance when he was Secretary of the Army briefly, and then I knew him intimately when we were in Paris. We used to see each other constantly every day, and I'd be over to his house especially when I was alone they would have me over for meals with the kids, I was sort of like an older brother in the family. Vance and I had stayed in touch, he's a fine man, I enjoyed him, a great man, really a decent man. At any rate, it kept me busy as hell.

Q: You went into the Under Secretary's job when?

HABIB: June or July of '76, and the administration changed in '78, and I stayed on. I guess I was about the only guy at that level in the entire government that stayed on. I got deeply involved in the Middle East. I was very much involved in the Israeli-Arab relationship and how things were going. I traveled with Vance through the Middle East. We went all over testing the water. When Kissinger left, of course, the Department lost a nimble mind and vision(?) of thinking. But in Vance they got good solid sincerity, honest and straightforward.

Q: The thing that touched me about Vance is that shortly after the Carter administration came in he had all the ambassadors to the Arab states in Aman and I went over for that while you were briefing him on your area and the Secretary of State taking notes on what you had to say.

HABIB: Very organized. At any rate, I stayed on and the range of problems continued. Probably at that point in '77 we concentrated a great deal of attention on moving the peace

process forward in the Middle East. So I had a number of trips to the Middle East with Vance. Of course, I was supervising the work in the bureau at the 7th floor level. I did all sorts of things. But one day when Sadat made his opening pitch before he had actually done very much, the Secretary asked me to go to Moscow to meet with Gomulka. I met with Gomulka and tried to persuade them not to be so negative to the Sadat initiative. At any rate, I took off to meet Cy in Brussels for a NATO council meeting, and then he and I flew together to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Well, on the way home I was feeling pretty punk. The airplane landed at Andrews that evening about 6-7:00, maybe a little later. I got home slept, got up in the morning, it was cold as hell in December. There was ice all over the windshield of my car. Now there's a good example...I had a chauffeur-driven car, but I never had him pick me up at the house in the morning, I drove my own car to work, and then I'd use it only for officially...

Q: A good way to stay out of the newspapers.

HABIB: A good way to stay out of the newspapers, but it ended up I was scraping the ice off the windshield of my car when I had a seizure. I barely made it to my office, practically collapsed in my office. It was 7:00 in the morning.

Q: From Andrews going...

HABIB: No, this is in the morning after we'd arrived at Andrews.

I barely made it to my office. I remember Hal Saunders...I was due at the White House for breakfast, Menachem Begin, Cy Vance and the President. And I had told Cy the night before when we got in to Andrews, I'll meet you at the office at 7:00 and we'll go over together. But I got to the office at 7:00 and barely made it to the room, collapsed and they called an ambulance and I got hauled out to Walter Reed. So I didn't make the breakfast with Begin and the President. They put me in intensive care in Walter Reed...

Q: They had your file.

HABIB: Yes, and I had an arrest that day. They had sedated me so they shocked me back with the paddles. They kept me there for a few days, and by golly I had another arrest. I got over it, and they put me on a lot of pills, I was taking at one time something like 36 pills, each a different kind, in one day. I'd have to get up in the middle of the night and take a pill. They were trying to adjust the rhythm of my heart by pills. What had happened, of course, the first heart attack left a scar and a bulge in my heart and that would always stay with me, and the pain. So the next thing I know, they said I'm in the hospital recuperating and when I recuperated I came back to the Department. Oh well, now you can go back to work, other people do. And I said, no, I don't think so. I'll take some time off to see if I can get my health back. So I went out to Stanford as Diplomatic in Residence.

Q: So you stepped down from the office.

HABIB: Obviously I wasn't going to be able to keep up that pace anymore. So I went out as Diplomat in Residence at Stanford in 1978. Well, I had another few bad incidents, arrests. What was happening, I would feel them coming on, and I'd get to the hospital.

Q: While you were at Stanford, did you?

HABIB: I had it at Stanford, yes. And finally I went to this doctor of mine. He had been my doctor at Walter Reed. He was once chief of cardiology at Walter Reed and he had retired, and he was now a professor out at the University of California hospital, a teaching professor. He started working on me. He got me an angiogram again to find out what was wrong. Quite obviously I had serious blockages in my arteries. So it was operation time. In '78, August-September, I had the operation. He gave me two by-passes, and they took the bulge out of my heart that was there from the first heart attack. They just removed the scar tissue and sewed the heart back up together again. After the operation everybody thought everything went so well. I'm lying in the intensive care unit, and I had a stroke, I was completely paralyzed. It was a clot. Well, that was bad and they really got frantic at that point.

Q: That was a clot from the operation probably.

HABIB: They don't know what it was. Don't you know they never admit the operation went wrong. It happened. At any rate, they saved me. I'm still to this day don't know what happened. So I relaxed for a while, when I was supposed to teach I just postponed. And then I ended up by teaching two quarters instead of four quarters. I taught in the quarters in '78 and the spring of '79, and then in June of '79 I came back to Washington ready for work up to a point at any rate. I'd had the operation and I was feeling pretty good. So I became senior adviser to the Secretary, and worked on odd jobs like the Caribbean.

Q: Like the Ambassador-at-Large function.

HABIB: It was a little different in my case in the sense that my personal relationship with Vance was very close. I went to China with him too, I had been earlier to China. But in this period I did special jobs. I did the Caribbean, I gave my time to some of the Central America stuff. He asked me to chair a committee on the recruitment and examination of the Foreign Service, a commission report which should be around. It was a very good report.

Q: It had a big impact on the new legislation, the 1980...

HABIB: It did in the sense that we produced some ideas on what to do about the problems of getting in other people in the affirmative action program. At the end of that it was quite clear that I wasn't going to be the same, so I retired. I went back to California.

Q: Did we retire on the same day? Did you retire in 1980? February 29th. That was the best day to resign because you'd get the kick-back from the raise before, and the raise after. Well, anyway, it was a good time to retire.

HABIB: I resigned because I didn't think I could carry a full load.

Q: And here you are.

HABIB: I went back to Stanford. I was a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, and they kept me on there. I lived in a house I had bought some years earlier in Belmont, California. About that time a guy called George Shultz called me up, he was president of Bechtel, asked me to drop around. I did and he offered me...I would be a consultant to Bechtel on a retaining basis from month to year.

Q: An offer you couldn't refuse.

HABIB: He was a nice guy and we had an understanding.

Q: You didn't know him before.

HABIB: I had met him early on, when he was Secretary of Labor, and we had mutual friends. One of my good friends, and one of his good friends, was Jim Hodgson who earlier was ambassador to Japan. Jim and I got along very well, in fact we actually played golf with Shultz. At any rate Shultz offered me this, and I took it. I became a trustee of the Asia Foundation, trustee of the World Affairs Council, and trustee of the Pacific Basin. You know, how you take on those do good things. This is what I was doing in California.

Q: Did you travel for Bechtel?

HABIB: No. I had an understanding with George that my job was not to lobby in Washington, and not to go abroad to seek business. It was not my job. My job was to be available when they wanted to sit down and talk about things, be available for meetings, and advisory. And on that basis I took it. I was offered other things, I just didn't take them. Then I was offered a seat on the board of a company in Hawaii by a friend of mine working in that part of the country. He asked me to join him in his private company. So I began doing things like that.

Q: Then you got elected.

HABIB: Back in 1980, in '81 Reagan gets elected. By this time I'm down in Florida playing golf in the middle of winter, and I get a phone call from Bud McFarlane who was going to be Al Haig's counselor, and said Al wanted to talk to me. Bud said Al wants to know if you might be willing to come to Washington, he wants to talk to you. I said, well, ask him to call me, we'll talk about it. So Al called...I knew Haig from Vietnam days, and

also when he was in the NSC, we worked together and always got along. And Haig called me and said, I'd like you to come up to Washington, I'd like to talk to you. What about? He said, I want to talk to you about personnel, who are the good guys, who to put in what job. So on January the 20some odd, I arrived in Washington. Haig was Secretary of State, and I gave my advice. We went through a list of people whom I thought were good. Some of them he took, some he didn't, some he made assistant secretaries, some he made ambassadors, some he just didn't do anything about. But I gave him what I thought were the best guys in various fields, and he made notes about it. He was very good about it, and I left. I went back to where I was in Florida, and suddenly I get a call one day, it was the missile crisis. The Syrians had moved, the Israelis were back in the [middle] of the fight, shot down two Syrian helicopters, and the Syrians had anti-aircraft surface to air missiles in the valley. The Israelis were going to knock them all out, or else they had to be out. Well, quite obviously we stepped in to try to tranquilize the situation. The Israelis were very unhappy about Palestinian action along the northern border. At any rate, I negotiated an understanding, sort of ad hoc, unwritten, sometimes ambiguous agreement on the matter in which the PLO would behave in southern Lebanon. I negotiated all that just by going back and forth. That was the beginning of my...

Q: ...shuttle. We'd see you on television every night.

HABIB: Well, in that period I completed tranquilizing the border, things were quiet, and I came back to Washington, and went back to California. And the Secretary asked me, what to do, and I gave him my views. At one point it was decided that I would go back to the Middle East to see if I could improve the security conditions in southern Lebanon and get the PLO a lower profile to soothe the Israelis a little bit. So I decided I would do that and combine that with a vacation, so I told my oldest daughter to come with me, I'd take her to the Greek islands and show her the Greek islands, and we'd come back. Then I had meeting on the Middle East, this was in '82 at Fitchley House. So my daughter and I arrived at Fitchley, and I've got reservations, we're going to go to Greece and tour the islands. It was June of 1982, I guess it was June 6th or the 5th that the Israeli ambassador got shot in London. Again, the Israelis are going to use that. The President was at a summit meeting, I got a phone call from him, we're sending a plane for you, the President wants to see you. So I went over there and talked to Haig, met briefly with the President, and was re-launched to the Middle East to try to...

Q: We turned that around.

HABIB: And that was the beginning of the major Lebanese war operation. All of that, the Lebanese thing is all pretty well written. Maybe I'll write the history of the period, I don't know. There's a lot of crap that has been written.

Q: Do you by any chance know the one by Johnathan Randal?

HABIB: Yes, he describes the political structure.

Q: I found it quite...this was very early.

HABIB: He was very anti--the Christian Militia.

Q: I gotten about half way through it, I'm reading it right now. It's good on the cultural, ethnic, and internal political faction of Lebanon. I see some place later he gets around to talking about your...

HABIB: Well, you see by the time he wrote that book I'd already had the first operation.

Q: Right. It's not up-to-date.

HABIB: At any rate, I got re-launched. That was a period of very intensive shuttle diplomacy to try to find a way to cool that thing down.

Q: How did you stand it physically?

HABIB: Well, you know, I took care of myself. The problem was I ate too much and gained weight. When you're only doing one thing, you concentrate on that. I used to get tired, sure, but I'd lie down. My real problem was eating too much, that's what got me in the end, I'm sure. We went through very long periods of frustration there. What we started to do in Lebanon was to do a number of things. Number one, get the Lebanese sovereignty reestablished, so things would be sovereign in their own country. Secondly, we wanted to get all the external forces out. We wanted a (inaudible) in the Lebanese government. And we wanted to get assurances that Lebanese character wouldn't be used for hostile action against the others. We had arranged that meeting. There was practically no evidence of any hostile action from Lebanese territory directly into Israel. The Israelis won't admit that, but it's true. We kept track of those damn things. Now, they had this plan, Sharon had this plan that had been made in Lebanon to crush the Palestinian movement. That's what he told me when he told me about this plan, and showed me what it was.

Q: Instead of stopping.

HABIB: I told him it was no god damned good, and I was right, but he didn't pay any attention. The next day you know the war is on and everything that goes with it. At that point we began to question, how do you stop the war? I had eleven ceasefires, then the twelfth one. Sometimes a ceasefire would last for a day, sometimes an hour, sometimes three days, it never would last. And it was not always the Arab's fault. The Israelis had this strange notion that if you declared a ceasefire, you could move your troops around. So they would accept the ceasefire and then they would move their troops, and the other guys would shoot at them and they'd say, they broke the ceasefire. I once said to the Prime Minister, a friend of the Defense Minister and the Foreign Minister, that I was going to have to get this new definition of a ceasefire written up in the annals of the War College. But that's what happened. I was terribly busy running from country to country. Trying to

the Saudis and get the Syrians to do things, talking to the Syrians directly to get them clued in, keeping the Israelis on board, flying in and around and up and down. It wasn't too bad. Well, I then got to talk ceasefire and it held long enough to...I got to a point where I was really fed up with the senselessness that was going on. I had practically got an agreement with the PLO and the Syrians to get their troops out of Beirut. I was negotiating the details and what follows and all that, and still the Israelis were hitting the cities. So I used to call them up on a secure line and said I wanted to talk to the Secretary. When they got the Secretary on the phone, I said, now this has got to stop. Its just can't go on this way. He said, what do you recommend? I said, I recommend the President pick up the telephone and talk to Mehachem Begin.

Q: Which he did.

HABIB: That's what happened. That led to a disengagement of forces, and bringing in the multi-national force and a ceasefire that held long enough to get an election in Lebanon. Things seemed to be going in the right direction, and the war started all over again. At that point, we were in negotiation involving Israel, the Lebanese, a negotiation which...I opposed that negotiation. The Israelis insisted they wanted a negotiation. So I'm not getting anywhere. I went to the President and Secretary and said, my idea is that I should go over there now with a solution and say, look fellows, tell me what you want and we'll put it together. I talked to the Lebanese, they were alright, I had a pretty good understanding with agreement to them. I go to Israel and I had the whole cabinet, the senior members of the cabinet. I started talking about my ideas of how to solve...and Sharif pulled out a piece of paper and he said, in effect we're way ahead of you, we've got this working paper with the Lebanese, this is the start of the settlement [talks] in Washington. I couldn't believe it, I didn't know anything about it. I had not been in that part of the world in several months. I was out in California. My deputy, Maury Draper was there and nobody had told him.

Q: And they had had secret meetings with the Gemayel government.

HABIB: That's right, with an intermediary, Gemayel who was an amateur, a businessman, a friend of his. And when I went back to Gemayel, I said, what the hell is this. You didn't tell me about it. Oh, it's nothing, it's just a guideline for the negotiation. They didn't decide because they were supposed to remain secret. Well, they were made public yesterday. I know, I know, it's causing me a lot of trouble, my people want to know what the hell I'm doing, what did I negotiate, who negotiated it. Well, at any rate, it was a bad turn of events. So we began plodding back to the negotiations, and finally got them through. By the time they were finished, they weren't worth the paper they were written on because they obviously couldn't be implemented. I remember I used to sometimes say to the Lebanese, you can't demand this. You can't demand [that] because if you do the Syrians won't accept it. They wanted to get the maximum benefits to justify the war. But by now the war had turned sour. Those attitudes were very sour towards the war.

Q: And the Syrians were very proud of their negative reality.

HABIB: All of this took so much time, the Syrians get reinforced, and yet fooling around with the travel groups, the animosities, the Israelis supported the Christians, they supported that other group. The fighting began to stir up again. After the agreement was signed I was going over to Syria to talk with Assad, I got the word back that I wasn't welcome because I had misled him in the early days on the ceasefire. I didn't mislead him. The Israelis would agree to them and then they would break them. But he held that against me.

Q: That you had deceived him on the ceasefire.

HABIB: So I said to the President, well, if he doesn't want to see me... That's when I resigned for the last time.

Q: But you had gotten along pretty well with Assad, hadn't you?

HABIB: Oh yes, I had gotten along personally very well. I've been told on good authority, by somebody who was present in a meeting with the Syrians that Assad said he had made a big mistake in dumping me and declaring me unacceptable, that I should have been kept on. So at least I knew then, and knew what the problem was. Others were not so well prepared. But that doesn't prove anything. At that point in life I decided for final retirement. I'm now on the board of various organizations. I go to meetings. I teach. I'm doing a lot of speaking now.

Q: Well, I hope you won't push yourself too much.

HABIB: No, I try to pace it and take a few weeks off now and then. I take my time when I can but sometimes you can't. You're never quite the same after these seizures. So now I belong to all these various organizations, and I go to meetings.

Q: How many honorary degrees have you had?

HABIB: Three honorary degrees so far, I'm getting another one. The University of Idaho gave me a L.L.D. in 1974. Yale University gave me a L.L.D. in 1982, and the University of South Carolina Medical School gave me a Doctor's of Humane Letters. And I'm going up to a commencement...degree to get I don't know what from Elmira College in New York where my daughter went to school, and I'm going to speak at their commencement. All together I've had lots of awards.

Q: Medal of Freedom, all kinds of other ones. Well, they can't make you Lord Habib, or Lord Habib of Belmont.

HABIB: It's all right...

Q: You'd never be a rich man, Phil.

HABIB: It's easy to make money out there if you want to spend the time in the business world. You know what the Foreign Service career is like. You go from all responsibility, or no responsibility, but it's responsibilities. That's the whole story of the Foreign Service. Why don't you go through this stuff and if you have any questions, call me. I'm always at the end of the phone.

Q: I don't think I've really...

HABIB: There were a lot of interesting things that we did that we haven't even talked about. Like the period in the 1960s when I was in Washington and we politicized the American Foreign Service Association. I remember that period particularly. I cooperated with that group. It was called the Young Turks when we took over the association in a fair election. I was elected president of the association in 1967.

Q: That's right. I had forgotten that.

HABIB: We tried to do all the work. There was Lannon Walker.

Q: Well that wasn't the time that Hemenway took over. That was the next go-around.

HABIB: He tried to abort the whole thing.

Q: I quit the Foreign Service Association.

HABIB: The guys I was associated with were Ted Eliot, who's now Dean in Fletcher. Dean Brown who is Middle East Institute, and myself, were the three running officers. Below us there were a whole bunch of Class 5, Class 4, Class 6 and 7 officers like Lannon Walker was the spark plug. Frank Weir, and then there was Charlie, the guy who is now ambassador to Ghana who was in USIS, he was spokesman in the Department at one time.

Q: I'm thinking of Tom Smith...

HABIB: I think it's Ghana, or was he in Senegal. He then went to USIA as deputy director but he was in the State Department...

Q: Oh, Charlie Bray.

HABIB: Charlie Bray, myself, and there was Frank Weir, Lannon Walker, and we brought other guys in all the time. Anyway, it was a good group. The young guys were the spark plugs, the old guys like myself helped them out. Of course, we were cursed by some of the old timers. I think it was inevitable.

Q: I rejoined the AFSA after a couple years of dropping out when Hemenway got out of the way. I think they've done a pretty good job, and I think they lobby for us. At least they're associated with all the federal employee lobbies. Not that one trade union, or association, can change history.

HABIB: His idea is fair representation of the views of the membership, I think, as a whole. This new generation in the Foreign Service is a lot different. There were a lot more privileges, there were a lot more comforts, there were a lot more assurances.

Q: Each generation has taken over for a while.

HABIB: Now the wives want to get paid.

Q: And you've got all this dual employment business.

HABIB: Larry Eagleburger's wife, Marlene but she's in favor of that.

Q: Larry couldn't shut her up.

HABIB: I don't know whether he tried.

Q: We began [a study] for the president years ago when you had some of the wives of the younger officers who didn't want to be bothered...into painting, or being present for the ambassador. They were into this and that, and do their own thing.

HABIB: The real thing is the dual posting is another problem. The wife is in one section, what happens when one gets promoted and the other one gets underneath him.

Q: Well, I think Personnel could probably avoid that.

HABIB: Yes, they probably could if they wanted to.

Q: Or in the case of a couple we know, she's in London and he's in Paris. I think these are freak cases.

HABIB: Bob went to Somalia and she stayed in Washington on the Afghan [desk], she's a FSO.

Q: Then you've got Carl Coon and Jane as ambassador...

HABIB: They're both on their way home. One of them is in [leave-without-pay status], the other one gets paid.

Q: I think it's a lot better Service than when we went in, Phil, all in all.

HABIB: Well, it's a more effective one now.

Q: The terms of service got better and better, basically the quality of the young people taken in was as good if not better than the pre-war service.

HABIB: Well, it's a different operation. Any other questions?

Q: If you had it to do all over again, would you do it?

HABIB: Oh, of course. Why do you think I came back in '81 and '82 was because I knew it might be risky to my health, but it was worth it.

Q: Like an old fire horse.

HABIB: It was worth it to get back in the action again, the things that really count. That's what we're supposed to do.

Q: We're all subject to principles of recall. But I can think of few besides you who have ever been recalled except for ACDC or whatever they call the classification-declassification.

HABIB: Yes that stuff is boring of course, but it has to be done, and gives employment to some of our colleagues for a few thousand dollars anyway.

Q: Most of them generally work a few months before they exceed their... Well, being this book has brought me into the Department a time or two every month for the last couple of years and that's been fun, walk around the corridor every now and then, and stop and knock on a door and stay in touch with the people there. I don't bother them very much, I try not to bother them.

HABIB: When I come to town I see very few people unless I'm asked to. Usually the Secretary asks me to come down and see the NEA guys, and I go down and see them.

Q: I had a good talk with Roy Atherton two weeks ago.

HABIB: I used to stop and see Roy because of my interest in the appointments.

Q: Phil, I may think of some other things to ask you about.

HABIB: Give me a call.

End of interview