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AMBASSADOR ARTHUR W. HUMMEL, JR.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bio Sketch

The Early Years

Return to China – September 1940

After Pearl Harbor, Interned by Japanese

Escape from Internment Camp: Joining Chinese Guerrillas

End of War: Work with UNRRA – Return to US

Completion of Education; Employment in Department of State Far East Bureau,
Information (FE/P) Predecessor of USIA – 1950

Nature of Early Work in FE/P

Hummel and His Associates in Department of State Information Work Little Affected by
McCarthy Persecution

1952 – Assignment to USIS, Hong Kong

After a Few Months, Becomes PAO, Hong Kong

Hong Kong Program Heavily Oriented Toward Overseas Chinese Throughout Southeast
Asia in 1950s

The 1952 PAO Regional Conference in Rangoon; Incompetence of Director Compton

Hummel Becomes Deputy PAO, Japan 1955

1957 – PAO, Burma

Gradual Decline of Burmese Government and Social Structure: Alternations of U Nu and
Ne Win, Culminating with Permanent Ne Win Takeover in 1962; Subsequent Descent
into Chaos

National War College – 1961; VOA Deputy Director, 1962-1963

Difficulties of Trying to Negotiate for VOA Transmitters in Foreign Countries

1963 – Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs: Beginning of Transition from USIA to Foreign Service Officer (State) Status

1965 – Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM,) Taiwan with Long Period as Chargé

Keys to Taiwan's Success Story

- Cultural ethnic traits of Chinese people

- Land reform in Taiwan²

- Assuring that main economic ventures were left to native Taiwanese

1968 – Hummel Becomes Ambassador to Burma

Major Problems in Burma

- Country's economy in shambles: survives only because of flourishing black market

- Narcotics problem – Hummel's dealings with Ne Win on issue

1971 – Back to Department of State; Initially to Handle Micronesian (Trust Territory) Negotiations

1972 – Back to Mainstream: Deputy Assistant Secretary of State East Asia and Pacific

- Development of 1972 China Policy – Nixon role

- Association with Kissinger: difficult to work with

- Establishment of US liaison office in Beijing

1975 – Hummel Requests and is Made Ambassador to Ethiopia

1976 – After Somewhat Over One Year, Brought Back to Washington as Assistant Secretary of State, East Asia and Pacific

Within Six Months, a New Administration Takes over: Hummel Replaces as Assistant Secretary

Change in Administration is Always Very Disruptive for Foreign Policy and Department of State

1979 – Phil Habib Assists Hummel in Becoming Ambassador to Pakistan

- Arrives just in time to see Bhutto government overthrown by Zia's military coup

- Conflict between US Nuclear Proliferation Policy and US need to assist Pakistan

in

the face of Soviet Afghanistan invasion
Pakistanis burn US Embassy in Islamabad
Comments on Bhutto and Zia Characters

1981 – Ambassador to China

Downturn in US-Chinese relations due to Chinese insistence on US termination of
arms sales to Taiwan

1982 – Chinese escalate complains over trade issues

Relations improve – 1983 – as US makes trade concessions

Chinese as negotiators: sophisticated, world-wise

INTERVIEW

Q: This is Thursday afternoon, July 13, 1989. This is an interview of Ambassador Arthur Hummel by Dorothy Robins Mowry, and we will begin.

Do you have your notes you had the last time, your outline?

HUMMEL: What do you mean?

Q: The last time, you had an outline that you talked from.

HUMMEL: Are we talking about my speech or personally?

Q: No, this is your oral interview which we were doing.

HUMMEL: I don't think I had any outline.

Q: You didn't? I thought you had some notes.

HUMMEL: If I did, I don't have them.

Q: It doesn't make any difference.

HUMMEL: I'm sorry.

Q: As I say, I was so horrified when I learned that somehow the tape, the notes, everything, my notes and the tape and everything got lost.

We will start from the beginning, then. This is an interview about the life and experiences of one Arthur Hummel, which will be of value in the larger oral history of both USIA and the Department of State.

BioSketch

I guess we'd better, because of your unusual growing up years and its contribution to your interest in Asia, perhaps we ought to start with at least a little portion of that part of your growing up in China in the war years.

A. The Early Years

HUMMEL: Okay. Let's see, my parents were missionaries and I was born in China, and spent my early years mostly in Peking. I left when I was eight years old.

My father moved to Washington where, being more of a scholar than a missionary, he was asked to be the head of the Library of Congress Oriental Division. He stayed there from 1928 or late '27, I forget which, to 1954. I more or less grew up here in Chevy Chase.

Q: Do you remember anything specific about Beijing or Peking, as it was then called?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes.

Q: By comparison with the more recent --

HUMMEL: I remember quite a lot of street scenes. We got out quite a bit on excursions to the hills in the west and so on. However, like a number of missionary kids, I think, coming back to the States was traumatic and I sort of put all that away and didn't even want to speak Chinese anymore.

As a matter of fact, because of the Chinese servants and the fact that my parents were practicing their own Chinese, I spoke Chinese before I spoke English but that withered away considerably.

I went to prep school. My father became a Quaker and I went to a Quaker prep school. I was one of the rebellious young people, like a preacher's son very often will be.

Q: Preacher's sons are very notorious. My husband is a preacher's son.

HUMMEL: As a matter of fact, I got kicked out of prep school, but then returned. Then I was a drop-out from Antioch.

Q: What was the prep school?

HUMMEL: Westtown, Pennsylvania. I went to Antioch but dropped out for lack of interest, and spent a couple of years roaming around, mostly in the Midwest, doing odd jobs and floating from town to town. I had a great time.

B. Return To China: September 1940

Then my father was invited to go back to Peking for a book buying and research stint of several months, so my parents decided to take me with them and sent me ahead. I arrived in September 1940. Then, their trip was canceled because of tension in the Far East, but I was too dumb to leave.

When I arrived there, I immediately went to a Chinese language school, the same school where my father had been part of the faculty and where I used to live as a child, the Peking Language School. My language came back in a rush but, of course, I had to study the written language for the first time.

C. After Pearl Harbor, Interned by Japanese

I was studying Chinese with a tutor and teaching English to support myself. I was too dumb to leave before Pearl Harbor. I got interned by the Japanese, first, one year in Peking, a very loose kind of internment. Then they shipped all of us enemy aliens -- British, Canadians, French and so on -- down to a camp in Weih sien in Shandong Province.

I was there for a year and then eventually escaped with a British friend and joined Chinese guerrillas nearby and stayed with them until the war was over.

Q: Let me just ask, by reason of policy, were you adequately informed by the Embassy or by the American authorities that it was time to get out? Policy is the reason for asking this.

HUMMEL: I think so; yes, there was a concerted effort made. As a matter of fact, there were married couples in which the wife was sent home in response to the urging of the American government.

When the man stayed on -- and this happened in many cases -- and was interned by the Japanese, he was eligible for repatriation as a reward for having done what the government said. Those whose wives stayed with them were not eligible.

Q: I never knew that difference before.

HUMMEL: All American women and children were eligible, but men were eligible only if they had obeyed the instructions to send their wives home.

Q: How tough were those Japanese internment camps at this time?

HUMMEL: It depends on where you were. I was in the one that was farthest north, closest to Japan, and that meant supervision by the Gaimusho, the Foreign Ministry. The

military ran the camp, but the Gaimusho supervised them and ameliorated a lot of the hardships.

So, the camp I was in was much more bearable than the one in Shanghai, which was really quite grim. Santo Tomas in the Philippines was worse and, of course, Borneo was horrible. The farther away you were from Japan, the worse these civilian internment camps were.

In this particular camp, we had more births than deaths but it wasn't pleasant; the diet was substandard, so it was no picnic.

D. Escape from Internment Camp: Joining Chinese Guerrillas

Q: How did you manage to escape?

HUMMEL: My friend and I had been trying for a long time to make contact by letter, smuggled letter, smuggled out by Chinese coolies who worked in the camp. We eventually got an answer from a Nationalist guerilla unit nearby, set a date, and got permission from the allied camp authorities to leave.

The guerilla outfit wanted to be in contact with the Americans, hoping that they could parlay this into some kind of support. The camp authorities felt it would be a good idea to have somebody out in the boondocks nearby, in case of -- well, in case of whatever happened.

Nobody knew whether, at the end of the war, the Japanese would start massacring people or whatever, so they felt it would be a good idea to have some people outside. So, in a sense, we were emissaries from the camp.

The guerilla outfit was very interesting and very self sufficient and very patriotic. It was one of the very few such efficient and patriotic Nationalist guerilla outfits. Communists were all over the place; it was just an accident that we wound up in contact with the Nationalist guerrillas rather than the Communists.

If we had escaped into Communist hands, we could have walked back to Yen'an and gotten out, possibly, but the Nationalists were just in small pockets -- not so small, an area of about ten miles by twenty miles that was in a densely populated flat plain.

There wasn't any running around and riding horses in mountain forests. It was a typical North China plains area and the Japanese didn't come in unless they were in overwhelming force, trying to mop up the place. They did that several times the year and a half that I was living there. That's another story. I've got the memoirs of the guerilla commander and I am translating and annotating those.

Q: I hope you're going to do something with that.

E. End of War; Work With UNRRA; Return to U.S.

HUMMEL: Some day. I've done some of it.

After the war was over, I spent a year working for UNRRA in North China doing survey trips into Communist areas; that was my first contact with the Chinese Communists.

Then I went back to the States and worked for awhile for the United China Relief Organization.

Completion of Education;
Employment in Department of State, Far East Bureau,
Information (FE/P), Predecessor of USIA 1950

In 1947, I went to the University of Chicago and in two years, got an M.A. in Chinese Studies.

Q: They must have given you credit for a lot of practical experience.

HUMMEL: I had to pass some comprehensive examinations that were given to a lot of people whose education had been interrupted by the war; there was a rather lenient program for that purpose. I had to make up a deficiency in Economics 101, I think.

Q: So, you finally did get your academic credentials.

HUMMEL: Right after that, when I got my M.A., Phi Beta Kappa, I almost immediately joined ONI, the Office of Naval Intelligence, and worked for them for about six months. Then, through the good offices of people who later became USIS people like Joe Bennett, Brad Connors and others, I joined FE/P (the Office of Information of the Far East Bureau), in the State Department. The Information Function was still at the State Department.

Q: We've gotten now to what, to about 1950?

HUMMEL: Somewhere in the 1950s for the State Department.

Nature of Early Work in FE/P

Q: What were you doing for FE/P?

HUMMEL: We were still trying to mop up the tag ends of USIS programs in Hong Kong and establishing them in Taiwan, as far as the China program was concerned. Also, we were engaged in supporting, with research materials, some of the people who were being

harassed by McCarthy during the McCarthy hearings period. So, we would help them with background materials and public statements and so forth.

Q: Did that affect what was going on in FE/P at all, except for your support work?

HUMMEL: Not particularly. I think because, when the Communists took over in 1949, they showed, themselves not to be agrarian reformers, and they showed that they were not abiding by their promises to have a multiparty system and accommodate other parties. Also, because of the well-documented killing of landlords and class enemies, there wasn't anybody who wanted to do anything differently in American policy, particularly after the Korean War started.

By the time I joined the State Department, the Korean War was on, so there was no occasion for the dissent. Our relations with China, whatever they were, did not leave room for anybody to be thinking about conciliation or advancing heretical views about American policy. We were all polarized by these events.

Later on, in the '60s, when we began to have tentative contacts during the Laos negotiations in '61 and then the Warsaw talks, there were some possibilities for contact, but the Chinese themselves showed that they were not terribly interested in what we had to offer unless we would simply abandon Taiwan and deliver Taiwan to them. That, of course, wasn't possible.

Q: Did we have any official offices in China at that time?

HUMMEL: No, none.

Q: None at all?

HUMMEL: None.

Q: Everything was closed?

HUMMEL: Our embassy was in Taiwan. For a time afterwards, our people stayed in place on the mainland, but the Communists treated them so badly that there wasn't any hope. I am fond of reminding people that we terminated all assistance to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, military and civilian, and left our people basically in place in the mainland. But the Chinese Communists spurned us in the beginning and then, of course, the Korean War was guaranteed to stop any contact.

Q: The Korean War presented a whole new picture, or it clarified things.

HUMMEL: Yes, it did. Now, when Chinese troops crossed the Yalu, when we were fighting Chinese troops, there wasn't much point in anybody advocating anything conciliatory.

So, my view is that American analytical reporting about China was not appreciably affected by the McCarthy tide, certainly not after the Communists took over in 1949.

Q: What about some of the people who became the focus of McCarthy's displeasure?

HUMMEL: A lot of people continued to have a bad time; Clubb, Remington and so on, those whom I met. Having been cut off behind Japanese lines, I was not part of that group that was back there in Chungking.

Q: You were a younger generation.

HUMMEL: A younger generation and I did not have the mainland experience that they had.

Q: How long were you in that position, then, in FE/P?

1952. Assignment to USIS, Hong Kong

HUMMEL: Two years. I met my wife in the State Department. She was working on the Near East Information Program. Let's see, I joined in '50, we married in '51, and in '52, we were assigned to Hong Kong.

Q: That's a good place to go on the first assignment in a family. What did you do in Hong Kong?

HUMMEL: I was sent out originally to replace Doak Barnett, who had been called the Evaluation Officer, trying to organize evaluations of USIS programs, not only in Hong Kong but on a regional basis; that is, polling, surveys of various kinds, as assets for our USIS planning. Not much of that got off the ground. Doak Barnett, I think, got bored with it and left and so I was sent out to replace him.

After a Few Months Becomes PAO, Hong Kong

Very shortly thereafter, a few months after we arrived in Hong Kong, Paul Frillman, the PAO, left, resigned, I believe, and they made me PAO. We had such bright lights as Dick McCarthy and Charles Cross, who became Ambassador to Singapore. There were some good men.

Hong Kong Program Heavily Oriented Toward Overseas Chinese Throughout Southeast Asia in 1950's

Q: Was Hong Kong a pretty big post, given the situation in China at that time?

HUMMEL: It was, very big. One of the innovations that I am proud of -- I didn't invent the idea, but I helped to get it started -- was the establishment of a Chinese language magazine called "World Today" which circulated throughout Southeast Asia for the overseas Chinese, in Chinese, and circulated also in Taiwan.

It was so good in its content and format that it was sold through the regular news networks. It was not a give-away.

Q: Was this in English or in Chinese?

HUMMEL: Chinese.

Q: What kind of Chinese?

HUMMEL: Mandarin, the written language.

Q: Was this the first of these magazines that USIA published overseas? Subsequently, there were any number of them.

HUMMEL: I can't be sure it was the first. I honestly don't know. It was an early one, and the key to its success was that it managed to meet newsstand standards and compete with all other magazines.

Q: What kind of material would you carry in it?

HUMMEL: News, commentary, anti-Communist stuff about the mainland, things about the United States. It was sort of a generalized magazine, fairly popular, quite a bit of stuff on movie stars, Chinese movie stars.

I remember having the pleasure of getting the absolute top Chinese movie star, a beautiful girl named Li Li-hua, in Hong Kong, getting her together with Clark Gable for a picture for this magazine.

Q: That's quite a combination, isn't it?

HUMMEL: They had their picture taken on a boat with the Hong Kong Island in the background. That was on the cover; that was a great issue.

Also, I took the opportunity to travel throughout Southeast Asia to all of the major places.

Q: But you couldn't get into China then.

HUMMEL: No, I couldn't get into China. I did surveys of the overseas Chinese, just simply to survey places, and I can't name them all, but Vietnam, including Hanoi and Saigon, at that time still in French hands, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore,

Indonesia, and I didn't get to Brunei, but the Philippines, Burma, doing comprehensive reports of local Chinese populations.

We, in Hong Kong, were publishing materials in Chinese for the whole area, and, of course, visiting Taiwan, too. All that was personally very pleasant.

Q: This was your first real encounter in these areas.

HUMMEL: With overseas Chinese, yes.

The 1952 PAO Regional Conference in Rangoon:
Incompetence of Director Compton

HUMMEL: Oh, yes; that's what I was. I was not an FSO. I remember there was, shortly after I arrived in Hong Kong in '52, I went off to attend a PAO conference in Burma where the Director Compton -- was it Wilson Compton?

Q: It could have been Wilson. There were a batch of Comptons.

HUMMEL: Anyway, it was one of the most dismal things I've been through because Compton was not competent and showed it.

Q: It probably was Wilson.

HUMMEL: The rumor was that when they phoned him up to ask him if he would be the head of USIA, then the new organization, they phoned up the wrong brother, Compton. They were thinking of his more talented brother.

Q: There are two others.

HUMMEL: There are two others, yes. Anyway, they didn't tell me until the end of the last day of the conference that I would be put in charge of writing a report for the conference. I had taken no notes, was not responsible for taking notes, and then I had to try and rehash it all.

After the conference closed off, I spent about ten agonizing days in Rangoon with the PAO there, Lionel Landry, trying to recapture what had been said and trying to make it sound sensible. It was no easy task.

Q: What were they talking about at the conference? Was this just planning for programs or was it policy development?

HUMMEL: I think it was more of a briefing of the Washington visitors, Compton and the others, than anything else, and an exchange of experiences. There was a certain amount of

discussion of overseas Chinese because this was one of the few issues to cut across all of the countries there or most of the countries.

The biggest program, of course, was Japan, a huge program they inherited from the occupation, but all of the other programs were considered interesting and significant and important, in varying degrees.

Q: Lionel Landry is a good friend of mine. We've worked together, most recently at the Aspen Institute.

HUMMEL: As it turned out, I followed him in Burma.

Q: As the PAO?

Hummel Becomes Deputy PAO, Japan 1955

HUMMEL: As the PAO, because from Hong Kong -- let's see, we arrived in Hong Kong in '52, left in '55; from '55 to '57, I was Deputy PAO in Tokyo, managing a much larger program under Joe Evans, two years, from '55 to '57. That, I enjoyed very much and traveled to all of the cultural centers, 12 to 13 of them at the time, and learned quite a bit of the Japanese language.

From there, I went to Burma as PAO, replacing Lionel Landry, from '57 to '60.

Q: So, you were overseas constantly during this period?

HUMMEL: '52 to '60.

Q: What did you make of all those branch posts in Tokyo, or in Japan, obviously during one of the final cut-backs? They've cut back since then, but it was such an agonizing kind of thing. It was so emotional for the Japanese.

HUMMEL: Yes. Well, as the country grows up and reconstitutes or constitutes its own media and cultural activities, the foreign input becomes a smaller percentage of the total pie. So, the cultural centers that were almost the only thing around that had had intellectual stimulation in the early days of the occupation were increasingly supplemented and superseded by Japan's own lively efforts.

Still, I don't mean to denigrate it because, throughout this whole period, there was an intense curiosity on the part of the Japanese about everything western. They wanted to learn about everything. They are terribly single-minded, as everybody knows.

By the time it became necessary to chop, when that time came, I think that was probably a rational decision because the need was no longer quite so great. In the same sense, the Fulbright Program that had been absolutely essential in bringing people out of

environments such as Japan, China, wherever, and vice-versa, later became a small part of the huge tide of exchange of persons that eventually went on through other auspices.

So, I think it had been highly valuable in the immediate post-war years, as USIS' program throughout the world was more valuable everywhere then than it is now, because it is quite often submerged under other media efforts.

Q: This was the rationale when I was there for further cutting.

HUMMEL: I'm afraid that's probably a good rationale.

Q: I know the situation in Germany, when they started to cut there, it seemed to be more difficult to cut in Germany than in Japan, but it made the same kind of rationale: You could spend your money on other things.

1957: PAO, Burma

HUMMEL: I think I agree with that priority. There were other priorities in places like Burma, where I went to next, where there was even more need because the Burmese were even more insular than the Japanese then.

Q: Did you pick Burma yourself? Did you request Burma?

HUMMEL: I think I did. Well, I floated some ideas. After three years in Japan as a deputy, obviously, I wanted to go back to running my own program again. I had been attracted to Burma. The Burmese are such lovely people. I studied quite a bit of language when I was there. For one hour a day in the office, you don't get terribly far, but I got to where I could travel around on my own and so on.

Q: What was Burma like in those days?

HUMMEL: Those were the golden days when the place was wide open. The immediate insurgencies right after independence had subsided and the new insurgencies had not arisen yet. There were no Kachin insurgents in the Kachin State and virtually no Shan insurgents in the Shan State. I drove my own jeep all over those exotic areas that now you can't go to at all.

Q: You are so lucky.

HUMMEL: I did a lot of hunting and hunting trips were my excuse. I must say I don't think I did much formal USIS work on those trips; I was entertaining myself, and learning a lot about the country and about the people. Usually, I tried to be the only white face in the bunch and traveled only with the Burmese.

Q: What kind of Burmese did you travel with? Was this part of the national staff of USIS?

HUMMEL: Usually.

Q: They were interested in the same thing.

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. Of course, I would meet the local rulers of the various states and the governors and the other people in the other areas. I did my job, but I also enjoyed it.

Q: How interested were they in the United States?

HUMMEL: Very much so. There was a long cultural tie involving missionaries, American missionaries.

Q: In Burma?

HUMMEL: In Burma.

Q: Not British?

HUMMEL: Well, British, too, but a lot of Americans. The most famous name was "Judson" and many of the missionary efforts were successful, not among the majority Burmans, but among the Karens, an animist people. The Burmans, with their solid basis in Buddhism, didn't take much to Christianity, but there were a lot of other ethnic minorities in the country who did.

The University of Rangoon had strong American ties, although originally, of course, British. We had a consulate in Mandalay. The British didn't have a consulate in Mandalay; they'd closed theirs up quite early.

So, our presence was known and valued, and American assistance was appreciated. In spite of the fact that we'd been caught red-handed supplying KMT guerrillas in the Shan state and contributing to disruption in the Shan State, making efforts to make trouble for the Communists in Yen'an Province next door at Burma's expense. In spite of that, we'd gotten over that chilly period and Americans were welcomed everywhere.

I had a good, close relation even with Prime Minister U Nu and General Ne Win, who was Defense Minister.

Q: Everybody who has served in Burma always has considered it one of their most favorite posts, if not the most favorite post.

HUMMEL: Cultural figures came through; Marian Anderson, for instance, singing in the university hall, who was an absolute, smash hit. Atoms for Peace exhibits and that sort of thing were extremely well received.

Gradual Decline of Burmese Government and Social Structure:

Alternations of U Nu and Ne Win, Culminating With
Permanent Ne Win Takeover in 1962:
Subsequent Descent into Chaos

Q: We'll come to this, because you went back subsequently as Ambassador to Burma. I'm interested in your assessment, just a little bit, of the development of that, the looking in, the withdrawing from the outer world, which obviously was not part of this period when you were first serving in Burma.

Then subsequently, they closed off and now, I guess it's back again to the same thing.

HUMMEL: Yes, it is.

Q: Isolation, set of attitudes.

HUMMEL: It was quite open under U Nu. There was a period when Ne Win took over by mutual agreement, at the request of the political parties in early '58. Ne Win had a military government for a short period of time and then did have the elections he was supposed to have, and turned the government back to U Nu when U Nu won the election.

Basically, the government was open and wanted to be open. They were proud of U Thant as their man in the U.N. and, to this day, there is a disproportionate number of Burmese who work for the U.N. and for our international organizations, the World Bank and IMF - very good ones, too.

You were asking about the Burma situation. What happened when Ne Win took over in '62, uninvited, was he managed a coalition between military authoritarians and left-wing intellectuals. The left-wing intellectuals, to this day, and the military authoritarians, have just run everything into the ground.

Marxist theory and socialist theory was used initially to abolish every scrap of private enterprise. Even the tea shops were closed. Little sundry stores were closed up. The state was going to supply all of these things, with no more profiteering by individuals.

Gradually, of course, they had to release this because nothing worked. Well, nothing really does work even today. They are most unwilling to admit error. There has been the rise of a new class of military people who are the beneficiaries, military and high-level administrators, who have their own shops and their own system, who are doing very well, thank you.

They know that if they turn back to a more democratic forum or change the forum, their privileges will disappear. I'm afraid they didn't learn their lesson with the last disturbances a year ago and maybe there will have to be more.

Q: After Burma, you were developing a family by this time?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. We already had our two boys.

Q: Where were they born?

HUMMEL: They were born in Germany. We adopted them when we left Hong Kong, on our way to Japan.

National War College, 1961, VOA Deputy Director, 1962-3

After Burma, I went to the National War College for a year, the class of '61 and then Voice of America as deputy for two years. There, I did a good deal of overseas travel, negotiating unsuccessfully everywhere for VOA transmitter sites.

Difficulties of Trying to Negotiate
for VOA Transmitter Stations in Foreign Countries

In Cyprus, Makarios decided he didn't want to share time on a transmitter with the American government. In India, after almost two months of excruciating negotiations and waiting around, we finally signed an agreement for a medium-wave transmitter on which we would share time with India. Krishna Menon didn't like it, so we no sooner signed it than he found out about it and tore it up or had it torn up.

In Thailand, we tried the same thing. The Thais were itchy about having an American installation broadcasting to China. The Philippines, that was all right, but that had already gone forward and had already started. I helped to negotiate some of the expansions in the Philippines.

Q: That's disheartening when you go from one place to another and get nothing but negative faces looking at you.

HUMMEL: No, that wasn't it. The individual experiences were -- the results were quite disappointing, but the experience was quite pleasant. I enjoyed meeting all of them, and the atmosphere was extremely pleasant, not chilly. It was a good experience of negotiation, I may say, particularly with the Indians, who are terribly difficult people.

Q: Was Krishna Menon at that point --

HUMMEL: He was the Defense Minister, but he wielded a great deal of power outside of his own ministry.

Q: I knew him when he was at the UN.

HUMMEL: He was a tough, poisonous bastard, wasn't he?

Q: He was somehow uncompromisingly rude.

HUMMEL: Yes, yes.

Q: I was involved with the negotiations for Sri Lanka. I don't know where that stands at this particular moment, given the situation in Sri Lanka. They were such wonderful people to -- even though they are so wonderful to work with, it would seem to me it went on and on and on and on.

Did you feel that, in these negotiations you were undertaking in all of these places -- and these were always for shared time -- they were concerned about their own sovereignty or they just didn't want any intrusion? Was political sovereignty the issue?

HUMMEL: No, not so much political sovereignty as a disinclination to be criticized by Communists, to whom a lot of our broadcasts were directed, against whom they were directed, and also a disinclination to be accused of being in the American pocket, of having American bases, in other words.

Also, the package we were offering would be that we really could not, with these megawatt medium-wave transmitters that we were interested in, although we were interested in others, too, but with that sexy piece of equipment, you can't change frequencies appreciably.

They are built for a certain frequency and, therefore, it would be obvious to every listener that the local broadcast, when it came time for the Indian government to start their broadcast, would be exactly in the same place, same frequency, same kind of signal, which they didn't find terribly appealing.

The idea of having a giant transmitter that they could use for their domestic purposes, as well as the medium-wave to China, which we were very interested in, that appealed to them a lot.

Q: You were Deputy to the Director at the VOA?

HUMMEL: Deputy to Henry Loomis the whole time. One of the highlights of that experience was that under Ed Murrow, a great guy, in VOA, we had to continually fight off battles from the hardline propagandists like Sorensen and some others, who wanted to curtail VOA's freedom of commentary and even news.

So, I appealed repeatedly -- if I remember, Henry was gone; he was making trips, too, of the same type. Henry Loomis was gone, and I had to appeal repeatedly to Edward Murrow and generally won. Murrow generally came down on the side of reasonable freedom for the commentators.

Q: I would think so. This was Tom Sorensen?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: He was a very different personality.

HUMMEL: Ted or Tom.

Q: It must have been Ted.

HUMMEL: It was Tom who was in USIA. Ted, I always saw as a little better balanced; Tom, I think, was something of a hatchet man.

Q: You were there at VOA for how long?

1963: Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs:
Beginning of Transition from USIA
to Foreign Service Officer (State) Status

HUMMEL: Two years, '61 to '63. Then for two more years, '63 to '65, I was Deputy Assistant Secretary in CU, cultural programs of all sorts.

Q: That was your transition, then, over to the Department of State?

HUMMEL: My first State Department job.

Q: Did you request this?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: After all, this is quite a switch. This is a switch from the information and the broadcasting side to the cultural side.

HUMMEL: Yes, I think I wanted to get with the State Department where a lot of more substantive things were happening. Some of my friends had done a lateral entry, Charles Cross, for instance.

Q: Into the State Department?

HUMMEL: Into the State Department and became FSO. I don't know that I made a serious effort to be an FSO, but the State Department is obviously a bigger organization. Honestly, I didn't know whether I wanted to be a PAO the rest of my life, even though it was a marvelous job; particularly in Burma. I think I enjoyed that as much as anything I ever did.

The prospect of spending twenty more years -- and this is a prospect that USIA officers now have to face -- of doing the same kind of thing --

Q: After awhile, you've done the same thing even if it's in a different country. Somehow, you've been down that road before.

HUMMEL: Still, one of the renewing things about the whole business, as we all know, is the opportunity to enter a different culture, learn about it. We are required to learn about it, study it, experience it.

Difficulties with Bobby Kennedy

CU had a lot of tensions in it including Bobby Kennedy, who was not a nice person, and who was kicking all of us around about the youth program. His style of administration was to be abrasive.

Q: He was Attorney General then, wasn't he?

HUMMEL: Yes, but he was asked -- he volunteered -- by his brother to make sure that we were contacting the youth of the world, which is a legitimate enough objective, and to try to make sure that we didn't -- all the programs, military, et cetera, didn't slight youth contacts.

So, the youth committee, an interagency committee that usually Luke Battle, who was Assistant Secretary, would chair, or I had to chair occasionally when he was away, would have Bobby Kennedy sitting at the right-hand side, jabbing everyone.

Q: He came to the meetings?

HUMMEL: Oh, indeed, he did. That contributed to some tension. Also, the political use of the program was pretty obvious, too, some of the exchange persons programs.

Q: This was the same thing, then, that you had been fighting with Sorensen on?

HUMMEL: Somewhat, yes. Still, Harry McPherson came in after Luke Battle left. Harry is also a very, very great guy and still a great friend, as is Luke Battle. Harry moved on unofficially, kidnapped back by Lyndon Johnson, whom he had been with before and who needed him in the White House, so he spent most of his time over in the White House.

So, I was acting on one memorable occasion when Bobby Kennedy, then Senator, decided that he wanted Eugene Nickerson, of Nassau County, New York, a politician, to do the tour of what we used to call the Three I League -- Ireland, Italy and Israel -- on a State Department grant.

Bobby Kennedy leaned on me directly, first indirectly and then directly by telephone. After stalling for a bit, I did what I should have done in the first place. I called up Harry McPherson and Harry said he'd check it out.

He came back with the news, I remember it very well, he said, "El Numero Uno," meaning LBJ, "El Numero Uno does not want Nickerson to get a grant to go abroad for this purpose." I said, "All right. Now, who shall I tell Bobby Kennedy made this decision?" Harry said, "You will tell him you made the decision." So, I did. It was a very unpleasant twenty minutes I spent in Bobby Kennedy's Senate office.

Q: This was face to face?

HUMMEL: Face to face, telling him I did it on my own and that I didn't believe in American politicians going -- the program being used for this purpose.

Still, I enjoyed the whole -- really, I'm talking about negative aspects of it, but I enjoyed it all because of the opportunity to meet fascinating people -- writers and other people that I never would have met going abroad.

Q: Your funding was pretty good at this point.

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: So, you could do a fairly respectable job.

HUMMEL: The program was entirely worthwhile and very satisfying. The African-American and African dimension here was also getting to be very high. The whole civil rights movement itself promoted the application of blacks going abroad and of making sure that African countries sent people here and so on.

After that --

Q: Could I, in this setting, is it appropriate for me to ask you what you ultimately thought then of the movement of the whole CU operation back over to USIA?

HUMMEL: I didn't like it at all. I thought it should stay separate. Well, you know the reasons why people argued about it. I think as it turns out, it's not nearly as bad as I had thought it would be.

There have been some times after Charles Wick came in and thought that that side of the program was not very useful, but even he came around to substantial support. I think it worked out all right because there has been a kind of separateness from propaganda.

Q: I guess that's always been -- whether it's used as a propaganda weapon rather than as an educational exchange, which is as it is designated.

HUMMEL: In some cases, it makes sense to do both. The Fulbright Program for China makes sense, makes a great deal of sense, because it is sharply targeted toward American

studies, not to English teaching or scattering American professors in economics or whatever around the Chinese universities. We have only a small number, 20.

They are all targeted toward building American studies institutions, and it has been very, very successful. There are American Studies Departments in a lot of Chinese universities. Now, if this is propaganda, okay.

Q: There was no resistance to this American Studies. When I was in Iran, there was tremendous resistance to American Studies because they felt that this was -- they understood about studying about Europe, but the minute you said American Studies, they were certain it was a propaganda-organized project. The concept was not that.

HUMMEL: No, this didn't occur in China, partly because of the euphoria on the China side with the opening, the Chinese, Sino-American rapprochement matched the euphoria in the United States and lots and lots of Chinese want to come here, and still do. So, it was not tainted. There was no nationalistic anti-American tinge, as you describe it in Iran.

1965: Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), Taiwan
With Long Period as Chargé

Q: You were then in the States until 1965. Did you go back overseas?

HUMMEL: In '65, I went overseas. It was another State Department job. I was Deputy Chief of Mission, DCM, in Taiwan. That was a great time because one Ambassador, Admiral Wright, had already left. I took over from the previous DCM, Ralph Clough. Walter McConaughy was supposed to come immediately. We had already had an agrément from the Chinese government for him.

Then the Indo-Pak War broke out and Walter McConaughy was Ambassador to Pakistan and he was stuck in Pakistan for a solid year. This is the DCM's dream, to have the Ambassador go away so the DCM can take over and do what he wants for a year; that was great fun. I enjoyed it immensely.

Q: That's a long time.

HUMMEL: It's an area that I knew a lot about. I met with Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo dozens of times on my own as the principal interlocutor. I enjoyed it extremely and learned a lot from it.

Q: What was going on then in Taiwan? The Economic Assistance Program?

HUMMEL: Just finished in '65.

Q: Just finished?

HUMMEL: It terminated in '65, but we still had extremely good relations and Taiwan was already becoming a success story. I had the nice experience of being temporarily a member of the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, JCRR, which managed land reform in Taiwan. The basis for all of their economic progress was that land reform.

Politically, there were some strains. We had to continually restrain the Chinese from doing silly things in relation to the mainland. It would be counter-productive and wouldn't get anywhere.

Q: Was this with vindictiveness, a sense of "we'll be back there on the mainland"?

HUMMEL: It was an article of faith at that time: "We are going back." So, we had to be sure that Americans, sometimes American organizations would not get involved, particularly military. CIA was very good about all of this, but some of our military outfits would insist on training the Chinese in small river boat activities that could only be engaged then against the mainland.

We would discover that the Chinese were about to do such and such and then I would arrange to do such and such and then I would arrange to express our displeasure before it happened, sometimes afterwards.

Q: How much influence did the madam have? She must have been very strong while you were there.

HUMMEL: A great deal. She had a great deal of influence, but not necessarily decisive. Chiang Kai-shek himself had his own strong views and sometimes they clashed; sometimes the two of them didn't agree.

Chiang Ching-kuo was the Defense Minister and, of course, even more powerful than an ordinary defense minister. It was a very rewarding time to be there and I'm sure it was because Bill Bundy, the Assistant Secretary for the area, thought that I handled the job reasonably well, that he put me up immediately afterward to be Ambassador to Burma.

Discovering that I'd been in Burma and spoke some Burmese and liked the place, why, he put me up for it.

Q: So, it was a very nice transition kind of recognition.

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: Let me just ask you in a quick fashion, was there anything special, over and beyond what we normally can read about, why Taiwan was such a success? After all, they were almost the first to build on -- I'm not talking about the Europeans. Is it the old same kind of thing that makes the Japanese so dedicated?

Keys to Taiwan's Success Story: Cultural and Ethnic Traits of Chinese People

HUMMEL: Culturally, of course, as you can see in Singapore and Hong Kong and elsewhere, when the Chinese are allowed to engage in free economic activity, they are very hard working and very smart. It is on the mainland, where they were told that they had to do things in a different way, that they stifled individual productivity, the work ethic, all kinds of things in addition to the political elements.

In Taiwan, there was virtually no political freedom or very limited political freedom, and this has been observed, that these great success stories of Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea, all occur with very limited political freedoms.

Land Reform in Taiwan

The key to that Taiwan success is that, in addition to the ethnic traits and the people that they brought with them from the mainland and Chinese in general want to succeed, really, the land reform was the big key to it because the landlords -- and there were a lot of Taiwanese landlords -- were paid off in bonds that they could negotiate, sell, and did sell.

Assuring that Main Economic Ventures Were Left to Native Taiwanese

They established the businesses that are now the biggest businesses. Furthermore, the officials told themselves they would not permit profiteering on the part of mainlanders, so they left the economic business, the big, large-scale stuff, to the Taiwanese so as not to make the same mistake they did on the mainland, stifling enterprise, corruption and so on.

Q: Where did this wisdom come from?

HUMMEL: They had a series of very sensible and sober meetings to examine what happened on the mainland. It has not been publicized very much but they decided to keep their fingers off of the Taiwan economy, and they left it to local people in an essentially noncorrupt fashion. The local people had the capital, the wherewithal and the incentive to bring it up to do what needed to be done, with American assistance and help.

Q: That's really learning from experience and from history, which you don't hear about very much.

HUMMEL: Right.

1968: Hummel Becomes Ambassador to Burma

Q: You went on to Burma then?

HUMMEL: In the summer of '68.

Q: You were Ambassador there?

HUMMEL: Until '71.

Q: So, you had two very nice long stints, then, in Burma.

HUMMEL: Yes, very pleasant. Even under the Ne Win government, it was still pleasant, because the Burmese are pleasant. I could still go hunting, too.

Q: Is this where you got your baby tiger?

HUMMEL: Yes, I got the baby tigers there. Actually, I bought those from the vendors in Rangoon. I didn't shoot them; I never did. I never shot a tiger, I'm glad to say, but I certainly saw a lot. I've seen them when I was on foot walking in the jungle; it's a great sight, very exciting.

Q: They left you alone, I take it?

Major Problems in Burma

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: You walk very discreetly. What, from your point of view, were the highlights of your time as Ambassador in Burma?

HUMMEL: Well, let's see --

Q: It was closed by that time, wasn't it?

Country's Economy in Shambles; Survives Only Because of Flourishing Black Market

HUMMEL: Very closed. The country was essentially the way it is now, running as an economic disaster and kept afloat only by a mammoth black market operation across the border with Thailand for most of the spare parts, a lot of the gasoline; all the essential things, medicines which the state system can't supply come through the black market.

By the same token, there is a terrible drain on their natural resources. The gems and teak are smuggled out. They get smuggled out and then, of course, there is the opium problem and the drug problem which has now put most of the Shan State out of control of the government. They have a continual civil war that's going on there between the government forces and the opium growers and smugglers.

Narcotics Problem - Hummel's Dealings with Ne Win on Issue

When narcotics was not yet high on our national agenda, I started, at my own initiative, the first talks with Ne Win about trying to assist him in doing something about the narcotics problem in Burma.

Q: Would the local population be using narcotics?

HUMMEL: Yes, to some extent, yes. What brought Ne Win around was that his son turned out to be a heroin addict later on. I didn't get very far in my first conversations with him, but I at least opened the subject and eventually the government decided they wanted to do things.

It was directly related to their insurgency. The insurgents were supporting themselves by the opium trade, so I guess that was one of the high points, the official high points of the place.

Burma is not terribly consequential on the American horizon. If it were to blow up or something, why then it would become so, or if the Chinese or somebody else were to invade it, it would be. But, they've always had an anti-Soviet tilt and, incidentally, a pro-Chinese tilt in spite of all the Chinese support for their insurgencies.

Q: At a conference I went to on Burma, it talked about the fact that at least the Burmese point of view was that because they are essentially a Buddhist country, they don't mind the deprivations because it is part of a reflection of their religion and the kind of life they lead and what they hope to have in the future.

Is that a straight out-and-out propaganda statement or is this really the way the people think?

HUMMEL: I think that's a propaganda statement if you are talking about the intellectual life. If you are talking about the life of the peasant, the farmer, in the small village, there is a lot of truth in that because their lifestyle is adjustable, expandable and contractible in a very remarkable way.

They live in an exceedingly simple way. When they get a lot of money, they will spend it on the temple, the Burmese pagoda, and on things like weddings and funerals. Their material possessions are very, very meager and they know how to get along without them.

So, when the economy turns down on them, as it has, they just can't give as much money to the pagoda and they can't have such lavish weddings and funerals or other parties, name days and so on, but they can, because of their lifestyle, which is certainly related to Buddhism, they can get along so that the peasants -- who live exceedingly simply -- can always find enough to eat. It's a lush country. They don't feel restive about the national economy turning itself inside out.

Q: Have the recent riots which they've been having, intellectually, this does not discomfit them with the situation?

Peasants Affected Relatively Little by Political Unrest, which is Largely Confined to Cities

HUMMEL: Not much among the farmers in the rural areas. Like almost all of this restiveness, except maybe the Communist Chinese Revolution, which began in rural areas, most of these other things happen in cities.

What we saw in Burma was the city people, everybody, workers, intellectuals, students, government officials, even, standing up; virtually, the whole foreign ministry sent in their resignations in Burma at one time.

1971: Back to Department of State; Initially to Handle Micronesian (Trust Territory) Negotiation

Q: After '71, then, you went --

HUMMEL: I came back to Washington. To my horror, I was assigned by Marshall Green, sold down the river, I thought, to set up an office to manage Micronesian Status Negotiations, the Trust Territory in the Pacific Islands. I started from scratch with no money, no office, no people, with negotiations three months away, already scheduled, working for Hayden Williams, who was the Asia Foundation Chief but also the designated negotiator. It was a real scramble.

The experience of traveling in the Trust Territories is great, but the bureaucratic problems of trying to put together a negotiating stance with the Defense Department bucking everything all the way, not willing to give up anything, and even questioning the instructions we had gotten out of the White House, was a tense business.

I managed to escape from that. I came straight back from Burma, I think, in July or June of '71 and immediately had to start finding money. The Congress insisted that the State Department was not allowed to spend any money on this, so I had to get donations from Interior and Defense.

Q: Ultimately, it ended up in Interior.

HUMMEL: Yes, it did. Interior put up the office space and a little bit of the money and a couple of

people. The Defense Department put up other money. The State Department supplied some people eventually.

Q: Mary Vance Smith was --

HUMMEL: That's right. She came after me. I had the pleasure of having as my deputy the present extraordinarily good Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces, Bill Crowe, Admiral Crowe.

February 1972: Escape Back to Mainstream: Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, East Asia and Pacific

I escaped from that back into the mainstream of the State Department to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs in February '72 just at the time of the Nixon visit to Peking. I missed that.

Q: You didn't go on any of those trips?

HUMMEL: I went later on; in '73, I went with Henry Kissinger to Peking. By that time, Henry had decided I was an okay guy and I sort of joined the inner circle there as Deputy Assistant Secretary, for quite some time.

I got bored with being a perennial first deputy assistant secretary and volunteered to go to Ethiopia in '75.

Development of 1972 China Policy - Nixon Role

Q: Tell me a little bit more, however, about the development of the China policy during this now historic period, the opening up of our relations. Whose concept really was that?

HUMMEL: It was Nixon's.

Q: It really was?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. He wrote an article in "Foreign Affairs" in '67. I reminded him that two years before that, in '65, he visited Taiwan. I briefed him. He asked for a meeting with the head of the embassy and I was chargé then.

Actually Ralph Clough was still there, my predecessor. The two of us went up to his hotel and he clearly said -- I was astounded, sitting there with the room bugged, quite obviously.

He quite clearly said that the United States was going to have to work out a modus vivendi or detente with the Chinese communists. This was in '65. Two years later, he wrote the "Foreign Affairs" article. By '71, he was carrying it out.

Association with Kissinger: Difficult to Work with

Q: And Kissinger's role in all of this?

HUMMEL: Great, an extraordinarily great facilitator; not just a facilitator, he invented a lot of things and managed the whole thing very, very well. This is one of Nixon's major accomplishments. However, he certainly deserved to be kicked out of office.

Q: He is a strange person.

HUMMEL: He's very strange, but right now, I think he's writing much more sensible statesmanlike things than most other people are writing. He is a very interesting person.

Q: I was always interested because Kissinger, I always felt, was essentially a European-oriented policy person.

HUMMEL: He changed. He was European-oriented but in '71, the war between India and Pakistan, when Bangladesh broke away, he was on top of that and took the extraordinary step of sending an American aircraft carrier in to warn the Indians not to destroy Pakistan completely.

It was an interventionist idea and it probably was quite a good one. I think, quite possibly, the Indians would have taken advantage of the war to just destroy Pakistan once and for all.

Q: They've never forgiven us, either.

HUMMEL: That's right. Of course, with his China, those are two non-European initiatives.

Q: Did you find him difficult to work with with that kind of a reputation?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes, extremely difficult. You just had to put up with all kinds of abuse at all hours and unreasonable demands, but very stimulating. I enjoyed it all.

Henry, to this day, says that he likes to tell people, and he said this when he used to visit me in Beijing when I was Ambassador and he was retired, he used to say that I was mean to him.

Q: You were?

HUMMEL: I was mean to him, yes. I sometimes talked back to him in his office -- always privately, never grandstanding in front of a group, never at a staff meeting. It was always in private, shouting at him, "You've got to listen. I'll do it. I'll do what you say, but before you make the final decision, listen to what I've got to say."

He'd say, "You're not loyal. You are disloyal. You're not going to carry this out. I'm not going to rely on you." I said, "Goddamit, Henry, you can. If you tell me to do it, I'll do it, but I don't think it's the smart thing to do. Here are the reasons why and would you kindly listen?"

Eagleburger was there once in a conversation, I think it was on an airplane, when Henry made some profound statement. Larry likes to remember that I just said, "Bullshit, Henry." I'm proud of those things.

Q: You are a man of great courage.

HUMMEL: Well, that was exhilarating. It's partly because he didn't respect people who didn't have their own ideas. He is an extraordinary intellect, very, very stimulating.

Q: There are so many stories about him all the time. It is refreshing to find stories where people aren't just swept up under the rug.

Establishment of U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing

HUMMEL: I think one of the high points of this period when I was a Deputy was when we managed to--actually, the Chinese in 1973 suggested or revived a suggestion that was made in the Geneva talks, the Warsaw talks, long ago, to have liaison offices; in the absence of diplomatic recognition, we had diplomatic relations, completely unusual and really an unprecedented mechanism then, the liaison office.

I helped to organize it, staff it, make plans for our people to go out. I didn't want to send Marines, but we sent Marines in the first place and they got into trouble and had to be withdrawn.

Q: Oh, really?

HUMMEL: Yes, this was all publicized at the time.

1975: Hummel Requests and is Made Ambassador to Ethiopia.

Then I was out of the bureau because I went to Ethiopia. I enjoyed that very much although relations were destined to go downhill, as I could see quite easily.

Q: You went out to Ethiopia in '75?

HUMMEL: In early '75, February '75.

Q: Did you ask for Ethiopia?

HUMMEL: I volunteered to go because I was tired of being passed over to be assistant secretary several times. First, they tried Mack Godley; then we had Bob Ingersoll, and then Phil Habib came in. Habib is one of my closest friends and he was a better guy to choose than me, but I could see myself being the perennial first deputy. It was time to go overseas again.

Q: In the diplomatic corps, it's always wise to go into a different area at some point.

HUMMEL: Right; that's right. I did that and enjoyed it, although the situation was turning adversely for American interests there. The rise of the leftists --

Q: Was Haile Selassie still there?

HUMMEL: He was already in detention; he died in detention while I was there, and the military government was the one I dealt with. The present leader was number three at the time. I knew him quite well, along with the other two whom he shot across the conference table; he succeeded to leadership of Ethiopia by assassinating his two superiors.

After Somewhat Over One Year, Brought Back to Washington as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific

Q: Direct action.

HUMMEL: Direct action. I was saved from the debacle of our Ethiopian relations which occurred later by Phil Habib asking me to come back and be Assistant Secretary when Phil moved up to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs on the seventh floor.

Q: So, you weren't in Ethiopia for all that long?

HUMMEL: No, a year and four months.

Q: Did you find any cultural strain after being so long in Asia?

HUMMEL: No. The Asians themselves have so many different aspects to them. I mean, the Malaysians are different from the Chinese and the Burmese are different from anybody else; the Japanese are totally different.

Ethiopia was just another different culture, and I mean really alien, terribly tribal, very underdeveloped, no notion of how to cooperate even though you disagree with people. This was one of Selassie's great defects. He never established any kind of parliament so they could have practice in something other than tribal politics.

If you disagree with someone, you shoot them, kill them. You are enemies for life and a disagreement is sort of a way of life. Who is bigger? Am I going to win or are you going to win?

Zero sum games, always.

Q: It is all absolutely a black and white situation, with no grays.

HUMMEL: A very difficult place to govern.

Q: So then you went back to Washington?

Within Six Months a New Administration Takes Over: Hummel Replaced as Assistant Secretary

HUMMEL: I came back to Washington. I came back in July and, by January, I was out, because of the change in administration. Dick Holbrooke took my place. That was a very interesting period, particularly after the elections.

Between the November elections when the Republicans lost and January, when the transition occurred, we were fooling around with all kinds of fascinating things trying to come to a quick agreement with the Philippines about the bases, warning Romulo, which I did on Henry's instructions, that Carter was going to have a much dimmer view of those bases, which was true. They had better make a deal with us before Carter took office, trying to get this kind of thing done. It didn't succeed.

Change in Administration is Always Very Disruptive for Foreign Policy and Department of State

Q: How disruptive is this, the switch which is going on even now in the State Department, or has gone on, even though it's one Republican administration to another?

HUMMEL: It is quite disruptive. It was terribly disruptive when the Kennedys took over, when John Kennedy took over the White House. Any time there is a party shift in the White House, there is a great tide. No matter what the President wants, the people below him get into a mood of "Let's throw the rascals out and let's have a complete change. We're going to do better and nothing you did is worth examining."

It is not quite that bad now, but it is pretty bad. This is mostly Baker's personal style, which is not conducive to teamwork and doesn't want or solicit support from the professionals. They make their decisions in a very small group.

What you have read in the papers is all true. Morale is not good. Then the excessive number of political ambassadors and other appointees has a drastic impact on the FSO Corps because of the ripple effect: You can't promote people because there aren't vacancies and so on.

Q: It's getting worse.

HUMMEL: A lot of good people are going to leave, I'm afraid.

Q: The United States is so profligate with its talent, particularly in the foreign affairs field which does not offer many opportunities outside of the practice of diplomacy.

1977: Phil Habib Assists Hummel in Becoming Ambassador to Pakistan

You were only Assistant Secretary of State for a relatively short period of time.

HUMMEL: Relatively short, seven months or something like that. Then I immediately volunteered to go as Ambassador to the Philippines, but Romulo didn't like me at all because of these negotiations and was dragging his feet.

Then, all of a sudden, George Vest, who had been scheduled to go to Pakistan, was drafted to be Assistant Secretary, so Pakistan became vacant. Phil Habib called me up and said, "How would you like to go to Pakistan instead of going to the Philippines?"

I called Betty Lou and we decided, "Okay." Besides, the Philippines was a mixed bag, particularly because of the differences between Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos, not to mention Romulo. Bill Sullivan got into terrible trouble, you know, with Imelda and his work was hampered by that.

Q: Tell me about Romulo. He was already pretty old, wasn't he, at this time?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: Did this affect his decision making?

HUMMEL: No, I don't think so. He was very conscious of the fact that he was one of the eldest statesmen in the world and that he was one of the founders of the UN and so on, and he expected to be treated in a deferential way, which we did, but he could be abrasive on his own, too. He was not senile in any way.

Arrives Just in Time to See Bhutto Government Overthrown by Zia's Military Coup

So, I went off to Pakistan. Immediately thereafter, we had the coup, so no sooner did I arrive and just barely met Bhutto than we had the military coup and Zia took over.

Then the following year, we had to terminate all aid programs because of their nuclear purchases. We didn't get an aid program back until actually in the Reagan Administration, so we had very little leverage there to accomplish our own objectives.

We had two main objectives in the beginning. One was antinuclear proliferation and the other was narcotics control.

Q: You were at home with the narcotics control.

Conflict Between U.S. Nuclear War Proliferation Policy and U.S. Need to Assist Pakistan in Face of Soviet Afghanistan Invasion

HUMMEL: Yes. This is the defect of Congressional legislation. As soon as you do pull the trigger and suspend your aid, then you can no longer work towards your own objectives. You don't have the wherewithal to do so and no country is going to capitulate to western pressure.

Then, of course, added to that, though, came the countervailing factor of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan after which I tried very hard to get an aid program going. I didn't make it. The Carter Administration decided they would have a try but the size of the aid program did not interest Zia. The price of making firm promises about nonproliferation, about not pursuing their research program for nuclear weapons, the price was too high, so that fell through.

It wasn't until I caught A1 Haig's attention in the very early days of the Reagan Administration that we put together an aid program.

Q: Did you have any opportunity to make your points up on the Hill with the Congressional people?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. I had a lot of wrestling with John Glenn. We had the classic case of competing priorities, of objectives that clashed. We wanted to support Pakistan against the real Soviet threat, but we also had objectives like nonproliferation and other things to balance these off.

I was very -- "upset" is too strong a word. I was concerned that we did not do anything about the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. We didn't go to the Olympics

and we curtailed our grain shipments to them, which hurt only our farmers, because the Australians and the Canadians supplied them, and we didn't do anything more. We were not supporting Pakistan against a very real, genuine threat.

Q: You were in Pakistan at the time of the Iranian debacle.

HUMMEL: Oh, yes, indeed.

Q: Did you find a change in either policy or attitudes toward the United States because of that? Did it affect the situation in Pakistan?

HUMMEL: For one day, it did, Dorothy, and that is when -- no, I guess it wasn't the Iranian situation so much, but the hostages were taken in '79.

Pakistanis Burn U.S. Embassy in Islamabad

Very shortly thereafter, they burned my embassy in Islamabad because somebody had started a rumor -- we never did figure out how this started -- that the news from Mecca, where unidentified, armed people had taken over control of the holy place in Mecca, they started a rumor that this was really the work of Americans and Israelis together who had attacked the holy place in Mecca.

As soon as that rumor went out, people began talking about it and people just got into buses and came up and started to attack the embassy.

Q: That must have been organized, wasn't it?

HUMMEL: No, it wasn't.

Q: It was really spontaneous?

HUMMEL: That's right. The only organized part of it was that a couple of hundred students from a nearby university were all ready with grappling hooks, ropes and tin cans for gasoline, which is about all you need. A Palestinian-organized group had already been planning something, so they took advantage of this.

Otherwise, the Pakistanis were terribly ashamed of themselves immediately afterwards. Before long, I got checks totaling \$24 million for the cost of rebuilding the building.

Q: From the Pakistan Government?

HUMMEL: From the Pakistan Government. I traveled everywhere freely in Pakistan.

Q: You didn't feel in danger?

HUMMEL: No, I never did; there was good hunting, too; driving up toward the China border, almost to the China border and so on.

Comments on Bhutto and Zia Characters

Q: Fascinating country.

HUMMEL: Fascinating. Socially and politically, it was extremely interesting.

Q: You were there with Zia?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes.

Q: What kind of a person did you find him?

HUMMEL: A very gentlemanly person, very gentlemanly and surprisingly wily in terms of politics. Bhutto had made him chief of staff of the army because he thought he was a little bit dumb and compliant and he could be manipulated. Bhutto brought it on himself in a real sense.

The public disorder was out of control, anti-Bhutto demonstrations, because Bhutto had rigged the election in March.

Q: This is why I find Benazir's book so interesting.

HUMMEL: She makes a saint out of her father. In fact, Bhutto supporters have told me that, of course, there is no question but that Bhutto was guilty of murdering that person and of ordering the killing of a lot of other people: "This is the way we expect our leaders to behave," these people say. He should not have been executed but he certainly should have been convicted.

Q: Well, I guess finally, if you keep him alive, you've got the problem of -- I've just been rereading Tudor history and this is part of the same thing. If they are there, they are a catalyst for disruption of your government.

HUMMEL: Yes. Well, let's see, off to China directly from Pakistan, '81 to '85, four years in Pakistan and four years in China.

Q: You really weren't in the United States very much the whole time you were in the Foreign Service. You were in the Service how long, all told?

HUMMEL: Thirty-five years.

Q: Of that time, you were in the United States what, five or six years?

HUMMEL: Something like 12 years out of 35.

Q: I found coming home after 10 years in Japan very difficult.

HUMMEL: I didn't.

Q: You didn't. You seem to adjust so easily to your various cultural --

HUMMEL: My first reentry was when we were eight years away, from '52 to '60. We bought this house and we settled in. I don't remember much trauma coming back in '60 even when we had no house. Now, a house helps a lot when you come back to the same place.

Q: It's a home. It really is a home.

HUMMEL: It certainly helps the children to adjust to these changes.
Anyway, to wind this up, I guess --

Q: Were you working on China at all when the President was in Peking?

HUMMEL: When Bush was? Yes, oh, yes. I was the principal deputy in the East Asia Bureau and I helped to brief him before he ever went out, and I saw him when he came back. We have maintained a nice personal relationship ever since. I used to drop in and see him whenever I came in from Pakistan or wherever in his vice presidential office.

Q: He seems very much to have enjoyed that experience and he learned a tremendous amount from it.

HUMMEL: Yes, he did.

1981: Ambassador to China

Q: You were in China from '81 to '85, following?

HUMMEL: Following Leonard Woodcock and just prior to Winston Lord. I guess the most important thing for me, of course, personally, was to be there at all as Ambassador after having been born there and spent so much time studying Chinese.

1981: Downturn in U.S.-Chinese Relations Due to Chinese Insistence on U.S. Termination of Arms Sales to Taiwan

Aside from that, the major event was when our relations -- we had a complete cycle of downturn and then revival. When I went out in the summer of '81, I did not allow our agent to lease this house except with a Foreign Service clause for cancellation right from the beginning.

Normally, you give one year's grace but I insisted no, because I thoroughly believed it was quite possible I would be fired out of that job by the Reagan Administration because what they were planning, in the White House, to do with Taiwan would have been so disruptive to our PRC relations that I thought we might very well downgrade relations.

The Chinese knew about this. The tensions were very high already when I arrived. They canceled a military visitor trip in the summer of '81 and, lo and behold, I no sooner got there than the Chinese said the Americans had to set a date for terminating arms sales to Taiwan; otherwise, relations would be downgraded. That means sending Ambassadors home.

It took 10 months of negotiations, and we finally negotiated our way out of that, which is essentially almost a textbook case of negotiations, of using all sorts of means and a lot of time to educate the Chinese, that we would not, under any circumstances, set a date for terminating arms sales. They had to help us find a mutually agreeable solution aside from that.

Then, relations began to take an upturn, but we still had an awful lot of trade problems, defector problems, legal problems, all of which China raised in the great heights of escalation, calling me in to listen to complaints from high levels each time. It was really very- (end of tape)

Q: This is the second tape, side one, of the Arthur Hummel interview. We were just talking about the developments within China, the nature of the negotiations which you had been carrying on.

1982: Chinese Escalate Complaints over Trade Issues

HUMMEL: Even after negotiations finished successfully, we still had a whole lot of downers while the Chinese tried to test out how much we loved them by escalating all these normal kinds of trade problems far beyond their importance, far beyond the need to escalate them.

Relations Improve: 1983 as U.S. Makes Trade Concessions

Then we made the essential gesture -- more than a gesture -- of deciding that China would have a higher status in our export licensing regime, where we would be willing to license technology to them of a higher grade than we had been willing to do before, something that the Carter administration had already promised them but had been unable to accomplish because of bureaucratic obstructionism, chiefly on the part of the Defense Department.

When we did that in May of '83, things began to turn for the better. Relations smoothed out and, of course, President Reagan came for a visit. Vice President Bush had already been there. The rhythm of mutual high level visits sort of solidified the friendly relations that we still have.

I think these high level visits are thought by some to be frothy and inconsequential; I don't think so at all. I think the bureaucrats of both countries take a cue from the events, and a whole lot of practical things from ordinary business and trade all the way through government-to-government negotiations are facilitated by the fact that both sides' bureaucrats understand that's what they are meeting about.

The Chinese as Negotiators: Sophisticated, Worldwide

Q: Just a couple of questions about negotiations before we stop. I have seen you in action at the Aspen Institute Conference with the Chinese and not only your fluency of language, but I was so impressed with your understanding of their sense of humor.

This is, after all, one of the most critical elements of dealing across cultures in a different language. Is this more critical in China than it is in other places? Did you find your process of negotiation in China very different from, for instance, when you dealt with Zia in Pakistan?

After all, the Paks are much different kinds of personalities.

HUMMEL: Yes, quite different. The Chinese are much more sophisticated. They brought negotiation to a fine art. They have all kinds of instruments they bring out, trying to pressure or shame you. Of course, they control the whole environment so neatly that nobody leaks to the press Chinese information the way they do on our side of the negotiations.

If they want to seem stern, everybody is stern. They know how to indicate through side talks -- we had lots of side talks; that is, informal discussions, which is where you get a lot of work done. They and we know how to signal what the direction that the solution might be in or what somebody might be willing to agree to.

All of these methods, from pressure to inducement to getting into a high dudgeon about things -- the Chinese are experts.

Q: They've been at it for centuries.

HUMMEL: They have, but the communists have added their own quirks, too.

Q: It makes one wonder if somebody like a Leonard Woodcock -- obviously, he's done tremendous amounts of negotiation in his entire background, but after all, no China particular --

HUMMEL: I don't think you need to be China specific about negotiating with them. You just have to be a damn clever negotiator. I don't think negotiating with the Chinese really is different from anybody else.

There are no particular cultural taboos that you have to worry about like eating with your left hand. There is no mysterious element. They are cosmopolitan, in a way, in terms of negotiating.

Q: Even the current communist group?

HUMMEL: Even more so in the current communist group. Having dealt with and negotiated with so many different peoples around the world, they have developed a standardized, world-wide style. Whatever is effective, they do, and they've learned the kinds of things that might be effective.

One virtue for me is that sometimes when they were trying to use the technique of being terribly sad, because it seems that I had just now gone back on a statement that I had made two weeks before in previous negotiations and so on, I would just laugh at them and say, "Oh, come on, you and I know this is the kind of trick that you use in your negotiations and I am not impressed. I did not go back on what I said before and even if I did, if I have new instructions from Washington, why should you put on this dour face for me?" and so on.

It helps a little bit to release the atmosphere but it doesn't get you anywhere, really. Being a friend of China has only one benefit. It doesn't get you a better deal from the Chinese government. What it does is enable me to talk in a blunt and almost abrasive way to the Chinese and get away with it, because they know that I'm not just trying to impress my superiors. I'm really interested in helping with the substance of the problem.

That is the only benefit that being accorded the status of a friend of China and being a diplomat gives you, but that's not inconsiderable. I can tell them things about real American reactions: "Look, you'd really better watch it because..."

Q: They believe you.

HUMMEL: They believe me. They believe me and they are willing to accept critical statements from me that might send them up the wall if somebody else made them. These are some slight assets but that, with twenty-five cents, you can get a cup of coffee.

Q: You resigned from the Foreign Service.

HUMMEL: Having passed 65 already, as soon as I left Peking, I retired at the end of October, actually. My birthday was passed in June. You are supposed to retire at 65, but as long as you are in a presidential appointment, you stay on. As soon as the presidential appointment is finished, then you are out. By the way, Leonard Woodcock was an excellent negotiator with the Chinese.

Q: His background was excellent in terms of negotiations.

HUMMEL: That is what I meant to emphasize. Because there is nothing terribly esoteric about negotiating with the Chinese, Leonard did it extremely well.

Q: Well, I was curious about the cultural element here.

HUMMEL: The Chinese are so sophisticated that I suppose -- I do know that in some primitive cultures, you have to be extremely careful about various customs and taboos. To

some extent, you have to in China, too, but there are no tricks to negotiating with the Chinese.

Q: Well, you have had a fascinating and wonderful career. How rewarding that you could achieve these highest elements within the diplomatic world within your field of interest.

HUMMEL: I certainly have enjoyed it and to wind up in China was great. If you had asked me what my most pleasant experiences have been, I would say in Burma, strangely enough, but most professionally satisfying have been in China; that was pleasant, too.

Q: Sometimes I get the impression that Burma is almost a kind of a dreamland rather than a reality.

HUMMEL: Everybody who has been stationed there sort of falls in love with the place. It's rather strange. It has a terrible government, but lovely people.

End of interview