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

HENRY L. HEYMANN

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INTERVIEW

Q: This is an interview with Henry L. Heymann. It is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Henry, could you tell me a little about your background to begin with, when and where you were born, and a bit about your family and early upbringing so we'll have an idea who you are, and where you're coming from?

HEYMANN: I was born June 27, 1920, in Philadelphia. I was educated in Philadelphia. I went to private school, the William Penn Charter School. My father was in the real estate business and a quite successful real estate broker. I graduated from Princeton University in 1943.

Q: What was your field?

HEYMANN: I was a history major. After Princeton I was four years in the Army.

Q: What were you doing in the Army?

HEYMANN: I was a field artillery officer and a battery commander. I stayed an extra year in the occupation; together I was four years in the Army. I reached the rank of captain.

Q: Where did you serve in the Army?

HEYMANN: I served in France and Germany.

Q: Were you with any particular division?

HEYMANN: I was in a separate battalion which was a split-off from the 30th Division, which is the Tennessee National Guard Division.

Q: What were you doing during the occupation of Germany?

HEYMANN: Well, I did several jobs. One, I helped run a displaced persons camp. Then I was in charge of the motor pool for European headquarters in Frankfurt. People had to come to me to get transportation.

Q: One of the most powerful jobs in the business.

HEYMANN: I think I have never had such power since. But on second thought my subsequent job was just as powerful. The Army decided to license vehicles. A lot of cars had been confiscated from the Germans, so many Army units had non-table of organization cars. To keep track of the number and type of vehicles the Army decided to issue licenses, and vehicles not eligible for licenses were to be taken away. I was placed in charge of the licensing. So I had unit commanders come up to me on their knees to allow them to license their cars. A rather strange part about it, I had a young soldier of Chinese extraction working for me. It was mainly a bookkeeping job to keep track of the issuance of those licenses, and he was terrific. He was really responsible for the performance of our office, but I was told I was doing a great job. I asked the colonel if we could give him a medal or a promotion. The colonel granted neither.

Q: Then you left the Army when?

HEYMANN: I left the Army in '46.

Q: And what did you do? Had you heard about the Foreign Service, or anything like that up to that time?

HEYMANN: Well, under my licensing job I licensed Ambassador Robert Murphy's office; he was the political advisor for the Army in Europe. Was it SHEAF or SHAPE?

Q: I'm not sure.

HEYMANN: There was a Miss Williams in charge of Ambassador Murphy's office for administration - she came to my office for their vehicle licenses. That sort of alerted me to the Foreign Service, although I had heard about it before. And also I had a lieutenant working for me, who was going to take the Foreign Service exams. So between Mr. Murphy's office and the 2nd lieutenant, it sort of kindled my interest in the Foreign

Service. Then I thought I would take a crack at the exams. I was going to take the exams in '46 but I was a couple days late in getting my application in. So I took the exams in 1947.

Q: When did you come into the Foreign Service?

HEYMANN: I came in in 1950. There had been a delay because of lack of funds. After taking the written exams, I worked for a about a year and a half for my father and he was pressuring me to stay in the business. When I took my orals in 1948, the Board Chairman, Ambassador Green, said, "Why don't you come in right away?" Somehow I had made a good impression in the orals. Green was going to get me an assignment until my FSO appointment came through. With all the pressures from home I did not accept, which I regret to this day.

Q: When you came in was there a training class, or not? Or did you just sort of come and were assigned?

HEYMANN: Well I'd been waiting for so long, and when they called me I was intending to go with some friends of mine to the Middle East for the summer. So I came down to Washington, and I said, "Could you delay my call-in for a couple of weeks, or about a month or so until I return from the Middle East?" And they said no, either I fished or cut bait. As a result I arrived in Washington later than my beginning class. I had only a week of training and went overseas.

Q: Where did you go? What was your first post?

HEYMANN: My first post was Stuttgart.

Q: What were you doing in Stuttgart?

HEYMANN: The money for our entering class was provided by the D.P. Program and we were all assigned to that program.

Q: That's the Displaced Persons.

HEYMANN: Yes, the Displaced Persons Program. I was assigned as a visa officer on the Displaced Persons Program.

Q: What type of people were you seeing?

HEYMANN: I would say primarily Poles, but there were quite a few Balts - Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians and also Russians.

Q: Do you remember what were some of the criteria for refusing people visas in those days?

HEYMANN: We rejected few, since the applicants had already been screened by the D.P. Commission. Before my arrival there had been a Consul General in Stuttgart who opposed the D.P. Program. He maintained rather strangely that the D.P. Act did not stipulate that anyone had to be granted a visa. He had fought to a standstill against the woman who was the head of the Jewish Welfare Agency. They were both strong personalities. He had his prejudices and he tried to have her moved from her job. She stood up against him and they were both transferred out.

Q: So when you got there the battle was...

HEYMANN: There was a residual sympathy for the former Consul General. His successor Consul General sympathized with the old Consul General, and didn't back the program very much, but didn't interfere.

Q: I don't want to overcharacterize this and correct me, but was this sort of the old Foreign Service which was basically somewhat belonged to those who were not too interested in bringing new people into the United States, particularly people who were not from "their area," northern Europe or something like that?

HEYMANN: Yes, there was that. And also anti-Semitic prejudice.

Q: How about you and the other consular officers, did you sort of go around the Consul General?

HEYMANN: Well, he didn't interfere much. I don't remember any battles particularly. I guess he had seen what had happened to his predecessor.

Q: You were in Stuttgart for how long?

HEYMANN: Just three months.

Q: And then where did you go?

HEYMANN: I went to Hamburg.

Q: And there what were you doing? You were there in 1950 to about '52.

HEYMANN: I was on the D.P. Program there, and after about three months the head of the program was transferred and I replaced him.

Q: Were they a different...were they still more or less the same mix of people that we were giving visas to?

HEYMANN: The same type for most of my period in the job, but during the last months we issued visas to Volksdeutsch (non-Germans of German extraction). It was pretty much the same as at Stuttgart, but the Consul General was neutral. We had two visa officers who worked for me at the beginning of my tour as officer in charge and who were doing their best to block eligible applicants.

Q: Was this because they were Germans?

HEYMANN: No, this was prior to the Volksdeutsch. It was anti-Semitic prejudice.

Q: Were you getting emanations of this from talking to them?

HEYMANN: Before I was in charge, they talked more to me and about their cases. One said, "I don't know how to block him so I think I will just bury his file." They put others through a sort of third degree - jointly questioning the applicant with one shouting and the other playing the part of the friendly, nice guy. They questioned one who was born on the Polish-German border and they blocked him for perjury because he said he was Polish. They blocked another because of his language. He forgot to say he spoke Yiddish so they got him on perjury.

Q: Where were these consuls coming from?

HEYMANN: They were temporary vice consuls appointed for the D.P. Program. They weren't FSOs. This was before Wristonization and they were staff officers.

Q: How long were you with the D.P. Program?

HEYMANN: I was about 14 months on the D.P. Program, which was in a separate area from the main Consulate General. Then I was transferred to the main Consulate where I was made chief of the regular visa section. My experience had been only on immigration visas and of a special type. I didn't know a thing about most visa work. I remember my first day; a visitor came to my office with some questions. I tried to give the right answers. After he left I got hold of somebody who had the real right answers. I chased down the stairs of the Consulate after the visitor and he left with the correct answers. I learned on the job.

Q: How was your staff? Usually one can rely pretty much, particularly in Germany.

HEYMANN: The German staff was excellent.

Q: You left Hamburg in '52. What was the situation in Hamburg at that time? Just as a city. This is '50 to '52, was the war still very much...

HEYMANN: It was still under the British. Our housing was provided by the British, who were still running the show. The British run a very orderly show, and I must say made

very pleasant living for us. I can't say it was very eventful. As I look back on it, Germany was making steady progress then. It already had gone on to its new currency.

Q: Then you left Hamburg in 1952, and you went where?

HEYMANN: Then I went to Naples.

Q: You were there '52 to '55. What were you doing in Naples?

HEYMANN: When I was assigned to Naples, I was assigned as a citizenship officer and was enthusiastic looking forward to a new field. The Consul General in Hamburg wanted to keep me in Hamburg. My orders to leave had arrived, but I was not informed of this or of his request to Washington to keep me. I thought I should go on to my new career as a citizenship officer and was irritated that I had not been informed of my transfer orders. However, much to my disappointment when I got to Naples I was assigned to the visa section. Having been in charge of a large visa section, I suddenly found myself an underling in another visa section, which is a common occurrence in the Foreign Service. You get transferred and you find yourself at the bottom of the totem pole all over again.

Q: What was the immigration program at that time from Naples?

HEYMANN: I handled regular immigration for southern Italian peasants. I didn't stay long at that. I moved for a brief time to the commercial section. The commercial officer, a staff officer, resented me as an FSO and wanted to make sure that I didn't jeopardize his position. He put me to work on walnut and nut production to keep me occupied and away from the office contacts. But I didn't stay very long and was transferred to become the consular officer which covered shipping, welfare and notarials. That was an interesting job.

Q: Any cases that particularly come to mind?

HEYMANN: Oh yes. The interesting part was the welfare. I got several tourists - people with mental problems who when they left the United States thought they were leaving their problems behind. We had one woman who ran naked down the hall of the Excelsior Hotel brandishing a knife. The Italian authorities would put such people in our hands and I would place them temporarily in a mental hospital (we had a fairly steady business with one mental hospital) or a hotel (with which we had more business) until I was able to arrange their passage back. Sometimes they needed an escort. Often it was a long and difficult process in dealing with relatives in the States who might be willing to pay for the hotel and transportation. This often involved considerable letter writing to persuade people to accept their responsibilities. We had other cases where people dumped their old parents on their Italian relatives who in turn dumped them on us.

The Embassy in Rome also handed us problems. One day they telephoned me that they wanted me to escort a woman to the boat who they were sending to Naples by train that

day. Shortly after boarding the boat, an American Export Line boat, she suddenly screamed that she wasn't going back to the U.S. where she was denied the right to do a four letter word meaning intercourse. She ran down the gangplank with me after her. I chased after her around the docks of Naples until I caught her. I did not know if she was going to jump into the water.

I kept her at a hotel for I don't know how many weeks. Finally I persuaded the Italian Line to take her. I did not bring out exactly all her bad points to the Italian Line officials. I got her on board the ship and just as we got seated in the lounge she started looking around wildly. I departed and the boat sailed without incident to my great relief.

We had other such mental cases. Would you want to hear another?

Q: Sure, sure. That's all right. I think this is interesting. It gives me an idea of the type of work.

HEYMANN: Another thing about the case of the woman who I finally got on the Italian Lines, the Consul General thought maybe I had jeopardized his relations with the Italian Lines which I hadn't. He bawled the hell out of me.

Q: Who was that?

HEYMANN: Alfred Nestor.

Q: He'd been there a couple of times.

HEYMANN: He roared at me. He had a cane - he was an invalid - and he threatened me with his cane.

Q: I think some of the Consuls General viewed the comfort of their relationships with the Italians, more than taking care of people.

HEYMANN: Yes, that was the case. Nestor had spent a large part of his career in southern Italy and that was his life. What happened was: an Italian Lines official came to see him and Nestor asked me, "Did you have anything to do with this? Can you explain why he is visiting me?" I told him what I had done and that's when he threatened and roared at me. It turned out the Italian Lines man had come to see him about something entirely different and my case was never mentioned.

I had another case of a woman who gave birth to a baby in the woman's room on the ship coming over. She arrived with the baby to whom she had given a long name including that of an Indian chief and the ship. I knew nothing about babies. The Consulate doctor said, "You better get some equipment to that woman." She was carrying the baby around like a suitcase. The doctor gave me some equipment and I hurried to her hotel to give the

paraphernalia to her, but the baby died. The Consul General again was furious - "Why in the hell were you so concerned about the baby?"

I think my most memorable case was when I was asked to meet somebody at the boat. The Naval Attaché in Rome telephoned me. Would I meet on the boat the wife of a man who had died at sea. She had cabled him demanding a full Naval funeral. The deceased did not qualify since he was just a civilian who was in the Naval Reserve. "Would you take care of it? Just go and meet the boat and take care of the death certificate and whatever else consular people do?" I met the boat and she turned her back on me. I never had a chance to speak. Evidently she was greatly disappointed. She had expected Naval officers with full regalia, but only a civilian appeared. The next day a man came to my office and said, "I was there when you met her and I understand what happened. I feel sorry for you." I had asked her the data about her husband for the death certificate and she would provide no information. The visitor said, "I'd like to help you. I am a British citizen." I thought what the dickens can you do? The man turned out to be Arthur Koestler.

Q: Oh, he was the...

HEYMANN: He was a Hungarian, the author of "Darkness at Noon."

Q: A very famous author.

HEYMANN: He contributed to "The God That Failed". Of course, his most famous book was "Darkness at Noon," which with uncanny accuracy reproduced the experience of a victim of Stalin's 1937 purge trials, modeled after Bukharin. Later he tired of writing about communism and delved into mathematics and other fields. He was a genius. He wrote in English and spoke fluent English, but his written English wasn't polished. The deceased had polished up the English for Koestler for "Darkness at Noon". That was the connection between them. Koestler gave me the information for the death certificate. The Naval attaché agreed that his office would provide a funeral with some Naval trimmings. The widow got mad at the Navy and during the funeral sat across the street having her fingernails done to show her irritation.

Q: Such is the life of a consular officer.

HEYMANN: Subsequent to that Koestler invited me over several times to his home on Ischia, a redone farmhouse. We would go to a village cafe in the evening and drink joined by W.H. Auden and other intellectual celebrities.

Q: You left Naples in '55, was that it? And then...

HEYMANN: I went to Cornell, I had applied for Southeast Asian studies with speciality in the Malay language.

Q: Any particular reason why you picked that?

HEYMANN: Well, I figured one thing, that I should specialize; and two, I thought Malaya would be an interesting and pleasant place to be. It turned out that there wasn't any Malayan language being taught. I was taught Indonesian instead. So I went to Cornell and spent a year at Cornell studying Southeast Asian studies, and the Indonesian language.

Q: I want to come back to the Cornell thing because it certainly in a later period became sort of the center or almost a movement, or something like that, with a particular point of view regarding American relations with Indonesia, not to the favor of the United States. How was Cornell at that time? Was it fairly straightforward? Did they find they had their own particular policy to push, or not?

HEYMANN: Cornell at that time hadn't gotten into conflict with the views of the State Department, because grounds for conflict had not yet developed. But the academics of that period believed the world of the ex-colonial countries was somehow pure and good. We were jaded, pigeon English was just as good as our English, nothing was superior, everything was relative. The Southeast Asian students at Cornell included some fine scholars, some of whom later became good friends of mine in Indonesia. There were others who never did any work. The professor would ask "What is wrong with our program here and how can we improve it?" The reply would be, "You wouldn't understand, you've got a colonial mentality."

Q: It was even at that time.

HEYMANN: I guess you could call it a strong propensity to take the side of the underdog. George Kahin was the leading scholar on Indonesia and a good friend of mine. I had great admiration for him. George had written a book, "Revolution and Nationalism in Indonesia", the first half of which was very good, but he got so emotionally involved in the country that the second half was sort of a cheering section for the revolution and its leaders.

Q: You went out to Jakarta in 1956, where you served from '56 to '58. What were you doing there?

HEYMANN: I was in the political section.
Q: Could you describe who was the ambassador, and how the embassy was at that time? How did they feel toward Indonesia?

HEYMANN: Frankly?

Q: Yes, frankly, absolutely.

HEYMANN: When I first went to Indonesia the Ambassador was Hugh Cumming and when I arrived there in '56 it was the time of the Suez Canal crisis. Cumming was a strong admirer of Sukarno and took an anti-colonial position. We gave the British and the French the cold shoulder. I wanted to join the British Cricket Club to play squash, but Cumming told me it was inadvisable. Strangely enough, Cumming after he left and went back to head INR reversed 180 degrees and thought Sukarno was the worst man in the world.

Q: Were you getting any intimations from the people who had served under Cumming and how he was as an ambassador?

HEYMANN: The political officers had no admiration for his admiration of Sukarno. I did not serve long enough with Cumming to really judge how he did. I do recall a telegram he sent with a title of something like "How to Deal with Asians" which I recall as nonsense. Change in attitude toward Sukarno, viewing him first as friend then as foe, was not uncommon among those serving in Indonesia. However, it was usually a gradual change. But with Cumming it was, at least ostensibly, a sudden 180 degrees change.

Q: Do you think there was certain propensity at the time for people to come out, particularly the younger officers, but others, to go to Indonesia or some place...we're talking about in the mid'50s, and these were countries who were just coming out of colonialism, and we'd had our own colonial past, and certainly give the benefit of the doubt, and this is the brave new future. There was a feeling, could you say...

HEYMANN: It was more than that with Cumming. Sukarno flattered Cumming. One of Cumming's favorite stories was when he traveled to the United States with Sukarno, Sukarno using an Indonesian term for a respected elder called him "Pak Hugh". I would like to note that Cumming was friendly with me and after our retirement we became closer friends.

John Allison came to Indonesia in about December, 1956, replacing Cumming and stayed about a year being replaced by Howard Jones. I developed a friendly relationship with Allison later visiting him in Prague and Hawaii.

Allison, who had assisted John Foster Dulles in concluding the peace treaty with Japan had hoped to be appointed Ambassador to Japan, but instead was sent to Indonesia. He arrived a frustrated and unhappy man. However, rather quickly he began to like Indonesia and the Indonesians. At the same time the Dulles brothers and Cumming back in INR became concerned that Indonesia would fall under the communist orbit. In local elections in Central and East Java the communists emerged as the leading or number two party, I believe the former, but in any event they did very well in the elections. Also the principals in Washington did not trust Sukarno. Allison told me they were starting to think of CIA action in assisting Sumatra and Sulawesi where rebellion was brewing against the Central Government in Jakarta. (I do not recall exactly whether the rebellion had broken out or not when Allison told me this, but I believe it was the latter.) Allison, I recall in working

with him on reporting Sukarno's August 17 Independence Day speech in 1957, was more concerned that Sukarno with his "guided democracy" was creating a fascist-type dictatorship. Allison's relations with Washington grew worse and worse and at the same time his irritation increased. I remember at least on one occasion Allison expressing his "surprise and amazement" at Washington's views in replying to a Department telegram. Another time Washington criticized the Embassy for not reporting something related to the Indonesian Parliament. It happened I had written a despatch on the subject and Allison took relish in telling that to Washington.

Allison was ordered out and sent to Prague. He hated to leave. In his memoirs called "Allison in Wonderland" he wrote about Cumming constantly trying to undermine him without naming him.

Howard Jones, who in the Department had worked with CIA on assisting the rebellion replaced Allison and immediately became very pro-Sukarno. I feel quite sure he made every effort to have CIA's assistance to the rebellion called off.

Q: Was it American hostility toward Sukarno at that time, or was this the CIA doing its own thing?

HEYMANN: Sukarno always had an anti-Western, Marxist bias saying that the future belonged to the third world and we were heading for the ashcan of history. The rebel leaders probably would have been much more friendly, but they didn't have the will to fight and that's one of the reasons CIA pulled out. I think CIA saw that it was hopeless and Jones, even though he had apparently backed the policy to assist the rebels in the Department, immediately when he came out as Ambassador reversed entirely and became what he remained for the seven years he served in Indonesia, a most enthusiastic supporter of Sukarno.

Q: Could you describe, and we'll deal with this again, but we're talking about the '57 to '59 period, how Howard Jones operated, and at that time how did you view him, his ideas, and maybe your colleagues in the political section?

HEYMANN: Well, I can't say the exact year, but we became less and less in agreement with Howard Jones. Sukarno by 1960 or 1961 showed signs of an increasing antagonism toward us. Sukarno reached the point of encouraging the Chinese to take over Hong Kong. He encouraged the burning of the British Embassy and the burning of the personal property of the Embassy personnel in connection with his effort to break up the new state of Malaysia. He took over the Dutch interest and the British interests and then the American interests, but Jones seemed to think he could always do business with Sukarno.

Q: Was the political section looking at this and in basic agreement.

HEYMANN: Basic disagreement, yes.

Q: How did this manifest itself? Were you aware, or did you get involved when visitors came of explaining one side or the other, or letters back to Washington? Was the discontent known?

HEYMANN: I used to brief the press and that was one of the few opportunities to speak the truth. We were censored in our despatches and our telegrams. There was quite a bit of tension. I can think of several examples: one, Sukarno got up to give an anti-American speech, and said, "Go to hell with your aid." I was asked to report that, it was very easy to report, I thought. But the telegram came back that this should be explained. It ended up that the ambassador told me to write that Sukarno had sort of whispered this. He never said it aloud, although it was in the Indonesian press. Somehow he had only said it in a whisper.

Another example was when Prince Sihanouk was visiting. Sihanouk and Sukarno both lambasted the United States, and then Sukarno did the honors of seeing Sihanouk depart and embracing him at the airport. Howard Jones turned this around in a telegram...I forget if it was my telegram that was twisted around, but the reason Sukarno went to the airport with Sihanouk, according to the telegram, was that he wanted to make sure that Sihanouk got out of the country. There was this conflict, and we were censored. It was quite an eventful time, and it was not only the outer island rebellion, but during this time from '56 to '59, Sukarno kicked out what he called the Kuomintang Chinese. These were the wealthier non-Communist Indonesians of Chinese extraction. Then he expelled the Dutch nationals, only a handful remained. This was because of Holland's refusal to hand over West Irian to Indonesia. To satisfy Sukarno we pushed the Dutch to transfer West Irian to Indonesia. This was part of the coddling of Sukarno by Jones. For a brief period Sukarno was more moderate and friendly and the government for a change turned to economic problems. This did not last long and Sukarno turned his attention to the dismemberment of Malaysia.

Q: I think it's interesting to look a little bit; I mean, here is I think the major example of an embassy where for seven years, as you said, you have Howard Jones in charge, and yet for most of the time the officers serving under him saw the situation completely differently. Was the word of this dissatisfaction getting back to the Desk where it's most important, and all that?

HEYMANN: I think we were always looking for tea leaves, or indications of what they were thinking in Washington. We occasionally got a telegram of Dean Rusk discussing the situation. Rusk saw the situation pretty clearly, but he reigned but did not rule.

Q: Was this Dean Rusk then...

HEYMANN: He was Secretary.

Q: He was not Secretary until 1961. So we're talking about '57 to '59.

HEYMANN: Yes, that was afterwards with Dean Rusk. I got my time frame mixed up.

Q: We'll pick that up later on. I don't know whether Robertson was still head of...

HEYMANN: What I'm talking about was later when Dean Rusk was Secretary and Harriman was Rusk's Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. Harriman didn't back us at all. He backed Jones. But we were always looking for backing from Washington, and we never got it until Marshall Green came out in '65 and replaced Jones.

Q: We're talking about the '56-'59 period, how did a young political officer work. I mean, what did you do?

HEYMANN: My job was to obtain information on the political situation. The daily developments we reported by telegram. Then there were the broader subjects such as the influence of intellectuals on Indonesia policy and analyses of the different newspapers which we reported by despatch. Our sources were the Indonesian press and personal contacts.

Q: During this period, do you remember who was the deputy chief of mission?

HEYMANN: During the '56-'59 period there were two DCMs who had memorable roles. Cottrell who was a forceful, effective and decisive Chargé following Allison's departure. Then there was John Henderson, who Jones brought as political counselor, and who became DCM and the principal enforcer of Jones' views. Perhaps he did not become DCM until 1960.

Q: Were you able to travel much during your first tour?

HEYMANN: Our travel was restricted because of the outer island rebellion.

Q: You came back to Washington in 1958, and you served '59 to '61, was it in INR?

HEYMANN: I was in INR.

Q: What were you doing there?

HEYMANN: I was the Indonesian analyst.

Q: Here you'd come from this place, and Jones had already been making his mark I take it by the time you got back. How did INR view our policy and Sukarno?

HEYMANN: They thought our policy as formed by Jones was wrong, that we were coddling Sukarno and he was taking advantage of us. We opposed helping Sukarno in regard to obtaining West New Guinea. We saw that Sukarno was friendly to, if not encouraging, the Communist party he excluded from power, and in some cases interned

moderates with whom we could do business. We were shocked at Jones' uncritical and apparently credulous reporting of his meetings with Foreign Minister Subandrio, who was a smooth master of duplicity.

Q: How about the desk? Was the desk more or less in agreement with INR? Were you getting that too, or did you have much dealings with the desk?

HEYMANN: Some desks worked closely with INR; this was not the case with Indonesia since our views were so far out of step with U.S. policy which was largely determined by Jones. I learned later that the reports I wrote in INR were not circulated when they reached the Embassy.

Q: You left INR and went right back to Jakarta as a political officer.

HEYMANN: Yes.

Q: I'm sort of surprised. I would have thought that Jones would have said, no, to your coming back.

HEYMANN: Jones was an affable person, probably not overly concerned with what his junior officers thought. On one occasion Frank Galbraith, who was DCM, had a sharp exchange with Jones which I witnessed. I had done a draft on Sukarno's Independence Day speech. Jones began altering it playing loose with the truth. They argued. Finally Frank shaking with anger said, "You can't do this, Howard." Jones replied, "Be careful Frank, your career is in jeopardy." Frank survived and became Ambassador to Singapore and Indonesia. While talking about Sukarno's annual Independence Day address (August 17), Sukarno would bluntly lay out his intentions and thinking. He used a sort of Aesopian style, but if you were familiar with the Indonesian political situation it was easy to understand. Jones seemingly refused to understand.

Q: When you went back, you were there in '61 and you were there at the time Sukarno and the September coup. While Jones was there did you find that the political section was still feeling very strongly about...they thought Sukarno was bad news, while Jones didn't. Was that still pretty prevalent?

HEYMANN: Yes they felt strongly and increasingly so. But the Political Counselor kept us in harness by censoring our reports. It was frustrating; we had the most contact with the Indonesians and knew what was really happening.

Q: Did you find yourself in reporting as you drafted things learning how you had to pull your punches?

HEYMANN: Yes we almost constantly pulled our punches and on rare occasions we slipped through some hard truths. By the way, the examples I gave about Sihanouk's visit and Sukarno's saying "to hell with your aid" happened after I came back, not in the first

two years. Shortly before leaving INR, I wrote a report on Indonesian communism. And soon after my return to Indonesia, my report arrived at the Embassy. Howard Jones didn't like it. Being an INR report there was no name on it. The Political Counselor than asked me...

Q: Who was he?

HEYMANN: John Henderson, who Jones had personally brought out as Political Counselor, asked me to write a rebuttal, which I did. It was a silly exercise. The rebuttal went back as a letter to INR from John Henderson, where probably nobody gave it any attention.

Q: This must have been a little soul searing...it wasn't as though Indonesia was a minor player. Indonesia was the Third World, non-aligned, with Vietnam cranking up, it was not an unimportant country. Of course, it's a very large and rich and wealthy country, and here are Foreign Service officers taking an oath to the constitution, with a political appointed ambassador whom they think is dead wrong, not just being inept, but I mean really wrong. There's quite a difference between somebody you can get and somebody that's not very good. This must have really done terrible things to people.

HEYMANN: It frustrated the hell out of you. Jones tried to hoodwink us into joining in on his starry view of Sukarno. One time he had a visiting friend of his, whom he had taken with him to meet Sukarno, address an Embassy staff meeting. It was weird to have Jones' words come out of the visitor, who had a mixed Harvard, New York accent. There was one addition: Sukarno's eyes resembled the visitor's own mother's and therefore he had to be a good man. Jones even had Sukarno speak to the Embassy staff after the burning of the British Embassy and the personal belongings of the Embassy staff, which needless to say had shocked many of the American staff. Sukarno spoke in English. What he said was about the opposite to what he orated to the Indonesians. He was a golden tongued orator and some of the Americans fell hook, line and sinker.

Q: Were there networks of official-informal, or just informal-informal letters back to the desk? Or when the desk officers or others would come out would they be told how people felt?

HEYMANN: We tried to convey our message when visitors came out of Washington. Bobby Kennedy arrived on a fact finding mission so I thought I was going to give him some facts. I saw him in the hall standing alone and approached him intending to tell him of Sukarno's encouragement of the communists and the internment of the moderate leaders. He gave me a big political handshake. I couldn't get a word in. He was looking for my vote. Probably the most effective thing I did was the briefing of the American press reporters. I knew the USIS press officer well and he had confidence that I could accurately provide the political situation. James Forrestal's son (I forget his first name), came out several times to gather information for President Kennedy. I was with him

several evenings usually as an interpreter for a Sukarno speech. I talked to him, but it was like talking to the wall. Jones was his source.

Q: Were you getting any reflections from Jones about your press briefings, or not?

HEYMANN: No, not really. I don't think I ever had any unpleasantness with him. One time I was duty officer and had to go over to his house. We discussed the political situation. He understood it far better than he conveyed in his reports. Sometimes we do things for small reasons. I hate to say this.

I think Howard enjoyed Indonesia and the prestige of his position so much that he didn't want to have the place blow up or for Sukarno to declare him persona non grata. He had an exaggerated view of the importance of Indonesia; on one occasion he told me he thought it was of equal importance with Vietnam in the eyes of the American public.

Q: This is not unknown. I mean this, of course, is one of the most egregious examples, but it's certainly true. I mean not on my watch. From accounts I've heard, he was Christian Science which meant a lot to him, which meant he tried to keep an optimistic attitude towards things, and a very nice person. And he was a former newspaperman so he could write well, and knew how to use writing.

HEYMANN: Oh, he knew how to make Sukarno look friendly and understanding in his telegrams. They were full of quotes. If they were accurate, Jones must have had a super memory.

Q: What about with the Kennedy administration? Harriman was the Assistant Secretary for East Asia, and a power unto himself. How did Harriman fit into this?

HEYMANN: Kennedy and Harriman followed Jones' line. Harriman seemed to like Sukarno. He did not like the Tunku in Malaysia. Harriman liked our enemies better than our friends. When Bill Bundy came in under Lyndon Johnson there was in the beginning a little more realization of the Indonesian situation. But Vietnam soon seized their attention.

Q: What about in the time that you were there under Sukarno, events were building up. I mean for a long time, but in Vietnam. Did Vietnam play much of a role? How did you all see the Indonesian, or at least Sukarno's attitude towards events in Vietnam?

HEYMANN: Well, Sukarno would support anything that would be against us. But as far as Indonesian attention toward Vietnam, Indonesians are very insular. The world begins and ends with Indonesia. I don't agree with the view that our firm hand in Vietnam restrained Sukarno.

Q: Did you have any problems during this time under Sukarno seeing Indonesian officials, dealing with them at all as a political officer?

HEYMANN: The Indonesians individually are very pleasant people. I interpreted for several of them for the Ambassador and if I missed a word they were very considerate. This included the first crypto-Communist that Sukarno appointed to his cabinet. Once I went over to Communist Party headquarters to interpret for a Communist specialist. We spoke to the number two in the party and he was extremely affable on the personal level.

Q: Jones left when?

HEYMANN: '65. He left before the coup. And Marshall Green came.

Q: How was Marshall Green received by the embassy?

HEYMANN: He had been in EA in the Department and already had an inkling of what was happening. We had briefing papers for Marshall on which we had worked our heads off and at last it came out. We were free under Green to write the truth as we saw it. It was a relief when the coddling of Sukarno stopped, and we cut off all aid except military aid.

Q: You were there during the coup of '65.

HEYMANN: I was there during the coup.

Q: Can you tell your recollection of how you heard about it, and what you and the embassy did at that time?

HEYMANN: Our first inkling that something had happened was when we saw troops in the square in front of the Embassy and facing the Embassy. We later learned they were an East Java battalion brought to Jakarta by the coup leadership. For a week the situation remained murky and we had only bits and pieces of what was happening. The language officers in the political section took turns staying overnight and listening to the radio news. At one point we observed or rather heard a plane flying over Jakarta, which later helped put together the pieces of what was happening. A cabinet was announced which was a real mish-mash, including the Army Chief of Staff (who probably had been murdered by the time the cabinet was announced) and a top Communist Party member. Sukarno had disappeared.

About a week before the attempted coup (defeated by Suharto's counter-coup) we learned that the government was going to declare the Consul in Surabaya persona non grata. This was not surprising, USIS and AID had been kicked out and USIS libraries had been seized. The coup was to be the finale with Sukarno and the Communists taking over and the Army leadership annihilated.

Marshall Green had decided that I would go to Surabaya as Consul and take charge without notifying the authorities. At the same time the former Consul was to quietly depart.

A week after the coup I went to Surabaya under changed political conditions. (The previous Consul had departed quietly as planned just prior to the coup.) However, the political situation in East Java of which Surabaya is the capital, was not so different as it had been before the coup. The left wing of the PNI (Indonesian Nationalist Party) infiltrated by communists remained a formidable force. With the assistance of the local police and Marines they were seeking to gain political supremacy. This remained the situation until June 1966, just prior to my departure, when Suharto's troops arrived and took control.

Q: So you got up there very shortly after the coup. I know you've been asked by newspaper people, but there's this talk about this great massacre of Communists in Indonesia, and yet there has never been a real figure put on this from western sources. There really hasn't been many witnesses to this. Did you have any knowledge, or were you getting any intimations of what was going on in Surabaya?

HEYMANN: There were many stories of massacres. The Brantas River, on which Surabaya is located, was reportedly running red with blood. One story had it that a raft had been sighted with decapitated heads on poles. I went to the river frequently to observe, but I never saw anything. I believe all these stories were gross exaggeration. The only seemingly valid report was from the British Consul. The Consulate was located near the river and the Consul saw three bodies which had been washed up on the river bank. It is apparently going down in history that there was a huge massacre of Communists in Indonesia. I forget whether it was supposed to have been a million, or hundreds of thousands. It was probably in the five figures. From my experience in Surabaya, it seems there was a lot of exaggeration and imagination. Perhaps the reason is that Indonesians like to say things pleasing to their listeners and they thought that the massacring of the Communists was what Americans would like to hear. There may have also been a macho element behind the exaggeration.

Q: What about your dealings in Surabaya with the local officials? Whom were you dealing with, and how did they work with you?

HEYMANN: The officials were pleasant but reserved. In my conversations with the Governor of East Java, I don't recall any conversation containing more substance than his enthusiasm for American cars.

An incident of interest. One day I could not get into the Consulate; it was surrounded by a mob. I called the police who after quite a delay dispersed the mob. I learned later that it was a friendly group whose main purpose was to block the leftists who reportedly had planned to take over the building that day.

Q: You left Surabaya in 1966, is that right? Where did you go then?

HEYMANN: I was the desk officer for Singapore and Malaysia in EA.

Q: How long were you that?

HEYMANN: I think 18 months.

Q: '66 to about '67. What were our major concerns in Singapore and Malaysia in that period?

HEYMANN: They were largely economic such as textile quota negotiations. Also President Johnson wanted to show his friendship to Malaysia and extended it a preferential loan through the Export-Import Bank. With Singapore it was the beginning of our understanding that Lee Kuan Yew was an outstanding leader and his leftist leanings were a thing of the past.

Q: Obviously Vietnam was a major concern of everybody. Did you get involved selling our Vietnam policy?

HEYMANN: The President through Bill Bundy was always looking for evidence of a country's backing for Vietnam. We grabbed and reported to Bundy any evidence of the slightest support for our Vietnam policy, which was usually some isolated sentence buried in a speech. You could almost feel the presence of the over active Lyndon Johnson. On one occasion I was supposed to draft telegrams from Johnson conveying holiday greetings to the chiefs of state in Singapore and Malaysia. I had to draft them over and over again; they weren't warm enough. One amusing incident: Harriman, who I believe had the title of roving Ambassador, used to telephone the desk to question us on Department telegrams going out to Malaysia and inject his advice. He called me one day in regard to the Export-Import Bank loan and started to express his objections. I told him the loan was President Johnson's idea. Harriman ceased and desisted.

Q: After '67, what happened. Where did you go?

HEYMANN: I went into CU, Cultural Affairs.

Q: From when to when?

HEYMANN: That was about October '67 to about 1970, I don't remember the exact dates.

Q: What were you doing in Cultural Affairs?

HEYMANN: I was in charge of Southeast Asia programs. That was also the time of the beginning of contact with China through the ping-pong match. They put China under my

bailiwick, which turned out to be answering a pile of letters from people seeking to take advantage of the new relationship with China. There were some strange requests. There was a would-be opera singer whose husband had some influence with Johnson, who wanted to sing in China. There was a group who wanted to invite Zhou En-lai to participate in a yodeling contest in South or North Carolina. I tried to be explicit in my replies. I do not find this to be true when I write the Clinton administration.

Q: I don't think they're getting people to write letters anymore. You left in '70, and where did you go at that point?

HEYMANN: I was ready to retire then. I was thinking of going to law school. But a job became available in Fisheries and Wildlife, to be the officer in charge of wildlife. I have a strong feeling for conservation, especially wildlife conservation. I have a kindhearted feeling toward animals. I don't fish, or hunt. Anyway, I was transferred to Fisheries and Wildlife. At that time they were working on the first worldwide treaty on the protection of wild fauna and flora. It was to be a treaty on international trade, which is a major factor in the destruction of wild animals and plants.

The idea of such a trade treaty had been originated in about 1959 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, a quasi U.N. organization known as IUCN. Several draft treaties had been circulated to the nations throughout the world by the IUCN. Finally a draft was agreed upon and the U.S. Congress passed a resolution or bill stating the U.S. would host the conference to conclude the treaty. We worked about three years on drawing up the U.S. position and assembled the Conference, which concluded the treaty. The thing nearly got off track several times. In aiming to invite all the world's nations we ran into the two China problem and were blocked by Kissinger, who headed the National Security Council at the time. It looked like the treaty was dead, but then it picked up again when we sent the invitations and nobody blocked us.

I can say there never would have been a treaty if it had not been for myself and Wym Coerr, a former Ambassador and the advisor to Christian Herter who headed the Environmental and Population Bureau. We both felt strongly about the need to get the treaty through and since we were both ready to retire we were willing to take chances to accomplish this. We ran into a tough problem in deciding what type of organization would administer the treaty. Would it be administered by the U.N. or would we create a new organization and how would it be financed? We finally worked this out in spite of one office in the State Department seeing it as an opportunity for empire building. But then the I.O. representative on the treaty task force, who was a fanatical nit picker, refused to sign off on our arrangement for the treaty's administration. Wym, who was usually very refrained, said he had never seen such a son of a bitch in his life. We did not know what to do. Then one day the task force met which we thought would be the final meeting since the hope of any treaty seemed dead. The I.O. representative did not appear and his replacement quickly gave the needed clearance.

A few days ago I saw one of the retired FSOs who is working in the Department in administering the Freedom of Information Act. He was ready to pull out. He had to deal with the former I.O. representative, now retired, whose nit picking and hair splitting he was finding unbearable.

Q: The basic treaty then the idea was to prevent rare species from being sent to zoos, or being killed.

HEYMANN: The idea was to restrict trade in endangered and threatened species. The treaty had several appendices. Appendix I covered species in danger of extinction. Appendix II covered those threatened with extinction. Through a system of import and export permits trade in the species on the appendices was controlled and limited. Appendix II species required only an export permit; Appendix issuance were stringent. Exceptions were allowed, which after the treaty came into force, became giant loopholes.

Q: Then you left there in 1972?

HEYMANN: I omitted the whole period from 1970 to '72, when I was in the Operations Center. I was in Fisheries and Wildlife from 1972 to '75.

Q: In the Operations Center, any major efforts that you were involved in?

HEYMANN: Well there were some memorable moments. I was in charge of the Operations Center when a Korean plane was shot down and when the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia. An unpublicized event I recall was two Oklahoma doctors, while polar bear hunting in Alaska, got lost and strayed into Siberia. The U.S. Air Force sent planes after them without notifying the Soviets. The doctors returned. Whether they were guided by the Air Force I don't recall. Anyway, the Soviets remained blissfully ignorant. Another thing I witnessed in the Operations Center. It usually took about five days for the discussions from the most secret meetings to leak to the press.

Q: Then after Fisheries and Wildlife what did you do?

HEYMANN: I retired.

Q: This has been really very interesting.

End of interview